



The Elders Council of Newcastle

Older People working for Older People

Jan – Feb 2010 - Issue 34

Elders Council of Newcastle

Contact Details:

Elders Council of
Newcastle,
FREEPOST
RRAK-YURB-SKGS
2nd Floor,
MEA House,
Ellison Place,
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE1 8XS

Tel: 0191 233 0200

Fax: 0191 260 5307

Email:

info@qualityoflife.org.uk

Website:

www.elderscouncil.org.uk



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

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

Thinking about my home and neighbourhood

We know that having a warm, comfortable home in a neighbourhood where you feel safe, supported and can access basic facilities is really important to older people. This is the key message from a number of different projects and workshops which Elders Council members have participated in during 2009.

We now have a wealth of information and ideas, and topics we would like to know more about. To help us to take this work forward we are re-launching the Housing Group as the *Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods* group. The first meeting of the new group will take place on Friday 19th February 2010 at 10.30 am in Room 1, MEA House, Ellison Place, when we will plan our activity for the coming year.

Some of the ideas we already have in the pipeline include a visit to the new Extra Care housing complex on Newcastle Great Park; presentations on how you can arrange and pay for adaptations; information sessions on housing options and planning ahead; a review of the draft Older People's Accommodation Strategy; developing work on age-friendly neighbourhoods as well as updates on national and regional developments. There are plenty of interesting ideas we can explore, so if you have an interest in home and neighbourhood, please join us in February! Please call Christine Richards on 233 0200 to confirm that you are coming or to arrange transport if needed.

Thinking about my home and neighbourhood – cont -

If you are not interested in joining the group, but know of issues relating to your home and neighbourhood which you think the Elders Council should be considering, please send a postcard to the freepost address on the front of the newsletter or email barbara.douglas@qualityoflife.org.uk .

Prevention is Better Than Cure

The Elders Council believes that prevention is better than cure in services for older people. As budgets are being drawn up for the 2010-11 financial year, the three examples below should indicate what we mean.

1. You will have seen on the television and in the newspapers during the last cold snap that Accident & Emergency departments in hospitals were being overwhelmed by the number of people, many of them older people, who had slipped on an icy pavement and needed treatment for fractures, sprains and cuts and bruises. We say to the Primary Care Trust (PCT): why don't you follow the example set in Durham and give some money to Newcastle City Council for pavement-gritting? It would save you a lot of money in the long run.
2. If you begin to lose mobility and find it more and more difficult to stay in your own home because you can't get upstairs or reach electric sockets set at inaccessible low levels or even turn on taps because your fingers aren't gripping as they used to, you think to yourself: "Why couldn't the builders have thought of all these things when they first built my house? Why will I have to pay so much now for adaptations?" So we think that the City Council should insist that all developers should be compelled to build all homes to what are called Lifetime Homes Standards, according to which a home is built for your lifetime, not just for when you're in your prime.
3. *Mens sana in corpore sano*: healthy mind = healthy body (our rough translation!). There's plenty of evidence that being active in your mind enables you to stay healthy physically. So we suggest that the City Council get together with the hospitals and the PCT and follow the example of other councils by giving full and generous discounts to older people for lifelong learning courses. Newcastle will have a healthier older population if you do!

**Think outside the box! Collaborate with other budget-holders!
Invest in order to save in the long term!**

Working Group Updates

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

The Big Debate has been a major topic of discussion over recent months. We have put forward our conclusions; now we must await the outcome of the consultation on the Green Paper. In the last issue of the newsletter, we summarised the three possible methods of funding a future care support system that we've put forward for discussion. After considerable debate we decided that we supported the proposal for a National Care System that would be fair, simple and affordable, but we concluded that none of the three suggested methods of funding would result in a system that would meet those criteria. Instead we proposed that a really fair national system had to be funded from general taxation, similar to the National Health Service. The debate will no doubt continue throughout 2010.

Other topics at meetings in 2010 will include:

- Progress with Transformation of Social Care and implementation of individual budgets programme
- Older Persons Service Review
- End of Life Issues/Good Death Charter
- Dementia Care Strategy

Please contact the Elders Council office for details of times of meetings and copies of the agenda.

Older Person Friendly City Working Group

Our work programme for 2010 will include:



Older Person Friendly Shopping

Assessments of shopping facilities for older people will extend to smaller supermarkets and revisiting City Centre shops.

City Centre Issues

We shall continue to have a watching brief over existing concerns such as cleanliness of streets, traffic, public toilets etc. and future developments in the Stephenson Quarter and East Pilgrim Street. See the item in this issue on page 4 about the opening of Eldon Square South Block.

Parks and Recreation Areas

As we move into the spring (it surely must come some time!), we shall resume interest in motivating activities and enjoyment of parks.

Older Person Friendly City Working Group – cont -

Visit to New Eldon Square South Development

Representing the Older Person Friendly City Working Group, Vera Bolter and Bill Ions (see photo below which includes Eldon Square General Manager Tim Lamb) were invited to a preview of the new St Andrew's Way Mall (leading to Debenhams).



Work is nearly completed on Eldon Square South, which is a huge development comprising 410,000sq ft of retail space.

It has involved the demolition of the original Whitecross Way Mall between Clayton Street and Newgate Street and rebuilding it to provide a new four-storey Debenhams department store and two-level modern shops along a wider mall. Stores on the new St Andrew's Mall will include All Saints, Dorothy Perkins,

Burton, Miss Selfridge, Top Shop, Top Man, Republic, Hollister, Schuh, Paperchase, Oasis, Superdry, New look, River Island and Apple. As we knew already, the Green Market will not be included in the development.

And the good news? When we asked, "Will there be more toilets?", the answer was: "Yes, there will!"

The mall is due to open on 16 February 2010 as a part of a week-long Eldon Square Festival.

Outreach Working Group

"Just what I need!"

The Quality of Life Partnership is launching a new campaign to inform older people about the many useful services that are available to them in the city. The "Just what I need" campaign aims to highlight key services that are beneficial to older people in Newcastle and to provide them with information about how to access them. Details will be appearing in the March/April edition of Citylife, and will be available more widely over the coming months.

As the campaign progresses, the Elders Council is playing its role in supporting the campaign by offering to visit local community groups to talk in more detail about the services, and to provide general information about the many and varied and activities and support available to older people.

If you are interested in arranging a visit from the Elders Council to talk about the campaign, or if you would like to volunteer to take part in promoting it, please contact Meena Chopra for further information on (0191) 235 9920 or email meena.chopra@acnewcastle.org

Working Groups – cont -

Outreach Working Group

Engaging with BME Elders

The Outreach Group is currently focusing on increasing the Elders Council's contact with elders in the BME (Black & Minority Ethnic) communities. The following is a summary of some background information provided by Hari Shukla (retired Director of the Tyne & Wear Race Equality Council).

Members of the BME communities began to arrive in Newcastle in the sixties. Most had very little funds or language skills. Job opportunities for them were few but they were determined to do well and establish themselves as good citizens. They worked extremely hard (between 14 and 18 hours a day) and began to make profits, which they invested into business and other fields, making a significant contribution to the economic life of the city. The elders from the first generation appreciated the value of education and encouraged and supported their children to go to university and get qualifications.

Most BME members have a strong faith, which they wanted both to retain and to share. They established contacts with other faith communities and began to organise activities to bring people together. But, while BME elders have played a vital role in the life of the community, they have needs which are not fully understood by others. BME communities practised an "extended family" system: the generations lived together. But now the younger generation moves on, leaving their elders to live alone, which causes loneliness and stress.

Many elders are not aware of the facilities on offer in the city. Communication between the elders and main service providers therefore need to be improved.

While we wish to record the contribution that BME elders have made to the economic, social, cultural and religious life of the region, we believe they deserve greater respect, support and help to enable them to live the remainder of their life with dignity and in peace.

Communication Working Group

First of all: apologies to those who listened in on their radio at 2 o'clock on Friday 4 December expecting to hear our yuletide broadcast for *Everyone's tomorrow – today!*, the Elders Council monthly radio programme. Unfortunately, we couldn't put a broadcast out, because some **!@#*** had somehow got into the NE1fm studio and trashed one of the station's computers.

But we successfully broadcast our New Year edition and hope to continue entertaining you for years to come. Just tune in to 102.5fm on the first Friday of every month (5 February, 5 March, 2 April) from 2.00-4.00 pm in the afternoon or the following Monday (8 February, 8 March, 5 April) from 10.00 am-12.00 noon.

The broadcast team would love to hear from you: tell us what you thought of our broadcast; give us ideas for future broadcasts; or ring up to join the team – it's fun!

Information

Big Changes to Retirement Pension from 6 April 2010

Pension equalisation

If you are a woman and are reaching 60 after 6 April 2010, you will have to work longer before you can claim your State Pension. Women born between 6 April 1950 and 5 April 1955 will see their pension age gradually increase from 60 to 65.

If I'm a woman born between 6 April 1950 and 5 April 1955, at what age should I claim my pension?

Born	Age to claim
6 April 1950 to 5 April 1951	61
6 April 1951 to 5 April 1952	62
6 April 1952 to 5 April 1953	63
6 April 1953 to 5 April 1954	64
6 April 1954 to 5 April 1955	65

Women born on or after 6 April 1955 will have the same pension age as men (65 – unless it's gone up by then!).

Other benefits for older people will also be affected by these changes

From 6 April 2010, the age at which you can claim Pension Credit and Winter Fuel Payment will also increase gradually from 60 to 65.

Fewer years to qualify for the full basic State Pension

In future, you will have to make fewer national insurance contributions to qualify for a full pension – only 30 years' worth.

Adult dependency increase – claim it now

At the moment, you can claim extra Retirement Pension for a husband/wife, civil partner or carer for your children. BUT you won't be able to make a new claim after 6 April 2010 (although, if you have claimed the extra before that date, you will continue to get it). So you might want to claim it before then **but you should seek advice before making a claim** (see below for advice points).

New Carer's Credit

- Are you a carer?
- Do you care for somebody for 20 hours a week or more?
- Is the person that you care for someone either getting the qualifying disability benefit or whose care needs have been "certified"?

If so, you can apply to Jobcentre Plus or on line for what will in future be called Carer's Credit. Carer's Credit is automatic for those on Carers Allowance.

Information

Big Changes to Retirement Pension from 6 April 2010 – cont -

Where can I get more information?

The new rules are complicated and you should get independent advice if they affect you. If you want more information about pensions or benefits generally, there are a number of organisations such as Newcastle Welfare Rights Service that provide free, independent advice on benefits and debt. For details of advice provision in your area, visit our website www.newcastle.gov.uk/welfarerights or ring 0191 2772633.

Note The Pension Service website closed at the end of September. All the information about pensions, retirement and later life is now on the Directgov website: www.directgov.gov.uk.

(Thanks to the Newcastle Welfare Rights Service for the information on which we based the above.)

Postscript: If you live on your own in a block of flats, carefully check the amount of winter fuel allowance that you've been paid: there have been reports of allowances being halved because the Pensions Service assumed that two people living at the same address were living together.

Rail travel: Information for Disabled Passengers



We're told that there's no need to fear rail travel if you're disabled: arrangements can be made. The train companies can usually arrange for staff to meet you at your departure station, accompany you to the train and see you safely on board. Similar arrangements can be made at your destination station and other stations if you need to change trains (for example, ramps can be provided for wheelchair-users). What to do:

1. Find out which train company you need to contact by ringing National Rail Enquiries on 08457 48 49 50.
2. As far in advance of your journey as possible, ring the contact number that they give you.

The train company will then help you to plan your journey in order to meet your needs.

The reports about this service that we have received from Elders Council members say that it is very good and helpful. If you use it, please let us know what you think. More details can be found in the leaflet *Rail travel made easy*.

Information

First Contact Newcastle

'First Contact' was developed in Nottinghamshire to enable older people to get support from preventive services easily and efficiently through a single point of contact. Staff from Nottinghamshire came up to Newcastle in autumn 2008 to talk about their work to a group of staff and older people, including members of the Elders Council, and everyone agreed that a similar system could work in Newcastle. This led to the Quality of Life Partnership developing a small scheme for the city to test the waters.

With the kind support of the Libraries Service, the scheme started in August 2009. This involved Library Assistants from the Home Delivery Service completing checklists with some of the older people that they visited at home. The checklists included questions such as '*Have you got a working smoke alarm on each floor of your house?*', '*Do you need help to arrange any repairs that need doing to your home?*' and '*Have you fallen in the last 6 months?*'.

The checklists were all collated by the Quality of Life Partnership team, who then contacted all of the relevant organisations who would provide support on the issues that the older people had identified. The benefit for an older person is that they receive services without having to go to the trouble themselves of contacting each of the different organisations separately. This way of working meets the need often expressed by older people that they want a single point of contact. They are also more likely to accept support if the advice is given face-to-face and they have trust and confidence in the staff member.

The organisations that are currently providing services as part of this work are: Anchor Staying Put, HealthWORKS Newcastle, Newcastle Clinical Falls Network, Newcastle Energy Centre, Newcastle Welfare Rights Service, Northumbrian Police, Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS), Tyne & Wear Fire and Rescue Service, and Your Homes Newcastle Community Care Alarm Service.

The first stage of this work with the Libraries Service finished at the end of November 2009. This is currently being evaluated. However, the initial feedback is very positive. After **12 weeks** the Library Assistants had completed the checklists with **146 older people** and from this there have been **130 requests** made for support from the organisations involved. This has resulted in a variety of work being carried out. Examples include:

- falls detectors and pendant alarms being installed in people's homes;
- smoke alarms being installed in people's homes;
- someone being transferred to cheaper tariffs for her gas and electricity;

First Contact Newcastle – cont -

- the Newcastle Primary Care Trust Infection Control Department visiting the residents and staff of a housing scheme to alleviate their concerns about MRSA; and
- someone receiving confidence building support from a Health Trainer who helped her to use public transport, get around town and drive more confidently.

The following example illustrates the impact that a coordinated approach between organisations and the correct information can have.

'Mrs D, aged 84, has requested several things but on the next visit she described two more problems she was experiencing. On reporting them to First Contact, the workmen were sent out to move thermostat and an intercom on her wall which she couldn't reach. She had previously been told that nothing could be done with them.'

The next stage of First Contact Newcastle will be to build on the success that the Library Assistants have had by involving different groups of staff carrying out checklists with the older people that they work with. This will hopefully benefit more older people and other groups across the city.

Work on First Contact Newcastle is part of a project on Information and Advice which fits into the Newcastle Adult and Culture Services Directorate Adult Transformation Programme. If you'd like more information, please contact Claire Horton in the Adult Transformation Team at Newcastle City Council by telephone at 0191 211 5285, or by email at claire.horton@newcastle.gov.uk

Stop that junk!

We've told you before how you can sign up to the Mailing Preference Service to cut the amount of direct post that comes through your letterbox (ring 0845 703 4599) but of course a lot of the junk that lands on the mat hasn't come through the post.



So, to try to cut back on the unaddressed stuff that you get, you can register with the Royal Mail's Door-to-door Opt-out Service. If you have e-mail, write to them at optout@royalmail.com; or you can write to them at Freepost RRBT-ZBXB-TTTS, Oxford, OX1 1RX.

Royal Mail delivers only about 25% of this unaddressed junk; if you want to cut back the amount even more, you need to register with the Your Choice Preference Scheme: yourchoice@dma.org.uk or ring them on 0207 291 3300.

Good luck!

Information

Living Well with Dementia

“Living with dementia is difficult and distressing. It evokes fear and discomfort in others and carries a great stigma. Some people describe it as coping with the loss of oneself” (*Community Care*, 5 November 2009).

In 2009, the government launched a new strategy called *Living Well with Dementia*, which aims to improve health and social care services for people with dementia and those who care for them. It also sets out to raise awareness about dementia and to reduce the stigma associated with the disease.

Research into the causes of dementia is ongoing and there have also been considerable advances in the approach to supporting people with dementia. We will be holding a Caring Café on Tuesday 16 March in the café in MEA House for people with dementia and their carers. This will be an opportunity for people to find out about the range of services available in Newcastle and to have an informal chat with others over a pie-and-pea supper. If you would like to attend the café, please call Christine Richards on 233 0200.

During 2010 we will be holding more sessions aimed at improving our understanding of dementia. If you would like to be kept informed of future sessions, please call Christine Richards or email christine.richards@qualityoflife.org.uk.

The following organisations can provide help and support to people with dementia and the people who look after them:

The Alzheimer’s Society, Newcastle Branch – Tel: 0191 274 2727 or email newcastle@alzheimers.org.uk or website www.alzheimers.org.uk.

Dementia Care Partnership – Tel: 0191 217 1323 or email pa@dementiacare.org.uk or website www.dementiacare.org.uk.

Carers Centre Newcastle – Tel: 0191 260 3030 or email CarersCentreNewcastle@btconnect.com or website www.newcastlecarers.org.uk.

You can also find information about a range of services for older people in Newcastle on www.informationnow.org.uk.

Dates for Your Diary

- Sunday, 14 February – Chinese New Year, which is the Year of the Tiger (and Valentine’s Day!!!!)
- Wednesday, 9 June – Elders Council AGM.

Information

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

PALS is the NHS service which helps patients, their families and carers to find out information about services and solve any problems or questions they may have.

PALS, the Patient Advice and Liaison Service, is confidential and acts independently, liaising with staff, managers and relevant organisations, to negotiate prompt solutions to any concerns or queries which patients, their families or carers may have about any aspect of NHS care.

PALS provides information about NHS and social care services and can refer patients, their families and carers to specific local or national-based support agencies.

PALS listens to suggestions and receives compliments about services. Issues which are brought to PALS are reported, anonymously, to departments within the Trust to assist with the monitoring and improvement of services.

PALS is available Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm. Outside of these hours you can leave a message on an answer-machine and you will be contacted on the next working day.

PALS for all NHS services in Newcastle, North Tyneside and Northumberland and for the North East Ambulance Service is North of Tyne PALS.

North of Tyne **PALS** can be contacted on free phone: 0800 0320202; email: northofthepals@nhct.nhs.uk; text: 01670511098; address: Freepost:RLTC-SGHH-EGXJ, North of Tyne PALS, The Old Stables, Grey's Yard, Morpeth, NE61 1QD.

Travel insurance

We've had an article on travel insurance before. Now *Which?* has produced some more information, the gist of which we'll pass on to you.

The following are the firms that *Which?* found good for those with pre-existing medical conditions: Karma Insurance, Saga, Golfguard, Insure for All, and CIS Home Options.

If you want to see the details of the report, go to www.which.co.uk/money or look at the January 2010 edition of *Which? Holiday*, pages 26-7.



Information

Newcastle University's 'Changing Age' Programme

Changing Age is a year-long programme of events which aims to celebrate Newcastle University's achievements in research on ageing and to increase partnership-working on age-related issues across the University and the region. The University believes that only by working together can the challenges of an ageing population be addressed. The programme should also establish the North East as a leading international centre for research on ageing.

Changing Age will encourage all staff throughout the University to explore opportunities for joint research on ageing. Workshops and conferences will consider specific challenges arising from increasing life expectancy. Visits by top international scholars and the provision of additional studentships for new projects will support the research programmes on ageing.

An event hosted by Newcastle Science City was held in September to explore with a panel of older people their needs in terms of services and technologies; the findings from this will inform new research projects. Future public events will include a high-profile debate to be held on 11 February on the motion 'This house believes that we should work until 70' and confirmed speakers include Terry Rooney, Chair of the House of Commons Select Committee on Work and Pensions; and John Gridland, Deputy Director of the CBI. There will be a public lecture on 11 March by Sir Michael Marmot, a leading expert on the way in which social status can impact on health and ageing. In May, in collaboration with Northern Stage, there will be performances of *The Lion's Face*, an opera on the theme of Alzheimer's Disease. The year will conclude with a celebration of 40 years of dementia research at Newcastle University.

Many new events are being planned and an up-to-date programme can be found at www.ncl.ac.uk/research/about/changingage.

The Elders Council congratulates the Institute for Ageing and Health on the Queen's Anniversary Prize awarded to them for their work on ageing.

Information

Newcastle Carers Udecide 2010 (Participatory budgeting in Newcastle)

How shall we spend £50,000 to improve the quality of life for Newcastle Carers?

Do you provide care or look after an adult? If so, what would make your caring role easier? How would you like to be involved in your community?

Contact the Udecide Team on Freephone 08000 731780 or Ali Lamb tel. 0191 277 7681 (email alison.lamb@newcastle.gov.uk) or Gail Forbes tel. 0191 262 1678 (email gail.forbes@newcastle.gov.uk)

*** Active Ageing News ***

Want to burn off the Xmas excesses and try something different for the New Year? Then why not try some of our new activities on offer

Weekly Cycling:

Due to the overwhelming popularity of the recent 'On Yer Bike' programme, we have now launched a weekly social cycling group to meet the demand for year-round cycling opportunities.

Running from **Spillers Quay, Newcastle Quayside** (next to the Ouseburn Regeneration Centre), the sessions run every **Friday morning, 10.30 am-noon**.

Each session is split into two groups:

- (1) Those who want to refresh their skills and ride at a more leisurely pace; and
- (2) those who are already confident cyclists and want to ride progressively more difficult routes.



Afterwards, both groups come together to have a cuppa and share notes.

Each session costs **£3** (which pays for the bike hire, safety equipment [helmet and gloves] and contributes towards the cost of our fully qualified cycling instructors).

Sessions resume on 22nd January.

Nordic Walking:

Ever seen people walking around with what looks like two ski-sticks? Well, this is called Nordic Walking and it was developed by cross-country skiers as a method of training in the summer months.

Using the poles to propel your body forward, you will find this activity is very stable even on uneven ground, uses more muscles and burns 46% more calories than normal walking. And it's a fun way of combining fresh air, physical activity and meeting new people!

Working in partnership with HealthWORKS Newcastle, we run several introductory courses throughout the year from Exhibition Park. Our next course will be running over four Thursdays in **Feb/March (exact date to be confirmed), 11.30 am-12.30 pm** and costs **£12** per person (which contributes towards the cost of the specialist instructor and the provision of all equipment). Once you complete the course, you can progress onto our weekly walks.

For more information about the Cycling or Nordic Walking, please ring Michelle Mordue, Active Ageing Development Worker, on 0191 255 1985.

Weekly Health Walks:

Working in partnership with Ground Work South Tyneside and Newcastle, these **hour-long** health walks are perfect for people wanting a brisk stroll with an opportunity to socialise with others.

Following six main routes (**Leazes Park, Exhibition Park, The Quayside, The Riverside, Ouseburn and the Castle Keep**), all sessions are led by qualified walk leaders.

Each walk costs **£1** and starts at **1pm every Thursday from Greys Monument**. **No booking required – just turn up at the meeting point.**



Quayside Walk



Exhibition Park Walk

Ladies Keep Fit:

Westgate Baptist Church holds Keep Fit classes for mature ladies each Wednesday morning at 10am. We have an hour of aerobics, including exercises with small weights, floor exercises using mats, and relaxation time. We all take the classes at our own pace – if you want to jump around, you can; if you want to use a chair, or sit down, you can!

We're a very sociable group, and enjoy a cuppa and a chat in the foyer cafe after the class. If you'd like to come along, ring **Angela** on **0191 272 0647** for further information. Sessions cost **£1.50**.

New Activity Website for the over-50s!!

A few months ago, we brought you news about a brand new website called **Active Newcastle** (www.activenewcastle.org.uk), which aims to get 'More People, More Active, More Often' by listing the full range of physical activity courses and venues on offer throughout the city.

As part of this, they are intending to launch a dedicated 50+ section in the Spring, where you can list all of the activities that you, your group or organisation provide.

For details of how you can access this FREE promotional opportunity, please contact Michelle Mordue, Active Ageing Development Worker, on 0191 255 1985.



New Water Confidence Courses for 2010!!

Are you nervous in the water? Have you never learnt to swim? Then these new weekly sessions have been organised with you in mind!

Working in partnership with **Elswick Pool**, we have designed a brand new pool-based course to provide a safe and supportive environment for you to venture into the water.

Sessions will incorporate the use of flotation aids and a variety of water-based activities to increase both water mobility and confidence. As an extra benefit, we can even guarantee a constant pool temperature of 30% so you never have to worry about the water being cold!!

As if this wasn't enough to tempt you, you don't even need to own a bathing suit to join in! You can wear a t-shirt, shorts or leggings instead!

Sessions will be held every **Tuesday** morning, **10 am-noon** at a cost of **£2** (which also provides FREE ENTRY into the sauna and steam rooms).

For more information about starting dates, please contact Elswick Pool directly on 0191 277 3456.

Things to do ...

Over 60s' theatre deals from Northern Stage

To mark its 40th birthday, Northern Stage is offering several discount package deals over the forthcoming months on the following performances:

Oh What a Lovely War

The landmark satirical musical is an entertaining and exuberant ride through the ironies and tragedies of the First World War.

The Ministry of Fear

When Arthur Rowe bumbles into a garden fête during the Blitz, he's haunted by his past and innocent of his future. But from the moment he enters Mrs Bellairs' fortune-teller's tent he trips into a hell of corruption and betrayal where he's way, way out of his depth.

With a powerful whiff of Hitchcock and echoes of film noir classic *The Third Man*, *The Ministry of Fear* is both taut espionage thriller and unnerving portrait of a mind in free fall. Renowned for creating exciting and imaginative work, Theatre Alibi brings its unique style to Graham Greene's surreal masterpiece.

Salome

The savage power of ancient myth collides with twentieth-century decadence in Oscar Wilde's astonishing verse tragedy. Salome, step-daughter of King Herod, agrees to perform the mysterious dance of the seven veils but demands in return the head of the King's prisoner – the head of John the Baptist.

Over 60's Package Deal!

Choose from:

Show 1: Oh What a Lovely War! - Thursday 18 March 2pm (1pm tour of theatre; 2pm show)

Post show discussion with members of cast and creative team

or

Saturday 27 March 2pm (12.30pm tour of theatre; 1pm Pre- show discussion with Director Erica Whyman)

Tickets are full price: £19, £17, £15 (Over 60s £2 concession)

Show 2: Ministry of Fear - Wednesday 12 May 7.30pm

Post show discussion with members of cast and company

Show 3: Salome - Wednesday 9 June 7.30pm

Post show discussion with members of cast and company

Book for: Oh What a Lovely War and any other one show and save £6 per transaction.

Book for: Oh What a Lovely War and other two shows save £12 per transaction.

To book, or for more details, please ring Northern Stage and quote '60 Plus Spring Offer' direct on 0191 230 5151 (BOOKING LINE WILL BE OPEN FROM 25/1/10!)

Event Update

Intergenerational Fashion Show and Music Event



As advertised in the October-November 2009 edition of the Newsletter an Intergenerational Fashion Show and Band Event involving models, catwalk and younger and older live bands took place on Saturday 7 November at the City Library. The event was a huge success and the City Library was buzzing with people of all ages who had come together to enjoy this day.



As music from the various bands occasionally disturbed the quiet of the library, young and old strode down the catwalk, showing off a range of exotic creations. All the outfits were made over a period of weeks with the help of artists, and the whole show was relayed live to the Monument! The photographs illustrate the striking costumes made and modelled.



Feedback from attendees included:

"the fashion show was wonderful, very good imagination in the styles"

"The bands were good, but very loud".

"Brilliant event! To be repeated more often. Well done everyone!"

The following organisations helped make the event possible – Utter Legends (the young people who meet at the 'Green'), the Elders Council, Quality of Life Partnership, the Youth Service, Arts Development, Social Policy and Libraries.



Newcastle Citizens Assembly



On 12 November, representatives from 14 community groups gathered at the Great North Museum to tell the Newcastle Strategic Partnership what improvements should be made in the city. Each group presented its idea; the idea from the Elders Council (*Improvement 7 below*) was that a “Use our loos” scheme should be rolled out across the city: as fewer and fewer public

toilets are available, shops and businesses across the city should throw open their facilities to all, not just to customers.

And now we’re all being asked to say which proposals we think should be implemented (although, of course, that does not necessarily mean to say that the most popular will in fact be implemented!).

Could you please help in this exercise? Please look at the list below and choose, in order of priority, the three which you think have the highest importance. The more people who vote, the more likely it is that the most popular scheme will be adopted, so we’re offering a £10 shopping voucher for the voter whose name is pulled out of a hat on 12 February.

A LIST OF IMPROVEMENTS PROPOSED:

Improvement 01: Look after our Newcastle

Install brightly coloured glow-in-the-dark litter bins and empty them regularly.

Improvement 02: Develop opportunities for shared family learning clubs at existing local facilities

Improvement 03: Visual communications on Metro trains

Visual messages should be displayed on Metro trains so that people who cannot hear the audible announcements will know which station the train is approaching or be advised in any emergencies.

Improvement 04: Develop more culturally appropriate activities for older women

Improvement 05: Suitable activities for adults with learning disabilities especially in the holidays

Improvement 06: Create informal health information sessions across the city

Improvement 07: Improved access to public toilets, especially to meet the needs of older people. City businesses could open their facilities for use by the public.

Improvement 08: To enhance our parks for use by all of the community

Improvement 09: More suitable activities for young people, particularly boys

Improvement 10: Improve public transport by bus

There should be more flexibility, with smaller buses off peak and larger ones in peak time as well as more small buses on estates providing hail-and-ride services.

Newcastle Citizens Assembly

Improvement 11: People not drinking alcohol in public places where children play



Improvement 12: The sustainability of old buildings: don't pull them down; renovate them.

Improvement 13: Keep cleaner; be greener, especially through an expansion of recycling services.

Improvement 14: Unpaid carers to be able to access a break from their caring role

Please select in order of preference the three improvements that you would like to see implemented and send your choices to us at the Elders Council office (*address on page 1*); if you have e-mail, please send us your choices by that medium (elderscouncil@qualityoflife.org.uk). Please add your name, address (incl. postcode) and telephone number.

And remember:

you don't have a chance of winning the £10 shopping voucher if you don't send your vote in!

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.



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

Local News – East of the City

Interested in the East End's local history?

Then come along to our local history group at Byker Community Centre, Headlam Street, on Tuesday afternoons 1-30 to 3-30 pm.

A People's Plan for the East End

Have you got views about what should happen in the East End? What about Shields Road? Satisfied with it? Your neighbourhood? The Byker Estate? Byker Old Town? West Walker and the Riverside Area? Shieldfield? What's needed to make them great places to live in? What's needed to get better employment opportunities, improve transport, get better education and reduce antisocial behaviour?

We are getting together a group of people from across the East End to look at these and other issues and at the end of it we will put forward our views in an East End People's Plan.

Why not join us? Wednesdays at 6pm at St Michael's Centre, Raby Cross, Byker.

East End People's Story

In 2010 it's time to do something different, something exciting, something dramatic. So why not do some acting?

We won't be able to get you on stage in London's West End but we can put you on stage in Newcastle's East End.

Join the East End Drama Group and perform sketches that tell the story of the East End. Beginners and show-offs equally welcome.



Tapestry

Have you heard of the Bayeux Tapestry, which illustrates William the Conqueror's triumph over Harold at the Battle of Hastings? It's world famous! So we thought we'd make a Byker Tapestry, based on scenes from East End history, which we hope, in years to come, will be just as famous!

If you have sewing and other similar craft skills or if you want to learn these skills, come along and help us make the Byker Tapestry.

Local News – East of the City

East End People's Story

Do you want to:

- put forward your views about Byker past and present?
- make suggestions about improvements for the future?
- learn about documentary film making?

A group of local people will shortly be filming in and around Byker. Please come and join us.

For more information on any of the East End activities, contact Phil Kitchen on 0191 265 4748 or email sphilkitchen@yahoo.com

Beavans, Shields Road



A member writes:

“In 2004, as part of a group from the Elders Council, I was involved with the making of a DVD about Shields Road. We looked at the history, then talked about how we remembered it in our childhood and youth and how it is now. We went out and took digital pictures of buildings. We said with one voice what a great pity it was to see Beavans Department Store in such a sad state of neglect.

I write this to say that it is with great delight that on 5 November Beavans Building re-opened as 30 (*I'm told*) affordable flats. They have kept the original brickwork and windows, which make them very bright inside and full of natural light. We were given a tour and I've included a view from one of the flats (see *picture below*):



Beavans, Shields Road – cont -

The building was opened by Cllr John Shipley and Cllr David Faulkner, but many more people were involved with saving this building. The Beavans Building dates back to 1904 and now will be a standing feature for a long time to come.”

End note: a picture on display showed a staff outing (dated 1937). There must be lots of interesting stories out there from past staff of Beavans. What was it like working in the shop? Did you work alongside of Mr Beavan himself? How much was in your pay packet at the end of the week? If you can comment on or answer any of these questions, please write in and tell us all about it (address on the front page of this newsletter).

Local News - Jesmond

Jesmond Community Festival

The 2010 Jesmond Community Festival is due to start with the Festival Parade (*see picture*) and Grand Festival Fair on Saturday 13 March. This year, the Festival will go on for just over two weeks, with a huge range of free events, including three concerts in Holy Trinity Church, an open day at Newcastle Cricket Club, and events at Jesmond Methodist Church, Jesmond Library and in Jesmond Dene.



Once again the Elders Council is joining Central Newcastle High School in arranging “Put a Spring in Your Step”, aimed at the over-50s, and one of the most popular events of the festival, which will this year be held on Thursday 18 March. Free transport to the event, from a range of residential homes in Jesmond, can be booked by telephoning Chris Murtagh on 0191 275 9745.

Full information on the Jesmond Community Festival Programme can be obtained from Jesmond Library on 0191 278 4215, or from www.jesmond.uk.net/festival .

Local News - Jesmond

Jesmond Community Orchard

History

In March 2009, a few local residents approached the City Council for permission to create a community orchard in St Andrew's Cemetery on Tankerville Terrace. A committee was set up and grants were sought, funds raised and the area was finally cleared of rubble by the Ground Work Trust in September.

Several working parties have been organised and on Sunday 6 December, a group of volunteers planted the first 14 fruit trees. The next step is for the perimeter wall to be pointed and paths to be laid down. The plan is then to plant more trees and soft fruits.

Aims

The founders of the orchard have a clear aim to provide opportunities for learning about and growing fruit for the benefit of the general community in Jesmond. In the future, there will be activities and social occasions for people to participate in.

You can become members at the cost of £5 per household per year, but the orchard is for everyone to enjoy and share.

For more information, visit the website at: www.jesmondcommunityorchard.kk5.org or contact / phone Fiona Clarke: 22 Newbrough Crescent, Jesmond., NE2 2DQ 281 0758.

Plan a Silver Surfers Day Event at your place for Friday 21 May 2010

Since 2001, Digital Unite has been co-ordinating Silver Surfers' Day taster events at locations throughout the country. Events are held annually on the Friday of Adult Learners' Week (15-21 May). Anyone can hold an event. DU resources you via www.digitalunite.com. You can hold an event in your sitting room or your board room; your office or your community centre; your classroom or your pub; your communal lounge or your prison recreation room; your steam-train or your speed-boat (stranger locations have been used!). The events are to give older people (that's people 50-120 years old), a chance to get to know the Internet, to enjoy the ease and excitement that being online brings.

For more information, go to www.digitalunite.com or e-mail du@digitalunite.net.

Pioneering Charter launched in the North East

Almost 2,500 north easterners have so far tackled a taboo and talked about death as part of the UK's first-ever charter on end-of-life care. NHS North East worked with a range of partners across the health, social care and voluntary sectors and patients and carers, to produce *A Good Death Charter*, which was launched on 5 October.

The pioneering charter sets out proposals for the kind of care and support which people who are dying, their families and carers, can expect. Once agreed, it will guide those who plan and provide end-of-life care or support.

Professor Edwin Pugh, consultant in end-of-life care for NHS North East, said: "There aren't too many taboos left in the world these days, but one of them is a proper debate about how we want to die. Although death comes to us all, we seem curiously reluctant to talk about the way we want to go and what really matters to us in terms of care and support.

"The subject is difficult for many people to think about and discuss but it really is the only inevitability for all of us. That's why we've launched this regional consultation to gather views and start a discussion about what is important and meaningful to people at this time.

"Our aim is to get a clear understanding of the local population's attitudes towards death and dying so we can make sure our society, and the support services people rely on during these difficult times, respond with compassion to the needs of those people who are dying and their loved ones."

The public consultation has centred around a questionnaire and on-street research.

The results reveal that the north east is the least comfortable region in the UK when it comes to discussing death. It also highlights that north easterners are the least likely to want to know if they are dying and almost two-thirds of us haven't discussed end-of-life care plans.

A Good Death aims to remedy this situation by encouraging people to think and talk about death and dying so that NHS North East and its partners can ensure that the right services and support are available at the right time.

The charter has been developed as part of the regional *Better health, fairer health* strategy, which aims to make the north east the healthiest region in England within a generation.

The research findings are expected to be available in late January 2010.

Get Involved

Medical Decisions in Later Life

Newcastle University is inviting older people to meet with medical students to discuss their views about medical decisions at the end of life. This is the fifth year that the event will be held.

These sessions have been very successful in the past and the students have gained valuable insights into how older people consider health issues in later life. The students will want to ask questions around, amongst other topics, living wills, voluntarily doing without treatment, physician-assisted suicide and decision-making responsibilities.

The date for the event this year has been set for Friday 12 March, 2.30-4.00 pm. The venue will once again be the Ridley Building on Claremont Road in Newcastle and taxis will be arranged for those who require transport.

If you would like to be involved in this event, please let Jacqueline McAloon at the Medical School know as soon as possible. Jacqueline can be contacted by telephone on 0191 222 6683, or by email at j.mcaloon@ncl.ac.uk.

Poetry

Time / Timeless

Rushing here, there and everywhere
No will to pause or stand and stare
At all the beauty that surrounds
From architecture, flora and nature's sounds.
The pace is fast and always furious
Lacking the pleasures of being curious.
How I wish to go back in time
To listen to the church bell chime
To watch the children at their play
With love and care of yesterday.
Alas those days are gone for ever
Unless we change and stand together
To make this country as it once was:
Happy and memorable like the Land of Oz



June Matthews

Poetry

Nana

Dear Nana, where did you go
when you stared out of your window so long ago?
you just seemed to drift off, to some place in time
I wonder were you a young girl, were the suitors in line?

I was 8 years old and can still see your eyes
they were completely transfixed on the summer blue sky
I watched your profile and knew you were gone
I hoped to a dance where the band played on

Did you look at your hands when you went to that place?
no brown spots or veins no wrinkled old face
just a fresh summer dress and lovely new shoes
and a dashing young man, which one will you choose?

A soldier called Joe stood out from the crowd
and he had the next dance as the band played so loud
you twirled and you turned and your head really span
you knew right then that he was the man

I saw a fleeting smile skip across your lips
I wonder were you remembering your very first kiss
can you still feel his strong hand that he offered to you
and can you still feel the love that helped see you through?

As your spirit came back and you looked down at me
you asked old Joe if he wanted more tea,
he didn't reply because he'd gone too
to the dance with the band when it was just him and you.

Adrian Brand



Information

Are you 85+? Yes!

Have you ever used the Community Care Alarm Service? No!

Then don't miss this opportunity! You are entitled to a 6 month free trial. To find out more call 0191 278 8699 or email telecare@yhn.org.uk or look on www.informationnow.org.uk.

Newsletter Information

Newsletter Articles



If you would like to submit an article to be considered for the April/May 2010 edition of the Newsletter, will you please ensure that you forward it before Friday 19 March. (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?



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: _____
