

Champion for Older People

Report on Expenditure from 1 April 2014 to March 2015

"To assist the Leader and appropriate Portfolio Holders by advising on serious issues which support and encourage activity, independent and healthy lives for older people and to raise the profile of older people and their needs in the development of policy across Directorates"

With a growing older population and in need of public services and tighter financial restrictions on those who may provide them the role of the Lancashire County Council Champion for Older People is an increasingly challenging one in terms of working to improve the lives of Older People locally within Lancashire and in the North West Region.

Older Peoples Champions are in general not portfolio or Cabinet level members. They are the appointment of the Council Leader and work across all functions of the Local Authority from social care to economic development.

The Champion for Older People needs to be in a position to respond to, and raise awareness of the issues which older people face within our communities. Just like much of the rest of the country, Lancashire has an ageing population and it is important that we not only respond to their needs but also to plan for the needs of older people in years to come.

To this end I have built on my experience of my previous year as Older Peoples Champion and have continued to spend time over the last 12 months meeting with each of the older people's forums and groups across the county to get a real understanding of the issues. I have attempted to promote a positive image of ageing and also worked with groups and individuals to raise their profiles and I have supported the delivery of a range of activities and events in the communities in which they live.

I have seen first hand the hard work and effort that older people put into improving our communities and I am proud to act as the county councils Older Peoples Champion. I am committed to my role in assisting to raise the profile of Older People and creating solutions to the issues which they face and many of us will face in the future.

Lancashire Older Peoples Forums

The past 12 Months have proven challenging for each of the 12 local authority forums across the county as alongside budget reductions across all services the county councils financial support to the forums has been reduced. However this does not detract from the high regard that the county council (and myself personally) has for the work of the forums in the localities and across the county as a whole and I am working with the forums to identify and secure alternative resources where possible to ensure that they continue their valuable work.

In the light of these challenges the forums, with the assistance of the 50+ Assembly, have focused on ensuring that they are as effective as possible which has included projects around

tackling loneliness in older peoples, a growing project to influence public transport provision and a redrafting of the constitution of the 50+ Assembly to ensure that the groups remain effective in these changing times More efforts have also been made in terms of raising their profiles both to new members and service providers to ensure that they play an active role in responding to the issues that affect them.

Meetings are held on a regular basis in a welcoming environment that provides attendees with both social interaction and with opportunities to raise and highlight the issues which affect them.

Members of the forums work extremely hard all the year round giving up their time and making the effort to arrange and attend a range of meetings and events which highlight and tackle the issues which really affect our older population. I would also like to give a special mention to all the work they do to celebrate National Older Peoples Day which is held in early October each year.

The Forums have taken this national event to highlight their work in the localities and across the county. A whole range of older peoples groups hosted a number of events throughout early October which not only increased awareness of their role but also, improved membership and provided an opportunity for older people to meet and take up new activities.

I would like to express my personal thanks for all the hard work everyone puts in to celebrate National Older Peoples Day and the work that goes on through the forums throughout the year.

Local Authority Elected Member Older Peoples Champions Network North West of England

The network consists of 27 members from across the North West Region and all members are Elected Member Older Peoples Champions for their Local Authorities.

Current Profile

The membership is restricted to Local Authority Elected Member Champions based in the North West of England.

Membership is drawn from first and second tier Local Authorities.

The network has been in operation for the past eight years and the focus of the network is member development and support which in essence is making champions better champions to influence their local authorities to perform better in the context of age and ageing.

Funding spent on Lease of Life Fund and North West Champions Group.

Lancashire Lease of Life Fund

The Older Peoples Champions budget is structured and administered through a small grants regime which is known as the 'Lancashire Lease of Life Fund'. The fund provides small grants of up to £300 each year to community groups working for the benefit of older people. The fund provides grants to groups for equipment, speaker's fees, rental for rooms and special activities etc. which contribute to the well-being and health of Older People.

Applications can only be made by a range of older peoples groups and organisations and the most important criterion is that at least 75% of the people who will benefit from an award must be aged over 50.

The Lancashire Lease of Life Fund is proving to be a significant and extremely popular way of delivering small amounts of funding to a wide range of groups of older people who need simple but important support. As a result of press publicity combined with my efforts to promote the fund, awareness and applications have again risen dramatically this year. A press release in February 2014 ensured that funding for 2013-14 was fully allocated for that year and this was followed up with a second release to raise awareness that the fund would reopen in April 2014. As such applications had been received by the time the fund reopened and we were able to begin supporting local groups as early as 3rd April 2014. As with the previous year, the full amount of the fund was allocated to local older peoples groups in 2014-15 and as it was actually oversubscribed applications have been carried over into 2015-16.

The fund supported over 40 separate organisations over 2014-15 with a 36% increase in applications. This when combined with the fact that the number of applications for 2013-14 had already more than doubled the average number of in previous years, shows that the fund is going from strength to strength and is a valuable means of providing support for activities for older people.

In 2014-15 the fund has supported:

- Activities around Older Peoples Day.
- Computer equipment to allow for the creation of a newsletter for an older peoples group.
- Tai Chi classes
- Winter Bowling equipment / indoor bowls.
- Specialist gardening equipment designed for older people.
- The development of a memorial garden.
- Transport and entertainment costs.
- And a range of other activities.

The fund is so important to groups of Older People across the County that need just a little bit of money to make such a major difference to the work that they do and to the lives of the people they work with.

Conclusions

The role of Lancashire County Council Champion for Older People provides me with a range of opportunities to work with and understand the needs of what is a significant section of our community. Older people currently make up 33% of the population of the county and this percentage is growing.

The role has given me the opportunity to offer a change in emphasis in the way Older People are viewed and more work is needed to promote a more positive Image of Older People. Older people do have a role within our communities, often performing great work without recognition. They are a valuable part of Lancashire's economy either through their on-going employment, their work as volunteers or as carers within family units.

It is for this reason that older people should not just be seen as the passive recipients of public services and we should do more to tap into the skills, experience, knowledge and vibrancy of Older People.

There is still much to do within the BME Community and I am confident that through the work of forums, other groups and the efforts of individuals that we can work closer together and have a greater understanding of the problems we all face as we get older.

The Older Peoples Forums act as a local focus for older peoples issues and play a valuable role in everything from awareness raising and policy development to tackling isolation and loneliness.

The North West Older Peoples Champions Group is becoming more and more important as we share best practice with other councils and raise the county profile across the North West to improve the lives of Older People.

It is vital that Lancashire County Council has a Champion for Older People which not only recognises the contribution that older people make to our communities but also actively supports older people around the county.

I am proud of the work that older people do across the county and proud to be the Lancashire County Councils Older Peoples Champion.

***County Councillor Terry Aldridge
Champion for Older People***

Schedule of Expenditure for 2014/15

County Councillor Terry Aldridge - Champion for Older People

Applicant	Amount of Grant
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Over Wyre Whist 7 Domino Club – room rental	£250
Brindle Over 55's – Entertainment costs	£290
St James the Less Luncheon Club – Kitchen equipment	£300
Emmanuel Women's Fellowship – entertainments costs	£300
The Twirleys – new laptop	£300
Longridge U3A – room hire	£300
All Saints Grange Bowling Club – upkeep of green	£300
Brindle Gardening Group – room hire and speaker costs	£300
Whiteholme Over 60's – transport and refreshment costs	£300
The Gleans Moor Nook Centre – bingo equipment	£250
Extra Time at Burnley Football Club – games equipment	£300
Oak Road Social Club – travel costs	£300
Chat Group – carer and bereavement support groups – entertainment and travel costs	£300
Preston and District U3A – laptop and printer	£300
Action 4 Elderly – art and craft materials	£300
The Leyland Project – kitchen and food equipment	£153
Entertainment for All – Entertainment costs	£300
Penwortham Holme West Allotment Association – Memorial Garden	£300
Maa Bacha – Women's over 50 pampering event	£300
Oswaldtwistle Luncheon Club – Massage therapy	£300
Women's Fellowship Torrisholme Methodist Church – replacement blinds	£300
FiftySomething Theatre Company – travel expenses and hire of facilities	£300
The Open House Group All Saints Church – entertainment costs	£200
St Pauls Bowling Club – Bowling equipment	£275
Parkinsons Preston and Fleetwood – refurbishment of hall	£300
Lancaster and Morecambe Lions Club – entertainment and bingo costs	£300
Preston Older Peoples Forum – Older Peoples Parliament Conference	£298
The Chorley Pensioners Association – speaker costs	£250
Oswaldtwistle District Womens Institute – Tia Chai classes	£280
Galgate Bowling Club – new bowling equipment and engraving costs	£300
Preston Social Support Group for Deafened People – hall hire and insurance costs	£300
Brothers of Charity Network 50+ - art, gardening and pottery classes	£300

Monday Conservation Group – specialist gardening equipment	£243
Ancholshome Bowling Club – winter bowling equipment	£300
St Peters Community Centre – entertainment costs	£100
Tuesday Friends – activity costs	£100
Burnley and Padiham Over 50's Forum – Older Peoples day	£100
M2E – transport costs	£75
Lunch Fellowship Fulwood Free Methodis Church – transport and refreshment costs	£75
Skelmersdale Action for Youth – remembrance dinner	£214
West Lancashire Pensioners Forum – activity costs	£80
TOTAL SPENT	£10,433