

# 2010 Annual Report

## Older People's Planning Group



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Planning Group

November 2010



## Introduction

The Older People's Planning Group (OPPG), formed in December 2005, welcomes anyone who is interested in issues that may affect older people's quality of life. Older people from across Essex and organisations such as Age Concern Essex, Alzheimer's Society, Carers UK, Housing Associations, Tendring and Colchester Minority Ethnic Partnership, NHS and the community police attend to share information. Meetings provide opportunities for Essex County Council's Adults Health and Community Wellbeing directorate and older people to work together to reach a better understanding of mutual issues and influence relevant services.

This information sharing and often differing viewpoints assists in greater understanding of issues that impact on daily living. The group's terms of reference include the promotion of the principle of "Our Health, Our Care, Our Say" to ensure that Adults, Health and Community Wellbeing customers and prospective customers can make a positive contribution and have choice and control of relevant services.

## Annual General Meeting 2009



**Pictured left to right - April Lawlor, ECC senior commissioning officer; Tony Constable, Deputy Co-chair; Peter Coleing, newly-elected Co-chair; Maureen Montgomery, Deputy Co-chair.**

The 2009 Annual General Meeting was very well attended. Cllr Bill Dick deputised for Cllr Robinson at short notice. At the time of the meeting he had responsibilities for older people's homes, people with learning disabilities, libraries, adult learning and the mental health partnership. Cllr Dick provided information regarding Essex County Council's current initiatives, such as the Bank of Essex, a scheme offering loans to assist small business, an apprenticeship scheme to assist with employment and the ongoing campaign to keep post offices open. He encouraged people to visit the Telecare equipment information stall that was available for the AGM.

## Officer reports:

### Adults, Health and Community Wellbeing Essex Older People's Champion: Cllr Anne Brown



As the County Council's Champion for the Older Person, I actively promote the large number of services provided for the older residents of Essex.

I am very keen to encourage an active and healthier lifestyle for us all. I visit the local older people's forums held around the county, where local groups come with ideas and problems.

We have an increasing number of older people's champions being appointed across Essex within local groups, town and district councils. With the help of Val Dawes, project manager at County Hall, Chelmsford, we are trying to encourage this valuable network and information resource.

All the ideas and information that I am given are taken back to the department of Adult Health and Community Wellbeing at County Hall. This is then discussed with Ann Naylor, the Portfolio Holder, and Liz Chidgey, the Deputy Executive Director for that directorate. We value all the information and feedback that we receive. It makes us aware of problems and helps us improve our service to the public.

### ECC Senior Commissioning Officer and Co-chair: April Lawlor



This year 2010 has been a busy one for the OPPG with members involved in a variety of activities. An election last year has resulted in a new Co-chair Peter Coleing as well as new Deputy Co-chairs in Tony Constable and Maureen Montgomery. They bring a wealth of experience and knowledge, ensuring the group remains committed to issues that impact on the lives of older citizens in Essex.

We had a very successful intergenerational event in May with the Young Essex Assembly. (*see full report and picture page 5-6*)

The government's agenda for personalisation has been fully embraced in Essex and members are keen to ensure this remains a live issue. The OPPG has also debated personalised budgets and individual service funds.

The three local authorities and the five primary care trusts in Essex have also embarked on a joint project to look at opportunities to work on shared issues that impact on the health and social care of people. This includes hospital care and support on discharge as well as care for people at the end of their

lives. The OPPG is represented on the steering group and can therefore contribute to this important agenda.

Finally, can I thank members for their continued support and input into this group as I know it is valued by many people. Thanks also to Val Dawes, Sue Golden and Janet Leach at Essex County Council for providing excellent administration and always ensuring meetings are well organised.

### **Older People's Planning Group Co-chair: Peter Coleing**



It has been my great pleasure to be the Co-chair of this group for the past year and to see how the group keeps moving forward issues that impact on older people's quality of life. The coming year will see us even more involved - as we see the Government cuts to Essex begin to bite, we will need to consider how these cuts affect the most vulnerable residents.

Do we make a difference? Can we change anything? Alone I cannot, but together we can. I have seen how Essex County Council officers and elected members value what we have to say. As a group we do make a difference to the way services reach residents in Essex.

My thanks to all OPPG members for their contributions to ensure that the group continues to develop and has a voice to influence issues that really matter.

### **Older People's Planning Group Deputy Co-chair: Maureen Montgomery**



Almost one year has flown by since I was elected as a Deputy Co-chair and what an interesting, busy year it's been. I have taken part in focus groups, task and finish groups, lay visiting and several training sessions, all of which have helped me develop my role as a listener and voice for older people.

I attend Go-East Regional Meetings in Cambridge, maintaining links throughout the eastern region with local authorities and other agencies, exchanging information and good practice, networking with other older people groups.

The recession is beginning to take effect, with threats of service cuts, funding being withdrawn and not knowing what's going to happen where or to whom. So we must make sure our impact and influence as a group continues to be heard, ensuring Essex County Council continues funding and improving the services Essex people are entitled to and are benefiting from.

I look forward, as your representative, to the challenges of the next year. Thank you all for your support.

### **Older People's Planning Group Deputy Co-chair: Tony Constable**



I continue to represent the OPPG on the Relatives' and Residents' Association, on the Essex & Southend LINK, and on the Older People's Community Health and Social Well-Being Overview and Scrutiny Committee, although on this last item I tend to cover only when Maureen Montgomery or Peter Coleing are unable to attend. This keeps my travelling expenses within a reasonable limit, since travelling expenses are not recoverable as this latter meeting is available for all members of the public to attend.

I am aware that, due to the current financial situation, many of these service user facilities may well be withdrawn - indeed the complete health and social care programme is subject to review. I just hope that OPPG will still remain, for attendances at our meetings prove that there is a need to maintain this group. I thank you all for your continued support and I thank Peter and Maureen for taking their stronger roles on behalf of our group. Lastly, I thank April Lawlor and Val Dawes at Essex County Council for their work and promptings so vital for our success.

### **Information sharing**

Group members bring information to the meetings and take back information gained to their local communities. Topics of interest this year have included:

- February 2010 - Essex Cares, Telecare, review of the group's terms of reference and ECC's five-year strategy, the "Age of Opportunity"
- April 2010 - Mental Health and Mental Health Joint Commissioning, Dementia and Increased Access to Psychological Therapies
- July 2010 - Carers and family issues, updates on the Care Quality Commission recent inspection of Essex County Council, village agents, the International Day of Older People, transport fares concession
- September 2010 - self-directed support for care, personalisation, Trading Standards Buy with Confidence and bogus callers, transport and respite care reviews
- November 2010 - AGM report, information stalls and representatives, Essex millrace unite, home libraries, wills and probate, Age Concern Essex, Patients' Advice and Liaison Service (PALS), end of life care, Relatives' and Residents' Association (Essex).

## Additional involvement

Group members also voluntarily give up valuable time to take part in steering groups and consultations with Essex County Council. For example:

- Lay visitors, who received training in 2009 from Essex County Council, continue to visit residential homes in Essex and report back their findings
- Focus group meeting with Care Quality Commission inspectors in May to share opinions on Essex County Council services for older people
- Individual Service Fund workshop to consider how this option could benefit older people who require care services at home
- Transport fares concessions consultation
- Essex spending budget survey
- Health and Essex social care commissioning project. Some members took part in telephone surveys to share hospital discharge experiences with researchers. OPG Co-chairs also attend the project's steering group to progress ideas for developing joint health and social care
- The Deputy Co-chair was part of judging panel selecting the best residential carer, as part of "Celebrating Your Achievements" award
- Six members visited the Telecare SMART accommodation in Colchester to learn more about equipment available to assist people to remain living in their own homes for as long as possible.

## Additional Events - Bridging the Age Gap



Pictured above – the Young Essex Assembly and Older People's Planning Group 2010 with (far right) Chairman of Essex County Council, Cllr Rodney Bass.

Following the success of the joint event between the Young Essex Assembly and the Older People's Planning Group for the Local Democracy Week in October 2009, a further event was held at Essex County Council chambers in May 2010. Our aim is to build on these links which identified more commonalities than differences between the generations and showed how engagement can assist in bridging generational gaps and helping to dispel some ageist myths. It is proposed to collate and share the information gained with a wider audience, including schools and older people's services, in 2011.

## **Proposed Forthcoming Topics and Updates For 2011**

- Update on LINK:Healthwatch
- Housing
- Reablement
- Older People as lay visitors for Essex Residential Homes
- International Day of Older People 2011
- Young Essex Assembly
- Health and Social Care Joint Commissioning
- End of life care; Dying Matters
- Pharmacy and medication issues
- Dementia services
- Carers' strategy
- Future national and local government services

## **Meeting Dates for 2011**

- Thursday 24 February
- Thursday 28 April
- Thursday 30 June
- Thursday 29 September
- Thursday 24 November (Annual General Meeting)

Time of all meetings - 9.45am until 1pm  
Refreshments are available from 9.30am

Venue for all meetings:  
Chapter House  
Cottage Place  
Chelmsford  
Essex  
CM1 1NL

**This booklet is issued by**

Essex County Council  
Adults, Health and Community Wellbeing

You can contact us in the following ways:

**By post:**

Strategic Planning and Commissioning Team  
PO Box 297  
County Hall  
Chelmsford  
Essex  
CM1 1YS

**By telephone:**

01245 430217

**By email:**

OlderPeoples.PlanningGroup@essex.gov.uk

**Visit our website:**

[www.essex.gov.uk/](http://www.essex.gov.uk/)

[www.engageessex.ork.uk](http://www.engageessex.ork.uk)

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