

Comments and report from Melksham Senior Forum June 2013

Unfortunately, I am unable to attend the area board meeting on Wednesday evening to provide a personal update of the activities of the Melksham Senior Forum along with our proposed activities for the next 12 months, due to a very long standing special family event.

A question we would appreciate the Board answering is regarding the Localisation Act 2011

The Act increases the power of local communities to include:

- A new Right to Bid, which will give residents the opportunity to take over treasured local assets and keep them as a part of local life
- A new Right to Challenge, making it much easier for local groups with good ideas to put them forward and drive improvements in local services
- Encouragement of local community groups to become a more integral part of the democratic processes within their communities

We would appreciate a statement from the Board in line with the key principle of the Localisation Act on the new general power of competence, particularly how the Board intends to assist in reducing bureaucracy processes and providing opportunities for our local community to become more enriched. Is it the intention of the Area Board to take advantage of the act by supporting our local community voluntary sector to put good ideas forward and drive improvements in local services? If so, how do they propose to undertake that task and ensure that they fully involve local organisations as full partner?

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We are delighted that we are now linked to promoting other community groups within our community and beyond. For instance, along with our business and consultation meetings we are prior to the commencement of our monthly film and Seniors meeting able to offer 30 to 40 minutes to community groups for them to have the opportunity to entertain the seniors, consult on any subject or to provide information about their own activities. We can also provide time to debate or consult on any relative matters that might affect seniors in Melksham. One of our major targets this coming year is to produce an information newsletter aimed at ways to improve the quality of life of older people in our community by also reaching out to more vulnerable and hard to reach groups including our ethnic neighbours.

Melksham Electronic Organ Club have taken up the above offer and delighted us with their pre-cinema performance by way of a DVD presentation on the large screen of music played on a Cinema Organ.

Arrangements are in hand for further intergenerational activities with local schools, along with a choir performance by the Wiltshire Goldies, a discussion with the local police officers about their role in Melksham and how seniors can support the local police. A consultation briefing and workshop on End of Life support by RUH, in addition we would like to have further update consultation meeting on the development of the Melksham Campus prior to the

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proposed planning application later in the year. We hope to have a planned joint meeting on the 9th October with our local Area Board. There will be a public meeting in the autumn when the Director of Adult Service and Public Health will be the key speaker, along with a further public meeting in the New Year with the Leader of the Council Jane Scott OBE being the key speaker. We shall on the 1st October be directly supporting the Council and the Government in promoting the United Nations International Older Peoples day celebrating the lives and contributions of older people.

We are also delighted to be working with the Arts and Culture Department of Wiltshire Council and also the RSA and the Arts & Society to develop a wide range of activities to help to improve the health and well-being of seniors by introducing them to various forms of Arts & Culture activities .

In addition to promoting a Job Club for young people and helping to identify jobs and work experience opportunities. We are also considering, subject to identifying external funding, the development of a "Shed Club project" based upon the Camden Town project and similar very successful projects in the Midlands. All of which are aimed at putting many of the skills of retired people to use within the community and passing on those skills by involving many younger people in those community projects.

Further information can be obtained from the following web site
: <http://www.camdentownshed.org/projects/dem>

Regards

Brian Warwick
Co-ordinator Melksham & District Seniors 55 + Forum