

EIA Comments

1. The Council are also trying to cut the life-line. We the public are worse off. But Council Tax still rises.
2. There would be no negative impact if GOLD stopped (x 2)
3. GOLD will be greatly missed, and all the good work they have done will fall away. The people and Town will be worse off. I hope the people who are willing to take over finds their way of funding.
4. GOLD will be greatly missed.
5. GOLD has done a lot of different things for the People and town, in all areas, and will be greatly missed. It is not too late for the powers to save GOLD to continue their good work and continue to give a lot of pleasure to the 50+.
6. Apart from emptying the bins, this is the only benefit I get from my Council tax
7. No positive impacts at all
8. Have never used GOLD events
9. Very little, as I am, fortunately, in good health and do not need to access help from GOLD
10. As an individual I have long held the opinion that GOLD does not achieve its intended objectives. Like most organisations it has a nominal membership but a very small active participatory group. Health group is a great meeting place to hear about what is happening in the health aspects of the community. The tea dance and the Christmas party give all members a chance to socialise - yet in the recent past socialisation was not considered to be part of GOLD'S remit.

For some time I have thought that there was a lot of duplication in activities undertaken by GOLD and other bodies/organisations.

I would hope that those who are active in GOLD would, should it close, devote their energies to existing community activities - there are always groups seeking volunteers.

Illness has prevented me from playing a full part in GOLD but once I am fit again I will become involved again either in some re-created GOLD or via some other organisation.

For the sake of the enthusiastic leadership I hope that GOLD can find a distinctive "home" but we shall have to await future developments.

11. Sorry to hear it may be closing, but I was in the process of cancelling my membership
12. People need a diverse type of help, what suits one is sometimes no good for someone else. So a town like ours needs a diversity in its provision of support. You need to be careful that members who fit your criteria and who find social contact thro' your organisation, don't fall thro' other people's nets. Social contact and support is vitally important. **DO NOT UNDERESTIMATE THE DANGERS OF ISOLATION!**
13. I have taken very little part in GOLD activities, therefore the proposed changes will make very little difference to me as far as I can see. I hope that GOLD can link up with other providers/organisations to strengthen its work with older people.
14. I realise that GOLD was originally given a limited time funding by DBC but the work it has done and is still doing is invaluable. I do not see how any other group or organisation can be so capable of gathering information, and ensuring that it is available and known to the elderly of Darlington. Their various positions in other organisations ie DMH and West Park are invaluable as they have the experience of the services they offer and the ability to recognise the good and bad qualities these places offer. A number of members are also involved with GPs, PPGs and again bring and disseminate information to patients, doctors and the Community Council. I sincerely hope that the DBC will seriously consider at some point in the near future re-financing such a valuable group of people as the members of GOLD have proved to be.
15. I don't go to any meetings and find out things anyway, so I wouldn't be affected by not receiving the newsletter
16. I have become quite disabled. I used to attend Health Group but am no longer able to. The help I receive now mainly comes through Age UK (Good Friends, lunch clubs etc) and not through GOLD. GOLD is more for people who are mobile.
17. Very sad. Been a member from the beginning but not been able to attend meetings for about 5 years. Sorry that it's come to this. Essential.
18. We all need GOLD – otherwise the status quo falls apart- it's just the tip of the iceberg – what's next to go? We can afford GOLD if all the “too highly paid official” would take a pay cut!!!

£3000 is not a lot of money, top execs cost us in excess of **£186,000** per annum

So who's lining their pockets at our expense

17. We have not found it to be of great value. We use the bus a lot to go places. There are a lot of things that people can find out about if they want to. We have attended the lunch at Elm Ridge. People could go to things but can't be bothered and then say they're lonely. (x 2)

18. It would be sad if GOLD had to close but I do not think it would have a significant impact on the service users we currently support. I think some would miss the Tea Dance and the GOLD newsletter has some interesting elements but other than this, the impact of closure would be minimal for our clients.

I feel the effect would be greatest on the more able older people who attend GOLD events regularly. (MIND)

19. Gold has done a lot for old lonely pensioners over the years finding information, activities etc by friendly people. It is a shame that funding is been stopped.

20. Gain information and spread the word

21. GOLD Transport Group (when it existed) was the most popular. The Health Group is very well received. The info we obtain from speakers is most important. Likewise the views of the group are brought from their organisations to the table. Info obtained from speakers is relayed back to the groups. I once asked for members to say which groups they relayed back to and the result was very surprising – as to the number we related to.

The Tea dance is certainly one of our successes. The event we held to find members' views in the Dolphin Centre truly showed they wanted GOLD to continue. They were even willing to pay towards the Christmas party.

GOLD is well thought of around the country and held up as an example of good practice for older people.

What now?

I myself attend meetings for GOLD with TEWV mental health trust and I travel to Newcastle with the Years Ahead Board – just to keep the name 'GOLD' on everyone's lips. I feel the south of the region is badly represented and everything happens in Newcastle!

22. It is also useful for myself and the other group members to disseminate this information among our acquaintances, and by leaving notices and leaflets in public places in the wider community. We also bring in observations and queries from outside the group.

23. This year's Tea Dance was an outstanding day, 23 Info Stalls offering great 'stuff', friends and family meeting up, able to bring children and grandchildren along (school hols); free cream tea for all (lovely). It benefits the town; brings people into the town as membership of GOLD is just for Darlington residents but people elsewhere (Northallerton, Bishop, Aycliffe etc) travel in for it as they make a note of the date in their diaries!
24. When a town like Darlington can arrange suitable lecturers for the ageing population, why can the Council refuse funding for so little time. The current GOLD worker has been so careful to push GOLD in all its manifestations, and all the volunteers that have given their time for the Tea-Dance, the Carnival and all the many other areas that volunteers give to others. Shame if the Council are lacking in Finance when so many give their time for all that is needed for the ageing population. GOLD has certainly put Darlington on the map.
25. I have only been a member of GOLD for a short time but have been impressed by the scope of work undertaken by loyal team members. I joined to take part in the important Dignity Training for Care Homes and have learned a great deal about the work undertaken over the years. I will be very sad and worrying if the cuts and lack of funding leave GOLD without a purpose. We have a great deal to offer our community.
26. We had interest in Health and Wellbeing for older people; prevention of isolation; suitable housing; podiatry services (or lack of them!)
27. GOLD provides a social platform to enable older people to have a voice.
28. So sad it has to become a Group that has not been able to continue but then many other Groups will also miss out.
29. GOLD was unique to Darlington, there are few who will (not) miss the excellent speakers and their excellent lectures
30. This contact from Gold has involved elders from various communities and young people (young)
31. Hearing Aid information helped our Chinese members
32. The Council have used Gold to provide information and contact with residents ie Care Homes, Education, Transport, Mobility
33. Youth helping elders with new technology etc Understanding each other
34. Not easy to think of positive impacts due to the unknown factor. Would probably be able to comment less hypothetically when we know what's happening. Until then it's an unknown entity as we don't know what they have in mind.