

Champion for Older People

Report on Expenditure from 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021

To assist the Leader and appropriate Cabinet Members by advising on service issues across Service Areas which support and encourage active, independent and healthy lives for older people.

This is my fourth year in the role as Lancashire County Council's Champion for Older People. A role which, in pre pandemic times, had provided me the privileged opportunity to get close to, and work closely with, Older People in their communities across Lancashire. This year started well, during the first few weeks of March, I started to receive invitations from across the County to attend groups and events focusing on Older People, these included a Speaker invitation at Preston and District 50+ Forum Annual General Meeting, opening the Travel for Life Workshop, scheduled to take place in Mere Brow Village Hall and attending the Preston City Mela. As things worked out none of these visits could take place because Monday 23rd March saw the Prime Minister announce that all of the UK was in lockdown and that residents had to stay at home in order to control the spread of Coronavirus.

Older People, that's people over the age of 55 years, are a valuable part of Lancashire's economy whether that be through their ongoing employment, their work as volunteers, or as Carers within family units and they deserve credit for this. I know that many older people, as lockdown restrictions permitted, have been actively volunteering within their communities, examples that came to my attention included manning telephone advice lines - telephoning people confined at home for a chat to help ease their feelings of loneliness and isolation, delivering prescriptions to people who were shielding and neighbourly gestures such as shopping for groceries and dog walking. Following retirement many people seek to give time in their communities and this year that time, freely given by Older People to Older People, has proven helpful to all.

This year restrictions have meant that, disappointingly, I have not been able to make any visits to groups. One outing I was able to undertake was just prior to Christmas when I spent time, wearing suitable PPE, at St Andrew's Church in Ashton on Ribble helping to pack hampers which were then distributed to Older People by Delivered North West. Given our lives were still restricted by COVID-19 the hamper also contained a local information booklet. Alternatively this past year has seen me receiving many enquiries, via email or the telephone. Examples - establishing a mobile grocery shop round, access to district nurse care, delivery of prescriptions and access to personal protection equipment and lateral flow test kits. Thankfully in Lancashire, there are numerous groups providing services to people over 55 years and this has helped me in signposting enquirers.

As Champion for Older People I am allocated a sum of £10,000 per annum as a grant scheme, for use at my discretion, within guidelines set out by the Authority. The Champion Grant fund is an extremely easy and popular way of providing small amounts of funding, to a wide range of groups, who need financial support via a simple process. As a result of press releases and my efforts promoting the fund twenty groups have received grants this year totalling £10,815.00. Recipients this year have included Aughton Townswomen's Guild, Moss Side Community Forum, Hyndburn Stepping Out, St Walburge's Shrine Church, Bank Hill House Senior Citizens, Carnforth Community Swimming Pool and Fylde Coast Men's Shed. Monies have supported initiatives providing access to Zoom and purchasing wi-fi boosters to help Older People keep in touch with others whilst shielding at home, some monies supported catering to provide food for those confined at home, both hot meals and packed lunches and others received a financial contribution towards essential work, or equipment, needed at venues where this generation meet and to support their activities planned post COVID. I cannot emphasise enough just how important this fund is to Older People, across the County, for whom just a little bit of money, the average grant was £500, can make a major difference to the work that they want to do and the lives of the people they support.

I have kept in touch with the Co-Ordinator of the North West Elected Member Champions for Older People Network. A forum where Champions from across the region can share learning and good practise. Members have continued to lobby central government for a Minister for Older People.

I have welcomed having the ear of senior decision makers in our Authority, albeit via the telephone or Zoom. I have still been able to brief the Leader, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Members, in particular the members for Health and Well Being and Adult Services alongside the Directors of these departments.

The position of Older People's Champion for Lancashire is a high profile role. I have taken it very seriously. Sadly this year I have been unable to get out and about meeting people, something that I see is core to the work of a Champion. I have missed having these informal chats with Older People about LCC, our current services and those services seen as needed in the future, every comment is fed back. Nevertheless the appreciation for work I have managed to undertake has been gratefully received and humbling. When some sort of normality has returned to our everyday lives there is still much to do.

***County Councillor Joan Burrows
Champion for Older People***

Schedule of Expenditure for 2020/2021

County Councillor Joan Burrows – Champion for Older People	
Applicant	Amount of Grant
Hyndburn Stepping Out - New Gazebo, fold up table and chairs	£450
West Lancs Pensioners Forum - Afternoon Tea	£500
Fylde Coast Men's Shed - new fridge freezer	£140
Hoole Village Hall Bowling Club - replace floodlights	£500
St Stephens Church - new boiler	£365
Farington Moss St Paul's Bowling Club – to weatherproof bowling green shelters	£300
Moss Side Community Forum - Christmas hampers	£300
Carnforth Community Swimming Pool - supervised swim for the elderly	£500
Delivered NW - Christmas Meals, hampers and information booklet	£500
Hoole Village Hall Bowling Club - replace floodlights	£1,000
St John's Church zoom classes and Wifi boosters	£600
Hapton Over 50's Luncheon Club - Hire of Coach	£200
Preston and District Carers Support Group - social trips	£360
Bank Mill House Senior Citizens - Re opening party and PPE equipment	£1,000
St Walburge's Shrine Church - Hot lunches and activities	£1,500
West Lancs Pensioners Forum - Annual Day Trip or Christmas lunch	£500
Moss Side and Midge Hall Community Group - activity days	£600
Friends of Kingsfold Library - Social events	£500
Aughton(e) Townswomens - Zoom meetings	£500
Moss Side Community Forum - raised planters	£500
TOTAL SPENT	£10,815