

SOPA Planning Group / Members' Meeting

2pm - 4pm, Wednesday 11th November 2020

The meeting was held via zoom.

Minutes

Participating: Diana Findley (chair), Elaine Thornton-Nicol, Chris Grant, Eileen Wallace, David Patterson, Harriette Campbell, Jennifer Adam-McGregor, Alex Thorburn, Matt Hamilton, Lynne Short, Sam Gibson, Jo Cowan, Christine Wilson, Alan Sidaway, Graham Reece, Catriona Mason, Keith Guy

Apologies: Bella Kerr, Anne Munro, Louise brown-Nicholls, Jim McGuigan, Sandra Wilson, Catriona Mason, Gordon Fraser, Gerry Kiernan

In attendance: Theresa Casey (coordinator)

1. The Chair warmly welcomed everyone to the Planning Group meeting and wished everyone well in these trying times.

2. Introductions were made around the group.

3. Minutes of previous meeting - 25th August 2020 - approved EW, CW

4. Matters arising not on the Agenda.

4.1 TC introduced the new film project in partnership with Strathclyde University School of Psychology, funded by the Chief Scientist office. The 'catalyst' project is based on their research during COVID that identified themes related to making positive change and staying well during COVID. SOPA will be making a set of very short films with older people describing their own experience and is still looking for a couple more people to be interviewed. Due to COVID travel restrictions they need to be from Edinburgh where the studio is located.

4.2 SOPA is continuing to explore ideas for its role in relation to Age-friendly Communities, as an associate member of the UK Network Steering group. A series of short meetings have been held with the network coordinator and colleagues to map connections in Scotland. The current work on the three-year plan is a good opportunity to embed Age-friendly Communities in SOPA's work.

4.3 Congratulations were extended to Elaine Thornton-Nichol for the award she recently received from Age Scotland. The award recognised her personally for her extensive work in the Borders, dementia training initiatives and making the case for Older People.

4.4 AS asked if we had heard from Cllr Andy Ferguson, Older People's Champion in Dumfries and Galloway. AS, and JW to follow up. (Membership application was subsequently approved)

4.5 TC to send the role description for Older People's Champions to JC and CG and offered SOPA assistance.

5. Laura Manderson, Master student at Strathclyde University, joined us to introduce the research project in which SOPA is a partner. She explained that her research will focus on communication, cognition and engagement. It is a four-year project and SOPA will be involved throughout. The project is multi-disciplinary and will begin with a survey to inform the rest of the research. Years two – three will be more experimental in nature including data collection and building knowledge year on year.

KG asked where the subjects would come from. Laura explained she would make use of the Strathclyde Ageing Network, SOPA and social media and newsletters etc. KG offered to help connect to the large memberships of U3A in Edinburgh and Glasgow which have 2-3000 members.

JC asked if the research would look at specific impairments or conditions. Laura explained that it will be focusing on healthy older people, that are 'normally ageing' who don't have specific impairments.

MH also offered to help tap into the network of Retired Police Officers (RPOAS) which has around 6000 members.

SG referenced the National Survey of Health and Development <http://nshd.mrc.ac.uk/>

DF thanked Laura very much for her input to the meeting and said we were all very much looking forward to supporting her research over the next few years. SOPA will be very happy to include the research in newsletters and events.

6. Working Streams - launch of the Health & Wellbeing Stream

DF introduced the Workstreams which we have previously discussed as a way of bringing members' views into SOPA. The current plan is to try to get one up and running as a pilot and to seek funding so that it is possibly to support and coordinate all the streams.

TC informed the meeting that SOPA has been able to set up a special meeting with Derek Feeley, chair of the Independent Review into Adult Social Care which is due to report in January 2021. Members are invited to take part in this meeting. [Review of adult social care - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](http://www.gov.scot)

It's suggested that meeting would also be a good opportunity launch the Workstreams.

TC to write out with details, seeking interested Members to take part in Workstreams.

Members of the group expressed interest, CG also offering to help look at funding; SG said Health and Social care would be a topic for many groups; DF said she was keen that groups work together

BREAK

7. Presentation and discussion: **Online learning for the over 50s – opportunities and**

challenges. Alix McDonald, Head of the Centre for Lifelong Learning, Strathclyde University

[Centre for Lifelong Learning | University of Strathclyde](#)

We are delighted to also be joined by Alix who began by describing the background to the Centre and how they have responded in recent months to the challenges and opportunities presented by COVID era circumstances.

The Centre for Lifelong Learning at the University of Strathclyde delivers a unique programme of face-to-face classes aimed at those aged 50+. It is the only University in the UK to offer a programme for this demographic attracting over 2500 learners a year to its Centre in the heart of Glasgow. In March 2020, everything changed, however this presents opportunities which are emerging and its now necessary to consider how the move to live online teaching is allowing a national approach to partnership building.

Alix explained that they had found that contrary to opinion older people are not resistant to using technology, although personal service and contact is still crucial. It provides the opportunity for communities of interest to come together that are not geographically close and there are many ways we benefit and create benefit.

DF shared the example of the Age Scotland conference attended by 150 from all over the country.

CG although there are barriers for some people including older people and disabled people, and there can be some push back on use of technology, there are also ways to support people over the hurdles.

DP also felt there was a role for learning and creative opportunities in helping people to become comfortable and familiar with technology which will help them use it in other areas of life (e.g. banking, health).

The group acknowledged that technology does not replace face-to-face contact.

Members including KG, MH, CW, AT, JC, EW, SG, E T-N and HC took the opportunity to thank Alix for the interesting presentation and for sharing opportunities for discussion and partnership. discussion points included:

- Many examples of people adapting and engaging with technology, accelerated by the necessity caused by the pandemic
- There are also examples of people being able to volunteer and participate in things that would be impossible if travel is required.
- There are a range of reasons for digital exclusion – not just competence but also access.
- Rather than digital/non-digital debate it can be more helpful to consider issues of choice, access and inclusion (JC)
- Online and offline aren't completely separate - online activities can lead to offline interest and activities.
- “Digital by design, personal by default” is a useful way of thinking about this (E T-N)
- Learning doesn't have to be simply tied to work or CPD rather something for all ages and stages of life.
- Tech such as Zoom has enabled groups of people to come together in new ways.
- [ARTS CULTURE HEALTH + WELLBEING SCOTLAND \(artshealthscotland.co.uk\)](https://artshealthscotland.co.uk) shared by JC

Df thanked Alix very much indeed for facilitating such an interesting discussion about learning, technology and partnerships. TC to follow up with Alix to send details of the centre to members.

8. Any Other Business - please notify in advance.

AT drew attention to the work of the Human Rights Commission and work around incorporation of economic and social rights. AT to send on details to DF and TC.

SG asked about SOPA funding and E T-N explained that the three-year plan was almost complete and awaiting approval by Trustees.SG expressed hope that food and nutrition remain a focus for SOPA.

Film project – CW is willing to take part; EW also suggested TC.

DP informed the meeting that he was preparing a paper on digital technology and health as an extension to the House of Lords Enquiry that SOPA members have been able to participate in.

CM informed the meeting that there is interest in Age Friendly Communities in South Lanarkshire.

J A-M shared that in Renfrewshire all the councillors had undertaken dementia friends training.

EW reflected on Remembrance Day today and that many people felt sad not to have been able to participate in events in the usual way.

DF thanked everyone very much for their participation and extended special thanks to our guest contributors Alix and Laura.

9. Date of next meeting: 10thFebruary 2021

Planning group meetings for 2021: Wednesday 10th February, 12th May, 11th August, 10th November.

The Scottish Older People's Assembly is a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation: Number - SC046520