

**Older People's Council**

# **Election News** **2011**

This guide tells you all you need to know about the OPC and the forthcoming OPC election

## **Election 30 June 2011** **Are you ready?**

The third Older People's Council (OPC) election will take place in June this year. Nine older people will be elected to serve a 4 year term of office.

You must be on the OPC Electoral Register to vote in the election. To be on the OPC Electoral Register you must be on the standard electoral register, resident in the city of Brighton & Hove, and over 60 years of age.

To check if you are on the OPC Register, telephone Brighton & Hove City Council Electoral Services Office on 01273 291999.

To get your name put on the OPC Electoral Register, fill in an OPC registration form – these are available in the City Libraries, from the Bus Passes counter in Priory House, or phone the OPC on 01273 295101. Make sure your form is received by 15 June 2011.

## **Election timetable**

Friday 13 May	Publication of Notice of Election
Friday 20 and Monday 23 May	Briefing sessions for interested candidates
Thursday 26 May – Noon	Close of the Receipt of Nominations
Tuesday 31 May – Noon	Publication as to Statement of Persons Nominated
Wednesday 1 June – Noon	Last day for Withdrawal of Candidature
Wednesday 15 June	Publication of Notice of Poll
Wednesday 15 June – 5pm	Last day for receipt of applications to change Postal Ballot addresses and proxy details
From Thursday 16 June	Issue of Postal Votes
Thursday 30 June – 5pm	Close of Poll
Friday 1 July – 10am	Count: Hove Town Hall

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## The Older People's Council (OPC) – an introduction

In June 2003 Brighton & Hove became the first local authority in the country to establish a directly elected older people's council.

The Older People's Council (OPC) is an independent body set up and supported by the Brighton & Hove City Council. The OPC works in association with the City Council and other large statutory services (eg health) making sure that older people have a say in the services and policies that affect them and the communities in which they live.

The idea of a directly elected body came from Denmark where it is a legal requirement for every town and city to elect a Seniors Council.

### The Older People's Council – a brief history June – October 1999

Brighton & Hove City Council start discussions with older people's groups and organisations to find ways for older people to have a greater say in services and policies that affect them.

### March – November 2001

Brighton & Hove City Council agree to establish an Older People's Council and to support a network of older people and older people's organisations. A 'shadow' Older People's Council is elected. It creates a constitution and a code of conduct for its elected members.

### June 2003

Nine older people are elected to the first full Older People's Council from an electoral register of 25,000 Brighton & Hove residents age 60 or over.

To make sure that older people from all parts of the city are represented on the OPC, the city is divided into 9 electoral zones. Each zone is made up of 2 or 3 electoral wards. Older people in each of the 9 zones elect one member to the OPC.

### June 2007

Election for the second Older People's Council.

## The Older People's Council – making a difference?

Too often too many older people are excluded from enjoying things most of us take for granted. The reasons for this include ageism, poverty and a disregard of our needs and the value of the contribution we make to family, community and the economy.

The Older People's Council exists to ensure that the needs and contribution of older people are never ignored. OPC members attend meetings and forums, scrutinise policy and committee papers, keep up-to-date on a wide range of issues, and take up issues with city councillors, local MPs and with government ministers and departments when necessary.

Since the OPC started our work has included:

- Campaigning against the neglect of vulnerable older people in care
- Taking part in research on older people and alcohol, human rights, and well-being
- OPC submission to the Dilnot Commission on the funding of care and support
- Introducing the OPC Medical Card to allow older people to carry with them details of their medication
- Letters to MPs against high energy costs, and for better rights for leaseholders
- Producing a regular local radio programme for older people (on 97.2 VHF)

We believe we have contributed to making Brighton & Hove a better place for older people. Policy and decision makers are now more open to speaking directly to older people about their needs and valuing the contribution they have to make.

# A year in the life of the OPC

Being a member of the OPC means receiving a regular flow of information, invitations, and enquiries. Some invitations are social and are accepted with pleasure, but many others are to attend committee meetings, advisory groups and forums, and these can be a bit of a challenge as there are many and they often need a good deal of preparation.

So what does the diary of an OPC member look like? Here are samples from OPC members during 2010. Some are one-off events, but more are regular commitments, as in the examples below:

**January:** Meeting with Council Leader to press for a Green Waste collection in the City, and protection of the bus subsidy for uneconomic routes used by older people

Discuss future of older people's services with Director of Adult Social Care

**February:** Discussion with University Research Group on Older People's Wellbeing

Discussions with Cityclean on Green Waste collection  
Talks about OPC work with older people's representatives from Lewisham Council

**March:** Speak at Capita Conference on Social Exclusion of Older People. OPC Hustings at Brighton Town Hall to put questions to general election candidates

Talk to BME Elders Group about OPC

**April:** Attend Health Overview Scrutiny Committee  
OPC run an information stall at the April Falls Day Event at Hove Town Hall

**May:** Attend the Annual City Council meeting  
OPC Tour of the Veolia Waste Recycling Plant at the Hollingdean depot

OPC is invited to join the Dignity board to protect older people's interests

Attend Community Transport Board meeting

**June:** Attend the Almshouses Committee meeting, and the Bus Users Group meeting

Talk given at OPC meeting on cancer prevention among older people

OPC challenge Connaught Centre closure plans and threat to adult education

June OPC meeting attended by members of the Brighton & Hove Youth Council

**July:** Attend Mental Health Action Group meeting

Discuss with Cityclean the problems with waste/recycling collections, and their Assisted Collection scheme for disabled/older people

Attend Pensioners' Forum AGM

**August:** OPC members revise the OPC Constitution.

Write to local MPs about problems for older leaseholders in Brighton & Hove

Write to City Council about reduced pavement space at bus stop outside Hove restaurant

**September:** Democracy Day – OPC members run information stall in Jubilee Square

OPC Meeting with Council Leader to discuss housing, problems for people with mobility scooters in high rise accommodation, and review of the Council's Winter Service Plan

OPC write to City Council and local MPs to protect free swimming for the over-60s

**October:** OPC AGM and Open Meeting: talk by Tom Scanlon on Public Health in the City

OPC provide an information stall at the Hangleton & Knoll 50Plus event

Attend Housing Management Consultative Committee, and Board Meeting at Age Concern

**November:** Raise pavement cycling problems with police at the Kemptown Community Safety Action Group

Discuss older people services in City Budget for 2011-12 with Head of Finance

Attend Governance Committee. Monitor planning applications affecting older people

**December:** Attend consultation meeting on the re-development of The Level

Talk given to the OPC on Community Transport by Ed Bassford

OPC members invited to sherry and mince pies with the Mayor

## Your OPC needs you

The OPC election in June is your opportunity to make a difference. The Older People's Council has established itself as a powerful voice speaking up for older people. Members have presented a positive image of older people and the contribution they make, and have promoted the well-being and quality of life of all older people in the city.

The OPC needs people from all walks of life and backgrounds to stand in the election. Women and candidates from minority groups are especially welcome. A key requirement for candidates is the enthusiasm to get involved, but to stand for election you must be: resident in Brighton & Hove; aged 60 years or over; and on the Brighton & Hove Electoral Register.

Candidates will not have to mount a sophisticated electoral campaign. Each candidate will be expected to write a brief statement saying who they are and what they want to achieve if elected to the OPC. The election is by postal ballot, and everyone on the OPC Electoral Register will receive a copy of the statements from the candidates in their zone.

If you are interested in standing in the OPC election please ask from **3 May onwards** for the Guidance Notes for Prospective Candidates and a Candidate's Election Pack by telephoning 01273 295101, leaving your name and address, or email the OPC at: [olderpeoplescouncil@brighton-hove.gov.uk](mailto:olderpeoplescouncil@brighton-hove.gov.uk)

Each vote cast in the election strengthens the OPC and its potential to make a difference.

The OPC needs your vote.



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Brighton & Hove  
Older People's Council