The Voice of Older People in the City of Bristol

Our aim is that every older person in the city is an equal, valued, participating member of the community who can influence the decisions which affect their lives.

Winter 2018, Issue 57

What a Swell Party, a “Swelligant” Elegant party-it was!” Mr Frank Sinatra said it for me. To the 200 odd people who came to our 25th BOPF Birthday Party at City Hall on 20 Sept 2018, thank you! I certainly enjoyed myself and dancing with the Lord Mayor Cleo Lake, the wonderful Choir, and YOU all added to the enjoyment. Above is one of the fabulous cakes made for us by Mrs Rose Burke a BOPF member and a member of the Golden Agers Club. A second cake and other photos (thank you Angela) are featured throughout the newsletter, can you spot yourself?

Judith Brown, BOPF Chair

Please help us make the Forum fit for the future by answering the two questions on page 18 and returning to our free post address.

Be a VIP and get your voice heard!

Voice & Influence Partnership
Your City Our City One City

Make a difference to Bristol and the services that matter to you by becoming part of the new Voice and Influence Partnership.

We are looking for Bristol residents who identify with one or more of the following:
- Over 55
- A member of a faith group
- Identify as disabled
- From a minority ethnic group
- Identify as LGBTQ or other

The Voice and Influence Partnership has been set up to support individuals, groups and communities whose voices are not always heard to have their say in shaping Bristol’s future.

If you would like to become a BOPF & VIP member please complete the form on the back page and the equality data form on page 19 (optional) and return to our free post address. The council needs equality data to make sure they are reaching everyone.

www.bopf.org.uk

Registered charity 1162616
Dear BOPF member

Thank you so much for signing up for B.O.P.F. membership. As you know, the Government brought in new Data Protection rules this year which meant we had to ask you to give us permission to hold your details. We thought that this would mean our partner in the Voice and Influence partnership would be covered by the form you signed, but we have now been told that this wasn’t so.

There is an amended form on the back page, and we would be very grateful indeed if you would fill this out again and send it back to our freepost address on the form.

We receive funding from the Council depending on our membership, so it is very important that you are members of both BOPF and VIP.

Thank you again,

Judith

Chair B.O.P.F.
Deputy Chair Bristol Ageing Better
Delivery Partner Voice and Influence Partnership
A VIEW FROM OUR ‘ROCKING’ CHAIR!

The Voice and Influence launch was good. Giving people the chance to speak up and get their voice heard is what we do; Ian Quaife, our Engagement Officer is eager to meet groups so get in touch. You can leave a message on 0117 927 9222 . You can also sign up free on the back page. See also Ian’s VIP report on page 4. Good news for whoever is the next Chair, we have agreed to have two Deputy Chairs to spread the workload, and the

Dancing along with Bristol Lord Mayor Cleo Lake at BOPF’s 25 Years Birthday Party

Trustees agreed that Ian Bickerton and Jenny Smith are the ideal people.

We must start a petition to save the FREE TV licence for over 75s. I’ve seen several ominous reports lately that the BBC, who now have responsibility for the TV licence, want to withdraw it. There are numerous reports showing that one in four pensioners say that TV is their only source of comfort against loneliness, and contrary to public opinion we are not all Alan Sugar! Many people would find the TV license an enormous amount to find. At a recent traffic focus group, put on by Bristol City Council, we suggested free bus travel for under 18s......now there’s a thought.

And finally....I found myself wrapping the first Xmas present today. Am I the only one who buys things throughout the year and puts them away like a squirrel? See you at the next meeting! If not, Happy Christmas in advance!

Judith Brown, BOPF Chair

BOPF 25 Years Birthday Cake Baker, Mrs Yvonne Campbell, BOPF & Golden Agers Club member
Since the project started in May our VIP work has progressed well. We have signed over 120 new members. This will give all of us much more clout when we engage with Bristol City Council through our Open Forum Consultation sessions and by building stronger community links. We want to identify issues that affect our members from transport, social care, and local Neighbourhood issues as well as contribute our views on the City Council’s forthcoming budget. So if you have any friends who would like to join VIP/BOPF please let me know.

In the last few weeks I have met up with our new VIP/BOPF members from the Somali Male Elder’s Community and helped them with a successful BAB Kick Starter Grant. I have also met with the Bangladeshi Women’s Elder Community. Ten of the women have now signed up to VIP/BOPF. I am working with the Bristol Community Health Team and the wider Bangladeshi Association Women’s groups on a funding application that will help the Elders’ begin a programmer of healthy activity.

Currently I am working with a group of older people living on the East Park Estate in the Eastville ward. Again we have recruited eight VIP/BOPF new members, with two of the group attending our first BOPF/Consultation session held as part of our open forum last week. These residents have identified a number of issues including fly tipping and anti-social behavior on their estate so through VIP/BOPF we will help facilitate a face to face meeting with the local ward councilors and officers from Bristol Waste and Bristol City Council.

On the invitation of Ben Barker, a respected local resident and campaigner in the Bedminster area, I dropped in on the Bedminster Social Club. One or two are already members of BOPF but I also signed them up (including Ben) for VIP.

In the coming weeks I’m meeting up with members of the Chinese Elder’s community, The Council of Bristol Mosques, The Golden Agers over in Easton and the Malcolm X Elders in St Pauls as well as digging in to a Christmas meal with the Bedminster Social Club!

If any of you would like me to visit or have a chat about any of the clubs or projects you are involved with or voice issues of concern my contact details are:

email: bopf@ageukbristol.org.uk
Tel: 0117 927 9222

Ian Quaife, BOPF Engagement Officer

Choir at BOPF’s 25 Years Birthday Party
Bristol Older People’s Forum (BOPF) & Voice & Influence Partnership (VIP) OPEN FORUM MEETINGS allow you to make sure your views and opinions are part of the decisions taken in Bristol that affect you and your community. They are for all older people in Bristol including people who are 55+, a member of a faith group, identify as disabled, identify as LGBT+ or are from a minority ethnic group. The meetings include speakers from Bristol City Council Consultations. Below is a list of our meetings.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>BOPF &amp; VIP Open Forum Meetings</th>
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<tr>
<td>Thurs 7 Feb</td>
<td>BOPF Open Forum, Broadmead Baptist Church</td>
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<td>10:30 - 12:30</td>
<td>BCC CONSULTATION: TBC</td>
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<td>Thurs 4 Apr</td>
<td>BOPF Open Forum, Broadmead Baptist Church</td>
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<td>SPEAKER: TBC</td>
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Charity Gift Aid Declaration

Gift Aid is reclaimed by the charity from the tax you pay for the current tax year. Your address is needed to identify you as a current UK taxpayer. In order to Gift Aid your donation you must fill in the details below.

I want to Gift Aid my donation of £______________ and any donations I make in the future to Bristol Older People’s Forum CIO

I am a UK taxpayer and understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations in that tax year it is my responsibility to pay any difference.

Title _______  First name_______________________  Surname  _________________________
Full Home address  _____________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________  Postcode  _____________
Date  __________________  signature  _____________________________________________

Please notify the charity if you: 1. want to cancel this declaration, 2. change your name or home address, 3. no longer pay sufficient tax on your income and/or capital gains. If you pay Income Tax at the higher or additional rate and want to receive the additional tax relief due to you, you must include all your Gift Aid donations on your Self-Assessment tax return or ask HMRC to adjust your tax code.

Please return this form to our freepost address:
FREEPOST RLTY-EHKU-SYXB, BOPF, Canningford House, 38 Victoria Street Bristol, BS1 6BY
EXTRA SOCIAL CARE FUNDS FOR WINTER!

The Government’s been thinking about winter so it’s giving councils money to deal with problems this winter. Bristol has been granted £2,028,366 pounds on 17/10/2018 to stop people being stuck in hospital beds. The money can be used for home care packages to help people get out of hospital, for reablement packages to support people to regain mobility and confidence, and for home adaptations including new facilities like shower rooms to help people stay at home. I wonder how Bristol City Council will spend their allocation.

Letter from Karin Smyth, Labour MP for Bristol South, about NHS Funding & Campaign by 38 degrees

Dear Judith,

Thank you for contacting me about NHS funding and the related campaign by 38 degrees.

I share your concerns about the sustained underfunding of our NHS. Eight years of cuts and the biggest financial squeeze in its history have pushed the NHS to the brink and I believe it is patients who are paying the price.

On all key performance measures, the NHS is struggling to keep up with demand: A&E performance hit a record low this year; more than 4 million people are stuck on waiting lists; and cancer targets are repeatedly being missed.

The Government’s announcement that it will increase expenditure on the NHS by an average of 3.4% annually over the next five years is welcome but represents little more than a standstill. It is less than what experts have been calling for and I believe it is insufficient to deliver the much-needed improvements in care. On social care, Ministers have pledged just £240 million, yet since 2010 there are 400,000 fewer people receiving care.

I have repeatedly called for a long-term investment plan for the NHS and social care sector, funded by increasing taxation on the very wealthiest in society. So far, Ministers have refused to set out how they will pay for their proposed increase. The Prime Minister has suggested that a combination of higher taxes and a so-called “Brexit dividend” will fund future rises. However, the Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) has said concerning the Brexit dividend that “there is literally zero available” over this period.

At the 2017 general election, I stood on a fully costed manifesto with a commitment to invest an extra £37 billion into the NHS and £8 billion into social care. This would have been funded by increasing income tax for the top 5% of earners, raising tax on private medical insurance and reversing cuts to corporation tax. The IFS confirmed that this would have amounted to almost £9 billion extra for health and social care in the first year – an immediate increase of more than 5%.

Thank you once again for contacting me about this important issue. I will press the
Friends Ageing Better (FAB) is a community of older people who get together in their local area, share a cup of tea and make new friends, while sharing information on activities in their local area and more generally in the city.

We hold FAB Cafés across Bristol on a monthly basis. A FAB Café is an opportunity to share a cup of tea (and maybe a slice of cake!) and chat about what is going on in the local area in an informal and relaxed setting. Being part of FAB also provides access to special events and discounts across the city – for more information about this watch this space!

The first FAB Café is taking place on Tuesday 13th November at Boston Tea Party in Horfield (293 Gloucester Road, BS7 8PE) from 10am to 12pm (and then the 2nd Tuesday of every month). Please contact us to receive free tea/coffee and cake at the event.

For more information about Friends Ageing Better, please contact Clare Mitchell or Silvia Jimenez Cruz on 0117 929 7537 or email fab@ageukbristol.org.uk. FAB is funded by Bristol Ageing Better and delivered in partnership with BOPF.
Flourish Connected Autonomous Vehicle (CAV) Project

Flourish Connected Autonomous Vehicle (CAV) project held its second showcase event this October, as shown on ITV News. Part of a UK/EU initiative. Flourish is helping shape the data driven transport network that is just around the corner.

UWE, Bristol City Council and Bristol University work with Age UK and many industrial/commercial movers and shakers to shape technology to the needs of the rising number of older people, be they drivers or not.

Current vehicle interfaces include; keys, doors, seat belts, adjustable seating, steering wheel, pedals, hand controls for gears, warning and road lights, direction indicators, heating and air conditioning, mirrors in 3 locations, windows and sunshields (don’t mention Satnav), plus external things such as kerbs, crossings, road signs, lights and markings, insurance, maintenance, road tax... potholes, cats, other drivers, etc. Oh, and accidents. Whew!

We manage these less well as our facilities decline and the world becomes more complex. Flourish helps develop and integrate technologies as driving tasks are taken into the overall infrastructure data network, with "the driver" left to decide what kind of trip s/he wants, and when they want it, whatever their abilities. Though we seem a long way from the aim of autonomous travel, I'm sure it will happen quite rapidly.

In later versions of data driven transport, you might, for instance; leave your chosen start point, stop to pick up family, go swimming, and return home via a shop, or whatever you choose to visit. The vehicle might be stabled in a car park for private or general use. You might finance the ride or use the equivalent of a bus pass, and give orders to vehicle and children, and enjoy yourself.

Flourish works to integrate mobility needs of older people with a secure, connected infrastructure, reducing loneliness and giving freedom to make spontaneous choices.

Tony Wilson, BOPF Trustee

New ‘flat fare’ for bus travel across Bristol

Buses are a hot topic of debate in Bristol as operator First Bus reveals details of a new ‘flat fare’ for travel across the city. Due to be rolled out in November 2018 as part of wider changes to the service, the new £2 ticket price for single journeys (£2.50 for those buying on board) means costs will go down for some passengers and up for others.

The idea is to bridge current inequalities, so people travelling into the centre from further afield will no longer have to pay...
more, and incentivise purchasing tickets beforehand via app, mTicket or smart card, in a bid to minimise delays and speed up the service.

Details of the new fares come soon after First boss James Freeman issued an apology for the state of the city’s bus services amid consistent delays and cancellations – blaming problems with recruitment and the increasing congestion.


Dreams Are Not Enough!

There is so much planning and talking going on about transport, it’s difficult to know where to begin, so I’ll mention one of my frustrations; stuck for over 20 minutes without moving in one of dozens of buses and Metrobuses competing for space and air to thoroughly pollute the city centre well beyond legal limits. Lesson one for Bristol City Council; if you cannot give Metrobus continuous dedicated road space with priority at junctions and pinch points, then don’t bother. In heavy traffic Metrobus needs exactly the same consideration you would give to trams. That is basic road management. Bristol City Council, educate your teams! We cannot wait decades for your dream metro service, most of us oldies will be dead by then, along with a fair few younger ones choked by pollution. I say wake up BCC, and the southwest regional planners, and especially the London-centric Westminster lot so busy chasing their tails over self-generated austerity and that waste of time called Brexit.

Tony Wilson, BOPF Trustee
(All opinions expressed are my own and deeply felt)

Care & Carers

St Monica Trust – ACE Neighbours project in Hartcliffe, Withywood, Lawrence Hill and Filwood!

St Monica Trust’s ACE Neighbours project matches older people (65+) wanting to get out more with older volunteers (60+) offering support over 6 months to get out and try activities. We also organise get-togethers for volunteers and participants.

A previous participant said, “I think it’s being involved in something, being part of something again.” Volunteers felt they had, “made a difference to others” and, “had fun!”

Kathleen, Project Co-ordinator said, “This project builds people’s confidence to enjoy the activities happening in their area, make friendships and reconnect with their community. Everyone gets so much out of it; it’s a win-win.”

If you are interested in participating or volunteering, contact Kathleen (Tuesdays-Thursdays) for a chat on 07964 923032 or email kathleen.woodhouse@stmonicatrust.org.uk
Local Organisations & Very Useful Numbers - perfect for the fridge!

Advice Centres (offer advice on housing, benefits, debt and other matters):
- St Paul’s (includes East Bristol) 0117 955 2981
- South Bristol  0117 985 1122
- North Bristol  0117 951 5751 (including Community Support at Home)

Alive! 0117 377 4756 (activity sessions & staff training for care homes)

Avon & Bristol Law Centre 0117 924 8662

Avon Fire & Rescue 0117 926 2061 (free fire safety visits)

Bristol Area Stroke Foundation (details P 14) 0117 9647657 Gatehouse Centre, Hareclive Road, BS13 9JNT. Open 9.15am-1.30pm Mon & 9.15am-12.30am Tues-Fri

Bristol City Council 0117 922 2000 (textphone 0117 357 4444)

Bristol Community Transport 0117 902 0157 (for those unable to use mainline bus)

Bristol Credit Union (community banking) 0117 924 7309

Bristol Dementia Action Alliance 0117 968 1002

Bristol Drugs (&Alcohol) Project: Older People's Service 0117 987 6016

Bristol Grandparents Support Group: 07773258270, www.bristolgrandparentssupportgroup.co.uk

Bristol Hate Crime Services 0800 171 2272 (to report incidents/seek advice)

Bristol Home Library Service 07714 898558 (volunteers who choose and deliver library books to those who can’t easily get to a library themselves).

Bristol Older People’s Forum 0117 927 9222 (full contact details P18)

Bristol Citizen’s Advice Bureau 0344 111 444 or debt advice 0117 946 2588

Bristol Mental Health 0117 919 5670

British Red Cross—Bristol—0117 301 2606 / 0117 301 2619 (local services include short term support at home and loans of medical equipment)

Bus Passes (Bristol City Council) 0117 922 2600

Care Direct 0117 922 2700, textphone 0117 903 6689 (Home care—and Safeguarding - you can use to report any concerns)

Carers Line 0117 965 2200 (Carers Support Centre, Bristol & S Glos) - lots of groups, support and information for local carers of any age

Cruse Bereavement Care Bristol 0117 926 4045 (Mon-Fri 10am-12.30)

Dementia Wellbeing Service 0117 904 5151 (weekdays 8am-8pm)

Dial-a-ride (Social Access) 0845 130 1875
FirstBus customer services 0117 244 4040

Healthwatch Bristol 0117 269 0400 or Text bris followed by your message to: 07860 021 603 (Healthwatch enables you to have your say about health & social care services)

Independent Age 0800 319 6789 - local support including visits available
Older People’s Services, Southville (SCDA) 0117 923 1039

Lifeskills 0117 922 4511 (safety knowledge & skills to maintain independence)

LinkAge 0117 353 3042

LinkAge Macmillan Prevention and Re-enablement Project 0117 353 3042

Pennywise 0117 9704548 (money advice)

RNIB (formerly Action for Blind) 0117 953 7750

RELATE (relationship and family counselling)—Avon region 0117 942 8444

Royal Voluntary Service (Bristol & Somerset) 0117 9055003

Shelter Bristol 0344 515 1430 (advice line—housing)

Shopmobility 0117 955 9083 (mobility scooters to assist shopping)

SSAFA Bristol & S Glos 0845 8500 510

Stroke Association — Bristol office 01179 119351

Talking Money (previously Bristol Debt Advice) 0800 121 4511

Traveline 0871 200 2233 (for travel planning)

Bristol U3A 0117 963 1032 / info@bristolu3a.org.uk
or membership enquiries, 0117 950 6807 / membership @bristolu3a.org.uk

Up Our Street - supporting residents in Easton & Lawrence Hill to get involved in their neighbourhood. Newsletter and events. 0117 954 2834

Walking for Health 0117 352 1283 (to find a walking group in your area)

WRAMAS 0117 352 1888 (welfare rights & money advice, run by the Council)

WellAware Freephone 0808 808 5252 (free health and wellbeing information for Bristol & surrounding areas. Weekdays 9am—4.30pm (except Bank Holidays)

WE (West of England) Care & Repair 0300 323 0700 (help with house repairs)

WECIL (support for disabled people) 0117 947 99 11

Details are accurate to the best of our knowledge. If your organisation’s details have changed please let us know.
National Helplines and Organisations

ACAS Helpline 0300 123 1100, textphone 18001 0300 123 1100
Action Fraud 0300 123 2040 (to report fraud including phone / doorstep scams)
Action on Elder Abuse 0808 808 8141 (all forms of abuse including financial)
Action on Hearing Loss (new name for RNID) 0808 808 0123
Age UK (National) 0800 169 6565, advice line 0800 678 1174
Alzheimer’s Society 0300 222 11 22 (National Dementia Helpline)
Arthritis Care 0808 800 4050
British Lung Foundation 03000 030 555
British Red Cross 0300 456 1981
Cancer Research UK 0800 800 4040 (‘speak to a nurse’)
Carers UK 0808 808 7777 (support for carers)
CSE: Home Energy Team 0800 082 2234 (energy saving advice) (and see P17)
Citizens Advice Consumer helpline 03454 04 05 06
Contact the Elderly 0800 716 543 (tea parties for older people) - South West office 01225 873 812
Compassion in Dying 0800 999 2434 (help with making a ‘living will’ & more)
Cruse Bereavement Care 0844 477 9400
Deafblind- Advice & Information Line 0800 132 320 (textphone 0800 132 320)
DisabledGo www.disabledgo.com Tel 01438 842 710 (and see P17)
Equality Advisory Support Service 0800 800 0082 textphone 0808 800 0084
Gas Safe Register helpline 0800 408 5500 (advice about gas safety / engineers)
Hearing Information Service 0800 488 0106
Independent Age 0800 319 6789 - advice line for anyone over retirement age
MIND 0300 123 3393 - for anyone worried about mental health
Macmillan Cancer Support 0808 808 00 00
Marie Curie 0800 090 2309
MS Trust - Helpline 0800 032 3839
National Osteoporosis Society 0808 800 0035 (including information for men)
National Pensioners Convention (NPC) 020 7383 0388—national umbrella body for pensioners’ groups. Individual membership also available
Contacting the Police:
Call 999:
- when it’s an emergency
- a crime is in progress
- someone suspected of a crime is nearby
- when there is danger to life
- when violence is being used / threatened
Textphone 18000 in an emergency
All non-emergencies — call 101 or textphone 18001/101
You can also report crimes anonymously by calling Crimestoppers 0800 555 111

Contacting the NHS
For immediate, life-threatening emergencies, call 999.
Call 111 (NHS Direct) if:
- you need medical help fast but it's not a 999 emergency
- you think you need to go to A&E or need another NHS urgent care service
- you don't know who to call or you don't have a GP, or you need health information or reassurance
North Bristol NHS Trust 0117 950 5050
University Hospitals Bristol 0117 923 000,
NHS Choices www.nhs.uk

Details are accurate to the best of our knowledge. If your organisation’s details have changed please let us know.
There has been a lot in the media recently about sexual abuse and rape and this may be raising issues or concerns for you.

There are a lot of myths around rape and sexual abuse, myths like ‘only young women are raped’ and ‘we’re married so it is ok’.

Sexual violence is any type of sexual behaviour that has not been consented to. 1 in 5 women and approximately 1 in 20 men will experience sexual violence during their lifetime. Older people don’t see themselves portrayed in the literature or media around sexual abuse but the truth is that it can happen to anyone of any age from the very young to the very old.

Research shows that very few older people access specialist sexual violence services for support and reasons may include them feeling embarrassed and ashamed or being unsure of who can help.

SARSAS is the specialist support service for survivors of rape and sexual abuse across Bristol, Bath, North East Somerset, North Somerset, Somerset, and South Gloucestershire. SARSAS exists to relieve the trauma and distress of survivors who have experienced any form of sexual violence, at any time in their lives, through the provision of trauma informed services that focus on listening, believing and supporting survivors.

We have counselling and support services across Avon and Somerset region plus an anonymous Helpline that’s open 5 days a week:

Women & Girls Helpline – 0808 801 0456 on Mondays & Fridays 11am – 2pm; Tuesdays, Wednesdays & Thursdays 6pm – 8.30pm

Men & Boys Helpline – 0808 801 0464 on Mondays 11am – 2pm; Tuesday 6pm – 8.30pm

Money Matters

BUDGETS, LOCAL AND NATIONAL

We shall be discussing Bristol’s budget at the next Open Forum on November 15th, and we hope to hear your views and some good news, because the National budget gave local councils an extra 55 million to spend on home adaptations, on top of the 468 million already paid this year for the Disabled Facilities grant. Income tax boosts for all, and help for people on the living wage is good news too.

Judith Brown, BOPF Chair
Working towards an Age Friendly City

Bristol recently applied to join the World Health Organisation’s Global Network of Age Friendly Communities. This means that we join communities from New York and London to South Delhi and Akita, Japan who are all working towards making their areas age friendly. Making this application is not about trying to claim that everything is perfect, but about encouraging decision makers in the city to make changes that will make life better for older people and for everyone. Whether it is about encouraging people to share information through noticeboards and shop windows rather than just online or working to keep pavements clear of clutter, Bristol Ageing Better has been working with people across the city over the last few years to get ideas of what needs to change and trying to coordinate a city wide response to this. In the coming months, people will be encouraged to work together in small action groups to find ways of tackling some of the things that have been identified, and they will release some funds to help people achieve these challenges.

Adam Rees, Bristol Ageing Better, Programme Director

Volunteer opportunities available

We’re in urgent need for volunteers in the Bristol area to support our growing network of older people who would benefit from a friendship visit in their home for a regular catch-up and chat.

If you’re a good listener and can get a good conversation going when someone’s feeling rather lonely or a bit low, we’d love to hear from you.

We’ll give you the support and training needed, cover your expenses and give you the flexibility to arrange regular one hour weekly or fortnightly visits to a schedule that works for you.

Get in touch, visit www.independenage.org/volunteer or call 0800 319 6789 quoting ‘Local 18’
Registered charity number 210729 / SC047184
Remembering Merrywood
When Interests Collide!

Old age - or do I mean, the passing of time - takes us to so many new and exciting places. With increasingly limited hearing I decided to learn to lip-read: surely a skill for my future! I found a class in Knowle, on the site of the old Merrywood Grammar School, perched on top of Novers Hill. This is where I met Phyllis Watkins who was a passionate member of BOPF and who introduced me to the organisation - I was signed up in next to no time. We discovered both her daughter and I had attended Merrywood Grammar under the stern headship of Miss Gray. She told me that Miss Gray was still going strong and was a key member of BOPF. Sadly Phyllis passed away last year but I hope she would have been pleased to hear how the Forum was able to help me recently.

Some Merrywood old-boys had set up a facebook group as a place to share memories and photos. As the group grew they really wanted to attract some old-girls! Despite the schools being adjoined, in the 1960s everything - and I mean everything - was done to keep the sexes apart: timetables staggered to ensure we didn’t mix on the buses or streets in the area; strict segregation keeping the boys behind war camp like pens; and detentions for anyone found flouting rules. The group’s strategy was to launch a drop-in monthly mini-reunion where anyone with Merrywood connections could stop by and meet up to share news of old friends. March saw the first meeting in the Grounded cafe in Bedminster. Three intrepid girls turned up: Trudi Bridges, Shirley Packer and her sister, me.

We found so much in common and also many differences. While the boys were encouraged into the sciences and industry, it seemed acceptable for girls to drift into secretarial and teaching. Some of the boys were keen to find out more about the history of the schools: why were they run separately when they opened in Knowle after the original school in Merrywood Road, Southville had been mixed; who were the key people involved as it moved and
morphed from Southville to its final Daventry site when once more the sexes were mixed; and could we find out more about its staff and pupils?

I immediately thought of Miss Gray and we three girls decided we’d try to find her in hope of meeting. So right at the time that the European laws around General Data Protection Regulation were coming into force we set ourselves a tricky challenge. BOPF was our first port of call and thankfully Ian Quaife was keen to help. He offered to contact Margaret Gray (yes, she had a Christian name!!) and ask if she’d be willing to make contact.

In no time at all I had a phone number and permission to ring. The only thing I lacked was courage. What had I been thinking? Why on earth would our eminent ex-headmistress want to talk to me? I built up my nerve and after a couple of false starts, made the call. I was relieved to find no answer and so I left a message – at least that broke the ice. I put the kettle on to relax with a cuppa, having done my duty. I don’t suppose you can imagine my panic when the phone rang and Miss Gray’s number was showing. She had been in the kitchen and had not reached the phone in time. I’d like to be able to share with you what we said but I cannot remember the tiniest bit of it. I suspect I gabbled as I would have done had I been summoned to her door 50 years ago!

Things were better when I rang back a couple of days later to iron out details of a meet-up.

And so we met. Miss Gray is a bright, modern, highly articulate woman with a sharp mind and cracking wit (who knew that 50 years ago?!). She entertained us with tales, brought old photographs and talked of staff who we remembered fondly, and some not so fondly! She is rightly proud to have held a key role in the success of our school and its pupils and where she remembers being supported by one of the best teaching teams you’d find anywhere. It was rewarding to learn that the school had strong teams in every subject and quite how much the staff were dedicated to us all.

Trudi took news of our encounter back to the September Drop-in and was delighted to be met with an enthusiastic response to her news: Miss Gray was both admired and held in great affection by those who were guided by her at school. All were thrilled to hear the stories which illustrated her terrific sense of humour.

We will meet again. Miss Gray is interested in helping us with our research and we are delighted to have her support. Whether we allow her to mix with the boys is as yet undecided!

If anyone out there attended Merrywood as a pupil or teacher you’d be welcome to join us at our regular mini-reunions, held monthly on the 4th Friday from 3-6pm in Grounded, East Street, Bedminster. Or sign up to our facebook page – type Merrywood Grammar School Bristol into the search and keep up to date with memories and events.

Jan Packer, BOPF Member

Couple enjoying BOPF’s 25 Years Birthday Party
Bristol Older Peoples’ Funding Alliance granted BOPF £7000 to spend on looking at BOPF in the future. We want to carry out a piece of work focussing on how we can improve the forum and look at new ideas to help us meet the needs of older people. We appointed Di Robinson, a consultant, to look at this with us and to help us decide the way we should operate in the interest of older people. You may find Di gets in contact with you and asks your opinion and we hope you will be totally honest. Is there a place for BOPF in todays brave new world, and if so what should it be doing?

We need to think about how BOPF will develop and continue to provide valued services in the future to a growing and diverse older population in the Bristol area. We have asked Di to report back to the Trustees in Dec 18 and we will hold a workshop to decide on the best way to go.

The views of our members are critical in this conversation and Di will be using all the things you told us in our Survey in June this year. Please help us by also answering a couple of extra questions:

What do you most value about the Bristol Older People’s Forum now?
_____________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________

What new things would you like to see the Forum doing in the future?
_____________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________

We will feed back the results of this work in the next Newsletter
Please return this form to our freepost address:
FREEPOST RLTY-EHKU-SYXB, BOPF, Canningford House, 38 Victoria Street Bristol, BS1 6BY
1. What ethnic group do you identify as belonging to

- White
  - English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British □
  - Irish □
  - Gypsy (including English, Scottish and Roma Gypsy) or Irish Traveller □
  - Eastern European □
  - Any other White background ___________________

- Mixed / multiple ethnic groups
  - White & Asian □
  - White & Black Caribbean □
  - White & Black African (non Somali) □
  - Any other mixed/multiple ethnic background_________________

- Asian / Asian British
  - Bangladeshi □
  - Indian □
  - Chinese □
  - Pakistani □
  - Other Asian background____________________

- Black / African / Caribbean / Black British
  - African (non Somali) □
  - Somali □
  - Caribbean □
  - Other Black / African / Caribbean_________________

- Other ethnic groups
  - Arab □
  - Kurdish □
  - Iranian □
  - Turkish □
  - Iraqi □
  - Other ethnic group ________________________
  - Prefer not to state my ethnic group □

2. Do you consider yourself to be a disabled person?

- Yes □
- No □
- Prefer not to say □

If you identify with any of the groupings below and are happy to let us know please select the ones that apply. This information will help us better understand the needs of those taking part.

- Physical impairment □
- Visual impairment □
- Hearing impairment □
- Deaf BSL user □
- Learning difficulties □
- Mental and emotional distress □
- Health condition □
- Other_________________________ Prefer not to say □

3. Do you identify as belonging to a faith group?

- Christian □
- Hindu □
- Muslim □
- Jewish □
- Sikh □
- No religion □
- Other ________________ Prefer not to say □

4. In relation to your sexual orientation do you identify as:

- Asexual □
- Lesbian/Gay Woman □
- Gay Man □
- Bisexual □
- Heterosexual □
- Other ____________________ Prefer not to say □

5. In relation to your gender identity

- Do you identify as: Male □ Female □ Other ___________ Prefer not to say □
- Do you identify as the sex assigned at birth? Yes □ No □

Please return this form with your membership form on the back page to our freepost address:
FREEPOST RLTY-EHKU-SYXB, BOPF, Canningford House, 38 Victoria Street Bristol, BS1 6BY
Benefits of BOPF & VIP Membership

Includes: receive FREE BOPF Newsletters. Have a voice and influence the decisions which affect your life. Attend FREE Open Forum Meetings. Participate in Consultations and Surveys. Become a volunteer and represent us.

Bristol Older People’s Forum (BOPF) & Voice & Influence Partnership (VIP)
MEMBERSHIP FORM for CURRENT and NEW members

Note: If you have received this newsletter by post then you are already a member of BOPF.

Title: ……..… First Name: ……………..…………….............…..  Surname …………….……………….……………..….......

Partner/spouse (for joint membership with shared newsletter)
Title: ……..… First Name: ……………..…………….............…..  Surname …………….……………….……………..….......

Please tick one option as applicable:
□ continue my membership
□ update my membership details  □ cancel my membership  □ new member

Address: …………………………………………………...…………………………………………….…………………….…….…………...

Postcode: …..…...….....… Telephone/mobile:  ……....……..…...……..  Email:  ……………...……………...….……....

DOB (DD/MM/YY): ……………………….…… DOB (Partner/spouse): …………….………….………

Receive the BOPF Newsletter by (please tick as applicable):  □ post and/or □ email

To comply with the new data protection regulations (GDPR) and remain a member or become a new member, please tick the box below.

□ I agree for you to store and use my data for legal reasons associated with the running of the BOPF Charity and The Care Forum, lead partner of the Voice & Influence Partnership project, and to provide me/us with its services and communications. You can find our privacy policy on our website: www.bopf.org.uk/privacy-policy.

You have the option to have your data removed and terminate your membership. For removal of your data with BOPF please email bopfadmin@ageukbristol.org.uk or call 0117 9279222. For removal of your data with The Care Forum please email VIPadmin@thecareforum.org.uk or call 0117 965 444.

Name:…………………………………….Signature: ……………………………………..Date: …………...……...

It would help us if you could fill out the Equality Data Form on the back of this page. Though providing us with equality data is not a requirement to becoming a member, equality data is required by our funders to ensure we are reaching everyone.

Please return this form to our freepost address:
FREEPOST RLTY-EHKU-SYXB, BOPF, Canningford House, 38 Victoria Street Bristol, BS1 6BY

BOPF Membership is free, however if you would like to make a DONATION you can post a cheque made payable to Bristol Older People’s Forum and use our freepost address:
FREEPOST RLTY-EHKU-SYXB, BOPF, Canningford House, 38 Victoria Street Bristol, BS1 6BY.
You can also donate online: www.bopf.org.uk/donate. Gift Aid form page 5. THANK YOU