

CENTRAL URBAN AREA COMMITTEE

At a meeting held on Thursday, 16th May, 2013

Present:-

Councillor D L Billing (Chairman) in the Chair;
Councillors S Bairstow, Mrs L Bastiman, E Broadbent, N Brown, C R Challen,
W Chatt, Mrs D V Cluer, T W Fox, Mrs J Jefferson, P G Popple, J Ritchie,
Ms A Robinson, S Sharma and M Smith

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

2. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 24 January 2013 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

3. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

The Chairman reported that no public questions had been received.

4. SCARBOROUGH DISABLEMENT ACTION GROUP

The Committee received a presentation from Tim Vasey, Manager of the Scarborough Disablement Action Group (DAG), which will now be attached to the agenda papers on the Council's website. The Committee were advised that DAG was a registered charity and began its support for the community in 1989. They are currently based in the new community building The Street and operate entirely on a voluntary basis. Tim is the only full time and unpaid officer, who receives ad hoc support from other volunteers on various days of the week. Tim puts in very long hours in order to support the growing number of clientele that DAG supports and a list of the services he provides, together with the number of enquiries received, is included in the presentation, namely:

- Adaptations (11)
- Appeals (1061)
- Attendance Allowance (243)
- Blue Badge Applications (80)
- Carers Allowance (341)
- Child Benefit (28)
- Community Care (58)
- Child Tax Credit (77)
- Debt (15)
- DLA (1529)
- ESA (759)
- Social Care Grants (181)
- Applications for Housing (132)
- Housing Benefits (237)
- Incapacity benefit (131)
- Income Support (186)
- Industrial Injuries (5)
- Job Seekers Allowance (37)

- Legal Advice (30)
- Mobility (56)
- Pension Credit (220)
- Pension Inquiries (67)
- Severe Disability Allowance (7)
- Social Fund (32)
- Tax Credit (23)
- Wheelchair Hire (6)
- Working Tax Credit (135)
- Unspecified (394)

Last year DAG supported 990 different clients, dealing with 6423 different enquiries and their helpline enquiries rose by 30%. They work closely with other agencies and receive referrals from the CAB, Job Centre, Age UK, Foundation Housing and many other groups. They offer help in completing forms, attend medicals, appeal hearings and offer many other services, making home visits where necessary to help the local disabled community. Where appropriate they do refer people to other agencies who can provide a more specialised level of support.

The workload is increasing and with Tim as their only full time member of staff and eleven unpaid volunteers who only provide between one and five hours a week, it will be difficult to sustain the service long term without financial support. Tim has worked for DAG for twenty years gaining a vast amount of knowledge and he is very concerned about who would take over from him if he were no longer able to meet the needs of their clients.

Cllr Chatt advised the Committee that he had invited DAG along to raise their awareness. He advised that Yorkshire Coast Homes had secured use of The Street for DAG for a period of twelve months and hoped that Members would consider offering their support for the DAG's uncertain future. Tim advised the Committee that DAG covered a much wider area than just Scarborough with cases often being from the East Riding and York. Suggestions were made for DAG to join up with another agency to share resources, ie CAB or perhaps with Whitby and Ryedale DAG groups. Tim advised the Committee that Scarborough had a definite need for their own branch of DAG and hoped that this could be sustained so keep services locally rather than clients having to travel to Whitby.

It was pointed out that Whitby DAG do charge for their services and perhaps Scarborough DAG should consider making charges, explore further avenues for funding and liaise with other agencies for advice/support.

5. **ROUGH SLEEPERS**

The Committee received a presentation by Graziella Brownbridge, Community Champion, North Yorkshire and York Forum of the Rough Sleeping Campaign, **Streetlink**, which will be attached to the agenda on the Council's website. Grazielle advised the Committee that she was making this presentation to as many local groups as possible in order to raise awareness of the support available for Rough Sleepers. The definition of a Rough Sleeper was someone who slept in a structure which was not considered to be a bedroom and who had no-where else to go, often people who had been referred to as "sofa sleepers" or who were homeless. This could be someone

from any background, who might just have walked out of a difficult situation in their former home or from a domestic abuse situation. Rough sleepers did not necessarily have to look unclean or be drug users.

The County Homeless Group is seeking for all organisations and community groups to become champions for the scheme and to disseminate the information as widely as possible. Their Vision is to end rough sleeping and the emphasis was on everyone to take action if they see rough sleepers to try and help reduce numbers, hopefully leading to a country free of homelessness; helping people to reconnect with their homelife. By recognising the services that are available and making a note of the helpline number, anyone can help to support this campaign.

It was stressed that rough sleepers should not be approached personally as they could become aggressive or indeed not really want to be helped. If contact is made through the helpline, appropriate support will be provided by trained agency staff who could offer temporary accommodation and support. Posters and telephone contact card details were available for members of the Committee to take and make a note of the helpline number: **0300 500 0914**.

6. SCARBOROUGH URBAN AREA FORUM - REPORT OF THE FORUM CHAIR

The Chairman welcomed Malcolm Short, Vice Chairman of the Scarborough Urban Area Forum and Matthew Joseph, Forum Support Officer, gave a brief presentation on current work undertaken by the Forum. A report on the changes to health care and the introduction of CCG's had been circulated to members and a wide cross section of community prior to the meeting.

Matthew outlined three events that had been arranged:

6 March: Changes to Healthcare and the Introduction of CCG's. A good meeting with 50-60 people attending to debate the introduction of Clinical Commissioning Groups.

13 March: The Return of the PCC. The Police and Crime Commissioner Julia Mulligan had been invited to give a presentation on her draft Police and Crime Plan. A lively debate took place with key decisions being taken, notably that Julia would join an evening patrol with the Street Angels and help to resolve current funding issues.

24 April: Public Information Session – Spa Sea Defence Proposals. The biggest turnout with 150 people attending to discuss future proposals for the sea defences at the Spa. A report is currently being prepared that would go to all members and be made available for the public.

7. INFORMAL DISCUSSION TIME

Grants for Voluntary Groups: Adrian Perry, Chairman of the Scarborough Civic Society, asked about progress on grants, which he considered were essential to receive early in the year, to enable groups in planning their annual events. Cllr Tom Fox responded that the distribution of grants was timed to match the Council budget decision making process in April and that a report on community and area committee grants would be discussed at a special joint Scrutiny Committee on the 7 June 2013.

Choices 4 Energy: The new advice centre would be opened to the public by the Mayor of the Borough on Saturday, 18 May at 11.00am and Cllr Cluer encouraged all members to support this new initiative.

8. ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held at 7.00pm on Thursday, 25 July 2013 at the Town Hall, Scarborough.

Chairman