

- Naomi Robinson – Rother Voluntary Action (Age Friendly Rother Network Coordinator)
- Cllr Gareth Delany – Rother District Council / Bexhill Foodbank
- Frederick Smith – Just Friends
- Frances McKenna – Office of Kieran Mullan MP
- Stephanie Collins – East Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust (Macmillan Information & Support)
- Lisa McAllister – Jobcentre Plus
- Jo Sharman – St Michael's Hospice (Compassionate Communities)
- Janet Meehan – Centre for Ageing Better
- Kira Parsons – Healthwatch East Sussex (East Sussex Community Voice)
- Tim Birch – Bexhill Breathers
- Gill Reynolds – Warm Welcome Campaign

Apologies / Unable to Attend

- Stuart Ramsbottom – Rother District Council (holiday)

Notes

Key Take Outs

- The Age Friendly Rother Network has been established to connect organisations supporting older people across Rother, improve collaboration and ensure local knowledge informs strategic planning.
- Rother has one of the oldest populations in the UK (around 33% aged 65+), making coordinated age-friendly working a local priority.
- Members welcomed the network as an opportunity to improve communication, reduce duplication and strengthen partnerships.

- A wide range of organisations attended, representing voluntary organisations, health services, local government, employment services, community groups and national organisations.
- There was strong interest in future discussions focusing on practical collaboration rather than simply sharing updates.

Discussion Summary

Purpose of the Network

The network will:

- Bring together organisations supporting people aged 55+.
- Improve awareness of local services and community assets.
- Encourage collaboration without organisations losing their individual identity.
- Provide a two-way link between community organisations and local policy makers.
- Share learning and identify opportunities to work together.

Priorities identified by members

Members highlighted the importance of:

- Better networking and partnership working.
- Improved signposting between organisations.
- Sharing information about local services and activities.
- Reducing duplication across the sector.
- Learning from each other's work.
- Improving access to information for older residents.

Ageism and changing perceptions of ageing

A significant discussion centred around challenging ageist stereotypes.

Members discussed:

- Moving away from negative language around ageing.
- Promoting positive images of later life.
- Recognising older people as active contributors to communities.
- Using inclusive language in publicity and communications.
- Learning from the Centre for Ageing Better's resources on ageism.

This was identified as a strong potential theme for a future meeting.

Intergenerational working

There was enthusiasm for creating more opportunities for people of different generations to work together on shared projects.

Discussion included:

- Benefits for both younger and older people.
- Moving beyond talking about intergenerational work to creating practical projects.
- Funding opportunities available through Rother District Council's Intergenerational Grant Scheme.

Living well as we age

Members discussed supporting people through life transitions rather than defining people by age.

Topics included:

- Remaining socially connected.
- Planning for later life.
- Supporting wellbeing during major life changes.
- Helping people stay informed, active and involved in their communities.

Information Shared

Upcoming Living Well, Ageing Well Fair

- An over-55s information event is being organised for **30 September** at the De La Warr Pavilion.
- Organisations will be invited to take part.

Warm Welcome Campaign

Members heard about:

- The Warm Welcome Champions Programme.
- £2,000 grants available for successful community spaces.
- The importance of encouraging more local venues to register as Warm Welcome Spaces.

Intergenerational Grants

Rother District Council is offering:

- Grants of up to **£500** for new intergenerational projects.
- Applications open until **31 July**.

Centre for Ageing Better

The network was encouraged to make use of:

- Resources on tackling ageism.
- Positive imagery library.
- Learning opportunities from other Age Friendly Communities.

Actions

Action	Lead
Share meeting transcription and network information with members	Naomi
Circulate Centre for Ageing Better resources on ageism	Naomi
Share Warm Welcome Campaign flyer with the network and include in RVA newsletter	Naomi
Share contact details for organisations interested in the Living Well, Ageing Well Fair	Naomi / Frances
Circulate link to Intergenerational Grant Scheme	Naomi
Arrange an Intergenerational Projects discussion session	Naomi
Explore inviting speakers on life transitions and other age-friendly topics to future meetings	Naomi
Janet to identify examples and resources from other Age Friendly Communities, including intergenerational projects	Janet
Members to consider potential intergenerational project ideas for funding	All members
Members to reflect on examples of ageism and language used in communications ahead of a future discussion	All members

Overall, the first meeting established a shared commitment to building a collaborative network focused on improving later life in Rother. Members expressed particular interest in tackling ageism, improving signposting and partnership working, supporting intergenerational projects, and ensuring older residents can remain connected, informed and active within their communities.