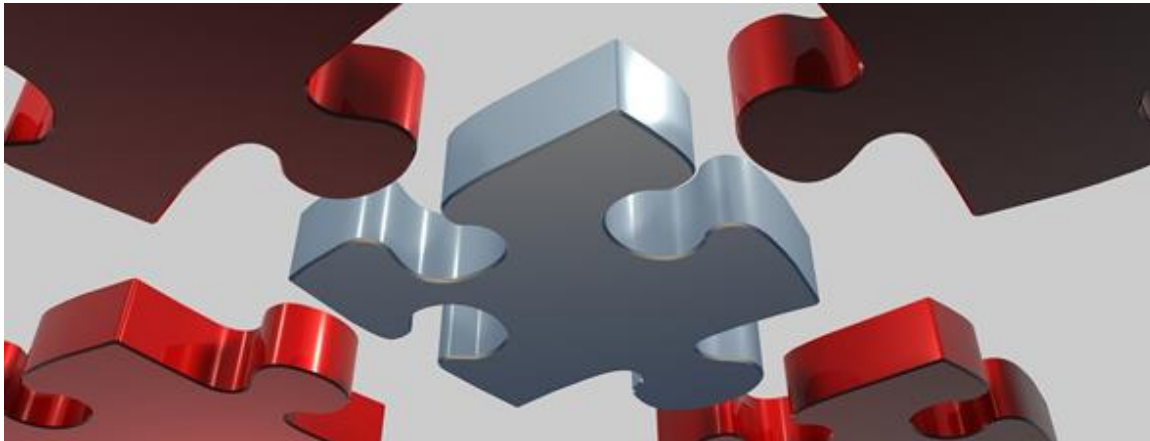

Newsletter – Winter 2020

COPA - Communications

I was elected as the COPA Communications Officer at the end of 2019. My particular interest in accepting the rôle was the prospect of helping struggling Forums across Wales. Having accepted the Chair of my own Forum 7 years ago, I am very well aware of how difficult the entity is to sustain. My hope is that by coming together we can share and help each other.



COPA Board has recognised that we need to create a successful social media presence. This is likely to start with a Facebook page. Would you prefer an alternative to Facebook? Do you have any ideas about what you would like to see from COPA on such a medium?



Trustees also recognise that the website needs to be updated regularly with interesting content. What content would persuade you to go to the website? What would be very useful would be items provided from around the country. Take this newsletter as an example; all the content comes from the South of Wales. The geographical extremes are marked by Carmarthenshire and Rhondda Cynon Taff.

You can give us feedback using the [contact form](#) on our website. You can also use that contact form to send us a suggestion for an item that you would like to contribute in “News” or “Forum Focus” or some other.

Really good news is that COPA have managed to recruit another co-opted expert to the Board. Andrew Hinchcliff, from North Wales, joined the first Board meeting of 2020.

A last comment about feedback. Would you please give us some comments about this newsletter? Just click on the link below and a form will open in a new Tab. It is mostly just a few clicks, with an opportunity to add some comments.

[NewsLetter Feedback](#)

Foreword by COPA Chair ; Steve Milsom

As we move into the New Year and a very different political and constitutional landscape, I am delighted to introduce this latest Cymru Older People’s Alliance (COPA) Newsletter.

Although COPA is only 2 years old as a charity ‘for older people run by older people’ we continue to make good progress in building a solid foundation for representing 50+ Forums and groups in Wales and making an impact. We now have 17 County Forums in the COPA umbrella and over 30 Voting members appointed from them. Following a successful Summer Conference attended by over 60 people, we held an excellent Annual General Meeting in October in Abergavenny where we agreed 4 Resolutions and 3 Motions to give us direction as a Charity. One of the Motions agreed, was to oppose the intended legislation in Wales to increase the age of eligibility to state pension age – currently 66 years old - for free bus travel. We worked with the Commissioner for Older People to take this forward and were very pleased to get a note back from Helena Herklots just before Xmas thanking us for our help as Welsh Government had indicated they were not now going to go ahead with this legislation and that our contribution had made an impact. This is an excellent example of how COPA as the national voice for 50 Forums can make a real difference.

Looking ahead 2020 will be another challenging year for COPA. We therefore welcome Cllr Andrew Hinchcliff as a new Co-opted Trustee to represent North

Wales. He has a wealth of experience of representing the interests of older people both at community and national levels. This will bring our Board of Trustees up to 10 with representation from Forums across Wales. COPA will also have two members appointed to the new Welsh Government Ministerial Advisory Forum on Ageing – myself a Chair and Gaynor Davies our Treasurer - we will report back to you. As agreed at our AGM we will be consulting Forums on a new revised Constitution which will be based on a “root and branch” review of COPA that the Board has agreed should be undertaken. Welsh Government will be consulting on a revised Strategy for an Ageing Society probably in the Spring and we will be consulting Forums about your views on it. Another priority for the year will be improving engagement with Forums around Wales, including making as many visits as we can to meet you . COPA will only be able to fulfil its charitable aims if we can make two-way co-production with Forums a reality and we are able to regularly exchange information, views and opinions both ways on the important issues impacting on the lives of older people in Wales. The door is very much open for Forums to engage with and influence the future of Cymru Older People’s Alliance

COPA NEEDS YOUR HELP AND SUPPORT

Cymru Older People’s Alliance – COPA – has Voting Members in seventeen 50+ Forums and Groups across Wales. This is a tremendous asset and following the launch of our “Volunteer with COPA” Scheme last year, we are already working with some Voting Members – for example on reviewing our Constitution and on Bus Travel

Now that we have tested this scheme out, we would like to invite expressions of interest from COPA Voting Members and 50+ Forum Members to work with the Board on a specific project where you have some expertise or interest that could help COPA.

We would ensure that the projects would be self-contained with clear objectives and a relatively short time-scale. There would be a process for reporting back to the Board and any contribution would be covered by our Volunteers and Travel and Subsistence Policies and our liability and indemnity insurance arrangements.

Examples of the sort of projects that could be undertaken are:

- Policy and Research – writing papers and summarising latest research findings on ageing and older people
- Applying for New Funds – help develop an application for additional funding – particularly if you have done this with your Forum or other organisation
- Engagement of Forums –suggesting and developing practical means of engaging with local forums and groups
- Spreading Good Practice – identifying ideas and approaches that Forums and Groups across Wales are progressing to disseminate to other Forums
- Website and (new) Facebook Page – help run and keep up to date our social media presence

COPA will only succeed as the national voice for 50+ Forums if it is owned and influenced by the Forums themselves. Please consider a volunteer role with COPA – it need only be for a few days or short period to suit you. If you are interested please get in touch with our Communications Officer Dr Ralph Steven on copa.communications@aol.com

2010 - 2020: a decade of opportunity, challenge and kindness for older people in Wales

The last decade has seen some significant milestones for older people in Wales, as well as some substantial challenges. Age Cymru's chief executive Victoria Lloyd reviews the last decade and reflects on the issues that lie ahead.

Social care

The Social Services and Well-Being (Wales) Act 2014 provided a framework to help older people retain voice, control and independence. However, squeezes on public sector funding have provided real challenges in making it meet older people's needs.

We often hear about the frustrations people encounter when trying to get the care they need. Delays in arranging assessments, the lack of care workers and services in rural areas, unexpected top-up fees, and delays in hospital discharges continue to impact on many older people.

Rising poverty

The Joseph Rowntree Foundation claims poverty amongst pensioners rose from 14% in 2010/13 to 18% in 2013/16. Rising fuel and food bills alongside static incomes is often cited as the main cause.

However, millions of pounds go unclaimed each year. Pension Credit, Attendance Allowance, council tax rebates and even pensions amongst our military veterans are all examples of potential support that remain unclaimed because people don't know about them or simply won't apply.

Pensioner poverty is one of the main reasons why we are fighting to keep free TV licences for the over 75s. It also shows the importance of our Advice service which last year supported more than 20,000 older people in Wales and helped them claim more than £6.5 million in benefits.

Loneliness and isolation

In Wales more than 70,000 older people ate their Christmas dinner alone in 2019, while up to 10,000 older people faced their first Christmas without their spouse.

But these are year-round issues. Our research shows that in Wales 220,000 older people claim to have felt lonely during later life; 100,000 older people speak to three or fewer people they know each week; and 330,000 say a few minutes of conversation would make a huge difference to their week.

Cuts to council budgets don't help with libraries, day centres and public toilets closing, while reductions in bus services make it difficult for those without a car to get out and about. The changing face of our high street has also meant that older people have fewer personal interactions as banks and building move services online.

However, the response from our communities offers much hope.

During Christmas in 2019, the public donated more than 1,000 gift boxes for our charity to distribute in care homes. We also worked with community groups to provide winter celebrations for more than 1,000 older people in 27 locations.

As we look ahead to the next decade, we hope the Welsh Government's strategies' on Loneliness and Isolation and on An Ageing Society will provide impetus for positive change.

Clearly we all have a part to play to help make our communities kinder and more age friendly during the next decade.

Carmarthenshire 50+ Forum

West Wales Walking for Wellbeing

The Carmarthenshire Fifty Plus Forum, through its Walking Well Carmarthenshire project, is the county partner in a successful three county collaborative bid for funds from the WG Healthy and Active Fund.

The 28-month project is now underway with co-ordinators appointed in Carmarthenshire, Pembrokeshire and Ceredigion.

The main aim is to encourage and help GP surgeries and similar settings to improve the activity levels of their patients by setting up their own walking groups and driving through this element of their preventative care agenda.

The Project also aims to develop a model which can be used around the country to increase the activity levels of the residents of Wales and thus reduce their dependence on the primary healthcare sector.

The Carmarthenshire Fifty Plus Forum is joined in the Consortium by the project lead, the Pembrokeshire National Park Authority, delivery partners Ceredigion County Council and Snowdrop Mobility and advisory partner, Public Health Wales.

For more information, please contact Andrew Kurzfeld, Chairman of the Carmarthenshire Fifty Plus Forum by email at chairman.carms50plus@gmail.com

Bytes and Bites Project

Carmarthenshire 50+ Forum has just received funding approval from West Wales Care Partnership for its plans to run a cross-generational community project across locations in Carmarthenshire. The purpose is to connect people who are 50+ with local young people to share learning and skills. The aim is to enrich lives through developing strong support networks, positively impact on health and wellbeing, and reduce social isolation and digital exclusion.

The approach will be to run regular informal sessions that are interactive, sociable and fun and provide new skills and useful, relevant information for those who take part. The process will build a tangible sense of community and engage older people in inter-generational exchange with younger people at places like Community Halls and Youth Clubs. There will be 2 way exchange of skills and experience with young people showing older folk how to use technology to access internet based services, and older folk helping young people develop skills like gardening, food preparation, cooking, and craft skills like mending bicycles and other items.

We have already tested this model with our partners in Carmarthen – Dr Mz Youth Project, Digital Communities Wales, and Carmarthen Town Council. Our first Bytes and Bites session was well attended, and 20 or so older people were coached by 10 Youth Project members on using their mobile devices and enjoyed afternoon tea prepared by the young people. There is now a waiting list and requests to hold it in other locations. Our evaluations show it was a great success and we now must do more of the same around the county. We also expect that the process of sitting and having a snack meal together will be beneficial in building mutual respect, forming cross generational relationships and enabling people to share their fears and challenges in a supportive setting.

The delivery mechanism will be through a part-time co-ordinator engaging with Youth Clubs and Town and Community Councils across Carmarthenshire to resource sessions in other locations. Digital Communities Wales trained the young people for the pilot project and are committed to continue working with us across Carmarthenshire and build a network of Digital Champions in those locations.

For more information, please contact Wyn Llewellyn, Community Engagement Lead, Carmarthenshire 50+ Forum on 07702249644 or wynmill@btinternet.com

Join my #EverydayAgeism campaign and help to challenge ageism and age discrimination

Despite a growing understanding of other forms of prejudice and discrimination, and the impact these have on individuals and society, ageism is widespread and is often seen as being acceptable.

Every day, we are bombarded with ageist language and imagery that reinforces stereotypes about older people that are often focused on ill-health, decline and frailty, and growing older is often presented as something that should be feared rather than celebrated.

As COPA members will be all too aware, this leads to a society in which we see age discrimination in the workplace, within health, social care, and other key public services, as well as across the media and advertising.

A growing body of research demonstrates the many ways that ageism negatively impacts upon older people, affecting their physical and mental health, recovery from illness, levels of social exclusion and even life expectancy.

Tackling ageism is therefore essential, which is why I have launched my Everyday Ageism campaign at the end of 2019 – to highlight just how prevalent ageism is across society and the significant impact it has, alongside robustly challenging examples of ageism that I have identified, and those that are shared with me as part of the campaign.

There's been a great response to the campaign so far, with older people and stakeholders throughout Wales sharing the campaign messages and making pledges stating the ways in which they will play their part in challenging and tackling everyday ageism.



There are a number of ways you can support my #EverydayAgeism campaign:

- Share examples of #EverydayAgeism so I can challenge and hold to account those who use ageist language, perpetuate ageist stereotypes, or discriminate against older people.
- Share #EverydayAgeism campaign messages and images via social media help people to understand the impact that ageism has, not only on older people, but also on society, and why it's so important we end ageism and age discrimination.
- Make your #EverydayAgeism campaign pledge to let me know the action you will take, however big or small, to challenge ageism and age discrimination.

Ending ageism must be a priority across society and I am looking forward to continuing to work with older people, public bodies, third sector organisations, business and the wider public to highlight and challenge everyday ageism. I hope you will join me as by working together we have an opportunity to change attitudes and tackle the ageism that underpins many of the issues faced by older people today.

Rhondda Cynon Taf 50+ Forum

Rhondda Cynon Taf 50+ Forums held an event on the 16th October 2019 at Llantrisant Leisure Centre the event was called 'Active Mind Active Body', this event was organised by the officers of the Rhondda Cynon Taf 50+ Forums whose aim was to bring the 5 forums together to get information and advice from the many stallholders and also to try some new activities such as Pickleball and Tai Chi hence the title 'Active Mind Active Body'.



The event was opened by the Chair of Rhondda Cynon Taf 50+ Forums Mrs Angela Tritschler who introduced the speakers for the event, and gave out the information for the day.

Speakers:

- Rachel Rowlands Chief Executive Age Connects Morgannwg
- Heléna Herlots CBE – Older People's Commissioner for Wales
- Rhian Webber Cwm Taf Morgannwg UHB
- Cllr Geraint Hopkins Older Peoples Champion

Rachel Rowlands: spoke about the help that ACM have given to 10,000 people throughout the year.

Heléna Herlots: Older People's Commissioner for Wales spoke about elder abuse: bus passes and the leaflet that will be enclosed with the new bus passes advising people how to apply for Pension Credit, the issues with public toilets was also talked about.

Rhian Webber: Spoke about her involvement with the Creative Arts Health and Wellbeing Strategy. This Strategy looks at the importance of art within a community, and how in various forms it is an integral part of healing.

Cllr Geraint Hopkins: Gave an overview of what the Local Authority are doing at the moment, with regards to helping people to fill their forms in for their new bus passes also free swimming which the Local Authority will be subsidised until the end of the financial year.

Members showing appreciation of the speakers. Everyone gained something from the information given by the speakers today.



Buffet Lunch was served at 12.00am Then after the Lunch members had free time to engage with activities and look around the many information stands.



Information Stands:

Full Stop Law: Edwards Coaches: Cwm Taf UHB Pharmacy: NHS Wales Flu Information: Drink Wise Age Well: Welsh Water: RCTCBC Recycling: Age Connects Morgannwg: Community Co-ordinators: Stroke Association: Dementia Friends: Ageing Well in Wales: RCTCBC – helping people with their bus

passes.

Members obtaining information and advice from the organisation that attended the event.

Activities:

Pickleball: Bowls: Curling: Nordic Walking: Tai Chi

Members enjoying Tai Chi and other activities on offer keeping their bodies active



Funding for this event was provided by:

- Full Stop Law who sponsored the buffet lunch.
- Edwards Coaches who sponsored the refreshments.
- RCTCBC who paid for the transport.

Everyone had a very enjoyable day so much so that they have asked for another event next year.

Caerphilly Over 50

Poetry Together:

Giles Brandreth created a new initiative called "Poems Together". The concept was to get schools across the UK to team up with a local Care Home and both learn some poems. The school would then host an afternoon tea during which both participants would recite the poems they had learned.

Caerphilly over 50 have long been closely associated with Lewis School, Pengam. We were very interested in this initiative and the school registered with the organisers. With some imaginative ideas, the original remit was expanded so that as well as the Care Home, the intergen lunch club was also involved as was our chairman.



Everybody met in the school library in early September and rehearsed their poems and had tea and cakes.

Leon is a member of the Lunch Club and originates from Poland. Kascper Dudeck, a year 10 pupil, is also from Poland and they paired up to recite in Polish and English. In fact we had poems in English, Welsh and Polish recited by men and women representing all of those nations. The Sunday Times ran an article about Poetry Together, particularly mentioning Lewis School in the article.



When we registered for "Poetry Together" they had no idea that some entries would be invited to London to take part in a joint poetry recital. Some 250 groups from across the UK were registered and 5 selected and invited to London. The Caerphilly entry was one of those five. The event took place in Eaton

Square School, Piccadilly; hosted by Gyles Brandreth and attended by the Duchess of Cornwall.



The fun Poetry Together event took place at Eaton Square School in central London. The event, hosted by broadcaster Gyles Brandreth, followed National Poetry Day, which highlighted the benefits of learning poetry by heart and bridging the gap between generations. It highlights benefits from improved memory and speech development to increased confidence, from learning and reciting poems. The inspiration for Poetry Together came after Gyles Brandreth made a radio programme last year about the value of learning poetry by heart, featuring University of Cambridge research that showed how learning and speaking poetry benefits both younger and older people.

The children and elderly people, aged from 14 years to 94years, recited works by Idris Davies, a Polish poem called Highlands, performed by Polish war veteran Leon Block and pupil Kascper Dudek and a piece written by care home resident Beryl Jones called friendship which was performed in Welsh and English.

BBC Radio 4 Just a Minute star Gyles enthused: "I love poetry and want to share the joy of learning a poem. The idea is beautifully simple – to get young and older people to learn the same poem and then get together to perform it and have tea. It's free, great fun, and bridges the gap between generations to the benefit of everyone."

Ralph Stevens, Chair of the Caerphilly over 50's Forum, who also attended and performed at the event added "I was certainly nervous about performing in front of royalty. However, I needn't have worried. The Duchess performed a poem as well and said that she was equally nervous".

The organisers hope that the event will become an annual one. Caerphilly Over 50



are hoping that they can expand awareness about the event next year and that they can work with the local Council in doing so.