

Mayor's Award for LOPSG Member

On 30th June at a presentation ceremony in the Living Room at City Hall Joan Bennetto was one of five people to receive from the Mayor his new "Team London" award for volunteers who have made an outstanding contribution to improving the quality of life of Londoners.

Joan is a founder member of LOPSG and the driving force behind the creation and growth of Capital Age Festival, which she now serves as its Chair of Board of Trustees.



Boris Johnson presents Joan Bennetto with her award.

Big boost for IT learning for older people

The Mayor of London's "Team London" programme is currently recruiting an additional 10,000 volunteers across the capital to work with organisations to cut crime and reach out to isolated groups, increase youth opportunities and generally improve the quality of life in the capital. As part of this programme the Mayor is providing £200,000 to enable 375 volunteers aged 16-18 to help 600 people over 60 to develop their computer skills. This funding will enable Age UK London and MiCommunity to develop the project in the ten London boroughs where the

need is felt to be greatest.

Boris Johnson says " This project will help will help many older Londoners discover that the internet is an easy and inexpensive way to keep in touch with friends and family or explore new interests and communities."

(For details of the full range of the mayor's volunteering projects see the LOPSG website at WWW.LOPSG.org.uk)

COMMITTEE

LOPSG AGM took place 4th November 2011 at City Hall where Management Committee were elected.

Listening to older people

From Ellen Lebethe
LOPSG Chair

At the heart of LOPSG is representing older people and ensuring that they have a voice in the development of policies that affect them in their daily lives and that policy makers and service providers listen to them. It is important that not only the most vocal and active older people are heard, but that the views of the most marginalised and socially deprived are sought and listened to. Enabling older people to contribute their wisdom, experience and valuable insights will go a long way in reducing social exclusion and in playing a part in planning their communities. By listening to older people's concerns, policy makers will gain a greater insight and fuller understanding of the practical details of the kind of services that will make a real difference.

Many older people do not get involved



Ellen Lebethe, Chair of LOPSG

in consultation exercises because there is the perception that policy makers do not listen to them and they question what impact their input will make. Older people want to know what their views are being gathered for and what impact they can expect.

We need to highlight and acknowledge the potential of older people in discussions and to begin the essential debate on how to ensure that the views of older people including those who are more likely to be overlooked are heard and heeded and urgent action taken to address the issues they raise.

Management Committee 2011 - 2012

Officers

Chairman: Ellen Lebethe

Vice-Chair: Bridgit A Sam-Bailey

Secretary: Paul Munim

Treasurer: Vacant

Committee

Anne Bryant
Ferdous Rahman
Stan Davison
Paul Joseph
Gulnaheer Khan
Kail Gunaratnam
Terry Murphy

Partnership Members

AGE UK London
Gordon Deuchers
NPC London and SE
Region
Pat Prendergast
Mervyn Kohler

ASSEMBLY

The Ninth London Older People's Assembly took place at City Hall on 18th July 2011



Speakers Ellen Lebethe, Boris Johnson and Alan Walker

Ellen Lebethe Chair of LOPSG: Assembly Address

Ellen began by thanking Professor Alan Walker, the Mayor, Boris Johnson, the Deputy Mayor, Richard Barnes and Bridgit Sam-Bailey, Vice-chair of LOPSG for their presence at the Assembly.

The theme of the Assembly was preparing for a more inclusive, age-friendly society. The fact that people are living longer is a cause for celebration not a threat. It is a challenge and at the same time a great opportunity. In a huge city like London the challenges present themselves as

numerous issues such as poverty, poor housing, health care, loneliness, discrimination and social exclusion. Encompassing all this is the challenge to unlock the potential of older people to take a full part in decision making on the strategies that affect their lives. As older people our contribution to family and community life is huge. So that we can be more effective we need the help to develop the skills to make us able to participate fully in society.

We look forward to discussing how the city can meet our needs.

ASSEMBLY



Questions from members at the assembly

The Mayor of London, Boris Johnson's address

After welcoming everyone to the meeting the Mayor stated that in spite of the rapidly changing times and economic conditions his work for London's older people would continue undiminished.

There were many successes to celebrate.

Security and crime on public transport, always a concern for older people, had been reduced by 30% and there had been an overall decrease in crime in general in London.

The establishment of the 24 hour freedom pass had been a major achievement.

In terms of access to toilets while many public facilities had closed this was being compensated for by the initiative to persuade large department stores to

make their toilet facilities available to older people.

The Mayor thanked Deputy Mayor, Richard Barnes, for leading the benefits take-up "Know Your Rights" initiative to ensure that as many older people as possible take up their entitlements.

Step free access to the tube was increasing though progress was slow due to the high costs. (The work at Green Park Station alone had cost £94 million) London remains the most easy access city in the world

The Mayor concluded with the thought that while we all enjoy the huge advantages of living in one of the world's greatest cities we need to need to develop flourishing village type communities bound together by neighbourliness and volunteering. His Team London volunteering project had been created to help to achieve this. One important aspect of this is the plan to bring improved IT skills to large numbers of older people, thereby liberating their talents and enabling them to take a full part in society.



Professor Alan Walker, Professor of Social Policy and Gerontology at Sheffield University

Professor Walker addressed two main issues: a) how to put ageing at the top of the national agenda and b) the priorities for an ageing policy for London. Ageing is in fact already at the top of the political agenda as the constant flow of reports demonstrate. One of this government's main reasons for reforming the NHS is the pressure of the ageing population. The top three priorities of the last government were ageing, terrorism and climate change.

At the moment one of our main problems is the negative concept of ageing held by the media. Age is too frequently presented as a disaster rather than something we should rejoice in. We have inherited this view of old age from past centuries but times have changed. In recent times many of the previous causes of premature death have been overcome. With the falling birthrate and the extended life-span society is achieving a much healthier and more even balance between the proportion of young and old. A new approach is needed and a new, more realistic idea of ageing must be recognised. The major contribution of older people to the family and society must be valued and recognised.

All policy on ageing must recognise that ageing is a life-long process. We must look at the whole life span and understand that many of the seeds of

the problems of old age are sown in earlier years. How do we go about to create this new vision? Clearly it is older people themselves who must take the lead.

London, as the most age friendly city in the world, has the opportunity to give a massive lead.

There are four main areas to be addressed:

- Social exclusion, old age poverty and loneliness;
- The scandal of excess winter deaths (2,500 in London last year);
- The crisis in the provision of social care, already acute and about to worsen due to proposed financial cut-backs;
- The gap large in life expectancy between the richest and the poorest sections of London society.

In the coming Olympic year London has the opportunity to involve older people in all aspects of healthy living and to provide an example to other cities in the world as to how this can be done. There is enormous potential for London policy makers to contribute to this process and the Mayor has a vital role in leading the new high profile Health and Well Being Board.

A final thought: Engaged, fulfilled – and a long life for all Londoners.

CAPITAL AGE FESTIVAL REPORT



CAPITAL AGE FESTIVAL 2011

Capital Age Festival took place on a brilliant summer's day (Sunday 18th July), at Bernie Spain Gardens on the South Bank of the River Thames. LOPSG was delighted that, after a two-year break when the summer event had been held at other venues, it was able to return to its now traditional home on the South Bank as part of the Coin Street Festival.

During the course of the day nearly 20,000 people attended to celebrate and enjoy the creativity of older people. The sun and performers all shone and everyone enjoyed a wonderful afternoon. Festival visitors were treated to amazing performances on the main stage and in the performance space at Gabriel's Wharf while other performers ranged across the site.

Capital Age Festival was delighted to welcome to the event Richard Barnes, Deputy Mayor of London and the Mayors of Southwark and Lambeth. Fundraising for the festival is a major

and on-going task. The festival directors are particularly grateful to the Mayor of London for his continued moral support and financial contribution.

LOPSG remains a strong and vital supporter of the festival and will continue to support Capital Age Festival in providing a showcase for older people's creativity across London.

London encourages volunteering - at any age

Alongside the Team London volunteering programme on the front page the Mayor has also launched the Team London Star scheme in order to recognise the thousands of Londoners who already volunteer their time to help make London a better place. Londoners are encouraged to nominate their volunteering stars to receive a Team London certificate signed by the Mayor. Among the 150 people to receive Team London Star Certificates since the launch of the scheme is LOPSG's **Joan Bennetto**.

For more information about how you can get involved in volunteering with Team London or to nominate your volunteering star visit:
www.london.gov.uk/teamlondon or
 telephone the GLA Public Liaison Unit
 020 7983 4100

NOTICES

Administrator for LOPSG

LOPSG welcomes Estelle Buckridge as part time administrator one day a week. She can be contacted on FRIDAYS on admin@lopsg.ac.uk. Estelle is a professional drama practitioner and has done some work for Capital Age Festival.



Estelle acted as Election Officer at the AGM

www.LOPSG.org.uk

Our website offers a growing resource on what we are doing, future activities and links to member organisations' websites. You can also download LOPSG documents and copies of STRATEGY. Why not log in today?

You can also list your events on the **Members Noticeboard**.

To place a free notice email chair@lopsg.org.uk or telephone 0208 525 0990.

DVD by CAF Board Member

THE SENIOR BLUES begins with Mary's funeral and follows husband John and sister Carol during their first painful year. This 35 minute film is an ideal way of encouraging older people to discuss bereavement. For more information contact Clair chapwell@blueyonder.co.uk.

DATE FOR THE DIARY
Next Participants Meeting
Monday January 30th 2012 at
City Hall

Equalities and Diversity Group

The Equalities and Diversity Group is a sub-committee of LOPSG. Its aim is to ensure that the principles of equality and diversity are firmly embedded in LOPSG policies and practices and the organisations with which it works. We meet every six weeks and are keen to invite members to join the group and to contribute their interest, knowledge and experience to the fulfilment of its aims.

If you would like to be part of a group that strives to promote equal opportunities for all, celebrates diversity, creates social cohesion and would like to know more, then contact the Chair at chair@lopsg.org.uk.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Ellen Lebeth. (Chair, Equalities and Diversity Group)

AND FINALLY...



LOPSG wishes all our members a happy and healthy winter holiday.

Looking forward to seeing you all in 2012.

LOPSG

What we are and what we do

Since its founding in 2000 LOPSG has been the principal voluntary organisation with which the Mayor of London liaises on older people's issues. As a registered charity LOPSG is run by an elected committee of older volunteers and has a membership of over 300 groups across the wide spectrum of London's diverse communities.

LOPSG holds quarterly Participants Meetings for members on current issues as well as taking part with the GLA in organising the Annual Older People's Assembly we and keep our members informed of events through our regular editions of *STRATEGY* and through our website.

Capital Age Festival developed from a LOPSG cultural initiative in 2002 and has since become an independent organisation run by a professional artistic advisor and its own board of directors. It is London's largest pan-London older people's festival and maintains close links with LOPSG.

Membership of LOPSG is completely free and open to all London older people's groups and to individuals. We are dependent for funding entirely on charitable donations including the generous donations of our members. We are grateful for the continuing support of the Mayor of London, particularly in the form of rooms and facilities for meetings.

To apply for membership please email: chair@lopsg.org.uk or telephone 0208 525 0990.