



The Elders Council of Newcastle

Older People working for Older People

April-May 2010 - Issue 35

Elders Council of Newcastle

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**THE ELDERS COUNCIL
NEEDS YOU TO HELP
PROMOTE ITS WORK.**

**PLEASE PASS THIS
NEWSLETTER ON TO
OTHERS WHO MIGHT
BE INTERESTED.**

LET'S USE OUR VOTES!

When you read this, the date of the general election will be known. So we suggest that we older people use the power of our votes to ensure that those who want to represent us in Parliament are really responding to the issues that concern us. Age UK are running a campaign along these lines and have suggested five main areas to ask your parliamentary candidates about:

- Will you protect the present scheme that gives a free bus-pass to everyone of pensionable age?
- Will you re-link the basic state pension to earnings by 2012?
- Will you protect social care and support from impending cuts?
- Will you end the scandal of malnutrition in hospitals?
- Will you scrap forced retirement at 65?

Of course, you may have other concerns that you want to ask your candidates about when they pop up on your doorstep, but if we all impress upon them that we have votes and that we're prepared to use those votes, we can have a powerful effect.

Remember: we constitute 32% of the population of Newcastle and 42% of the voting population – and we're more likely to vote than younger people. So ...

THEY MUST LISTEN TO US!

Let's Use Our Votes! – cont -

Prospective parliamentary candidates for the three main parties in Newcastle:

Newcastle Central

Chi Onwurah (Labour), FREEPOST, Newcastle Labour.
chi@chi4central.com

Gareth Kane (LibDem), 157 Stratford Road, NE6 5AS.
gareth.kane@newcastle-libdems.org.uk

Nick Holder (Conservative), Aston House, Redburn Road, NE5 1NB
nick4newcastle@gmail.com

Newcastle East

Dominic Llewellyn (Conservative), Benton House, Four Lane Ends, NE7 7UJ
dom@votedom.com

Nick Brown (Labour), 1 Moseley Street, NE1 1YE
nickbrownmp@parliament.uk

Wendy Taylor (LibDem), 12 Boundary Gardens, NE7 7AA.
endy.taylor@newcastle-libdems.org.uk

Newcastle North

Ron Beadle (LibDem), 21 Beaconsfield Avenue, Low Fell, NE9 5XT.
ron@beadle.org.uk

Stephen Parkinson (Conservative), Aston House, Redburn Road, NE5 1NB
office@newcastle-conservatives.co.uk

Catherine McKinnel (Labour), Labour North, Eldon House, Regent Centre, NE3 3PW
north@new.labour.org.uk

Newcastle Charter for Changing Age

The Newcastle Charter for Changing Age was launched in March 2010

The number of older people in our population has increased dramatically. This trend will continue for the foreseeable future. A radical reassessment of the place of older people in society is long overdue. This must be accompanied by a profound change in attitudes to ageing, informed by facts and not by outdated misconceptions.

Too often, political debate has focused on population ageing as a negative issue, a burden to be managed. This negativity pervades attitudes commonly seen in the media, business, employment, education and even in health and social care. Political leadership is needed to promote change across society.

Newcastle Charter for Changing Age – cont -

If you have access to a computer* and would like to find out more about the charter and pledge your support go to www.ncl.ac.uk/changingage

Remember: If you don't have a computer at home, you can use one in your library; or you can ask your grandchildren to help you.

Working Group Updates

Action for Health – Senior Citizens in Newcastle (Working Group on Health and Social Care)

Having a Good Death has been a main item for discussion. An article in the last Newsletter described a process for putting together A Good Death Charter for the North East. The Charter sets out the principles for a good death, such as Respect, Time to Plan, Care and Support. We would like to see it more widely discussed (copies are available from Elders Council office). The main issues raised by the Working Group, and which are not covered in the Charter, are the status of Living Wills, and also attitudes to assisted death. These are, of course, legal issues but are of particular concern at the moment.

NHS Consultation and New Patients' Rights

The working group was involved two years ago in consultation about a proposed Constitution for the NHS. We supported the adoption of a Constitution because it seemed a good way to protect the NHS. The Constitution contains 25 rights and 14 pledges for patients and public, as well as their responsibilities. The current consultation is about adding new rights to the Constitution:

1. waiting time to start treatment for non-urgent conditions to be 18 weeks, but 2 weeks for urgent referrals for suspected cancer;
2. a right to an NHS health check every 5 years for those aged 40-74;
3. suggestions for future rights.

Comments were forwarded in support of these three proposals, with the suggestion that NHS Dental Treatment should become a new right. In further discussion, it has been suggested that we should enquire further about the operation of 75+ health checks for older people. We should be grateful if you could take the time to respond to our questionnaire which comes with this Newsletter, to share your experiences of 75+ health checks.

Working Groups – cont -

Communication Working Group

Readers Group

At the beginning of March, we had one of our most successful sessions yet. The topic was road safety and the author of the leaflet engaged with us very well indeed.

Everyone's tomorrow – today!

Plans for downloading the monthly radio programme on to the Elders Council website have been thrown slightly off course by two factors: first, we cannot copy any of our music on to the website, for the license to do so would cost us £thousands; second, the size of each download is limited to about 14 minutes of airtime. But we still intend to download the talk into digestible chunks so that web-users can get a flavour of the programmes.



If you want to listen to the programme live, tune in to 102.5fm from 2-4 on the first Friday of every month or 10-12 on the following Monday. If you would like to join the team, please get in touch with Steve Whitley on 273 4727 or steve.whitley@phonecoop.coop

Transport and Highways Working Group

Changes to the national free bus pass scheme

The age at which people become eligible for a national concessionary 'free' bus pass is going to change, starting from 6 April 2010. Because Nexus is part of the national scheme and is funded by Government to provide bus-passes, it is bound to follow these changes.

The first important message to you is that this affects only new applicants for a bus-pass – you are not affected if you already have your pass.

From 6 April 2010, people will no longer be eligible to receive a free bus-pass on the day they reach their 60th birthday.

Instead, both men and women become eligible for a pass in line with the rise in the age at which women become eligible for a state pension. This is rising on a sliding scale, from 60 to 65, between 2010 and 2020. A table of these changes is shown over page.

Working Groups – cont -

Transport and Highways Working Group –cont -

Revised eligibility criteria for the issue of Bus Passes

| If you were born on or before | | You will receive your pass on | | When you are aged Years-Months | |
|-------------------------------|------|-------------------------------|------|-----------------------------------|----|
| 5 April | 1950 | 6 April | 2010 | 60 | 0 |
| 5 May | 1950 | 6 May | 2010 | 60 | 0 |
| 5 June | 1950 | 6 July | 2010 | 60 | 1 |
| 5 July | 1950 | 6 September | 2010 | 60 | 2 |
| 5 August | 1950 | 6 November | 2010 | 60 | 3 |
| 5 September | 1950 | 6 January | 2011 | 60 | 4 |
| 5 October | 1950 | 6 March | 2011 | 60 | 5 |
| 5 November | 1950 | 6 May | 2011 | 60 | 6 |
| 5 December | 1950 | 6 July | 2011 | 60 | 7 |
| 5 January | 1951 | 6 September | 2011 | 60 | 8 |
| 5 February | 1951 | 6 November | 2012 | 60 | 9 |
| 5 March | 1951 | 6 January | 2012 | 60 | 10 |
| 5 April | 1951 | 6 March | 2012 | 60 | 11 |
| 5 May | 1951 | 6 May | 2012 | 61 | 0 |

The age at which you become eligible for a Metro Gold Card will change in line with that for a bus-pass.

Bridge Card

The Bridge Card is available free from Nexus for anyone who has difficulty using public transport because of age, disability, illness or a lack of confidence.

These are now becoming more widely recognised by drivers and passengers but please note that you should tell the driver when you get on the bus what sort of special assistance you need (for instance, “Please tell me when I reach such-and-such a stop” or “Please don’t move away until I’ve sat down” or “Please put down the ramp when I get off.”) Full guidance notes are available at Nexus Travel Centres.



Working Groups – cont -

Transport and Highways Working Group –cont -

Bus Strategy: Nexus plans for local bus links

Nexus has unveiled plans to completely overhaul bus routes it pays for in Tyne and Wear as part of the Bus Strategy, a three-year action plan. These plans are open to public consultation between 15 March and 4 June 2010 and you can have your say by writing to Nexus direct or on their website.

Alternatively, in April and May a series of roadshows will take place where you can speak to Nexus staff and ask questions, as well as giving your views. Details of those to be held in Newcastle appear on page 7.

The proposals are planned for introduction in April 2011 and are aimed at improving evening and Sunday services. Also, links to local services and employment sites from neighbourhoods with little or no public transport will be improved.

The central question they are asking is: Do their buses get people where they want to go, and at the times they want to travel?

They plan to finance these changes within the existing funding, by focusing its spending more cost-effectively and withdrawing the LinkUp demand-responsive service in favour of fixed bus routes.

Some of the major services in Newcastle which will be affected seem to include (but please check): Services 3, 6/6B, 15/15A, 18, 32/32a, 33, 35, 38a, 50, 62b, 70, 97, 340/342, 350/351, 941, 943, x63, m71, 75. New services are planned for Services 5, 70, 335, TB75.

The Transport Working Group will be working closely with Nexus on these proposals but please do check them out and if possible get along to one of these Roadshows and have your say.

Consultation Roadshow events in Newcastle area:

Denton Burn Library, West Road, Denton Burn, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE15 7QQ.
Friday 19 April, 10.30am-1.30pm.

The Lightfoot Centre, Wharrier Street, Walker, NE6 3BR - Thursday 22 April, 3-7pm.

East End Pool, Hadrian Square, Byker, NE6 1AL - Tuesday 18 May, 1.30-6.30pm.

Gosforth Library, Regent Farm Road, Gosforth NE3 3HD
Wednesday 19 May, 10.30am-4pm.

Centre 4 Sport, Westgate Community College, West Road, NE4 9LG
Thursday 20 May, 1.30-6.30pm.

Outer West Pool, West Denton Way, NE5 2QZ
Friday 21 May, 11.30am-4pm.

Working Groups – cont -

Transport and Highways Working Group –cont -

Summer Outings in 2010 with a Concessionary Bus Pass

Following the success last year of our “Summer Outings with a Concessionary Bus Pass” leaflet, when over 200 copies were sent out, we have updated it for this year and have printed extra copies.

We heard that many of you enjoyed the better-known trips such as to Alnwick and Hexham and we believe that some even ventured as far as Penrith and Scarborough, so we have added a new route – the “Weardale Circular” – and have updated the notes on the others.

More than 16 journeys are mentioned together with some interesting comments about the locations. If you would like a copy of the free leaflet (or a few to give to your friends and neighbours), just telephone Christine Richards at the office on 0191 233 0200), or email christine.richards@qualityoflife.org.uk . The leaflet can also be downloaded from the Elders Council Website:

<http://www.elderscouncil.org.uk/publications/>

A word of warning, though: these notes are just suggestions. Whilst many departure times and service numbers are mentioned, some of these do change, so you must **check the details** with Nexus or the companies concerned before you travel. We, obviously, cannot accept any responsibility for any problems which might arise; it is up to you to make any enquiries necessary.

Nevertheless, we are grateful to Mervin Dixon for preparing this light-hearted summary and we hope that you will enjoy many happy days out exploring our wonderful countryside here in the North East.

Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods Working Group

We have had an excellent response from members wishing to join this group, which has set off to a good start with a range of lively discussion. The key themes which members expressed an interest in are: Lifetime Homes; Specialist Housing (e.g. retirement housing; Extra Care Housing) and making adaptations to your own home.

At our March meeting, we learned more about lifetime homes standards and agreed that we should continue to press the government to maintain the commitment to make Lifetime Homes Standards mandatory. Vera Bolter prepared a response on behalf of the Elders Council to the current consultation on this topic.

We also enjoyed a presentation from Vera Bolter on the work of HAPPI (Housing for an Ageing Population – Panel for Innovation). This included information about a range of very exciting examples of housing for older people in other parts of the UK and Europe. Many examples demonstrated how housing for older people can be a central hub in communities, providing high quality housing and community facilities.

Working Groups – cont -

Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods –cont -

Members also discussed their recent visit to the new Hartfields retirement housing complex in Hartlepool – which wasn't everyone's cup of tea!

Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods is the theme of the Elders Council's Annual General Meeting on 9th June and the group will be contributing to the planning of the event.

Several members took up the opportunity to join the First Stop workshop on housing options for older people, to find out more about what information and support is available to enable older people to make housing choices. The workshop proved very popular, so a second workshop is planned on 26 April. If you would like to sign up, please call Christine Richards on 233 0200.

Older Person Friendly City Working Group

We now have a report of our assessment of the main supermarkets, which will go to local Managers for comment before we proceed further. In the meantime we are proceeding with surveys of district supermarkets and discount stores. The main issues so far are: lack of clear signposting; lack of seats; reduced prices mainly for bulk purchases rather than single items; and lack of home-delivery schemes for goods purchased during visits.

Public Toilets/Community Toilet Schemes

The campaign goes on: having raised this issue at Newcastle Citizens Assembly, there is an opportunity to press the case again at a follow-up meeting. Incidentally, have any members checked out the new toilets in the Eldon Square South Block? In case you haven't found them yet, they are on the second floor, access by lift, from Clayton Street West, opposite the Grainger Market.

Parks and Healthy Outdoor Activities

A meeting was arranged with representatives of Parks Management, and Friends of Parks Group on 3 March. We are now planning a Summer Fun event for older people in a park, and will be arranging to see some examples of adult outdoor exercise equipment.



Get involved

The Lake Side Explorer Project

Can older people's experience benefit young people today? Fifty years ago, Barbara Hogg would wheel her children two miles in their pram to the lake in Exhibition Park because they so delighted in the wild life there – the tadpoles, frogs, ducks, moorhens, swans and fish. Now her memories have inspired the Lake Side Explorer project, which aims to give today's children an opportunity to experience and enjoy nature in the city too. As reported in *The Journal*, students from Newcastle University SCAN project



have cleared undergrowth round the lake to prepare for the project. Board-walks with handrails between reed beds and shallow pools will provide safe access for everybody to dipping and viewing platforms, giving an absorbing and fascinating experience of pond life, from tadpoles to waterfowl. The project resonates with local older people, and benefits from the experience of the Northumberland Wildlife Trust in bringing 'nature' into the city.

The Lake Side Explorer project has won first stage approval from Changing Spaces for a grant of £50,000 towards the anticipated cost of £88,000, **subject to the Trust gaining letters of support**. The Trust has also received small grants from the Sir James Knott Trust, the North Jesmond Ward Committee and the South Jesmond Ward Committee. Voluntary work support has also been offered by SCAN and the Northumberland Wildlife Trust.

If you would like to see illustrations of the Lake Side Explorer, share your thoughts on Nature in the City, talk to Barbara and Keith about the project and have a cup of tea, come to MEA House (Room 1, 5th Floor) on Monday 26 April at 2.00 pm

But if you cannot come, yet would like give your support, hear more details, or even join a support group, write to Barbara Hogg c/o the Elders Council or email keithpimm@btinternet.com .

Information

Celebrating Parks

Newcastle has a rich variety of parks and recreation areas; and 2010 is a year when there will be even more activities and amenities to enjoy. The Ouseburn Parks will benefit from a Big Lottery grant, so there will be a new Visitor Centre in Jesmond Dene, a refurbished café in Heaton Park, better toilets and paths in both these parks, as well as culling and replanting of trees, and conservation of historic buildings. And in Exhibition Park the Lakeside Explorer Project has won approval to develop a wildlife area around the end of the lake.

As we know from Elders Council surveys, some members like tranquil places to sit and enjoy the scents and colours of flowers and plants, while others look for opportunities for healthy exercise. Whatever your interest, parks can provide perfect opportunities for enjoyment.

The Parks Department is arranging a Summer Programme of events which will include band concerts, walks and a range of sporting activities. See page 14 for details of the Active Ageing programme of activities in parks. And Elders Council members would like to share some experiences of what they have enjoyed over the past year:

Bowling is a popular activity. Many parks have well-maintained bowling greens. Our member Arthur Holmes enjoys bowling in Brandling Park and finds it benefits his health as well as providing social contact. Mr Dodds wants to let us know that Westerhope Bowls offers an introductory session for beginners on Fridays. And Mary Armstrong, Secretary of Gosforth Ladies Bowling Club points out that bowling is a healthy outdoor activity for women too. She would be pleased to welcome new members (*see page 11 for details*).

Nordic Walking: having completed an introductory programme in 2009, Elders Council member Vera Bolter is keen to continue. This form of exercise is said to be good for older people, and Vera reports that it has helped her cope with sciatica, as well as providing an excuse to be out and about in a park.

Cycling: John Smart participated in the cycling programme in 2009 (*see photo*). He found getting back on a bike most enjoyable – and a park provided a pleasant safe environment.



Celebrating Parks – cont -

Newburn Riverside Country Park provides a different environment as it is a country, not an urban park. Bob Speight, Chair of the Friends Group, points out that there is a sensory garden, a wildflower meadow and arboretum, as well as accessible walking routes. It is a good place to observe wildlife, as well as having three sheep in the park!

Friends Groups are active in most parks. Our members Keith Pimm and Barbara Hogg have told us about the benefits of getting involved in your local park. Barbara and her neighbours have helped to improve Brandling Park so that it achieved a Green Flag award, and now gives much pleasure to everyone, as well as increasing social contacts between neighbours. And they now want to get even more people involved in having a say about future plans for Exhibition Park (see pg. 9 for further details of consultation events). So joining a Friends Group is a way of getting involved and enjoying yourself.

And if any readers are wondering what the Elders Council is doing about Outdoor Adult Exercise Equipment –

WATCH THIS SPACE FOR FURTHER NEWS!

Things to do

LADIES BOWLING

at Gosforth Central
Park
1.30-3.30 every
Monday from 10 May.
*Come along and
have a go.*

Calling all elders in Jesmond (north and south)!

Join us on Tuesday 20th April at 10.30 am – 12.30 pm at St Hilda's Church, Thornleigh Road, Jesmond to catch up on current and future projects aimed at making Jesmond a more older person friendly place to live. There will also be an opportunity for you to comment on the future plans for bus routes with Nexus, and to find out about how to stay safe with SafetyWorks. If you require transport, please call Amy Redpath on 277 3635 or email amy.redpath@newcastle.gov.uk

JESMOND SENIOR MEN'S CLUB

Senior men, not necessarily resident in Jesmond, who are free on Thursday mornings are welcome to join the club, which meets at 10 am at the Cricket Pavilion in Osborne Avenue. Founded some 40 years ago, the club arranges a programme of talks on a wide variety of subjects every Thursday except for recesses at Christmas, Easter and the summer. They meet for coffee and this is followed by the talk and discussion, ending at noon. Recent talks have included Alternative Energy, King Arthur, the Regeneration of Tyneside, and the new Hancock Museum. The annual subscription is £10, and there is a charge of £1 for each attendance, but no charge for coffee. If you are interested, please contact the Chair, Dawson Clark, on 0191 292 5204 to arrange an introductory visit.

Information

Finding the credit crunch tough? Contact the Income Generators

- Disabled? Are you claiming everything you should be?
- Over 60? There are some benefit changes you might not know about.
- Do you own your home? Only half of owner-occupiers, who could get help with their council tax, claim it!

Newcastle council's new Income Generator team can help you find out what benefits you may not even realise you are entitled to. They could save you pounds on council tax and rent as well as increase your weekly income. To find out more and turn your questions into cash, you can meet our specially trained advisers Peter Scott and Claire Toleman at the Trinity Centre, Gosforth High Street every Thursday morning between 10.30am and 12.30pm.



For more information phone Peter on 0750 0224928 or Claire, 0797 6507471 or email Income.generators@newcastle.gov.uk

Benefits by bedtime

If you've got access to the internet, Newcastle council are introducing a new way to find out which benefits you may be entitled to and how to apply for housing and council tax benefits.

We're going online so you can have the information you need or apply for these benefits at any time of the day or night.



With the benefits calculator, all you need to do is enter a few details about your household, income and capital along with the amount of rent and council tax you pay and you get an immediate decision on whether you can get help. You can then fill in an easy-to-follow, online claim form.

To use the on-line calculator, please visit <https://hbclaims.newcastle.gov.uk/hbcalc> or to make your claim for housing and council tax benefits, please visit <https://hbclaims.newcastle.gov.uk/housingbenefitform>

Things to do ...

Come on! Get netted!

Diane, from Cambridge, is helping her grandson with his reading. He reads to her and she follows the text and prompts and corrects him as necessary. It's a regular date and they both enjoy doing it. Nothing strange about that – except that Diane lives in Cambridge, England, and her grandson lives near Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA.

They can bridge the miles thanks to the Internet, which allows any computer in the world to connect to another, and a small device called a webcam, which also allows them to see each other. Diane is just one of millions of people who have found that using a computer and the Internet helps her to do the things that she wants to do to enjoy life.



Silver Surfers' Day is an annual campaign that is designed to give older people an opportunity to find out what using the Internet could do for them. In 2009, there were over a thousand Silver Surfers' Day Events in all sorts of places all over the country. Libraries, schools, community centres, housing schemes and offices make their computers available and arrange for people to be on hand to explain what to do, and give people the chance to try for themselves.

In 2010, Silver Surfers' Day is on Friday 21 May, and there will be events during the weeks before and after. They will be publicised locally, but anyone can find events near them by telephoning the National Learning Advice Line number **0800 100 900** (freephone).

Or you can ask someone who has a computer to look at the website <http://silversurfers.digitalunite.com/> .

50+ Heritage Walks

Starting from **20 April**, our very own City Guides will be launching a series of dedicated 50+ walks throughout Newcastle and Gateshead covering areas such as: **Local History, Art, Architecture, Nature and Story Telling.**

These will run every **Tuesday** morning from **10.30 am** with each walk costing **£2.50** per person.

To download a full list of the walks, please go to the Keeping Active section of Information Now www.informationnow.org.uk or pick up a copy at the Tourist Information Centre, Market Street, Newcastle (0191 277 8003).

Active Newcastle launches a new 50+ micro-site!

This new and easy-to-use website has just launched a dedicated section for people aged 50+ wanting to become more active in Newcastle.

This site provides you with information about the range of venues, how to get there and what is involved in different activities, all within a few clicks of your mouse. You can also watch short videos with the stories of people leading an active lifestyle across the city.

The new section includes information on Walking, Swimming, Cycling, Dancing – plus so much more!

To have a look for yourself, go to www.activenewcastle.co.uk

Take Part – A New Booklet of Spring/Summer Opportunities

Often described as a ‘hidden gem in the heart of the city centre’, the Healthy Living Centre, MEA House, has recently launched its new Spring/Summer programme.

Offering over 30 different activities ranging from art to local history, IT, music appreciation, choir, languages, keep fit, yoga, pilates and a variety of dance classes, the centre provides a dedicated space for people aged 50+ to learn something new, meet new people or just chill in their award-winning cafe.

To request your copy of the booklet, contact the Healthy Living Centre Team directly on 0191 235 9914 or pop in to see them on the Ground Floor, MEA House, Ellison Place, Newcastle.

Notices

Ring 111 for urgent non-emergency healthcare



The Department of Health has announced that a new free three-digit number – 111 – has been agreed with Ofcom, the communications regulator. The number will make it easier for patients to access non-emergency healthcare wherever and whenever they need it, and will be piloted in the North East later this year, before potentially launching nationally.

When you call 111 in this pilot area, you will be assessed straight away. If it is an emergency, your call will be immediately passed to the ambulance service, which will despatch an ambulance without the need for any further assessment. For minor illnesses and injuries, the 111 service will be able to provide immediate clinical advice. If you need to see a GP, you will be referred to the nearest local centre.

Nick Chapman, Chief Executive of NHS Direct said: “NHS Direct is looking forward to working with local NHS organisations to pilot the new 111 number. We believe that it will increase the access that patients have to the information and advice they need to help themselves and make best use of the NHS.”

111 will not replace existing local telephone services, NHS Direct or 999 but the new number will provide you with an additional choice in how you find non-emergency care. In the long term, 111 could become the single number to access non-emergency care services in England, including NHS Direct.

999 will remain the number to call in an emergency situation.

What do you think about older people's NHS Services?

Are you aged 65 or over?

Have you in the last 3 years used NHS services (NOT including a GP or Dentist)?

Community Action on Health is holding a drop-in session on:

Thursday, 29 April, 2.00-4.00 pm in the Coffee Shop at MEA House, Ellison Place. No specialist knowledge needed, they just want your views!

Enjoy a free cuppa and cake whilst giving your views!

If you would like further details please call 226 3450 or email info@caoh.org.uk

Things to do ...

Have you got something for our Gadgies Gallery?

Do you paint, draw, sew, embroider, produce photographs, write poetry or.....? If so, we need your contributions to our constant but changing display of older people's creative work in the office, where it can be seen by visitors.

Some of the current contributions displayed:



*Gadgies Gallery Banner
produced by June Thexton*



Pastel drawing by Alan Robinson



Display of silk painting by June Thexton

**Please ring the
Elders Council
office on
233 0200 for
details.**

Notices

Do you look after someone?

If the answer is “Yes”, then come along to the Newcastle Carers Conference on Monday 14th June, 10.30am to 3pm at the Assembly Rooms, Fenkle Street. This is a free event, including lunch, for carers in the City.

The event has been organised by Carers Centre Newcastle and Newcastle City Council Adult & Culture Services.

Social care is changing. It is moving from its traditional way of providing services, where professionals made the decisions about the sort of care people should have, to a new system where people have choice over the social care and support that they receive. This new system is known as Personalisation.

The aim of the event is to give carers an opportunity to come and learn about relevant issues including personalisation. More information about what to expect from the conference will be available soon.

If you are interested in attending and would like to book your place, please contact the Carers Centre Newcastle on 0191 260 3030.

Intergenerational International Woman's Day Project 2010

The Arts Development Team have worked with eight groups of women across the city on a project called 'Her Story'. Each group worked with a creative writer and a visual artist for four weeks to produce pieces of artwork (in glass or textiles) that celebrate their own individual stories.

All work produced will be on display for the first time at Grainger Market Event Space on Saturday 24th April 2010. Why not go along and have a look?

**For more information contact either :
Alison Flanagan Wood tel: 0191 278 2958 or
Emily Crallan tel: 0191 278 2961**

Newcastle Citizens Assembly Competition Winner

Congratulations to Patricia Middleton who entered the Newcastle Citizens Assembly competition included in the last edition of the Newsletter and won a £10 shopping voucher. Well done!

Information

Semitones, bringing music home

Semitones was set up in 2008 after founder member Ewa Posner realised that she knew a number of keen amateur musicians with a lack of opportunity to perform, and that older and frailer people had limited opportunities to hear live music. She had the bright idea of setting up a voluntary musical society which would take music to people who were not necessarily in a position to visit a concert hall, including residents of residential and nursing homes and hospices. Aged from 10 to 70, from all walks of life, Semitones is simply a group of musicians of varying experience who enjoy the opportunity to share their performance with an appreciative audience. They have now performed over 20 concerts in 10 different venues, and include a string section, woodwind, keyboard, guitars, concertina, accordion, singers and the most entertaining masters of ceremonies you could imagine. They do not charge a performance fee but rely on donations from the places where they perform to fund the purchase of sheet music to enlarge the repertoire.

Their philosophy is very much that anyone can contribute, and they focus on having a varied programme of accessible music which an audience can enjoy. This ranges from traditional northeast folk songs to Vivaldi, passing through jazz, Christmas carols (in season), popular classics and all points in between. The concerts have a spirit all of their own. Sometimes it is difficult to tell if the audience or the musicians are having more fun!



If you are a musician at any level and would like to join the group, or if you are an organisation who would like to book Semitones to perform in your venue, please contact Ewa on e.b.posner@ncl.ac.uk or tel 07900 657138.

Correspondence

Dear Editor,

I listened to your radio programme *Everyone's tomorrow – today!* on 5 March and found it a very professional and informative show, covering local history, local museums and local activities; interesting subjects such as gardening are also covered. I especially enjoyed the feature on Bessie Surtees and found the account of Thomas Bewick's career wonderful and compelling. Lord Cuthbert Collingwood has always been a hero of mine, with him being a fellow Geordie and my interest in the Napoleonic Wars, so I found the feature on him immensely interesting. I also enjoyed the feature on photography from the West End and, being a Newcastle United fan, the piece on football legend Jackie Milburn. I loved the feature on Ellen Wilkinson, who was very active in socialist politics, especially the Jarrow March.



Your music is very diverse: rock, classical and a good Geordie influence, with artists such as Sting, Jimmy Nail, the Shadows and Lindisfarne.

This show has something for everybody – a superb show well worth taking the time to tune in and listen to.

Yours truly,
Drew Foster

Note from the editors:

We'd like any other listeners to write in and tell us what they think of *Everyone's tomorrow – today!* Tune in to 102.5fm from 2 to 4 on Friday 7 May or 10 to 12 on Monday 10 May (and the first Friday and following Monday of every month thereafter) and give us your thoughts. Or maybe you'd like to join the radio team? Just ring Steve Whitley on 273 4727 and find out what it's all about.

Dear Editor,

I was interested to read your article about assistance for rail passengers. This is a service that I have used for several years and it has always been satisfactory until one occasion last year when upon arriving at Newcastle Central I was told that staff were too busy to assist. I wrote a letter of complaint and learned that, providing you have booked the assistance more than 3 days in advance and the help is not then available, you could be eligible for compensation. It is, however, important that you obtain a reference number when booking the assistance. I followed through on this and subsequently received the compensation. This information may be some help to disabled travellers.

Yours faithfully,
Doris Enfield

Correspondence

Dear Editors

I am writing to say a big thank you to all members of the Elders Council who have taken part in research studies at the University of Newcastle over the last few months. We very much appreciate the time that people have given to attend meetings and events, volunteer to be healthy controls for trials, answer questionnaires etc., and hope that you have found it enjoyable too!



This work is co-ordinated through VOICE North at the Institute for Ageing and Health (IAH) at Newcastle University. The IAH has an extensive programme of work which aims to understand the causes of conditions such as Parkinson's disease, stroke and dementia which touch so many of our lives, as well as developing treatments and services to support and care for older people. We are also looking at how to prevent many conditions and ensure that people are healthy for as long as possible. We are immensely grateful to you for sharing your experiences and hugely value your contribution. This partnership means that we are able to understand the priorities and experience of older people and focus on the key issues which matter. To date people from Elders Council have been involved in a wide range of projects which cover everything from understanding what new products and services we need to develop for older people, to being healthy controls for a study on Parkinson's disease. Others are also helping to develop a new vitamin-packed biscuit which will help to ensure that a person gets all the nutrients they need when they are unwell and perhaps aren't feeling like eating.

Your involvement is making a tremendous difference. We are very keen that as many people as possible continue to get involved – no qualifications or specific experience is necessary. The only requirement is that you are interested in helping and we hope there is something to interest everyone. We pay all travel expenses and a voucher for taking part. Please contact Sarah Armstrong or Lynne Corner at the Institute for Ageing and Health for more information about how you can get involved. Telephone 0191 248 1353, or email sarah.armstrong2@ncl.ac.uk. Details are also available at www.ncl.ac.uk/iah.

We look forward to hearing from you!

Best wishes,

Lynne Corner
(VOICE North)

Poetry

A welcome to spring



The season of spring is almost upon us
Nature's prepared with almost no fuss
The climate's much milder, no frost day or night,
Gentle rainfall, warm sun, less darkness, more light.

First to appear – courageous white snowdrops, delicate and clean,
Having struggled through frozen ground, their desire to be seen,
Cheered by mixed flora confined below earth
Containing their eagerness but never their mirth.
At the forthcoming prospect their turn will come soon
To flourish above freely amidst sun, rain and moon.



Next on the scene swaying daffodils golden and yellow
To brighten green grasses, elegant yet mellow,
Followed by iris, tulip, freesia and crocus
Bringing pleasure to all, who can now focus
On this patchwork of colour that nature provides
For all our five senses, but mostly our eyes.

Rebirth of green leaves on trees young and old
Silhouetted against sky and holding their own
Against uninvited winds and heavy showers of rain
They contribute to each springtime again and again.



A variety of birds fly in from the west
Singing their songs anticipating to nest.
Farmyard animals return to green fields
With freedom to roam and food nature yields.
Beauty continues in this land we all share
With humanity, earthbound creatures and birds of the air.

June Matthews

Newsletter Information

Newsletter Articles



If you would like to submit an article to be considered for the July/August 2010 edition of the Newsletter, will you please ensure that you forward it before Friday 18 June. (Contact details on page 1).

Newsletter in other formats

We can make our Newsletter available in alternative formats (e.g. in **larger print** or audio tape).

**To request information please contact the office
(details on page 1)**



Electronic Version of the Newsletter

It costs about 50p per member to send out this newsletter, so would you be willing to have the newsletter sent to you electronically? If you would, it would save a lot of money every year. So please sign up for this service now by emailing anne.richardson@qualityoflife.org.uk, please put "E-mail newsletter" in the subject box.

Advantages to signing up for this service includes receiving the Newsletter at least 14 days sooner than you would normally receive it via the post; getting earlier notice of events happening throughout the city and seeing the various images in colour.

What are you waiting for?



Newsletter Information

Can you help?

The Elders Council is running on a tight budget and your Board has been looking for ways in which spending could be cut. The largest item of expenditure in our budget is the cost of posting newsletters to members, which takes up **nearly a quarter** of the annual income.

We are therefore looking for people who would be willing to hand-deliver newsletters to a small number (10-20) of members who live in their immediate neighbourhood. Those willing to take this on will be sent newsletters with address labels on them, so all they have to do is to put them through the appropriate letterboxes.

Please help by completing the reply slip below and returning it to the address on the front of this newsletter, or by phoning/e-mailing Christine Richards on 0191 233 0200/ christine.richards@qualityoflife.org.uk. The money saved can then be put to better use providing services and activities for older people.



I can deliver newsletters in the following streets near my home:

.....
.....
.....

I can come to the Elders Council office in MEA House to collect the newsletters:

Yes

No (In which case, we'll get them to you by other means.)

Name:

Address:

.....

Tel:

Email:

Gift Aid

As you know from what we said in the previous newsletter, the Elders Council grant this year was not increased by as much as we had hoped. So we need to depend more heavily upon voluntary contributions from our members.

Gift Aid is the easiest way to increase donations to the Elders Council by nearly a third at no cost to you (in fact, if you're a higher-rate taxpayer, you can even claim something back).

What is Gift Aid?

Gift Aid is a tax relief that is allowed on any money that you donate to the Elders Council. The government treat your charity donations as though you have already deducted basic tax from them, which in turn means that we can reclaim this. So we get the benefit and you lose nothing: the extra comes from the government.

How does Gift Aid Work?

Gift Aid can apply to one-off donations, or those over a specific period. It can even be backdated for up to six years.

Higher-rate taxpayers are eligible to reclaim 25p from the taxman for every £1 donated to charity by including details of their donations on their Self Assessment form. This rebate can be donated directly to the Elders Council on the same form and, if you so choose, it can be increased further through Gift Aid.

How can I use Gift aid?

If you would like any future donation to the Elders Council to apply for Gift Aid, please contact Matthew Phillips for a Gift Aid Declaration Form: 0191 255 1980.

PLEASE HELP THE ELDERS COUNCIL TO CONTINUE ITS WORK

I wish to donate £5 [] £10 [] £25 [] Other [£] to the Elders Council of Newcastle and enclose a cheque for that amount. Please send me a gift aid form.

Name: _____

Address: _____
