

# Scottish Older People's Assembly Newsletter



The Scottish Older People's Assembly is a voice for older people across Scotland

- ***Welcome to the SOPA newsletter, please feel free to pass on to others!***

**July 2023**

## **In this newsletter find out more about:**

### **SOPA News**

- Invitation to attend the SOPA Members' Day and Assembly Planning Meeting – **including talk from Colin Smyth, MSP on Proposed Commissioner for Older People Scotland Bill**
- Age-friendly Communities Scotland Update and how to become involved

Please get in contact:

Hetty Malcolm-Smith, Lead Officer, SOPA

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Or follow us on Twitter or Facebook

### **SOPA Members' News**

- Scottish Older People's Forum Open Day in partnership with Ability Borders
- Seniors Together: Fitbit Project
- Invitation for Participation: Investigating older adults' thinking skills, speech production and social engagement
- Learn 50+ at CLL more than just classes
- Intergenerational Training – Generations Working Together

### **Consultations**

- Proposed Commissioner for Older People (Scotland) Bill
- A Human Rights Bill for Scotland: Consultation

## SOPA News

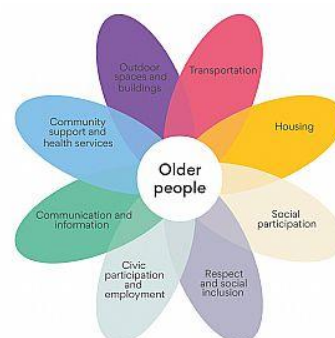
### **Invitation to attend the SOPA Members' Day and Assembly Planning Meeting – including talk from Colin Smyth, MSP on Proposed Commissioner for Older People (Scotland) Bill**

SOPA is holding an online Members' Day and Assembly meeting at 2pm on 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2023. We are delighted that Colin Smyth MSP will be joining us via zoom at 3pm to discuss the proposed Older People's Commissioner Bill. Please contact Hetty if you would like to attend. Her email is: [hetty@scotopa.org.uk](mailto:hetty@scotopa.org.uk)

*If you are not a SOPA member and would like to hear Colin Smyth MSP at 3pm talk about the proposed bill please contact Hetty regarding accessing the zoom link. [hetty@scotopa.org.uk](mailto:hetty@scotopa.org.uk)*

### **Age-friendly Communities Scotland Update and How to Become Involved**

SOPA's Project Co-ordinator, Tony Donohoe, is continuing to develop our work to promote Age-friendly Communities across Scotland. With currently two AfCs in Scotland, South Lanarkshire and South Ayrshire, the focus of our project is on building on the success of these to bring the potential benefits to older people in other areas across Scotland. You can find a short briefing paper [HERE](#) which provides some background on AfCs and the up-to-date picture in Scotland.



Further work over the next few months will include establishing a Scottish Network or Working Group to share practice and information on AfCs in Scotland and assist other areas to achieve this. Over the next year or so we want to help as many communities as possible in Scotland to become more age-friendly.

*If you or your organisation wish to find out more then please contact our AfC Project Co-ordinator, Tony Donohoe, email: [tony@scotopa.org.uk](mailto:tony@scotopa.org.uk) mobile: 07745 355234.*

## Members News

Please send [hetty@scotopa.org.uk](mailto:hetty@scotopa.org.uk) any members news for the next newsletter.

### Scottish Older People's Forum Open Day in partnership with Ability Borders

Scottish Older People's Forum held an Open Day in partnership with Ability Borders, who look to the interests of disabled people and those with long-term conditions. This is the first such event we have held since before the pandemic but we felt that we should take the risk, hoping that we would have sufficient attendees to make it worthwhile. We chose St.



Boswells Village Hall on 31st May 2023, which is fairly central in the Borders from the point of view of transport.

We notified the national and local organisations with which we have had connections over the years and on the day we had over 30 stands manned by a variety of organisations. We advertised an open invitation to Older People and those who are interested/connected to come

along and speak face-to-face with stand-holders, gain information and catch up with old friends. Of course free refreshments were available from a super local caterer, T-4-2. Open from 10.30 until 3.30 we were delighted that many people came along and some had travelled some distance but the general feeling was that it was great to meet lots of people, find out new information of services which were relevant to them and their friends.

In writing to the stand-holders afterwards to thank them for coming along and asking if they felt it had been worthwhile we have received many responses which said that they had met lots of people, some had gained new Members and it had also been beneficial for them to chat with other Stand-holders to hear what they were up to. Many of them said they would be keen to be included when next we organise a similar event as it helped them to get their message down to the grass-roots. That has been very pleasing and encouraging for us to follow up with similar events in different parts of the Borders in the future, which you can be sure we will be doing.



## Seniors Together: Fitbit Project

Seniors Together in South Lanarkshire recently completed our pilot Fitbit Project that involved a small sample group of our members.

The Fitbit Project was designed to help Seniors Together members who had experienced poor mobility due to the impact of Covid 19 and having to give up daily routines such as exercise classes and walking groups, regain some of their lost mobility.

Members had reported to Seniors Together that they were noticing a dip in their physical activity having been less active due to lockdown. To help members improve strength and balance and be at less risk of falls at home, it seemed like the perfect opportunity to trial the Fitbit approach where everyone was equipped with a Fitbit watch. We had been looking at the options of people using wearable devices for tracking movement at that time, and this provided us with the opportunity to undertake a small trial.



Each participant was supported to keep a track of daily steps and the wearable device was set so that each participant received a prompt if they were immobile for too long. This would encourage members to increase their physical activity after a period of inactivity while ensuring that strength and balance was maintained or in some cases even improved.

To ensure members felt confident enough to wear and use their device, ongoing technical support was provided, by the Seniors Together Project Team.

Project Partners, from South Lanarkshire Leisure and Culture were able to provide exercise support and outdoor activities when lockdown was over.

Seniors Together staff supported the Fitbit Group with some outdoor walks to continue with their progress from exercising at home to reconnecting with their community and to each other. The group also participated in First Aid Training.

### **Data**

The Fitbit device produces 'Weekly Progress Reports' and these were passed to the Project Co-ordinator to track the progress of each participant. This allowed us to support each person during the small pilot phase of the project.

Some Participants, living with long-term health conditions, who visited their GP during this time received positive feedback from them due to the increased movement and health benefits gained for them.

For the purposes of the end of project report, we looked at three categories:

- Number of Steps taken
- total Km walked,
- and Active Minutes - results demonstrate that these eight individuals are now:

**Taking an average 8,000 steps more per week than their first week.**

**Walking an additional 7.5km each week.**

**spending an average 71 minutes more being active.**

Of the eight individuals selected –

**six out of eight people, recorded an increase in their Kilometres walked per week.**

**five out of eight people recorded an increase across all three categories per week.**

**Following the completion of the project individuals were asked to complete a questionnaire on their experiences of being involved. The results found that:**

- **13 out of 14** participants feel they have improved their strength and balance since being involved in the project.
- **2 participants** experienced a fall at home before taking part – Both participants feel that undertaking increased exercise as part of the project reduced the number of falls, they experience.
- **All 14 participants** feel more confident in wearing a Fitbit.
- **13 participants out of 14** feel more confident after participating with the Fitbit project about joining in exercise classes in leisure centres.
- **13 participants** feel their confidence about re-engaging with community activities after the pandemic and lockdowns has increased due to participating with the project.
- **10 participants** feel their confidence has improved about managing their own long term health conditions with Fitbit's additional features.
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For more information, please contact : **Christine Calder, Project Manager, Seniors Together** [christine.calder@southlanarkshire.gov.uk](mailto:christine.calder@southlanarkshire.gov.uk)



## Invitation for Participation: Investigating older adults' thinking skills, speech production and social engagement

SOPA has been working in collaboration with the University of Strathclyde on the project 'Ageing and Communication: understanding the roles of cognition, speech production and social participation'. This research is supervised by Dr Louise Brown Nicholls.



You are invited to take part if you are:

- ❖ Aged 60+
- ❖ Fluent in English
- ❖ No diagnosed learning difficulties (e.g. dyslexia), cognitive impairment (e.g. mild cognitive impairment, dementia), neurological condition that affects functioning (e.g. stroke, Parkinson's Disease, brain injury), or speech/ language/ voice disorder (e.g. dysarthria, aphasia)

The PhD researcher, Laura Manderson, is now collecting data for the final study that is investigating older adults' thinking skills, speech production and social engagement. This is an in-person study that will take place during one visit to the University of Strathclyde's Glasgow city centre campus. Laura is looking for people aged 60 or over to take part, and the session is expected to last approximately 1.5 – 2 hours, including breaks. Participants will receive a £10 high street shopping voucher as a thank you. If you are interested in taking part, you can contact Laura on: [laura.manderson@strath.ac.uk](mailto:laura.manderson@strath.ac.uk) or 07401873785.

## Learn 50+ at CLL *more than just classes*

Join our exciting range of on campus and online classes aimed at those aged 50+ at the Centre for Lifelong Learning. Choose from a variety of classes this autumn, including creative writing, languages, history, creative art and much more.

Connect and learn with likeminded people.

Visit [mycll.strath.ac.uk](http://mycll.strath.ac.uk) to browse and book.

(Booking opens 14 August 2023 for October term).0141 548 2116



## Intergenerational Training – Generations Working Together

Following on from the successful Global Intergenerational Week, Generations Working Together (GWT) are keen to raise awareness of intergenerational work and the importance of intergenerational training. Scotland has more grassroots intergenerational projects than any other nation, developed in partnership between a wide range of organisations ranging from childcare, play and education, to libraries, youth work, community and faith groups, adult social care and local authorities.

GWT recognise the impact that the cost-of-living crisis is having upon budgets for training and in response they are offering their one-day intergenerational training at a reduced rate this September for East Kilbride on Tuesday 19th September and Ayr on Wednesday 20th September.

Places can be booked for East Kilbride [here](#) and [Ayr](#) here.

For additional dates/places at the normal training rate, including an online session please click [here](#).

## Consultations

### Proposed Commissioner for Older People (Scotland) Bill

This is a draft proposal for a bill to establish and independent commissioner to promote and safeguard the rights and interests of older people.

The consultation runs until 12 September 2023. To find out more and take part in the consultation please visit:

[Proposed Older People's Commissioner Scotland Bill | Scottish Parliament Website](#)

Proposed Commissioner for Older People (Scotland) Bill



A draft proposal for a bill to establish an independent commissioner to promote and safeguard the rights and interests of older people.

Consultation by  
Colin Smyth MSP, South Scotland Region  
June 2023

### A Human Rights Bill for Scotland: Consultation

The Scottish Government is gathering views to help inform how it will take forward the Human Rights Bill. The Bill will incorporate a range of economic, social and cultural rights into Scots law for the first time, as far as possible within the limits of devolved competence. The consultation runs until 5<sup>th</sup> October 2023. Further information can be found here: [A Human Rights Bill for Scotland: consultation - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#)

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