

Minutes of the meeting held on Friday 6<sup>th</sup> November 2015 (FINAL)

Present:	
Name	Organisation
Cllr Gul Khan (Chair)	RBC
Cllr Rachel Eden	RBC (Lead Member Adult Social Care)
Neil Scott	Reading Buses
James Penn	
Barbara Hobbs	
Miriam Sparkes	
Nina Crispin	RBC
Tony Hall	Civil Service Pensioners Alliance, Reading Group
Elaine Jalland	
Pearl Gibson	
Jean Hutton	Firtree & U3A
Dianne Hilfi	
Judith El-Nager	
John Walford	Whitley Community Development Association
Peter Staples	
Jill Hodges	Southcote Residents Association
Jennifer Ingram	
Valerie White	
Patience Odunsi	Unison
Roy Allum	Age UK Volunteer
Sylvia Newberry	
Irene Percival	
Bob Percival	
Diane Hiles	
Ann Worsley	
Yvonne Antrobus	
Douglas Dean	Thames Valley Pensioner Convention
John Wilkinson	Age UK Reading
Brian Tull	
Margaret Slater	
Carole White	Berkshire HAD Support Group
Jessie Serrano	

Aniye Ward	
Gina Harris	
Marion Higgins	C.S.R.F
M E Turner	Readibus
Mary Reilly	British Red Cross
Colin Ferguson	Firtree
Sarah Hunneman	RBC
Julie Waterworth	Royal Berkshire Fire & Rescue Service
Graciela Melitsko	RBC
Janette Searle	RBC

Apologies	
Name	Organisation
Cllr Sandra Vickers	RBC
Cllr Rose Williams	RBC
Carol Froud	
Michael Froud	
Liz Grugeon	
Carol Munt	
Joan Walker	
Brenda Jenkins	
Valerie Bond	

<b>Agenda item 1: Previous minutes &amp; matters arising</b> <i>Cllr Gul Khan</i>
<p>The minutes of the meeting on 26<sup>th</sup> June 2015 were checked for accuracy.</p> <p>Amendment noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Agenda 3 (page 8) - Question 8 should read as 'the advertised timetable for bus routes 4 x 4X is incorrect'</li> </ul> <p><b>Update from Reading Buses:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- From January 2016, the number 4 will go via Wokingham Station in both directions</li> </ul> <p>The approved minutes are available from the Older People's Working Group page on the RBC website at: <a href="http://www.reading.gov.uk/opwg">www.reading.gov.uk/opwg</a></p>

## Agenda item 2: Fire Safety in the Home

*Julie Waterworth, Royal Berkshire Fire & Rescue Service*



- The aim of the service is to reduce the number of fire related deaths, injuries and incidents, in turn making the lives of people in Berkshire safer.

### Berkshire Statistics:

- Between April 2014 and March 2015 Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service attended 379 Accidental Dwelling Fires.
  - 142 of these were cooking related
  - 102 were caused by electrical appliances
  - 72 were between 22:00 and 07:00
  - Distraction or falling asleep was the main human factor

### Did you know?

- Over half of people who die in accidental fires in the home are aged 65 and over.
- The likelihood of dying in a fire for people aged 80 or over is more than four times higher than the average risk.
- On average 76 people die each year because their smoke alarm is not working.

*Source: Communities & Local Government National Fire Statistics: Great Britain 2010-2011*

### Electrical Fire Safety:

- Regulation 28 Report: to ensuring agencies work together to prevent future deaths and give vulnerable people better protection from fire.
- Reading Borough Council, Bracknell Council and Care Agencies must work together to protect vulnerable people.

### Who is most at risk from fire?

- Research shows that people are more at risk from fire if they:
  - Are over 65 years of age, the risk increases further if they are over 80
  - Live alone
  - Have mental health issues (including dementia or memory loss)
  - Have mobility difficulties
  - Suffer from hearing loss or are visually impaired

- Abuse alcohol or drugs
- Smoke heavily
- Have a learning disability
- Hoarders - a flag can be put on the fire service system to identify potential risks

What might increase the risk?

- Will the person wake up?
- Will the person have the understanding of what an activating smoke alarm means? ... Especially for people who suffer with dementia.
- Will the person have the ability to react correctly to the smoke alarm?
- Will the person have the ability to escape from the property?
- Will the person be able to call the Fire Service?

Telecare for people with hearing impairment will wake them at night in case of a fire.

- If someone has oxygen in the property, this need to be flagged with the fire service

There are variations in the length of time between calling for a fire service and extinguishing the fire.

The Home Fire Safety Checks Services

- A home fire safety check helps identify fire related risks in the home
- Give advice on how to reduce the risk of fire
- May include the free fitting of smoke alarms where necessary.

This will also include putting a flag on the property specific rooms in the property for those who are most at risk or disabled. The Fire Service will know exactly where to go in the property to find people. It can also inform is the need for an extra fire appliance is needed.

Never leave washing machine/tumble dryer or dishwasher on when going out or going to bed.

Should use a stick to touch the button to test that the alarm is working in the property.

Main contact number for the Fire Service is: 0118 938 4000

The Fire Crew works 24 hr/day, 7 days/week

Partnership approach

The Fire Service works together with agencies to protect those who are most at risk of a fire in the home. To achieve this, they provide the following support to agencies:

- Training to identify risk and referring for a Home fire safety check
- Joint visit with a carer or family member to do a home fire safety check to the most vulnerable clients
- Testing of smoke alarms in vulnerable persons properties and reinforcing fire prevention messages
- Risk information for fire crews

### Questions & Answers:

Q1. What is the number of fires in homes in Reading and Berkshire? And how many involved older people?

A1. Fire in Reading is very rare. In 2014, there were 379 accidental dwelling fires, that's over 1 per day. The majority of fires tend to be from single professionals aged between 20-30, but they are smaller fires and are dealt with quickly. The number of casualties is small but tends to involve vulnerable people. Over the last 10-20 years, fires have reduced significantly. People are able to deal with things themselves (although this is not recommended), and advances in technologies and textile composition have improved things greatly.

Specific figures to be added to the minutes - causes of fire

Q2. What about the risk of leaving chargers and electrical items on long term standby?

A2. We recommend that anything that is not in use is turned off. For chargers, it is recommended to use only genuine parts. A lot of fires are created by imitation and fake components.

Q3. It is a known problem that older people don't get rid of their old furniture. Some people can fall asleep with a cigarette in their mouth and there is a danger of smoke inhalation from old furniture. It is important that everyone ensures safety in their home.

A3. Yes it is important to ensure that safety in the home includes Telecare equipment for smokers to warn them of a fire. There are also sprays that can be used on furniture. There is also a cooker-guard, if someone leaves something cooking, it will shut the cooker/oven off.

### Agenda item 3: Winter Warmth Discount

*Graciela Melitsko, RBC*

This year's campaign will run from 1<sup>st</sup> December 2015 until 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016 and will offer the following services:

#### Services provided:

- An energy check and advice on how to keep warm and healthy at home - and to ensure all systems are running efficiently. This is a case by case check.
- Draught proofing/ handyman service
- Information on and help in accessing energy efficiency grants for loft insulation, cavity wall insulation and boiler replacements/repairs
- Help to access an emergency payment where there is severe hardship
- Emergency equipment - such as heaters and bedding, dehumidifier
- Emergency payment: If you have concerns about being able to pay for your energy bills, you need to ring us: 0118 937 3747

Energy companies provide grants to replace boilers, we help people find out if they qualify. We facilitate and assist people with changing energy company.

The grants for boilers/insulation will change from April 2016. We are waiting to see what the Government will offer in future.

#### Priority Services Register (PSR):

If you are of pensionable age, disabled, chronically sick or have sight or hearing difficulties you can call your energy company and ask them to be on their PSR. Dependent on circumstances, PSR customers can access services such as:

- Free gas appliance safety check
- Relocation of pay as you go meter for improved accuracy
- Quarterly meter readings - by law only one meter reading/year is acceptable
- Bills in alternative formats

#### Getting help with your energy bills

- Most energy suppliers offer some form of help to their customers who

are struggling to pay their energy bills.

- If you owe your supplier money, they must offer a payment arrangement that takes account of your financial circumstance and ability to pay.
- Talk to them about your options

We do tend to recommend Reading Citizens Advice for support in negotiating energy bills. If you are not on the best rate, or maybe you have been on the same rate for 10 years, the energy companies have a duty to let you know that you are not on the best rate and to offer you a better deal.

It is worth checking to look at rates and try to get a better rate with your current provider first, and then check with other providers.

### Switching Energy Provider

Winter Watch can help you. But there are other options. Use a free, impartial comparison service, online/phone. E.g. Uswitch: [www.uswitch.com](http://www.uswitch.com) or call 0800 051 5493

You will be required to give some details about the property and current usage. Use old bills to make results more accurate. Look for a gas and electricity tariff if possible.

### Warm Home Discount

- This is a discount of £140.00 which is deducted from your ELECTRICITY bill ONLY.
- You automatically qualify for the discount if on the 12 July 2015 all the following apply:
  - Your supplier was part of the scheme
  - Your name (or your partner's) was on the bill
  - You were getting the Guaranteed Credit element of Pension Credit (even if you were getting Savings Credit as well)

### Help from the Government

- **Winter Fuel Payment** - an annual payment to people of pensionable age to help keep warm in winter. Payments vary between £100 to £300 depending on your individual circumstances. If you have not been receiving this payment, call the Winter Fuel Payment Helpline on 08459 15 15 15 or visit [gov.uk](http://gov.uk) or [citizensadvice.org.uk](http://citizensadvice.org.uk).
- Everyone can get this.
- **Cold weather payment** - eligible households who experience temperatures below zero degrees Celsius over seven consecutive days

between 1 November - 31 March will automatically receive £25 for each seven day period.

- This is means tested, based on the Guaranteed Credit element of the Pension Credit. People on key meters are eligible (PayPoint outlets).

Direct Debit is the cheaper way to pay for energy bills.

Contact for Winter Watch:

**Phone: 0118 937 3747**

**Email: [winterwatch@reading.gov.uk](mailto:winterwatch@reading.gov.uk)**

#### Agenda item 4: Reading Joint Strategic Needs Assessment

*Kim Wilkins, RBC*

This item will be covered as part of the meeting on Friday 5<sup>th</sup> February 2016.

#### Agenda item 5: Older People's Day Services

*Janette Searle, RBC*

##### Promoting wellbeing

- We have a new duty under the Care Act, which sets out underlying principles we need to follow to look at care and support needs for people and what we need to do to meet our duty.
- This applies to people with different levels of need, and to anyone who is facing a risk of having care and support needs, including unpaid carers.
- It covers social and emotional wellbeing and opportunity to take part in leisure activities on a par with, e.g., physical wellbeing

##### Neighbourhood approach

- This has been a priority for RBC since 2013 - services based on neighbourhood network is what people want to see.
- We are developing partnerships with voluntary, community and faith groups. Michelle Berry and Sarah Hunneman have been working with a vast number of voluntary groups to reach more people and to work more effectively together.
- We currently have in local communities around Reading:
  - 40+ Lunch clubs
  - Retirement clubs offering a range of activities

- Fitness and leisure opportunities
- Peer support groups
- We want to make it easier for older people to find services

#### Extra care development

- 'a home of your own with support on hand'
- 5 sites in Reading currently and 2 more in development
- Individual flats plus communal space / activities

#### The Maples Centre

- Previously known as 'Phoenix Day Centre'
- It was built to accommodate 80 people
- The average attendance over the past year has been 33 to 43 people per day. There are more alternative options out there, so less people use The Maples. It is mostly used by people with more complex needs.
- Most people attend for a full day (9:30-4:30)
- The location of the centre makes shorter sessions unattractive

#### Consultation on day services

- The consultation was carried out between March to June 2015
- We had 126 responses
- Most valued:
  - Care staff
  - Companionship
  - Breaks for family carers
- Increasing the range of activities is welcomed
- Transport to and from activities was rated as important
- Aspect to consider on how to manage the transition, change is difficult and needs to be managed.

#### Rivermead Wellbeing Centre

- It is proposed to develop Rivermead into a dedicated wellbeing centre 'day activities with care' wing
- The centre will be able to host 225 spaces per week
- Users will have access to the leisure centre facilities - pool, gym, rooms
- This will create opportunities to develop a 'hub' of information and activities for older people - with varying levels of need

Positive feedback from voluntary sector organisations was received about the possibility of using the Rivermead as a Wellbeing Centre.

#### Implementation of proposals for Rivermead Wellbeing Centre

- The move from The Maples to the Rivermead Centre is scheduled to be

completed by September 2016

- Current users of The Maples Centre will get individual reviews, including transport options for shorter and longer journeys.
- People will receive support to identify the best day activities to meet their individual circumstances
- All current Maples users would have the option of a place in the Rivermead wing and will receive support to manage the transition
- The decision to proceed with the proposals was made at the Adults, Children and Education Committee on Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> November 2015.

## Questions & Answers

Q1. Will there be a bus service to Rivermead?

A1. Readibus have agreed to service Rivermead. Reading Buses might divert one of their public buses to Rivermead.

Q2. Given that Rivermead is managed by GLL, is there plans to bring the management of Rivermead back to Reading Borough Council?

A2. GLL is a social enterprise; it is not taking a profit out as a private sector organization would.

Q3. What will be done about catering?

A3. We can bring in different caterers and different types of meal provisions. Various catering companies already cater for events from the Rivermead kitchen. But we are looking into this.

Q4. A lot of people who use Rivermead are over 50/60. It is a good idea to engage with them.

A4. Yes, we want to do that.

Q5. Firtree is currently based at the YMCA building Park Lane. We will have to move in a very short period of time. We were considering The Maples Centre to move Firtree to. We run 3 days a week with various activities, what prospects are there?

A5. There are rooms at Rivermead to hire. We want to see more activities converging around that centre and to offer a range of opportunities to users and voluntary organisations.

Cllr Eden expressed her appreciation to RBC officers and people who took part in the consultation. Changes are difficult and emotional. The Maples is a valued resource by family members and carers. Staff at The Maples are also valued. This opens a positive future for day services. A lot of councils are choosing to move away from day services. If other clubs could go down to Rivermead, that would be exciting. It will be tough to get it right.

#### Agenda item 6: UK Older People's Day - Feedback

*Nina Crispin/Sarah Hunneman, RBC*

Older People's Day on 1<sup>st</sup> October was a success with around 300 people attending the event throughout day.

Attendants expressed their appreciation for an 'excellent day', 'good organisation' and 'excellent food'.

It was noted that there were not many wheelchair users in attendance. The organization of the event worked better than last year. Stall holders found it difficult to talk to people due to the high noise level from other activities and presentations. This will need to be looked at for future events.

We need to consider other venues in future. The question as to why the Town Hall is so expensive was raised.

#### Agenda item 7: Current Issues and Matters Arising

*Cllr Gul Khan*

##### **Current Issues:**

- Library Services - Have your say survey - Ashley Burton

The way people are using libraries is changing. This is happening at the same time as government cuts to the funding received by councils. As a result, we are reviewing our library service with the aim of making savings and ensuring a modern service fit for the future.

We need your help to understand how you are using library services and what you want from the service in the future to help us develop proposals. You will be able to have your say on proposals in a second round of consultation in Spring 2016. Final decisions will be made in

Summer 2016.

Full details can be found on [www.reading.gov.uk/libraryreview](http://www.reading.gov.uk/libraryreview)

Email in to: [libraryreview@reading.gov.uk](mailto:libraryreview@reading.gov.uk)

Write in to: Library Review

Reading Borough Council

Bridge Street

Reading

RG1 2LU

Closing date for consultation: 10am on 23rd November

We will holding a review panel on Friday 20<sup>th</sup> November - 3-4pm - in the Council Chamber. If you would like to attend, please contact Ashley Burton.

- The Afternoon Tea Party at St Laurence Church on 18<sup>th</sup> December has had to be cancelled due to Health & Safety issues at St Laurence Church. It is suggested that the event is merged with the OPWG meeting on 18<sup>th</sup> December in the Council Chamber -
- Cycling Consultation in Broad Street

At the moment people can cycle half of Broad Street - from Starbucks to John Lewis. But can't cycle from John Lewis to KFC

#### CONSULTATION PROPOSALS:

- Leave things as they are
- Allow cycling all the way through Broad Street
- Ban cycling all the way through Broad Street
- Consultation starts on Monday 9th November and will run until the end of December.
- You can respond to consultation Online questionnaire on RBC website

The overwhelming response from the majority of attendants present is to ban cycling altogether through Broad Street!

- Carers Rights Day is on Friday 20<sup>th</sup> November - flyers with time/venue/agenda were distributed to those present.

Suggestions for future meetings:

- Item on the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment to be brought back on the

agenda for the meeting on Friday 5<sup>th</sup> February 2016

- What is happening to our medical services and local GPs/NHS services? Healthwatch are doing some work with GPs at the moment.
- Everyday First Aid programme from British Red Cross - (Mary Reilly) - a request was made to have this item presented at the OPWG meeting on 5th February 2016
- Fitness and Leisure activities
- Bus service to Rivermead Leisure Centre
- More info for people with chronic illnesses who live on their own

Next Meeting:

- Friday 18<sup>th</sup> December 2015  
2 - 4 pm, Council Chamber, Civic Centre