



Swindon Seniors Forum

A Voice for Swindon's Senior Citizens

**Annual Report
2017 - 2018**

Chair's Report

One of the joys of preparing an annual report is that it gives us the opportunity to look back and be thankful for all that has been accomplished.

As we look back on the past year with a smile the Forum is proud to have won the Pride of Swindon Team Award 2018. News of being nominated for such a prestigious award, not only came as a surprise, but also gave the group a positive and encouraging message of the work that they were doing. The ceremony was held at the Steam Museum and those who attended had a very lovely afternoon.

The Forum organized another successful Loneliness Summit in April, the open meeting was, as always, very popular, giving those who attended practical advice and an opportunity to socialise with other members.

Our regular meetings are well attended and we have a range of speakers covering many areas and issues local, national and simply interesting or inspiring.

Some of our open meetings were held at either Lawn or Pinetrees Community Centre to raise awareness of the aims and objectives of the Forum and to attract new members. Both community centre's catered for the groups needs and my thanks is extended to the staff who have supported the Forum throughout the year.

Planning and delivering the events would not happen without the work of the Swindon Seniors Forum Management Committee. The team consists of willing and dedicated volunteers who work together tirelessly to promote what the Forum stands for. Not only do they attend the Forum's open meetings but are invited to meetings within the voluntary sector; we are fortunate that some of our members represent the Forum at important meetings, conferences and consultations to "voice" and "raise awareness" of the SSF's work - not only for older people now, but to protect the needs of older people in the future.

This year we have had to say goodbye to a number of members, some of whom have moved away and sadly others who have passed away.

Member feedback has been positive. People enjoy attending the Forum's open meetings, not only for browsing around the stalls for information or listening to the speakers but the opportunity to meet with other members. "Speakers are informative and interesting; it's great to be able to ask them direct questions.

Hopefully you enjoy receiving your newsletter in which you can find latest information and updates on what is happening in and around the town. I along with Kay, are keen to receive articles so do get in touch with us if you would like to make a contribution.

The Forum continues to thrive and we encourage you to join us. Would you be willing to contribute by becoming a member of the Management Committee? This is an active role just not simply attending meetings. If you are interested in joining the committee please contact us and make your voice heard.

We are incredibly grateful to have received support and donations for the AGM from:

- Taj Mahal Restaurant
- Morrisons

My thanks to all our funders, stall holders, speakers and supporters for their continuous support.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Management Committee personally for their support and assistance - without your dedication the Forum would not be where it is today.

Norma Thompson

Management Committee

The Committee has met four times during 2017-2018 to take forward the outcomes of the open meetings and to discuss the issues and requests from individuals, groups and organisations for Swindon Seniors Forum to be represented. The issue of loneliness across the Borough and its implications for older people is the subject of a current project being led by The Forum and Robert Buckland MP.

Our ability to meet the growing expectation is very much dependent on more people getting actively involved either through the Management Committee, or volunteering at the Forum open meetings.

Swindon Seniors Forum can only be as effective and useful as its membership allows it to be. It is up to individuals to bring issues and concerns to our attention and equally be part of helping to address them. Once again if anyone would like to join our team please contact us on the numbers at the end of this report.

Members Standing for Re-election

Our Management Committee consists of 9 people, all of whom are volunteers and between them have strong connections with other voluntary and statutory organisations working with local people over the age of 55 years. We must make a special note of thanks to Ghada who has decided to step down from the Management Committee for personal reasons, but will remain a member of the Forum.

Our current Management Committee members are the 8 members below, who are seeking re-election

- Norma Thompson - Chair
- Kay Malko - Acting Secretary
- Kris Jones - Treasurer
- Carol Brownlee
- Paul Burgess
- May Evans
- JB Gurung
- Barbara Matthews (*currently co-opted*)
- Ghada Rule (not standing for re-election)

Activities and Achievements

“We Deserve Better”

This video was launched officially on the 29th November 2017 at Sanford House. We would like to thank Hannah Parry and her team for producing a beautiful video on the work that the SSF delivers.

In this film in the series focusing on equality and inclusion, we hear about the issues faced by older people and the work that Swindon Seniors' Forum are doing to support and give them a voice

<http://www.swindonviewpoint.com/video/we-deserve-better>

This is a Community foundation, Swindon 200 project

Awareness Days

Some members of the Management Committee attended two awareness days at the Santander bank in Swindon to raise awareness of the Forum and recruit more members.



Pride of Swindon Awards 2018

We are delighted to have won the Pride of Swindon Team Award for the community category. Winning this award reflects the work that we do, it helps to raise our profile and expand the awareness of our Forum.



“Loneliness Summit No 2”

Swindon Seniors Forum and Robert Buckland MP hosted our 2nd summit in April 2018 at the Lawn Community Centre. The summit brought together members from organisations; communities and charities to hear guest speakers and to receive feedback from the last summit.

Seema Kennedy, MP for South Ribble, attended and spoke about the forming of the late Jo Cox commission on loneliness. Since the launch the government appointed the world's first Minister for Loneliness in January 2018. David Lidington MP made a surprise visit to the summit to give support.

Open Forum Meetings

The Forum has maintained its four times a year Management Committee meetings plus two open meetings and the AGM (Annual General Meeting). Our open Forums are an opportunity for members, and others, to get together, interact - and most critically provide a chance to meet and question/influence key decision makers affecting their lives. The speakers are given the opportunity to meet and listen to older people. Our April speakers were Cllr Brian Ford, Cabinet member for Adult Health and Social Care, Samantha Mowbray and home line.

We publicise our meetings in our newsletters, our website and through the media.

Some members of the Forum attend regular meetings and this is useful for networking and keeping up to date with what is happening in order to keep members informed.

Membership

While our membership is very slightly down, interest in Swindon Seniors Forum continues to increase. The drop followed the contacting of registered members to update our database to comply with new General Data Protection Regulations which came into effect earlier this year.

Constitution

The constitution needs to be updated periodically to keep it up to date and to make sure it helps us deliver our vision and reflect the current work of the Forum. A revised version has been circulated to members and we will be asking members to vote for a new constitution.

The Newsletter

The Forum newsletter has appeared twice a year with paper copies sent by post to members and electronically to those members with access to email. The remainder are distributed to community centres, sheltered housing complexes, libraries, and used for Swindon Seniors Forum awareness days where older people will see them. It is also posted on the Forum website. We do signpost and provide telephone numbers for the many support organisations.

Website

Our website is temporary and under new management and some of the normal features and content may either not be temporarily available, or display in its normal manner. Please bear with us while we are working on our new website until normal service is resumed. We would like to thank Ghada for her hard work in setting up and maintaining the website.

Message from Swindon Carers Centre

Swindon Carers Centre is an independent charitable organisation and is part of the Carers Trust established to provide help and support to carers in the borough of Swindon.

We support adult, parent, young adult and young carers who provide unpaid support to a family member, friend or neighbour who would otherwise be unable to manage without this support due to a physical or mental health condition, a learning difficulty or a drug or alcohol dependency. We help enable carers to have a quality of life alongside their caring role.

Swindon Carers Centre is based within Sanford House in Sanford Street, alongside other voluntary sector services, including Citizens Advice Swindon, Swindon and Gloucestershire MIND, and Swindon Advocacy Movement.

We have a dedicated, dynamic and trained staff and volunteer team that hold carers at the centre of everything we do.

For further information: www.swindoncarers.org.uk

www.facebook.com/swindoncarerscentre

Telephone: 01793531133

Email: carers@swindoncarers.org.uk

SSF Priorities for the Coming Year

- Moving forward we will be looking at funding for the next year so that we can continue our work;
- We will continue to raise awareness and the profile of the Forum in the borough, within the South West region and nationally;
- Increase our membership, expand our outreach programme;
- Participate in regional and national engagement, campaigns and consultations;
- Continue to seek the views, issues and concerns that affect older people within the Borough of Swindon;
- “Campaign to end loneliness” SSF will continue to work with Robert Buckland MP, QC on the project of loneliness.

If you would like to join our Management Committee please contact us – contact details below. We are specifically looking to hear from people who have skills and experience in the following areas: Volunteer Secretary and Website Manager.

Contact us:

Post: Chair, Swindon Senior's Forum, c/o Voluntary Action Swindon,
1 John Street, Swindon, SN1 1RT

Email: secretary.swindonseniors@talktalk.net
info@swindonseniors.uk

Website: www.swindonseniorsForum.org

Telephone: 07828 446672

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