

MEETING OF THE HORSHAM OLDER PEOPLES FORUM

Friday 3rd March 2017 10.30 am -1pm

Drill Hall, Denne Road , Horsham

PRELIMINARIES

(1) **Present** : A list of those present is attachment at the end of these notes.

(2) **Apologies** : Alf Goodchild, Peter Catchpole

(3) **Previous Meeting**: 8th December 2016. The notes of this meeting were approved as a record. They can be found on the Website

www.horshamdistrictolderpeoplesforum.btck.co.uk.

(4) Reports :

Chairman – Martin Bruton:

Directory of Services: HDOPF, Age UK Horsham, and HDC updating.

Older Vulnerable Persons: Forum and Action Plan participation.

Older Vulnerable Persons Forum & Road Safety Action Group: participation

Hospital Episodes working group: with Age UK Horsham, WSCC, Healthwatch,

Publicity : Articles in West Sussex County Times 19th Jan; 17th & 23rd Feb 2017.

Treasurer: £350 remains from HDC Grant of £500.

QUESTION TIME: questions to:

Rt Hon. Nick Herbert CBE MP Arundel & South Downs Constituency. [NH]

Introducing himself NH compared his rural constituency of 250 square miles with Villages but no large towns with a constituency in North Queensland Australia from where he had just returned, of 125 thousand square miles. He was now in his eleventh year as an MP.

[**Summary Headings of the questions** are given in this section; the full texts are attachment [2] at the end of these notes.] **Note: Nick Herbert's responses, as noted, are the interpretation of the note-taker and may not be entirely accurate reflections of what he said.**

QUESTION [1]

SUPPORT FOR OUR ELDERLY COMMUNITY TO PARTICIPATE IN THE TECHNOLOGY OF THE DIGITAL WORLD

Correspondence by Email and Mobile phone; Information seeking and Form filling on the Internet are in widespread use but not by everyone. **Public Services must not be delivered exclusively by electronic means.** The Government supports initiatives by voluntary groups to adapt and adopt electronic technology to facilitate the provision of services and social interaction.

FLOOR EXCHANGES

- > In thirty years' retirement things move on and it is now very difficult to handle Parish Council affairs without a Computer. (NH office receives 200 emails daily)
- > Mobile Phones are a nuisance intruding on time away from normal contact. Car phones a danger.
- > Social Media: can distract; can be useful; can be angry; can be a risk for children; can raise a Trump.
- > Councils and Government need to address the problem of over-complicated websites.

[NH: the Coalition government set up the 'gov.uk' general platform but work is still in progress to sort out teething problems]

QUESTION [2]

WHY ISN'T THERE A COMMISSIONER FOR OLDER PEOPLE AS THERE IS FOR WALES & NORTHERN IRELAND?

Government view is that Ministers are accountable in the relevant areas of government and Commissioners are not necessary. **NH** personally agnostic on the issue. Useful to see the experience in Wales and Northern Ireland.

QUESTION [3] and [4]

WILL **NH** PUSH FOR A PENSION INCREASE TO COVER LOCAL GOVERNMENT TAX INCREASES?

This is the first time in a few years where we are seeing rises in Council Tax and they impinge upon us all.

The Government is committed to the Triple Lock** for pensions – you can expect to see it in the next election's Manifesto. It is an expensive policy and Pensioners have benefited to the extent of £1000 over the past few years. Pensions do not have a fund but are paid out of current expenditure, so they have to be protected, as broadly speaking they have been, in current spending plans.

The government protects pensioners from excessive Council tax rises by requiring a referendum to be held for rises over a Government set limit. Councils must set priorities and say no to some. In an MP's postbag unaffordable amounts are asked for. Do not ask for anything above the triple lock**.

There has been a change in the public debate: after six years of austerity people expect the deficit to have disappeared. In reality, one third of the deficit has been paid off. In a period of 15 years of deficit spending: financing the cost of that deficit could break the public finances – as it nearly did in 2008-2009.

The only way to increase the tax yield is by growing the economy.

**under the triple lock the Basic State Pension is increased each April by the higher of the growth in average earnings, the Consumer Price Index, or 2.5%.

FLOOR EXCHANGES

- > It is all very well for Pensioners, although the pensionable age is lifting, but those still working are suffering.
- > Social Care funding is in crisis: a better way of delivery is required.
- > Integration of Health and Social care and the Sustainability and Transformation plan – where are the funds? [NH: Government has put in extra £900m this year and proposes £3 ½ billion over two years.]
- > Local Government seems the only area for ‘savings’ to be made as so many other budgets -Pensions, defence, schools, health – are protected. Where are savings to come from?
[NH: see what the Chancellor says in his Statement next week]
- > Care Homes are under-funded (under-paid). Can we not divert resources from our overseas Aid budget?

QUESTION [5]

WHAT WILL BE THE FUNDING OF BUS PASSES IN THE FUTURE ?

Bus Passes are a universal benefit for Pensioners but are at the discretion of Local Authorities.

Means testing them would be unpopular and difficult. They are likely to continue as they are generally felt to be owed to the older generation.

QUESTION [6] AND [9]

WHAT IS THE WAY FORWARD FOR FUNDING POST-HOSPITAL GERIATRIC CARE?

Most expensive intensive care is not needed by everybody – estimated one third of geriatric population only - so the risk could be pooled by Insurance – a National form of savings. This is a Nick Herbert idea for a long term solution. Costs are going to rise and underfunding social care impacts on the Health Service. So, the answer is that there must be a joined up service and new means of paying for it.

> what can be done where a person lives close to the border of two health authorities and has care from over the border? [NH: double complication National Health is paid without local borders – social care is paid within local borders. What is needed is flexibility with cross border billing.]

QUESTION [7]

WHAT DO YOU KNOW OF THE PATIENT TRANSFER SERVICE CONTRACT FAILURE AND ITS REPLACEMENT?

The Contractor who failed was the only bidder, was not properly prepared, and the handover was chaotic.

The contract was quickly terminated and a new Contractor found and approved by the Care Quality Commission. NH ideologically approves of providers being from the private sector with public accountability and with no charges at the point of service. The mechanisms of letting contracts probably need improvement to avoid the problem in future.

> a patient gave an account of the bad experience. [NH: All will be well after April 1st]

QUESTION [8]

IS THERE ANY POINT IN ASKING MPs QUESTIONS ?

See answers above and below

QUESTION [10]

A SIGNIFICANTLY DAMAGING INCREASE IN BUSINESS RATES IS THREATENING CARE HOME BUSINESSES

This is due to the re-valuation of business properties which is done regularly over periods of years. The government is not loading businesses with tax but the system, based on property valuation, causes both rises and falls in taxation rates (and valuations are independently arrived at). On the average: rates are coming down. The tax is supposed to be fiscally neutral so that modifications can be made to both reductions and increases and transitional help can be offered.

QUESTION [11]

SOCIAL AND HEALTH CARE RELIES GREATLY ON WORKERS FROM OVERSEAS: CAN THIS CONTINUE?

The referendum event and reasons for the decision to leave the European Union were focused on what was seen as a problem of excessive immigration to the UK which the UK could not control. The fundamental question was whether the UK had exclusive control over its policies and laws. The UK has always had control over immigration from outside Europe and after leaving the European Union it may control all immigration including immigration from Europe. It is a different question as to whether immigration will be much reduced – the UK needs workers from overseas – but the regulation of the numbers will be decided by the UK.

QUESTION [12]

COULD HOME CARE COSTS BE MADE AFFORDABLE BY VOLUNTARY SERVICE ?

The National Citizens Service set up by David Cameron in his volunteering vision of the Big Society is something of this nature – a voluntary ‘national service’. **NH’s** Arundel and South Downs constituency would be a very quiet place without the

multiplicity of volunteer roles played by the 'retired' and weekend free population providing minibuses, clubs and activities of all sorts, and including grand-parent help for working parents. Apart from the Scouts there is little practical experience of the idea and the experience of the National Citizens Service has been expensive of public money. It would be a good investment in social interaction if it could be extended successfully and applied to assist the aged.

FLOOR EXCHANGES

> **The Sustainability and Transformation plan for the National Health Service** has, as part of its aspirations for the integration of medical and social care, the involvement of volunteers from the general public. Patient participation groups and the like (Brighton an example?) consultations and the preparation of protocols for reconfiguration of services are in some places in progress. This process is essential for the current financial situation but strong leadership is needed for effective integration. This is not generally present and not all areas are making the effort but Greater Manchester and Torquay may be showing the way.

QUESTION 13

CAN GOVERNMENT ENSURE THAT ESSENTIAL WORKERS IN COMMUNITIES CAN AFFORD THEIR HOUSING?

The biggest issues in an MP's postbag are **protests against housing proposals**. The rows over North Horsham development were huge. The debate needed is to find ways in which Communities can campaign not for what they don't want but for what they do want. Neighbourhood Plans are intended to encourage this and to protect communities from entirely commercially driven developments.

Young people who cannot get on to the housing ladder are a large silent constituency. Home ownership is falling and schemes such as shared and renting ownership and fair rents have to be developed.

The older generation also has to look out for the interests of the younger. Houses have to be produced to a quantity so that they are no longer investments increasing in value through their scarcity but are places to live and readily exchanged.

Reduce pressure on housing: George Osborne's Northern Power House scheme and the associated rail developments are long term central government initiatives to replace the economic activity lost in the run-down of manufacturing production in the Midlands and North of England whilst the financial and service industries in the South boomed producing the pressure of a population move to the south. There is no comparable housing problem in the North.

Provide more housing land: Planning controls (1947) are being reviewed. New 'Villages' such as Mayfield in 'green' land, are proposed for example, and the edges of existing settlements are looked at. With more housing, infrastructure has to be funded – more health centres and schools in localities.

Controls on housing / rental accommodation: are against the ideology of this government and are difficult to get right in any case.

FLOOR EXCHANGES

> Older people's particular concern is for infrastructure. They do have concerns for the younger generations.

> Developers seem to win battles reducing the proportion of affordable housing which they are supposed to provide.

QUESTIONS 14-21 HAD TO BE ABANDONED AS TIME RAN OUT.

Martin Bruton thanked Nick Herbert for his contribution in giving the Forum an excellent meeting.

NEXT MEETING :

RUDGWICK VILLAGE HALL, GUILDFORD ROAD, BUCKS GREEN. RH12 3JJ

Wednesday 7th June 2017 10:30am – 1:00 pm

Attachments

[1] List of Attendees

[2] Questions full text.

MEETING OF THE HORSHAM DISTRICT OLDER PEOPLES FORUM 3rd March 2017 Drill Hall, Horsham

QUESTION TIME TO: NICK HERBERT MP

ATTENDANCE LIST

Martin Bruton	Chairman HDOPF
Arthur Reader	Vice Chairman HDOPF
Martin Toomey	Secretary HDOPF
Jackie READER	Horsham
Valerie PUGH	Horsham
Caroline INSTANCE	Thakeham PC
Jean FRANCIS	Horsham Circle of Life
Michelle TAYLOR	
Jill CHAYTOR	Nuthurst PC
Ann GAFFNEY	Nuthurst PC
Pauline WEBB	Rudgwick
Sonia MANGAN	CEO Age UK Horsham HDOPF Committee
Philomena LEECH	RUDGWICK HDOPF Committee
Norman BURTON	
Trevor DAYNESWOOD	Slinfold Computer Cafe
Paul MARSHALL	Cllr HDC
Kate ROWBOTTOM	Cllr HDC
Anne HILL	
Margaret CORNWELL	
Bunty GEORGE	
Tony GEORGE	
David SEARLE	North Horsham PC
Jane APOSTOLOU	Horsham Town Community Partnership (HTCP)
Sheila BEAUMONT	HTCP
Vera CRONCHEY	HTCP
Arthur CARDEN	Horsham District Neighbourhood Watch
Deborah BAILEY	Southwater Welcome Club
Randolph RIECKER	Ascot Care
Marylin WILLIAMS	Horsham, & Red Cross /Civil Service Pensioners Association
Derek WILLIAMS	“ “ “ and Probus
Brian HARVEY	
Lilian BOLD	
Jennifer PEARCE	Secretary Park Surgery Patients Group
Lesley AINSLIE	HENFIELD
Anthony MUNTON	HENFIELD
Maureen MUNTON	HENFIELD
Betty COLLIER	HENFIELD
David TIDEY	WEST GRINSTEAD

Anita VAN DER COLFT	Action for Deafness
Amanda JUPP	Cllr WSCC
Nigel JUPP	CLLR HDC
Joy HEARN	HDC Dementia Friendly Co-ordinator
Ashvin PATEL	Cllr WSCC Deputy Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care & Health
Ian WINDWOOD	RUDGWICK
Beryl WINDWOOD	RUDGWICK
Daphne ROGERS	RUDGWICK
Samantha GRAYCON	SLINFOLD
Muriel BUNCE	HORSHAM
Robert BUNCE	HORSHAM
Emma BAILEY	HDC
Rosemary BURTON	Southwater Neighbour Network
Chris CRIBB	“ “ “
Alicia SMITH	North Horsham Parish Council
Fidelna ALLIF	Mid Sussex Older Peoples Council (MSOPC)
Barbera BALCHIN	MSOPC
Mike BRIGHT	MSOPC & DOLPHINS PPG
Lesley BRIGHT	“ “ “

Questions submitted in advance for Nick Herbert MP for Arundel & South Downs for public meeting of the Horsham District Older Peoples Forum Friday 3rd March 2017. Drill Hall, Denne Road, Horsham. 10.30am – 1pm

Q1. Following a Government objective for 2010 - 2015, stating that 'We live in an increasingly digital world, everything from providing services to social interaction is changing'

Has any provision been made to assist and support our elderly community with this technology?

I feel that education and knowledge of the digital world could really have a positive impact on loneliness and social isolation.

Q2. Why isn't there a Commissioner for Older people as there is in Wales & Northern Ireland?

Q3. Will he make representation and press for an increase in the basic pension of £1.00 per week for us pensioners as the Council and County Council, and P.C.C. are increasing our Council Tax and we will have that amount less, to spend on food, heat and light?

(I do not consider that the amount of increase by the triple lock covers such creeping taxation)

Q4. Can those on the triple lock pension, retain this formula unless and until a more financially beneficial to them is in force?

Q5. Could he offer his views on the future funding of bus passes?

Q6. What is the way forward for funding post- hospital/geriatric care?

Q7. What interest/knowledge does he have in the failed Ambulance Service P T S contract (Patient Transport Service) and its replacement arrangement?

Q8. Is there any point in answering MP's questions if they only answer with what they want to answer instead?

Q9. How do we properly and fairly fund care homes?

Q10. Care/Nursing homes are typically in larger buildings, which have increased in value significantly in the last 7 years. In addition to reduced council funding and the introduction of the living wage these businesses are now facing significant increases in business rates.

This is at the same time as we have a rapidly increasing older population. In Pulborough we are expecting an increase in the number of over 65s of more than 50 per annum over the next 15 years. What can be done to ensure that the provision of care/nursing homes increases rather than decreases in a time of increasing need?

Q11. At present, it is difficult for older people in the community to obtain care/cleaning services in their own homes - there has been a shortage of staff in both areas for a few years, and this shortfall is getting noticeably worse. This sector is critically reliant on overseas workers, whether it be Polish/Lithuanian cleaners or Filipina care assistants. How can we best ensure that the supply of these workers does not fall, and that needs in the community can be catered for?

Q12. This is with a background of low pensioner incomes = around 1/4 of pensioners have no work based pension; and an article in the Sunday Telegraph around the end of January 2016 gave the statistic that the average (not the median) pension pot was around £15,000, which buys an annuity of around £500/annum at current rates. So, the amount a typical pensioner can afford is typically for less hours than they need. Would it help to attract younger, British people into these increasingly necessary professions if it was made clearer that the customer handling skills they would gain through this work could give useful experience for entering other industries later in their career?

Q13. What can government do to ensure that we have truly affordable housing for essential workers in the communities we live in? The target is for people on less than the median wage (around £24k) to have reasonable quality rental accommodation. Vehicles such as community land trusts are unlikely to be able to meet more than 10% of the current need.

Q14. As local authorities are having to keep their budgets under strict control and services that the local authorities provide are being cut back or got rid of, what can LA's & the Government do to help promote more community involvement in helping to maintain the environment where we live?

At the moment there seems to be a total lack of enthusiasm from communities to get involved with looking after the area where they live.

There needs to be more of a mindset that we should all help take care of our locality. This is in terms of litter picking in the street where we live, sweeping up the pavement outside our house, looking out for our neighbours, for instance.

If local authorities and government could help promote more of this mindset, it would help keep the area where we live looking cared for, help create community spirit, help a 'working together for the common good attitude' and also help keep local authority budgets under control.

If this type of attitude could be part of 'Live Skills' classes in school, it would be really advantageous and help young people growing up realise that you have to put something back and not just think it's the problem of someone else.

Q15. What is the government doing to ensure that there are enough UK trained doctors and nurses in the NHS to meet the demand, to enable 7 day GP working and reduce the huge cost for locum doctors & nurses?

Q16. Certain drug companies have taken advantage of being sole suppliers and raised their prices by enormous amounts (for the NHS). What is being done to stop that?

Q17. Can Mr Herbert reassure us that older people will not be put to the back of the queue by the government for resources because they don't complain enough?

Q18. Today (22/2/17) I telephoned the surgery for an appointment for me with my preferred doctor and the earliest I could get was 27th March! If I had taken another doctor, the earliest would still have been 9th March.

My question is – what provision is being made in the locality for GP availability given the high level of development in the area, mostly with properties that are family sized and will therefore need to register with a GP and require appointments, a number of which may be urgent? It is not always easy to attend walk-in centres if you have to rely on public transport when you are already unwell. Consistency of treatment is not possible if you are unable to see the same doctor twice. This raises issues of confidence in the treatment being received. (Different doctors will have different approaches).

Q19. With the increased age that those born pre 1954 are required to work until, what is being done to assist them back into work when necessary? Example – I took early retirement in 2010 to care full time for my elderly mother. When I could no longer do so because of my own health issues she moved into a nursing home. I started looking for part time employment which proved difficult given my age and disability. I spent two years looking for something suitable before finally finding my current fixed term contract job. As my pension took me beyond the amount that would make me eligible for job seekers allowance, I could not access training or other facilities available through the job centre unless I ‘signed on’ which seemed to be a waste of their time and mine when I was not getting any benefits (other than NI payments). I spent several weeks attending the job centre where I was threatened with my benefits (that I didn’t get) being stopped if I didn’t attend. I ultimately did find a job, under my own steam without their assistance, but it is frustrating that there must be a lot of people in the same position trying to do the right thing but most employers are not keen to take the risk of taking on older workers who have been out of the workplace for several years with the added issue of a disability, despite many years of experience and knowledge.

Q20. Why are members of the Lords allowed to claim £300 just for clocking in & then leaving?

Q21. 5 years ago my husband had to wait 6 months to see a cardiologist. It would have been 9 months if we had not made a fuss. Now I am waiting to see a cardiologist as well and my appointment is still 4 1/2 months from the time I was referred. This is disgusting that nothing has changed in this time. Are they hoping that some people will die before their appointments, thus bringing the waiting list down?

Q22. What can be done about the poor bus services available to get to hospitals such as East Surrey at Redhill? Are our MPs and senior councillors working with bus companies to find a way of accessing all our hospitals? So many people have difficulty finding transport and neighbours to help but still able to be independent if this would happen.