



July 2011 - Issue 42

The Elders Council of Newcastle

Older People working for Older People

Elders Council of Newcastle

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

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

The Annual General Meeting 2011



Mary Nicholls, Chair of the Elders Council, writes:

“The day was bright and sunny but I was feeling some trepidation as this was to be my first A.G.M. as Chair so there were some responsibilities and niggling doubts. One task I set myself was to try and speak to as many members as I could during the day. I did speak to many members and learnt we had a billiards champion in our midst as well as a new member arriving for her first meeting. We have such an interesting membership: people have done so many wonderful things and continue to do so.

“There were also our guest visitors to welcome. We have a new cabinet in the city since the local elections so it was pleasing to meet councillors who wish to engage with us; there were also representatives from the LIVE WELL project led by Prof. Mather and colleagues from the Gateshead Older People’s Assembly.

The Annual General Meeting 2011 - cont -

It was a real pleasure to meet our guest speaker as I had asked him to do something rather unusual and I still didn't know if he would meet the challenge set.

“The two sessions before and after lunch were fascinating. In the morning session members were asked to describe what activities they were involved in within their own neighbourhood. The afternoon activity on ‘Mind Apples’ was a bit more of a challenge. Perhaps the concentration was more on what we see that gives us uplift rather than on what we can do to achieve this. We will be analysing this data in the weeks ahead. So I await the results and hope my speculation is wrong.



Pictured: Dr Meng Khaw

“Our speaker, Dr Meng Khaw, rose to his challenge superbly. As Director of Public Health, he has an enormous responsibility and his job covers a wide spectrum from trying to get older people to be vaccinated against flu each year to having a plan ready for a big emergency (like a big fire in one of the metro underground stations for instance). He's also responsible for improving the quality of the health service and improving the health of all the people in Newcastle – no easy task.

“He spent twenty minutes giving us a brief view of his complex role and how the inequalities of life impact not only on the life span we will have but also on the amount of time we will have living free from illness.

“As I knew of his musical talent as director of a Gilbert and Sullivan Society, I asked if he would consider putting new words to one of the songs and then singing it to us at the AGM. It was one huge request and I don't know of any other person who would have done that, but Dr Khaw did. He did it in style too.


“For those of you who know the ‘Pirates of Penzance’, the song is from there; it’s the ‘Model Major General’ and Dr Khaw changed the words as the Director of Public Health rather than as an army general in the original song. As young people say today, he was ‘wicked’!

“The song is reproduced, with his permission, in this Newsletter and I’d encourage you all to read it if not sing it. I would add that Dr Khaw did all that for us despite the pressure of his job and knowing that an even more important date was on the horizon – his marriage! His wedding day was June 18th and by now he will have enjoyed the day and the honeymoon. I know you will be pleased that he received a small gift from us, a conductor’s baton, and a card wishing him and his bride a long and happy life together.

“Finally, despite my niggling worries, the whole day was a real success story from my point of view, and I certainly hope it was so from all who attended. If you couldn’t manage it this year, or forgot to put the date in your diary, you missed a treat. Thank you to all those who made the day such a winner; you are too many to name but you know who you are; with your skills, work and diplomacy the day accomplished much and helped establish links with others that may further our work.”


Note: If you would like a copy of Meng Khaw's presentation, either call into the office, email anne.richardson@qualityoflife.org.uk or telephone 233 0200 for a copy.

A Protagonist of Public Health



I am the very pillar and protagonist of public health
I’ve evidence and policy and strategy I use by stealth
I know the principles of matters epidemiological
From incidence to prevalence and numbers categorical;
I’m very well acquainted, too, with arguments
statistical

I understand regression, both the multiple and logical,
About binomial theorem I’m dealing with indifference
With many cheerful facts about statistical significance



Chorus:

With many cheerful facts about statistical significance,
With many cheerful facts about statistical significance,
With many cheerful facts about statistical signifi – nifi-cance.

I’m very good at calculating intervals of confidence,
I know of many formulae for generating evidence,
In short, in planning policy and strategy to use by stealth,
I am the very pillar and protagonist of public health

The Annual General Meeting 2011 - cont -

Chorus:

In short, in planning policy and strategy to use by stealth,
He is the very pillar and protagonist of public health
I know the aetiology of social inequality,
I've read Sir Michael Marmot's views on healthy life expectancy

I target interventionals proportionate to poverty
I recommend and advocate for equitable policy
I know that education is a wider health determinant
And poverty, poor housing, unemployment that is permanent,
But I can solve the problems of our illnesses and maladies
By implementing Coalition's views on Big Society,

Chorus:

By implementing Coalition's views on Big Society,
By implementing Coalition's views on Big Society,
By implementing Coalition's views on Big Socie – cie - ty,

Then I can map the assets of our neighbourhood's abilities,
And tell you ev'ry detail of community facilities,
In short, in planning policy and strategy to use by stealth,
I am the very pillar and protagonist of public health

Chorus:

In short, in planning policy and strategy to use by stealth,
He is the very pillar and protagonist of public health
In fact, when I know how to change behaviour for a healthy life,
When I can say that five a day is what we all should always strife

And smoking, inactivity and alcohol are bad for you,
And cholesterol and fatty foods and risky sex are dangerous too,
When I have learnt the elements of cardiac biology
When I know more of modifiers of our physiology
In short, when I've a smattering of factors aetiological
You'll say a better DPH has never been more logical

Chorus:

You'll say a better DPH has never been more logical,
You'll say a better DPH has never been more logical,
You'll say a better DPH has never been more logi – logi - cal,

On health improvement strategies, I'm spending all my energies
I'm always seeking to procure commissioning priorities,
But still, in planning policy and strategy to use by stealth,
I am the very pillar and protagonist of public health

Chorus:

But still, in planning policy and strategy to use by stealth,
He is the very pillar and protagonist of public health



Working Group Updates

Communication



Everyone's tomorrow – today!

If you want to listen to the programme live, tune in to 102.5fm from 2-4 on the first Friday of every month or 10-12 on the following Monday.

And, if you miss either of those slots, you can go to:

<http://www.elderscouncil.org.uk/audio/>
and listen to all our interviews on line.

If you would like to join the team, please get in touch with Steve Whitley on tel. 273 4727 or email

steve.whitley@phonecoop.coop

Transport and Highways

Working with Newcastle University:

The Transport Working group has now established links with the “Transport Operations Research Group” at Newcastle University. Following their visit to our last meeting, we have agreed to help them with two projects:

“In-Vehicle Navigation” – Christopher Emmerson

The aim of the PhD study is to support the continued mobility of older drivers through new technologies – specifically in-vehicle navigation systems (sat-navs) as seen from the older driver’s perspective. If you have any thoughts or opinions on in-vehicle navigation, please feel free to contact Christopher at

christopher.emmerson@ncl.ac.uk or call 0757 241 8149; your help will be greatly appreciated

“Older Driver Study” – Amy Guo

In this study, Amy and the team are looking at a broader range of “in-car advisory systems” which might help older drivers

The next stage of the project is expected to start in late July and takes the form of a “trial drive” by a number of drivers over 60.

If you are interested in knowing more about the trial, and currently drive an automatic car, please give your name to Christine (0191 255 1981) and we will let you have further information when we have it. Alternatively, you can have a look at their website on http://www.side.ac.uk/inclusive-transport/case_study/elderly-drivers-study

Items to report from Nexus:

Metro timetables

Following recent feedback from the Readers Group looking at Metro timetables, Nexus have confirmed that large-print Metro timetables are available upon request. The Readers Group recognised that existing timetables are very handy to carry in a pocket but are hard to read due to their small text. If anybody would like to request a larger Metro timetable, please contact Andrew McGuinness at Nexus on 0191 203 3459 or email Andrew.mcguinness@nexus.org.uk .

Haymarket Bus Station

Redevelopment up to 4 September will result in services departing from different stands. Details are at www.nexus.org.uk .

Smart Card machines on buses

People who use a concessionary bus pass to get around are now being asked to use the pass as a 'smart card' on most bus routes in Newcastle. Stagecoach and Go North East have so-called smart readers on all their buses. Arriva will follow at the end of the year.

You can use your existing pass as a smart card – simply follow the instruction of the driver and place it against the reader to confirm that the pass is valid when you board a bus.

This means Nexus, which funds concessionary travel, knows it is paying the right amount to bus operators for your journey, and that stolen or counterfeit cards are not being used fraudulently.

Most of the 220,000 bus passes in Tyne and Wear were issued in 2008, and a small number will not work properly when first used as smart cards because they have been damaged in the last three years or have a fault in the microchip inside them. If a machine cannot read your card, the bus driver will advise you of this, allow you to travel, but ask you to get a replacement card. You can get a replacement card free from a Nexus Travelshop, by bringing in your existing card. The normal £5 charge for lost cards does not apply.

Cards may not read properly for other reasons that you can do something about. If you keep two cards on top of each other in the same wallet or purse, the machine will be unable to read either of them. It will also fail to read a card stored with another smart card of any sort. The best advice is to keep your card where you can produce it separately to place on a reader when you start your bus journey.

Summer Outings 2011 using a Concessionary Bus Pass:

Reports are already coming in of members using this leaflet. Don't miss out on this way of getting the best out of your Concessionary Bus Pass. Copies of the leaflet are still available – just write to us and ask.

Editors' note: For a detailed copy of this report, please contact 233 0200.

Working Group Updates

Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods

Are you struggling to manage in your home?

At the May meeting of the Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods group, we had an excellent presentation from a team from Newcastle City Council explaining how people get help and support with essential adaptations to their homes to enable them to live independently. We were reassured that Newcastle has plans for the continuous improvement of this service, which is so vital for people who, through illness or limited mobility, find they can no longer manage in their homes. To find out more about this service, which is called the Disabled Facilities Grant, you can look on Information NOW <http://www.informationnow.org.uk/resources/articles/28> or call the team on 211 6849.

We also heard about **Helping Hand**, a service which is also provided by Newcastle City Council to assist homeowners who are struggling to carry out repairs, essential improvements, or adaptations to their homes. Financial help, in the form of an affordable loan and step-by-step support, is available if anyone who cannot afford to pay for essential works. For more information, see <http://www.helpinghandnortheast.org.uk/> or call 211 5836.

And don't forget that if you need advice or information about housing or care options, try First Stop on www.firststopadvice.org.uk or call 0800 377 7070.

Older Person Friendly City

Summer Programme in the Parks

Throughout July and August there are free family fun and entertainment events in Newcastle's Parks and Nature Reserves. Or maybe you just want a quiet stroll in a healthy environment. Did you know that 10 of Newcastle's Parks have won Green Flag Awards? So why not use your Bus Pass to visit – and maybe have a picnic in – a Green Flag Park. This is the list:

- Benwell Nature Park
- Brandling Park
- Elswick Park
- Gosforth Central Park
- Heaton Park
- Leazes Park
- Nunsmoor Park
- Paddy Freeman's Park
- Tyne Riverside Country Park
- Walker Park

For information about what's on, telephone 0191 278 3089.

Please let us know if you enjoy your visit and we will publish your comments in the next Newsletter.

Working Group Updates

Older Person Friendly City Working Group – cont -

Bowling

In our last Report we publicised two Bowling Clubs which would welcome new members. Now there is a letter from one of the clubs (*see correspondence below*) asking for support as a forthcoming review may result in some closures. So it's a case of 'use it, or lose it!' This is the time to sample the activity and join a Club!

Older Person Friendly Shopping

We are still following up the issues raised by our Report on Older Person Friendly Supermarkets. We know that local managers have limited powers to make any changes to layout of the store and pricing policies. So we are aiming to draw our findings to the attention of the higher levels of management who can initiate change. We still wish to challenge one of our Supermarkets to be the first to become 'older person friendly'. In the meantime, for our next piece of work we are planning to assess District Centres and some Local Centres for the 'older person friendliness' of their shopping and other facilities. More news in the next issue!!!

And finally, **SEATS AGAIN**. In the last issue, we showed a photograph of the design of public seating developed by Design Network North in association with a group of older people to meet their requirements for comfort and convenience. We have now turned our attention to the seating which has appeared in Northumberland Road, where the Northumbria University Campus has had a makeover by landscape architects.

Correspondence

Dear Editor,

We are a bowls club based in Heaton Park and the bowling green is set in what are probably the best surroundings in the county.

We have recently been informed by Parks and Countryside that there is to be a citywide review of the bowling facilities and to anticipate some future closures.

We will do our best to keep our green; your views and any support you can give would be much appreciated.

Yours truly,
John Gardiner, Secretary
Heaton Meldon Bowling Club

Working Group Updates

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

The debate about the future of the NHS and Social Care is now moving into a further phase, with the publication of a report of the Government's Listening Exercise.

The NHS Futures Forum was set up by the Government in April to 'listen and reflect' on controversial issues in the Health and Social Care bill, which is still on its way through parliament. Now we have their Report setting out some recommendations based on their 8-week listening exercise. The Working Group has commented on two White Papers over the past year, so now members will be scrutinising these new recommendations to see if they will make a difference. First reactions are:

Structure of Services – We have previously commented that the preferred division of responsibilities between GP Commissioning Consortiums, Hospital Trusts and Local Authorities would make it harder to work in partnership to improve the health of local communities. As a response to the concerns of doctors and nurses, there are now some recommendations about membership of Consortiums and Trusts to enable working in partnership. It is also recommended that all these bodies should be more accountable to the public, and should involve patients and users of services. So not a real change in structure, but some measures to improve relationships and collaboration.

Access to NHS and social care services is a major concern for older people. This Report emphasises again the importance of the NHS Constitution, which sets out the rights of patients and citizens, and suggests further that all health service organisations should be required to show how they are carrying out their duties under the Constitution.

Public Health – We can also welcome the recommendation that Health and Wellbeing Boards should get on with the task of developing joint health and wellbeing strategies for their local populations – and that Healthwatch organisations should be established soon to give a lead in watching over the interests of patients during this period of change.

So on balance, what do we think now? Clearly some of the issues we have been concerned about, e.g. access to NHS services, closer integration of health and social care, and improvements in public health, have all been reinforced during this listening exercise. So what happens next? We do not yet know if all the Recommendations in this Report will be incorporated into the Bill, which has not yet completed its journey through Parliament. And we are still waiting for the Report of the Dilnott Commission on paying for social care

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

So the Working Group will continue to hold a watching brief over developments at national level – but not forgetting local concerns about residential care and services to people at home.

Readers are invited to tell the Working Group of any concerns about changes in services. And we shall also be looking out for ways in which patients and the public can be involved in influencing local developments as proposed changes are put into practice.

Old Spice



Pictured: Members of Old Spice with their 'out and about kit'

It's more than 12 years ago that Action for Health – Senior Citizens in Newcastle set up the Old Spice Drama Group with the objective of using performances by older people as an alternative way of expressing views about health and safety issues – and also challenging ageist attitudes. The first volunteers were helped to develop a repertoire of songs,

sketches and poems which have been used in programmes covering a variety of themes, and reaching out to a range of audiences. In recent years Old Spice has become involved in using performance at four universities in training programmes for social workers, nurses, and other therapists. We have found that drama is an effective way of conveying messages about services for older people. Now some of the 'old stagers' are ready to retire, so we'd like to hear from anyone interested in helping us to move onto a new phase of work –

Old Spice Mark 2

If you would like to know more, please contact Vera Bolter on 233 0200.

Reports

Older and Safer – What you said!

In the last issue of the Newsletter we reported on the Older & Safer Day held on 5th April and attended by about 100 members. An account of participants' comments is now available and is summarised below.

A number of strands emerged from the discussions and these were:

- i) The importance of family, neighbours and the community in general in relation to older people feeling safe both at home and in their neighbourhood.
- ii) An intergenerational barrier, with older people feeling uneasy close to groups of young people.
- iii) A range of physical obstacles such as uneven pavements, poor lighting and cars parking on pavements detracting from feeling safe when out and about.
- iv) Dislike/avoidance of going out after dark.
- v) The fact of having devices such as smoke alarms, spy holes and good quality locks making people feel safer in their homes.
- vi) Dislike of unexpected callers and unsolicited phone calls.

It also seemed noteworthy that quite a few of the participants said that they never felt unsafe.

A report on the meeting has been presented to the Elders Council Board and consideration is now being given on how to take the findings further. The report is available on the Elders Council website (www.elderscouncil.org.uk).

Poetry

Be Aware

There's different layers of safety
And we all have our own guide
Do we go out day to day
Or do we stay inside?

As our bones grow older
Should our lives be changed
When we go down to the shops
Should an armed guard be arranged?

Let's not take this to extremes
Simply make ourselves aware
Of the pitfalls that surround us
When we leave our best armchair

Mind your bag and purse inside
Always keep them by your side
Check your windows and your doors
Before your bedroom hears your snores

Don't let strangers in your home
If their business is not known
You have to check out where they're from
Or your belongings will soon be gone

Don't pay for work that's not been done
Or for schemes not yet begun
I say these things – no – not to scare
All I ask is be aware

Liz Dey

Reports

Bringing wildlife back to the city

Members of the Exhibition & Brandling Parks Community Trust have embarked on a project to create an exciting wetland nature resource on part of the lake, so children and parents will again have the opportunity to observe wildlife and biodiversity in the lake environment. Marshy reed beds will be established around the lake edge to create an ideal environment for frogs, newts, small fish and nesting water fowl. Duck-board paths will give safe access into the reed beds for children and people with disabilities. Later an island is planned to provide a nesting area for the swans; last year they walked their cygnets back through the traffic from Leazes Park where they had nested. As well as swans, there are

moorhens, ducks, and coots and even, on occasion, herons on the lake. The construction work will be complete by August, the planting in the autumn.

If you are interested in Natural History and wildlife, there is a place for you to contribute to the development of the project over the long term. If you would be interested to hear more, contact Keith Pimm at keithpimm@btinternet.com for more information.

The project illustrates how older people continue to contribute to our community, benefiting younger people as well as their contemporaries.

My Gambian Adventure, Easter 2011

A member writes:

“Seven of us flew from Newcastle for our grand adventure to Gambia. On arrival in Africa, we had recruited another member to our tired but happy band, a lady travelling on her own who was eager to join us.

“Our main mission was to visit a primary school and take books, pencils etc for the children. The children, three to nine years old, have to pay approximately £3 a month to attend school; even this small amount is difficult for some families but the school gets no government funding. The wages of the headmaster, a lovely man of 22 years, and two assistants are paid out of this money. So it is more a

labour of love than cash. No cash is available from government for teaching materials either. After a chat with the headmaster, I was able to give the school enough funds to buy a laminator and get some tables made for the empty classrooms. Out of four classrooms only one had tables and chairs! There were plenty of chairs to furnish the rooms. Because the reading materials they get are so sparse, they will use the laminator to cover new materials, which can then be passed around.

“The school seems to act as a community centre as the village children use the yard for football games and community events.

Reports

My Gambian Adventure, Easter 2011 – cont -

"We also visited a Muslim family who lived in a humble abode made of breeze blocks and corrugated iron. We were welcomed with open arms and invited to share a meal, which was made in a lean-to outdoor kitchen. It was delicious: rice, fish, chicken and vegetables. The family ate in the traditional way, which is to put everything into a large bowl with everyone helping themselves, using their right hand, but my friend and I were given spoons.

"The food was delicious and was accompanied with a very hot sweet drink made of green leaves, honey and lots of sugar.

"Our other visits included Jackson Island, where Africans were held before being shipped off to the USA. Also, a visit to a museum where the guide told us of the tradition of taking young boys from their mothers for three months, when they are taught respect for their elders. At the end of the three months, the boys are circumcised and prepared for the parents coming to take them

home. They are taught a traditional tribal dance dressed in costume and have to perform this dance to their elders, who in return dance for them; they then have refreshments and the boys go home.

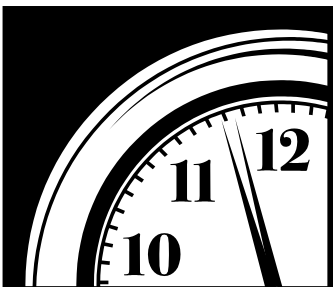
"We saw an oyster shell farm, crocodile farm, a goat market and visited the area where the boats come in with their catch.

"On the side of the road as we passed villages, we noticed men and young boys walking with their prayer mats towards the mosque, which must have been full because they laid them down by the side of the road and all got down to pray.

"My friend and I were able to assist in giving funds to enable the family to get water piped into their home and through a chance conversation I was able to take a football strip for one of five teams that the men in the family play for. We were rewarded with hugs and kisses and a promise to keep in touch."

Poetry

Time of Your Life



Arrival time, opening time
Wait time, waste time
Pass time, past time
Bad times, good times
Play for time, do time
Old times, in no time
Beat time, two time

Olde tyme, waltz time
Time out, half time
Time off, part time
Father Time, extra time
Time has come
It's full time

Jane Smailes

Health and Wellbeing

St John Ambulance Listening Support Service



The **Listening Support Service** offers a listening ear, advice, support, and a signposting service for people who have a long-term illness; feel alone, worried or anxious; or look after someone in those situations. The service can stay in contact and provide emotional support to people for as long as they like, often at times of need such as leaving hospital or following bereavement.

To find out more, or to use the helpline, call Sandra or Wendy on **0191 256 7070**

A new GP practice ...

...has opened its doors to patients, based in the existing Walkergate clinic building, which has recently been refurbished by the Newcastle PCT.

The practice has opened with a zero list size and is keen to welcome new patients. They are open from Monday to Friday, 8-6.30 and have two female GPs and a Lead Practice Nurse. Same-day consultations are currently available.

For further information about the practice or how to register, please contact the Gateway Practice on 0191 238 0000.

Help!



Visitors to City Library who are blind or partially sighted can reserve time with a Reading Buddy. Each of the volunteers has received training and a recognised qualification from the Guide Dog Association. Reading Buddies will be using their new skills to help visitors who have visual impairments to use facilities at the City Library, including screen readers and computers. They can also provide assistance choosing materials from a range of formats available such as MP3s, CDs and ebooks. To book a Reading Buddy or to enquire about becoming one, telephone 0191 277 4100, or email information@newcastle.gov.uk .

Health and Wellbeing

About Reablement

Reablement is a highly personalised support to people who find themselves unable to manage day-to-day living tasks at home. It provides personal care, help with daily living activities and other practical tasks, usually for up to six weeks. This is to encourage service users to develop the confidence and skills to carry out these activities themselves and continue to live at home or in the community.

It tends to be provided to people who have just been discharged from hospital or who live in the community, following a crisis or a change in their needs.

Reablement is provided for people who meet Critical or Substantial Fair Access to Care Criteria, and is the default service for new service users or existing service users who experience a change in their needs.

Reablement is about:

- supporting people to do things for themselves;
- helping people to live in their own homes or in the community;
- setting and working towards specific goals agreed with the reablement team;
- building on and regaining skills to increase confidence and independence;
- providing equipment or assistive technology and understanding how to use it, where appropriate;
- reducing the need for ongoing support after the reablement period.

It is free of charge for up to six weeks.

Access to the Reablement Service is via Social Care Direct, telephone: 0191 278 8377.

Editors' Note: See also the letter from Keith Pimm on pg. 25.

Notices

Cheques – a little more hope?

You will remember that the Elders Council has been concerned about the banks' intention to end cheque facilities and we said in our last newsletter that there might be a chink of light on the horizon. Another chink has appeared: David Ward, MP for Bradford East, will have a bill debated on 20 January 2012. His bill proposes that provision be made "to ensure that cheque facilities continue to be available to customers of financial institutions; and for connected purposes".

Three million cheques are processed daily; they are especially useful for small businesses and, of course, older people. If you would like your MP to support David Ward's bill, please write and let them know. Here are the relevant names and addresses:

Newcastle Central: Chi Onwurah, Suite 25, 7-15 Pink Lane, Newcastle, NE1 5DW; 0191 232 5838; chi.onwurah.mp@parliament.uk .

Cheques – a little more hope? – cont -

Newcastle East: Nick Brown, 1 Mosley Street, Newcastle, NE1 1YE; 0191 261 1408; nickbrownmp@parliament.uk .

Newcastle North: Catherine McKinnell, House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA; 0191 286 1266; catherine.mckinnell.mp@parliament.uk .

Things to do ...

The Green Gym is a community-based health project suitable for all people who lead inactive lifestyles; including people who experience isolation or mental or physical health problems. The Green Gym brings local people together to 'work out' in their local environment and is delivered weekly at five sites across Newcastle in local parks and community gardens. Each session lasts two hours and refreshments are provided.

All tools, equipment and instruction are provided with a range of activities at each session ensuring that there is something for everyone, no matter what their fitness level.

Activities have included restoration of a derelict rose garden, wildflower planting, planting a mixed-species hedgerow to encourage greater levels of wildlife at a play park and building bird and bat boxes. The memorial beds at Leazes Park have also been weeded and replanted, and an oversized garden developed with plants that are considered too big for a conventional garden. Volunteers are encouraged to develop ideas for site improvements and are actively able to shape the activity plans.

The Green Gym is an excellent way to meet new people, make new friends and give something back to the environment at the same time as getting fit in the outdoors.

For more information, please contact Alene Lee at Groundwork South Tyneside & Newcastle 0191 428 1144 alene.lee@groundwork.org.uk

Walking Works Wonders ... hosts a weekly health walk suitable for the over-50s; it meets at Grey's monument in Newcastle City Centre every Thursday at 1pm. The walk makes up one of a network of health walks across South Tyneside and Newcastle accredited to Natural England's walking for health initiative.

The walk in Newcastle now has 12 routes taking in aspects of Newcastle's past and present following routes along the quayside, walls, parks, city centre and bridges. History and architectural points of interest are also included and walks last no more than one hour and are no more than three miles in length. Walking project officer Fred Baines commented: "Walks are diverse and appeal to a wide range of walkers from all different walks of life. We now average 20-25 each week and have accommodated over 150 people since it started over two years ago."

The walk finishes with a cup of tea and a chat at St. Nicholas' Cathedral, Grainger Market, the library or the newly opened café in Exhibition Park.

The health walk in Newcastle has a suggested donation of £1. For more information, please contact Alene Lee at Groundwork South Tyneside & Newcastle 0191 428 1144 alene.lee@groundwork.org.uk

Things to do ...

Fish and chip trips of the Shields Ferry for Summer 2011

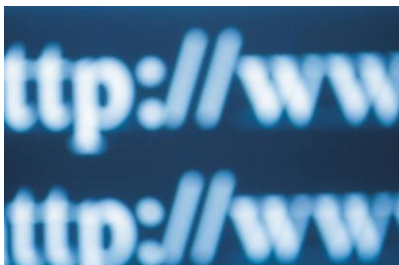
Nexus tells us that the Shields Ferry cruises are coming back for summer – and this year passengers can enjoy a special 'Fish and Chip Trip' as they take in some of the Tyne's most iconic views.

The Fish and Chip Trips are taking place on Sundays 14 August and 11 September. They will depart from the South Shields at 1pm and last for two hours. The ferry sails from South Shields to the mouth of the Tyne before heading back to collect the fish and chips at North Shields and making its way up river. Passengers get to enjoy them with a light-hearted recorded commentary from the well-known local historian John Grundy.



Nexus will still be operating its one-hour Tyne Tours this year and the three-hour Sunday Afternoon River Trips. Full details about dates, times and prices are now available on the Nexus website at www.nexus.org.uk or by calling Nexus on 0191 202 0747.

Internet Taster Sessions



Newcastle Libraries offers the below range of FREE one-to-one internet taster sessions to customers.

- Ancestry for beginners (family history website)
- Basic computers (keyboard and mouse)
- Basic internet
- Digital photography for beginners
- Ebay for beginners
- E-mail for beginners
- Facebook for beginners
- File management for beginners
- Health information online for beginners
- Music downloading for beginners
- Online shopping for beginners

To find out more about these sessions, including times and how to book, please contact your local Newcastle library or ring the library enquiry centre on 0191 277 4100 or email information@newcastle.gov.uk .

Things to do ...

Picture this (a better future through learning from the past) ...

... is a project funded by the Newcastle Fund; it's about using writing and storytelling as a method of inquiry – a way of finding out.

How we can provide appropriate services for LGBT people as they get older that are responsive to their needs.

Taster Days

Introducing the idea of writing for health as a way of 'finding out' and 'storying' experiences. There will be three tasters as follows:

- Older LGBT people age 50+
- Staff, volunteers who work with and support older people – July 18th at MEA House
- LGBT of all ages



Writing for health sessions

Sessions go into more depth demonstrating the therapeutic value of writing and storytelling as a vehicle of inquiry as well as impacting positively on health and well-being.

Circle of Friends

We have one group which is mixed and we are looking to start another where we need more representation from gay men. So please get in touch if you're interested. A facilitator will show you how to start Life Story books, scrap booking and storyboards. Sessions will get friends together engaged in an activity which will ultimately raise the profile of the needs of older LGBT people (for example by exhibiting stories submitted for LGBT history month).

Group 2: Staff and Volunteers who support older people

To reach staff and volunteers and share writing exercises and techniques that they can use in their work with LGBT people and people generally, for example staff working in support services for older people.

Group 3: LGBT people of all ages.

To move forward in a positive way and begin to outline choices that all people deserve to enjoy as they age. Exploring how to preserve people's comfort, dignity and presenting the choices that they deserve and want for themselves and generations coming behind.

If you require more information, please contact Pen and Tonic: Bridget Shea on 0791 491 5634 or Tess Hudson on 0798 102 6289; penandtonic@btinternet.com .

Things to do ...

Give it a go!

Fancy yourself as a budding bowler, crafty crafts person, graceful golfer, fanatical film buff or cunning quiz contestant? Thanks to a new project from Your Homes Newcastle, you can now have a go at a range of activities no matter what your age or ability, with support if you need it – and you don't have to be a Your Homes Newcastle tenant.

As part of a push to keep its services for older people one step ahead of people's changing needs and expectations, Your Homes Newcastle tells us that it is testing more flexible ways of providing the support sometimes needed to live safely, actively and independently – including a new team to work on activities and social events which keep people active and involved with their community.

The team claims to be focusing not just on offering interesting things to do based at sheltered housing schemes but also on inviting the surrounding community, providing support for individuals who might feel isolated or lack confidence, and working alongside other organisations in order to contribute to physical, mental and emotional wellbeing for all participants, thus improving links to groups of other ages and backgrounds.

Activities so far include carpet bowls, film shows, playing Nintendo Wii, quizzes, traditional games and trips – with more planned such as indoor target golf, arts and crafts, gardening and using the

internet for shopping, banking and staying in touch with family and friends.

There is little or no cost for the activities and transport can usually be provided for free; most activities will be in a comfortable lounge but if you're unsure there will always be a friendly face to introduce you to other participants and you could also bring along a friend, family member, or carer.

Your Homes Newcastle say that other aspects of their work to improve services include offering similar support services to those received by sheltered housing tenants to other people in the community, including daily calls and support plans; making services for people in their own homes more flexible, so that short-term support can be provided and people can have changing services to keep them independent; and providing easier ways for people to choose, apply for and move into a sheltered housing scheme, and give them more control of things which go on in the schemes.

Whether or not you are a tenant of Your Homes Newcastle, you can join in with activities and events and even get one-to-one support to get there and get involved if you need it – look out for the What's On guide or just call the Activities & Engagement Team for more information about what's on. Call 0785 582 8073 (Kristy), 0797 133 6576 (Paula), 0797 062 2175 (Lewis), or 0785 583 5025 (Maureen).

Things to do ...

The Angelou Centre's Women's Café

Mondays 12.30-2.30 & Wednesdays 10-12; at the former Roshni Centre, 10 Dilston Rd, Fenham (just next to The Angelou Centre).

It is a chance for women to get together and support one another, get advice from Angelou Centre staff, and learn about volunteering, employment opportunities and campaigns.

It is also a good chance for organisations to inform women about any events, opportunities, training or to consult with women. It may also be something that women may turn to if they are isolated or need some social/down-time.

The café is women only; we do not have a formal crèche as yet but we have a break-out room for mothers and children to play in.

For further details, contact Rosie Lewis on 0191 226 0394 or at rosie.angeloucentre@btconnect.com .

St. Martin's Centre, Byker

Zumba Classes ...

the Latin-inspired, easy to follow, calorie burning, dance fitness
at St Martins Centre, Roman Avenue, Byker Tuesdays at 7.30pm
Cost: £3.50 per class

Soup and stottie ...

... at St Martin's Centre, Roman Avenue, Byker
between 12.00 and 2.00pm on the following
Mondays – 8 August, 12 September, 10 October,
7 November and 12 December (*Christmas Lunch
with entertainment extended to 4.00pm*).

Over-55s only.

Come and join us. Have a chat with others and get
a free bowl of delicious homemade soup with fresh
bread. We look forward to seeing you.



If you would like to find out more, please ring St Martin's Centre on 0191 276 4002.

Things to do ...

Have you got something for our Gadgies Gallery?

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

One of the current contributions displayed (*pictured left*) is a glitter design produced by Noah Shanks.



Research volunteers needed



A researcher at Teesside University is conducting a study looking into the things older adults with long-lasting pain do on a daily basis. The research uses two types of new technology, as well as a written diary, questionnaires and two interviews, to explore the experiences of older adults since developing their persistent (chronic) pain.

Would you be willing to volunteer to participate in this research? If you want further information, please ring:

Gemma Wilson on 0785 294 0527 or e-mail her on H8086576@Tees.ac.uk .

Research Report

Research on patient-centred care and vulnerability in old age

This research used group discussions and individual interviews with older people and health and social care professionals (therapists, social workers and nurses) to explore patient-centred care and vulnerability in old age.

It found that there are differences between the way older people view their own vulnerability and the way professionals view vulnerability. Older people feel vulnerable in certain situations – when they are ‘at the mercy’ of others, such as when waiting for an ambulance, travelling by bus or when at home alone; whereas professionals tend to associate certain characteristics with vulnerability, such as being mentally and physically frail and living alone or having a number of risk factors or being unable to manage those risks.

For older people being discharged from hospital, and the feelings of vulnerability associated with arriving at home were stark. Work is required to reduce the feeling of vulnerability felt by older people arriving at home after a stay in hospital, particularly for those living alone.

Older people said that for them patient-centred care was about “getting back to normal”, not knowing that you are getting

old, improved function and feeling good about oneself. This is a key message for professionals as it sheds light on what older people consider to be important. These four indicators might be used to evaluate whether health and social care input for older people is patient-centred.

In terms of providing patient-centred care, professionals spoke about a number of barriers or challenges. Providing patient-centred care for people with dementia and alcohol problems were particular challenges. Often health and social care professionals working in the community do not receive education on meeting the needs of older people with dementia; and specialist services and expertise in meeting the needs of older people with alcohol problems are lacking.

Finally, the study found that those who consider their care to be patient-centred tend not to feel vulnerable, whereas those who feel vulnerable tend not to view the input they receive as patient-centred. It is recommended that professionals ask older people if they ever feel vulnerable and if so in what situations and then intervene accordingly.

Editors' note: Many thanks to Clare Abley for letting us know the outcome of the research that older people contributed to.

Notices

The Newcastle Trades Register

The Newcastle Trades Register is now operated by **Mears Home Improvement Ltd** : they tell us that they aim to give older people peace of mind when hiring tradespeople and the referral information is given free of charge.

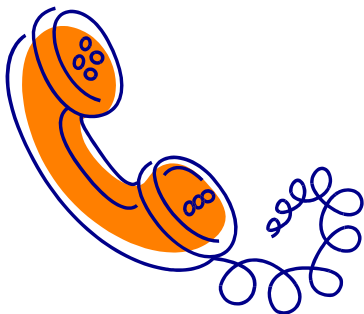
The Register includes a wide range of approved firms across Newcastle area who can take on a variety of jobs – whether it's a small property repair or a new bathroom, fitting a new carpet, decorating, gardening & fencing, roof repairs, gas service and repairs, electrical, joinery jobs, broken locks, adding telephone sockets, setting up or repairing a computer to fixing a TV or setting up a DVD or erecting a new TV aerial. You name it and in most cases the service can assist your needs as they have 20 different trades covered with many local contractors from their list.

And for older people who want Mears Home Improvement Ltd to handle the whole process – via their Advisory Service from start to finish, getting in touch with traders to giving estimates and guiding you through the whole process – a service is available for a total charge of £30.

They also have a Small Repairs Service that covers all the little non-urgent jobs that do not need a qualified tradesperson to do. Their team of handymen cover these on a waiting-list basis. There is also a gardening service, which can be for one-off big jobs, tidy-ups or regular fortnightly, monthly or quarterly maintenance.

To find out more, please contact Mears Home Improvement on **0800 111 4418** and ask about any of the above services, where staff should be able to assist you.

How to stop unwanted calls



One of the strong messages from people attending the Older & Safer Day on 5 April was their dislike of unsolicited phone calls. We should therefore like to remind readers again of the Telephone Preference Service (TPS). The TPS is the central opt-out register on which you can record your preference not to receive unsolicited sales and marketing telephone calls to your home or mobile telephone numbers. It is a legal requirement that no organisations (including charities, voluntary organisations and political parties) make such calls to numbers registered on the TPS unless they have your consent to do so. A TPS registration prevents only marketing calls; organisations will still be able to call you for the purposes of genuine market research.

You can register with the TPS by telephone on: 0845 070 0707 or
if you have a computer, you can register on line at: www.tpsonline.org.uk

Editors' Note: See also the letter from Bob Weiner on pg. 24.

Poetry

Welcome Summer

Chelsea Flower Show came and went
Lots of grace and nature's scent
The secret garden and way beyond
Walls, floors, tiles, that garden pond

Orchid image that silent call
In praise of life to one and all
Rainbow colours all there on view
To please both me and you

Geese cry out 'summertime' from on high
V-formation while crossing the sky
To welcome June and on their way
Telling us summer is here to stay

Suddenly life's up and running now
Cockerel announces 'get up and how!'
Bees all at work, pollination to be done
Nectar transferred, another fine job won



Flowers soon look their very best
As rise of sun will prove a test
Fruit trees, bushes and spreading vines
Life at its best even in wines

Wildlife visiting down at the pond
The fox, hedgehog as birds make a bond
For all to drink at nature's place
All different times – no fools, your grace

We all welcome summer morn till dawn
The friendly cat to cross the lawn
As birds are singing all day long
The robin, thrush, nightingale – a special song.

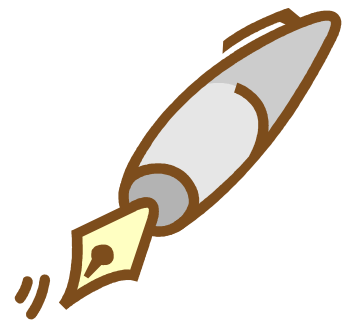
John Reid

Correspondence

Editors' Note: We very much appreciate members' letters. Please note, however, that we reserve the right to edit them before publication.

Dear Editors

At the recent Older & Safer day, many people said how much they disliked unsolicited phone calls. Being able to see the number of the person calling you can make life easier in that respect, because then if you don't recognise the number, you simply don't pick up the phone. We find that this is particularly helpful with sales calls from abroad, as the telephone preference system does not seem to apply to them. Your phone needs to have a 'caller line identification' facility (a little window in the handset) and you do have to pay your phone service provider a small charge (we pay £1.75 per month) for the Caller Identification service.



Bob Weiner

Correspondence

Dear Editors

Impressions of arrangements for discharge from hospital

As we grow older, a stay in hospital for even a limited time can be unsettling, and after three weeks at the Freeman, my wife, Sonia, found difficulty in re-establishing herself on coming home. She was greatly helped by the Social Services Reablement Team, and I thought people who face a long stay in hospital might find it helpful to know the problems and support available.



When my wife was taken to hospital as an emergency after a fall, she was found also to be severely anaemic with a very painful urine infection and was admitted. She is completely blind, has very poor hearing, severely limited mobility and a painful bowel condition. Her treatment was generally good: nurses were kind and competent, and doctors provided treatment that was effective and readily gave clear information about her condition. Elderly patients with such high levels of sensory deprivation call for some constraints on mobility for their safety, but being wheeled round instead of walking even slowly, having tablets given to one rather than selected oneself along with powerful painkillers etc all tend to disempower elderly people. When her conditions had improved, and prior to her discharge, we were told her support needs would be assessed and initial support would be provided by the Reablement Team, without being entirely clear what was involved

When she came home, Sonia had a completely unexpected and disturbing experience of loss of personal self-confidence and of being disempowered by her experience. For many years, Sonia had moved confidently round the house, finding her way from memory; suddenly she was disorientated and no longer knew where she was, where rooms were, or once in a room, how to get out. Always having managed her own medicine before, she now wanted her tablets put in her mouth. Again, having previously rejected the idea of a commode with distaste, now, unable to be confident of finding the lavatory, she wanted a commode in her bedroom.

From the day of her discharge, the reablement team staff came night and morning to help Sonia get up and go to bed, providing personal care (not housework), aiming to re-engage her with 'normal' family life, and at least settling back into the home environment. But their contribution to 're enabling' was not just confined to practical help with bathing and walking Sonia round to help fix again the geography of the house; they provided a critical 'social' re engagement, offsetting psychological disempowerment of the hospital routine and environment. Their very positive but cheery, friendly relationship helped Sonia cope with the emotional impact of disempowerment. They also worked with the project physiotherapist to help Sonia develop an exercise programme to strengthen leg muscles, which had degenerated over years as a result of disability. – cont -

Correspondence

– cont - Sonia is now four weeks through the six-week assessment period, and is moving more confidently, with a more positive approach. At the end of the assessment period, consideration will be given to long-term care needs. Of course, Sonia's overall limitations resulting from physical disabilities remain as a profound constraint for her. However, without any question, the Reabling team have made a very real contribution to her return to her home now, and I think it will make possible some improvement to her quality of life in the long term.

Yours truly
Keith Pimm

Dear Editors,

I have only recently acquired a laptop, and more importantly only discovered how easy it is to use it, so I would appreciate having my newsletter sent by e-mail in future. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank everyone involved at the Elders Council of Newcastle. I look forward to receiving the newsletter and, although I am not able to attend many events, due to family commitments, I think the work you all do to make life more easy for us elders is remarkable. Once again thank you all.

Mrs Sylvia Richardson

Dear Editors,

Several residents from Rosebery Place thoroughly enjoyed the 'Put a Spring in Your Step' event. Some of us – the younger ones – joined in the circle dancing; we racked our brains and memories for the quiz and greatly relished the splendid tea!

We wanted to say a big 'thank you' to Central High for its hospitality, for the girls' cheerful singing and to the organisers for a delightful afternoon.

Anne Mercer

Dear Editors,

I have just been emailed a copy of the Elders Council of Newcastle May Newsletter. What a revelation: as far as I know we have nothing like this here in Surrey. If it is OK with you, I want to circulate the Newsletter amongst some of my more active friends to see if we can start something similar, or if there is something already running which I don't know about.

If it is possible, can you put me on your list to receive an electronic copy of your next and future newsletters?

Many thanks and best wishes,
David G Crowhurst

Correspondence

Dear Editors,

Congratulations on a great publication. I circulate it to my colleagues.

Regarding travelling with a wheelchair in airports, my son is disabled and has his own wheelchair.

Dublin airport is not my favourite, but...

...my son managed to get help to get on a bus in Galway to go to Dublin airport. I was concerned that he couldn't get from the bus terminal to the check-in. There is a service from the airport which sends someone to assist from the bus to the airport and brings the luggage as well. You call ahead and then again when your bus is about 10 minutes away, you phone and let them know (in case of delays).

Also, Zurich airport check-in for disabled is at the entrance, with the wheelchairs if you don't have your own. They also have a separate weighing machine for baggage there. All done in one. Very good operatives push you wherever you want to go and if that means shopping or eating, they will arrange to come to pick you up before the flight is boarding.

Name and address supplied



Newsletter Information

Articles

If you would like to submit an article to be considered for the September 2011 edition of the Newsletter, will you please ensure that you forward it before Friday 19 August. (Contact details on page 1).

Electronic Version of the Newsletter

It costs about £1 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 include 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.

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)**



Gift Aid

As you know from what we said in a 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 Nathan Gulliver 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: _____
