

Elders Council of Newcastle



Annual Report

2010-2011

Overview

This has been an interesting year and one of many challenges. Mid-way through the year we had a new central government determined, as are all new governments, to work through a whole raft of legislation which they hope will improve lives. We also heard the phrase “Big Society” used many times. Of course the biggest change from the new government was the decision to reduce the deficit which resulted in large losses of funding to local government. The Elders Council received news of their funding for the year, sustaining a cut of around one third of their income. Previous Trustees having been provident, had managed to save over several years, this meant we have been able to use some of these reserves to help us through at least this year.

It has been an active year; the working groups have been busy; members have attended national, regional and local events; and we have contributed to national and local consultations. Four trustees are also members of the Older People’s Strategic Board. This is where the city work with partners trying to ensure the needs of older people is met.

Working Groups

The working groups have continued a busy schedule of meetings, consultations and surveys. The reports below from the group co-ordinators give a brief summary of the year.

Communication Group

Everyone's tomorrow – today!

The radio group continues to broadcast on 102.5fm on the first Friday of every month, repeated on the following Monday. Owing to government cuts, the community radio station (NE1fm) is no longer funded; but volunteers continue to provide us with much appreciated help.

The Newsletter

Despite a much reduced grant from the City Council, the Elders Council Board of Trustees decided to continue to produce the Newsletter six times a year. Postage costs have increased by 22% since last year and we are therefore very grateful to those members who have elected to receive their copies electronically and to those members who have volunteered to deliver copies by hand to their neighbours.

The Readers Group...

...has met five times this year. We discussed:

- leaflets from the Transforming Team in Adult and Culture Services Directorate;
- the changed format of *City Life*;
- the Elders Council Welcome Pack;
- a support needs questionnaire from the Adult and Culture Services Directorate;
- the Quality of Life Partnership leaflet *Just what I need*; and
- the pocket timetables published by Nexus for the Metro.

The Website Group

To be successful, this group needs many more volunteers who are prepared to monitor the Elders Council website on a regular basis.

Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods

We started the year by reviewing the wealth of information collected at our 2010 AGM, when we discussed what made our neighbourhoods good places to grow old in. The information gathered was then presented to a workshop hosted by the Older People's Strategic Board as part of their programme of work on Newcastle – an age friendly city. A copy of our report is on our website.

We have continued to contribute to the development of the Older People's Housing Strategy by commenting on presentations from Peter Fletcher Associates on the Older People's Housing Impact Assessment; Your Choice Homes Allocations and Lettings policy review and Disabled Facilities Grants.

We have improved our knowledge and understanding of what Extra Care housing can offer us, including a visit to Bowmont House on Newcastle Great Park. Whilst we could see the benefits of the facilities provided, it is unfortunate that the development of the surrounding area has been delayed, making the housing complex feel isolated.

We've continued our interest in the *First Stop* exemplar project by attending workshops and commenting on presentations about how we can improve housing options advice services and how we can encourage older people to plan ahead. This work has also prompted some Elders Council members to work with Kaye Turner (Quality of Life Partnership) in promoting the *Just What I Need* campaign to older people's groups. *Just What I Need* draws together information about several related services into a light-hearted story which is presented on a single sheet, making it quick and easy to find out the information that you need. This work is attracting national interest. Elders Council member Anita Davies and Barbara Douglas (Quality of Life Partnership) presented the work at a regional conference *In our Hands* organised by Care and Repair England.

We bravely tried to get to grips with the One Core Strategy, concluding that whilst we understand the importance of economic

growth for the city, it also needs to include in its vision a reference to making Newcastle a good place to grow old in.

Thanks to the participation of Vera Bolter in the work of the Housing and Ageing Alliance, we continue to maintain links with work being done nationally on older people's issues. The information she brings us enables us to stay alert to the impact changes in national policy may have on older people in Newcastle.

Outreach

While we have continued to give new members a warm welcome, in comparison with previous years there has been a reduction in the numbers joining the Elders' Council. Contributory factors are concerns that our limited resources, both in terms of finance and staffing, will be unable to support ever-increasing membership numbers. Additionally the relative priority of further recruitment, as again encouraging stronger engagement from existing members, is currently the subject of debate.

In relation to greater engagement, particular emphasis is being placed on activity at neighbourhood level. In cooperation with St Martin's Centre Partnership, Byker an event was held in September when the Elders Council agreed to support a neighbourhood event that was held in May 2011.

The year also saw the launch of the 'Just What I Need' (JWIN) campaign. The Elders Council contribution has been the establishment of a group of volunteers to present JWIN information to community groups and so to enable the older people to ask questions. Two training sessions have taken place with the volunteers to ensure that they feel confident about delivering the information.

We have also continued to try to strengthen engagement with potentially marginalised groups. The Elders Council had a stand at the Mela (Asian Arts & Music Festival) on the Town Moor and at the Pink Picnic in Leazes Park (both events took place in July 2010). We were also represented at the launch of the Black & Minority Ethnic (BME) Network as well as its first AGM and the Elders Council has

joined the Network as an Associate Member. Elders Council members also took part in an Equalities Training workshop in October 2010 and a Safeguarding Adults (Level 1) training session in February 2011.

Looking outside of Newcastle, we have had a number of productive meetings with representatives of the Gateshead Older People's Assembly, looking to see where we could work together on issues of mutual interest. These meetings included one to which the Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress of Newcastle and the Mayor of Gateshead were invited, with part of the meeting including a symbolic handshake on the Gateshead Millennium Bridge.

Most recently we organised an Older & Safer Day in April 2011, at which the approximately 100 participants addressed questions concerning their feelings of safety both when at home and when out and about. In addition there were relevant performances from the Old Spice Drama Group and participants also had an opportunity to seek specialist advice from representatives of some 12 safety related organisations.

Transport and Highways Working Group

During the year we have continued to work on a number of projects with Nexus, the major bus operators (Stagecoach, GoNorthEast and Arriva) and the City Council.

These include consultation exercises on the Local Transport Plan, subsidised bus routes and protection of bus services.

We were also consulted on the major Metro re invigoration plan including the design of ticket machines and also the temporary closure of part of the Metro service.

We liaised with Nexus regarding the cost increase on the Metro Gold Card and explained our concerns over the financial effect on older people of a substantial increase in the annual charge for this; however, we have also had to accept the Nexus comment that they "were faced with a challenging budgetary process". Of course, the Gold Card is a good investment for some of our members but we are

advising everyone to look closely at the number of times they use it and make sure it is still a worthwhile investment.

Another major item is the subject of access, particularly by public transport, to hospitals following the re-organisation of the three Hospitals into two major ones. We are working closely with the Hospital Trust and other authorities to make sure that this is made as convenient as possible for older people.

Perhaps our major achievement last year was the repeat of our “Summer Outings using a concessionary bus pass” leaflet when over 600 copies were issued; a special thank you to Mervin Dixon who put in “the spade work”. We had many favourable reports of how members had enjoyed the journeys suggested in the leaflet and were impressed by the ingenuity some showed by exploring even further. I am pleased to say that we have been able to issue an updated leaflet again this year.

We continue to monitor other transport issues such as the Bridge Card, Companion Pass, Community Transport, bus stations, bus-stops, bus-only lanes, parking on pavements and a host of other items which we try to keep you up to date with in our Newsletter.

On a wider basis, we are well represented on a number of local transport groups including the newly formed “Tyne and Wear Public Transport Users Group” which looks at public transport on a Regional basis. We also work with the planners on local transport initiatives, advise property developers on their proposed plans and with the national government on all older person issues to do with transport.

We will continue to work on your behalf in the coming year and we welcome all of your comments. In fact we rely on them to help us make a case to those responsible for any necessary improvements.

Creative Leisure and Learning Working Group

The group announced its new title ‘Creative, Leisure & Learning’. The core aim remains to stay focused on to ensure that older people in Newcastle have plenty of opportunities to stay active in mind and body.

In striving to contribute and make a difference, over the past year the group continued building on our relationships with city partnerships, networks and key players; Active Ageing, U3A, WEA, Open University, Arts Development Team, St.Martins Centre, Tyne and Wear Museum and many more.

Project involvements include:

‘Getting Together’ – a booklet which will provide practical help for anyone thinking of starting, maintaining or expanding an informal learning group.

With the support from Michelle Mordue, Active Ageing, we have developed a booklet which offers basic guidance on how to develop new activities, how to raise funds, find a location, attract members and so on. We would like to test the booklet before it is finalised and are looking for groups who would be willing to help us.

Ageing, Health & Vitality Project – a steering group investigated how museums can work effectively with older people to address issues around ageing and health and identify the benefits of cultural engagement to them. How museums could contribute to a more vital and healthy old age and look at the specific interventions this sector can make in relation to collections, venues and spaces.

Intergenerational Project- Involving young people from ‘Utter Legends’ and older people from The Elders Council and Eldon Tea Dancers, supported by Lindy Jazz.

Letter Writing Project- Initial focus of the project will start with writing letters/postcards and will involve two groups. Groups will work independently but write to each other and culminate in an exhibition probably at Central Library.

Health & Social Care Working Group

This has been a year for consultation after consultation on important national issues about the future of the NHS, and the future of social care.

“Equity and Excellence, Liberating the NHS” a White Paper was quickly brought forward following the change of government in May 2010 and proposed some sweeping changes in the structure of services. On behalf of older people, who are major users of the NHS, we expressed concern about the division of responsibilities between the proposed G.P. Commissioning Consortia, Hospital Foundation Trusts, and Local Authorities. A year later the future direction of the NHS is still rather uncertain pending some practical decisions.

Future Funding of Care and Support was referred to the Dilnott Commission in late 2010. Having participated in the Big Care Debate of the previous year, it was disappointing that we had to respond again to the call for evidence about ways of funding social care. We reiterated our views that there should be a fair, understandable system so that we could plan for our later years if we needed care and support. The Commissioners report is due in Summer 2011.

Healthy Lives, Healthy People- the White Paper on Public Health required a coordinated response on behalf of several Working Groups. We gave a cautious welcome for Local Authorities to have responsibility for public health, as they are involved in a wide range of services which influence the health of their citizens. Our main concern is that promoting the health of the public involves partnership working across all sectors and the relationship with the GP Commissioning Consortia is not yet clear.

In addition to these major national consultations, other issues discussed within the Working Group with representatives of services, and reported to the Elders Council wider membership through the Newsletter, have included:

- Proposal for Summary Care Records
- Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment
- End of Life Care
- Individual Budgets
- Choose and Book system
- Patient-Centred Care and Vulnerability in Age
- Transfer of 2 wards from Walkergate to Freeman Hospital

Some of these discussions have been initiated by NHS North of Tyne who have welcomed an opportunity to discuss difficult issues with a

group interested in health and care services, but some have been initiated by the Working Group who wish to be well-informed.

NOTE: All the above discussions and consultations provide information about services, and about the reactions of users of services, which is useful material for Old Spice sketches and presentations (see Old Spice report below).

Old Spice Drama Group was founded by Action for Health – Senior Citizens in Newcastle (AFH-SCIN) about 12 years ago, and used performance to highlight health and safety issues for older people. The Group has moved on over the years to develop new material, and to use performance to express older people’s views on a range of topics, with an increasing involvement in teaching programmes at the Universities of Northumbria, Durham, Sunderland and Teesside.

In the current year, examples are:

Performance of ‘Mind the Gaps’ sketch on transformation of social care at a training event for Local Authority workers, and at a regional event organised by DOH.

Presentations, performances and discussion with social work students at Northumbria University (2 sessions), at Durham University and New College (2 sessions), Sunderland University (4 sessions) and an extensive involvement at Teesside University in 2 sessions for large groups of students enrolling into the multi-disciplinary training programme.

Programmes on “Having Your Say” and “The Spice of Life” which can be interactive with the audience, have been performed with 2 older people’s groups. There have also been performances at special events organised by the Institute for Ageing and Health, Age Concern Newcastle (now Age UK), Wellbeing and Health Partnership, Jesmond

Older Person Friendly City Working Group

The Working Group has continued enquiries into aspects of the environment which affect the daily lives of older people.

Parks and Recreation Areas

In the summer of 2010 the Working Group was active in promoting the Summer Programme of activities in parks. The group took the initiative in convening a meeting of the Friends of Parks, and as a result arranged a 'Fun in the Sun' afternoon in Heaton Park in August, with the assistance of Michelle Mordue and the Active Ageing Programme. Estimated attendance was about 100, who enjoyed a programme of activities. We also continued to push for adult outdoor exercise equipment in parks, as recommended in our report of 2008. As a result it is anticipated that there will be this type of equipment in 3 parks in 2011. Our enquiries amongst older people suggest that there would be interest in using this equipment as part of a group. So the next task for the Working Group will be to organise some introductory sessions when the equipment is in place.

Older Person Friendly Supermarkets

This has been an extensive piece of work involving members in assessing the 7 major supermarkets in Newcastle, as well as 14 other neighbourhood stores, and 10 food retail outlets in the City Centre. The report was published in February, so the current task is to follow up the Recommendations and to persuade the supermarkets to make some changes that will benefit older shoppers, e.g. better signposting, more seats, toilets in all supermarkets, home delivery services, and more single items at reduced prices (not so many buy one, get one free).

Newcastle Gateshead Urban Core Action Plan was published for consultation in January 2011. The Working Group's response is based on members' previous experience in assessing the City Centre for "older person friendliness" and in commenting on development plans over the past 3 years. This joint plan with Gateshead for a development framework for the urban core sets out a vision for the future economic prosperity of both places by concentrating retail and office development in the urban core. Comments were forwarded on the 12 Preferred Option Policies. In agreeing that a drive for economic prosperity is essential for the future wellbeing of the area, it is still essential that the Vision should be inclusive of the wellbeing of all citizens, including those of us classified in planning terms as

“economically inactive”. In other words Newcastle / Gateshead should be good places in which to grow old, as well as to be young and to study and to work.

(A full copy of the Working Group’s comments and of all reports can be seen on the website or obtained from the Elders Council office).

Quality of Life Partnership

The Elders Council is a core partner of the Quality of Life Partnership with Age UK 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.

Members of the Elders Council continue to play a vital role in the work of the Quality of Life Partnership, helping to make sure that whatever we do is addressing the needs and aspirations of older people. These are just a couple of examples:

Elders Council members have been part of the steering group for the Joining the Dots project. This ambitious project has been looking into how we can enable people at risk of social isolation and depression to access social networks and practical support. It is a complex project, involving many agencies and individuals, but the participation of older people in the work has made sure that we never lose sight of the issues affecting people's everyday lives.

Newcastle City Council's Environment and Regeneration Directorate worked with the Wellbeing and Health Partnership to host an event on 'Getting Out and About Easily'. The event got off to an excellent start with a humorous but pointed sketch by the Old Spice drama group. The Elders Council also presented information about the difficulties older people face when getting out and about and ideas for solutions. Elders Council members also attended the event and participated in the discussions.

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 and “First Stop” on housing advice are all fine examples of older people's contribution to Newcastle's Information and Advice strategy.

Older People's Strategic Board

During the year there was a change of Chair and as a result some decisions were made in the direction of the work and of the membership of the Board. The new work plan focuses on an Age Friendly City and currently is looking at piloting some work in a particular neighbourhood. This will cover many aspects including housing, supporting independent living, having capable communities and active citizens. As you can see these chime well with much of the work the Elders Council and its partner organizations; an example of this is the survey work undertaken by some members of the Older Person Friendly City which concluded in a Supermarket Report by members of the Elders Council which was presented at the last Board meeting.

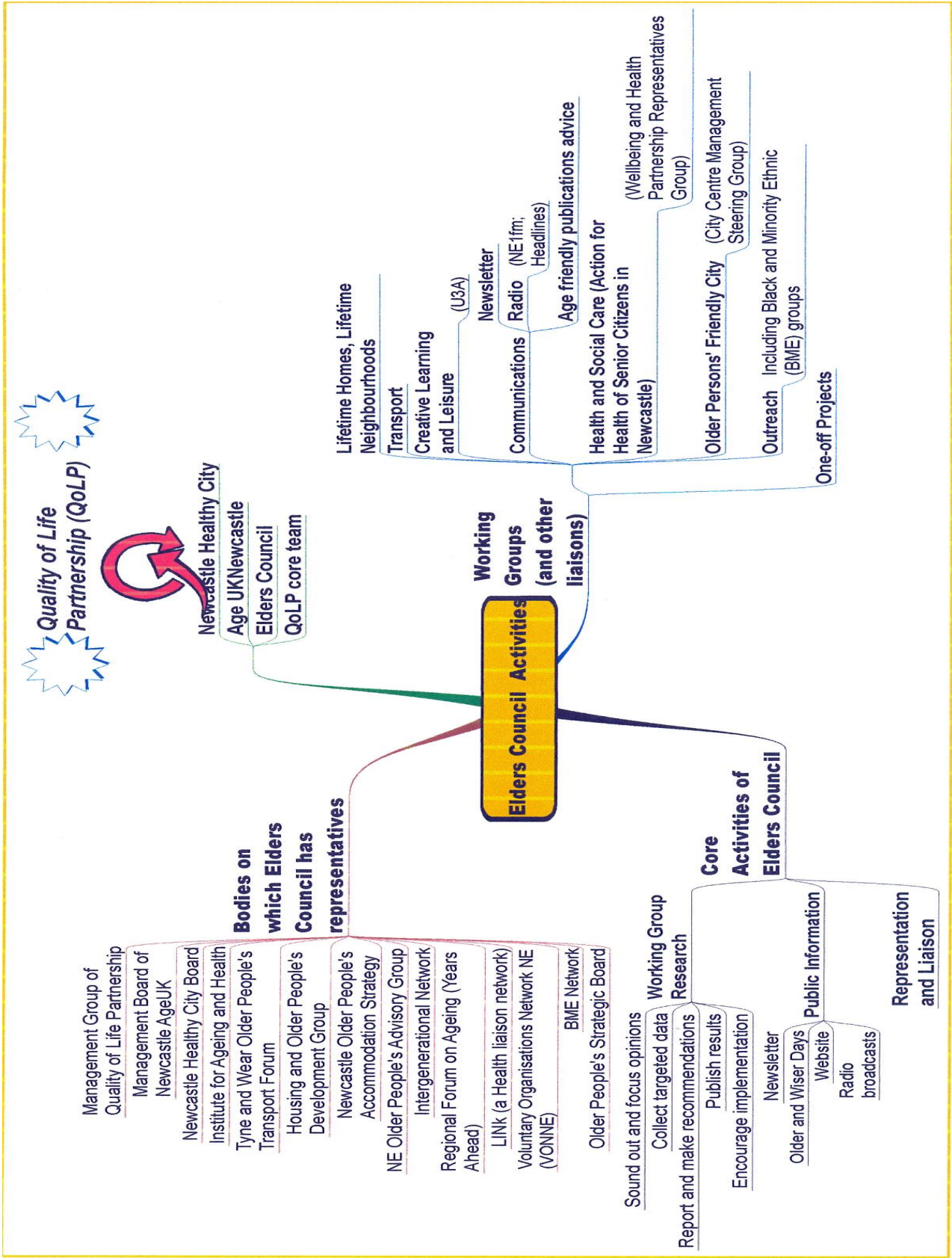
The Elders Council members on this Board are determined to continue to ensure the voice of older people is clearly heard and their contribution to the Board are backed by sound evidence gathered from and by the membership and also from the large number of older people who are not members but still need their voice to be heard.

Intergenerational Work

The Elders Council continues to seek opportunities to work with younger people. Members continue to contribute to discussions on how to improve intergenerational relationships in the city. Members have also maintained links with the Youth Parliament and the Youth Council, including jointly presenting an issue at the Citizens Assembly concerning inconsiderate parking. Some members have continued to work with Utter Legends on dance and fashion projects. And the annual Jesmond Festival 'Spring in your Step' event with Central Newcastle High School was another roaring success!

Diagrammatic Representation of the Elders Council

The diagram on the next page may help you have a better understanding of the Elders Council and the work it undertakes. The left hand side lists the bodies with Elders Council representatives and our core activities. The right hand side lists the current working groups whilst our partners are seen at the top.



Acknowledgements

All of this work would not have been possible without the commitment of the Elders Council Board of Trustees who deserve our heartfelt thanks.

Vera Bolter
Susan Chan
Anita Davies (co-opted)
Dick Godfrey (co-opted)
Liz Hannan
Bill Ions (Treasurer)
Ruth Lesser
Marguerite Maxwell
Mary Nicholls (Chair)
John Reid
Elsie Richardson
John Smart
Peter Stone (co-opted)
John Telfer
Dorothy Ternent (Vice Chair)
Bob Weiner (Secretary)
Steve Whitley

We have been ably supported by the Quality of Life Partnership team. During this past year there have been several changes to the QoLP team. Matthew Philips left to go to a new post and Michelle Mordue and Sandra Hillyard were employed on particular projects which have now come to an end. We really enjoyed working with all of them and have missed seeing them in the office. We are pleased to say that even in these difficult times for job seekers both Michelle and Sandra were successful at gaining new posts and we send them all our very best wishes for a successful future. Claire Horton's secondment has become a permanent post for the city council so we'll see her only infrequently.

We were happy to welcome Nathan Gulliver to the team and hope he finds the work interesting and satisfying.

It was also time to say goodbye to Sue Pearson, the Chief Executive of Age UK Newcastle, one of our partner organizations. Sue has been a true friend and support and although she has retired she is remaining in Newcastle and we'll see her as one of the local Councillors having just won a seat for the Blakelaw ward

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)
Kaye Turner (Information Development Worker)
Laura Warwick (Knowledge Transfer Associate)
Nathan Gulliver (Assistant Project Manager)

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 £1453 and we are grateful to those members who contributed to the work in this way.

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 2011

THE ELDERS COUNCIL OF NEWCASTLE LIMITED

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2011

	<u>2010/11</u>	<u>2009/10</u>
<u>UNRESTRICTED FUNDS</u>		
<u>INCOME RESOURCES</u> (Note 1)		
Grants Received		
Quality of Life Partnership	27,030	31,500
Creative Writing Project	2,000	--
Income from Services	339	1,982
Donations & Subscriptions	1,453	1,058
Interest Received	142	139
	<u>30,964</u>	<u>34,679</u>
<u>RESOURCES EXPENDED</u>		
<u>DIRECT COSTS</u> (Note 1)		
Development Working Groups	921	387
Information Days	--	1,321
Interpretation	357	526
Meetings	2,048	2,186
Postage	5,495	4,819
Printing, Stationery, Newsletter	13,125	11,281
Sundries	144	334
Training & Conferences	1,450	709
Transport	3,214	3,615
Creative Writing Project	400	--
Older & Wiser Days	3,160	--
	<u>30,314</u>	<u>25,178</u>
<u>ADMINISTRATION COSTS</u> (Note 1)		
Accountancy	552	460
Insurance	549	529
	<u>1,101</u>	<u>989</u>
<u>EXCESS/(DEFICIT) OF INCOME OVER EXPENDITURE</u>	(451)	8,512
<u>TRANSFER FROM/(TO) SPECIAL RESERVE</u> (Note 2)	<u>5,000</u>	<u>(5,000)</u>
	4,549	3,512
<u>UNRESTRICTED FUND AT 31 MARCH 2010</u>	<u>30,376</u>	<u>26,864</u>
<u>UNRESTRICTED FUND AT 31 MARCH 2011</u>	<u>£34,925</u>	<u>£ 30,376</u>

Notes

1. 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 £120,000.
2. Special Reserve
The transfer of £5,000 from 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 2011

	<u>2011</u>	<u>2010</u>
<u>CURRENT ASSETS</u>		
Debtors	70	5,000
Cash at Bank	<u>43,954</u>	<u>36,555</u>
	44,024	41,555
<u>CREDITORS</u>		
Amounts falling due within one year	<u>9,099</u>	<u>6,179</u>
<u>NET ASSETS</u>	<u>£34,925</u>	<u>£ 35,376</u>
<u>UNRESTRICTED ACCUMULATED FUNDS</u>		
General Reserve	34,925	30,376
Special Reserve	<u>--</u>	<u>5,000</u>
	<u>£ 34,925</u>	<u>£ 35,376</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 2011 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 24 May 2011.



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 2011.

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.

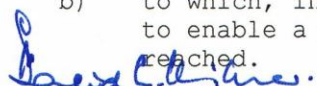
My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or 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
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24 May 2011

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