

# The Senior Council for Devon

## Strength in Later Life

Newsletter – June 2008

### Senior Council for Devon

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**WE WANT MORE PEOPLE  
TO JOIN AND GET  
INVOLVED IN THE SENIOR  
COUNCIL - PLEASE PASS  
THIS NEWSLETTER ON TO  
OTHERS WHO MIGHT BE  
INTERESTED**

### Senior Council launched and funded!

Welcome to the second Newsletter of  
the Senior Council for Devon.

In this edition:

- Launching the Senior Council
- Funding and partnership with the County Council and PCT
- What have the directors been up to and handing over the administration
- Around the County – news from local Senior Council Groups
- Providing evidence - response to the Parliamentary Inquiry on Older People
- Inter generational action
- Who are our members
- What have the transport group been up to

## Launching the Senior Council for Devon

The Senior Council for Devon has been built bottom up as a network of local groups representing Exeter and each of the main 28 market and coastal town areas in Devon and their rural hinterlands.

In January and February this year local Senior Council Groups were consulted on the draft constitutional arrangements and elected two representatives (four for Exeter) to form an overarching 60-member strong Senior Council Assembly. The Assembly (operating then as the Shadow Senior Council) approved the constitutional arrangements on 20 February, and agreed that the Senior Council should go ahead and register as a Company Limited by Guarantee (this limits the liability of all members, as requested by local groups during the consultations on the structure and legal status of the Senior Council). The Senior Council is non profit making and will consider registering as a charity. The objects for the Senior Council are set out on the back page.

After 18 months' development the Senior Council for Devon was formally launched at the first meeting of the Assembly on 19<sup>th</sup> March 2008, when the election results of the officers and directors were announced. They represent a good geographical spread across the county:

- Bill Jordan, Chairman, from Exmouth
- Clifford Bell, Vice Chairman, from Barnstaple
- John Stedman, Treasurer, from Tiverton
- Ken Crawford, Secretary, from Okehampton
- Graham Bowen, Director, from Great Torrington
- Janet Crocker, Director, from Exeter
- Malcolm Froude, Director, from Newton Abbot/Kingsteignton
- Toni Hamilton, Director, from South Molton
- Derek Pedder, Director, from Sidmouth
- Graham Rogers, Director, from Ivybridge

Addressing the Assembly for the first time as Chairman, Bill Jordan, said:

“We have an excellent opportunity to make an impact in decision making with respect to local public services.”

“Issues of particular interest to us include health and caring services, the environment and local transport.”

“Although we are focusing very much on issues relating to people over the age of 50, we see our work within the context of improving the quality of life of the whole community.”

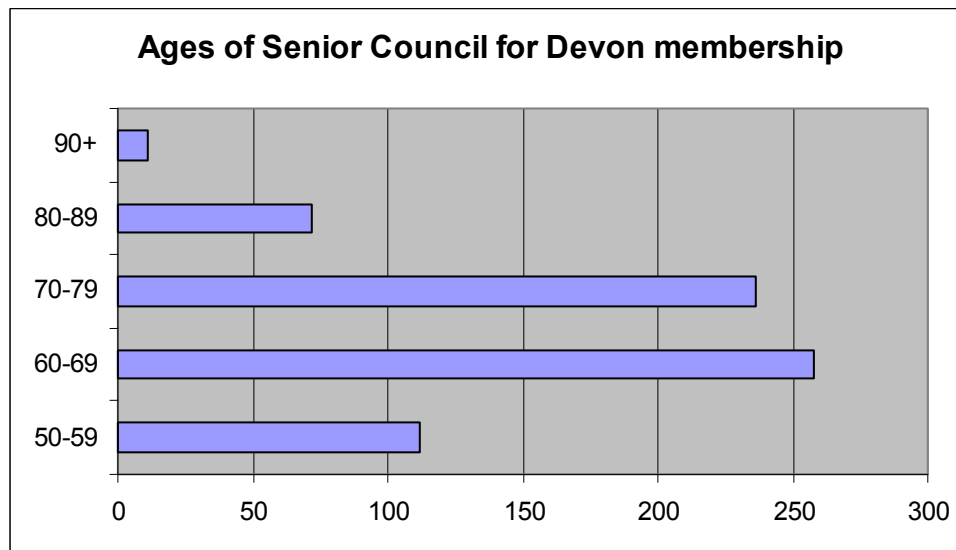
“Our Members are already working alongside Devon’s Youth Parliament to identify issues of mutual concern to young and older people, so that we direct them to the right authorities.”

Assembly members identified the following priorities for the Directors over the three month period to the end of June:

- Securing the funding and contract with the County Council and PCT
- Setting up the administration and appointing the administrator
- Electing the Executive Committees and Officers for the local Senior Councils and adopting the model local constitution
- Building the partnership structures
- Getting on with action on issues and priorities

### ***Who are our members***

The Senior Council now has over 730 members and is now well on its way to reaching its initial target of 800 members. The Senior Council is committed to having an inclusive membership that reflects the diversity of the population in Devon aged 50+. The membership form enables us to understand the spread of our membership by age group (see table below) and ethnic origin.



716 of the members are individuals and 20 are organisational members.

Devon is a rural county. We also know that 51% of the members live in rural areas by the DEFRA definition, and nearly 22% of members live in villages and hamlets. This compares with 57.8% of the 50+ population in Devon as a whole living in rural areas (based on health data, so not a strict comparison). So we need to do more to encourage members from rural areas.

## ***Setting up the Local Senior Council groups***

Following on from the formation of the Assembly and the appointment of the Officers and Directors, local Senior Council groups have been meeting to formally adopt the local model constitution and elect their own officers and Executive Committee Members. Up till now local Senior Council groups have been formally constituted in:

Exeter	Exmouth	Axminster	Totnes	Seaton
Sidmouth	Okehampton	Tavistock	Dawlish	Honiton
Culm Valley	Barnstaple	Newton Abbot	Teignmouth	Tiverton
Holsworthy	Ivybridge	Kingsbridge	Bideford	Braunton
Great Torrington	Ilfracombe			

Over the next few months there will be further development work with Senior Council groups in other areas. Clearly having viable groups (of not fewer than ten) is of paramount importance to the value of our work.

## ***Funding from and Contract with the County Council and Primary Care Trust***

Core funding for the Senior Council has been agreed with Devon County Council and Devon Primary Care Trust for an initial three year period. The core budget for the first year, which will run up to the end of March 2009, is £147,900. Additional funding for capital setup costs will also be made available.

Alongside the funding agreement, a contract between the Senior Council, and County Council and PCT is also being finalized, which will set out clear expectations of each organisation.

## ***What the Directors have been doing***

The Directors have already met 3 times and have a further meeting planned in early June. In addition to the work with the County Council and PCT to agree the budget and contract, they have been concentrating on:

- Setting up the systems and infrastructure, such as recruiting the administrator, arranging insurances, and setting up the administrative and financial procedures for local Senior Councils; and agreeing the logo – we will continue to use the tree logo currently on the Senior Council website
- Working with Peter Fletcher Associates on material for the resource packs, such as publicity material
- Developing links and partnerships

## ***Handover from Peter Fletcher Associates to the Senior Council***

The development role that Peter Fletcher Associates (PFA) have been playing in supporting the development of the Senior Council will finish at the end of June, or during July, depending on when the administrator takes up post.

### Resource packs for local senior Councils

As part of the handover, PFA are putting together a Resource pack for all local Senior Council groups which will include sections on:

- Governance (principles, membership, constitution, contract with the County Council, financial procedure and delegations, logo information, stationery)
- Handling the membership database
- Local publicity
- Partnerships and contacts
- Issues
- Skills/knowledge notes, details of training courses

The Resource Packs will be available from the middle of June.

## **All Party Parliamentary Inquiry into Services for Older People**

The Senior Council, even though it was just setting itself up, responded at short notice for the call for evidence from the Parliamentary Inquiry into Older People. Here is a summary of the Senior Council's response:

The Senior Council for Devon <http://www.seniorcouncildevon.org.uk/>, is a focus for the voice of people aged 50+ in policy development and service planning, and aims to realise the potential of people in later life as a creative and active resource for the community, within the administrative area of Devon County Council. Other than Exeter, all the towns are classified as rural.

By 2026:

- 24% of the population will be over 65,
- 17% of households will be occupied by lone pensioners
- 25% of households will fall into the Rural Isolation Group

You will note from the above demographic information that access to services is an important issue in Devon, access to health is a priority, but without integration of other services, transport to get there, local Post Offices/local shops to get our prescriptions, access to fitness equipment, improvement to services only accessible to those in urban areas will be as useful as a chocolate teapot.

We would welcome further involvement with the Select Committee on this issue, and would like to take part in the round table discussions.

Any solution has to look at the whole, rather than a small element.

***What would the ideal services be like if all barriers were removed?***

Services need to be “integrated”. Progress is being made on integration of health and social care services in Devon.

Services also need to focus on “prevention”. It is still the case that the holistic approach to the quality of people’s lives “from the cradle to the grave” is not as yet fully embraced. Local Area Agreements should be a vehicle for putting more emphasis on prevention rather than cure. The proposed Devon Health and Well-Being Partnership is the type of initiative which should receive Government encouragement.

We need to look at the following issues:

- Local surgeries
  - ★ Working round the patient rather than the practice managers, or doctors
  - ★ Appointments at a time to suit the patient
  - ★ Fit in with local bus schedules
  - ★ Consultants to visit the patient (surgery or cottage hospital)
  - ★ In this modern world, access to the appointments book via the internet
  - ★ Proper stock control within the pharmacy, to avoid return visits, a necessity if you rely on public transport, and to keep the carbon footprint down
  - ★ Outreach surgeries
  - ★ More prescribing nurses
  - ★ Minor casualty facilities within 20 minutes
  - ★ Ambulance/paramedics within 15 minutes
  - ★ Defibrillation equipment and trained operators in each village
  - ★ Respect for the patient; avoid the use of first name when announcing that the doctor/nurse is ready for the patient
  
- Hospitals
  - ★ Appointments kept, not cancelled
  - ★ Consider dedicated emergency teams, rather than calling surgeons/consultants away from their consultations
  - ★ Pre-surgery checks carried out locally
  - ★ Again fit in with local bus schedules

- ★ Evening bus services for hospital visiting from all rural towns
  - ★ Free car parking or Maybe pay on exit (with tokens for patients and visitors)
  - ★ Return the subsidy for hospital transport, (for most rural towns the cost now to visit the regional hospitals is in excess of £25)
  - ★ More recovery beds in the local area
  - ★ Overnight facilities for relatives
- Fitness
    - ★ Fitness facilities available in each village
    - ★ Reduce cost of public sports/fitness facilities to a reasonable level, (currently the cost for a couple is 45% of the average disposable income)
    - ★ Tie in sports grants to local sports facilities (athletes should be expected to coach/train others in order to qualify for their grant)
- Transport
    - ★ Co-ordinate all the individual operators, (Okehampton, Devon has four buses from three operators leaving for Exeter between 09.30 and 10.00, none are full, all except one go direct with no stops, only one - the 10.00 - goes through the villages)
    - ★ Make servicing the villages and rural towns a condition of the licences
    - ★ Re-introduce the 09.00 start for concessionary fares (for most rural users the new “National Bus Pass” is of less benefit than the old regional one. Free transport whilst on holiday does not compensate for the loss of free pre 09.30 fares)
    - ★ Free public transport to hospital, whatever the time, (perhaps by production of appointment card)
    - ★ Reintroduce evening bus services (the last bus from Exeter to Okehampton is at 17.45)
- Post Offices and local shops
    - ★ Ensure the viability of all local Post Offices and shops
    - ★ Main supermarkets to sponsor village shops

### ***Using older peoples' time***

This should not be taken for granted, many people do not volunteer simply because they are concerned they will be “put upon”. Whilst they appreciate that their efforts are worth while, equally they see many charities and organisations with highly paid executives and employees. Volunteers of whatever age need back-up support if their services are to be maximised. Carers and carers'

organisations are important examples of inputs into the monitoring of services. Experience of PPI Forums across the country confirms this. There is a need for:

- Tax breaks for volunteers
- Increase in Pension Credit for volunteers
- Recognition
- Mentors for volunteers
- Expenses as a right

### ***In Conclusion***

In view of the time scale our contribution is, at this stage, a list of bullet points but it does give some idea of our concerns. We hope that you will consider these in the spirit that they have been given.

## **Transport**

At the first meeting of the SCfD Directors on the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2008 transport was one of the agreed key priorities, and Ken Crawford was appointed the director in charge of transport issues. The Board received a letter from Professor Leaper, Chairman of the AGILE Transport Theme Group, indicating that they wish to become the Transport Theme Group for the SCfD. In view of the expertise within this group, the SCfD has agreed that all existing members should continue on the group, and that additional members from the SCfD will be appointed to ensure representation from each of the District Council areas.

Through the Rural Services Network, (<http://www.rsonline.org.uk>), and by alerts from the Local Government Information site <http://www.info4local.gov.uk>, we are being kept informed in time to make comment, so that our views can be heard before the event, not after. Key developments are:

- **The new Transport Bill** allows for the setting up of a body to represent bus passengers as, unlike rail and London Transport, bus users have never had an official body to represent them. We have indicated that this is essential and that it must be a new integrated body representing all transport issues. (see SCfD web site for details)
- **The Department for Transport** is looking at how it subsidises local bus transport
- **All Party Parliamentary Group on Rural Services** is discussing concessionary fares at its next meeting. We have asked all the local Senior Council groups to comment on this. The full details will be posted on the SCfD web site

Please communicate any issues that you have with transport to your local group who will then deal with any local issues and report any national/county issues back to the Transport Group.

## **Inter-generational work with young people**

An exciting day is being held on 28 May called “Forward to the Future” with 30 older people from the Senior Council and 30 younger people meeting together at County Hall with councillors to discuss some important issues which the three groups have in common - these are health, age discrimination, transport and the environment. There will be a drama workshop, displays from air ambulance and climate change, and questions to a panel about transport in the afternoon, with the managing directors of First Bus and Stagecoach and Devon County Council representatives. It is hoped this will be the beginning of an ongoing dialogue with the bus companies, young people and the Senior Council.

## **Around the county – what are local Senior Council groups doing?**

There is no room in this Newsletter to put news from every local Senior Council area. In future editions we may have specific pages that local groups can use to put on their own information. In this edition we:

- Profile one area, Tavistock, to give a feel about what one group is doing when it is up and running
- Give some examples from other areas of action to build the membership, address local issues and build local partnerships

### ***Case study from Tavistock area***

At the meeting of the Tavistock and surrounding area council on 8 April 2008 the executive for the local area was voted in and the constitution was agreed. This means that the group is now formally and legally constituted and able to work on behalf of the over 50s in the Tavistock and surrounding areas about a wide range of topics that affect our everyday lives. The local group is delighted with the range and variety of skills, knowledge, expertise and experience the members bring, and the enthusiasm for the task in hand is much appreciated – we’ve got a lot to do! All these attributes will be put to good use! The immediate tasks we have identified include:

- Developing good links with the Devon Strategic Partnership
- Actively engaging with “The Way Ahead” project
- Using existing links to promote and publicise the Senior Council

- Maintaining and developing our links with Tavistock Area Support Services (TASS)
- Keeping housing and transport needs for the over 50s high on our agenda
- Inviting new members to make contact with their local Senior Council group, either as individuals, groups or organisations
- Developing close links with the Okehampton area Senior Council as we share boundaries and are affected by similar concerns
- Promoting the Senior Council wherever possible
- Using materials currently available to engage individuals and groups
- Developing user-friendly information to help people understand what the Senior Council aims to do

### ***Building links and partnerships at different levels***

Local level: In Barnstaple, the local Senior Council group made contact with and has been invited to become a member of the Barnstaple Town Alliance.

District level: In some parts of the county, local Senior Council groups are working together to get engaged with their District Council or Local Strategic Partnership. For example, when the local Senior Council groups in West Devon – Okehampton and Tavistock – were forming, they were fortunate that the West Devon Local Strategic Partnership was consulting on its main themes, and wanted to gain the input from older residents. As part of our local publicity, we had got on their radar, so we were invited to contribute to consultation events on a range of themes. These included access to services, housing, environment, leisure and several others. We took up every offer and usually fielded at least two people! Some people have agreed to sit on action groups formed following the events. On 10 July representatives from both local Senior Council groups are meeting with the chair of the LSP, the LSP co-ordinator and a senior manager from West Devon BC. We are mentioned in the West Devon LSP Engagement Strategy as a collaborator. The next step is to negotiate the terms of the partnership.

Similarly in Exeter the local Senior Council has met with the chief executive of the City Council and is discussing the Senior Council's role with, and place on, the local Vision Partnership (the LSP for Exeter).

County Level: At county level the chair of the Senior Council has been invited to join the Health and Well-being Partnership of the Devon Partnership. Work is also going on to secure a role for the Senior Council in the new LINK's structure.

### ***Taking action on issues***

The Axminster group are working on getting a town bus in place by surveying local people and providing evidence for the County Council. The transport section have advised them on wording for the survey to get the information they need. Axminster group also started a dialogue with Adult Education having invited a speaker to their group from DCC which is keen to work with them to identify gaps in adult education.

The Holsworthy group are in correspondence with BT about concerns and implications of closure of payphones in rural communities.

### ***Building the membership***

The Okehampton group have arranged stalls for the LINKs session at the Charter Hall, monthly with West Devon BC at Hatherleigh market, and are planning stalls for Okehampton and Chagford Shows.

A number of groups for example Seaton and Exmouth have been targeting Farmers' Markets to publicise the Senior Council in their area. The Honiton group leafleted the general market, and used a coffee shop as the latest venue for a meeting.

The Braunton group are working hard to grow their membership. They had a coffee morning and fundraising raffle in aid of the Mariners' Day Centre, which raised £26 and also resulted in about 8 new members. They are setting up a stall at the local village fair over the Bank Holiday. They will be asking older people for their views on issues of concern and creative ideas for solving problems. They will also be providing information on the Senior Council.

The Bideford group are setting up a stall on one day during the annual Potwolloping Festival in Bideford, with a similar aim.

The Exmouth group had a stall at a very successful Age of Opportunity Conference and fair in May. Considerable interest was shown by participants in the conference and visitors to the fair. Given the number of membership forms taken away the group is confident that their numbers will swell. Another encouraging thing is the agreement of the District Council to provide a room free for their meetings at the Town Hall.

## **Objects of Senior Council of Devon from Memorandum and Articles of Association**

The **Objects** are to:

represent and be an independent and non party political focus for the voice of people aged 50+ within the **area of benefit** (currently the administrative area of Devon County Council) for all policy development and service planning affecting their quality of life;

realise the potential of people aged 50+ as a creative and active resource for their communities;

help to ensure that people aged 50+ are able to lead active and fulfilling lives, and maintain their integrity and independence in later life;

help to reach people aged 50+ who are lonely or isolated and to ensure that those people who are socially excluded or 'hard to reach' are given opportunities for their voice to be heard and to contribute to the aims of the Organisation;

raise awareness of issues affecting people aged 50+ and to provide a platform where matters of concern can be raised and policies developed at a countywide or more local level to improve the lives of such people;

act as an information source, co-ordinator and provider of infrastructure support for the Local Senior Councils, currently based on the 28 market and coastal town localities and Exeter which represent the broader individual membership and their local communities, and promote collaboration between Local Senior Councils;

improve the quality of life of people aged 50+ in Devon by:

- (1) reviewing and monitoring services provided for older people and forwarding feedback to relevant bodies such as LINKS (Local Involvement Networks)
- (2) acting as a consultant to statutory and other public and private bodies on matters relating to the lives of people aged 50+
- (3) offering an opportunity for members to share information and experience and, when agreed by members to adopt common policies and joint actions on issues of concern to the members

lobby about issues that are important to people aged 50+ in Devon, but in ways which reflect the Better Government for Older People principles of a partnership ethos;

identify unmet needs of people aged 50+ in Devon and help in meeting those needs; not to duplicate or replace work already being done to meet such people's needs but to enhance and improve such work;

provide information to people aged 50+ in Devon on issues such as health, social care, community safety, financial benefits, the environment and housing;

liaise and work in partnership with public authorities but not to be controlled by any local authority or statutory agency.