

The Assembly Times

*Our Community
Our Voice*

Newsletter of the Older People's Assembly

Useful Numbers

Southend Police	01702 431212	Traveline	0870 608 2608
Southend Community Action/ SAVS	01702 356000	Arriva Southend	08701 201088
Southend Borough Council	01702 215000	First	01268 525251
South Essex Homes	0800 833160/161	National Express	08705 808080
Swan Housing	0845 6124700	Dial-a-Ride	01702 215666
The Guinness Trust	01245 496773	Anchor Staying Put	01702 465182
Southend Hospital	01702 435555	HandyVan Scheme	01702 464199
Southend Primary Care Trust	01702 224600	RSPCA Cruelty Line	0870 5555 999
NHS Direct	0845 4647	Crimestoppers	0800 555 111
Carers Line	0808 808 7777	Consumer Direct	08454 040506
Help the Aged	0207 278 1114	NSPCC	0808 800 5000
Age Concern (Southend)	01702 215780	Victim Support Line	0845 30 30 900

Assembly Meetings in 2011

To be held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre

1.00pm Registration

1.30pm Start

The 2nd March 2011 will be the annual general meeting where you can become an elected member of the committee.

Download a volunteer application from our website or contact our Vice Chair for further details on 01702 472174 or email: members@southendopa.org.uk

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From the Chair...

I do hope you had a good Christmas and New Year and managed to stay warm during our very wintry weather.

Since taking over as the interim Chair I have seen many changes that affect our way of life and now, with the Committee, have the opportunity to continue with the OPA's formidable platform to help champion issues of importance to

older people in the borough.

Our belief, particularly at this time with various local services under threat of reduced Government funding, is that it's vitally important that the voice of older people is continually heard and taken seriously and to that end, I am determined that the Assembly will continue to play a substantial and significant role in the community, but we need your continued support to help us achieve this.

You can give your support in a number of

ways; by coming to our meetings and airing your views and telling us what is working well or not so well for older people in the community, or, by using your life or professional experience in one of our Committee roles – an excellent way perhaps to put your experiences to good use in this New Year and to work with a great bunch of people.

See the inside back page for further details of how you can help.

Vaughan Hartbridge

With ever increasing printing costs, the Assembly have considered producing this newsletter in a smaller format, that of this size so we can send it out with our meeting papers.

We hope that it suits you and would like your views on its content. Also we would like to receive items from you for publishing - see the details on the back page

News in brief.....

- Southend Borough Council have received over 1000 comments from the public
- The proposed new library expenditure was raised at full council requesting it be reconsidered in this inclement financial time.
- Flu jab under scrutiny following reports that it contained the addition of the H1N1
- OPA election
- In a "pickle"



News from the (CDRP)



Southend Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) would like to make householders aware of a nationwide survey that is being sent out by a mailing company.

N-Power, Unilever and Talk Talk are among the many companies sponsoring a survey that is to be sent out by TNT. They request you fill in a questionnaire detailing your personal information and to leave it on your doorstep in an unsealed paper bag for collection the following day.

The survey, which was featured in a report on the BBC's Watchdog programme on 4 November, is five pages long and contains 186 questions about your personal circumstances.

The Information Commissioner's Office stated: These surveys usually require peo-

ple to provide a large amount of personal information - ranging from whether they have any outstanding medical conditions, to details of their household income.

"Anyone approached to fill in one of these surveys should think twice before leaving information like this on their doorstep. They should be aware that anyone could potentially pick it up, opening the way to identity theft."

People completing these forms should also understand who will have access to their information and what it will be used for."

More information and advice is available from the Watchdog website at

http://www.bbc.co.uk/blogs/watchdog/2010/11/tnt_survey.html

Michael Holland BA (Hons), MA
Community Engagement Officer

Council website & Digital TV



Switch on your TV to help you find valuable information on Southend-on-Sea Borough Council services.

The Council has boosted its existing DigiTV service with a quick code to make it even easier to use.

This free service offers instant access to Council information 24 hours a day, seven days a week from the comfort of your own home.

It is available if you subscribe to Sky or Virgin Media and is accessed via your remote control. The service is also available on Wii's, PC's and any web enabled mobile. **Not available on Freeview.**

Here are some of the helpful details you can find on DigiTV;

- Visit our improved Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit section to see if you could be entitled to claim this benefit.
 - Use it to check up on waste collections over bank holiday periods.
 - Use it to view what there is on offer to do in Southend.
- Use it to find out more about Transport and Streets in Southend.

How do I access the service?

To reach the site on DigiTV follow the relevant instructions:

Sky

- Press the **Interactive** button on your remote
- Choose **DirectGov**
- Press '**Select**' on welcome page
- Choose **#1 - Local Services**

Enter the QuickCode:
'**SBCTV**' (72288)

Virgin Media

- Press **Interactive**
- Select **News & Info**
- Select **Looking Local**
- Enter the QuickCode '**SBCTV**' (72288)

New Cycle Parking.....

Southend on Sea Borough Council and c2c have worked to create cycle parking where cycling commuters can now rest easy in the knowledge that their bikes will be safe while they're at work – thanks to a new cycle parking area at Southend East rail station. A covered two-tier parking area protected by lighting and CCTV has been installed on the north side of the station to allow 60 bikes to be stored whilst their owners use the train.

This is set to be expanded before March 2011 when another 80 spaces of two-tiered parking will be installed on the south side of the station.

The cycle parking on the south side of the station is being installed by c2c as part of a package of major improvements at the station.

Councillor Mark Flewitt, Southend-on-Sea Borough Council's Executive Councillor for Planning and Transport, said: *"This is great news for those who want to reduce their carbon footprint and cycle to the station, but until now did not have anywhere to put their bicycle. This new facility ensures that they can cycle to the station and carry on their journey to work safe in the knowledge*

that their bicycle is being stored in a reliable and safe place."

Hugh Jennings, Head of Retail for c2c, said: *"We are delighted to be working with Southend-on-Sea Borough Council to improve cycle parking facilities at Southend East Railway station. These improvements will be warmly welcomed by our customers and will significantly enhance their experience of the station."*

Why let your experience of older

Your New Year resolution?

people issues go to waste? Now is an excellent time to fulfil one of your New Year resolutions by making an application to take up one of our Committee posts. You can make an application by using the enclosed form or by downloading a copy from our website at www.southendopa.org.uk.

If it's easier you can email your completed application form to our Vice Chair at

members@southendopa.org.uk or send it c/o Older People's Assembly Returning Officer, SAVs Centre, 29-31 Alexandra Street, Southend-on-Sea, Essex SS1 1BW. But if you'd like to have an informal chat about what's involved first, do give our Vice Chair a call on 01702 472174. The closing date for receipt of applications for our AGM is **Monday 28th February 2011.**

Jenny Dean.....



All too often we have the painful task of reporting the passing of a dear friend or relative.

Some might say it's 'par for the course' when you reach a ripe age.

We were aware that Jenny had been unwell for some time and had not been able to attend our meetings of late.

Under the care of hospitals, we sadly learnt that she peacefully passed away in Southend Hospital, with her family by her side.

Jenny was a staunch campaigner for the Southend Taxi Drivers Children's charity, ensuring that underprivileged children had events to look forward to, and that was her reward.

She was a long standing member of the Southend Tenants and Residents Federation where, in its early days, she was its chair.

Taking up roles in focus and community groups Jenny made a significant impact.

Although knowing and working alongside Jenny for many years, her term of nursing didn't go unnoticed either, passing on the care she adopted in life.

She organised and supported outside events with great enthusiasm and relished the challenge to be part of a team where others became the beneficiaries.

Jenny was an avid supporter for increased care of people, irrespective of age or denomination, and she eagerly came on board with the Assembly making notable and substantial contributions as to how issues could be addressed.

Jenny was selfless with time for others, making sure that all were aware of how and where they could obtain help or advice, never failing others.

Ever caring, Jenny and her quick sense of humour, will be sadly missed not only from the community where she devoted herself to, but by her family and the many who knew her with fondness.

Little lady with a big heart.

Simon Morton

Residents asked for comments on key vision for the future

More than 1000 took the time to complete the budget consultation. The Council will use this feedback to help decide how to deliver services from April 2011. The views you expressed in this consultation will inform their priorities for the next three years, and in turn, how the Council spends its money.



The Council has a statutory requirement to set a balanced budget by 11th March 2011 and it will make a decision on proposals for the 2011/12 budget on 3rd March 2011.

This survey is part of an ongoing conversation between the Council and its residents on how they plan services and spending. They want to keep hearing from you, so if you have any further comments you would like to share with them in the coming weeks or months, please get in touch - don't feel you have to wait for another survey.

Email your comments to yoursouthendyoursay@southend.gov.uk.

Pickles promises 'people's planning power'

Eric Pickles said he wanted to take decisions out of the hands of councils and Whitehall



Communities in England will get the power to decide where shops, offices and homes are to be built, the government will announce. Under the plans, local referendums will be held, which could force councils to adopt "neighbourhood plans".

Speaking out for the elderly.....another term

Members of the Older People's Assembly regularly meet to address issues facing the older population of Southend.

Increasing awareness of an ageing society has concentrated attention on meeting the challenges and opportunities presented by this key demographic change.

Strategic planning and service delivery will need to take account of this change in the years ahead. Public sector organisations will be at the forefront of meeting these challenges and opportunities and solutions will be informed by effective and meaningful engagement with older people to understand their needs and ambitions

The Older People's Assembly gives a substantive and independent voice to the community and has steadily gained recognition within Southend and other partners in Essex.

A LOCAL assembly that deals with issues affecting Southend's older residents is looking for new Committee members at its AGM on the 2nd March 2011, to be held in the Council Chamber. All 15 positions become available at this

meeting.

The only qualification you need to take part is that you live in Southend and are 55 or over.

It is also on the lookout for contributions to be discussed at their meetings.

The current chair, Vaughan Hartridge together with a dedicated team work tirelessly to deal with issues that affect the more mature residents in the area. The team have played a volunteer role in the community for some years and describe themselves as '*retired amateurs*', with some having held posts in local government, some having experience with service providers and some with just good life experience.

An application form can be found by visiting our website or by calling our Vice Chair on 01702 472174

Closing date for applications will be Monday the 28th of February.

If you have a topic for discussion, or feel that you can contribute to the Assembly by becoming a member of the committee, visit www.southendopa.org.uk

Southend "Mind"

The past year has seen many changes at Southend Mind, as we strive to improve the delivery of services to individuals who experience mental health problems across Castle Point, Rochford & Southend.

Many of these changes have continued into the current financial year, with us having held a Mental Health Confer-

ence in June and our Landlords Conference in November.

These events have been aimed at raising awareness of mental illness with reducing the stigma which is associated with the condition.

Currently we are working on two more events, for 2011. We are aiming to hold an

event aimed at GP practice managers to discuss the upcoming changes from PCT to GP commissioning and how this may affect the delivery of mental health services and we are planning the next mental health conference, which will be held in June 2011. We will be releasing information of that event around about February.

Flu jab....

It was kept at a low profile but the report made clear that this flu vaccine included the H1N1 {Swine flu} vaccine and information was made available that some people had sustained serious side effects which were alarming.

Partial paralysis of body functions developed.

Even a doctors receptionist was a victim.

There is still no further information available on this but you should, if having this jab, ask your doctor of the implications of

having it - you are entitled to ask and have information to ensure you are making the right choice.

It's not clear if this has become fully aware to the public so air on the side of caution.

Census time....

The National Census day is on Sunday the 27th March 2011 and is a survey of all the people and households in the country. The Government calculates the funding for the Borough according to the official population figures recorded by the

census. Council Leader Nigel Holdcroft said: *"It's in everyone's interest for full and correct information to be recorded. Future decisions and funding allocations for education, health, transport and many more public services*

are made on the basis of the National Census. We want to make sure that in future Southend receives the funding and investment it is entitled to".

The government will also offer financial incentives to encourage the "right kind of development".

Communities Secretary Eric Pickles said this would mean *"more people-planning and less politician-planning"*.

Mr Pickles said: *"For far too long local people have had too little say over a planning system that has imposed bureaucratic decisions by distant officials in Whitehall and the town hall."*

"We need to change things... so there is more direct democracy and less bureaucracy in the system. These reforms will become the building blocks of the Big Society."

The Localism Bill, to be unveiled later, says residents can set out an overall plan for development in their area, which will then be voted on in a referendum.

Localism in planning will create the freedom and the incentives for those places that want to grow, to do so.

This will allow voters to decide where building takes place and which green spaces should be protected.

Councils will then have to adopt the neighbourhood plans, which would be put on a "fast track" to approval, meaning urgent projects can short-cut the system.

The government is asking for 12 local authorities to volunteer to take part in trials.

Greg Clark, minister for planning and decentralisation, added: *"We want local people to be able to make more of their own choices about what their home town should look like in the future. These reforms offer a scope for self-determination unheard-of until now."*

Localism in planning will create the freedom and the incentives for those places that want to grow, to do so, and to reap the benefits. It's a reason to say 'yes.'"

Southend Borough Council should take a leading role with its residents?

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Library-based Community Safety Road Shows in 2011

A further series of Community Safety Road Shows are planned at all 7 Southend Libraries in 2011.

These FREE events will take place across the Borough, and follow on from a series of successful sessions held during 2010, at which over 1000 bikes were electronically tagged.

The Community Safety Road Shows will be at the following libraries to electronically tag bicycles and mobility scooters free of charge, postcode property, give crime prevention advice, take referrals for home fire safety checks and for the HandyVan Scheme and much more.

The 2011 library tour dates are given below.

Thorpedene Library - Saturday 26th February (10.00am - 2.00pm)

Westcliff Library - Saturday 30th April (10.00am - 2.00pm)

Friars Library - Saturday 21st May (9.30am - 1.00pm)

Southchurch Library - Saturday 16th July (10.00am - 2.00pm)

Leigh Library Gardens - Saturday 10th September (10.00am - 2.00pm)

Kent Elms Library - Saturday 22nd October (10.00am - 2.00pm)