

## **Sedgemoor Older Persons' Forum Discussion – Ageing Well**

**November 2016 (11 People)**

### **What does ageing well mean to you?**

Exercise – keep fit for over 60s, Tai Chi

Eating well

A feeling of relatively good health but also accepting your restrictions.

Mental wellbeing – looking forward to the future – there is a lot of adverse publicity – you have to be optimistic

Carers and people with mental health problems – need more community support and different sorts of community support

Intergenerational interaction – (this person gave the example of a collaborative film [“In It Together”](#)) – ...the media seems to divide us.

Active living centre in Frome – local school pupils go in to learn about Frome history over a six week period. School pupils serve lunches at the Milborne Port ALC

Loss of family units and a lack of connection to grandparents. So much begins at home, teaching practical skills to the very young.

We have a different society now – have to deal with what you have *now*.

### **Diet**

Home cooking, home economics, we ate to survive, no processed food, had to make the best use of food yourself, no freezer, no waste and we *grew* more (food).

Changes to diet in older age – more choice and food not seasonal

If you're isolated or lonely you don't cook so much.

### **Exercise**

Outside to play “running after boys”

Cycling, climbing trees – too much 'cotton-wooling'; exposure to danger makes them safer.

Cross country running at school, sport was seasonal, music and movement, country dancing

A lot of sport more indoor-based now – e.g. squash and pilates

In later life, continued walking and cycling – now there is a proliferation of cars and computers

## **Housing**

No electricity when young, some gas lighting, a well

No heating in bedrooms – this was good for health and I don't overheat my home now.

Gym membership is unaffordable

## **Hobbies in later life**

Gardening, home maintenance, sewing, knitting, men's sheds – it's important to have a purpose.

Transport – it's a problem that community transport runs along district council lines – difficult if you need to cross over into another district on your journey

Buses to hospital – can't go directly from Bridgwater

A lack of transport *isolates* people – you might be able to get one way but then you can't get back! Goes against drive to alleviate loneliness

There are many disabled people who are stuck out in villages – community transport looks good on paper but you have to book a Slinky bus two weeks in advance.

Public transport very much depends on where you live in the county.

## **What doesn't help people age well (negatives of ageing)**

Sensory impairment – difficulties with being able to see the number of a bus

New buildings for older people – people aren't allowed pets

Nursing home fees – and the worries related to that - not being able to provide for children's future

Nursing home closures

The time paid carers have with patients and not enough care assistants in the community. Community care is fine in theory but not practically.

Some paid carers [are] not trained properly – with dementia you need a return [visit] and sometimes carers don't turn up or cancel. Dementia training is desperately needed.

There's not enough time and not enough carers – they are under pressure and this feeds back on family carers.

Caring training for families is available but it's not advertised well.

If you're seen to be looking after someone they won't get services, they're shunted to one side.

### **Positives of ageing**

Good company is important, laughter, sharing meals and common interests, walking with other people

Getting people together is a good thing.

Church work – active in community

Drama groups and social singing

A lot of church activity has been lost – outreach and pastoral care is very important

What you grow up with influences your feelings about society

Some sheltered housing residents have formed community groups

### **Young people – what could young people be doing to help them age well?**

[They need better] diet and exercise

Generations are what they are

There are a lot of good kids and we need to expand on the positives about them

Significant pressure on young people eg. league tables in schools, social media, the 24/7 economy

Going into this [technology] without realising the consequences (mental health issues)

Pressures of much later retirement

We need to have something *there* for them after education.

Housing/renting much harder, they're at home for longer

More life skills are needed – what would happen if technology failed?

There is a more transient lifestyle now [for young people] – more travel, they don't settle like their parents did – [they] don't have that 'platform' to come back for.

Late retirement has an impact on availability of jobs for young people

[There are] not enough places on apprenticeships and many can't afford to finish the courses

[There is a] big gap in funding for 19 – 25 year olds

Higher expectations and pressures are making some young people unhappy – leading to mental health problems

Peer pressure/bullying

**Media** – images create a vicious circle

Branding is very important now

Parents are more compliant in providing what's expected by their children (branding) – [they're] afraid to say no – healthy neglect wouldn't be a bad thing.

### **Technology**

Benefits include information, travel, holidays, communication with family/grandchildren (in this group the majority did not use technology for shopping or banking)

Concerns about too much reliance on technology and also 'pressing the wrong button' with online banking

Personal contact is very important – including in supermarkets (referencing an increase in automated machines at checkouts)

**Ends**