



ANNUAL REPORT

YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2005

COMMITTEE

Chair:	Monty Meth
Secretary:	Tony Watts
Vice-Chair:	Audrey Hardwick
Treasurer:	John Hennell
Social Secretary:	Anne Wood
Other Members:	Doreen Hogg Derek Friggens (Silver Threads Club) Irene Frost (Winchmore Hill United Churches) Chris Mitchell Don Smith

Co-opted Representatives:

Stanley Anderson	(Enfield Pensioners Action Group)
Demos Demetriou	(Cypriot Elderly and Disabled Group)
Jennifer McIntyre	(Age Concern Enfield)
Peter Shukla	(Asian Cultural & Welfare Centres)
Olivia Goodfellow	Forum Co-ordinator / Development Officer

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June 2004 marked a watershed for the Forum. The £55,000 award to the Forum from the Community Fund (now The Big Lottery) led to the appointment of Olivia Goodfellow as our own development officer. This has allowed us to focus on making the Forum more representative of the community mix that makes up Enfield, leading to more individuals, community, ethnic and disability groups joining to the Forum. The Forum's newsletter has appeared regularly, our event programme has expanded and our membership has been energised.

Thanks to the voluntary and unstinting efforts on behalf of the Forum by many people throughout the year. We can confidently say that we are now better established and more widely recognised in the Borough than ever before. We are not, however, complacent and we do realise that there is much more to do, but we can reasonably claim that the voice of older people is being heard just a little more, although we are not as yet being consulted and listened to as much as we would like before decisions are taken.

"Don't talk about us, without us" is a phrase that ought to become a byword for all those involved in decision-making who are seeking - as we are - to find solutions to problems that will make life better for older people in Enfield. Our objective is to make the Forum the representative sounding board of older people; to provide good quality information that benefits Forum members; to have informative speakers at our monthly meetings; provide opportunities for members to meet other people and form friendships; campaign against any form of injustice and discrimination against older people; and seek to influence local and national government in whatever way we can on such issues as incomes, health, transport, social and leisure services, crime and personal safety - the list is almost endless.

The progress we have made on these matters in the last year, is due to Committee members such as Anne Wood, Derek Friggens, Don Smith, the chair and other members including Jean Calvert, Brian Wright, Roy Barrows and Des Hegarty who have taken responsibility and used their initiatives to speak up on our behalf. So when the Committee is losing such stalwart members as vice-chair Audrey Hardwick and treasurer John Hennell it is timely to ask younger Forum members to come forward and give just a little of their time, talent and experience to the Forum. It really would make all the difference to the quality of our work and the service we can give.

In seeking to provide a service to members we try to attend meetings of the various Council scrutiny panels, work with the Primary Care Trust, the Enfield Strategic Partnership and the Pensions Service; attend meetings of the Greater London Forum and the London Older People's Strategy Group linked to the Mayor of London which all helps us to know what is going on locally and nationally regarding the many concerns of older people - and every extra pair of hands would enable us to do so much more.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

The evidence for this claim can be seen in the contribution made to the Forum's growth by our Lottery-funded coordinator and development officer Olivia Goodfellow, and by our secretary, Tony Watts, who has not only created the best web site of any Forum in the country, but who launched our first membership card scheme this year and is now heavily involved through his membership of the important Enfield Strategic Partnership in building bridges with others in the Borough so that Enfield develops a coherent strategy for older people, similar to that existing in many other parts of the country under the umbrella of the Better Government for Older People project.

PROGRESS IN 2004- - 5

The Forum highlight for this past year has undoubtedly been the agreement between us and Enfield Leisure Centres Trust (ELCT) to launch a new discount scheme for people aged 60 and over with a special discount for Forum members starting at age 50. The discounts range from 60% off annual membership of the Aspire Fitness Suites to 33% off direct monthly and annual debits, with Forum members obtaining the basic Energy discount card for £5 instead of £10 or £20 depending on age.

This "Get Fit for a Longer Life" campaign has two aims. Firstly, to get more older people to participate in physical activity as a means of preventing or delaying the onset of many illnesses associated with the ageing process. Secondly, to boost the membership of the Forum with new members joining to take advantage of the best discounts. While the scheme only got off the ground on April 1 2005, we have been working for the best part of 2004 in making the arrangement which largely arose out of the very successful "Stay Safe, Fit and Healthy" Day at Edmonton Leisure Centre in September 2004 which attracted some 300 people, many of them new to physical activity.

Meanwhile, the Over 50s fitness day at Southbury Leisure Centre on Wednesdays is now firmly established and is proving so popular, that we are now talking with ELCT about adding another day to the programme. And we are trying to establish a similar activity day at Edmonton Leisure Centre on Thursdays. In this "Get Fit for a Longer Life" campaign we are seeking to work in partnership with the Primary Care Trust in the belief that the more people exercise for at least 30 minutes a day the greater the chance of reducing pressure on our GPs, hospitals and social services, and we have applied to Enfield Council's sport and leisure team for funding of free "taster" days in a bid to attract more participants. Our initiative in this field features prominently in the prospectus going to the London Mayor, who will be producing a draft strategy for older people later this year and we hope that a London-wide subsidy scheme for admission to leisure centres will result.

MEETINGS AND MEMBERSHIP

The past year has seen us having some of the most informative and best attended meetings since the Forum was formed. We've had three good discussions on crime involving the Borough police commander Simon O'Brien and top police officers; we've had top speakers on Tuberculosis and the two chief executives of our Chase Farm and North Middlesex hospitals; we've been updated on the various services for older people provided by the Council and Age Concern; and we were among the first in the Borough to hear of the Council's budget and council tax proposals with a discussion led by the LBE director of finance and corporate resources.

Your Committee tries to find speakers on topics that warrant you leaving home and coming to meetings, enabling you to be better informed than people who are not members of the Forum. So we need your ideas of how to make the meetings more interesting to more people, so that they too will be inclined to join the Forum.

Our membership obviously fluctuates during the year but at its peak it reached 220 individual members with 29 organisations of older people in the Borough affiliated to the Forum including, for example, organisations as diverse as Christian Care, Stroke Action and Enfield Vision, to art, fellowship and lunch clubs, the RAF Association and groups reflecting the Cypriot, Tamil, Bangladeshi and Polish communities in the Borough (Appendix I). These organisations combined have hundreds of members and together we can claim that this makes the Forum the representative voice of older people in the Borough.

With the most advantageous discount scheme now operating with the leisure centres, and with the formation of a Forum sub-group in Edmonton tackling issues affecting older people in that part of the Borough, it should now be possible to reach 350 individual members and 40 affiliates in the coming year - and this will be a key task

for your new Committee to achieve.

Undoubtedly, a key weapon in reaching that goal will be our Newsletter - re-styled during the year with the Enfield Over 50s masthead which came out on time every two months. We are now circulating about 2,500 copies of each issue to members, clubs in the Borough, the 14 libraries and more than 60 surgeries and we will be considering new outlets for the Newsletter in 2005.

CAMPAIGNS

We need a stronger membership not to boast about numbers, but to give us the backing and muscle to argue on behalf of older people and earn the right to be listened to without our case being dismissed out of hand as it was when we took up the cudgels on behalf of pensioner, disabled and unemployed evening course students at Southgate College. Their long-standing reduced fee concessions were suddenly withdrawn without warning or explanation - but we are not walking away defeated.

We did, after all, help the Kempe Hall Monday OAP Club to defeat the Council's demand for higher hire charges for their community hall, including a claim for £951.75 in backdated charges. We have won a new deal on charges at the leisure centres. We did convince the Primary Care Trust to release funds to start providing digital hearing aids much earlier than would otherwise have been the case.

We did organise a survey on the loss of the NHS toenail cutting service which showed that some 90% of respondents needed treatment for a variety of conditions. We hope our constant pressure on the PCT and the Council on this issue helped to convince them to support the Age Concern toenail cutting service, albeit covering a limited area, and we have urged the Council to continue funding this much-needed project in future years.

We are currently in discussions with Council officers regarding improving the amenities at Whitewebbs Park and, in supporting the Enfield Pensioners Action Group, we have asked the Council to set aside money from the budget to rebuild the cafe, get rid of the temporary accommodation and generally landscape the area to make it an attractive open space amenity.

We have campaigned to encourage the maximum number of pensioners to apply for the pensions and savings credits and the council tax rebates they are entitled to. We agreed to partner the Citizens Advice Bureau in a successful bid - one of only 170 in the country - to fund a part-time worker who will seek out people entitled to the pension credit already being received by some 14,000 people in the Borough. Our voice helped to ensure that the PCT and the Local Authority continued to finance and support Age Concern's excellent 'Fit for Life' programme for older people in Enfield.

We have tried as well to ensure that as many older people as possible have smoke alarms fitted in their own homes and there is no doubt that without our support the Fire Brigade campaign would not have been so successful. In addition we are actively involved with the Council led Home Support Network aimed at providing practical handyman support services to the vulnerable in our community.

We still have much to do on all the above matters. We need to be vigilant in exploring any opportunities for improvements as well as being critical when people appear to us to default or are dilatory in fulfilling their obligations. We are thinking here of our campaign to replace disused public toilets and place signs indicating public toilets in the Borough's parks which we have been asking about for over two years and are only now seeing some activity.

SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

Our Forum should not just be about meetings and campaigns. It must have a place and make time for new friendships to be formed, enabling people to join in activities

as a group they would not otherwise do on their own. Our Christmas social event in 2004 was bigger and better than ever and last year we had an enjoyable visit to the themed gardens at Capel Manor. In the coming year we already have a coach trip planned to Canterbury and we hope that new Forum members will come forward with ideas for social events - and will volunteer to organise them - and so help to make the Forum a vibrant body that it is a joy to belong to.

Certainly the 25 Forum members who, thanks to the Greater London Forum, took part in the free overseas Christmas phone calls provided by Merrill Lynch in the City had a most enjoyable time and appreciated the value of the Forum in reuniting them with family and friends.

FINANCE

The Big Lottery award and other smaller grants obtained during the year means that our finances are healthy. The Lottery Award money is given as a restricted fund and this means that it can only be used for the purposes specified in our original application, Expenditure of the the restricted fund is in line with our plan. By the end of the first year of the grant (31st May 2005) there will be a slight underspend as we have not yet been able to find suitable office accommodation in the Borough. This will be a high priority for the incoming executive committee. The full annual accounts are given as appendix II.

DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2005 - 6

Having achieved the key objective in our first development plan - that of securing a grant to employ a part-time development officer for the Forum - our second development plan is now in circulation. Priority has to be given to becoming a registered charity and ensuring that funding for our part-time support post continues to be made available, because to simply rely on volunteers to maintain and improve an enlarged Forum's work will be an impossible task. Failure to extend the grant would be a massive failure.

We would like to see a Better Government for Older People organisation created in the Borough charged with coordinating, monitoring, improving services to older people in the Borough in which the Forum would be one of the constituent members working alongside the many organisations with active responsibilities in this field.

Ideally, we would like to see the Forum develop into an organisation with its own accommodation and possibly linked to an advice / social centre for older people. Charitable status would be of real value to aid our fund raising effort.

CONCLUSION

Taking our cue from Help the Aged, the Forum is really only of value if it "works for a future where older people are highly valued, have lives that are richer, and voices that are heard" and we should be judged by how far we have advanced towards these goals. With that in mind, we can envisage the Forum becoming the link between older people's service users and the service providers and ideally working together in a new community-based partnership where people can voice their concerns and have them resolved quickly and efficiently without the run-around that is too often the case at present. That is the concept, as we see it, of a Better Government for Older People project in the Borough - and it is an objective worth fighting for. Thanks to the funding from 'The Big Lottery' many of our plans are coming to fruition.

APPENDIX I

Affiliated Organisations

Age Concern Enfield

Arnos Grove Townswomen's Guild

BEVAD

BHP Residents Assoc.

Church Street Residents

Civil Service Retirement Association

Cypriot Elderly & Disabled Group

Cypriot Elderly Luncheon Club

Elsinge Monday Club

Enfield Bangladeshi Welfare Assoc

Enfield Cypriot Association

Enfield Pensioners Action Group

Enfield Unison Retired

Enfield Vision

FERAA

First Tuesdays Ladies Group

Home and Fellowship Club

Housing 21

Leigh Hunt Drive Neighbourhood Watch

Little Park Luncheon Club

Macular Disease Society, Enfield

Meet a Need with Christian Care

Naree Shakti (Asian Womens Strength)

Over 50 Bangladeshi Society

Polish Community in Enfield

Silverthreads Club

St Johns Art Group

St Thomas (Oakwood) Golden Link

Stroke Action

Tamil Relief Centre

The Royal Air Forces Association

The Walkabouts Rambling Group

Winchmore Hill Community Care

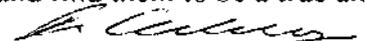
APPENDIX II

Enfield Borough Over 50's Forum

Revenue Accounts 1st April to 31st March, 2005

Unrestricted Funds		Restricted Funds		
INCOME		INCOME		
Subscriptions	888.00	Lottery Fund Grant	<u>16,730.00</u>	
Grants	1,942.88			
Miscellaneous	398.20	EXPENDITURE		
Transfer to Restricted Funds	<u>874.98</u>	Printing	2,469.08	
	<u>4,104.06</u>	Dev. Officer Expenses	747.13	
EXPENDITURE		Dev. Officer Salary	8750.00	
Refreshments	189.77	Postage	679.92	
Miscellaneous	<u>373.32</u>	Hall Hire	91.90	
	<u>563.09</u>	Recruitment	<u>874.98</u>	
			<u>13,613.01</u>	
				TOTAL
Surplus for year	3,540.97	Surplus for year	3,116.99	6,657.96
Funds at start of year	<u>3,427.19</u>	Funds at start of year	-----	<u>3,427.19</u>
Funds at end of year	<u>6,968.16</u>	Funds at end of year	<u>3,116.99</u>	<u>10,085.15</u>
		Balance Sheet		
		Barclays Bank		6,356.89
		Barclays Bank		<u>3,728.26</u>
				<u>10,085.15</u>

I have examined the accounting records of Enfield Borough Over 50's Forum and find them to be a true and fair view of the Forum's affairs.



R C Ashley, A.S.C.A. 18 Culloden Road, Enfield
20th April 2005