



The Elders Council of Newcastle

Older People working for Older People

November 2010 - Issue 38

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

When GOPA met EC

Was this a new blockbuster film arriving in the city or another modern art collection at the Baltic? Unsurprisingly, it was neither but it was an important event.

On 7 October, the Board members of Gateshead Older People's Assembly (GOPA) met the Board members of the Elders Council (EC) (*see photo below*). So important was the event that even the sun shone throughout; which was fortunate as each group walked from their side of the Gateshead Millennium Bridge for a symbolic handshake at the centre. The Lord Mayor and the Lady Mayoress of Newcastle and the Mayor of Gateshead were the invited guests of both Boards. As a special bonus, the two chairs of the Boards were also given the immense privilege of opening the bridge to allow a boat through.



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

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



When GOPA met the Elders Council - cont -

Apart from the photo opportunity of handshakes at the bridge with the first citizens of city and town in attendance, there were other sound reasons for this meeting. Both groups share the view of ensuring that the voice of older people is heard and that action is taken when evidence is presented that will enhance lives.



Pictured: Lord Mayor of Newcastle Brenda Hindmarsh; Esther Ward, Chair of GOPA; Mary Nicholls, Chair of Elders Council; and Mayor of Gateshead Michael Hood

After a shared lunch, we did some sharing of ideas where we believe we can work together as an even stronger voice from both sides of the river. You won't be surprised that, even with such a relatively short meeting, there are now four pages of ideas to sift through!

Some members were interested in developing combined visits for members to museums, art galleries; or more social activities for older people confined mainly to home; and definitely more joint working. We also spent some time focusing on community safety as this is something that worries many older people. As well as this, there was an interest in working with younger people known in jargon speech as "inter-generational work".

A small group of the EC Board are getting together to have a first attempt at looking at this long list of ideas and perhaps having two or three possible ideas from it that we can take to GOPA to begin to work on together. If you are interested in this and would like to take part in working with our friends and colleagues "across the water", please do contact us. It's still a bit vague at present so your thoughts will be very much valued.

Working Group Updates

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

The future of the NHS continues to be a major concern. After our debate on the proposals in the white paper “Equality and Excellence, Liberating the NHS” (summarised in the last issue of the Newsletter), comments were forwarded from the Elders Council. Our main concerns are that the proposed changes in the structure of services (e.g. phasing out of PCTs and Strategic Health Authorities) will widen the gaps between services rather than bring them closer together.

- The proposed National Commissioning Board for GPs, dentists, opticians and pharmacies will not be aware of local needs for these services.
- The consortiums of GPs taking on the duty of commissioning services must involve patients in their decisions, and open up their activities to public scrutiny.
- The promotion of public health, preventing ill health and reducing inequalities depends on working in partnership, which may be inhibited by the proposed changes in the structure of services.
- The proposed changes will result in competition between services rather than working in collaboration; e.g., GP consortiums may be in competition with each other, and hospital trusts, private and voluntary agencies may be in competition to win commissions for their services.

So we now await the government’s response to the results of the consultation. And the next thing will be a report from the commission enquiring into the funding of social care. (Copies of the full comments are available from Elders Council office).

Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment is currently a topic for consultation, and was discussed at a meeting with representatives from NHS North of Tyne. This is all about the extended role of pharmacies in providing advice about health, convenient opening hours, and meeting local needs. Members of the Working Group are completing questionnaires about pharmacies in their neighbourhoods and are contributing their views about the importance of these services in each locality.

NOTE – This is an example of consultation by PCTs about their local services as part of their role in “patient and public involvement”, which will not be possible in the same way when they are abolished.

Readers interested in any of these topics are invited to contact the co-ordinator, Vera Bolter, Elders Council (contact details on the front of this newsletter).

Working Group Updates

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.

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

Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods Working Group

This lively group has played an important role in helping to gather older people's views on what makes an age-friendly city. We helped with the planning for the Elders Council AGM. We reviewed the feedback from members who attended the workshop on 9 June. This information was then used to present older people's views to a workshop on 'Newcastle – an age-friendly city', which was held by the Older People's Strategic Board on 23 September. Several Elders Council members attended this workshop and we look forward to hearing about the ideas and actions which emerged from the joint discussion between older people and agencies. These will form the work-plan for the Older People's Strategic Board and all the partners involved, including the Elders Council. This may all sound rather tortuous, but it does show how we incorporate the things you tell us about your neighbourhood into discussions with a range of agencies, in the hope that together we can achieve changes and improvements.

The last few months have been a busy time for people interested in housing and older people. We have discussed the Older People's Housing Strategy. Many of us have taken part in focus groups and responded to questionnaires as part of the Older People's Housing Impact Assessment being conducted by Peter Fletcher Associates. Others have participated in the First Stop exemplar project which aims to improve the ways in which older people access information about their housing choices. Most recently, we have also participated in discussions about changes to the Allocations and Lettings Policy. We have also kept up to date on national work on housing and older people through the work of the Housing and Ageing Alliance and HAPPI panel, thanks to the commitment of Vera Bolter.

Working Group Updates

Older Person Friendly City Working Group

Shopping:

Over the past year or so we have carried out surveys of the larger supermarkets, neighbourhood and discount stores, and city centre supermarkets. We have been using a checklist of facilities that the readers of this Newsletter told us were important to you when doing basic food shopping. We started with a list of the 'older person friendly' amenities, observed on a visit to the Kaiser store in Berlin, which has led the way in introducing features to make shopping easier for older people. But you had told us in your responses to our questionnaire of other things that mattered to you, such as delivery services and pricing policies. After completing our surveys, we are now in a position to draw some conclusions about which stores come closest – or are farthest away – from meeting our requirements. Amongst our recommendations will be:

- Toilets should be available in every store.
- Reduced prices for single items rather than multiple buys, to benefit smaller households.
- Seats are needed, especially near the door if waiting for transport.
- Delivery service for goods purchased in the store (as well as goods ordered on line).
- Baskets and trolleys in different sizes and the latter easy to steer.



But we still have some QUESTIONS TO YOU, OUR READERS.

1. Do you have any comments on the above recommendations and/or anything you want to add?
2. Do you think that the Elders Council should give a SEAL OF APPROVAL to stores with good facilities?

Working Group Updates

Older Person Friendly City Working Group – cont -

Outdoor Exercise Equipment:

In the last issue, we gave an account of our successful 'Fun in the Sun' day in Heaton Park. During this event we collected some views from those attending about whether they would like to see this type of equipment in parks and, most important, whether they would use it. We were able to show only pictures of the equipment, although this included photographs of some of our members enjoying it in other places. Twenty-nine people filled in our questionnaire, and of these 28 said that they supported having this type of equipment and WOULD USE IT, either on their own, or with a group, or as part of a training programme. The gift voucher for returning a questionnaire was won by Pauline Robson, who commented: "An



excellent idea if placed beside activities for children, thus encouraging family pleasure/activity".

So what next? We'd like to test out some equipment for REAL – and get everyone to think how it could be used to encourage more outdoor exercise by adults, including older people. *(Pictured testing out equipment: Henry Lenthall above; Vera Bolter left).*

The Working Group is always pleased to hear from readers on any of the above topics and can be contacted via the Co-ordinator Vera Bolter on 233 0200.



Creative Learning and Leisure Working Group

This group used to be known as the Learning and Culture Group. Its change of name is due a wish to include a more active element in its title ("creative") and lose what some people have felt to be the rather ambiguous nature of "culture". So it's now CLL!

In September, we heard from a researcher, Bruce Davenport, on the Tyne and Wear Museums Project about recent evidence that active learning in older people does help to prolong a good quality of longer life. We now have three pages of references about the value of such things as arts and singing to follow up. This should help one of our

Working Group Updates

Creative Learning and Leisure Working Group – cont -

aims: to find evidence of the value of learning in older life in order to convince the purse-holders of funding that organisations which promote it are worthy of support.

We shall also be resuming, together with the Outreach Group and the Quality of Life Partnership, our work on stimulating the setting up of local groups around Newcastle. One of the ways we have been working on for this is the preparation of an advice booklet, which is now ready for testing in a pilot form in one or two localities.

By the time this issue of the EC Newsletter is published, we shall have congratulated the Workers Educational Association (WEA) at a celebration on October 29 at Newcastle University on the centenary of its foundation. The meeting included journalist Melissa Benn's thoughts on "Education, Democracy and Social Justice".

We have also had the pleasure of wishing Happy 90th Birthday to one of CLL Group's members, Clare Glaholm – a real proof of the value of continuing active learning.

Transport and Highways Working Group

Hospital Access

The Transport Working Group has been liaising with The Newcastle Hospital Trust and Nexus regarding changes under way at the RVI and Freeman Hospitals and a number of points have emerged which may be of interest to members.

Royal Victoria Infirmary (RVI)

The new Victoria Wing and the Great North Children's Hospital will provide a new heart to the RVI site in the same way as the famous Peacock Hall did in 1906. It will link (via a six-storey atrium) to the Leazes Wing, Claremont Wing (Eye Department) and the multi-storey car-park.

Access for pedestrians and vehicles is being improved throughout with a new walk-way running from Queen Victoria Road right through to the Leazes Wing entrance, a new main entrance on Queen Victoria Road, new car-parks and a new route on to Richardson Road for ambulances.

The new Victoria Wing is nearly completed and the access will be via the new main entrance at the left of the children's ward on Queen Victoria Road. This is due to be ready at the beginning of November 2010. It is expected that the move of Accident and Emergency services (A&E) from the General Hospital to the RVI will take place at the end of November 2010.

Working Group Updates

Transport and Highways Working Group – cont -

Currently, there are bus-stops on Richardson Road at the Leazes Wing and the nearest stop to the new main entrance is on St Thomas Street. However, requests for changes have been put to Nexus – in particular, the possibility of re-routing some services to provide a stop on Queen Victoria Road near the new entrance.

Freeman Hospital

It is worth noting that the nearest Metro station to the Freeman Hospital is, in fact, Longbenton Metro station. There is a path to the hospital from the station. For car-users, a revised paid parking system is now in place and the situation has improved.

Regarding buses: at the moment, all buses stop outside the hospital on Freeman Road, which leaves quite a long walk to the hospital. The possibility of some (or all) of the bus services being re-routed through part of the hospital grounds is being looked at. However, buses cannot be allowed to use the road immediately outside the hospital building because of obstruction to emergency services. Some sort of improvement might be possible but it is emphasised, it is only a possibility at this stage. We will keep you informed.

Information

Accident and Emergency is moving ...

From midnight on 16th/17th November 2010, Newcastle's Emergency Department will move from Newcastle General Hospital to a brand new, specialist Department at the:



The Royal Victoria Infirmary (RVI)

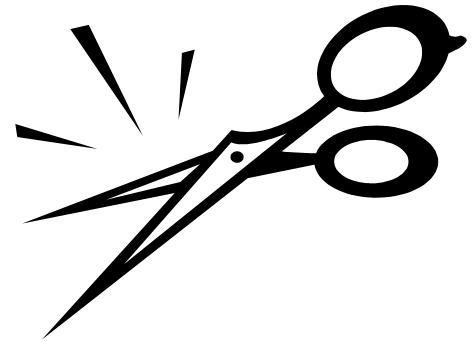
The new Emergency Department will continue to be run by a highly skilled team, with emergency care consultants, nursing and support staff providing important specialist care to patients in an emergency.

It is easy to reach and conveniently located at Richardson Road.

Information

How will the cuts affect us?

The Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) on 20 October was, as far as older people are concerned, a bit like the curate's egg: good in parts (or, at least, not as bad as some people expected).



Social care

The Chancellor said that there would be an extra £2bn of funding for social care, £1bn of which is to come from the NHS; BUT some local councils are already saying that this will not cover the cuts that they are going to make to their adult services budgets. And, of course, we will need to see what comes out of the care review later in the year. Age UK has stated that, given the 26% government funding cut that councils face and the rising needs represented by an ageing population, they expect that spending on care will **fall** modestly in real terms over the next four years, “but it could have been far worse”.

Universal benefits

The full range of universal benefits for older people has been retained, including free eye tests, free prescription charges, free bus passes, free TV licences for those over 75, and the Winter Fuel Payment. The temporary increase in the Cold Weather Payment last year will now be made permanent.

Pensions

The Chancellor mentioned again that the government will restore the link between the basic state pension and earnings from April 2011. From now on, your state pension will rise by the highest of prices, earnings, or 2.5%. The fact that the measure for prices gives a lower increase than before will adversely affect those on index-linked pensions (civil servants, local-government officers and others).

And the Chancellor announced that the State Pension Age for both men and women will rise to 66 by 2020 – six years earlier than planned. This will particularly affect women workers, as it means that the rate of increase of the female state pension age (to equalise it with men at 65) will now be faster than planned. And the rise in the State Pension Age will hit the poorest hardest, as it will shorten the retirements of those living in areas with lower life-expectancy.

(We acknowledge with thanks the help given by the Age UK website in the writing of the above.)

Reports – Health and Care

Disability North Exhibition (DNEX) at Metro Arena 20-21 October

A member of our Board of Trustees writes:

“Once again I went to this well-attended exhibition of aids for people with disabilities. These aids are the very latest in manufactured, ready-to-use items and facilities for caring at home. I saw on-site bathing apparatus, universally adjustable to suit all needs of access for a disabled person and allowing privacy in its use, and peace of mind to a carer. On site were tilting baths, orthopaedic beds, tilting electric reclining chairs, various aids to allow a person to transfer from a wheelchair to a bed in safety – all giving independence and a raised self-esteem to a disabled person, which is most important for them. There was a wide range of equipment for deaf and hard-of-hearing people, reading aids for visually impaired people and much more.”

Find out more about care and support in Newcastle?

Newcastle City Council wants to help people to live as independently as possible within their community, and to have a wide range of information about the different choices available to support them to do this. The My Care Newcastle website – www.mycarenewcastle.org.uk – has been created to provide this information and, in particular, advice on care and support for adults in the city. Whether you are looking for information for yourself, or for someone you look after or are friends with, the website should point you in the right direction. The site is brand new and has been developed in conjunction with people of all ages across the city, including members of the Elders Council, to make sure that it meets their needs. Why not check it out for yourself? There's even an option on the site to tell the City Council what you think of it, so that they can make changes to ensure that it is as good as it can be!



Quote from the website trialling sessions held in October: *'It's absolutely wonderful, just what I'm looking for.'*

What do you think about your health and care services?



Newcastle LINK (Local Involvement Network) gives everyone a say about their health and adult social care services. It's a great way to share information and talk about the issues that affect YOU.

Newcastle LINK is free to join and you'll receive newsletters and information about activities and events. There are lots of ways of

Reports – Health and Care

What do you think about your health and care services? – cont -

being 'hands-on', for example, taking part in surveys and task groups or even training to become an 'enter and view' visitor. How much time you give to Newcastle LINK is entirely up to you.

This is your chance to let the people who plan and deliver your health and social care services know what you want. Why not become a part of the LINK and have your say?

For more information email the LINK Project Manager at craigduerden@cvsnewcastle.org.uk or contact the LINK Support Team at findoutmore@newcastlelink.org.uk, call us free on **0800 756 9526**, or visit the website at www.newcastlelink.org.uk, where you can also download a membership form.

Newcastle LINK is supported by Newcastle Council for Voluntary Service and Community Action on Health.

LINK and the Elders Council

Mary Nicholls, the Chair of the Elders Council, represents us on the Board of Trustees for the Newcastle LINK, which, she says, all sounds very grand but really isn't.

What it does mean is that she tries to make sure that, whatever subject is being discussed at LINK, she approaches it from the point of view of the older people in the city. If she thinks that that view has been missed, she speaks up.

A good example of what LINK can do concerns medication for people with Parkinson's Disease, mainly a disease of older people. Hospital in-patients with Parkinson's were not able to get their prescribed medication for Parkinson's at the correct time, which often made their symptoms worse. The problem was brought to the Newcastle LINK and the Newcastle upon Tyne Hospital Trust; it was identified as an area for further action. As a result, the specialist Parkinson's nurses worked with ward managers to ensure that they were aware of the nature of the treatment. There are plans too to train medical students, nursing staff, doctors and pharmacists about this particular management.

If you have issues you want to raise regarding health or adult social care services, LINK may be the right place to go. You can contact them on 0800 756 9528 and through email at findoutmore@newcastlelink.org.uk. There is also a website: www.newcastlelink.org.uk.

If you would like Mary to raise an issue which you think affects older people in general, please ring the Elders Council office number: 0191 233 0200 and leave a message for her.

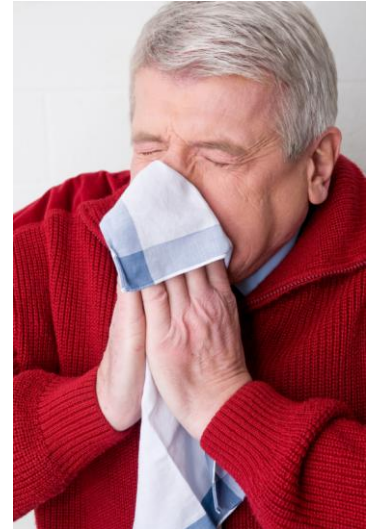
Reports – Health and Care

Have you had your flu jab this year?

IF NOT, WE STRONGLY ADVISE YOU TO GO TO YOUR GP AND GET IT DONE.

And what about preparing for winter by getting your pneumo jab?

Experts at the Health Protection Agency in the North East are urging the over-65s to protect themselves from pneumonia, meningitis and other infections caused by invasive pneumococcal disease (IPD) by having the pneumococcal polysaccharide vaccine (PPV), which is also known as the pneumo jab. Remember: except for a few special individuals, one jab lasts a lifetime. Have you had yours?



Where can I find out more about IPD and the vaccine?

For more information on IPD, visit the Health Protection Agency's website (www.hpa.org.uk). For more information about the vaccine, visit NHS Choices (www.nhs.uk).

Young designers look at older people's needs

Four students of design met five Elders Council members at MEA House in October to discuss their designs for equipment which could make life easier for older people.

Stephen had a sketch of a fully functional mobile three-wheeled gadget which an older person can use to move around the garden or house, and included a storage compartment to store garden tools or other appliances. This resulted in a discussion of the merits of three and four wheels, and the advantages and disadvantages of equipment which is already available. Daniel wanted to design a kitchen board on which everything could be stored ready to hand. Jane and Rachel were interested in whether older people like living in age-limited or mixed residential housing.



We hope that the students came away with some insights into what it is like to be old, and what the little things are that help people (young as well as old) to be independent and active. It was encouraging to find that young design students are concerned to give practical help, and that we can help each other across the gap of years.

Reports – Health and Care

Carers Rights Day

**Do you look after someone?
Know your rights!**

If you support a family member, friend or partner who could not manage without your help, you could receive support.

Go along to one of the Information Events running in the City to celebrate National Carers Rights Day on:

Friday 3 December

to receive a free pamper session by a qualified complementary therapist:



1. Millin Centre – Benwell, 12.30 – 4.30pm
2. East End Library – Byker, 10.00am – 2.00pm
3. Lemington Centre – Lemington, 10.00am – 2.00pm
4. RVI Leazes Wing – City Centre, 5.00 – 8.00pm
5. Freeman Hospital – Main entrance, 1.00 – 5.00pm

A range of information will be on hand with staff available to assist you on:

- Services to support carers in Newcastle
- Welfare Rights and Benefits
- Looking after yourself
- Training and employment
- Having a life outside caring

If you need any support to attend one of these events, or would like more information please contact Kathryn Chard, Carers Lead Officer, Newcastle City Council on 2777 452.

Reports – Safety and Security

Safe and sound during the darker nights



As winter approaches and the nights draw in, many people's thoughts turn to cosy nights in and planning for Christmas. But this time of year, unwanted calls can be frightening for older people and those living alone.

Safe Newcastle is a partnership that includes Newcastle City Council, Northumbria Police and the Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service. Together we are putting in place actions to tackle problems that tend to peak around this time of year such as anti-social behaviour, unauthorised fires, and criminal damage.

Over the past few weeks, the Fire and Rescue Service and council have been visiting schools across the city to educate young people about the dangers of bonfires and fireworks and the consequences of misuse and anti-social behaviour.

We have also had many more patrols on the streets; quickly removing any rubbish that could be used on a bonfire and cracking down on people who break the law.

But we also need you to help us keep your neighbourhood safe:

- You can report any build-ups of rubbish in your local area to **Envirocall** on **0191 274 4000**.
- Also call Envirocall to arrange bulky waste removal.
- Look after your wheelie bin.
It can be set alight, stolen or used to stand on to break into your house. Put it out on the morning of collection and bring it back in as soon as possible after it's emptied.
- Report anti-social behaviour (for example litter, abandoned vehicles, noise and vandalism) to the Neighbourhood Helpline on **0300 1000 101**.
- In emergencies always call **999**. For non-emergencies, you can contact Northumbria Police on **03456 043 043**.

Keeping your home safe

Arrange a **Home Safety Check** with the Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service on 0800 032 7777. All visiting firefighters will always carry proof of identity.

Criminals often think that they are less likely to be caught when it is dark, so we are asking you to take the following steps to remove this opportunity and keep your home safe:

- Make your home look occupied when you are out or away. Leave a light on or use a timer switch.

Reports – Safety and Security

Keeping your home safe – cont -

- Ensure that your windows and doors are locked.
- Remove valuables from display and put your keys and mobile phone in a safe place in the house.
- Put away garden tools or other objects outside that can be used to prise open windows and doors of your or neighbours' property. Lock them away in your shed or your house.
- Mark your property with property-marking kits.
- If you are upstairs, make sure that downstairs is secure.
- Install outside security lighting such as 'dusk-till-dawn' lighting.
- Look out for your neighbours.

For more advice visit www.safenewcastle.org.uk

Safeguarding vulnerable adults in Newcastle

Abuse is never OK. There are different ways by which people may experience abuse:

- Physical
- Financial
- Sexual
- Institutional
- Neglect
- Discriminatory
- Psychological

If you think that you or someone you know is being abused, it is important to tell someone. Please do this by talking to Adult Social Care using the contact details listed below:

Adult Social Care Direct: 0191 278 8377

Emergency Duty Team: 0101 232 8520

In an emergency, always dial 999

In response to your alert, trained staff will carry out a careful and sensitive enquiry. We will work together with all of the relevant organisations and provide information and advice to ensure informed choice about how best to protect and care for the abused person. There may be a need for further action or investigation in order to protect the vulnerable adult from abuse.

For more information about safeguarding adults, please visit:

www.newcastle.gov.uk/safeguardingadults

Research volunteers needed



Volunteers from Voice North have been assisting Dr Sue Lord from the Clinical Ageing Research Unit on a study investigating aspects of gait and cognition in older adults and in people with Parkinson's disease. Sue has assessed 90 volunteers to date, and requires 10 more (who do not have the disease).

A huge thanks to those people who have already taken part; a full report from the study will be available in the new year.

The assessment takes place in the unit at Newcastle General, and takes under two hours. If you think that you could help Sue out or if you would like further information, please ring Sarah Armstrong on 0191 248 1288 or e-mail sarah.armstrong2@ncl.ac.uk.

Domestic food-provisioning and hygiene practices of the over-60s



Would you be willing to help in some research? Helen Kendall, of Newcastle University, is researching the domestic food-provisioning and hygiene practices of the over-60s in the North East in conjunction with the Food Standards Agency. She would like volunteers to complete a questionnaire, which aims to assess the variation in life experiences of older adults and goes on to look at their attitudes towards food safety. She will go through the questionnaire with you personally, at a place to suit you (your home, local community centre, coffee shop or the university, for example); it will take about an hour. On completion of the questionnaire, Helen will send you £10 and says that she will be even more generous if you're included in the home study. If you're

interested in volunteering or want further details, please contact her on mobile telephone 0783 455 8524.

Research volunteers needed ...



Statins: the new normal?

Statins are widely used in the UK, so much so that taking these preventive drugs now seems to be the norm for people over 50. Researchers at the Universities of Sussex and Manchester are interested in investigating the experience of people taking statins for heart health, especially at the 'low' doses of 10mg or 20mg, whether bought over the counter in pharmacies, or prescribed by a doctor. They would like to arrange interviews to talk about the things that prompted you to take these drugs and your experiences with them. These interviews could be arranged at a time and place to suit you (they'd travel!) and they can give a small sum (£25) to recognise the time and effort that this might involve. If you are interested in taking part, please contact Kate Weiner, by phone (0161 2752565), by email (kate.weiner-2@manchester.ac.uk) or by mail at the School of Psychological Sciences, University of Manchester, Oxford Road, Manchester M13 9LP.

Things to do ...

Olympic Memories

Active Newcastle needs your help to find people living and working in Newcastle who have a story to tell about their Olympic experience.

We are asking you to look back into the city's sporting history to unveil sportsmen and sportswomen of the past. We are looking for individuals who may have:

- spectated,
- volunteered,
- coached,
- officiated,
- or even competed at any Olympic or Paralympic games.



Whatever your Olympic experience or story, we'd like to hear from you.

Please get in touch with John Hannen on 0191 256 2929 or e-mail john@activenewcastle.co.uk .

Things to do ...

Get dancing!



Do you remember tea-dances? Old-fashioned tea-dances are being recreated by student volunteers; the first one will be held at Northumbria University on Thursday 2 December. There will be tea and cakes, musical entertainment and dancing. You'll get an opportunity to socialise with each other as well as with student volunteers; it'll be a good day out!

Tickets will be £1.50 and details about how to get them are available from Lydia Hughes on 0790 584 0839. The students really hope to see you there!

Places to go

The Lemington Over-60s Club tell us that they have had three outings this year so far and thought that other groups might be interested in the places they visited.

They have been to Eden Camp Modern History Theme Museum at Malton in Yorkshire, which was built by Italian prisoners of war during the second world war, and found it very interesting (see www.edencamp.co.uk). Their second visit was to the market town of Ulverston, where Stan Laurel was born, which houses a museum about his life. Finally, they went to a community centre in East Hartford, which is run by friendly and welcoming volunteers (contact Jean on 0167 073 4353 or 0167 073 9186 for details).

If you are in an older people's group and would like to benefit from the Lemington group's knowledge and experiences, please ring Hazel Rutherford on 0779 046 3101 or e-mail rutherfordlem@blueyonder.co.uk.

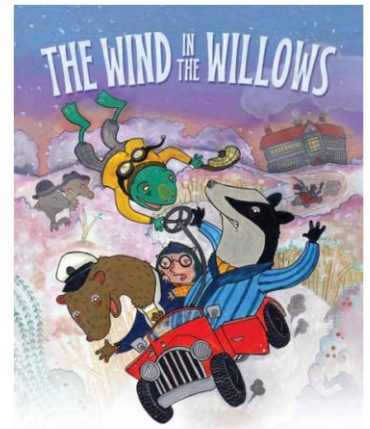
The Wind in the Willows (adapted for the stage by Alan Bennett)

Exclusive showing for the Elders Council **Thursday 9 December, 2pm** at the Northern Stage (formerly Newcastle Playhouse)

Exclusive Elders Council Offer:

Come and see the matinee of *The Wind in the Willows* on Thursday 9 December at 2pm and after the show you can join us for a cup of tea and a chat with members of the creative team. Find out more about how we put together our Christmas productions from designing the set to casting the performers; the rehearsal process and opening-night nerves!

For tickets you can phone the Box Office on **0191 230 5151** or book online at www.northernstage.co.uk



Things to do ...

Rookie Golf

Rookie golf was one of the activities that people had the chance to try at the Elders Council Fun in the Sun Event at Heaton Park on 4 August. It's an activity that is proving a bit hit with over-50s groups in Newcastle. Everyone who takes part agrees that it's a fun game as well as a way to improve fitness, socialise and meet new people.

Rookie golf is a target golf game where players use specially designed clubs to hit soft balls onto colourful velcro targets in order to score points. The game is easy to learn and can be played by anyone at any venue – both indoors and outdoors. It has proved so popular with groups across the city that friendly games and matches between groups are being organised on a regular basis. Community festivals are also held, where a number of groups have the chance to come together to play against each other and socialise. The next festival will be at the West Gate Centre for Sport on 1 December.

The rookie golf programme was devised by Rookie Sports, a Social Enterprise based in Newcastle. Sessions are organised for groups at venues across Newcastle and in other parts of the north east. Why not join in the fun and get your group involved? For further information, or to try out rookie golf with your group, or join a group where sessions are already taking place, please contact: June Shone, Rookie Sports, The John Buddle Work Village, Buddle Road, Newcastle NE4 8AW. Tel: 0191 226 7356. Email: june@rookiesports.co.uk.

The Association of Newcastle City Guides

The Association of Newcastle City Guides is a voluntary association of local people giving guided tours to the people of Newcastle. They are attached to the Newcastle Tourist Information Centre in Market Street, which administers their tours.

They offer over 40 walking tours, not only within the centre of Newcastle but into Gateshead and to the suburbs of Jesmond, Gosforth, Newburn and beyond. Tours are conducted on Wednesday evenings and Sunday afternoons from April to October, plus daily tours for visitors from June to September.

They are beginning a new training course in January 2011 and would welcome applications from interested people in the region. You don't necessarily need to have had previous guiding experience or be a good public speaker – they can give you coaching. You don't necessarily need to be an expert in the history of Newcastle and Gateshead – a keen interest will help, and you will receive tuition. And you don't necessarily need to have formal qualifications – some very good guides have been people with no paper qualifications.

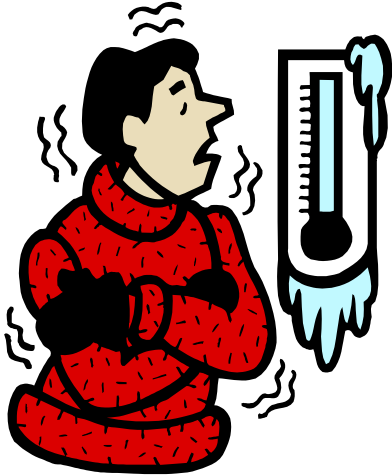
You do need to be reasonably fit, be friendly and outgoing, like meeting people and have a clear speaking voice. The association needs enthusiastic people who love the heritage of the region and enjoy telling others about it.

If you are keen to become a Newcastle City Guide, please contact Pat Lowery on 0191 263 3131 or 0794 968 0345 or e-mail patlowery@blueyonder.co.uk.

Things to do ...

Be a Community Energy Champion

We've been asked by National Energy Action (NEA) whether any of our readers would like to volunteer to become a Community Energy Champion (CEC).



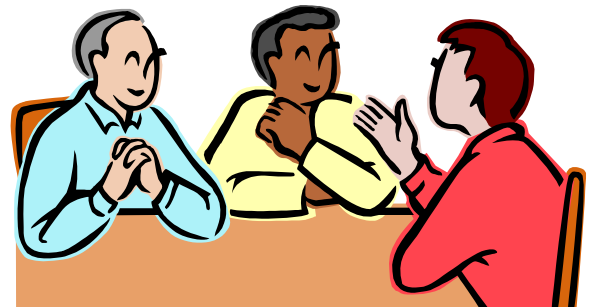
Many vulnerable people, especially pensioners, have great difficulty in keeping warm and paying their fuel bills. Fuel debt is an ever-increasing problem owing to the huge rises in fuel costs over the last few years with many people self-disconnecting – especially those on key/card meters.

NEA will try and address some of the issues by training people in the community to help those around them. It will give individuals the skills to enable them to help themselves and others to save money on their fuel bills, access grants and understand the basics of energy efficiency.

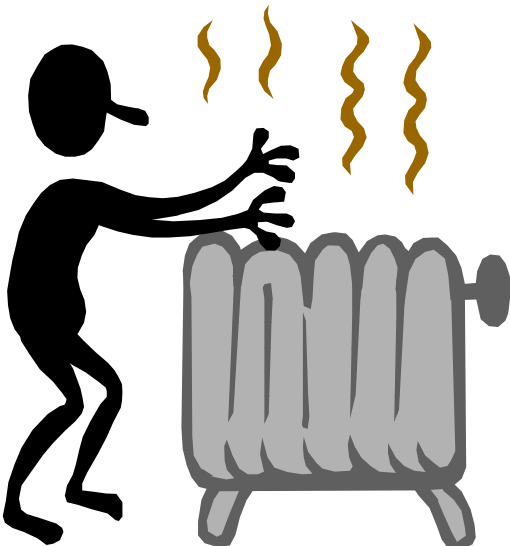
NEA will train all CECs in basic energy awareness in venues across the City or, if they wish, at NEA's head office; they will pay expenses if necessary. The training will consist of a 2½-hour course outlining the key issues concerning energy efficiency.

This session can be tailored to suit the specific needs of certain groups, and can be scheduled to suit the times and dates of groups and individuals.

All CECs will be given a support pack, will be assigned an NEA Co-ordinator and will have access to a helpline.



All training is **FREE** to the participant.



If you want further details of this scheme, please contact Malcolm Dove by ringing 0191 261 5677 or by e-mailing malcolm.dove@nea.org.uk .

Things to do ...

You're need for the census – please!

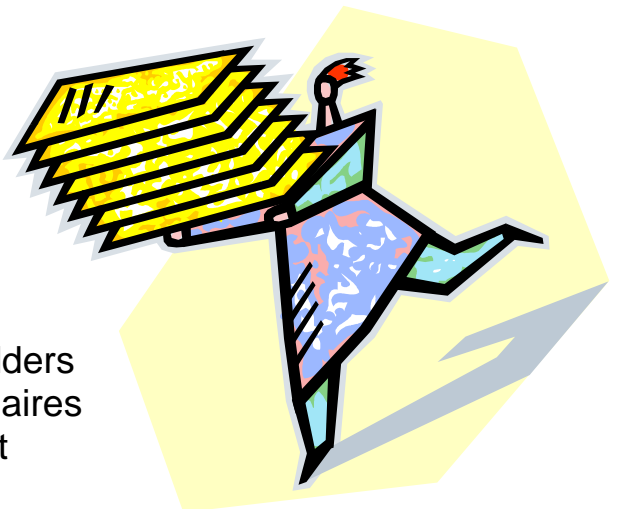
As you may be aware, the 2011 Census is fast approaching. Taking place on the 27 March next year, the census will provide an accurate snapshot of life in Newcastle. Information from the census is used to make important decisions around future policies, planning, services and funding for local communities.

Recruitment is now underway for over 35,000 temporary part-time and full-time vacancies to help make the census a success and it's important that the Census Team gets the right people to make sure that every community is properly represented.

They want our help in recruiting local people, using our knowledge and understanding of the local community, to make sure that the 2011 Census is a true reflection of the diverse communities across England and Wales. For more information, visit www.censusjobs.co.uk . Unfortunately, the Census Team are recruiting only through this source; so, if you don't have access to the internet at home, why not ask your local librarian to help you with the application?

Recruitment for the following roles will take place this year, with more vacancies becoming available next year:

- **Census Coordinators** lead and motivate a team of up to 15 field staff (recruitment started from 20 September 2010)
- **Special Enumerators** deliver questionnaires to organisations such as care homes, hotels, or prisons and collect completed forms (recruitment started from 4 October 2010)
- **Census Collectors:** contact householders to collect completed census questionnaires and assist where required (recruitment started from 1 November 2010)



You can help us in a number of ways; for example, you can:

- **apply** for a role by visiting www.censusjobs.co.uk ;
- **display** information on your notice boards (a small number of posters and postcards are available on request);

Things to do ...

You're need for the census – please! – cont -

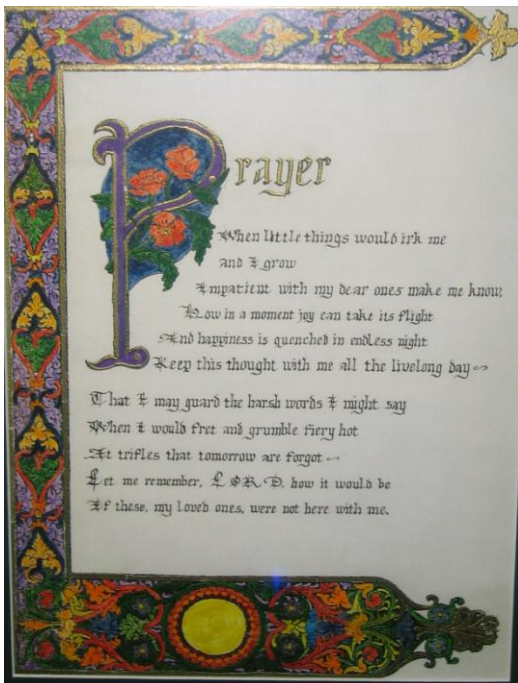
- **publish** articles in relevant publications;
- **e-mail** interested staff, group members, family and friends;
- **become a fan** with our [Facebook Page](#);
- **follow** us on [Twitter](#).

We really appreciate your help recruiting for the 2011 Census to make a difference to the future of your local community.

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.

Some of the current art work displayed:



*Display of calligraphy
produced by Eunice Gent*



*Wall hanging created by local members of the
Knitting and Crochet Guild*

Information

The Open University



The Open
University

Open to everyone... Open to you

The Open University has a wide range of learning opportunities to suit everyone of all ages, from all walks of life. There are no entry qualifications for most of their courses and, as they are a distance-learning university, there is no need to attend classes. You can choose when and where to study.

The OU can also support groups of learners, so if you are a carer or volunteer for example, why not get together as a group and study a course in as little as five months with support from one of their tutors?

The OU provides a variety of courses. For example, their Openings range consists of short introductory courses designed to give you a gentle introduction to the subject and to the world of study. In this range you can study topics like 'Introducing environment', 'Making sense of the Arts' or 'Understanding health' amongst many more on offer.

Depending on household income, many courses are offered free or at a subsidised rate. If you do not qualify for financial assistance, you can pay for your course in instalments.

You can check out the courses available on the OU website at www.open.ac.uk or if you would prefer to speak to someone in person about what we offer, contact: Katrina Coleman on 0191 477 6100 or e-mail her at k.m.coleman@open.ac.uk .

It's never too late to learn!

Poetry

Heavens Above



The magic of the winter skies
Reveals its view as sunlight dies
To sink out west then out of sight
To leave the heavens all flaming bright

New moon rises and all aglow
Distant stars appear in nature's magic show
To celebrate her timeless wondrous ways
That life on earth has night and days

Heavens now alive a silver chase
Though moon of course takes pride of place
To glow so bright and set the scene
Of hidden world of night sky supreme

Slowly time moves on to mystery show
Moon and stars to twinkle and glow
The Southern Cross, the Milky Way
The Plough, North Star – all on display

This timeless world beyond the stars
Out of sight Saturn, Jupiter, Venus, Mars
Time seems just to stand in praise
At wonderful nature and her ways

Once Galileo announced: "Earth circles sun"
Unbelievers said, "He's making fun"
Vast galaxies await us, enjoy the view
Until day arrives with sky of blue

Sun will rise, moon fades away
It's welcome to a brand new day
Slowly countryside awakes still and calm
For life goes on daily like a charm

John Reid

Correspondence

Dear Editors,

Please accept a big "Thank you" for the information in a past newsletter about the swimming sessions for 'people who are nervous in water' at Elswick pool.

I attended Elswick pool every week — well almost — from Easter to July and have made great progress with the very competent and patient instructor there who has taught me to swim on my back for the first time in my life! The pool is very warm and encouragement is generous.

Do remind members that the sessions will begin again in September. This may be one of those 'Use it or lose it' services especially in the current climate.

Regards

P. L. Smith



Dear Editors,

My father receives your newsletter and suggested that you may find the following story suitable of a mention.

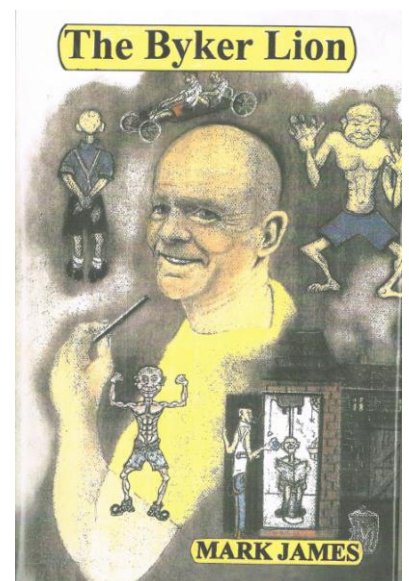
Approximately 20 years ago, my father appeared on GMTV being interviewed by Lorraine Kelly regarding a small soft-backed book that he had produced for a children's charity (Newcastle Freeman Hospital Children's Heart Unit). The book was a collation of short humorous stories under the heading "Byker Lion".

The originality of the book was that my father left school barely able to read or write and whilst unemployed he attended Heaton Adult Education Centre; this resulted in the production of the aforementioned short stories and subsequent employment with Newcastle College.

My father retired from Newcastle College in 2003 and has subsequently produced various other short stories/plays in a very raw manuscript. However, a company named Authorhouse showed interest and have produced the book on our behalf.

If you are interested in getting a copy of the book (hardback: £11.80; softback: £7.30), please contact Authorhouse Publishing on www.authorhouse.co.uk and input either the author (Mark James) or the title *Byker Lion* in the online library search engine. Or, of course, you can get it from your local library.

Best regards,
Shaun James



Newsletter Information

Newsletter Articles



If you would like to submit an article to be considered for the January 2011 edition of the Newsletter, will you please ensure that you forward it before Monday 13 December. (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 60p 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.



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: _____

Would you like to be a trustee of the Elders Council?

The Board of Trustees of the Elders Council meets each month. We follow a prepared agenda which aims to ensure that we are financially secure and that we are aware of the activities of the Working Groups. It also gives us an opportunity to look at potential areas of work and hear reports from groups and individuals.

Usually there are 15 Board members; at the moment there is a vacancy but we can't elect a new Board member until the AGM in June; however, we can co-opt members (up to four) until an election takes place.

Perhaps you know someone who you think would be a valuable member of the Board or you might be the very person we need. We know that we need people who have an interest or some experience in or knowledge of public relations; or are active in their local community; or are just one of the "younger" older people (i.e., from 50 to about 65). You don't need to have any experience of working on a committee; life experience and enthusiasm and a willingness to commit the time needed to fulfil the role are far more important.

We work closely with the Quality of Life Partnership and are often asked to attend events or contribute in some way to research or activities that either concern older people or that will hopefully benefit them. This means it does take up some time. We wouldn't want anyone to join the Board under false pretences!

It is very interesting and you do learn a lot, though we would say that the learning takes time and no-one expects new members to struggle along without support and help to get to grips with the experience. Don't be put off if this is something you haven't done before: now is your opportunity to "try it and see"!

All the current trustees would encourage anyone interested to seriously think about being a co-opted member initially, and then perhaps standing for election at the next AGM.