

Wiltshire Council

Full Council

16 May 2017

Public Statement

Statement from Older People's Champion, Mr Brian Warwick

I would appreciate the opportunity to make a statement at the Annual council meeting in my role of the Councils Older People Champion.

First, I wish to congratulate all the newly elected Councillors and hope they will continue to support the aim of making Wiltshire an age friendly County, one where you can grow older without any barriers to living a healthy and fulfilling life. Hopefully, also continuing the support to do things, big or small to make Wiltshire more age friendly in improving the quality of life for its older citizens.

Secondly, to express my sincere thanks to those present and past Councillors who have supported me over the years in striving to reduce social isolation and loneliness in Wiltshire and beyond.

I do have a huge concern about growing old in Rural England and that it is not being given the level of priority in tackling issues of an ageing society as that the Inner Cities and major urbanised communities are benefiting, especially from the Ageing Better grants and MICRA (Manchester University project) plus additional Urban areas support.

I have in recent months been pressing the Centre for Ageing Better, Central Government and the University of Manchester to incorporate Rural communities into their Funding allocations and to develop a more strategic approach to barriers of ageing safely and gracefully in Rural England. I feel I am making some progress, but the GE has now got in the way.

I would like Wiltshire as part of its Future Policy Framework over the next four years, to consider adopting its own Older Peoples Charter or similar, linking in key areas of policies of Public Health and Adult Services and other key departments that can by improved joint working improve housing for older people, the built environment, highways and future planning needs, with support of course from our Area Boards and the voluntary sector.

Another major issue for me is the slow pace of digital inclusion for seniors and lack of effort by housing providers to assist in their schemes.