

**North Yorkshire County Council****Selby Area Committee  
Monday, 13th March 2017****Annual Report of the Older People's Champion****A LOOK BACK IN HISTORY**

1. This will be my eleventh and last report to North Yorkshire County Council on my activities as your Older People's Champion. It all began in the mid-nineties when North Yorkshire bid for funding from the Government of the day, with the idea of developing a means of engaging actively with older people across the whole County so that we could consult with older people when we developed new services for them. Our bid was one of 28 across the country which was successful.
2. A forum was set up in each district and one representative from each district came together on a regular basis and formed the North Yorkshire Forum for Older People. The Project Manager was someone who is now working with Age UK in North Craven, Sue Bradley and Micky Johnson was our designated older person. Micky still works for the older people in North Yorkshire and more recently took part in the thorough review of our bus and community bus services.
3. Our first strategy was called "Our Future Lives" and when we consulted on this strategy, we soon learned that the last thing an older person wanted, was to go into a residential or nursing home at the end of their lives. The policy of changing our 29 residential homes into extra care facilities was developed following the publication of our first strategy.
4. I chaired Social Services (children and adults) at the time and in 1997 because the Government could not think of a better title, the notion of appointing Older People's Champions was born. It was believed that a member of the Executive should hold that post to give it the high profile it deserved.
5. A national review was held after 12 months and I presented at the Queen Elizabeth's Conference Hall in London. The conclusions of myself and the Director of Social Services was that my most useful role was that of a conduit between older people and the County Council and Government and essentially in that role I should develop a good network at regional and national level. The review also suggested that an executive/cabinet member did not have the time to develop the role as it should be developed. When I stepped down as Executive member of Social Services and became the executive member for Community Services and Safer Communities it gave me the opportunity to develop my role.
6. My aim was to champion opportunities for older people, ensure they were well informed so that they could make the right choices, which would improve the quality of their lives in their later years. This meant that I needed to take every opportunity to raise older people's interests and attend Seminars, Conferences so that I was up to date with Government thinking, at the same time I was a Non-Executive Director of North Yorkshire Health Authority. The County Council had ten years working with a Health Authority which was coterminous with our own boundaries.

## **FUTURE YEARS THE YORKSHIRE & HUMBER FORUM ON AGEING**

7. I was elected by the older people of North Yorkshire to represent them on the new Regional Forum on Ageing. I became chair of that organisation which I had helped develop with Age Concern. A position I have held for 11 years and it is through this group I have been able to develop my national interests for older people. I have held 14 workshops to raise awareness of Loneliness across Yorkshire and the Humber. Two of them in North Yorkshire at Scarborough and Harrogate.

## **AGE ACTION ALLIANCE**

8. Five years ago, the Age Action Alliance was developed jointly by Age UK and Government its work is done through a number of working groups and Future Years joined the Isolation and Loneliness Working Group. I became a member of the Campaign to End Loneliness in the months following. I now find myself totally committed to reducing isolation and loneliness at every opportunity and this has been my objective in everything I have done as a county councillor and Campaign Ambassador during this last year.

## **THE PREVENTION STRATEGY**

9. I was delighted when the County Council set up its Living Well Team, headed by Cath Simms, more information on which is outlined in the Appendix. Over the last 2/3 years I have worked very closely with the County Council and the villages of Gargrave, Embsay and Grassington to ensure they were able to set up their own Community libraries. The biggest percentage of the volunteers are older people and all three have become social hubs.
10. I have particularly but not exclusively, supported applications for funding from my **locality budget** from Village Hall Management Committees for building repairs and maintenance using it for this purpose means that whole communities have benefitted. Without a village hall where would local people meet and get together in such isolated villages? Where would community libraries find a home?
11. **The Venturer, the Community timetabled bus service** has been a huge success. Faced with no bus service of any description north and east of Grassington the villagers got together. I organised public meetings to discuss the situation and two villagers came forward and developed a business case for a timetabled bus service. I organised many meetings in the early stages with officers from County Hall. The targets for income have been exceeded and the service has carried many full fare paying passengers. In the height of Summer, we left people at the roadside. Definitely not one of our aims!
12. In Craven the CCG (Clinical Commissioning Group) gave funding for a pilot to develop Village Agents. I chaired the Steering Group, with the end of funding from Health we successfully applied for funding from Age UK £40,000, this enabled further work to be done by those village agents still in post.
13. Embsay particularly benefitted from the Village Agent's work and as a result a Steering Group was formed to develop **Embsay and Eastby Good Neighbours**. I co - chair this group with the Vicar of Embsay Church. This is now working well but the most asked for service is transport to hospital or the GP Practice. With the help of County (Marion Tweed Rycroft) we applied for funding from Stronger Communities to augment the funding received initially from Rural Action Yorkshire.

14. Added to this we applied to “Awards for All” to develop a **Befriending Scheme** for Embsay and Eastby residents. The funding will provide for a co-ordinator for twelve months to continue the development of this scheme begun by our Village Agent.
15. At Buckden Parish Council meeting last month they were discussing having a village 'champion' who called on older people living alone to ensure all is well. I introduced them to Marion Tweed-Rycroft via email and I am confident something will be develop from this link and with a small grant to build a '**resilient community.**' I shall be well pleased.

#### **FROM A NATIONAL PERSPECTIVE - THE CAMPAIGN TO END LONELINESS**

16. I am now designated an **Ambassador for the Campaign to End Loneliness.** Following the successful recruitment for ambassadors who can give talks on the subject, I attended a training event in York and was asked to help with the training.
17. I was invited to speak at the launch of Leeds Beckett University and the publication of the findings from the project “**Together for Health**” funded by the DH. Some really good and sound evidence was produced for this project and a tool to measure the improvement of a person's wellbeing was used after connecting the person to a social activity. Knaresborough Age UK was a participant in this research. I was on the steering group for North Yorkshire when the project was being set up.
18. I spoke at the Annual Conference of '**Minding the Gap**', held in Sheffield last year. I used the latest powerpoint presentation and the emphasis was on identifying those in the community who may be suffering from the effects of loneliness this was based on the publication of the 'Missing Millions', an excellent publication. The outcome of the conference was a call for the use of social prescriptions nationally.
19. I was invited to attend the Strategy meeting of the Campaign, planning for the next five years and attended the 5<sup>th</sup> birthday of the Campaign in June where the document '**The Missing Millions** was officially launched.
20. I spoke for the Campaign at a Hub event in Brighton organised by the Brighton and Hove Local Authority and at a Scrutiny meeting of Harrogate BC as an ambassador.
21. There is an increase in the number of invitations to advise and speak on the subject of loneliness. The Campaign ensures I am invited to most of the events where the publication of research on the matter of loneliness is being launched. The latest was the launch of the findings from the research done by the Red Cross and The Co-op in partnership
22. This piece of work '**Trapped in a Bubble**' concentrated on getting to a better understanding of the triggers for loneliness. The partners are setting some targets e.g. Bringing social connection to 12,500 people in England. They are to use their members to act as befrienders and to date they have raised £4m for the Campaign.
23. I have accepted an invitation to be a trustee of a soon to be launched charity '**Linking Lives UK**'. Jeremy Sharpe who has successfully launched the Link Visiting Scheme in the South of England, feels it is time to widen the opportunities for churches to bring people of all ages together across the whole of the country. Local Churches provide unique opportunities due to the number of older and single people

who attend church. **How can your church reach and support isolated older people?**

24. The Bishop of Ripon invited me to be a member of a group who are active in their faith to come together to identify the local issues of isolation. Some work has been carried out by the Diocesan Rural Officer he has developed some social activities using the 'Men in Sheds' ideas. There is a growing number of single older men who are committing suicide and this needs to be addressed.
25. Current work in progress is the setting up of a project through my own GP Practice Manager with a local pharmacy and the Living Well officer for Craven, to identify those who may be lonely in the locality of the practice.
26. I have enjoyed my work with older people, beginning when I used to teach retired people luncheon cookery. Becoming Chair of Social Services was a turning point in my life. It was in this role that I fully recognised the great need 'out there' in North Yorkshire.
27. I must thank officers in North Yorkshire who have worked with me to achieve that which local residents in my division wanted. Libraries, Community Transport, HAS particularly in the prevention work, Highways, most recently constructed a dropped kerb to make it easy for someone with an electric wheelchair to get to her 'local shop' and lastly Education who were so supportive of me when I chaired the Governing Board of Upper Wharfedale School, with one exception, when I was not supported in my idea to federate the primary Schools in Upper Wharfedale with the UWS to develop a hub and spoke federation with one headteacher. Officers have unstintingly given of their time. No one achieves anything on their own, so having the right partners round one table is a 'given'.
28. I shall continue with:
  - my national work and involvement in the Campaign to End Loneliness.(It is the only working Group of the AAA where my travel expenses are reimbursed by the DH.)
  - My work with the older people in North Yorkshire, through the Yorkshire & Humber Advisory Forum.

Councillor Shelagh Marshall OBE  
Older People's Champion NYCC 2017

### Living well in North Yorkshire

Working with people who are lonely or socially isolated, the Living Well team is helping people to become more connected to their communities and helping people to prevent or resolve issues before they become a crisis. By the end of December 2016, the team had responded to nearly 2000 referrals since its launch in October 2015.

The predominant reason for referral is loneliness and isolation, although most people present with several reasons, including bereavement and loss of confidence. Living Well coordinators work with individuals over an average period of 7 weeks, providing face to face information advice and guidance, support to build self-confidence, help to access community activities and practical support, for example ways of maximising a person's income.

Success is dependent on people increasing their confidence, skills and motivation to find their own solutions to improve health and well-being. The team works alongside the council's Stronger Communities team to ensure that there are a range of good quality community options in place.

The Living Well Team recently won the council's people's choice award for innovation, in recognition that the team is already making a huge contribution to the targeted prevention agenda in North Yorkshire. It is a radical, innovative approach which maximises benefits from partnerships and uses creative approaches to support individuals and achieve positive individual outcomes.

For Edna, who lives alone and felt isolated in her home after the loss of a loved one, she valued the way that Living Well took the time to get to know what was important to her and helped her to get her life back. Edna says 'I now know that there really is life after 80'