



The Elders Council of Newcastle

Older People working for Older People

July-August 2010 - Issue 36

Elders Council of Newcastle

Contact Details:

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

Tel: 0191 233 0200

Fax: 0191 260 5307

Email:

info@qualityoflife.org.uk

Website:

www.elderscouncil.org.uk



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

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

The Annual General Meeting: our neighbourhood – a good place to grow old

On 9th June, over 150 members of the Elders Council gathered at the Assembly Rooms for the Annual General Meeting (*see photo below*). The theme of the meeting was 'older-person friendly neighbourhoods'. To start the day, members were invited to sit in groups with other people from their local area to consider what they liked about their area and what they would like to improve. This resulted in lively conversation with people sharing information and ideas about their neighbourhood. Members were invited to judge the quality of their neighbourhood using green, amber and red dots (*see photo on page 2*).



The Annual General Meeting – cont -



A quick glance around the room indicated that many people are happy with where they live, and that we do have neighbourhoods which, with a little improvement, are 'older person friendly'.

This was echoed by our keynote speaker, Karen Croucher, who pointed out that whilst the concept of 'lifetime neighbourhoods' may be new, many of our neighbourhoods already have the facilities and characteristics which mean

they are good places to grow old in. Karen illustrated this by contrasting the features of Hartrigg Oaks, a purpose-built retirement community in York, with the many positive features of the medieval town of Knaresborough.



Karen also highlighted the wide range of agencies which have some responsibility for helping to make our neighbourhoods 'older person friendly'. After we have analysed the feedback from the AGM workshop and written up our findings in a report, the Elders Council will be seeking the opportunity to present the findings to the Older People's Strategic Board and to take forward the issues raised with a range of agencies in the city.

In the afternoon, the members dealt with the business side of the AGM. We approved a motion to charge members living outside Newcastle an annual subscription of £10; we endorsed the election of John Telfer and Liz Hannan to the Board of Trustees and the re-election of Elsie Richardson, Bob Weiner, Vera Bolter and Steve Whitley; and we approved the annual accounts.

Keynote speaker Karen Croucher

At the June meeting of the Board of Trustees, Mary Nicholls was elected as Chair, Bob Weiner as Secretary and Bill Ions as Treasurer.

Information

Benefits

The Benefits Section at the City Council tell us that there isn't anything major coming from the emergency budget relating to pensioners; however, the following could affect us:

- Basic state pension will be uprated by a triple guarantee of earnings, prices or 2.5%, whichever is highest, from April 2011.
- From April 2011, the Government will use the Consumer Price Index (historically, a much lower index than the Retail Price Index) for the price indexation of benefits, tax credits and public service pensions. This change will also apply to public service pensions through the statutory link to the indexation of the Second State Pension.
- The government is to review the date at which the State Pension Age rises to 66; it's proposed that this will be in 2016 for men.
- If you get Local Housing Allowance (LHA), then the £15 excess payment is to be scrapped from April 2011. Also, LHA rates will be capped for each property size.
- Council Tax rates will be frozen for 2011/12.
- Free swimming for over-65s ends on 31 July but local councils are able to support it if they so decide (the Elders Council has written to Newcastle City Council asking them to do this).
- VAT will increase from 17.5% to 20% from 4 January 2011.
- The standard minimum income guarantee in Pension Credit will increase in April 2011 by the cash rise in a full basic State Pension.
- Winter Fuel Payments, free off-peak local bus travel, eye tests and prescriptions for those over the female State Pension Age and free TV licences for those aged over 75 remain (but could be affected in the Autumn Spending Review).
- Non-dependant deductions for Housing and Council Tax Benefit will no longer be frozen.
- The existing rules that create an effective obligation to purchase an annuity by age 75 will end from April 2011.

Working Group Updates

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

The **Choose and Book** system for NHS services has been a recent topic of discussion. It seems that many people are still unaware that if you are being referred to hospital services, your GP should be able to tell you where you can get appointments with the shortest waiting time for the treatment you need. You can be referred to specialist centres in other places if that is your choice. It is quite a common experience to come away from a consultation with your GP with an appointment already booked! In practice, most of us just want a good local service in a familiar hospital without travelling further afield. When the Working Group was consulted about the system, we agreed that Elders Council members should be aware of the benefits of this system and should exercise their right to be booked into a service or hospital of their choice. There is just one note of caution, however: any follow-up services locally may be more difficult if you have travelled to a distant location for treatment.

Future topics for Working Group discussions will be concentrated on developments in Social Care, and especially the funding of Social Care when the Coalition Government produces a response to the recent white paper.

Outreach Working Group

Recent topics of discussion at Outreach Working Group meetings have included:

Older & Wiser Days: Ideas for potential Older and Wiser Days were proposed including Paying for Care (although that might need to wait until we know how the new Government intends to deal with this issue), Engaging with the Younger Generation (people in their 50s), Informal Learning and Financial Literacy. It was recommended that after the AGM, the next O & W Day should be held in November.

BME Engagement: With help from Nazrul Islam and Meena Chopra, 17 organisations were contacted with invitations to the AGM.

Just What I Need. A draft information pack was considered and will be somewhat revised based on comments from the Group.

Gateshead Older People's Assembly. Following a meeting with representatives of Gateshead Older People's Assembly it was agreed that a joint meeting of the two Boards would be a constructive first step. The proposed date was early in October and a suitable venue is being sought. It is also hoped to arrange for the Mayors of Gateshead and Newcastle to be present at the start of the meeting in order to give the event some publicity. Suitable dates are being sought in both Mayors' diaries.

Working Groups – cont -

Older Person Friendly City Working Group

The main message from the Working Group is:

4 August is the date to come to an event in Heaton Park. There will be a programme of fun and activities from 1.00-3.00 pm, with opportunities to enjoy yourself in good company and try a new activity. **Please support the Elders Council in this venture – and bring your friends and family too ...**

Fun in the Sun
with the Elders Council
Wednesday 4th August, 1-3pm
Heaton Park, Newcastle

Things to do:

- Health and food stalls
- Meet local groups
- Find out what's happening in your park
- Listen to music and local singing groups



Try your hand at...

- Hanging baskets
- Arts activities
- Rookie Golf
- Bowling
- ...and much more!

What's on at The Pavilion:

- 1pm Official opening by John Grundy
- 1.30pm Nordic walking taster
- 1.45pm Tai Chi Taster
- 2pm History walk with John Grundy
- 2.30pm Nordic walking taster
- 2.45pm Tai Chi taster
- 3pm Event close

For more information,
please contact the
Elders Council on
0191 233 0200

Newcastle City Council  

Working Groups – cont -

Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods Working Group

In July, the group will be joined by Karen Croucher to look at the findings from the Annual General Meeting and to consider how best to present the findings from our conversations to our partners and other agencies in the city.

At its June meeting, the group was joined by Fiona Dodsworth from the Planning and Housing Strategy team to consider the draft 'Older People's Housing Strategy', which is currently out for consultation. The Elders Council has already played a significant role in the development of the strategy, so we welcomed the opportunity to comment further.

The aim of the strategy is to improve access to services in the home and those in the surrounding area and offer a better choice of accommodation of older people. We want to ensure that older people have access to advice and information so they can make an informed decision about the accommodation and services which will best suit their needs.

The strategy is not just about meeting the needs of older people now. We know as people get older they want to plan for their retirement and it is important that they are aware of the options available to them. People's aspirations are also changing and this will have an impact on the design and type of accommodation that is provided in Newcastle that will meet the needs of future generations.



Further details about the consultation is available in the housing section of Newcastle City Council's website, www.newcastle.gov.uk

If you require more information please contact Fiona Dodsworth in the Planning and Housing Strategy team by e-mail at fiona.dodsworth@newcastle.gov.uk or by telephone on 277 7860.

Working Groups – cont -

Communication Working Group



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.

If you would like to join the team, please get in touch with Steve Whitley on 273 4727 or steve.whitley@phoncoop.coop

Transport and Highways Working Group

Three items are currently under discussion at the Transport Working Group.

Nexus Consultation: “Local bus links in Newcastle”:

This consultation finished on 4 June and the feedback is being looked at.

Feedback has been received from a variety of sources including the questionnaires, staffed events, public events, e-mails and over 5000 “hits” on their website. 38% of all respondents are over the age of 65. The findings from this consultation will be passed to Newcastle City Council later this year and it is expected that a final plan will be issued in Spring next year.

Transport Access to Hospitals:

The working group is in discussion with the hospital authorities, Nexus and the City Council regarding possible improvements to the bus services to the major hospitals.

The changes currently taking place at the Royal Victoria Infirmary mean that the main access to the site will eventually move to Queen Victoria Road and it is hoped that it may be possible to re-route some bus services.

In addition, we have raised the question of access to the Freeman Hospital, where the bus-stop outside the hospital grounds means a difficult walk, especially for older people.

Nothing has been decided yet and we will keep you informed on both of these projects as soon as we have further details.

Working Groups – cont -

Transport and Highways Working Group –cont -

“Summer Outings in 2010 with a Concessionary Bus Pass”:

Over 200 copies of our leaflet have now been issued but there are still some available. Already we have had a number of favourable comments, both about the content and about trips that members have made ranging from Scarborough in the South to Berwick in the North.

One enterprising member, Freda Horsley, has even enlarged on suggested routes. We recommended the Hexham to Consett journey, which Freda and friends took but then returned via Chester-Le-Street. Now they plan to take our Wooler and Alnwick tour but will probably make a short visit to Rothbury on the way.

It just shows what can be done!

If you haven't already got a copy of the 2010 guide (or even one for your neighbours), just phone Christine on 0191 233 0220 for a free copy or download one from the website at <http://www.elderscouncil.org.uk/publications/>

Learning and Culture Working Group

This group's activities are based on our members' experiences and interests – creative, social, mental and physical – which we believe can contribute to the wellbeing of all older people.

Are you interested in ensuring that older people in Newcastle:

- have something interesting and stimulating to do? – a continuing hobby or craft, a chosen study or a physical activity?
- take on a new challenge that will take people out of themselves and perhaps discover new talents they didn't know they had?
- have opportunities to work with others on these, making friends and enjoying their company?
- contribute to joint efforts and get something back in return?

Then this is the group for you.

Our aim is to promote activities which will offer these kinds of fulfilling experiences to the wider community of older people by:

- keeping a constant watch on what is offered by local agencies in the city, looking at range, costs, suitability of venues, etc.;
- establishing contacts with all relevant bodies to increase what's available;

Working Groups – cont -

- offering advice to providers through local, regional and national conferences and consultations;
- developing links with local libraries, theatres, art galleries, museums – and anyone else who can help;
- initiating our own projects (e.g., exhibitions, publications, activity days – and possibly things we haven't thought of yet but you might!).

Our bi-monthly meetings at MEA House are open to all Elders Council members. To find out the dates, ring Christine Richards in our office on 233 0200 or email christine.richards@qualityoflife.org.uk and come along. You will receive a warm welcome. If you have specialist knowledge or relevant contacts, these will be very useful, but being willing to get involved and joining in is just as important. Come and see.

Get involved

Wordsmiths wanted!

Have you ever thought about how our ways of communication have changed: from handwritten letters to skyping in just a few decades? Do people know how to write letters any more?

We'd like to invite you to join us in a project where we link two groups (older and younger) together as pen pals. Through letters, postcards, emails and texts, we'd share stories and events in our lives, and imagine letter-writers of the past in a fun and imaginative look at communications over the years.

We will be meeting on Tuesday mornings at MEA House starting on 14th September, and hope to have a display of the results in the Central Library later in the Autumn.

There will be eight sessions on Tuesday mornings from 10.30 am to 12.30 pm at MEA House: 14, 21, 28 September; 5, 12, 26 October; 2 and 9 November. (NB: no session on 19th October.)

If you would like to sign up for this project, it is important that you are available for all (or most) of the sessions. If you are interested, please let us know now: call Christine Richards on 233 0200 or email christine.richards@qualityoflife.org.uk to book a place.

Get involved

Fabric of Life

Northern Seams is a Community Interest Company providing textile arts and crafts for people who use day services and receive a personal budget. They are using a grant from the Big Lottery to run a project called the Fabric of Life. People over 60 can come to a series of four free workshops and make themselves a gorgeous textile memory book to treasure as a keepsake.

Participants will be encouraged to talk about good things that have happened in their lives and record them in a handmade book. Two artists will support them by showing how to make and embellish the book cover. Next, pages will be created using your heat-transferred photos and text on to fabric.

The books (or photos of the books) that are made will be part of a touring exhibition around the North East's galleries and libraries.

Here is a sample made by Hazel from Durham. It consists of a handmade felt cover and pages with memories heat-transferred which have been then been hand-stitched.



The next four-week course for people over 60 will start on Wednesday 8 September, 10am till 12 noon. It will take place at Brickworks, Studio 10, Hannington Street, Byker, NE6 1JT.

To book your place, email info@northernseams.co.uk or ring Omi on 07940104093.

Visit our website

www.northernseams.co.uk .

Listen to our stories: a project for older LGBT people

Pen and Tonic would like to find out if you would be interested in being involved in a reminiscing project. They want to hold different workshops which will include reminiscing, creating life-story books, episode writing (snapshot stories), making life posters and creating artwork and books about shared memories.

Pen and Tonic would also like to hear from staff/volunteers who work with LGBT people. Would you be interested in supporting the project? In return, you will learn new skills and see how reminiscing can have positive benefits for health and well-being.

If you have an interest as a participant or staff/volunteer already supporting a group OR you're able to offer us a room to run workshops in, then please email:

penandtonic@btinternet.com (website: www.penandtonic.org).

Get involved

Ouseburn Valley Volunteers



Ouseburn Valley Volunteers involves volunteers in a range of activities within arts, culture and heritage organisations in the Ouseburn Valley and across the centre of Newcastle. Volunteering roles are tailored to the needs and aspirations of individuals and host organisations.

Living Archives volunteers invite people with memories of the local area to share stories and reminiscences about the Ouseburn

Valley to add to the growing collection of anecdotes. Photographs of Ouseburn Valley through the ages would also be welcomed by the Archivist volunteers. With consent, copies are made of the photographs and they are added to the archive.

There are also regular summer walks and winter talks in the Valley and, if you're kitted out with sturdy shoes and a hard hat, you are welcome to join one of the Victoria Tunnel tours.

Ouseburn Trust's Street Stars project is a community participation initiative to link together communities that live, work, play and learn in the Ouseburn Valley. Street Stars ensures that the community is involved in local decision-making processes, representing the views of local people.



Victoria Tunnel Tour

Please visit their Welcome Centre at 55 Lime Street to find out more about local activities and events, to use the space for a meeting or to access the internet. Street Stars would value the ideas and input of Elders Council members to ensure that older people are actively included in Ouseburn Valley plans.

For all volunteering enquiries, please contact Colette Harrison, Ouseburn Valley Volunteers Coordinator: 0191 261 6596 or colette.harrison@ouseburntrust.org.uk

Get involved

Arthritis Care: can we help or can you help us

Arthritis Care is the largest arthritis charity in the UK working with and for people with arthritis, their carers and families. Our aim is to offer people the information and support that they need to make choices and reach their potential as full members of an inclusive society.

To do this, we need your help. We have approximately 7,000 volunteers in the whole of the UK but they are spread thinly where they are most needed. Volunteers can take on lots of roles. They can:

- supply information points with literature;
- lead self-management training courses;
- give talks about arthritis and what our charity can do to help;
- campaign about issues that affect people with disabilities;
- fundraise to keep the charity going;
- help in local support groups.

Local support groups offer a monthly meeting where people can get together with others with similar problems. The groups offer a social life with entertainment, outings, sometimes even a group holiday. They also have visiting speakers who may cover a range of topics. Transport is sometimes provided at a small charge. The group is led by a committee of volunteers and there is usually a chair, vice-chair, secretary and treasurer. It is often found that people love to attend a group but do not feel capable of helping to run it.

Can you help? For more information, please contact Marilyn on 0191 420 3875 or e mail her on marilyn@arthritiscare.org.uk .

Study on computer use and memory

A researcher from the University of Northumbria is looking for adults aged 65-75 to take part in a three-session study on computer use and memory. Technical knowledge is not required to take part, although familiarity with computer systems is necessary. Participants must be able to attend all three sessions (dates to be arranged individually). Participants will be asked to remember a number of images across the three sessions and will be asked questions regarding their computer use. Participants will be given a total of £30 upon the completion of the study to compensate for time, travel expenses, etc. If you want to help, please contact James Nicholson at james.nicholson@northumbria.ac.uk or on 0191 227 3723.

(Editor's note: I'm taking part in this study and it's interesting – nothing to be frightened of, anyway!)

Get involved

How would you like to have £100 of shopping vouchers to spend?

The University of Newcastle is mounting a study investigating a new food supplement which has been designed to improve muscle mass and strength in older people. They will be looking to see if the supplement helps in these areas.

To participate in the study you will need to be:

- aged 65 years or over;
- willing to take the supplement each day for 13 or 26 weeks;
- willing to provide small blood samples, have your strength and body composition measured, and complete questionnaires about your health and diet.

If you're taken on to the study, you'll get travel costs and at the end you'll get vouchers to the value of £100 (or £80 for 13 weeks).

If you are interested in taking part, or you would like further information, please e-mail Provide@ncl.ac.uk or contact **Lee Munro** on 0191 222 3592.

Information

Health Checks for Older People



Thank you to the 151 members who returned a questionnaire on this topic circulated with the last Newsletter. You will be interested to know that in reply to the question whether people over 75 should have a right to an annual health check, 97% of respondents said **YES**.

There were also many other comments especially about free dental checks and access to chiropody services. We also have hundreds of suggestions about many other ways of keeping healthy in later years that don't just rely on medical checks – keeping active and having a health diet being top of the list.

We shall be summarising all these points so we can put them forward to service providers when there are discussions about preventive services.

Information

Driving Test for over-70s



Eunice Gent at the wheel!

The road-safety charity Brake says that over-70s should have to retake their driving tests and is therefore calling for annual 'fit to drive' health-checks.

The demand from Brake for 'controls' on older drivers comes following the death of an 18-month-old boy, killed on the pavement by an 89-year-old driver in Accrington earlier this year. It is thought that the driver lost control of his car after he became ill at the wheel.

So what does the current law state? Currently, the law only requires the over-70s to renew their licence and complete a self-assessment form declaring themselves safe to drive every three years.

According to Brake deputy chief executive Cathy Keeler, this isn't good enough, and over-70s should be forced to take 'an annual fit-to-drive health-check carried out by a professional'.

In fact, Brake feels that more concern should be taken over driver health generally. Keeler says: 'These checks should also be required every five years for drivers under the age of 70, as health can deteriorate at any age. More frequent checks are needed for older drivers as there are known health risks associated with ageing that directly affect driving ability.' These risks include loss of eyesight and hearing, as well as heart conditions and medication that may impair driving. 'Drivers who have a high risk of heart attack or fainting fits must not be allowed behind the wheel,' says Keeler.

Going even further, Brake is calling for a government consultation to consider a maximum driving age and regular re-testing, in addition to the above measures.

What do members of the Elders Council think? Please tell us.

Information

Single Point of Access Rehabilitation and Intermediate Care Service

Self Referral – Information for patients, families and carers

Who are they?

They are single access point for Rehabilitation and Intermediate Care services in Newcastle. They aim to help people to remain in their own home and attain the best possible quality of life and maintain independent living.

Who makes up the team?

- Nurse Practitioners
- Specialist Nurses
- Occupational Therapists
- Secretary

What do they do?

They assess patients who are having difficulties day to day at home including physical health issues, mobility problems, falls and general difficulties in managing daily activities.

Who can refer to them?

They operate an open access referral system. Referrals are welcomed from patients, carers and relatives as well as all health and social care professionals. They can be contacted 8.00am till 5.00pm, Monday to Friday by telephoning 0191 256 3869 or via email RICS.SPA@nhs.net

What will happen once you have contacted them?

An assessor will contact you by telephone and may visit you at home to gather information, if necessary. Following this you may be referred to an alternative service for further assessment and treatment/input.

Is my information kept confidential?

Everyone who works for the NHS has a duty of care to keep information confidential. Occasionally they may need to share your information outside of the team with other organisations and services.

Contact:

Elderly Management Offices, Rear of Diabetes Centre, Newcastle General Hospital, Westgate Road, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 6BE
Tel. 0191 256 3869 Fax. 0191 219 5050

To make a comment, complaint or compliment please contact:

Rehabilitation Nurse Practitioner, NHS Newcastle and North Tyneside, Community Health, Elderly Management Offices, Newcastle General Hospital, Westgate Road, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE4 6BE. Tel. 0191 256 3869

Things to do ...

Make a difference – join the NHS Foundation Trust!

Our local NHS Foundation Trust provides a wide range of mental health, disability and substance misuse services. The Trust would like to give local people more say in the management and development of the services they provide. To help achieve this, they are asking for people to become members of the Trust.

As a member you can:

- receive regular information about the Trust;
- give your views on their plans and how they can make things better;
- get involved, if you wish, in issues that interest you;
- elect people to the Council of Governors, which will help run the Trust;
- stand as a Governor yourself.

Anyone living in Northumberland and Tyne and Wear can join. It doesn't cost anything and you can be involved as much or as little as you want.

To find out more, you can visit the website www.ntw.nhs.uk or contact the membership office on freephone 0800 023 2511 (24 hour answerphone).

How about putting your name forward to represent the Elders Council?

*** Active Ageing News ***

News Flash

The Government has announced that it will no longer fund local councils to provide free swimming for under-16s and the over-60s.

But Newcastle City Council has said that it will ensure that free swimming sessions can continue in swimming pools across the city.

A new programme of free swimming sessions for the under-18s and over-60s will be available at all Council-run pools. Details will be published soon on the Active Newcastle website www.activenewcastle.co.uk

Active Newcastle launches a new 50+ micro-site!

Active 50 plus



To find out more about activities for over 50's visit the Active Newcastle 50 Plus Microsite.



For more info on activities near you visit www.activenewcastle.co.uk

This is new and easy to use website has just launched a dedicated section for people aged 50+ wanting to become more active in Newcastle.

This site provides you with information about the range of venues, how to get there and what is involved in different activities all within a few clicks of your mouse. You can also watch short videos with the stories of people leading an active lifestyle across the city.

The new section includes information on Walking, Swimming, Cycling, Dancing plus so much more!

To have a look for yourself go to www.activenewcastle.co.uk

Fun in the sun with John Grundy!

Come and join us for some outdoor fun on **Wednesday 4th August**, 1 - 3 pm, when the Elders Council are taking over Heaton Park.

Joining them will be a variety of friends providing you with the chance to try bowls, tai chi, Nordic walking and supplying a delicious range of healthy foods and cakes. The multi-talented John Grundy will also be on hand to open the event and lead a very special history walk around the park grounds. *(See pg. 5 for further details)*

For more information please contact Elders Council on 0191 233 0200.

*** Active Ageing News ***

'On Yer Bike' returns with a twist!

The much-loved cycling programme returns for 2010, with a few notable additions – new venues, new times and new sessions.

Beginners' Cycling Programme (for people who have never cycled):

| 4 week Programme: | Venue | Day | Time |
|---|----------------------------|------------|-------------|
| 50 Plus - starts 23 rd July | Exhibition Park | Friday | 10.30–12.00 |
| Mixed Adults - starts 27 th July | Blakelaw Recreation Ground | Tuesday | 10.30–12.00 |
| Mixed Adults - starts 28 th July | Exhibition Park | Wednesday | 2.30–4.00 |

Refreshers' Cycling Programme (for people who are returning to cycling):

| 4 week Programme: | Venue | Day | Time |
|---|----------------------------|------------|---------------|
| 50 Plus - starts 20 th August | Exhibition Park | Friday | 10.30 – 12.00 |
| Mixed Adults - starts 24 th August | Blakelaw Recreation Ground | Tuesday | 10.30 – 12.00 |
| Mixed Adults - starts 25 th August | Exhibition Park | Wednesday | 2.30 – 4.00 |

Weekly Social Cycling (for people who want to practise their cycling with like-minded others):

| Venue | Day | Time |
|------------------------------|------------|---------------|
| Ouseburn Regeneration Centre | Friday | 10.30 – 12.00 |

Pricing: The cost of each session per person is £3.00 payable to the instructor at each venue. (This contributes towards the cost of bike hire, all the relevant safety equipment and tuition from two qualified cycling instructors).

For more information, please contact Steve Lynn (Cycle Trex Ltd) on 0783 357 3191 (9am to 5pm) or email him at steve@cycletrex.com

Things to do ...

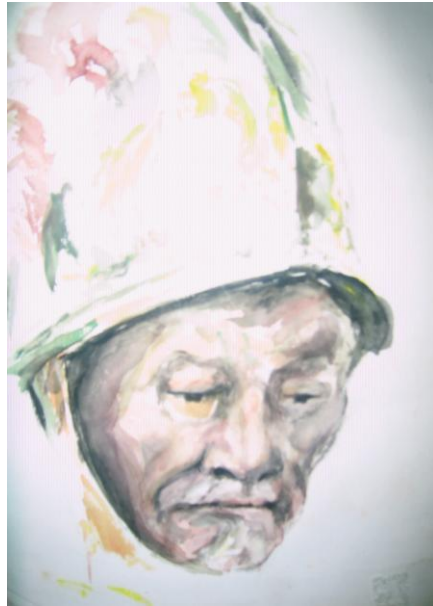
Have you got something for our Gadgies Gallery?

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.

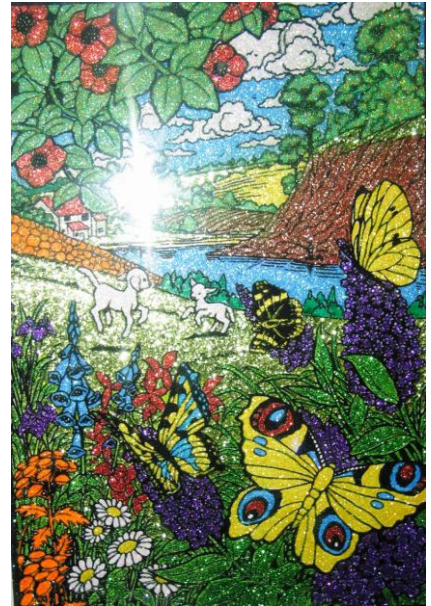
Some of the current contributions displayed:



Gadgies Gallery Banner produced by June Thexton



Pastel drawing by Alan Robinson



Glitter design by Noah Shanks



Display of silk painting by June Thexton

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

Dear Editors,

Fawltly Thinking

The introduction of the Employment Equality (Age) Regulations in 2006 was, of course, a very welcome step in countering the age bias that has always been so much part of our society's thinking. The new law did, however, contain one stupidity: the default retirement age at 65. This makes it perfectly legal for people to be forced to retire at 65, whether or nor they want to do so and reaffirms the very bias that the legislation was intended to outlaw, namely that age alone, rather than work performance, is a valid criterion.

It is therefore heartening that the newly elected coalition Government has announced that it will be looking at ways of abolishing the default retirement age. However, as in all human matters, there will be a plus side but also a minus side to allowing people to decide how long they want to go on working.

People retire for all sorts of different reasons, something that does not seem to be very widely appreciated. There are probably three important factors: health (their own or their partner's); finance; and the enjoyment/satisfaction (or not) derived from working. For work requiring strenuous physical effort, health may be the prime determining factor. However, it is an ageist myth that mental ability diminishes with age. While older people may think more slowly, they are just as

capable as younger people of dealing with situations that require complex thinking. Similarly, they are equally capable of acquiring new skills and knowledge, even though, again, their rate of learning may be somewhat slower.

Then we come to finance. With the continuing attack on occupational pension schemes, people are sure to feel that they need to go on working longer in order to accrue a sufficient pension. The abolition of the default retirement age will be very helpful in that respect. The down side is that, if fewer people retire, so also will there be a smaller number of jobs available to younger people, especially, as is likely, in the coming period of a shrinking job market. A partial solution might be considerably expanding the possibility to take up part-time working.

Finally, the satisfaction people get from working covers a very wide range from utter boredom to the 'workaholic'. While those at the bored end of the scale no doubt regard retirement as a merciful release, others have long-held plans as to what they will do or look forward to a period of trying out something entirely new. However, the common assumption is that retirement is all about 'rest and relaxation', which, of course, is yet another myth. In fact, as the Elders' Council never tires of pointing out, older people can be a huge resource to the community. Where, for example, would working parents be without the childcare support of willing grandparents?

Correspondence – cont. -

So, the sooner we get rid of the default retirement age the better. This will allow people to decide how long they want to go on working and make job performance the only thing that matters. And by the same token why should people be barred from getting travel insurance just because they are

over 80, irrespective of their medical history? So while the Government is about it, what about a widening of the anti- discrimination laws to include services and goods?

Yours truly
Norvell



Dear Editors

I think the Elders Council logo is too close for comfort to the drug-referencing leaf logo for all things alternative. I appreciate all the hard work people do and I look forward to the information you disseminate but that leaf should go!

Yours truly
John Anderson



Editors' note: What do other readers think?

Dear Editors

As you know, the banks are proposing to stop supplying cheques. I myself, and many people who are elderly, depend on the cheque system to handle our finances. It is important to all of us that we are able to do this.

Not everyone has a computer, nor do we shop online. We want to be independent as long as this is possible. Also, we want to keep our brains working.



I think that most of us have our pensions paid into a bank account and we are issued with a PIN; we do not want to use this in place of cheques, as fraud is prevalent. So I hope that the Elders Council, on behalf of us pensioners, can perhaps consult with the banks on this problem, which needs to be addressed.

Yours truly
Elizabeth Buchan

Poetry

Imagine

Imagine a world free from war, poverty, famine and greed.
Enough food for everyone's needs.

Imagine peace, no quarrels or strife, a tranquil earth, everything in harmony.
A utopian life.

We all have dreams, wishes and ideas, which can spark imagination.
No harm wishing for a future along those lines.

Imagine is a world that lets your mind roam, near or far.
One day in the future, across the divide we all might live harmoniously side by side.

C. M. Hogg

Life Moves On

While Spring passes into Summer
Through blossom is its way to cover
Trees will hide a secret world
Until blossom is then 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 heavy shower

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

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

John Reid

Newsletter Information

Newsletter Articles



If you would like to submit an article to be considered for the September 2010 edition of the Newsletter, will you please ensure that you forward it before Wednesday 4 August. (Contact details on page 1).

Newsletter in other formats

We can make our Newsletter available in alternative formats (e.g. in **larger print** or audio tape).



**To request information please contact the office
(details on page 1)**

Electronic Version of the Newsletter

It costs about 50p per member to send out this newsletter, so would you be willing to have the newsletter sent to you electronically? If you would, it would save a lot of money every year. So please sign up for this service now by emailing anne.richardson@qualityoflife.org.uk, please put "E-mail newsletter" in the subject box.

Advantages to signing up for this service includes receiving the Newsletter at least 14 days sooner than you would normally receive it via the post; getting earlier notice of events happening throughout the city and seeing the various images in colour.

What are you waiting for?



Gift Aid

As you know from what we said in the previous newsletter, the Elders Council grant this year was not increased by as much as we had hoped. So we need to depend more heavily upon voluntary contributions from our members.

Gift Aid is the easiest way to increase donations to the Elders Council by nearly a third at no cost to you (in fact, if you're a higher-rate taxpayer, you can even claim something back).

What is Gift Aid?

Gift Aid is a tax relief that is allowed on any money that you donate to the Elders Council. The government treat your charity donations as though you have already deducted basic tax from them, which in turn means that we can reclaim this. So we get the benefit and you lose nothing: the extra comes from the government.

How does Gift Aid Work?

Gift Aid can apply to one-off donations, or those over a specific period. It can even be backdated for up to six years.

Higher-rate taxpayers are eligible to reclaim 25p from the taxman for every £1 donated to charity by including details of their donations on their Self Assessment form. This rebate can be donated directly to the Elders Council on the same form and, if you so choose, it can be increased further through Gift Aid.

How can I use Gift aid?

If you would like any future donation to the Elders Council to apply for Gift Aid, please contact Matthew Phillips for a Gift Aid Declaration Form: 0191 255 1980.

PLEASE HELP THE ELDERS COUNCIL TO CONTINUE ITS WORK

I wish to donate £5 [] £10 [] £25 [] Other [£] to the Elders Council of Newcastle and enclose a cheque for that amount. Please send me a gift aid form.

Name: _____

Address: _____
