

# **Your Life: Your Retirement 2019**

## **Introduction**

This short report is based on the experience of participants on the programme Your Life: Your Retirement that ran for six weeks during February-March 2019. It was organised and supported by the Hangleton and Knoll Project (HKP) in Brighton and was held at St Richard's Community Centre in Hangleton. The programme itself was a collaboration with Chris Baker from Work & Learning Opportunities c.i.c (WLO). It was based on the materials and approach that WLO had developed in 2017/18 with the support of Lottery Funding. WLO had piloted it in Brighton as a free programme with the focus on enabling people to enjoy a fulfilling, active and healthy retirement.

<http://www.workandlearning.co.uk/projects/retirement/>

For HKP and Clare Hopkins, the Community Development Worker - Older People, it afforded an opportunity to achieve the following:

- Add a new strand of activity to their established programme of work for 50+ in the local community.  
<https://www.hkproject.org.uk/50plus>
- Provide an opportunity introduce participants to the activities and volunteering opportunities at HKP.
- Engage a new and potentially younger cohort in developing community activities.

Participants were charged £5 for the programme and the costs of advertising, room hire etc. were met by HKP. The promotional materials were developed by HKP in collaboration with WLO to include a positive message to ensure wide appeal and



### **Your Life: Your Retirement**

**Soon to retire or newly retired?**

**Already retired and a bit lost or stuck?**

**Take some time out with us to  
explore what next for you in your life**

**When:** Tuesdays 5th, 12th, 26th February, Wed 6th and  
Tuesdays 12th and 19th March  
10am-12.30pm (tea and coffee from 9.30am)  
**At:** St Richard's Community Centre, Egmont Rd BN3 7FP  
**Cost:** one-off £5 fee payable at first session

**6 week course focusing on:**

Managing your time, money and resources

Looking after yourself

Volunteering and making new connections

Never too late to learn something new

Looking to the future

**BOOKING ESSENTIAL AS PLACES ARE LIMITED**

Small group setting with individual support, group discussions,  
inspiring speakers and fun activities

Information about local opportunities and more

For more information and to book :

Clare Hopkins 01273 410858,  
[clare.hopkins@hkproject.org.uk](mailto:clare.hopkins@hkproject.org.uk)



engagement. The targeted promotion and engagement to the course was led by HKP using local networks, outreach into the community, social media and email.

## **Aims of the programme**

The programme had a number of overlapping aims, which included the following:

- To explore the implications of what retirement means for each participant and look at the issues raised for making choices in this stage of life.
- To challenge participants to see this transition as a time of opportunity and personal growth.
- To present a range of practical ideas about what was available locally to stimulate interest and promote a healthy and active lifestyle.
- To encourage participants to plan for their immediate future and take advantage of the new opportunities they were discovering.
- To create an environment that was conducive to shared learning, enjoyable and formed the basis for creating new friendships.

## **Overview of programme**

The programme was based around a number of interconnected themes that were explored in an interactive way. The participants were provided with a resource booklet that covered these themes, identified local sources of further information and encouraged reflection and action after each session.

*“The research that went into the content of the course enabled me to access a wide variety of free or cheap 60+ activities and opportunities that I otherwise wouldn’t have known about”*

The themes of the programme were as follows: -

- Managing money, time and resources
- Making new friends and volunteering
- Looking after yourself
- Carrying on learning
- Looking to the future

Clare Hopkins (HKP) and Chris Baker (WLO) acted as co-facilitators. They ran the sessions and provided follow-up summaries at the end of each week. There were also contributions from local organisations where a specialist input was required. These included the Healthy Lifestyles Team from the City Council, Harmonessence Choirs, Stoneham Bakery and volunteers from HKP.

Participants were encouraged to experiment and try things out both during and after the sessions.

*“The Health Walk was very enjoyable last Tuesday, and a few from our group turned up.*

*“I loved the hands-on experience of baking and the singing session. I have joined a choir, something I never considered previously”.*

*“Many thanks for sending the recipes and photo; it was a really brilliant event - well done for planning such a super session into the course. I enjoyed it immensely and am pretty sure that everyone else did too. “*



## **The participants**

There were 11 participants, 8 women and 3 men. Most were aged above 60. Six were still doing paid work at the start of the programme. The majority of those in work were about to retire. Attendance was very high at 91% of all sessions. There were no members of ethnic minorities in the group. There was, however, a diverse mix of life and work backgrounds of participants - with some from the local community and some from further afield. This created rich and interesting discussions as they shared their life experiences and perspectives. Along with using a venue in a community setting, this was felt to be a key component in the success of the course and in the benefits felt by participants.

## **Getting feedback**

The process of collecting feedback involved spontaneous comments from participants after each session; an activity in the final session and follow up questionnaires sent to all participants. The latter incorporated a standardised survey that is used for all HKP activities and an additional set of questions specifically about the participant's experience of the programme. For the purposes of this report the replies from both surveys have been integrated to

form a single narrative. 11 questionnaires were issued and 11 responses were received. For the purposes of this report direct quotes have been italicised.

## Benefits of the programme

When commenting on the overall benefits participants agreed on a number of factors that were important. Personal development (9); positive changes to lifestyle (7); better informed about health and exercise (9); made new friends (11) and gained information on opportunities at HKP (10).

*"It helps you feel less isolated and empowers you to take control of your retirement."*

All 10 participants said they got what they wanted from the programme. When asked what three things they liked most about the programme the most frequently mentioned responses were: -

- Meeting people/sharing experience and learning environment
- Format/activities and information given to participants
- Challenging myself and gaining confidence

*"The group has helped me think about and prepare for retirement in a thoughtful and structured way"*

In contrast there were very few comments about what participants liked least. There were individual references to particular sessions like singing and the challenge this posed. Aside from that one person said, *"nothing I didn't like accept missing a week!"*

They were some useful suggestions about what might be changed about the programme. This included adding topics like, for example, cyber security or coping with illness and bereavement. There were also suggestions that participants could now use their skills and experience to help deliver the programme. One comment also asked that more attention be given by the organisers to identifying any hidden disabilities before the course began. Others felt it was too short or that participants should pay more. The issue of gender inequality was also one that should be addressed in the sessions.



When asked whether they would recommend the course to a friend all 10 made positive comments that ranged from, *"Do it! I have already*



*enthused about the course to several friends. Anyone attending just one session would benefit."*

This was expanded upon in the space allowed for general comments where participants said the following: -

*"One of the best courses I have been on."*

*"Well worth attending I was so glad I joined."*

*"I like the way Chris and Clare interacted with each other and the group".*

*"Helped develop confidence and self-esteem."*

*"I found the course very helpful and would recommend to friends. Courses like this are very important for people."*

*"Yes definitely but approach it with an open mind and make sure you take part in discussion."*

*"I feel it is a good springboard to start a new adventure in retirement".*

*"It was great fun and more informative than I imagined it would be".*

When asked about how participants now viewed the next stage of their life, 8 said they were really looking forward it; 2 said they were clear about the next steps they would take and 1 expressed that they were still unsure about the future.

*"There are so many groups available for residents of Hangleton and Knoll. I will make use of the keep fit group, computers and maybe social ping."*

*"I still have issues to come to terms with but this has set me on the right path"*

*"Thank you so much I hope to I can put some of your wisdom into practice."*

## **Next Steps**

Eight of the original group attended a follow-up session in early July. Two were on holiday and one was working! The session was intended to allow people to share what they had been doing over the past three months. The answer was quite a lot. Three had joined forces to do a variety of activities including daytrips, festivals, walks and lunches. Their next challenge is to learn to play the ukulele together. Two had become volunteers at HKP. One was singing in a choir and had done a couple of "gigs". Others were doing health walks and one had just retired so was taking things easy.

One of the unexpected and yet welcome outcomes of the programme has been the creation of friendships between participants. One even confessed that she had recently taken part in a recording of the programme "Come Dine with Me" to be broadcast in the near future.

The gathering also provided an opportunity to look at new ideas and techniques. This included participants creating their own Mind Maps and even venturing into the mysteries of philosophy.

A review is underway to explore possible next steps to develop the course and update the materials. A taster session is planned for November with a new course being launched in January 2020.