

Elders Council of Newcastle



Annual Report

2009-2010

Overview

We have had another successful year.

Membership has increased; the working groups have been active; members have attended national, regional and local events; and we have contributed to national and local consultations.

Membership

There has been a modest increase in membership, which stands at 2285 (2148 individual members and 137 institutional).

Working groups

The working groups have continued a busy schedule of meetings, consultations and surveys. Their work remains the power-house of the Elders Council.

Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods

Over the year, Elders Council members with an interest in home and neighbourhood have taken part in a number of different pieces of work which have contributed to building our understanding of what it means to have houses which suit our needs in neighbourhoods where we feel safe and can access key services.

We have worked with a number of different partners including Northern Housing Consortium; Northern Architecture; Planning Aid; Your Homes Newcastle; Department of Planning, Architecture and Landscape, University of Newcastle and the Centre for Housing Policy, University of York.

The outcomes of this work have been many and varied. Examples include a major contribution to the Northern Housing Consortium's report *Age-Friendly Communities in the North: People and Places 2020*, which was launched at a conference in January 2010, chaired by Elders Council member, Vera Bolter.

Another example is the 'Older Person Friendly Cowgate' project conducted by postgraduate students from Newcastle University. This revealed the need for an informal activity programme for older people on the estate. The Quality of Life Partnership has since worked with sheltered housing managers from Anchor Trust and Home Housing, a Newcastle City Council community development worker and a Healthworks health trainer to develop and fund a comprehensive activity programme for the 'Chatterbox Club' based in a local sheltered housing complex.

Group members are building an understanding of the opportunities available to improve the quality of homes and neighbourhoods through presentations and visits. A recent example is the group's visit to the new Hartfields retirement housing complex in Hartlepool.

The group has benefited from national and regional links, thanks to the work undertaken by Vera Bolter as a member of the national Housing our Ageing Population – Panel for Innovation and the regional Voluntary Sector Advisory Forum. Members of the group have also actively contributed to the development of Newcastle's Housing Strategy for Older People, which is going out to consultation in summer 2010.

Health and Social Care

During the year, members have participated in local and national consultations about services, with the aim of raising awareness of the issues most important to older people. As older people are major users of national health services, easy access to primary health services, such as GPs, dentists, chiropodists, optometrists, etc., is essential for the maintenance of good health and fitness. In responding to the strategic and operational plans of NHS North of Tyne, we constantly draw attention to these basic needs. At the same time we seek to raise members' awareness of developments in services through items in the Newsletter.

Developments in social care have been a major topic during the year. Locally a plan to transform the way adult services are provided, with an emphasis on the personalisation of care, is currently being implemented. It is important to keep track of how good intentions are put into practice, so the Working Group has kept in close touch with the programme to offer individual budgets for applicants for services. Nationally the Group has responded to the Big Care Debate about the future of social care. After considerable discussion, the

suggestion for a National Care Service was supported, but it was felt that none of the three funding options put forward would provide a satisfactory national service. It seems that debate will continue for some time pending a political decision.

Old Spice Drama group was originally founded to use performance to highlight health and safety issues for older people. Although there are still performances to older people's groups on these themes, we have devised new programmes for special occasions during the year (e.g., a sketch about elder abuse for the review of the guidelines on adult abuse; a presentation for the launch of the Carers Strategy; and a performance about involvement in research programmes for a conference about research into brain diseases). Involvement with the social work degree courses at Northumbria and Durham Universities has continued with performances about users' perceptions of services. This work has been extended during the year to Teesside University for a multi-disciplinary course for therapy students.

Older Person Friendly City

There have been several themes to the Working Group's activities during the year as members have continued to examine aspects of the environment which affect their daily lives.

Older Person Friendly Shopping: The programme started in the usual way, i.e. a questionnaire to members about the facilities of most importance to them when using supermarkets. A member of the group participated in a visit the previous year to a German supermarket geared to the needs of older shoppers. The purpose of our investigation has been to see whether similar facilities would be popular with supermarket customers here and whether there are other changes that would make shopping easier for them. Using our checklist of desirable features, members carried out systematic surveys of the seven major supermarkets in Newcastle. The main findings showed that there is a general lack of clear signposting to sections of the store and that labels are difficult to read. Although aisles are usually wide enough, they are sometimes cluttered by stacking trolleys making it difficult to move around. The most common complaint is about pricing policy: a prevalence of special offers for bulk buys rather than reduced prices for single items. There is also a lack of delivery services for goods purchased in the store. These issues are being brought to the attention of supermarket managers. In the meantime, surveys of 11 smaller neighbourhood stores have been completed

and the study will be extended next to include shopping for food in the City Centre.

City Centre: The Working Group continues to maintain a strong interest in developments in the City Centre. Attendance at meetings of the City Centre Management Steering Group has been a useful way to keep up to date with developments, such as the opening of the new south block of Eldon Square replacing the old Green Market and now called St Andrew's Way. Together with St George's Way opened earlier, there are now brightly lit, level routes through the Centre. Other developments in the City Centre, in the Stephenson Quarter and in East Pilgrim Street area, are still pending and will continue to be scrutinised by the Working Group.

Public Toilets: The provision of public toilets in the City Centre continues to be of concern. During the year, we have concentrated on promoting the idea of a Community Toilet scheme, which involves local businesses being subsidised in some way to open up their facilities to the public. The Elders Council put forward this suggestion to the Citizens Assembly, where it received wide support. Although there are new toilets in the new block of Eldon Square, overall provision in the City is still unsatisfactory, so the campaign must continue.

Parks and Recreation Areas: The Working Group's report published in 2008 identified the features which encouraged use of parks by older people – and which also prevented enjoyment of these amenities. This has provided a useful basis on which to assess the plans for improvements which are currently being put forward for funding. Work will continue to promote activities of interest to older people in the forthcoming Summer Programme.

Learning and Culture

The core of this group's work is to help ensure that older people in Newcastle have plenty of opportunities to stay active in mind and body.

Our promotion of relevant activities in the city was exemplified at the International Day for Older People Day on Thursday 1 October 2009. The Elders Council was able to mark this special day by including it in its popular series of Older and Wiser Days as part of the week's Older Persons' Festival. The City Library's Bewick Hall was crowded by over 20 associations

demonstrating to a large number of visitors the wide range of opportunities that older people have in Newcastle for enjoying life.

Members of the group, with the support of Active Ageing, are currently finalising a booklet which will provide practical help for anyone thinking of starting, maintaining or expanding an informal learning group.

Two other projects are continuing: finding an acceptable definition of informal learning; and seeking evidence that learning benefits older people's general health. In respect of the first, we are for the time being using a definition of informal learning as learning which does not require or lead to certificated recognition for the participants. In respect of the latter, the only evidence so far seems to be that the benefits come from the social and physical activities involved, and that solitary learning (as in "brain-training") does not generalise to other aspects of well-being. A member has also joined the steering group of a project being fostered by the Institute of Ageing and Health, which is looking at whether engagement with museums contributes to healthy old age.

In order to improve the connotations of the title of this group, it proposes to change it to The Creative Learning Working Group.

Outreach

As members will be aware, right from the outset the Elders Council set its sights on being the voice of all of Newcastle's older people. It became apparent, however, that the elders from the black and minority ethnic (BME) communities were under-represented within the membership. The BME communities make up roughly 7% of Newcastle's population but only about 4% of Elders Council members came from those communities.

Following discussions with the City Council's Community Development section, we were fortunate in securing help to rectify this situation, through the secondment (on a part-time basis) of Nazrul Islam (Community Development Officer). Nazrul has worked with us to establish links with the various BME communities, so as to find out the issues faced by their elders and to encourage the communities' older members to join the Elders Council.

Further help in this respect has come as a result of the merger of our outreach activities with those of Age Concern Newcastle. We now receive excellent support from Meena Chopra (Age Concern BME Elders Take Up

Project Worker), who, among many other things, has provided further links to some of the city's BME communities.

Turning to the wider community, we have provided speakers or looked after information stands at 36 community events, which provided opportunities to speak with about 1000 older people.

Most recently, we have been working on the introduction of *Just what I need*, which involves widening the scope of the information we provide at outreach events. Rather than covering only those services organised through the Quality of Life Partnership (such as the Trades Register), we will additionally include a few of the more popular other services available to older people.

At the end of the year, some members went to visit a meeting of the Leeds Older People's Forum and talked about the work and structure of the Elders Council. Also, we have recently begun to establish closer links with the Gateshead Older People's Assembly.

Transport and Highways

We have continued to build on our excellent relationships with Nexus and the major bus operators, Stagecoach, GoNorthEast and Arriva.

In particular, we have worked with GoNorthEast on their "travelsafe" policies including a demonstration of new buses with a variety of safety and information services which will be of help to older people.

We have also worked with Nexus on a number of consultations, including the public consultation on Local Bus Links.

Much of our time in the last year has been spent in working with Nexus on the Bridge Card. This card is available free from any Travel Centre and is a way of informing the driver that you have a difficulty in getting on or off the bus. You simply show the driver the card and tell them what special assistance you need.

"Hop to the shops" goes from strength to strength and we have worked closely with Nexus on improvements where possible to the TaxiLink and LinkUp services.

On members' behalf, we continue to monitor other transport issues such as the Companion Pass, Metro Card, Community Transport, bus-stops, bus-only lanes and a host of other items with which we try to keep members up to date in our Newsletter.

A particular success in the summer was our publication *Summer outings in 2009 with a concessionary bus pass*, which gave members ideas of where they could go in a day by using their bus-pass. We printed 220 copies, all of which were distributed. Members' comments about the value of the leaflet were very positive.

On a wider basis, we are part of the Tyne and Wear Older Persons' Transport Forum and the City Region Transport Focus Group, and we work with the planners on local transport initiatives, advise property developers on their proposed plans and respond to the national government on all older person issues to do with transport.

Communication

The Communication Working Group has three strands.

Newsletter: Owing to the financial constraints that the Elders Council was under in this financial year, the Board of Trustees decided to reduce the number of newsletters from six per year to four per year. The Newsletter itself does not cost very much to produce but postage is very expensive, which is why the Board of Trustees has introduced two measures to try to reduce the cost: first, we are encouraging members to receive their copy electronically if they can; and second, we have recently introduced a scheme for members to deliver copies to their neighbours by hand.

The Newsletter itself continues to be warmly received by its readers.

Readers Group: Work in the monitoring of official publications has been slowing down over the last year. We have had successful sessions looking at some Adult Services leaflets and some advice on road safety, but we are convinced that not everything published in the city is reader-friendly and the group would like to encourage members to bring to its attention any pamphlet, leaflet or brochure that could be improved.

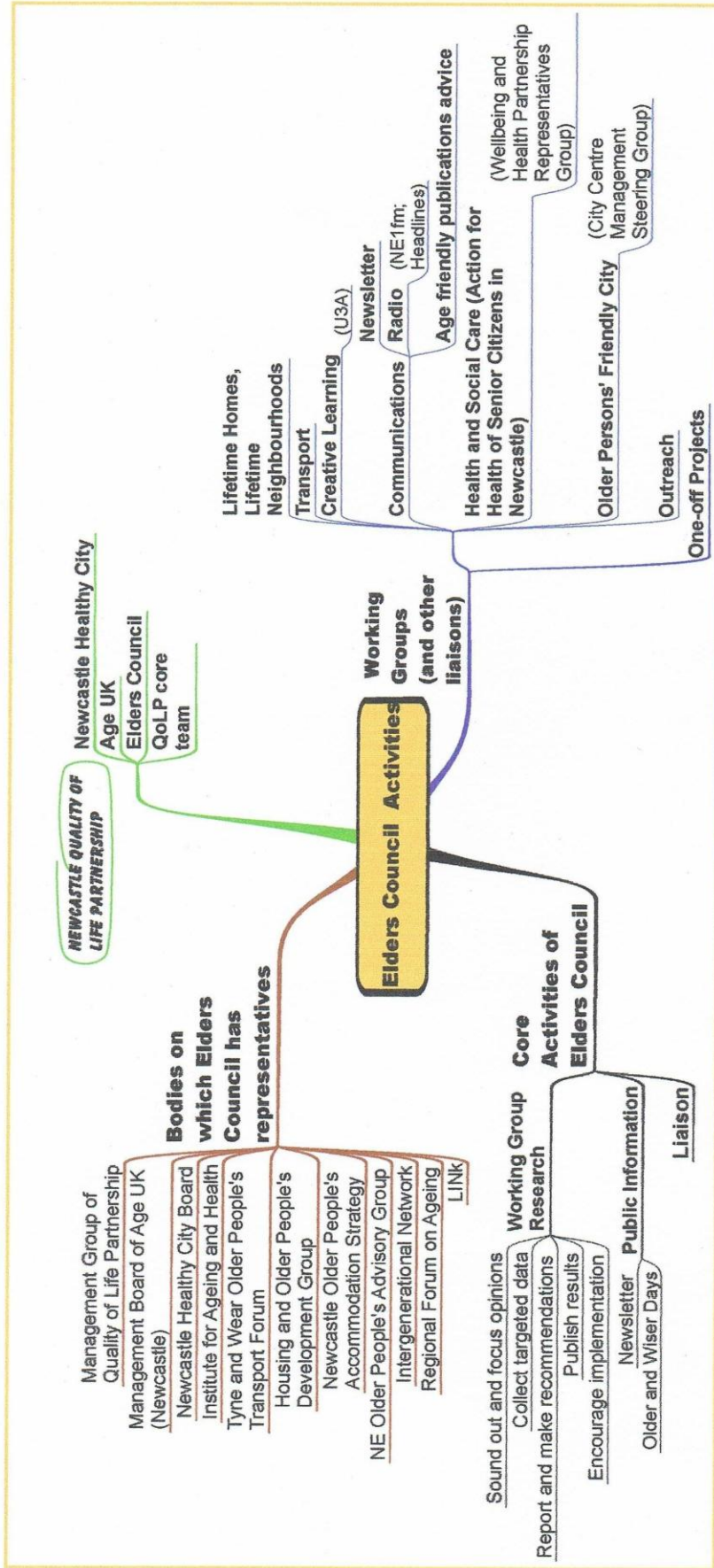
Everyone's tomorrow – today! The radio group has continued to broadcast a two-hour programme on the first Friday of every month, which has received the recognition of a repeat on the following Monday. The wavelength of the broadcast is 102.5fm.

The group is small and would welcome new members.

Representing the Elders Council

Members of the Board of Trustees have represented members' views on a wide range of bodies, including:

- The Older People's Strategic Board
- Voluntary Organisations' Network North East (VONNE)
- Older People's Advisory Group (OPAG)
- Years Ahead
- Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) Innovation Group
- Tyne and Wear Older People's Transport Forum
- Equalities Coalition
- Institute for Ageing and Health
- Housing and Older People Development Group (HOPDEV)



Members were also invited by the City Council, by the ruling administration and by the Opposition to attend consultation meetings on the council budget.

Everyone's Tomorrow and the Older People's Strategic Board

The Elders Council continues to play a key role in the development of *Everyone's Tomorrow* (Newcastle's Strategy for Older People) to ensure that it reflects the key issues of concern to older people. Our representatives sit on the Newcastle Partnership's Older People's Strategic Board.

The Elders Council will continue to strive to engage with a wide range of older people in the city to ensure that we are contributing their ideas and concerns to the review and development and implementation of *Everyone's tomorrow*. Through this process, we work closely with agencies to improve the range and quality of services for older people in the city.

Building bridges between the generations

We continue to meet with the representatives elected to Newcastle's Youth Parliament and at the end of the year established contact with Headliners, a group established to help young people with journalistic production (mainly radio in our case).

Quality of Life Partnership

The Elders Council is a core partner of the Quality of Life Partnership with Age Concern Newcastle and Newcastle Healthy City. The Quality of Life Partnership undertakes a wide range of activity which is aimed at changing or developing services for the benefit of older people in Newcastle.

The Elders Council participates in the Quality of Life Partnership in a wide variety of ways:

- Members of the Elders Council Board serve on the Management Committee of the Partnership.

- Elders Council Board members are on the Project Group of Joining the Dots, a project which is seeking to enable people at risk of isolation to access services and support networks. Several members also participated in workshops through which we developed proposals for strategic linkworkers, who will play a key role in joining up services at local level.
- Members have enjoyed the benefits of the Active Ageing programme, taking part in cycling, Nordic walking, Rookie Golf and many other activities, including the very successful Older People's Festival.
- Members are supporting the development of an Intergenerational Network which is bringing together older people and staff from agencies to plan and develop a range of intergenerational projects. Members participated in a project which took the City Library by storm one Saturday in November with a riot of fashion and music presented jointly by older people and members of 'Utter Legends'.
- Several members have engaged in the work of the most recent Partnership project, a Service Design project being delivered in partnership with the University of Northumbria. This new area of work is fostering new and interesting ways of engaging older people in the co-design of services and bringing new insights to our work.
- The Elders Council plays a particularly strong role in enabling older people to access information and advice and in doing so demonstrates the very important role that older people play in supporting their peers. The newsletter, radio programme, website, readers group, Older and Wiser Days, and, more recently, working with Partnership staff on the 'Just What I Need' campaign are all fine examples of older people's contribution to Newcastle's Information and Advice strategy.

These examples demonstrate the very significant role which the Elders Council plays in enabling older people to participate in the work of the Partnership at every level. The Partnership has a very wide-ranging programme of work, and therefore makes many demands on Elders Council members, who respond with enthusiasm, commitment, a willingness to learn and the confidence to challenge, all of which contributes to ensuring that the work of the Partnership is grounded in the needs and aspirations of older people.

The QoLP team continues to give the Elders Council full and dedicated support, for which we are very grateful. We would like to end this report by thanking each and every one of them:

Barbara Douglas (Strategic Director)

Fran O'Brien (Project Manager)

Anne Richardson (Strategic Support and Administration Manager)

Christine Richards (Office Support Administrator)

Michelle Mordue (Active Ageing Development Worker)

Kaye Turner (Information NOW)

Sandra Hillyard (Joining the Dots Project Manager)

Matthew Phillips (PA/Funding Administrator)

Laura Warwick (Knowledge Transfer Associate)

[Claire Horton (seconded to the City Council Adult and Culture Services)]

We are grateful to Newcastle City Council, the Primary Care Trust and anonymous donors for the financial support that they give to the Elders Council. During the year, individual donations, many through Gift Aid, totalled £1058 and we are grateful to those members who contributed to the work in this way.

Contact details:

e-mail: elderscouncil@qualityoflife.org.uk Telephone: 0191 233 0200

Website: www.elderscouncil.org.uk

Post: MEA House, Ellison Place, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 8XS

Registered charity no. 1122424

Company Limited by Guarantee no. 6188907

9 June 2010

1. Board of Trustees

Vera Bolter	Susan Chan	Bill Ions (Treasurer)
Ruth Lesser	Marguerite Maxwell	Mary Nicholls
John O'Shea	John Reid	Elsie Richardson
John Smart	Pat Stephenson	Dorothy Ternent (VC)
Bob Weiner (Secretary)	Steve Whitley (Chair)	Mick Williams
Judith Williams (co-opted)	Peter Stone (co-opted)	Liz Hannan (co-opted)

One third of the Board of Trustees retires every year; those who retire may stand again. The Annual General Meeting appoints trustees, after an election if more members wish to stand for the Board than there are places available. Only members of the Elders Council may be appointed.

The officers are appointed by and from the Board of Trustees, after an election if more than one trustee wishes to stand for the vacant post. The term of office of an officer is three years; they may not serve in the same post for more than six consecutive years.

New trustees are given a brief induction to the Elders Council and the duties and responsibilities of trusteeship.

Normally, the Board meets monthly.

2. Governance

The Board of Trustees is responsible for the policy and management of the Elders Council. It is guided in its decisions by the work of the working groups (see above, pages 2-8).

3. Objects

The objects of the Elders Council are:

- (1) to provide the infrastructure to enable the over-50s residing or active in the city of Newcastle upon Tyne to contribute as a resource to the community;

- (2) to educate, develop, improve, encourage and promote awareness of the over-50s and their capabilities and needs whilst residing or active in the city of Newcastle upon Tyne;
- (3) to provide general financial assistance for over-50s residing or active in the city of Newcastle upon Tyne;
- (4) to provide for and assist in the provision of exhibitions, lectures, classes and demonstrations for members of the general public to further and increase their knowledge, understanding and appreciation of all matters and awareness of the over-50s in Newcastle upon Tyne;
- (5) to promote the welfare of the over-50s in any manner which now is or hereafter may be deemed by law to be charitable;
- (6) to provide relief to over-50s residing or active in the city in Newcastle upon Tyne who are in need of services or facilities calculated to relieve the needs of such persons;
- (7) to provide information for the relief of financial hardship, sickness and poor health amongst the over-50s.

4. Public benefit

As will be seen from the body of the report, the Elders Council trustees have, in the exercise of their duties, fully complied with their duty to have due regard to the guidance on public benefit published by the Charity Commission.

Registered Number 6188907
Charity Number 1122424

THE ELDERS COUNCIL OF NEWCASTLE LIMITED
(A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)

FINANCIAL ACCOUNTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2010

THE ELDERS COUNCIL OF NEWCASTLE LIMITED

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2010

	<u>2009/10</u>	<u>2008/09</u>	
<u>UNRESTRICTED FUNDS</u>			
<u>INCOME RESOURCES</u> (Note 1)			
Grants Received			
Quality of Life Partnership	31,500	24,010	
Healthy City Project	--	3,666	
Others	--	150	27,826
Income from Services	1,982		1,543
Donations	1,058		535
Interest Received	139		1,312
	<u>34,679</u>		<u>31,216</u>
 <u>RESOURCES EXPENDED</u>			
<u>DIRECT COSTS</u> (Note 1)			
Development Working Groups	387	1,286	
Information Days	1,321	1,102	
Interpretation	526	408	
Meetings	2,186	1,512	
Postage	4,819	6,901	
Printing, Stationery, Publicity	11,281	12,340	
Sundries	334	154	
Training & Conferences	709	446	
Transport	3,615	3,985	28,134
	<u>25,178</u>		
 <u>ADMINISTRATION COSTS</u> (Note 1)			
Accountancy	460	464	
Insurance	529	498	
Legal	--	15	977
	<u>989</u>		
<u>EXCESS OF INCOME OVER EXPENDITURE</u>	8,512		2,105
<u>TRANSFER TO SPECIAL RESERVE</u> (Note 2)	5,000		--
	<u>3,512</u>		<u>2,105</u>
<u>UNRESTRICTED FUND AT 31 MARCH 2009</u>	<u>26,864</u>		<u>24,759</u>
 <u>UNRESTRICTED FUND AT 31 MARCH 2010</u>	 <u>£30,376</u>		 <u>£26,864</u>

Notes

- In addition to the above costs, co-ordination, clerical and support services were provided to the company during the year by the Quality of Life Partnership at an estimated value of £115,000.
- Special Reserve
The transfer of £5,000 to the Special Reserve is to cover additional unfunded expenditure for the year ended 31 March 2011 which was committed by the Trustees at 31 March 2010.

THE ELDERS COUNCIL OF NEWCASTLE LIMITED

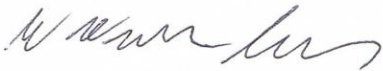
BALANCE SHEET

31 March 2010

	<u>2010</u>	<u>2009</u>
<u>CURRENT ASSETS</u>		
Debtors	5,000	4,173
Cash at Bank	<u>36,555</u>	<u>26,091</u>
	41,555	30,264
CREDITORS		
Amounts falling due within one year	<u>6,179</u>	<u>3,400</u>
<u>NET ASSETS</u>	<u>35,376</u>	<u>26,864</u>
<u>UNRESTRICTED ACCUMULATED FUNDS</u>		
General Reserve	30,376	26,864
Special Reserve	<u>5,000</u>	<u>--</u>
	<u>£35,376</u>	<u>£26,864</u>

The trustees consider that the company is entitled to exemption from the requirements to have an audit under the provision of section 477 (2) of the Companies Act 2006 and members have not required the company to obtain an audit of its accounts for this year in accordance with section 476 of the Act. The trustees acknowledge their responsibilities for ensuring that the company keeps accounting records which comply with section 386 of the Companies Act 2006 and for preparing financial statements which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the company as at 31 March 2010 and of its income and expenditure for the year ended on that date in accordance with the accounting requirements of the Companies Act 2006

The financial statements were approved by the trustees on 27 April 2010.



W W Ions
Treasurer

Independent Examiner's Report to the Members
of The Elders Council of Newcastle Limited

I report on the accounts of the company for the year ended 31 March 2010.

The trustees (who are also the directors of the company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under Section 43(2) of the Charities Act 1993 and that an independent examination is needed.

Having satisfied myself that the charity is not subject to audit under company law and is eligible for independent examination, it is my responsibility to:-

- a) examine the accounts under Section 43 of the 1993 Act;
- b) follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 43(7)(b) of the 1993 Act;
- c) state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

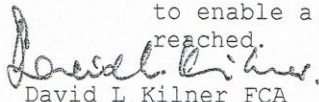
My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and the seeking of explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and, consequently, no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present 'a true and fair view' and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent Examiner's Report

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

- a) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that, in any material respect, the requirements
 - i) to keep accounting records in accordance with Section 386 of the Companies Act 2006 and
 - ii) to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records, comply with the accounting requirements of the Companies Act 2006 and with the methods and principles of the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities (revised 2005) have not been met or

- b) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.


David L Kilner FCA

Chartered Accountant
7 Eldon Square
Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 7JG

27 April 2010