



The Elders Council of Newcastle

Older People working for Older People

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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

AGM 'Enjoyable'

Several people said after the Annual General Meeting on 3 June how enjoyable it had been – and we thought that AGMs were for conducting business!

We combined the AGM with an Older and Wiser event. To be relevant to the keynote speaker's presentation, we chose housing as the theme and various agencies set up their stalls around the Chandelier Suite in the Assembly Rooms.

Sue Adams, Director of Care and Repair England, was our keynote speaker. She reminded us all of what still needs to be done in housing for older people, especially that many local authorities (Newcastle being one) have not yet fully adopted lifetime homes standards. The implementation of the standards would mean that older people could stay in their own homes much longer, and we shall continue to remind the City Council of that fact.



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

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



AGM 'Enjoyable' –cont -

Then the members adopted the Annual Report, which in particular showed what turbulent financial waters the Elders Council is entering this year; but the Board of Trustees is determined that we will weather the storms, in particular by being more self-reliant: we have over 2000 members but only about 2½% are actively engaged with the work of the Elders Council. The Board knows that there is an enormous amount of talent, skills and experience amongst the members and is discussing ways of channelling all that energy into activity.



We welcomed our 2000th member Glyn Evans ...



... and said goodbye to one of our founder members – June Thexton, who for many years has served older people in Newcastle with energy, good humour and commonsense.

Over 150 older people attended the AGM and we raised nearly £80 to help the work of the Elders Council. Thank you!

The members of the Elders Council have elected four colleagues to the Board of Trustees: John Reid, Dorothy Ternent, Ruth Lesser (new trustee) and Susan Chan. Congratulations to all four!

Working Group Updates

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

Pharmacy Services were discussed at a recent meeting with the pharmacy contracts manager of NHS North of Tyne and also the Northern Region representative of the Pharmaceutical Society. Members were interested to hear about the terms of contracts between pharmacists and the NHS to provide specified levels of service. There have been changes in training as well so that pharmacists can have extended roles as health advisors, not just dispensers of medicines.

Have you noticed that many local pharmacies now offer a prescription collection and delivery service? And you can also have health checks, e.g. for blood pressure, heart disease etc at your local pharmacy so you don't need to bother your GP. Many pharmacies now have space for confidential consultations if you want to talk over a health problem. One issue raised by members is the question of whether pharmacists can substitute another cheaper drug for a branded medicine prescribed by a GP.



We were assured that this cannot be done by a pharmacist without consulting the GP. So we are encouraged to make full use of the extended services now available from our neighbourhood pharmacy.

Future topics for meetings on 24 July and 4 September are: consultation on proposals for hospital services in Northumberland and North Tyneside; relationship with Links organisation, as well as ongoing discussions about the Transformation of Adult Social Care.

Transport and Highways Working Group

Bus Services

We continue to work closely with Nexus and the Bus Operators and during the last two months we have seen the successful relaunch of the Service 1 in Newcastle and the continuation of Service 33 (Jesmond) for at least another year.

Concessionary Pass and Gold Card

These should now have all been renewed and you should have received your new Concessionary Pass and your Gold Card. (if you applied for one). Please note that Press speculation that some Councils are cutting back on concessionary travel

Transport and Highways Working Group – cont -

does not apply to Tyne and Wear. There should be no changes to the ways in which you can use your bus pass.

“Summer Outings in 2009 with a Concessionary Bus Pass”

Now that summer has arrived (hasn't it?), we know that many of you are out and about exploring with your concessionary bus pass but it is unlikely that anyone will have done as many journeys as a member of our Transport Working Group, Mervin Dixon.

In response to many questions from members, we encouraged Mervin in preparing some notes about possible journeys you could make using your bus pass and we have produced a leaflet summarising these which is called “Summer Outings in 2009 with a Concessionary Bus Pass”.



Whilst we have all heard of some of the obvious trips such as to Alnwick, Hexham or Carlisle, do you know about some of the others such as Keswick, Penrith, Wooler, Scarborough, Whitby, Barnard Castle or even Hartlepool?

More than 15 journeys are mentioned together with some interesting comments about the locations and if you would like a copy of the free leaflet, just telephone the office (0191 233 0200) and we will post one out to you.

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

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

Older Person Friendly City Working Group

Summer In The Parks

Having surveyed parks for ‘Older Person Friendliness’ and having published our report, we are keen to draw the attention of readers to the summer programme of activities in the parks. There’s something suitable for all ages, whether you just want a quiet sit down or a healthy walk in the fresh air or to join an activity. Pick up a copy of the Parks and Countryside Service programme of events from your local library to find out what’s on (there are also some copies in the Elders Council office).

Older Person Friendly City Working Group – cont -

We have also devised a prize quiz to test your knowledge about parks. We surveyed 18 parks and recreation areas for our report, you may have to visit some of them to find the answers to our quiz (see below). To enter our prize draw, please send your entry by Monday, 7th September.

Older Person Friendly Shopping

Thanks to the many members who returned questionnaires sent out with the last newsletter. You may be interested to know that your priorities for improvements to supermarket shopping are ... wider aisles, more seats and toilets and especially reduced prices for single items rather than 'buy one get one free'. So these will be top of our checklists when we go out to survey the main supermarkets. And to keep with this, we would welcome more volunteers. Please Inform the Elders Council office if you are willing to join the Older Person Friendly Shopping Enquiry Team (0191 233 0200).

Quiz

Prize Quiz to test your knowledge of Parks

Here's a clue: to find the answers you may have to visit these parks – Elswick; Exhibition and Brandling; Heaton; Hodgkin; Jesmond Dene; Leazes; Nunsmoor; Walker

1. In which park can you see an old watermill?
2. Which parks have bowling greens?
3. Name the parks which have sensory gardens.
4. In which park is there a swimming baths and what are the hours of opening?
5. Which park has a maze?
6. In which parks can you go fishing or hire a boat on a lake?
7. There are many trees in our parks – but which park has a 'shoe' tree?
8. In which park can you see peacock and goats?

And finally a tie-breaker: please complete the following sentence in no more than 25 words:

My favourite park is

To enter the prize draw to win £25 Eldon Square vouchers please send in your answers with your contact details to the Elders Council (address on front page)

Information NOW Website Competition Results (www.informationnow.org.uk)

Thanks to all of you who entered the Information NOW quiz that was featured in the April edition of this newsletter. The winner of the £15 Eldon Square Gift Voucher was **Joan Irving** – well done Joan!

In case you're wondering, the correct answers were:

1. The new basic State Pension rate for a single person for 2009/10 is **£95.25**.
2. You would contact **Michelle Mordue** for information about the 'On Yer Bike' cycling programme.
3. Dimensions is a **learning difficulties** organisation.
4. The two different types of Lasting Power of Attorney (LPA) are: **Property and affairs** and **personal welfare**.
5. The organisation known as RSVP stands for **Retired and Senior Volunteer Programme**.



Inspired

After the Older and Wiser event at Trinity Church, Gosforth, where we had a taste of music, art and drama, one of our members wrote: "Even though I did not join in Bronwen's music session, I was so impressed by her enthusiasm that, to add to my participation in the Sage's Silver Singers programme, I decided to try to play a ukulele. I just love the buzz that people get from music, either playing or singing it. Thank you, Bronwen."

"The drama session was great fun and the buzz on the day was catching. I hope that all of the people who filled in the questionnaires follow through and take part in future drama events. I look forward to seeing you soon and enjoying further sessions."

Reports

Jesmond Community Festival 2009

Jesmond's 2009 Community Festival was generally agreed to be its best yet, with a host of events for young and old. Once again, a highlight for many older residents was "Put a Spring in Your Step", jointly organised by the Elders Council and Central Newcastle High School, at which 55 over-50s enjoyed a singing performance by 48 junior school pupils, a lively display by the Age Concern Tap Dancers, a quiz (by Don Perry), tea, and free cakes provided by Greggs plc.



This year's performance by Old Spice at Jesmond Methodist Church Hall was linked to a crowded session at which around 50 elderly local residents met with students and lecturers from Newcastle University to discuss the pleasures and problems of living in Jesmond.

Other events which took place during the week-long free festival included the Festival Parade on 14 March, several concerts, including a popular recital by a band of Northumbrian pipers, and an Open Day at Newcastle Cricket Club.

The Festival is organised by the Jesmond Community Forum, of which the Elders Council is an active member. The Forum has a year-round series of events, quite apart from organising the Festival, such as a photographic competition and meetings for all community organisations in Jesmond to share knowledge and experience. If you would be interested in knowing more about Jesmond Community Forum, or next year's Festival, why not contact Chris Clarke at Clarke@newbrough.fsnet.co.uk or 0191 281 0758?

Reports

New City library – a first report from a member

First impression: spaciousness

Second impression: how to find way around?

Answer: ubiquitous signage, colour coding and very helpful staff.

Innovative features: self issuing and return of books; temperature-controlled building; crèche; café with outside seating; and long opening hours.

Adequate seating and study space, plus comfortable chairs for relaxing.

Performance hall, meeting rooms and large computer suite, enhanced local studies and family history section and study space. Apart from books, there are DVDs, CDs, and music download stations for Ipods and mp3 players.

Some questionable aspects: interfiling of lending and reference stock; apparently many fewer periodicals taken than hitherto; very small selection of directories on display (though probably more available on request); computerised catalogue for specialist material (e.g., serials and bound volumes of local tracts) – staff assistance required.

The continual mechanical voice in the lifts ('doors opening', 'doors closing', 'floor x') is an irritation.

But a good experience overall.

Parking

We know that many of our members are not car-drivers; and we also know that many of our members have concerns about the way that car-drivers behave, especially over parking. So here are a few reminders about parking in Newcastle.

Double yellow lines: No waiting at any time.

Single yellow lines: Look for the nearby sign, which will tell drivers when parking restrictions apply.

School keep clears: No parking, waiting, loading/unloading, or dropping off/picking up passengers during the times shown on the sign.

Disabled bays: No parking unless you have a valid blue badge.

These offences are now dealt with by Newcastle Parking Services and you should report any infringement to them on 0191 277 2736.

Pavements: Car-drivers are not allowed to park their car on a pavement. If a driver breaks the law by parking on a pavement, call the police (0191 214 6555). Unfortunately, Newcastle Parking Services don't deal with this common infringement.

New Activity Brochure Available Soon!

Newcastle's Over 50's Activity Programme.

2009 Brochure.



It's Never Been So Easy To Try Something New...



The Active Ageing programme is in the process of developing a new 50+ Activities brochure. As well as providing information on old favourites like the Healthy Living Centre and the Health and Heritage Walks, it will also include details on future opportunities such as exclusive Victoria Tunnel Tours, new Nordic Walking Courses and a Social Cycling Programme.

There will also be a new section about Community Activities that you can access in your area.

To reserve your free copy, simply ring the Quality of Life Partnership on 0191 233 0200.

Photographers Wanted!

With the increase in 50+ activity programmes and an impending week-long celebration to be organised, our Active Ageing Worker is finding it increasingly hard to be in two places at once.

Consequently we are asking if any amateur or budding photographers would like to attend a variety of programmes/events on our behalf and document the action. These photos will go on to be used in all future Active Ageing Brochures and will form the basis of our city-wide publicity. Costs towards transport and photography will be reimbursed.



For further details of this opportunity, please contact Michelle Mordue, Active Ageing Development Worker, on 0191 255 1985.

We look forward to hearing from you ☺

Reports

Older People as Victims

A while ago, a group of Elders Council members trawled through 84 days' worth of articles in the local press: *The Journal*, *The Evening Chronicle* and *The Sunday Sun*. Over that period, they found only 48 stories about older people – i.e., only about 1 story every two days.

Some headlines to articles that featured older people were:

**BUS HORROR AT RUSH HOUR
DEATH OF PENSIONER IN CARE HOME
VICTIM, 56, WAS TORTURED
PENSIONER, 76, MUGGED NEAR SPORTS CENTRE
THUGS TOOK OP'S CAR
ELDERLY ARE TARGETED IN BOGUS CALLS**

So the conclusion from those headlines seems to be that, if you're older, you're vulnerable. The group assessed whether they thought that, overall, the articles raised fear of crime. They found that about half of the articles were not concerned with crime, so fear of crime was neither raised nor lowered. But of the others they found no articles at all which lowered fear of crime – there could, for example, have been pieces about greater police presence on the streets or the appointment of street wardens, but the newspapers ignored such “good news” stories. Of the stories that did deal with crime, the group found that 30% could be said to raise fear somewhat and 70% raised fear a lot.

But there were some good news stories as well:

**CENTENARIAN...AND THE REST – DORA CELEBRATES HER 103RD
BIRTHDAY IN STYLE WITH MAYOR
105 YEARS OLD AND IVY'S STILL GOING STRONG
CARE HOME BOSS HONOUR
WE'LL MISS YOU, MISS
TRIBUTES TO DEDICATED VOLUNTEER**

And the conclusion here seems to be that it's praiseworthy to reach a ripe old age or to have had a full career!

The reality is that Newcastle is, relatively, a safe place to live.

Thanks for the research that produced the details about the press coverage of older people are due to: Bill, Eileen, Eric, Ettie, Greta, Jean, John, Joyce, Margaret, Olive, Sheila, Steve and Yvonne.

Reports

Newcastle is Safe

Newcastle upon Tyne is a safe place to live, says Frank Gallop, Superintendent in Northumbria Police. Despite what we might see in the news, crime in the city is relatively low. Yes: crime is still occurring; and yes: we all can take precautions to prevent ourselves becoming victims. However, the chances of becoming a victim of crime are low. This is particularly true of crimes against the person, i.e. a crime where the offender directly attacks the victim. These are the types of crime that occur 'on the street' or in public and have the biggest impact on a person's decision whether or not to go out at a particular time of day or visit a particular area.

It is this so-called fear of crime that makes many of us feel unsafe when out and about in the city. But is the fear of crime based on what we experience first-hand as a victim, see on the streets or hear in the news? In most cases, the fear of crime is based on what we read in the papers (see pg. 10) or hear on the news. Bad news is good news to the media: it sells newspapers, fills out news items and provides a real opportunity to sensationalise the very few serious crimes that affect the older population. The evidence of crime that we might see on the streets is usually what we term criminal damage, for example broken windows, graffiti etc. But how many of us witness such crime taking place?

In Newcastle, the vast majority of crimes do not involve personal contact; the criminal doesn't like being seen or getting caught, so soft or opportunistic crime is still the most popular method. In a large proportion of crimes that do involve personal contact, the offender actually knows the victim as a relative or friend and in the majority of cases that victim is a person below the age of 50. During the last year, only 0.2% (that's 1 in every 500) of crimes reported to the police in Newcastle involved a victim over 50 years old being physically attacked by someone they didn't know.

The reality is that the risk of being a victim of crime whilst out and about is very, very low. It is also a fact that **the older we get, the less likely we are to become victim of personal contact crime**. So, as summer approaches, don't let the fear of crime spoil your plans and enjoyment of what is truly a vibrant, interesting and safe city.



I have overall responsibility for the investigation of crimes committed in Newcastle; managing the quality of intelligence which comes into the area command and monitoring and reviewing the way police operations are carried out. My role also includes maintaining and developing local partnerships and strategies to reduce crime and disorder and help make our community safer.

*Superintendent Frank Gallop,
Newcastle Area Command*

Reports

An Introduction to Joining the Dots

Joining the Dots is a development which aims to improve access for older people to services including healthcare, community activities and information and advice by:

- 'joining the dots' within existing provision;
- sustaining and building on existing services; and
- identifying and filling gaps.

The work is initially for 12 months. It is working to help older people with long-term conditions and those at risk of social isolation and depression. We want them to have access to information, advice and appropriate early interventions; they should also have choice and control over the services and support they need in a timely manner to prevent, delay or minimise the need for health and social care services. *Joining the Dots* also forms an important formal part of Newcastle City Council's Adult Services Transformation Programme.

Sandra Hillyard is the Project Manager for this new and innovative area. She is working from the Quality of Life Partnership based in MEA House and will be co-ordinating, overseeing and taking forward the developments in the project over the next 12 months. First-phase priorities are:

- Seeing what needs to be done and developing a 'link worker' role.
- Engaging older people and carers and the voluntary and community sectors in the process of change.

If you would like to find out more about the project or become involved in it, please do not hesitate to get in touch with Sandra by telephone: 0191 255 1991 or by email: sandra.hillyard@qualityoflife.org.uk .

Notices

Newcastle Small Repairs

The Small Repairs Service in Newcastle is expanding! This year, they have received additional funding from Newcastle Council, which pays for two more technicians. This will mean that they will be able to help many more people across Newcastle. The waiting list for a visit is currently quite short, so if you would like to have any small jobs carried out, please just give them a call on 0191 495 6177.



Health

Keeping Cool

Severe heatwaves, where temperatures are very high day after day, are not common in the UK. But temperatures in July and August may be hotter this summer than in summers in the past. It is important to stay as cool as possible during hot weather as severe heat can make you seriously ill. So keep an eye on the weather forecasts.



Tips to help you stay cool:

- Check the weather forecast. If it's going to be a hot day, try to plan your day so that you can stay out of the heat.
- During hot spells, keep inside as much as possible and try to stay in the coolest room in your home. Shutting your curtains will keep some of the heat and direct sunlight out of the room.
- Drink plenty of water or fruit juice. Don't wait until you're thirsty to have a drink. If you're on medication, you should check with your doctor how much it is safe for you to drink when the weather is hot.
- Try to avoid drinks that contain alcohol or large amounts of sugar or caffeine. These can actually cause you to lose more body fluid. Also, try to avoid very cold drinks as they can cause stomach cramps.

Eat as you normally would, but try to eat more cold food including fruit and salad which contain water.

Newcastle ladies over 70 years of age

What are your memories of medical care for yourself and female relatives in Newcastle: memories of doctors, midwives, hospitals, district nurses, dentists etc.?

Did your mother, grandmother or aunt ever tell you about their experiences of medical care?

Wendy Prahms is writing a book about health-care for women in Newcastle 1800-2000 and would like some direct accounts from the 20th century or earlier from the patient's point of view.

Much of the book will be about pregnancy, childbirth, baby care and associated topics, even though these are not illnesses. For instance, did you or anyone you know suffer from post-natal depression? Was this condition even recognised by doctors? What happened to women who could not cope, as a result of childbirth or for any other reason? Were doctors' attitudes to women different from their attitudes

Health

Newcastle ladies over 70 years of age – cont -

to men? Why did so many women in the 1930s have all their teeth taken out? Did dentists encourage this?

Please send your contributions by post to Wendy c/o Elders Council of Newcastle, 2nd Floor, MEA House, Ellison Place, Newcastle NE1 8XS, marking the envelope 'Medical Memories' in the top left-hand corner, or by e-mail to prahms65@hotmail.com

All contributions will appear anonymously and unidentifiably. Wendy expects to finish the book late this year and to see it published late next year.

Act FAST to be a 'stroke saver'

Stroke is the third largest cause of death in England and the single largest cause of adult disability. For many years, stroke has been seen as untreatable and as an inevitable part of ageing. However, new developments, such as acute stroke units, have had a positive impact on stroke services.

Despite this, public awareness and recognition of the main signs of stroke are still very low. This is why you may have seen much more publicity recently about stroke, including television campaigns and posters, which are part of a three-year campaign to raise awareness. Stroke is a medical emergency whose outcome can potentially be improved by getting faster treatment. A FAST response to stroke reduces the risk of death or disability.

These simple checks can help you to recognise whether someone has had a stroke or a mini-stroke (otherwise known as Transient Ischaemic Attack – a TIA).

- **F – Facial weakness:** Can the person smile? Has their mouth or eye drooped?
- **A – Arm weakness:** Can the person raise both arms?
- **S – Speech problems:** Can the person speak clearly and understand what you say?
- **T – Time** to dial 999 immediately if you see **any** of these symptoms.

If you see the signs of a stroke, you need to act **FAST** and dial **999**.

For more information, visit the NHS Choices website at www.nhs.uk/stroke, or for local information visit Information NOW at: <http://www.informationnow.org.uk/resources/articles/333>

Information

Take up your entitlement

Are you over 60? Have you looked at whether you are entitled to Pension Credit?

Or are you an older carer? Are you missing out by not claiming Carers Allowance and its associated benefits?

As an Elders Council member said at the Annual General Meeting recently: "I'm not the sort to claim. But when I talked to the very nice young Welfare Rights woman at the Older and Wiser event earlier this year, she explained what I was entitled to and even came to visit me at home to take me through the forms so that I understood what I could claim. The extra money I received has really changed my life."

If you want to find out whether you're entitled to Pension Credit or Carers Allowance, just ring Welfare Rights on 0191 277 2633 or Age Concern on 0191 232 6488. Or go to www.informationnow.org.uk and click on "Benefits". Or you could buy (£5.99) *Your rights to money benefits 2009-10* from Age Concern in MEA House.

Finally – Council Tax rebate is the benefit with the least claimants in the city, so there are thousands of pounds just lying around not going to those who need the money and are entitled to it. Why not go along to the Grainger Market on Monday 27 July to talk to somebody about it?



P.S. Help for the over-60s

The Treasury has sent us a new booklet that promises "real help now for the over-60s to help them through tough economic times". They say that you can get help with pensions and benefits, fuel bills, savings and managing your money, money problems, keeping your home, skills and learning, and jobs.

Information

Benefiting You

If you have a low income, it can often be difficult to manage. You might find it hard to meet household bills, care costs and other expenses. This may lead to problems with debt. If this applies to you, do you know that you may be able to claim extra money that will help to make your life easier?

Many older people fail to claim the benefits and tax credits that they are entitled to. The Department for Work and Pensions estimates that around one in every six people over 60 do not claim their full entitlement. This could be because the benefit system is complex and so people are unsure what they should be claiming. Lots of people are also put off claiming by means-testing or complicated forms and as a result lose out on money that they have a right to. It is important to remember that the benefits system is there to help and you are entitled to claim.

There are a number of benefits available to older people and one of the most important things is to ensure that you have the relevant information. Some are means-tested, which means that your existing income and your savings may affect your claim. Other benefits are not means-tested but have their own rules and conditions.

Here are some of the benefits you might be able to claim:

- State Retirement Pension
- Council Tax Benefit
- Pension Credit
- Winter Fuel Payments and Cold Weather Payments
- Attendance Allowance or Disability Living Allowance
- Carer's Allowance
- Housing Benefit
- Health costs and visits to hospital

If you want to make sure that you are not missing out, it is a good idea to get a '**benefit check**'. You can do this by getting advice about your entitlement.

There are a number of organisations such as Newcastle Welfare Rights Service that provide free, independent advice on benefits and debt. They can check on your benefits, help fill in claim forms and challenge decisions if necessary.

For details of advice provision in your area, visit the Newcastle Welfare Rights Service website at www.newcastle.gov.uk/welfarerights or ring 0191 2772633.

Things to do

The Silver Programme

The Silver Programme is a major area of the work of The Sage Gateshead. They provide a music-based, daytime curriculum for people over the age of 50, by programming a broad range of music workshops and events.

SOME OF THE SESSIONS STARTING IN SEPTEMBER

Silver Singers is a community Choir for anyone over 50 who likes to sing. The intention is to provide a supportive environment in which to enjoy the experience of being part of smaller and larger groups, sing for pleasure, develop confidence and improve health. The group sings a mix of world music, popular songs, folk songs, spirituals, Geordie songs, anything from Cole Porter to Annie Lennox! There is a "Big Silver Sing" monthly, where all the groups come together.



Silver Blues

A chance to sing Blues and Jazz standards. New regular sessions will begin on Monday 21 September 1:30-3pm.

Men Allowed

Singing group for men of all ages. Broad and interesting repertoire. Regular sessions will begin on Monday 21 September 6-7:30pm.

Deep Tyne Gospel

Sessions for all comers to experience the different approaches to gospel music and spirituals. Regular sessions will begin on Tuesday 22 September, 10:30am-12:00 noon.

Group playing a range of South American percussion.

Regular sessions will begin on Wednesday 23 September, 10:30am-12:00 noon.

All sessions £2.50

To enrol on any of the groups above, contact **The Silver Programme**

Tel: 0191 443 5034.

Email: silver@thesagegateshead.org .

Web: www.silvercommunities.org.uk .

Things to do

Tea Dances

Fancy a tea-dance?

From 12.00 noon until 3.00 pm on Saturday 18 July, there's music, dancing and all-round fun at the Ouseburn Regeneration Centre, Spillers Quay, NE6 1BU. There's also a buffet.

If you'd like transport to and from the event or you want further details, please contact Angela Barker on 0191 275 5612.

50/50 tea dance

From 2.00-4.00 pm on Friday 7 August, there will be a tea dance for the over-50s at the Trinity Centre in Gosforth High Street. Admission is £2.00 – and that includes a cup of tea and biscuits.

If you want to know more or you want to buy tickets, just ring 0191 285 6130.

Events this summer in your local park

Events to suit everyone will be happening in Newcastle's Parks and Countryside sites this summer. If you are interested in nature, there are talks and walks on birds, bats and trees in places such as Big Waters and Tyne Riverside Country Park at Newburn. If live music is more your scene, you can catch brass bands, ceilidh music and hits from the 60s playing in popular locations such as Heaton Park, Leazes Park, Gosforth Central Park and Exhibition Park. You can even enjoy Shakespeare with Heartbreak Productions in Jesmond Dene! Have you got green fingers? Show us what you grow at our Allotment and Garden show on 13 September at the Civic Centre. If you fancy a game of bowls or tennis, many of our parks have bowling greens or tennis courts. You can learn how to turn wood on a pole lathe, take a history walk, or volunteer to help to keep our parks in shape. For those who would rather just sit back and watch the youngsters having fun, there are also plenty of family activities you can bring the grandchildren along too.

You can look up the full list of Parks and Countryside events at: www.newcastle.gov.uk/parks or ring (0191) 277 3533 and to request a free leaflet. We can also advise on which parks and events give the best access to people with mobility problems, on welfare facilities and where to get the best cup of tea!



Poetry

Life Moves On

While spring passes into summer
Though blossom is its way to cover
Trees will hide a secret world
Until flowers are unfurled.

Cherry: pink; apple blossom: white
While windy weather provides a sight
To scatter colours beneath the trees
Always a glorious sight to please.

Fruit buds are showing all around
As life evolves with little sound
A quiet hum from busy bee
Pollination (sterling work) – wait and see.

Seeds have grown plants now tall
Ready for beds at nature's call
Though nature never takes a rest
But she alone knows timing best.



The scent of flowers in the air
A welcome scene of summer fair
Bees spread pollen flower to flower
In between a fine May shower.

Look after nature's presents to us
All of this with so little fuss
Birds, bees and nature's fold
And many stories can be told.

Life at the pond: the frog, the toad,
Hoverfly and fish in their abode
This is nature's life at ease
It's all aboard the gentle breeze.

John Reid



Information

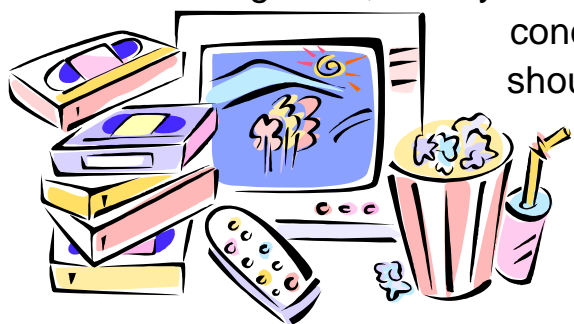
TV Licence Concessions

The current cost of a television licence is £142.50 for a colour television and £48.00 for a black-and-white television. However, there are concessions available for people aged over 74, those who are registered blind or severely sight impaired, or those who live in residential care or sheltered accommodation.

Over 74: Everyone aged 75 and over is entitled to a free television licence. If you are aged 74 years old, and will turn 75 before your television licence is due to expire, you can apply for a Short Term licence. This means that you will have to pay only for the number of months between the date of your current licence and your 75th birthday. If you are aged 75 years old or over, you can apply for your free television licence. If you already have a Short Term licence, you will receive your free television licence automatically in the month of your 75th birthday and you do not need to apply. To apply for a Short Term licence, or a free licence, telephone 0844 800 6790.

Blind or severely sight-impaired: If you, or someone you live with, is registered blind or severely sight-impaired, you are entitled to a 50% concession on the cost of your television licence. To qualify for this concession, you must provide a photocopy of the certificate from your City Council or ophthalmologist indicating that you are registered blind.

Living in residential care or sheltered accommodation: People who live in residential care or in sheltered housing may be eligible for a concessionary Accommodation for Residential Care (ARC) licence. If you have your own TV in your room or living area, and your accommodation qualifies, you will be entitled to this



concessionary licence at an annual cost of £7.50. You should speak to your scheme manager to see if your accommodation is eligible. If you watch TV only in a communal area and do not have your own TV, you will not need to buy your own licence.

If a TV is being used only to play DVDs or to watch pre-recorded programmes, a TV licence is not required.

For further information about concessions, contact TV Licensing on 0844 800 6790 or visit their website at www.tvlicensing.co.uk

The switchover to Digital TV will take place in the second half of 2012 for people living in the Tyne Tees region. If all of the televisions in your home are already digital, the change will not affect you. However, if you have a television that has not been changed to receive a digital signal, it will no longer work once your region has been switched over to only receive digital signals.

If you already watch more than five channels, your television is probably digital already. If not, you will need to choose what to do with your television set. You can convert your existing set by plugging a digital box (often called a 'set top box') into the back of your set, or take the opportunity to buy a new television set. If you need to buy any new equipment, make sure that it displays the government-backed digital logo.



The Switchover Help Scheme can provide practical assistance, support and advice for all households:

- with one person or more aged 75 years old or over; or
- with one person or more entitled to receive Attendance Allowance, Constant Attendance Allowance, Mobility Supplement or Disability Living Allowance; or
- where one person or more is registered severely sight-impaired/blind or registered sight-impaired/partially sighted.

This help will be free of charge if you meet the above criteria and receive Pension Credit, Income Support or income-based Jobseeker's Allowance. If you meet the above criteria and don't receive one of the above income-related benefits, you will need to pay a subsidised fee of £40 to get the help from the scheme.

If you are eligible for the scheme, you will be able to apply for help up to eight months in advance of the digital switchover in your area. Eligible individuals will be contacted around this time. In the meantime, if you want further information on this scheme in advance, call Digital UK on telephone number **0800 519 2021**.

For details about other organisations that can provide advice and information about the Digital Switchover visit www.informationnow.org.uk.

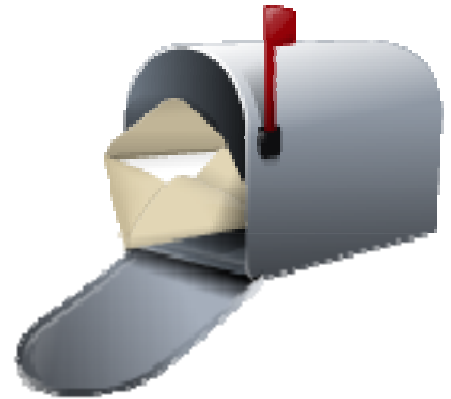
Information

Unwanted Mail and Unsolicited Phone Calls

Unwanted Mail:

Do you know that if you register with the MPS (Mail Preference Service) they can remove your name from, up to 95% of Direct Mail Lists; dramatically reducing the amount of unwanted mail, that drops through your letterbox. However, it will only stop the unwanted mail that has been, addressed to you personally by name; it will not stop the unwanted mail that is addressed to, The Occupier, the Householder, etc.

You can register with the MPS. By telephone on: 0845 703 4599 or if you have a computer, you can register on line at:
www.mpsonline.org.uk



Unsolicited Phone Calls



The TPS (Telephone Preference Service) 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 only prevents 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

Correspondence

Dear Editor

I am writing to thank you for the assistance that the Elders Council of Newcastle provided in January 2008, in including an advertisement about the Caring for Carers: Support for Informal Carers Study in the Elders Council Newsletter. The assistance was extremely valuable in helping me to get in contact with people in the local community.

I would like to thank you for assisting me with this study - I am very grateful.

Valerie Egdell,
Newcastle University



Newsletter Articles



If you would like to submit an article to be considered for the October/November edition of the Newsletter, will you please ensure that you forward it before Friday 25 September. (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)



Date for your diary!

Showcase!

The International Day for Older People takes place on Thursday 1 October. And the Elders Council of Newcastle will be marking that special day by including it in our popular series of Older and Wiser Days. It will be part of the whole week's Older Persons' Festival.

The new City Library will be packed with demonstrations of the activities and events in which older people can join. In the Bewick rooms, there will be displays of Tai Chi, dancing, painting art patterns, hands-on IT gadgets, craftwork, birding and many many other activities; there'll also be seated exercise sessions. More than 20 associations and charities will be given space to showcase their activities, and demonstrate the opportunities that older people have in Newcastle for enjoying life.

FREE Admission
Thursday 1 October, 10.30 am – 4.00 pm
City Library

It'll be a great day out, so make a note of the date now.
You can get further details from Michelle Mordue: 0191 255 1985 or
michelle.mordue@qualityoflife.org.uk .

The International Day for Older People is part of a whole week of activities. And for the first time ever, people aged 50+ in Newcastle will get their very own celebration during that week of 28 September to 3 October.

Building upon the success of last year's Older Persons Day event, this week-long celebration will see organisations such as Age Concern Newcastle, the Quality of Life Partnership, the Elders Council, Equal Arts, CSV, YHN, Community Heritage Project, Ground Works, Theatre Royal, Northern Stage, the Baltic, Tyneside Cinema, and Newcastle City Council coming together with older people to provide celebratory events throughout the city.

During this week, there will be various workshops, exclusive tours, information events, cinema screenings, freebies, pampering sessions, dance and activity events. A full brochure will be available in September. To reserve your copy, please ring the Quality of Life Partnership on 0191 233 0200.