



The Elders Council of Newcastle

Older People working for Older People

April 2009

Issue No. 31

Elders Council of Newcastle

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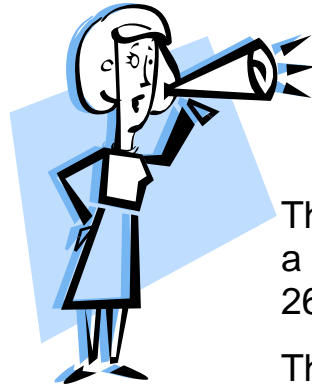
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make your voice heard!

The City Council is looking to introduce a neighbourhood charter in each of the 26 wards of the city.

The Elders Council urges you to get involved in the formation and then the implementation of your ward's neighbourhood charter.

What is a Neighbourhood Charter?

A neighbourhood charter is a voluntary partnership agreement between the community (that's you!), the local authority, and other services such as the Police and Primary Care Trust.

Charters are meant to strengthen local democracy and enable more local people to have their say in the decisions that affect their quality of life. They may be helpful in determining priorities.

Why is the Council doing this?

This approach to neighbourhood management and community empowerment using the neighbourhood charters is in response to Government and Council policy priorities.

How will neighbourhood charters achieve this?

Neighbourhood Charters require authorities to understand the needs of wards and act on those needs in a way that makes sense to residents and others.

So the intention is that there will be a growing direct involvement of residents in achieving outcomes important for where they live.



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

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

The Elders Council wants older person friendly neighbourhoods and we want our members to become involved in achieving them.

You are invited to a presentation by Kevin Coombs, Neighbourhood Management, Newcastle City Council on **Thursday, 30 April 2009** from 2 pm - 4 p.m. at Brunswick Methodist Church (adjacent to Fenwicks). If you would like to attend, please contact the office on 2330200 to book a place as numbers are strictly limited.

If neighbourhood charters are imposed from the Council centrally, they will not be worth the paper that they are written on. So please respond to any notice that you get telling you where meetings are being held to draw up your own local charter and **please get involved in your Ward Committee.**

Working Group Updates

Older Person Friendly City Working Group

Older Person Friendly Shopping is our next big piece of work. Please do your bit by completing (and returning!) the questionnaire which comes with this newsletter.

Parks and Recreation Areas – We want older people to get involved in activities in parks this year. The Parks Department will soon be publishing their list of Spring and Summer activities. We shall also be promoting more outdoor activities through the Active Ageing programme (see page 9). So prepare to **SPRING INTO ACTION.**

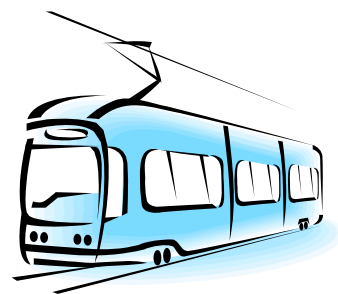
Older Person Friendly Neighbourhoods – We have assessed the City Centre and Parks and Recreation Areas so now we move on to asking older people their views about their neighbourhoods. So start thinking now about **HAVING YOUR SAY** about living well in your neighbourhood.

Transport Working Group

Gold Card

For most of us, our Gold Cards (for use on the Metro) expire at the end of April.

If so, you should have received your renewal forms by now and, if you haven't, you should contact Nexus on 0191 202 0720.



Nexus have kept the annual charge at £12, which can be sent to them by posting a cheque together with your renewal form or can be paid online using a credit/debit card.

Nexus have about 55,000 cards to renew in April, so regret that they can't accept payment at travelshops – it's post or online, unfortunately. Cards whose renewal date falls after April, however, can be renewed in person at a travelshop.

A reminder about Bridge Cards – Do you have difficulty using public transport because of your age, disability, illness or a lack of confidence? If so, you should get a Bridge Card from Nexus. You then simply show it to the transport staff and they'll recognise that you may need extra help during your journey.



If you have a Bridge Card, transport staff could help you to count out your money or change; check that you know where you are going and what stop you need to get off at; tell you that you have arrived at your destination; allow time for you to sit down on a seat before moving off; tell you information about your journey, rather than just giving you a written timetable; use bus-stop bays to make it easier for you to get on and off; and operate special equipment for you, like ramps.

There is no charge or forms to fill in to get a Bridge Card – you just need to ask for one at a Nexus TravelShop, day centre, library, local authority or pick one up from the Elders Council office in MEA House.

TaxiCard – The TaxiCard scheme is for passengers with certain disabilities/in receipt of one of the following benefits and who find it difficult to use conventional public transport:

- a) High rate mobility component of Disability Living Allowance;
- b) Attendance Allowance; and
- c) Registered severely visually impaired or blind.

You receive a smartcard with money on it that you can put towards your taxi fares with Nexus-approved taxi operators. You phone the taxi company direct and book your journey.

Further information is available on a Nexus leaflet or on our 'Information Now' website at www.informationnow.org.uk



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

'No Secrets' Guidance for Safeguarding Adults. The Government is reviewing this guidance, which sets out what Authorities should do about abuse of older people. We don't like to think about older people being badly treated but it does occur.

The main point we put forward in our response to the review is that legislation is needed to strengthen the guidance, so that older and vulnerable adults have the same protection as children against abusive and cruel treatment.

We have a Safeguarding Adults Unit in Newcastle, so we also discussed with the Manager how to raise awareness of what to do if you suspect someone is being abused. So if you want to know more, you can always check on the Information Now website: www.informationnow.org.uk/resources/articles/459.

Dental Services were the main topic of discussion at the February meeting attended by the Head of Dentistry for NHS North of Tyne. We were assured that there are sufficient NHS dentists in Newcastle. An article in the last newsletter explained how to get help finding a dentist and also set out the level of charges for NHS treatment. We discussed the importance of keeping dentally fit so it is possible to enjoy a healthy diet.

The question of free dental checks has often been raised. We can have free eye tests on the NHS, but not dental checks. The question of charges is, of course, a political matter, so comments on this issue need to go to our MPs and not to local dental services.



Many people have been unfortunate enough to lose their dentures during a stay in hospital. This can be a most distressing experience, making it difficult to speak or eat and it may not always be possible to find a dentist who can make new dentures at short notice.

You don't have to go through this – just have your dentures marked with your name. This is best done when the dentures are made but can be done afterwards. So check your dentures: if they don't have your name, on ask your dentist about having them marked.

Forthcoming topics for the Action for Health Group include: pharmacy services; representing the views of service users, etc.

Next meeting: 17 April to be held in Room 1, 5th Floor, MEA House.

Housing

At its March meeting, the Housing Group reviewed progress on Newcastle's Older People's Accommodation Strategy. The draft strategy will be available for consultation in early summer 2009. The Elders Council will ensure that members have an opportunity to comment.

We also received a report on regional and national developments from Vera Bolter. Thanks to the national housing strategy *Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods*, Newcastle has received additional funding to expand the handyperson scheme provided by Anchor Staying Put. If you would like to know more about the handyperson scheme, call Anchor Staying Put on 495 6177.



Members of the Housing Group also took part in a focus group with a student from Newcastle University who is researching how the city of Newcastle is meeting the housing needs of older people.

Work is underway with students from the University of Newcastle to explore what would make Cowgate and Jesmond older person friendly. Our initial findings show that there is work to be done on providing transport, a range of activities and good local shops and services for older people.

We will be working with Newcastle City Council and others to see what we can do together to act on our findings.

Note: The theme of the Elders Council Annual General Meeting on Wednesday, 3 June will be housing, so get the date in your diary!

Learning and Culture

TEMPER, TEMPER!

On 25 February 2009, by very generous invitation of the WEA (Workers Educational Association), Bob Weiner, the Secretary of the Elders Council, joined a party of delegates from Tyneside travelling to London to lobby Parliament. The purpose of the lobby was to ask for the reinstatement of funding for adult learning and to encourage MPs to support an Early Day Motion to that effect.

The lobby was organised by CALL, the Campaigning Alliance for Lifelong Learning, which is a coalition, now made up of more than 100 organisations.

Bob writes: "We had arranged to see our own MP, Jim Cousins in the case of our group, to express our concern about the loss of 1.4 million adult education places over the last two years due to changes in the Government's funding policies. During our discussions I also pointed out that, for some older people, attendance at classes provides a rare opportunity for social contact and that there is thought to be a link between the lack of social contact and depression in older people. Our comments were well received by Mr Cousins and he has signed the Early Day Motion.



"We then trooped along to a committee room in which an audience of about 100 people was being addressed by a range of speakers from CALL. The 'Star Turn' was, however, John Denham, Secretary of State for Innovation, Universities and Skills whose Department (DIUS) is responsible for adult education.

It quickly became clear that adults learning for personal development came very low in the DIUS's priorities and the expectation was that such learning should be self-funded.

Not surprisingly, Mr Denham got a fairly hostile reception and was heckled at several points, so much so that he cut short a question-and-answer session and refused to speak further.

"Our party came away with rather mixed feelings. We certainly know now where we stand with the DIUS. However, there is still the Early Day Motion and the way the membership of the Campaign has grown, the Government will not be able to ignore us for much longer."

Jim Cousins and Dave Clelland are the only Newcastle MPs to have signed the Early Day Motion, so the Elders Council has written to the others to urge them also to sign.

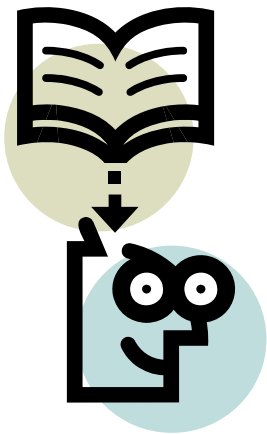
You can help by writing to your own MP telling him that he should support lifelong learning and should therefore sign the Early Day Motion.

The two addresses are:

Nick Brown
(Newcastle East and Wallsend)
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

Doug Henderson
(Newcastle North)
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

Readers Group



The Readers Group has recently looked at City Life. On the whole, we made positive comments about it, with some suggestions for improvement.

We can't believe that all the pamphlets, brochures and leaflets in Newcastle are perfect; so, since it's our task to offer comments to improve information for older people in the city, please let us know about anything you come across that you think should be rewritten to make it more easily understood.

Please call Claire Horton on 0191 255 1983 or send her the offending material by e-mail: claire.horton@qualityoflife.org.uk.

Information

The Sensory Garden, Exhibition Park

The Big Lottery and Your Breathing Place

A breathing place! It has become one of life's essentials, somewhere to stop and appreciate the beauty around us, and take part in its preservation. NSBP (Newcastle Society for Blind People) has built its own breathing place – the sensory garden located in Exhibition Park, which was created after much fundraising and planning input by our older, blind and partially-sighted colleagues, in conjunction with Newcastle City Council, and officially opened by Sir Norman Wisdom in 2002. It is a peaceful oasis within mainly open parkland, but immediately surrounded by the boating lake, children's playground, the putting green and the Cafe in the Park. It's easily accessible to all park users – and that means you!



Come and visit, bring the family and a picnic; make the most of this fresh green space in the City Centre, and watch out for the bees and butterflies and small mammals that we hope, by clever planting, to entice back into the garden.



In 2007, NSBP was very fortunate to receive funds from the Big Lottery to hold events in the garden throughout the summer, which promoted the attraction and preservation of local flora and fauna.



They had some wonderful days. Transport was provided so that people who might otherwise not have been able to participate were able to come along and enjoy a buffet lunch in the Cafe in the Park. NSBP have been invited to apply again for 2009, and take part in BBC's Springwatch.

To coincide with this weekend, NSBP's first event will be on **Sunday 7 June**, when Marian Foster will be broadcasting her BBC Gardening Programme from our Breathing Place. NSBP would like to invite members of the Elders Council to come and see the fruits of their labour, perhaps lend a hand or just help celebrate a special place and make it your own.

Before this event, we have enlisted the help of volunteers from Groundworks, the Probation Service, and the Princes Trust, to begin preparing the ground for replanting, as, in spite of some brave efforts, the garden is in need of a serious make-over.

If gardening is your joy, and you have a couple of hours free each week/fortnight (arrangements are flexible) to share with people who have sight loss, please contact NSBP (**Anne Banks on 0191 232 7292**).



Anyone volunteering would be offered sighted-guide training and admin assistance, and must agree to a CRB check.

Reports

Your Homes Newcastle's Community Care Alarm Service has been bringing generations together once again through dance – with teenage dance students and older people doing Salsa, Disco, Bollywood and Hip-Hop together!



A combined total of 120 people, many of whom are sheltered housing tenants, attended the events over two days in Newcastle at the Lightfoot Centre, Walker and the Westgate Centre for Sport, Fenham.

Led by an experienced dance teacher and students from the Newcastle Dance Centre, the events aimed to get older people active to promote physical benefits, and bring people of all ages together from the local communities.

Among those attending was Peggy Dixon, a resident of Coniston Court in Newcastle.

She said: “The dancing did me a world of good and made me feel really good because I used to dance all the time. Doing this dance boosted my morale and made me completely forget my constant leg pain.”

The success of these events and the demand for more activities for older people have led to plans for more work in the East of the city, to get people active, strengthen links in the community, and promote understanding and respect between generations.

Look out for opportunities to get involved or contact Lewis Kirkbride at Community Care Alarm Service; to find out more, ring him on 278 8695 or e-mail: lewis.kirkbride@yhn.org.uk



ACTIVE AGEING NEWS

With summer just around the corner, there has never been a better time to combine some fresh air and trying something new in beautiful surroundings!

Leazes Park - Green Gym

We all know we should try to be healthier and fitter. We are increasingly aware of the importance of our natural resources and environment. Green Gym ticks all the boxes!

Here, experienced leaders guide you through a range of practical projects, giving you the opportunity to tackle light physical jobs in the outdoors – improving your strength and stamina, boosting your practical skills and confidence and benefitting your local green spaces.

You can undertake a variety of different activities including developing a memorial garden, developing a bird-feeding area, general pruning and park maintenance, developing a giant shrub area, and maintaining the flower beds.

Sessions run in Leazes Park every Wednesday morning from 10.30 a.m. and are free to join.



To express an interest in this course, or for more information about the other Green Gyms in Newcastle, please contact Alene Jauncey, Green Gym Co-ordinator, on 0191 428 1144.

Exhibition Park – Cycling

In last month's edition, we brought you the exciting news that 'On Yer Bike', the dedicated 50+ cycling programme, is returning from April.

Whilst the response has been fantastic – with over 40 people signing up to one or more of the courses! – there are still a few places left.

So whether you have never cycled before, or have not been on a bike for years and are looking to brush up your skills, or you are a capable cyclist simply wanting to learn how to maintain your bike, we have something for everyone.

And at only £15 per 6-week course (which equates to £2.50 per session) there has never been a better reason to 'get on yer bike' and give it a try.

And we even provide the bikes! 😊

Places **must be booked** in advance.

To do so, or to request your free copy of the full 'On Yer Bike' brochure, please ring Michelle Mordue, Active Ageing Development Worker, on 0191 255 1985.

City Centre – Walks

Did you know that, since the introduction of free off-peak bus travel for over-60s in April 2008, there has been a 33% increase in the number of short bus journeys (under 1 km) made?

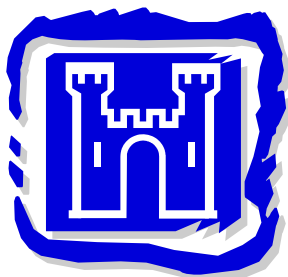
This suggests that, whilst free travel may be great for both your finances and your independence, it may not be so great for your health and overall fitness.

So if you are hopping on the bus just to get into town, why not combine your journey with joining one of the great new walking courses that are currently on offer?

And with prices ranging between £1 and £2 per walk, they won't break the bank, either!

1. Health Walks – These ever-popular hour-long health walks are perfect for beginners and/or people wanting a brisk stroll with an opportunity to socialise with others.

Following 4 main routes: Leazes Park, Exhibition Park, Castle Keep and the Quayside, all sessions are led by qualified walk leaders and cost £1. Sessions run from **Greys Monument** every **Thursday at 1pm** with no need to book in advance. Just turn up, introduce yourself and join in!



2. Local History Walks – March saw the beginning of a blossoming partnership with Newcastle’s very own Green Badge Tour Guides, when a series of local history walks were held exclusively for people age 50+. The level of interest was such that not only were the walks fully booked within a fortnight but another series of walks will be running from May to July to accommodate further demand.

Past and future tours include:

- Taste of Newcastle
- Castle Keep
- Ale Trail
- Grainer Town
- Bridges of the Tyne
- Arty Facts
- Justice Walk
- Blackfriars & The West Wall
- Grisly Newcastle
- Nasty Newcastle
- Lest we Forget

At only £2 per tour, what better way of combining gentle physical activity and the great outdoors whilst learning more about our city’s fantastic heritage!

To request your free copy of the Local History Walking Programme, please ring Michelle Mordue, Active Ageing Development Worker, on 0191 255 1985. Places **must be booked** in advance.

****FREE SWIMMING FOR THE OVER 60s****

From Wednesday 1 April 2009, all the public pools in Newcastle, including Fenham and Jesmond, will charge older people (over 60) nothing to join a public swimming session. To join a session or for more information please contact your local pool.



If you want to use any of the other facilities at the pool, however, you will have to pay.

We are still trying to persuade the Council to put on free swimming sessions for older people only.

Keeping Active with Information NOW



Are you worried about missing out on exciting activity opportunities? Do you want to be kept updated about new courses developing in the city?

If your answer is Yes, then never fear – because Newcastle’s Older People’s website has launched a new section called ‘Keeping Active’ so that all of the information is at your fingertips 24 hours a day. For more information, go to www.informationnow.org.uk .

Books at home

Can’t get to the library? But you still want to have books to read? Then you need to get in touch with the library’s home delivery service.

The service is for anyone living in Newcastle who can’t visit the library because they are ill or because they’re caring for someone else and must stay at home.



The librarians already visit 500 people in their own homes and over 100 care homes. They bring you books, large-print books, and books on tape; they’ll also meet your requests for books that they haven’t got in stock – just ask. They’ll lend you specially designed reading lamps and can bring you a “Memory Box” made up of photos, memorabilia and books to help you reminisce.

If you’re interested in this service, contact them by phone on 278 4200 or write to Home Delivery Service, Brinkburn Centre, Brinkburn Street, Newcastle, NE6 2AR or e-mail: brinkburn.centre@newcastle.gov.uk

Winning Places North East: Exploring Sport and Place with the over 55s



Winning Places is a brand new partnership project between Northern Architecture and The Building Exploratory in Hackney, inspired by the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

Winning Places is supported by *O.Space*, a new nationwide programme showcasing the regeneration and architecture of the London 2012 Olympic site and how it is relevant to neighbourhoods across the UK.

Are you a keen supporter of Newcastle United? Are you a yoga enthusiast? Are you a volunteer for a leisure facility? Are you a professional coach?

Northern Architecture would like to invite Elders Council members to participate in the *Winning Places North East* project. We are looking to form a group to join us on six weekly workshops across Tyne and Wear’s sporting venues, museums and archives.

This will include behind-the-scenes tours and a look through the region's sporting heritage with various experts.

The workshops will be informal and an opportunity to socialise. We would also like to find out what the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games mean to the North East?

- London 2012 – Could the Games be more sensitive to age? What are the real opportunities for older people in the North East up to, during and after the Games?
- Participation – What are the existing barriers preventing older people from participating in sports across amateur, competitive and professional levels?
- Design and regeneration – Who are the region's elite sporting venues for? Do these buildings present a barrier for the local community? Are the North East's sporting venues inclusive and accessible for all?
- The North East – How does our sporting heritage define regional identity?

Each workshop will be filmed and we will make a documentary film charting our journeys and conversations that arise. This film will be available on the O.Space website. The project will begin in May 2009 and take place over six weekly sessions (each lasting approximately 2 to 3 hours), ending in July 2009.

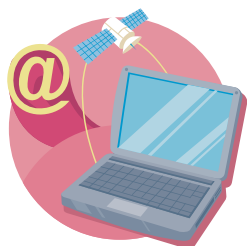
Refreshments will be provided and a contribution towards travel costs will be available. Please note that places are limited.

Interested?..... If so, we would love to hear from you.

Please contact:

Andrea Macdonald (Projects Officer), Northern Architecture, Blackfriars, Monk Street, Newcastle, NE1 4XN Tel. 0191 260 2191 or e-mail: andrea@northernarchitecture.com

Information NOW Website



Competition time!

To help to keep your brain cells active, why not use the Information NOW website to do the following quiz – www.informationnow.org.uk – You may even pick up some useful information while you're doing it!

Top tip: Try typing key words in the 'What are you looking for?' box in the top right-hand corner of the website page.

1. What is the new basic State Pension rate for a single person for 2009/10?

2. Who would you contact for information about the 'On Yer Bike' cycling programme?
3. What type of organisation is Dimensions?
4. Name the two different types of Lasting Power of Attorney (LPA).
5. What does the organisation called RSVP stand for?

Send in your answers using the FREEPOST address on the front of this newsletter, or email Claire Horton at the Quality of Life Partnership at: claire.horton@qualityoflife.org.uk .

Please respond by Friday 1 May 2009 and include your name and contact details, as all responses with 5 correct answers will be entered into a prize draw to win a £15 Eldon Square Gift Voucher.

Future Events

Newcastle Carers Conference 2009 – 'Adults caring for adults'

A special conference for carers will be held on **Thursday 11 June 2009** at the Assembly Rooms in Newcastle. The event is organised by Newcastle Carers Strategy, which is led by Newcastle City Council Adult Services.

This conference is an opportunity for carers to hear about national and local carer developments. There will also be workshops where carers can give their views on some of the proposed areas for development in a new local Carers Strategy for adults caring for adults in Newcastle. The conference coincides with Carers Week, which is an awareness week to recognise and celebrate the contributions made by carers. It is an important event, highlighting the needs and role of carers, as well as influencing decision-makers such as MPs and health-care professionals.

The theme for this year's Carers Week is *Carers ... The UK's secret service*. According to the 2001 Census, there were around 26,000 carers in Newcastle, many of them being schoolchildren caring for parents. However, many people identify themselves not as carers but as family members, friends or neighbours. If you are providing unpaid help and support to someone who has a disability or illness, is frail, has mental health difficulties, or has alcohol- or drug-related problems, then you are also a carer and could attend this conference to make your views heard.

If you would like to attend the conference, you **must book a place by Tuesday, 5 May 2009**. To do this, or for further information, contact Carers Centre Newcastle on telephone number **0191 260 3030**.

Silver Surfers' Day 2009

This year's Silver Surfers' Day is on Friday 15 May 2009. This is Britain's biggest campaign to help older people to get online. Hundreds of organisations will hold taster events that give older people a chance to try surfing the internet, using email, and much more.



There is also a national annual *Silver Surfer of the Year Award*, which recognises outstanding achievements by older people in the digital world.

To find out more about Silver Surfers' Day, to look for an event in your area, or to nominate someone for the Silver Surfer of the Year Award, visit the Digital Unite Silver Surfers' website at: <http://silversurfers.digitalunite.com>

North East Pre-Retirement Association

NEPRA will hold its Annual General Meeting on **Wednesday, 29 April 2009** at 6pm at MEA House, Ellison Place, Newcastle.

The Right Reverend Paul Richardson, Assistant Bishop of Newcastle, President of the North East Pre Retirement Association, will take the Chair. The speaker will be Fran O'Brien, Deputy Chief Executive, Age Concern Newcastle, who will give an address on *The Merger of Age Concern England and Help the Aged*.

If you would like to attend this meeting (you don't have to be a member) please contact Patricia Ward, Chairman on 01670 860312 or Tom Grist, Honorary Secretary on 01669 621013 before **Monday, 20 April 2009**.

Things to do

Do you know what's in the Laing?



The Laing Art Gallery is offering visitors the chance to learn more about the stories behind some of its paintings.

You can have a FREE tour, which will focus on The Picture of the Month. There's no need to book – just go along to the Laing at 11 o'clock on any Saturday.

Special Tea and Ticket Offer

for Elders Council members to see *Wuthering Heights* – the Bollywood musical version – at Northern Stage, Haymarket.



Northern Stage are offering a Tea and Ticket package to members of the Elders Council for the Saturday, 30 May matinee performance at a special price of £15.

Details are: 1.15-1.45pm Tea and coffee on arrival
 1.45pm/2.00pm Matinee performance

Bronte goes to Bollywood in this new musical. Influenced by a history of Indian cinema, *Wuthering Heights* is from the leading British Asian Company, Tamasha – creators of the ground-breaking film *East is East*.

For further details and to make your booking, contact Northern Stage on 0191 232 1551 or e-mail: alanna@northernstage.co.uk quoting reference: MatAMB.

Book by Saturday, 9 May and they will guarantee that your seat will be with other Tea-and-Ticket holders.

The Green, Eldon Square – Can you help?

A group of young people who regularly visit The Green, Eldon Square, each Saturday are very interested with working with people of older generations to find out more about the use of The Green over the 20s, 30s and 40s to now.. The Utter Legends are planning an event on Saturday 2 May, from 12 to 4 at The Green to display past images of the space. An additional drop-in and refreshment point is the Connexions Office on Percy Street, where young people will also be present to talk to people.

The Utter Legends would like to talk to people interested in sharing stories, memories, pictures and or anything else of interest relating to earlier usage of The Green.

Kiah: “It would great to see what our parents used to wear when they were our age.”

Emily: “If we could produce something which represents the changes in The Green, it would be really interesting.”

Grant: “I think it would be cool to trace its history.”



The event coincides with the 1st European Day on Solidarity and Cooperation between Generations (29 April). This is a day aimed at raising the awareness of the positive benefits of younger and older people working together.

The group would like to use the event to launch a longer piece of art-related work celebrating the use of The Green across the decades.

So please root out those photos, old clothes, memories and come along either to The Green, or to the Connexions Office and chat to the young people. If you can't manage to get into Eldon Square on 2 May, please send in any pictures/stories or other materials that you would like to share about The Green. Please contact: Warren Crake, Play & Youth Worker, on (0191) 265 2982 or email caroline.beckett@newcastle.gov.uk

Do you want to be useful?



For Rose and Ernest the highlight of their month is the Friday evening when they go to the Newcastle Arthritis Care social meeting. This is the only time they can rely on regularly getting out of their bungalow.

They both have restricted mobility and are dependent on a specialised bus to travel anywhere. They've spread their enthusiasm round their sheltered accommodation, especially when there are Arthritis Care day trips in the summer.

Newcastle Arthritis Care is run by a small group of dedicated volunteers, and they need help. You certainly would feel useful if you joined them.

If you would like to find out more (without obligation), please ring Marie on 0191 2461087.

Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor

I would like to thank you for your kind help in getting my call for volunteers published in the Elders Council Newsletter. The notice generated a tremendous amount of response and I have now been able to accomplish completing recruitment for the research study. Without your support, I don't think that it would have been possible.

Thanks once again for your kind help. Regards

Dr Akshya Vasudev
(Northumberland Tyne and Wear NHS Trust)



Dear Editor

In response to the letter from Bob Weiner to the Editor, can I give great applause to the suggestion of outdoor exercise equipment. We have only ever seen these things in southern Spain, where of course the climate is warmer. But I think they are a great encouragement to be exercise-conscious and would certainly be appropriate in some of our local country park areas etc. Thanks.

P.L. Smith

Welcome Spring

Winter leaves us, spring comes in
To welcome all new life within.
The joy of birdsong from on high
New life is calling for you and I

My friend the robin welcomes all
To whistle so loudly for one so
small
A quick reply from neighbour thrush
To say good morning from all of us.

For spring awaits – it will progress
As winter passes to vanish – no
less,
For nature puts the plan on view
The sounds and sights gently will
renew

Early birds greet the morning sun
To celebrate all life above is once
more won

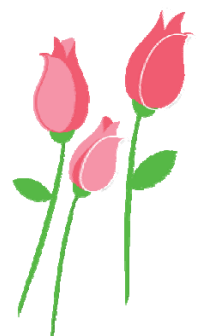
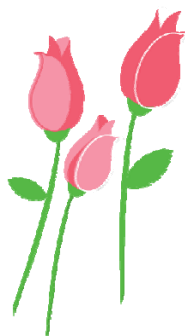
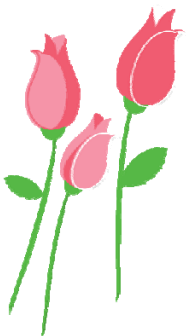
A calling from the starling and crow
They call from high to let you know

That life's below and in the trees
We are all aware it's in the breeze
As soil is turned, seeds are sown
Prolonging life as plants are grown

Season warms up inviting spring
New birds now upon the wing
Chaffinch, goldfinch, swift and
swallow
Acrobatic formation soon to follow.

Listen to robin announce 'I'm about'
Magpie to rattle as if in any doubt
Woodpecker knocks 'Is that for
me?'
Or is it just a mystery?

By John Reid



Would you like to join one of our working groups?

Please contact the Coordinator on 2330200 for meeting times and further information.

Working Group	Date	Coordinator
Outreach	Tuesday, 5 May	Bob Weiner
Health and Social Care,	Friday, 20 March	Vera Bolter
Housing	Friday, 15 May	Barbara Douglas
Older Person Friendly City	Wednesday, 13 May	Vera Bolter
Readers	TBA	Steve Whitley
Transport and Highways	Wednesday, 13 May	Bill Ions
Radio Group	Friday, 8 May	Steve Whitley

REMEMBER!

The deadline for articles for the next newsletter is Thursday, 14 May 2009.



A date for your diary

On Wednesday, 24 June 2009 from 10.30 am - 2.45 pm in Darlington, there will be a regional conference on Regional Governance Structures for Older People. The Elders Council can send four representatives so if you would like to attend please call Anne Richardson on 233 0200.



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2009

Members of the Elders Council's will hold their Annual General Meeting on the afternoon of Wednesday, 3 June in the Old Assembly Rooms. So get that date in your diary!

The meeting will include a talk by Sue Adams, Director, Care and Repair England on housing.

The AGM elects Trustees (Directors) of the Board of the Elders Council of Newcastle. The Trustees are responsible for ensuring that the organisation is properly run. They ensure accountability to the Charity Commission and Companies House for the conduct of the charitable company. Any member of the organisation can stand for election as a Board Member.

However, membership of the Board is a complex and demanding task which involves the exercise of significant responsibility. It is advisable that anyone nominated should have a reasonable knowledge of the Elders Council and, preferably, some experience of being on a Working Group. If you would like to nominate someone to stand for one of the vacancies, you must discuss it fully with them first and be sure that you have their agreement. If you wish to stand yourself please ring us, to discuss what is involved, on 2330200, leave your details and one of the officers will get back to you.

Older Person Friendly City Group

The above group would like to hear your views on how older person friendly your supermarket is. Please complete the enclosed questionnaire and return it to us using our **FREEPOST RRAK-YURB-SKGS** address by FRIDAY, 1 MAY 2009.

All returned questionnaire will be entered into a prize draw for a £25 Eldon Square Voucher. Thank you.

