

**Committee Strategy Meeting**  
**Thursday 21 January 2016 11.30 – 15.30**  
**City Art Centre, 12 Market Street,**  
**Edinburgh EH1 1DH**

**Note of Meeting**

**Participants**

|                  |  |
|------------------|--|
| Tom Berney       | Chairperson & U3A Scotland   |
| Glenda Watt      | Co-ordinator & City of Edinburgh Council                                     |
| Barbara Barnes   | Alzheimer Scotland   |
| Mary Benson      | West Lothian Senior Peoples Forum  |
| Helen Biggins    | Seniors Together South Lanarkshire   |
| Alison Clyde     | Generations Working Together   |
|                  | Diana Findlay Age Scotland and Borders Older<br>People's Service Forum       |
| Bill Johnston    | Scottish Seniors Alliance  |
| Mike Liddle      | Scottish Government  |
| Donald Macleod   | Highland Senior Citizens Network   |
| Brian Martin     | STUC   |
| Bill McDonald    | Renfrewshire Seniors Forum   |
| Sandra McGregor  | Make It Happen Forum, Falkirk  |
|                  | Betty Milton A City for All Ages Advisory<br>Group Edinburgh                 |
|                  | James Miller Joint North Ayrshire Elderly<br>Forum                           |
| Jeanette Pieper  | Scottish Pensioners Forum  |
| Tim Puntis       | LGBT Age, Scotland   |
|                  | Alan Sidaway National Pensioners<br>Convention Scotland & Vice Chair of SOPA |
| Rob Snodgrass    | Grey Matters   |
| Eileen Wallace   | Stirling Reference Group for Older People                                    |
| John White       | Dumfries and Galloway Over 50's Group  |
| Christine Wilson | Scottish Human Development   |
| John Parkhill    | Centre for Lifelong Learning rep for Val Bissland                            |

**In attendance**

Rosa Ardia SOPA Administration

**Apologies**

|                     |  |
|---------------------|--|
| Val Bissland        | Centre for Life Long Learning, University of Strathclyde |
| Rohini Sharma Joshi | Trust Housing Association                                |
| Catherine Hewitt    | Scottish Government                                      |
| Bashir A Malik      | Interfaith Association Edinburgh and Scotland            |
| John McAllion       | Dundee Pensioners' Forum                                 |
| Mike Lynch          | Voluntary Action Orkney                                  |

## **1. Welcome, introductions, apologies and scene setting**

Tom Berney presented SOPA's purpose, achievements and challenges during 2015/16. This included the issues listed below. Tom emphasised SOPA's aim as being "a voice for older people" and the value of everyone on the Committee uniting to promote its importance. He encouraged a discussion on the future of SOPA and how we should build on our collaborative working to raise and address the concerns of older people in Scotland.

- Local campaign trail
- Committee members involvement in SOPA events
- Reception and Assembly in the Scottish Parliament and the joint reception with the Northern Ireland Pensioner Parliament in the House of Commons
- Press coverage and SOPA communications
- Hosting the Scottish Parliament's Cross Party Group on Older People, Age and Ageing
- The need to agree a way forward on the relocation of SOPA as the City of Edinburgh Council will cease to host SOPA from 31 March 2016. An exploration of the options point to the updating SOPA's Constitution to enable it to be a registered charitable organisation with its own bank account. Office space is available in SCVO. If SOPA succeeds in the relocation of its business, it can seek a variety of funding sources and the Committee will take on new roles and responsibilities.

The following points were raised by the Committee during a sometimes lively discussion:

- A number of committee members acknowledged SOPA'S achievements as a valuable, co-ordinating umbrella group and one of the most transparent organisations in the country as all of our minutes, reports and newsletters are freely available on our website.
- It was noted that some areas of Scotland were not included in the campaign trail but could be covered during this year, for example, Western Isles.
- The importance of involving older people in decision making was noted.
- The representative of SSA repeatedly argued that the SOPA Committee is not an 'executive committee' and therefore could not make decisions as those being discussed today. Others disagreed.
- Although some committee members voiced concerns about funding for 2016/17, the Scottish Government has confirmed that it is willing to fund SOPA from April to June 2016 at the same level of funding as 2015/16.
- Two committee members said the timescale for changing the constitution to become a charity was too short to allow representatives to discuss

proposals with their organisations. The SPF representative said she was instructed not to agree to any decision making at today's meeting. In reply, the Chairperson stated that all committee members were there to represent their organisations. He understood that it was up to each of the constituent organisations to decide for themselves what authority they would give to their representative. However, he hoped they would continue, as they had done since 2011, to trust their representatives to act on their behalf without a continuous need to refer back, as the infrequency of committee meetings could mean decisions being delayed for several months.

- It was suggested that in the event of a member disagreeing it would be sufficient to simply take a vote for a majority decision. The Chairperson agreed that was possible, but said he would much prefer that we would be able to continue on the basis of a consensus.
- Many committee members encouraged everyone to think positively, move forward together and leave the negativity behind.

## **2. How should we conduct our campaign actions locally and nationally during 2016/17?**

There was a discussion in small groups on the campaign objectives below followed by feedback and further discussion with all participants.

- Reduce funeral poverty through funded developments and promotion of social enterprise funeral arrangements.
- Major changes related to the State Pension.
- Funded programmes on active citizenship for older people
- Improve participation of older people via funded use of communication technology.
- Older representatives on all Joint Integrated Boards
- Care workers respected, well paid and trained to the highest standard
- Improved quality of life for older people cared for in a home and 'at home' through links to the community.
- Funded therapeutic services for people over 65 on a par with 'adult' services

### **General points**

- SOPA should consider building on the agreements (as stated) by MPs, MSPs, Provosts and Councillors – by having SOPA members linked to these people, to build a relationship and connection to pursue actions/campaigns.
- We should have clear agreed responsibilities and smart goals
- Discuss all points below with the Scottish Government and agree their contribution to the campaign actions
- Campaign items could be managed by establishing sub groups in localities
- **Reduce funeral poverty through funded developments and promotion of social enterprise funeral arrangements.**
- Have to read leaflet but Social Enterprise arrangements would be good to progress.
- Look at pre-paid funeral plans – the way to keep the cost to the minimum. Also ask a number of undertakers to quote – costs vary. The main concern is the cost of the plot varying from 500-1200 in Dunbartonshire.
- Start in one area, working with TSI? to help establish social enterprise funerals. If doable, then promote, roll out, and apply for funding. What's TSI?
- Pilot scheme to bring out pitfalls and establish good practice.
- Common cost for cremation across the country regardless of when and where you are cremated
- Why are cremation costs increasing when price and utilities decreasing?
- Establish a grid of cost across Scotland and publish results; name names
- A grant provided on proof of death to cover costs of basic funeral – paid out very quickly
- Build on the Scottish Government's Funeral Poverty Report and recommendations. Consider contents and promote where appropriate.
- **Major changes related to the State Pension**

- Smart goal, i.e. do what re this/these?
- Campaign to ensure uniform state pension, regardless of date of birth, gender
- Encourage activists to access HMG website: House of Commons work and pensions committee
- Press for more/clear public info
- Link to new NPC (looking to the question of Scotland's future too)
- Contact Mhari Black, MP who has SNP lead for Pensions
- Join with NCP, Northern Ireland Pensioners Parliament, Silver Voices and Welsh Ageing Well Group to establish a campaign
- **Funded programmes on active citizenship for older people**
- Smart goal i.e. Do what?
- More projects connecting younger and older people, sharing skills, having fun and learning together
- Funding is always in silos we need specific strands for intergenerational work
- Intergenerational work socially and in projects to achieve something would benefit both generations involved.
- First important to get the older people interested to participate. Many are not willing to do so. In general, many organisations available for people to join.
- Government should initiate a scheme whereby they could use the professional experience of retired people rather than using expensive consultants.
- Look at local Participatory Budgeting Opportunities –see previously circulated note

- Link to existing Citizens Group - Public Participation Network -Oliver Escobar and Edinburgh's Citizenship Group – organise meeting in Edinburgh to feature SOPA's Campaign Agenda
- **Improve participation of older people via funded use of communication technology.**

### **Local Authority**

- Investigate all funding available for all types of communication technology e.g. hearing, sight loss.
- Older people could learn skills from younger people: involvement of libraries and schools.
- Older people set in their own way and are not interested in technology.
- Generations Working Together conference in Glasgow on 2<sup>nd</sup> March – Intergenerational workshop showcasing projects and rep from Digital Participation Unit of Scottish Government.
- Lots of existing intergenerational digital projects taking place across Scotland which could be showcased sharing toolkits, resources and ideas.
- Is loop hearing technology fully available in all relevant areas, offices, departments and buildings in the public sphere?
- Scottish Government may know of funding for this subject

### **National Level**

- Schemes to redistribute computers to older people (as they did to unemployed)
- Government should be providing funding to enable ALL to access and participate
- Older people have to actively consider embracing this item. It is not an option to opt out. It is the way forward. Yes it may be difficult but can be done. You do not need your own computer, no cost but can use in local library or college. There will be basic courses if you do not have young grandchildren to help you.
- Rationale for my comments: older people today have the benefit of microwave ovens, central heating, mobile and landline telephones compared to the stove,

lighting a coal fire and NO phone of any sort. Therefore just as we have embraced these new items, it is only a small step further to be able to get online, set up a free email account.

- Scottish Government Digital Inclusion Strategy/SCVO
  - **Older People's representatives on all Joint Integrated Boards**
  - Seek representation on Strategic Planning groups and Local Planning groups
  - Impossible to gain access to Integrated Boards ( Wrong! Difficult but not impossible). Next best option is a must to be on the LOCALITY team, so local concerns and suggestions for the community are implemented.
  - Government must stipulate the inclusion of older people in services for them and enshrine it in the legislation.
  - All representatives must have equal voting rights!
  - Older people bring experience and knowledge: the longer you live, the more you have to give
  - Inclusion should not only be at consultative level but also at operational management level to engage in designing services.
  - Push for older people to have representation at all levels to help them do better!
  - Older people same voting rights and local offices of health boards and local authority.
  - We have a voice, we need to be heard and have an equal voting right
- LOCALITY PLAN Localities Guidance:** <http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0048/00481100.pdf> (pdf file saved in Strategy meeting folder)
- **Care workers are respected, well paid and trained to the highest standard**

- Care workers carry out significant work for all of us – government should intervene and legislate to ensure significant recognition by requiring employers to pay decent wages.
- All care workers to be qualified with recognised certificate – paid a living wage and travel time.
- Training for intergenerational work for staff to recognise importance of connecting the generations and time to allow staff to make connections - not only in nursing home settings but also in their own home.
- Specially trained staff for dementia residents.
- Very important training is of the essence all local authorities and government officials need to be constantly required to improve this.
- Training so important, however homes need to have enough staff to cover patients when training in place.
- Agency staff need to be qualified; national recognised training
- Contribute to the development of national care standards
- Link to Manifesto for Unpaid Carers
- **Improved quality of life for older people who are cared for in a home and 'at home' through links to the community.**
- Smart goal, i.e. Do what to help ensure this?
- Agency staff should be properly qualified and supervised.
- More befriending volunteering and intergenerational work to be introduced in all homes.
- Levels of staffing in care homes need to be addressed and highlighted at all levels. Older frailer people now in homes need more support. 3 staff night time shift 8pm-8am to 26 people.

- Local involvement on a “Friends” basis which would add to social engagement and loose inspection ability.
- Negotiate with care home owner to enable local groups to use a room in a care home for talks, meetings, etc and so involving and incentivise residents.
- Care call is good and worth campaigning for this to go out over all of Scotland
- Make sure links to community organisations are in place and working. Isolated people may not easily communicate g LGVT organisations
- **Therapeutic services for people over 65 are funded on a par with ‘adult’ services**
- Lobby/campaign for funded therapeutic services for people over 65 on a par with ‘adult’ services
- Like the idea of “friends” of Care Homes and would like to try something on that project.
- “Care call” is very successful in Dumfries and Galloway and we should campaign to spread this over all of Scotland as part of the Care Bill.
- If integration is to mean anything it is to put the patient first, not for the benefit of the administration – that is what is happening, e.g. chiropody service taken from Day Centres as it is more appropriate for the practitioner. It is a must for GPs to see patients out of hours. Without such, integration will not work – all will arrive at A&E departments.
- I am interested in being active in this area but can’t be here this afternoon (Christine Wilson) make a link with Human Development Scotland, also pursuing this aim ?
- Help to establish befriending services – to combat loneliness – greater issue for older people
- Help establish Dementia friendly towns – with Alzheimer Scotland also mental health

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#### **Additional Possible Action Points**

#### **9. RESPONDING TO CHANGES / PROPOSALS AFFECTING OLDER PEOPLE**

- Care standards

- Long term funding of health and social care debate/discussions
- Housing Strategy – comments
- Carers Bill/Act
- Attendance allowance
- Carers' allowance
- Inspection Regime changes
- Others not yet sighted e.g. what policy changes will there be post 2016 Election
- Note: Local Government Elections in 2017

### **3. Summary, next steps and close - Tom Berney**

Tom thanked everyone for their contributions to the meeting. Obviously the transitional process in moving away from our present arrangement with Edinburgh Council may present some difficulties but we were doing that because we had no choice. We were fortunate that while the Westminster governments had decided to withdraw support from our equivalent Forums in England, It seemed probable that our current levels of funding would continue. The cross-party support we had received from MSPs and MPs was no doubt helpful in that and it was something we should build on.

Tom said he was confident that most Committee members were keen to see SOPA continuing to develop its present consultation and representational activities and hoped that they would play their part in helping us to maintain continuity by achieving a suitable structure. The important thing was that we continue to represent the interests of older people. Organisation was just a means to that end.

**Dates of future meetings** – 18 February 2016, Business Centre, City Chambers Edinburgh, Thursday 3 March 2016, City Art Centre Edinburgh