



# GOPA Newsletter

'GOPA — Representing the many voices of older people'

## GOPA IS ALIVE AND WELL!

### *"The Reports of My Death are Greatly Exaggerated"*

Over the last couple of years we have felt a bit like Mark Twain, when we have heard rumours that GOPA had been disbanded. In fact, the truth is that we are going from strength to strength.

We are being recognised as a charity that can engage, facilitate and provide results whilst working towards our priorities as set out below:

- GOPA will continue to act for older people and is run by a committed group of volunteers.
- GOPA is alert to the needs of older people.
- GOPA is committed to improving the quality of life for older people

- GOPA is committed to working in, and seeking, partnerships across the statutory, private and voluntary sectors.

To demonstrate this final point, our Newsletter highlights projects from some of our partners' agencies as well as our own. If you would like your projects included, in future editions, please contact us.

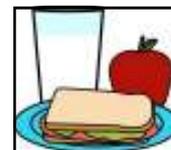


I am pleased to report that we are operating on a firm financial position and still receiving support from a number of funders, without whom we would not be able to cover the operating expenses. As such I would like to take this opportunity to thank them.

I would also like to thank our membership for their support, after all we are here to represent you and report on your concerns. We are also here to let you know of upcoming events that we feel could be of benefit to you. As such we have a website [www.gopa.org.uk](http://www.gopa.org.uk) where we publish notices to inform you. Please feel free to visit.

Finally I, as Chair, would like to thank my fellow Trustees for all the hard work and dedication in supporting GOPA and the aims of the Charity. Without their volunteering we would not be able to perform all the actions we are able to perform within our limited budget.

**David Grant (Chair)**



## New Plans for Stroud District Forum

From September 2015 the formal meetings of the Stroud Older Person's Forum will take place quarterly in the Committee Room at Ebley Mill from 10.00 am — 12.30 pm. **Diary dates for these meetings are: 28th September 2015, 18th January 2016, 18th April 2016 and 11th July 2016**

We are also holding smaller **Talkabout Community Lunches** to which older people and representative organisations are invited. The date of the first of these events will be on **Tuesday 3rd November 2015 at Berkeley Town Hall from 11.30 am to 2.00 pm**. If you would like to attend please email Dilys Warren (GOPA Trustee) on [dilyswarren@aol.com](mailto:dilyswarren@aol.com) or phone 07815 851714

## Marina Court Activities Hub

Marina Court in Tewkesbury was established in 2008 when residents began to occupy the flagship ExtraCare Housing Scheme. The on-site communal facilities, managed by a Coordinator, are also open to the wider community. The wide programme of activities has evolved into a comprehensive selection broadly covering physical, social, creative, sensory and cognitive wellbeing. physical activity initiatives. These range from Tai Chi to Healthy Heart to help to maintain strength, balance and ability to perform activities of daily living independently. Holistic therapies and footcare enhance sensory well-being, alleviate stress and promote

restful sleep. Craft workshops, quizzes and Scrabble keep the mind stimulated in a sociable environment.

The latest initiatives at Marina Court include a Table Tennis table (see pic) and Archery for the Disabled. Both items have been made possible through grants afforded to the Community Hub from Gloucestershire Rural Community Council and Archery GB. We have also created a Wildlife Pond and Garden with disabled access, which will open up a hitherto unused area for other gardening and games activities. We also



**Pamela Marshall, 80 and Jim Green, our oldest male resident, aged 98 testing out the new table**

have an Away Days partnership initiative with Daffodil Support Services which offers a half-day or whole day of activities, meals and care, thus affording carers some respite time.

**Lesley Gilmour  
Therapy and Wellbeing  
Coordinator**

## New Chief Executive for AUKG



I have had a connection to Age UK since running the London Marathon in 1999 to raise money for Age Concern (as it was called then). Learning about different experiences of ageing and how various organisations respond inspired me to retrain as a social worker with older people. I've worked in the public sector ever since, for several Councils and charities. I'm delighted to have

come 'home' to Age UK Gloucestershire. It's an interesting time - more people are living well for longer. At the same time public funding for support services is declining. My mission for Age UK Gloucestershire is simple - I want to change the way we perceive growing older and to work with partners (statutory and voluntary sector) to provide more ways for the growing number of older people in our county to love later life. I believe we should aim high - we should aspire to make Gloucestershire the best county in which to grow older. That will require all providers

and the wider community to work together, to listen to what local older people really want and to find innovative ways of meeting different needs. I support the local authority's goal of seeing more people living safely and independently in their own homes and ensuring they stay connected with and active in their communities. I am very excited about working with colleagues and friends across the sector in developing services to make that happen for more people in the future.

**Rob Fountain CEO,  
Age UK Gloucestershire**

## South West Seniors' Assembly



GOPA is a member of the South West Seniors Network and on 16th July they held their Assembly in Bristol entitled '**Health and Care' What lies ahead for our ageing society?** It highlighted some of the interesting developments that are emerging. Here are some of the highlights from the excellent presentations:

**Kevin Bounds, Director of Fit for Better Living** gave a presentation '**Time to get Moving Before it's Too Late**' on how interventions in nursing homes had significantly improved the mental and physical health for a 92 year old bed bound patient over a 3 month period. It improved his mobility, wellbeing, confidence, self esteem and social integration. This was evidence that preventative activities at any age can improve the health and wellbeing of older people.

**Claire Keatinge, Commissioner for Older People in Northern Ireland.**

Claire Keatinge spoke passionately about the role of Commissioner for Older People which was established in 2011 by the As-

sembly of N Ireland. It came about after extensive lobbying by older people and organisations. It has statutory powers and its principle aim is to be an independent champion who safeguards and promotes the interests of older people. A proposal was tabled from the Chair that a request for such a role should be established in England.

**Jennifer Bute**

Jennifer Bute of St Monica's Trust is a former GP and Lecturer who had worked with her husband as a missionary in Africa. She gave a riveting presentation, sharing her own experiences of dementia. Jennifer has a strong faith and positive attitudes towards living with dementia. She gave key messages for carers, whom she calls 'supporters', and emphasised that life could still be worth living even with a diagnosis of dementia.

**Link Age West of England**

**Claire Miller** spoke on their work to engage older people in the many wellbeing activity projects that are going on in the Bristol area. Many of the projects address social isolation and loneliness and

all the projects are set up in response to the participants themselves and are giving new hope to older people in the Bristol area.

**Contact 0117 353 3042**

[www.LinkAgeBristol.org.uk](http://www.LinkAgeBristol.org.uk)

**Solicitors Ashfords, and Frenkel Topping** gave financial information about the implications of the Care Act 2014 in general and in particular about the Care Cap proposed by the Government. (It has since been announced by the Health Minister that this will be scrapped).

**Big Lottery Grant Opportunities Programmes** Catherine Stevens is the South West Local Manager and set out all the grants programmes available to organisations.

Photos and full presentations are available on the SWSN website. The link is <http://www.southwestseniors.org.uk/your-views-blog/>



**Speaker Claire Keatinge with Chair Brian Warwick (Photo courtesy of South West Foundation)**

## Issue of Concern ...



**Age UK Gloucestershire** and the **Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner** have recently raised this as an issue where we could work together. Financial abuse is a complex and often hidden problem and older people themselves are reluctant to talk about it as it sometimes perpetrated by family members or close friends. In order to raise awareness of this problem, we set out information which is published on the **Action on Elder Abuse** website.

The warning signs to look out for are:

- Signatures on cheques etc. that do not resemble the older person's signature, or signed when the older person cannot write.
- Sudden changes in bank accounts, including unexplained withdrawals of large sums of money by a person accompanying the older person.
- The inclusion of additional names on an older person's bank account.

- Abrupt changes to, or the sudden establishment of wills.
- The sudden appearance of previously uninvolved relatives claiming their rights to an older person's affairs or possessions.
- The unexplained sudden transfer of assets to a family member or someone outside the family
- Numerous unpaid bills, or overdue rent, when someone else is supposed to be paying the bills.
- Unusual concern by someone that an excessive amount of money is being expended on the care of the older person.
- Lack of amenities, such as TV, personal grooming items, appropriate clothing, that the older person should be able to afford.
- The unexplained disappearance of funds or valuable possessions such as art, silverware, or jewellery
- Deliberate isolation of an older person from friends and family, resulting in the caregiver alone having total control

**More details are given on the following link:**

[http://www.elderabuse.org.uk/main/pages/Abuse/abuse\\_financial.html](http://www.elderabuse.org.uk/main/pages/Abuse/abuse_financial.html)

## Would you like to become a Trustee?

If you would like to become a member of GOPA or feel your skills could help GOPA on our Board then please contact **Jim Rollinson, Secretary** by email on [gopa4672@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:gopa4672@hotmail.co.uk) or by post at **GOPA, c/o 28 Byfords Close, Huntley, Gloucester GL19 3SA. A Membership form is available on the GOPA Website at: <http://gopa.org.uk/membership-application-form/> Thank you.**

GOPA is a member of the Age Action Alliance and the South West Seniors' Network  
Registered charity number 1124977

## Some of the projects we have supported



GOPA is a registered charity and a Forum member of the national organisation **Age UK**, from whom we have received a number of small grants which have enabled us to arrange local events for older people. Last year we received a grant from the Winter Celebration Grant programme which enabled us, in partnership, to support events in Gloucester, Tewkesbury and the Cotswolds.

This year we have run events for diverse communities. Using our network of partners we have supported events including:

- **A lunch at a Hindu Elders Open Day**
- **An all day event for BME carers**
- **An information event for the Polish community;**
- **A social evening for the transgender community**
- **An American Independence Day themed lunch at the Black Elders Day Centre (see photo above)**

At least two other events will be taking place during August.

We are also grateful for the support we have received from our partners and by working together we have proved we can make a little go a long way and we hope to give more reports in future editions!

**Jim Rollinson (Secretary)**