



Gloucestershire Older Persons' Assembly (GOPA)

GROWING OLDER

Welcome to GOPA's first newsletter which is being distributed to older people and older people's groups throughout Gloucestershire.

Gloucestershire Older Persons' Assembly is here to support older people living in the county. Founded in 2000, as a result of Age Concern's countywide consultation with older people in the previous year, it aims to meet their request that a single voice be established to express their needs and concerns, especially in the following areas:

- Access to health and social care
- Employment
- Transport
- Lifelong housing or access to appropriate housing, when needed
- Poverty and pension levels

GOPA is an independent organisation currently based at Centre for Voluntary Service in Gloucester. It is funded by income earned from consultative work, and grants from the statutory and voluntary sectors.

It has an active Steering Committee of older people representing groups throughout the county including Carers Gloucestershire, The Hard of Hearing Group, Pensioner's Forum, Hestersway Partnership, Uplands Care Service. The Chairman Bob Stanbanks is also Chairman of the Senior Persons Users Group from the Forest of Dean.

Co-ordinating GOPA's activities is the Facilitator, Mick Churchward. Mick has a background in Engineering, Management and Training, and works three days a week in the Gloucester Centre for Voluntary Services, 75-81 Eastgate Street, Gloucester, GL1 1PN. He can be contacted on 01452 332424 where you can leave a message when he is not there.

The second countywide GOPA Assembly will be held at Shire Hall on Thursday 29th April 2004, where the Constitution will be ratified and officers elected. All readers of

Growing Older:

- In 2001 there were 109,831 people aged 65 and over in Gloucestershire.
- By 2050 one person in five in Britain will be over 70, a total of 12 million which is double the current population of London.
- For the first time in this country, **there are now more over 60 year olds than under 16's.**
- A hundred years ago, for every pensioner there were **five people** in employment providing National Insurance contributions towards pensions. Today that figure is **two and a half**, in a few decades it will approach **one.**

Promoting Action

GOPA volunteers have participated in the following: -

- After the Townsend Inquiry, in Gloucester, our volunteers formed part of a Reference Group providing significant input to the development of policies and procedures related to moving older people from nursing/residential homes or hospitals.
- Another need that was identified by the Inquiry was a countywide advocacy service for all older people, including those in Nursing and Residential Homes. GOPA is beginning to work in this area, so aiming to complementing the excellent service provided by Age Concern in the Forest of Dean.
- Representing the views of older people to Social Services and Primary Care Trust staff as the new Single Assessment Process (SAP) for social and health care was introduced.
- Assisting Social Services with aspects of training and the introduction this assessment process.
- Representing Gloucestershire at National "Better Government for Older People" and Regional Older Peoples Advisory Group conferences.

Adrian Goode, recently appointed Co-ordinator, Health & Active Life in Older Age

I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself, Adrian Goode, as Co-ordinator, Health & Active Life in Older Age within West Gloucester Primary Care Trust, based at Matson Resource Centre, Matson.

My role is "To extend the healthy life expectancy of older people." This is to be promoted through a co-ordinated programme of action led by the NHS with support from all types of councils, e.g. District, Parish etc.

The key purpose of my role is to develop a multi-agency strategy which promotes health and active life for older people within West Gloucestershire. This involves ensuring the inclusion of older people's needs within the strategies developed by both Health and Social services. A crucial aim of the work is to engage older people in activities which promote physical and mental well-being in order to prevent the onset of ill-health and social isolation.

The initial stage of my work has been to review the current situation regarding services for older people within West Gloucestershire. This has involved consultation with older people and their carers, and with relevant organisations involved in older people's services. Therefore if living in West Gloucester PCT area and you have any thoughts, or ideas you feel could be valuable to me please feel free to contact me at Matson Resource Centre on

Causes of fuel poverty

Low income, poor budgeting, need for higher temperatures, need for longer hours of heating and home difficult to heat, because of :-
p o o r l y insulated

inadequate heating

ineffective heating

expensive fuel

home too large

How a cold damp home can effect your health?

Cold Home:

condensation

mould/mites

asthma

allergies

coughing & depression.

Cold Person:

strokes

heart attacks

respiratory illness

hypothermia

Recommended temperatures

21°C (69.8°F) in Living Rooms; Bedrooms
18°C; Others rooms 18°C (64.4°F)

Why insulate your home?

TO STAY WARMER LONGER

At temperatures below 16°C (61°F) respiratory illnesses are more likely to occur **and** blood pressure rises **but** the blood vessels narrow!

Warm Homes - Healthy Homes

“cold, damp homes are associated with premature mortality, physical and mental illness, and impaired quality of life”

Dr. Noel Olsen. BMJ March

2001

Making a Referral

Via the Gloucestershire Energy Efficiency Advice Centre 0800 512 012. The Warm and Well team can be reached on 01594 544 124.

The Project Co-ordinator is Sarah Giff and her direct number is 01594 545 363, or email her sarah@swea.co.uk

Staywarm from **Powergen** are promoting a payment system designed for the over 60's, which combines Gas and Electricity at a “*low fixed price*”. They can be contacted by phone on 0800 1 694 694, 8 a.m.-7 p.m. Monday to Friday & 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Saturday, please quote ref R1, or via their web-site www.staywarm.co.uk

Council Tax Rises and Grey Power: Grey Power is a term being used by the press to describe the growing disquiet being felt by our age group. In late February 83 year old **Elizabeth Winkfield** become a focal point for Grey Power, stating that she is prepared to go to prison rather than pay the balance of her Council Tax. **Sylvia Hardy** 72 a retired social worker in Exeter has taken a similar stance regarding her arrears of £91. She will join other elderly people in Devon threatening to get themselves sent to prison in protest at a record 18% Council Tax rise in the county this year.

Charles Kennedy made his first explicit bid for the “**grey vote**” when he unveiled policies designed to appeal to the “**new old**”. The Liberal Democrat leader proposed changes to Inland Revenue rules to allow older workers to work part-time while drawing part of their pension. Mr Kennedy's bid comes as politicians of all parties seek to woo the 11 million baby-boomers due to retire in the next 10 years.

"We must change our mindset. We must see older people as a resource."

The first countywide Assembly of GOPA was held in Gloucester in April 2003. Approximately forty-five people attended and heard **Dr. Ian Donald**, Consultant Physician for Elderly Care in Gloucestershire, highlight the process of ageing and its demands on the NHS.

Sue Grove, Director of Age Concern followed, by outlining statutory and voluntary sector's response to an ageing population. She enthused that older people can indeed be part of the solution by actively participating in GOPA. Sue ended with this quote from Kofi Annan and her final comments are below.

“Trees grow stronger, over the years, and rivers wider. Likewise with age, human beings gain immeasurable depth, and breadth of experience and wisdom. That is why, older persons should be, not only respected and revered, they should be utilised as the rich resource to society that they are.”

ACG commends and supports this Assembly. We believe in you. Believe in yourselves and the knowledge and skills you have to offer to your community, and the county as a whole.

The keynote address was given by **Martin Shreeve OBE**, former Director of Social Services Wolverhampton and the initial Programme Director of Better Government for Older People.

Evaluating the Sessions and the views from those attending that morning, he summarised by suggesting that GOPA should provide; -

1. An Assembly that was accountable to all older people in Gloucestershire
2. An Assembly that had a co-ordinating function as an information resource **for** older people in the County.
3. An Assembly that sought to influence local services.
4. An Assembly that sought to influence Central Government policy.
5. The Assembly membership should be of older people rather than of organisations representing older people or providing services to older people.

Building on the work undertaken last year, GOPA is continuing to develop a network of older people's group throughout the county. Do try to attend the **Countywide Assembly** on **Thursday 29th April**, in the Council Chamber, Shire Hall, Westgate Street, Gloucester, **9.30** for refreshments, **10.00 start** till **11.30**. This will be **followed by the AGM**.

Keynote Speaker: -Councillor Margaret Edney, Older Persons' Champion

Or attend a mini-assembly in your local area.

*If you or your organisation would like to attend any of these events, or be involved in the development of the Gloucestershire Older Persons' Assembly and you haven't yet registered your interest, please contact: **Mick Churchward Gloucestershire Older Persons' Assembly at:**
GloucesterCVS, 75-81 Eastgate Street,
Gloucester, GL1 1PN: Tel: 01452 332424*