

Elderly Citizens Liaison Forum

A meeting of Elderly Citizens Liaison Forum was held on Tuesday, 31st October, 2006.

Present: Cllr M Frankland (Chairman), Cllr W Noble (Vice Chairman), Cllr Mrs J Beaumont, Cllr M Cherrett, Cllr K Faulks, Cllr K Leonard, Cllr F G Salt

Officers: Mrs T Harrison, Miss S Johnson (LD); Mr F Russell (Trading Standards)

Also in attendance: Mr B Macaulay (Age Concern), Cllr Mrs Cains

Apologies: Mrs E Chapman (St Johns Living Well), Mrs M Cooper (University of the Third Age), Mrs D Fairhurst (Stockton Residents & Community Groups), Mr S Neal (Teesside Pensioners), Mr Raj Put (Stockton International Family Centre), Mr L Stanley (Royal Navy Associates), Mr & Mrs Parker (Retired Members Association TGWU)

1 Draft minutes of the meeting held on 26th September 2006

The minutes of the meeting held on 26th September 2006 were agreed as a correct record.

2 Beware the Bogeyman - Avoiding being conned in your home. Video presentation given by Mr F Russell (Trading Standards)

The Trading Standards Officer, Mr F Russell, delivered a presentation on 'Beware the Bogeyman'. Members were advised that the initiative dealt with preventing door step crime and bogus callers. It was explained that unfortunately elderly people were the main victims of door step crime and bogus callers.

The Officer advised Members of two 'No Cold Calling Zones' currently being set up in the area. The two areas chosen for this initiative were Yarm and Oxbridge. The Officer explained that Trading Standards had held meetings in both areas and the residents had voted for the zones. It was explained that cold callers were not committing a criminal offence but that it was illegal to offer a contract without a 'cooling off' period attached. Also, cold callers repeatedly asked to leave an area could be viewed as a public nuisance, in which case the police could be called. The Officer explained that the zones would empower residents to ask cold callers to leave and discourage them from returning. It was noted that Cambridge have 69 'No Cold Calling Zones'.

The Trading Standards Officer also told Members about the Police initiative Operation Strongbow which was carried out in conjunction with Trading Standards. It was explained that this initiative dealt with those who had been a victim of doorstep crime and bogus callers. The Officer recalled a case where an old lady had been taken to the bank by bogus builders to draw £5,000 out to pay them. This happened on another occasion and on the third time the bank became suspicious and called the police. The Officer explained that banks are proactive and sign up to a protocol for unusual transactions.

Members were advised that unfortunately neither initiative receives funding. The Officer explained that Trading Standards had so far funded the 'No Cold Calling Zones' but had received a contribution of £200 from Stockton Home Safety Association. Members discussed how important this issue was and also how important it was to raise awareness and be proactive.

Members were shown the 'Beat the Bogeyman' video in which a door step crime scenario was acted out. The Officer explained that the presenter in the video Brian Steele, a retired police officer, had previously been to Stockton to deliver a presentation on this issue. The Officer advised that he would like all Council Members to see Brian Steele's presentation in order to raise awareness and the profile of this issue.

CONCLUDED that the information be noted.

3 Work programme

Members discussed changing the frequency of the Forum meetings from once a month to once every two months.

Members gave consideration to the work programme. It was agreed that John Kavanagh would be invited to a future meeting of the Forum to provide an update on free bus passes and bus services.

CONCLUDED that:-

1. further consideration be given to the frequency of the meetings at the next meeting of the Forum, following further consultation by the Chair; and that
2. the Secretary would invite John Kavanagh to a future meeting of the Forum to discuss free bus passes and bus services.