



ANNUAL REPORT

For the year to 31st March 2024

Community House
46-50 East Parade
Harrogate
HG1 5RR

Tel: 01423 531490

Email: team@supportingolderpeople.org.uk
www.supportingolderpeople.org.uk

Charity No. 1155682

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Welcome from the Chair

Firstly I would like to introduce myself. My name is Peter Hannon and I am a relative newcomer to the Harrogate area after moving here in 2021. I was keen to continue my involvement in local charities and I joined SOP as a volunteer and then Trustee in 2023. During 2023 I became the Chair of Trustees.

I would firstly like to say a big thank my predecessor, Julie Barlow, who had been the Chair since 2020. Her skills and knowledge as a volunteer, Trustee and then Chair of Trustees has been invaluable to SOP. I am happy to say that Julie remains a Trustee and is our Vice Chair.

I was quickly struck by the care, enthusiasm and expertise shown by our small SOP team of Kate, Julia and Lorna. The number and type of events organised by the team continues to grow and flourish. The demand is increasing with an ageing population and SOP is on the front line helping to improve the quality of life to the local elderly population.

We work as a team with a number of Partners including Harrogate Town AFC Foundation and Age UK North Yorkshire & Darlington. This cooperation and coordination is vital in delivering the services and care to our beneficiaries. We do this to support people to stay Healthy, Independent and Connected in our area. We are supported in doing this by the awarded grant from NYCC. We continue to work with them to ensure we deliver the best service we can to our clients.

Our Fundraising Team has worked tirelessly this year to help support the good work of SOP. The highlight being the very successful summer ball raising nearly £8K to support our services. We look forward to future planned events to help raise needed funds and having fun together. Thanks also must go to the providers of local grants to SOP. We work closely with the Benefactors to show that the grants awarded are wisely spent and support the local work that we do.

We also have a dedicated team of Trustees to oversee the charity, provide support and guidance to the SOP team. I would like to thank them as well for supporting me in my first year of office.

Our Volunteers are fundamental to SOP and without them we could not “Support Local People” A huge thank you for their support, dedication and kindness in what they do, they are amazing.

Whatever the conditions I know SOP will continue to deliver and develop care and services to our local elderly population. There will be challenges but if we face them, with our partners, funders and volunteers then I am confident we will continue to flourish.



Introduction from the Director



Reading this annual report at the end of another incredibly busy and successful year, I am once again incredibly proud of everything our small charity has achieved during challenging economic times. Demand for our services continue to rise and we have reached the end of our first year's partnership with Harrogate Town Community Foundation and Age UK, North Yorkshire and Darlington. We look forward to the next two years of "Together in Harrogate" and once again would like to thank North Yorkshire Council for their faith in us.

We came to the end of our partnership with Nidderdale Plus to help them set up and develop an outings programme, which was beneficial to people living in the dale, affected by rural isolation and to both organisations and people. Partnerships have continued to be extremely important to us during 2023-24.

You can see from our activity and befriending reports and case studies that they have gone from strength to strength, with demand for them has continuing to grow and so we have continued to diversify our funding sources in light of increased competition for grants. Our second annual ball, organised by our small fundraising team, was another huge success and we were delighted that several local businesses sponsored us and joined us on the evening, helping us raise over £7,500.

We are delighted that local businesses continue to give their staff time to support us as part of their Corporate Social Responsibility, especially by driving our members to our events.

This makes a huge difference and they are thanked later in this report. At our last AGM, in November 2023, Julie Barlow stood down as chair but has remained on the board as vice chair and I would like to thank her for her hard work and the support she has given me over her three-year term. Her successor, Peter Hannon became a trustee and chair on the same day and has hit the ground running! I've really appreciated his hands on support and guidance during his first 6 months in post and look forward to continuing to work with him in the future. All our trustees make steering a small charity through sometimes choppy waters much less of a burden and I am extremely grateful to them and indeed to all our volunteers, without whom we would not exist. They make a huge difference to the lives of those with whom they are matched. Finally, every year I finish my introduction by thanking my wonderful colleagues, Julia Lightfoot and Lorna Daniel, for their continued dedication, commitment and innovation which place us in a strong position to meet the challenges ahead and make Supporting Older People such a wonderful place to work. Whilst I may say something similar every year, I mean every word.

Activites

Home Befriending

We have a dedicated team of 120 volunteers visiting 114 members of Supporting Older People. Taking an average of one hour a week over a yearly period our volunteers give an impressive **6240** hours of volunteering per year.

Using the Living Wage as guidance this would amount to **£71385.60**.



1.4 million older people in the UK are often lonely.

The impact of loneliness in older people can be a higher risk of physical conditions, increased risk of mental health issues and reduced quality of life and well-being.

Supporting Older People's befriending service helps considerably with loneliness. Our clients look forward to a friendly face visiting once a week with a chance to chat and catch up over a cup of tea. Sometimes our befriender is the only person the client will see each week.

All our volunteers are DBS checked and are matched with a client according to their interests, location and how much time they can offer.

Our Befriending Manager prides herself on making good matches which lead to long and fulfilling friendship between the client and the befriender.

Activites

Tea & Talk

We have 65 members of Supporting Older People who attend all or some of the Tea & Talk monthly sessions at the Crown Hotel.

We had a special event to celebrate the Coronation at Follifoot Village Hall. The team at Supporting Older People produced an afternoon tea for 50. Our wonderful volunteers and Brian from the Happy Wanderers provided transport. There was entertainment with a patriotic theme from Karen Clegg.

We are very grateful to Certina, 4Life Wealth Management and our wonderful volunteers for helping with the transport to this event.



certinia


4LIFE WEALTH
MANAGEMENT

Activites

Dining Out Club

The attendance at Dining Out Club continues to grow with around 15 to 20 people attending each event. We aim to book local, independent restaurants to help the community. The Dining Out Club brings people together to enjoy a meal and a chat. It also gives our members the opportunity to visit restaurants they have not been to before.



We have one very nervous lady who came along for the first time. She was too nervous to come in by herself, after a chat with the Befriending Manager she came in and was welcomed by the group. She had a wonderful time and now attends our other events and has made good friends with a fellow SOP member who lives close by.

Activites

Outings

We are delighted to work with the wonderful charity The Happy Wanderers transport service who provide the bus and a driver for the trip. Our trips are so popular we often need two buses.



Cinema Club

In March 2023 we launched our Cinema Club. Our survey showed that some clients would like to meet up to go to the cinema in a group. We now meet on the third Wednesday of the month to join the Silver Screen film showing.



Activites

Music & Movement

The group has 20 members who attend each week. The group is run by wonderful volunteers who dedicate their time on a weekly basis – without their input the group would not run and we so appreciate them. Thanks go to Peter Hannon, Chair of SOP who helps with the finances etc. Mandy the instructor continues to lead the group exercise and gives the group a fun and diverse exercise routine each week.



Harlow Friendship Group

This group is overseen by Lorna, Supporting Older People's administrator who puts together a varied and exciting programme of speakers, entertainers and quizzes. There is around 25-30 members attending the weekly sessions.



Incorporating our new groups into our ethos

Music & Movement/Harlow Friendship Group

Over the years we have realised that our group activities are becoming more and more popular, with more members attending and new people joining.

We were delighted to take over the Movement & Music Group which was run by the original volunteers after Age Uk pulled out of Harrogate. The group meet every Tuesday at the Green Hut. Supporting Older People have sourced a new instructor, Mandy, who is very lively and has something new each week. Our Chair, Peter Hannon, attends the group and deals with the finances and we have introduced a monthly fee rather than weekly which cuts out the paperwork and trips to the bank!

The Harlow Friendship Group has been going for over 60 years. Pat and a small committee ran the group but felt it was getting too much. They approached Supporting Older People with a view to us running the group which involves seeking speakers/entertainers, dealing with the subs, setting up the hall and serving the refreshments. Lorna, SOP's administrator has taken over the group and it has been extremely successful. The original committee are delighted the group can continue.



Extra Activities

Thanks to Promedica 24 we were able to deliver an Easter gift to each of our members – delivered by our fantastic volunteers and help from Harrogate Town Community Foundation.

As usual Christmas was full of fun at Supporting Older People with parties for all our activity groups and finalizing in our big Christmas party at Oakdale Golf Club. 60 members were served a two course Christmas lunch with all the trimmings and entertainment from Harrogate Spa Town Ukes.

With the wonderful support from Nuffield Harrogate, Yorkshire Building Society, Commercial Street Traders, Home Instead and Morrisons who collected or donated Christmas gifts we were able to deliver a Christmas present to our members.

Case Study

Supporting Older People received a referral from the Living Well Team which was described as a “long shot”!

It was for a befriender for a delightful Italian gentleman who was 95 very recently bereaved and had limited English.

SOP are very lucky to have two wonderful befrienders on their database, one Italian and one who is learning Italian and has been for the last three years.

E (the befriender) was introduced to F (the referral) and had an immediate connection. E has helped F through his bereavement with both emotional and physical help. It is extremely beneficial to F to have someone to talk to in Italian and they enjoy their time together chatting away.

On confirming to the Living Well Team a perfect match had been made we received the following email: “That is fantastic. Made my day and its only 9am – thank you!”.

Every match we make at Supporting Older People takes time and it is important to find the right match taking into consideration hobbies, past times, personalities and distance to travel. We pride ourselves on making long term relationships where the befriending soon loses the be and become friends.



Risk Management

Supporting Older People maintains a risk register and the Board of Trustees ensures that all major risks to which the charity is exposed are reviewed on a regular basis and also that systems and procedures are in place to manage such risks. We also work with our insurance broker, Marshall Wooldridge to ensure that risks are minimised.

The main controls used by the charity include agendas and minutes of all meetings held; reporting through the organisational structure; policies and procedures formally adopted by the board and activity specific or individual risk assessments which are developed and maintained by the staff team and approved by the Director.

Public Benefit

We have referred to the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit and are confident that Supporting Older People meets their requirements. Our Home Visiting Scheme is free to all and, whilst we ask for a contribution towards the cost of our activities, these are subsidised by us. Equal access to our services is important to us and people join us regardless of gender, ethnicity, faith, sexual orientation or any other factor. We are now doing specific work with veterans, both male and female.

Provision of our 1:1 befriending and group activities for older people who live alone aims to avoid social isolation, encourages friendships and helps to prevent mental and physical ill health. A significant number of our older volunteers also live alone. Volunteering their time to visit others alleviates their loneliness and gives their lives a focus, without which they may become in need of interventions.

Future Plans and Possibilities

Our strategic aims up to 2025 are:

- To diversify our funding base and secure longer-term funding,
- To build, expand and support more flexible, diverse and high-quality volunteers,
- To strengthen partnership working with a range of organisations and agencies to extend our reach and access to other support services for older people,
- To evidence the impact and raise the profile of our work,
- To review, update and strengthen SOP's policies, processes, procedures and governance.

We are planning trustees' and team away day with an independent facilitator to review and update our strategic plan in the second half of 2024-25. This will ensure that it reflects the continued increased demand for our services and the need to meet the challenges of a more competitive funding environment.



By diversifying our funding and applying for larger multi- year grants we will aim to have a funding cushion for the future.

Our small fundraising team is planning a third fundraising dinner in July. We aim to hold three larger scale fundraising events each year and would welcome partnering with other charities and organisations to do this, as well as actively seeking business sponsorship. As part of our strategic plan, we will continue to ensure full cost recovery for all our activities and aim to attract more in-kind support, as well as funding and skills from the local business community.

Future Plans and Possibilities

It is imperative that we continue to raise our profile via the local press and social media to aid local funding and sponsorship opportunities. To this end, our Director has been nominated to join the management committee of the Harrogate Chamber of Commerce in June this year.

We will launch our “Together in Harrogate” Project Fund during 2024

This is with funding designated for this purpose from our North Yorkshire Council Staying Healthy, Independent and Connected (SHIC) Grant. Our primary aim is to give small grants to Harrogate based grassroots organisations or small charities to enable them to start new projects or have continuation funding for existing ones.

Our secondary aims are for more organisations to benefit from the SHIC grant, strengthen the local sector and be in position to apply for further funding.

Towards the second half of 2024-25 we will begin conversations with our colleagues at North Yorkshire Council about future funding.

We have just joined the Humber and North Yorkshire Cancer Alliance, which will enable us to signpost and support older people who have come to the end of treatment and ensure they receive the services they need and have social outlets to alleviate loneliness. Our Director will be doing monthly training seminars during the first half of this year. We will also support our friends at Nidderdale Plus as they set up a befriending service.

We will continue to have conversations with our colleagues in local voluntary sector organisations about joint working to benefit the people we support. This includes IT / digital support and ideas for new activities. We also plan to have three volunteer get-togethers a year, to share information, have training and socialise!

We will identify the most suitable Customer Resource System for our needs and purchase it during 2024-25 to enable us to record and carry out our work more effectively. Our trustee with legal expertise will retire during the year and therefore we would like to recruit someone with this expertise, having carried a trustees' skills audit during the year. We would also benefit from having a trustee with an HR background and support with our social media.

Nidderdale Plus Partnership

This pilot of this project concluded in September 2023 when we transferred Laura Crossley, the member of staff we had recruited to run an outings programme for older and vulnerable people in Nidderdale, to our partners at Nidderdale Plus. Funded by the Community Transport Association, the minibus days out programme is specifically designed to counter social isolation and loneliness, by giving people the opportunity to get out to new places, see new things and meet others. It provided a service to Ripon on market day (Thursday) most weeks from Pateley Bridge to Ripon, as there is no bus service linking them. We also provided bespoke trips for local lunch clubs so that their members can go somewhere different for their lunch once or twice a year and experience somewhere new, often a garden centre or a popular restaurant that is not too far away.

In the first 6 months of the project there were 28 days out incorporating Ripon market trips, 155 passengers were taken out, 9 minibus drivers gave their time, and 146 volunteer hours were given.

Someone who benefitted from the service commented: “The day trips are brilliant, It gets us out, and there’s a really good choice. All the ones we have been on have been absolutely wonderful.”

This project is continuing to go from strength to strength and we were delighted to play a part in its establishment and development. Laura has transferred to Nidderdale Plus and we wish her every success.

Together in Harrogate

On 1st April 2023 we began our three-year project “Together in Harrogate”, funded by North Yorkshire Council’s Staying Healthy, Independent and Connected grant. Together with our partners, Harrogate Town Community Foundation and Age UK North Yorkshire and Darlington. Our aim is to provide more support for older and vulnerable people in Harrogate. Our share of the funding has gone towards the activities you have read about elsewhere in this report.

During the first year, Harrogate Town Community Foundation supported 89 people who attended their walking football sessions, 61 at “Pitch Positive” and 27 at Women’s Walking Football.

Age UK North Yorkshire and Darlington began running a Harrogate phone line for queries and signposting to relevant organisations in April. Five volunteers provide telephone support. They also recruited an Information and Advice Worker and a regular volunteer based in the Harrogate Town Community Foundation office one day per week. The recruitment and training process took longer than anticipated but since December 2023 they have secured £26,335 in benefits for local people. They have supported 112 people in Harrogate, having a total of 286 contacts with them as we have assisted them.

Case Study

Mr and Mrs B contacted Age UK for a benefits check, both over state pension age, both with health conditions and caring for each other. We assessed them for Attendance Allowance, completed application forms. Both were awarded the higher rate AA. We then submitted underlying entitlement for Carers’ Allowance and completed a general benefit check. This showed eligibility for Guaranteed Pension Credit and Savings Pension Credit along with Council Tax Support and Housing Benefit. We have successfully maximised their income. As a result, Mr and Mrs B have informed us that they are able to enjoy their retirement without worrying about their finances.

Administrative Information

Legal and Administrative Information:

Charity Name: Supporting Older People CIO

Charity Registration Number:1155682

Principal Address

Community House

46 – 50 East Parade

Harrogate

HG1 5RR

Trustees:

Supporting Older People CIO is a charitable incorporated organisation registered with the Charity Commission on February 6th 2014 and governed by its constitution of December 3rd 2013. The control and governance of the charity are the responsibility of its trustees.

Peter Hannon Chair

Julie Barlow Vice Chair

James Houseman Treasurer

Teresa Stearn

Jackie Ashton

Martin Taylor

Garrey Haase

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records, which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity, and for the preparation of accounts for each financial year, which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the association and of its income and expenditure for that period. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities and for reviewing the risks to which the charity is exposed and the mitigation of these.

Director - Kate Rogata

Examiner - Claire Millington

Bankers - Lloyds Bank PLC

8 -11 Cambridge Crescent

Harrogate

HG1 1PQ

Sources of Funding and other Support

The main source of funding for the core activities of Supporting Older People was our Staying Healthy, Independent and Connected grant from North Yorkshire County Council. We were also thrilled to receive a substantial grant from the Garfield Weston Foundation and several grants from the Two Ridings Community Foundation. Our activities were also funded and supported by:

4Life Wealth
Allen Lane Foundation
Certinia
Commercial Street Traders
Good Health Chiropractic
Home Instead
Masonic Charitable Foundation
North Yorkshire Council Stronger Communities
Presence Church Harrogate
Promedica24 North Yorkshire, Lancashire and South Cumbria
Rotary Club of Harrogate Brigantes
St. James' Place Charitable Foundation
The Brelms Trust
The Dulverton Trust
The Fisher Care Group
The Harrogate Round Table
The Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management (ICCM) Metals Recycling Scheme
The Local Fund for the Harrogate District
The Local Lotto for the Harrogate District
The McCarthy and Stone Foundation
The Yorkshire Hearing Clinic
Yorkshire Building Society

In addition, Supporting Older People received income from donations from numerous individuals and organisations, together with charges for some group activities. Our fundraising group, chaired by our trustee, Martin Taylor, organised a highly successful ball.

We are extremely grateful to all the organisations and individuals whose generosity has enabled us to carry out our work in 2023-24.

Finance

Overview

Despite the financial statements stating a £32,513 deficit for the financial year ended 31 March 2024 (“FY23-24”), indicating a poor financial performance and a weakening of total funds position from the prior year, this is largely caused by timing differences so can partly be disregarded. If we consider like for like activities, the reality is a ~£5k deficit, which is driven by the competitive funding environment and the high inflationary environment.

Despite this, Kate and the team have done a fantastic job, both in terms of securing other grants/other fundraising activities, and in providing the services we provide to our customers (not forgetting the support of our fantastic volunteers too!), and I am confident that SOP is in the best financial position it could be.

Accounting basis

As a small charity (defined as one with gross income of less than £250,000), the financial statements have been prepared on a receipts and payments basis, in line with the previous year.

Funding during the year

During FY 23-24, SOP received total funds of £90,784, with grant income accounting for roughly half of this amount. This represents a decrease on the financial year ended 31 March 2023 (“FY 22-23”) but as mentioned in my report last year, due to the accounting basis used, we front loaded the new Stay Healthy, Independent and Connected (“SHIC”) grant from North Yorkshire County Council (“NYCC”) within the prior year financial statements, despite this amount being in respect of the current financial year. Furthermore, the SHIC payment in respect of the financial year ended 31 March 2025 (“FY 24-25”) was not received until April 2024, meaning it is not included within the numbers for FY 23-24, thus making the funding posting look worse than it actually is.

Finance

Aside from the NYCC funding, SOP received ~£44k of other grants, of which ~£32k were restricted funds and ~£12k were unrestricted. These amounts included:

- £10k from the Garfield Weston Foundation
- £5k from The Brelms Trust
- £5k from St. James's Place Charitable Foundation
- £5k from the Two ridings Community Foundation
- ~£19k from other sources.

In terms of gifts and donations, SOP received ~£20k in gifts and donations.

Notable amounts were £7k from the Cremation Fund (money raised from selling precious metals salvaged from the cremation process!) and ~£5k from the Presence Church, as well as many smaller donations for which we are extremely grateful for.

Finally, over £26k was generated from charitable activities, including £10k from the paid for activities that SOP provides (regular outings, exercise group, and the ever popular 'Tea and Talk' to name a few), and ~£14k[CEM1] raised from the highly successful Summer Ball; this represents an increase in the amounts raised from the prior year event and we would also like to thank the Yorkshire Hearing Clinic and other companies for the generous sponsorship of the Summer Ball.

Finance

Expenditure

Despite SOP continuing to operate on a very lean basis, we have seen ~£23k increase in costs from FY 22-23. However, £18k of this relates to the reallocation of the SHIC grant to our partners, meaning a net increase of ~£5k. Part of this relates to general inflationary increases in salaries and other costs, and part relating to an increase in costs on paid for activities/ball costs (which is to be expected given the income received from these increased too). SOP continues to rely on its very generous unpaid volunteers that provide the befriending activities; this is such a key part of SOP and provides such an amazing service to our clients and we all remain very grateful for your contribution.

Financial position and future

As mentioned, the overall result of a £32.5k deficit for FY 23-24 is not quite reflective of like for like performance; if we add in the net income from the SHIC grant received in early April 2024 (the prior year funding was received during the 2022/23 year whereas this year the amount was received after the accounting year end), SOP achieved a much smaller deficit of ~£5k. Whilst it is rarely good news to achieve a deficit, this is a good result in light of the challenging economic conditions throughout the year.

Cash at 31 March 2024 sat at £61,637, with unrestricted reserves accounting for £57,661. Whilst this is down from the prior year, if we include the delayed SHIC income, reserves comfortably cover >6m of planned expenditure in line with SOP's reserves policy and therefore does not give cause for concern. Furthermore, I am pleased to say that at the time of writing, we are forecasting to comfortably surpass the FY 23-24 result in FY 24-25. However, care must still be taken; every grant/fundraising opportunity and every cost saving should be pursued to ensure continued operation of SOP.

Finance

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

INCOME	
	Donations and grants
	Income from charitable activities
	Investment income
	Total income
EXPENDITURE	
	Charitable activities
NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE) FOR THE YEAR	
FUND BALANCES AT 31st MARCH 2023	
FUND BALANCES AT 31st MARCH 2024	

YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024		
Unrestricted	Restricted	Total
£	£	£
31,649	32,039	63,688
26,619	-	26,619
477	-	477
58,745	32,039	90,784
49,838	73,459	123,297
8,907	-	32,513
48,754	45,396	94,150
57,661	3,976	61,637

BALANCE SHEET

NET ASSETS	
	Cash, bank and building society deposits
TOTAL NET ASSETS	
FUNDS	
	Unrestricted
TOTAL FUNDS	

YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024		
Unrestricted	Restricted	Total
£	£	£
57,661	3,976	61,637
57,661	3,976	61,637
57,661	3,976	61,637
57,661	3,976	61,637

Related Party Transactions

During the year, SOP incurred telephony costs of £732 (2023: £732) from XI Comms Limited, a company partially owned by one of the Trustees.



CHARITY COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Independent examiner's report on the accounts

Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees/
members of

Charity Name
Supporting Older People CIO

On accounts for the year
ended

31 March 2024

Charity no
(if any)

1155682

Set out on pages

22 of the Annual Report

(remember to include the page numbers of additional sheets)

Responsibilities and
basis of report

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended 31 March 2024.

As the charity's trustees, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").


I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent
examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; or
- the accounts did not accord with the accounting records

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed: 
06B2104D8D91416...

Date: 1/30/2025

Name: Claire E Millington

Relevant professional
qualification(s) or body
(if any):

BA
CA (ICAS)

Address:

10 Hereford Close
WV7 3RL

Section B

Disclosure

Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight material matters of concern (see CC32, Independent examination of charity accounts: directions and guidance for examiners).

Give here brief details of any items that the examiner wishes to disclose.

No matters that the examiner deems are disclosable.



@supportingolderpeople



www.facebook.com/SupportingOlderPeople



@HarrogateSop

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