



Elders Council of Newcastle

Older People working for Older People

September – October 2016 Issue 73

Newcastles of the World conference in Canada



As you all know, we are trying to send one of our members on a **once-in-a-lifetime opportunity** to take part in the *Newcastles of the World* conference in Canada. We chose Julie Irvine by lot to be the one to represent us, **BUT** she can go only if we raise enough funds on our Crowdfunder page.

A few people have recently been in touch to say that they have had problems making a donation, so below are some instructions on how to do this:

1. Visit <http://www.crowdfunder.co.uk/newcastles-of-the-world-conference-ontario-canada>
2. On the right of the screen there is a blue 'pledge' button; click on this button.
3. On the pledge page you have an option to select either £5, £10, £20, £50 or £100.
4. Select the amount you wish to donate.
5. You will then be directed to the checkout page, where you will need to enter your credit or debit card details.

Inside this issue:	Page
Elders Council at Work	2-8
Information NOW	11
Digital Deli	12-13
Money Matters	16-18
Things to do.....	22
Volunteering opportunities.....	23
Poetry.....	26-27
Contact Details.....	28

Or you could send a cheque made payable to 'Elders Council of Newcastle' enclosing a note to say that the donation is to enable our member to attend the *Newcastles of the World* conference in Canada.

In a city which prides itself on its work on ageing we really feel it is important that an older person should attend the conference. If you haven't pledged yet, can we ask you to do so? Also, if you go to any meetings, please pass round something to collect actual cash in, as every penny counts. (If people give cash, it remains given unlike pledging on line.)

Elders Council at Work

The Mile Castle Drop-in Sessions

The Mile Castle continues to hold a regular session on the **third Wednesday of each month at 10.30am**. The activities vary from month to month: sometimes we have a speaker or it could be a quiz or a different activity altogether. Recently Cath Gerrard organised a “Would I lie to you?” based on the TV programme.

We are planning to continue with this and a small group of Elders Council members get together to try and plan a programme for the months ahead. We're not trying to be anything other than a group who meet and welcome any older person to come along and meet others, find out what may be happening in the weeks ahead and enjoy some conversation.

We haven't confirmed some of the projected plan so at the moment there will be meetings as follows:

- 21 September “Hearing dogs” helping the deaf
- 19 October Not confirmed
- 23 November Not confirmed
- 21 December A magician

We hope to see you there!



Transport and Highways Working Group

Arriva tell us that they have made improvements to their inter-hospital service (Service 46), which means that buses stop not only at the six major stops (General Hospital Grounds, RVI Hospital Grounds, Haymarket Bus Station, Regent Centre, Polwarth Drive, Featherstone Grove) but also at another 16 intermediate stops as well.

Throughout the day it is scheduled as a 30-minute service and is well worth investigating. Timetables are available at Nexus Travel Shops.

Nexus have recently published their report on METROFUTURES, which outlines a combined future of Metro and local rail in the North East. It addresses a number of ambitions including a new Metro fleet, re-opening routes and stations and managing Metro and local rail together as one network.

Whilst the report is essentially looking a good way into the future, it is important that the right decisions are taken now so that our children and grandchildren will benefit from them. You can get a copy of the report direct from Nexus Head Office (tel. 0191 202 0747).

Elders Council at Work

Transport and Highways Working Group

Outings in 2016 with a Concessionary Bus Pass



Just a reminder that we still have copies of the latest edition of our “Summer Outings with a Concessionary Bus Pass” leaflet. If you want to take advantage of what is left of the summer, you can download a copy of it from our website. Or you can get a free printed copy by sending a large-letter stamp to Anne or by calling her on 0191 208 2701.

Why not consider a visit to Hexham (*see item 12 pg. 4 of the leaflet*) and visit its beautiful abbey complete with a new museum and a lovely little gift shop?

Wherever you are travelling to, have a good journey and do let us know how you get on.

Communication Working Group

Listen in to your own special radio programme

Everyone’s tomorrow – today! is the Elders Council radio programme that goes out on the first Friday of every month between 2 and 4 pm on the community radio station NE1fm (102.5fm).

If you have difficulty in finding the wavelength 102.5fm on your radio, you can listen via the Internet on NE1fm Webplayer <http://ne1fm.net/webplayer> .

We are keen to get our members’ views on our programmes, so please listen in and send in your comments. Email our co-ordinator at steve.whitley@phonecoop.coop or write to Steve at 166 Wingrove Road, NE4 9BX. Please include any suggestions for topics you would like to hear about.

We are also looking into setting up a Listeners Panel which can provide direct feedback to our radio team. If you are interested in being a member of the regular Listeners Panel, then please email or write to us and we will get in touch with you.



Elders Council at work

Health and Social Care Working Group

Current discussions have focused on a review of the **Information and Advice Strategy**, and **Home Care Services**. The main points arising from the discussions, both within the working group and with other groups, are summarised below. So what use can we make of our evidence about older people's views of these services? When members have taken the time to share their views, we have a duty to make sure that there is some follow-up action. So, as well as providing a formal response and engaging in the consultation processes with the organisations concerned, members are also involved in practical ways of using this evidence.

So the working group is not just a talking shop – but members are out and about as well, involved with Healthwatch, Patient Participation Groups at GP practices, and universities – to influence the next generation of our professional advisers. Some recent examples include:

Working to improve home care services: In previous newsletters, we talked about our expectations of a good home care service and you can find the report on the Elders Council website (www.elderscouncil.org.uk). Elders Council members also helped with a survey about home care that Healthwatch Newcastle carried out this year and we shared our views at their recent conference in March. We've made use of everything you have said when we were invited to set up a moderation panel in August to look at applications from home care providers who want to get a formal contract with Newcastle City Council to deliver services in the future. We were pleased to see that the Council had listened to our views and given very clear guidance on the importance of dignity and respect as well as treating people as individuals.

Testing toolkits: Elders Council members were also invited to comment on a new publication being developed by the Northern Neurological Alliance. This is about setting standards and monitoring home care and is seen as a toolkit that can be used by a service-user or their carer to monitor their experience of using services. Although it is seen as something mainly for people affected by neurological conditions, when a group of members discussed this as a group in August, we felt that this tool can be used by anyone as a checklist to think through what they feel about their home care and what might improve.

Getting advice and information: we all know how useful Information NOW is and lots of us use it regularly to keep informed about how to stay healthy, keep our independence and make informed choices. So when we were asked to look at *Newcastle City Council's Wellbeing, Care and Learning: Information and Advice Strategy 2015-2017*, we felt that we could make some useful comments. A small group of Elders Council members met up in July to read through this document and we are sending comments back very soon. We are very keen to see that Newcastle continues to support Information NOW and other advice services that are face to face.

Elders Council at work

Health and Social Care Working Group

Participating in induction and training sessions for social work students and medical students at both universities (*see picture right*).

Social inclusion and loneliness continue to be health issues on the Working Group's agenda, alongside concerns about access to NHS services. Following a lively discussion about social inclusion, an artist was able to depict the group's views on a poster, which is now available as a visual illustration of what works to promote good social relationships.



We shall be continuing further work on these – and other – issues at meetings on Fridays, 10.30am-12.30pm on the following dates:

16 September, 21 October and 18 November

Did you know that ...

... NHS England has engaged the services of Capita to implement a deregistration scheme which is to be rolled out across all 8000 GP surgeries in England pending a successful trial.

Under the scheme, GPs will be obligated to send Capita a list of patients who have not been in contact for five years or more. Capita will then attempt to make contact via two letters and, if no response is received, the GP surgery will be given six further months to re-establish contact. If the patient still makes no contact, they will be removed from the GP's list.

If you have any comment to make about this proposal, we suggest that you write to your MP. If you decide to do this, could you please send a copy to Vera Bolter at the office address (*see pg. 28*) or by email to verabolter@hotmail.com .

Elders Council at work

Older Person Friendly City Working Group

The main concern of this working group is to promote older person friendly environments for the everyday activities of older people so that we are able to move around easily in our neighbourhoods, around the town, in parks and shops and buildings. In the last issue of the Newsletter we were encouraging everyone to enjoy being out and about in parks and join in outdoor activities – and there's quite a lot going on in the summer. Also in the last Newsletter, there was a reference to the report of the Director of Public Health expressing concern that healthy life expectancy for men in the city was not increasing as it is for other places – and stressing that everyone should walk more and enjoy parks and green spaces (amongst other things, of course). But it is encouraging to see that the Elders Council is working on the right lines in supporting activities in parks – and in promoting the idea of wellbeing walks (e.g., attractive short leaflets for interesting walks in your neighbourhood, currently being tested out in Jesmond).

The City Centre was the subject of our first investigation over a decade ago. There have been several developments over this period – in Old Eldon Square as well as the indoor shopping malls; in the Stephenson Quarter; and in traffic management, with the stated objective of improving facilities for cyclists and pedestrians.

We have repeated our surveys of the facilities most important to older people (e.g., safe clean streets, pedestrian crossing times, seats, access to public toilets). There have been some improvements in signposting in the city, but there is still a deficit in other amenities. We shall be publishing our findings in a report shortly but we are aware that feelings about the City Centre are not all negative – there are some positive views too – which brings us back to our appeal to readers to tell us about their favourite places and where they like to walk in the City Centre. This is what we've heard so far:

“I like to walk down Grey Street and then along to the Quayside by the river and over the bridges.” (Bob)

“I like to walk from the station, passing by the Mining Institute and the Lit and Phil and then down Orchard Street and South Street, where Robert Stephenson had his locomotive factory – and then a brand new hotel the Crown Plaza has appeared.” (Mary)

“My favourite part of the City is Northumberland Street, where young and old come together in the excitement and bustle of a modern shopping street, surrounded by history.” (Bill)

We shall be pleased to have some more contributions!

Working Group meetings will take place on Mondays, 10.30am-12.30pm at Broadacre House, Market Street East on the following dates:

19th September, 17th October and 21st November.

Elders Council at work

Community Conversation in Westerhope and Denton

In July we held another of our community conversations; this one was held at West Denton Association, which we chose because it is an area where there is a large population of older people. Many people bought their homes in the 60s and 70s and have continued to live in the area.

Ian Johnson from Open Lab, Newcastle University, who had been so good at developing a working methodology, was able to support this conversation. Ian agreed to help again in capturing the conversation on video and audio and he will be able to analyse this both for his own research work but also for the purposes of the Elders Council. We are very grateful for his continued support.



On the day itself we met in a large sunny room in a West Denton Association building. 47 people were gathered in groups of about six around tables which had a large-scale map of the area. Some of the tables had cameras directed at them and all had audio recorders. All the tables had facilitators, which we know is important. The tables also had plastic markers and a set of cards, which said things like “Move the marker to a place you enjoy” or “Move the marker to a place you feel happy” or it might ask people to discuss something about the place where the marker had been put. The cards and markers proved valuable in encouraging people to speak, to listen to others and often to think about things when a card with a particular challenge turned up. Everyone takes a turn and the questions often led to interesting discussions.

All the conversations we have held (six so far) have demonstrated that many people just aren't knowledgeable about the activities available in their own neighbourhood. Comments are heard: “I didn't know about that” or “Where does that happen?” Several people commented that they had found out something new about the area. Transport is an issue in part of Westerhope; mainly it is relatively well-served by buses but one area has difficulties in accessing places with ease.

The event was valuable for the Elders Council as it gave us an opportunity to give people in Westerhope and Denton information about the organisation and how to join us. We also found out about what it is like to grow older in Westerhope and Denton. We will be analysing the comments from the day in more detail, as this information helps us to represent the views of older people more effectively.



Elders Council at work

Housing Working Group

Is this the home for me?

Bearing in mind that 'we don't know what we don't know', the Housing Group organised open days at different types of specialist housing in the city, to give people the opportunity to see inside the doors of sheltered housing and assisted living schemes. Working with Newcastle City Council and housing providers Your Homes Newcastle, Bernicia and Anchor, we held open days in six different types of housing with different tenures.

At the Open Days, scheme managers described the facilities on offer and gave visitors a tour of the scheme. They also explained the process for applying for sheltered or assisted living accommodation. Residents living in the schemes joined us to talk about their experiences of living in the schemes and how and why they had moved.

For those who attended, the Open Days were a success and we all learned more about the (sometimes complex) process of moving to specialist housing. The schemes varied in facilities that they offer, based on a common principle of people having their own flat and access to some communal facilities and activities.

Although we tried to publicise the Open Days widely, attendance at all the

events was quite low. We would have liked to see many more people taking advantage of this opportunity, and we will pay more attention to getting the word out if we do this again. After the open days, the Elders Council radio programme devoted a programme to the choices available but we also need publicity beforehand.

The feedback from the people who attended reinforced the need to continue our efforts to test different ways of encouraging people to plan ahead and think about their housing options. We want people to make positive housing choices, so that they don't end up making decisions in a crisis. With this in mind, we have started planning an Information Day on housing for Spring 2017. If you are interested and have particular interests you would like us to feature on the day, please let us know.

If you would like to know more about your housing options, take a look on www.informationnow.org.uk. The Housing section is packed full of

practical, useful information.

The Elders Council would like to thank Newcastle City Council and the housing providers for supporting this programme.



Information

A new government report about **Housing and Ageing**, based on an in-depth analysis of the national English Housing Survey, notes that the vast majority (94%) of older households were satisfied with their accommodation compared to 86% of younger households; and for those older people classified as 'under-occupying' this satisfaction rises to 97%.

Given that 'older age' commonly now lasts for 30 or even 40 years, there is some helpful analysis of the situations of different age groups within the 'older age' category.

For example, this reveals a marked difference for those aged 85, who are more likely to live in a non-decent home than any other age-group and live on lower incomes. Some 29% of households where the oldest member was 85 or over lived in a non-decent home; this compares to 17% for households aged 55-64 years and 20% for households where the oldest person was under 55.



Get a free personal alarm

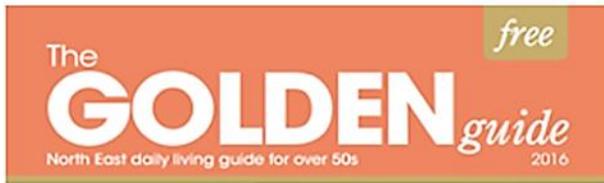
If you have been a member of the armed forces or are a dependant of such a person (and this includes widows and widowers), the British Legion will buy you a free Appello personal alarm. All you have to pay is a monitoring charge of about £4.60 a month.

You wear the waterproof alarm around your wrist or on a pendant from your neck. In an emergency, you press the alarm button and Appello say that the operator will immediately respond and deal with the situation.

If you want to know more about this offer, please ring 0800 032 0306 or visit www.britishlegion.org.uk .

To find out more about the Appello system, please ring 0333 321 6470 or visit www.appello.co.uk .

Publications



Newcastle over-50s get their Golden Guide

A FREE local handbook for over-50s is now available across Newcastle and North Tyneside.

Packed with tips on money, health, leisure, care and community it has been produced in response to demand from local residents. The Golden Guide began in Northumberland with a mission to help older people stay active, keep healthy and in touch, and now over-50s further south can get a copy.

The guide is full of activities from men's groups to musicals, rambling to radio and gospel singing to bell-ringing. Contacts are given for health concerns, care issues, pensions, benefits and legal help. There is information too on befriending, bereavement and how to get online.

Editor Heather Alabaster says: "Good local information inspires us to try new things and reassures us that help is nearby. We had a fabulous response to our appeal for help; Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust, and Northumbrian Water are our partners, and many others have generously sponsored pages."

5000 copies are being distributed across both areas. You can find them in libraries, GP surgeries (with the practice nurses), Newcastle Carers, Healthwatch, Age UK, Alzheimer's Society, with care and reablement teams, community and hospital occupational therapists, selected pharmacies, and various other charities and groups.

The guide is online at www.goldenguide.org.uk. There is a free postal service for over-50s residents - please ring Golden Guide on 0191 386 5918.

Book review: The Byker lion roars again by Mark James

Mark James was born in Byker in 1939. He left school barely able to read or write. But in 1987 he did a course at the Heaton Adult Education Centre, wrote his first book (*The Byker lion*) in 2010 and last year produced this collection of short stories, which, as the blurb says, are "based on actual events and memories sprinkled with a few spirited yarns".

Whether or not you remember the days of pawnshops, building bogies, school PT and PT teachers, and moving house in a horse and cart, we think that you'll enjoy this look at life in the 1940s. It's written in an element of Geordie dialect but is easily intelligible to a non-Geordie. Larded with humorous anecdotes and nostalgia, the book is a good light read; we recommend it. (Hardback: £17.99; paperback: £9.95).



InfoNOW News – Information NOW's free weekly e-bulletin

Did you know that you can receive a free weekly email newsletter from Information NOW, Newcastle's older people's website www.informationnow.org.uk ?

The newsletter is full of interesting news items, helpful tips, activities in your area and much more.

To subscribe and read all the previous editions, please visit <http://www.informationnow.org.uk/newsletter-archive> or email informationnow@qualityoflife.org.uk .

Hospital Visiting Times

The Newcastle Hospitals Trust tell us that, in response to patient and public feedback, they have extended weekend visiting times, with effect from 1 August. So visitors can now visit between 2pm and 8pm on Saturdays and Sundays. In addition, the Trust have taken into consideration the specific needs of the carers of patients and developed key principles and guidance to facilitate individual flexible visiting for them when needed.

The Trust has also pledged its support for "John's Campaign". **John's Campaign** is focused on ensuring that carers of people with dementia should be able to support the person they care for at whatever time is most helpful to the patient and the carer. The Trust will enable the carer to provide this support by offering flexible visiting, access to food and drinks when required and the opportunity to stay overnight if appropriate.

A new visitor's guide has been produced for both staff and visitors; this provides key information to help make visiting easier.

Visiting in some specialist units, such as Children's, Maternity and Critical Care, are different to those above; this is to support individual needs. Details of visiting hours of individual units are available on http://www.newcastle-hospitals.org.uk/patient-guides/coming-to-hospital_visiting-arrangements.aspx and are displayed at ward entrances.

Do you need help with your digital skills?

It can be hard to find the time and the people to help you to either get started or update your digital skills. Here is a selection of opportunities to suit you, depending on your interest or motivation to brush up your skills:

- **Techy Tea Parties:** Perfect for anyone living in Newcastle who wants to learn more about iPads, tablets or smart phones. The sessions are open to all levels of ability and iPads and tablets are available for those who want to have a try before they buy. The venue is the City Library and places must be booked; ring 0191 277 4100 to book or visit <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/d/united-kingdom--newcastle-upon-tyne/techy/> . If you don't have access to the internet, please ring the number above and the library will post your e-ticket out to you.
- **One-to-one internet taster sessions:** These sessions are for anyone who would like to learn how to get on to the internet. Please ring 0191 277 4100 to make your booking.
- **Learn My Way Basic IT course:** Five hours (2 x 2½-hour sessions) of basic computer and accessing the internet training. These sessions are perfect for anyone who wants to learn how to gain access to the internet, set up an email address, attach documents and find out about online security. You get a certificate when you complete the course. The venue is the City Library; however, this course can be delivered on site to groups (provided PCs are available) and groups of learners can also be accommodated at the City Library. Ring 0191 277 4100 to book. If you don't have an email address, they will post your e-ticket out to you.
- **Get Online Champion Training:** This course has been designed specifically for staff and volunteers from community and charity organisations. It is perfect for anyone with good IT skills who wants to gain the confidence and skills to help get their members online. The next available date for this course is Wednesday 30 November; to register your interest please email Getonline@newcastle.gov.uk .

Note: If you do sign up for the 'Get Online Champion Training', the Elders Council would like to hear from you. We are hoping to build on the success of the IT drop-in with Northumbria University to create more opportunities to support older people to stay connected.

For further information about getting on-line, don't forget to look at www.informationnow.org.uk .





As part of the Go Digital Newcastle programme, BT is working in partnership with Newcastle City Council and Gateshead Council to provide free outdoor WiFi on key pedestrian routes in Newcastle city centre, Gateshead town centre and the Quayside. To find out more visit www.godigitalnewcastle.co.uk/wifi .

How to connect to Go Digital WiFi: guidance notes

The service is being delivered by BT under two separate contracts. The service will be “family friendly”, with inappropriate content automatically blocked by BT.

A full list of the buildings from which you can access indoor WiFi is available on the Go Digital Newcastle website. WiFi is also available outside from the Haymarket all the way down to the Sage on the Quayside.

Getting Connected

Connecting to the free WiFi is very simple. You should take the following steps:

Step 1:

Select ‘Settings’ on your device.
Select ‘Network and WiFi’.

Step 2:

A list of available WiFi should appear; select ‘Go Digital’.

Step 3:

A landing page will appear. The page view may vary slightly depending upon the device that you use. Click the ‘**Get online**’ button.

Step 4:

‘Accept T&C page’ will appear.
Click on the ‘**Access free WiFi**’ button.

Last step: Complete!

You will now see the authentication screen. which states:
‘**You are now connected to free WiFi**’

After following the above steps, whenever the customer is in the radius of the Go Digital WiFi, their device should automatically connect itself to Go Digital free service.



Accessible Information Standards

As we told you in the July/August edition of the Newsletter (p17), there are now in force new standards to make information accessible to all. These standards apply to the NHS and all publicly-funded social care services. When you access services provided by the hospital, your GP, the optician, chemists, social workers, supported housing, or anywhere there is adult social care, you have a right for them to identify your communication and information support needs and meet them.

Deaflink tell us that this is particularly significant for them. So, if you are hard of hearing, you have a right for, e.g., a BSL interpreter or lipreader; or to documents in BSL format or large print.

What	All D/deaf, deafblind and hard-of-hearing people are welcome to come to Deaflink's next forum
When	Saturday 17 th September 10:00 am – 12:30 pm
Where	Brunswick Methodist Church Brunswick Place (off Northumberland St) by Fenwick's

For more information,

please text Katie Dewar-Purvis on 0789 732 9359

email her at katie@deaflink.org.uk or

go to <http://www.deaflink.org.uk/about-us/deaflink-services/health-forum>

Reports

Pushing the Possibilities – *learning through adventure*

Pushing the Possibilities (PP) is a programme of outdoor adventure courses organised by the Gateshead Charity, WinG (www.wing.org.uk). WinG specialise in organising outdoor activities. During the warmer months of the year, WinG puts on several three-and-a-half-day courses for the over-55s. "PP 55" courses give participants the chance to have a series of completely new experiences, learn new skills, meet new people, build confidence and, above all, have fun. To date the PP 55 courses are free thanks to generous sponsorship.

An Elders Council member has been on one of the courses and sent us the following account.

"I was intrigued and decided to check it all out. First I went along to a PP Open Day in Low Fell. There, WinG's director, Nick Coates and his volunteer helpers explained to groups of hopeful (and sceptical) would-be participants about the course. We were all informed that the maximum number on any course was eight persons plus the instructor. So there would be a half-day selection process and then the eight selected would need to devote three full days (approximately 9 to 5) to their choice of outdoor activities. The range of activities on offer includes hiking, biking, rock-climbing and abseiling, canoeing, kayaking, plus forest/ outdoor skills. Full equipment and transport would be organised and supplied by WinG.

"The week after Open Day, I went along to the selection afternoon. The group of 12 hopefuls were welcomed by Nick and previous course veterans. All 12 hopefuls then took part in a series of observed non-strenuous team games, which were both intriguing and fun. Following the games each hopeful was interviewed as to why they wanted to go on the course and, very crucially, whether they could be available for all three of the scheduled activity days. Eight persons were then informed that they would be continuing on the course. The four not selected had mostly deselected themselves by not being available for each of the three full activity days. Those not selected were, however, invited to apply for the next course in September (no dates fixed yet).

"The "Lucky 8" then met together with Nick and were invited to choose the first day's activity. It was hinted to us that a day's hiking was a good first day activity for bonding, but our group was an adventurous lot. We chose rock-climbing and abseiling for the first day, canoeing for the second day and forest craft and skills for the final day. Biking was off the agenda as one of the group had never ridden a bike – but everyone could walk and swim! None of the group had much (or any) experience in the chosen activities. However, it was amazing how well we all did in each activity. This was due in very large measure to the very excellent instructions and demonstrations, given by Nick, as well as enthusiastic group encouragement.

"Of course, none of us became experts in any of the activities but we all participated and we all certainly did test ourselves. We Pushed the Possibilities and enjoyed a lot of good fun and companionship in the process. – cont. -

Reports

Pushing the Possibilities – *learning through adventure*

“Pushing the possibilities a bit more, I can now boast that I have rock-climbed, abseiled from great heights, canoed the rapids, and survived in the wild forest. Exaggerated of course, but It is true to say that on all subsequent “keeping active” walks, I have been on the lookout for good tinder and sticks for the cooking fire, and the best position for building a natural material shelter; and all rock faces are now scanned for likely hand- and foot-holds.

“Where does it all end? Maybe it doesn’t: our group intends to re-group for a local hike or two and maybe even an outdoor weekend or a few days away (but taking our mentor Nick with us!). There is also the opportunity to join the band of course volunteers. In conclusion, WinG’s PP 55 course is stimulating and confidence-boosting and I highly recommend it. Don’t think you are too old: one of our group is 80 years young! Start by going to an Open Day – there’s nothing to lose and a lot to gain.”

If you want to know about future courses, please ring WinG on 0191 487 9356 or email contactus@wing.org.uk .

Money Matters

Can we talk about debt?

“The pressure, you can’t explain it. It’s every day ... I had to go to the doctor and go on anti-depressants ... You can’t sleep. It’s just there all the time. After work I would drive round the town rather than come home to it all.” (Interview with woman in her 50s, teaching assistant.)

Do you have any money worries? Are you behind with any of your bills? Do you have enough money for food? Being in debt can make you feel very alone, but the truth is that over 3.3 million people in Britain struggled with debt last year. Quite often there will be something that triggers our money problems, for example a serious accident or illness, redundancy, a divorce or even the death of a partner. All these major life-events are difficult enough to deal with on their own, so when we start to struggle with our finances as well it can all seem overwhelming.

Talking about money matters can be tricky. No one wants to feel embarrassed by discussing their private financial circumstances, but sometimes we need to get things out in the open and ask for some help: a problem shared is a problem halved and there are always organisations and groups that can support you. A good place to start is your local Citizens Advice Bureau. The Newcastle branch is now based on the 4th floor of City Library, and you can pop in without an appointment between 10am and 3pm Monday to Friday.

For more information on dealing with debt, please visit www.informationnow.org.uk/articles/467/dealing-with-debt .

Money Matters

Saving? or borrowing?

If we asked you what a credit union is, you might be able to tell us. If we asked you where your nearest union is, you might happen to know; but most likely you'll be among the millions of British citizens who are unsure or simply don't know about their local credit unions. For those of you who do know, you may be under the impression that credit unions are for the poor, for those who have no access to high-street borrowing or banking, but you'd be mistaken. Credit unions provide a "financial community". The idea is that members benefit equally as there's no profit for any third parties. Although this can often mean helping those who can't get access to high-street bank products, it also offers those who can afford to save an ethical choice for growing their money locally, while at the same time providing a welcome alternative to high-cost credit (payday loans and doorstep lending) for those in their community who need it most. Additionally, even those who can afford to borrow from high-street lenders may benefit from the low interest rates credit unions are bound to.

"So, what exactly is a credit union?" Historically, credit unions are small, non-profit financial organisations set up by members with something in common to benefit their local community. The common factor may be living in the same area, working for the same company or industry (e.g. the Police Credit Union) or belonging to a particular trade union. Credit unions offer savings and loan facilities and in some cases bank accounts and even mortgages. Most credit unions now operate in person and online with many credit unions having at least one high-street branch. The members also own and control the union through elected committees. Finally, all of the saved money is insured and guaranteed just as in a bank.

"So if there's no profit, where's the return?" When a member takes out a loan, an affordable repayment amount is agreed and this amount includes a savings deposit and a low level of interest. At the end of the financial year, the interest from all of the loans is used to pay for running costs (human resources, premises, utility bills, etc.) and any remaining profit is split between all members (with a positive balance) as a dividend. As the dividend is split equally depending on share value (£1 in savings equals 1 share), the more you save, the larger your share of the dividend will be.

So why should you save with a credit union? By saving with a credit union instead of a bank, you guarantee your money stays local; you directly help those in need within your community; and you have access to affordable credit should you require it.

If you want to find a credit union suitable for you, you can ask Citizens Advice, use a business directory or, if you have access to the internet, you can use ABCUL's "Find Your Credit Union" www.findyourcreditunion.co.uk website or call ABCUL on 0800 015 3060.

Some credit unions have annual fees and charges, joining fees, withdrawal fees and minimum deposits. But many credit unions have no fees, so shop around until you find a union that's right for you. Additionally, make sure that the credit union is registered with the Prudential Regulation Authority and the Financial Conduct Authority.

Money Matters

Compare prices and switch



Michael, aged 78, who lives alone in a two-bedroomed terraced house in Walker, is a Wor Hoose regular.

Michael attends Wor Hoose's older men's games group to meet up with friends for a game of dominoes, a cuppa and to have a chat; he also attends arts and craft sessions and says he enjoys getting out and seeing people. During one session in March 2014, Michael mentioned that he had received a reminder letter to renew his home and contents insurance, which was due to expire. Usually he just agrees the insurers' new quote and they take the amount straight out of his bank account.

Michael said that he was paying over £550 a year for home and contents insurance with an insurance company to whom he had remained loyal for 30 years, never making a claim. Michael brought his insurance renewal letter and certificate to Wor Hoose and their Outreach Worker said that she would carry out an insurance comparison search online to see if he could get cheaper comprehensive cover elsewhere. Michael agreed to this, even though he naively believed that his insurance company could be trusted and he was being charged the going rate.

However, they found that Michael was being charged a higher premium rate as he was paying for the possibility of a terrorist attack taking place close to his home and for accidental damage from trees blowing down, even though he had no trees in his garden. Through showing him how to do a price comparison search online using a computer, Wor Hoose helped Michael cancel his original policy and switch to another company, where his new annual premium was just £144.32.

Michael was extremely grateful for the support from Wor Hoose and said he wouldn't have changed his policy if they hadn't helped him do so.

To find out more about Wor Hoose, which operates mainly in the East End, please ring Liz Coates on [0191 287 2885](tel:01912872885) or email her at liz.worhoose@hotmail.co.uk.



Your care, your feedback

Healthwatch Newcastle is here to make sure that the voice of patients, carers and the public is heard by the people who plan and provide social care and health services.

We have an online tool where you can search for social care and health services in the city, as well as review and rate them using a star system.

If you don't have access to the internet, please ring 0808 178 9282 (*free from landlines*) for a feedback leaflet.

The information you provide also helps Healthwatch Newcastle to analyse local trends, with the ultimate aim of making sure that everyone in Newcastle receives great care.

Your views matter – so please share your experiences.

To give feedback please go to:

www.healthwatchnewcastle.org.uk/services

Care Home Survey

Healthwatch Newcastle is also conducting a survey of the city's care homes. If you live in a Newcastle care home, or have a relative who does, please complete their survey. By doing so, you will get your views heard and help improve services. All information will be treated confidentially and remain anonymous.

For the **residents' survey**, please visit:

www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/care-home-residents .

Relatives' survey, please visit:

www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/care-home-relatives .

If you prefer a paper copy of the survey, please ask a member of staff for one; if you have any questions, please call Freephone 0808 178 9282.

Please submit your completed survey by Friday 30 September; send your paper survey to: FREEPOST, HEALTHWATCH, NEWCASTLE.

Things to do...

Standing Taller Exercise Class for over-50s

Want to develop your balance, strength and posture?

Jesmond Pool are putting on a new class to maintain your fitness; they say that it's your next step if you've attended *Stand Tall Don't Fall* or *Staying Steady* or do other fitness activities.

When: Fridays, 11.30am-12.15pm

Where: Jesmond Pool

Cost: £4 per class

For further information: Contact Jesmond Pool on 0191 281 2482.

Are you struggling with both sight and hearing difficulties?

Then go to the Hub's 'Talk and Try' coffee afternoon.

Talk to staff from *In Good Hands* about what support you can get.

Try some easy-to-use equipment to help with daily tasks (e.g., pouring hot drinks, listening to radio, watching TV), using amplified and large-buttoned phones, reading and writing aids...and more.

**Tuesday 13 September from 1.30 to 3.30pm
at the Baptist Church (The Hub), Westgate Road**

To book your place, ring Search on 0191 273 7443 or email info@searchnewcastle.org.uk.



Dance City Taster Dance Day for people aged 55+

Following the success of last year's event Dance City will be holding a taster day for people aged 55+ on Sunday 2 October.

This is a fun and lively event for anyone who wants to try dance, and costs just £2 to take part. Whether you're a regular dancer or completely new to dance, you are welcome to pop along. Try out a variety of styles – Tap, Ballet, Pilates, Salsa – with their friendly and professional teachers and / or go along to one of their Dance for people with Dementia or Dance for people with Parkinson's sessions.

The morning or afternoon session costs just £2. (The Dementia or Parkinson's tasters are FREE). To book a place call 0191 261 0505.

Information

Phone scams: things to watch out for

Which?, the consumer organisation, have told us to be aware of phone scams. They say that it might be a scam if:

- you're asked to authorise the transfer of money to a new account;
- you've never heard of the company or person before;
- you're asked to hand over cash;
- you're asked to give your PIN or passwords in full;
- the caller says that they'll send someone to your home to collect cash, bank cards or anything else;
- you're asked to send personal or banking information via email or text.



If you're contacted by anyone asking you for personal details or passwords (such as for your bank account number), you should take steps to check the true identity of the organisation. Ask the caller to verify their identity by asking them to give you details that only that company would know, such as details of your service contract or how much you pay per month.

If you still have concerns about the caller's identity, you should hang up and call the company back, and preferably from a different phone.

Never disclose the following details:

- A four-digit card PIN to anyone, including a bank or the Police.
- A full password or online banking codes.
- Personal details, unless you are sure who you are talking to.

Stop silent calls?

In our July-August edition, we gave you some advice about how to stop silent calls on your telephone. Unfortunately, although we always get our advice from a reputable source, in this case we boobed. Sorry!

As a result of the experience of a member who followed our advice and registered with SilentCall-Gard, we are now suggesting that you do NOT register with this site: it is commercial, not official, and could sell your data on to people who do not have your best interests at heart.

Again, our apologies.

Unfortunately, although we normally get our advice from reputable sources, in this case we boobed. Sorry!

Information Board

Community Carpet Bowls Club

On Saturday 10 September the Robert Stewart Memorial Church, and Community Carpet Bowls Club are hosting an open afternoon from 2 to 4pm. Then on Tuesday 27 September Robert Stewart Memorial Church, Community Carpet Bowls Club and Greening Wingrove are putting on a taster session from 5 to 7pm. Both events will take place at the Robert Stewart Memorial Church on the corner of Wingrove Road and Hadrian Road.

Everyone is welcome to come along and try their hand at carpet bowls. A cup of tea or coffee with light refreshments will be available.



Age UK Newcastle Will Day Tuesday 29 September

Age UK Newcastle would like to offer you the opportunity to come along to their Will Open Day to see a friendly local solicitor and make your will. The cost is just £50 (or £80 for a couple making mirror wills) although any donations over and above this amount would be very gratefully received.

To find out more or to book an appointment please call the Advice and Support Team on 0191 232 6488 or

email enquiries@ageuknewcastle.org.uk

VOLUNTEERS

You won't believe what you can do!

Anyone for coffee?



A researcher at Northumbria University would like healthy volunteers aged between 61 and 80 to take part in a study of "mental performance enhancing the effects of coffee". You'd be asked to go to the City Campus for one 3-hour session and three 2½-hour sessions; for this you'd be given £60.

To express your interest or for further information, please ring Jo Forster on 0191 243 7252 or email her at jo.forster@northumbria.ac.uk.

Johnny's easy tips for maintaining health and strength

Exercise while cleaning your teeth

When cleaning your teeth, bend your knees into a squat position as low and as wide as is comfortable. Hold this for as long as you comfortably can without straining. Hold onto the sink with one hand if necessary and try to keep your back straight.

This is not a quick-fix exercise. It's a procedure to practise for life, so take it easy in the beginning. If you can do this twice a day, every day, imagine the improvement you will see and feel in your legs and hips!

Start today and good luck!

Editors' note: We hope to make Johnny's tips a regular feature of the Newsletter. So please write in and tell us how you got on with this first one. (Two members of the editorial team have already tried it and report success.)

A tribute to

Professor Jan Reed

It was with great sadness that we learned of the death of Professor Jan Reed from Northumbria University. Jan Reed was a great friend of the Elders Council. In the early days of our development, Jan worked with us to pioneer approaches to the involvement of older people in research, including training older people as researchers. This research (*Older people involved in policy and planning: factors which support engagement*) was published in 2008 and from it we learnt about the important role which we as older people can play in shaping research. The Old Spice drama group worked closely with Jan over many years, in particular in relation to engaging older people in teaching nursing and social work students.

Jan was also instrumental in introducing Appreciative Inquiry to Newcastle. Jan organised workshops for participants



from different sectors in the city to come together to learn about the approach. We have continued to apply Appreciative Inquiry (AI) in a number of different settings in the city, as Jan continued her pioneering work in using AI as a research framework. Jan believed that research should make a practical difference to people's lives, and she certainly made a difference to the way in which the Elders Council developed and the confidence she gave us in carving out a role for older people in research and teaching.

Correspondence

Dear Editors,

Research study into why some people on intensive care units get chest infections

Many of you very kindly got in touch after reading about my research study in the Elders Council newsletter July/August issue and, although not everyone who contacted us was able to take part, I would like to say thank you very much for your interest. A special thank you goes to those who donated blood for the study at the RVI over the last few weeks, as having such a good number of volunteers across a fairly wide age-range has been exceptionally helpful and allowed me to develop my research as I had hoped.

I would also like to thank everyone involved in the production of the Elders Council newsletter for their help.

Yours truly,
Dr Jason Powell

Newsletter Costs

Each edition of the newsletter costs the Elders Council nearly £600 to post out to members (plus about £1125 for printing). So we'd be really grateful if you could help to reduce these costs.

1. If you agree to take the newsletter electronically (by email), not only do you get your copy in colour and earlier than if you got it by post; it also means that we're saving on postage. To sign up for this service see details on pg. 28.
2. If you agree to deliver some newsletters in your neighbourhood by hand, we save on the postage and you get to have a bit of exercise and perhaps meet and chat with neighbours (just ring the doorbell and hand over their copy of the newsletter personally).

We'd be very grateful if you could choose either of these options. Please ring Anne Richardson (0191 208 2701) or email her (anne.richardson@qualityoflife.org.uk) and let her know

3. The third way you could help is by giving a donation to the Elders Council to cover postage and production costs. (See the donation form below and on pg. 26.
4. Or you could help by using the **Give as You Live** system, giving money to the Elders Council each time you shop online.

Donations and Gift Aid

Could you please help by making a Gift Aid donation to help cover the costs of the production of the Newsletter?

✂.....

PLEASE HELP THE ELDERS COUNCIL TO CONTINUE ITS WORK

I wish to donate £7.50 [] £15 [] £30 [] Other [£] to the Elders Council of Newcastle and enclose a cheque for that amount. Please send to Elders Council office (address details on page 28).

Name: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____

Please tick if you require a receipt (✓).

✂.....

Poetry

A Grand Day Out

A lovely day out, won't it be grand
Down by the sea, we'll sit on the sand
Take your shoes off and your socks
Go for a plodge – phew what a shock
To bathe in the sea, you need to be brave
But it's great when you dive thru a wave
Grand-dad's asleep in his deckchair
Hankie on head to protect his thin hair
Dad's chair really is all wonky
Mam, can I have a ride on a donkey
Now it's time for our tea
Sandy sarnies for you and me
In your bag, what else have you got?
Phew, blimey isn't it hot
Time to go, Mum's in a tizzy
Cos the metro is really busy
Pail and spade she cannot reach
Mam, we left them on the beach
Home at last, gee I'm shattered
We enjoyed it, that's all that mattered
Put your feet up, have some tea and toast
After a lovely day at the coast

Eileen De-Voy

Donations and Gift Aid

If you would like us to claim Gift Aid relief (so that we can claim back money from the Treasury), please complete the relevant boxes below:

Charity: The Elders Council of Newcastle Ltd.

- I confirm I have paid or will pay an amount of Income Tax at least equal to the Amount of tax that the charity will reclaim on my gifts.
- I confirm that this donation and all previous and future gifts of money to the Elders Council should be treated as Gift Aid donations.

Please notify us if you wish to cancel this declaration.

Thank you.

Poetry Corner

Rocking Chair

It stood covered with dust in the corner,
Its rockers were buckled and worn,
Where once it was shiny and golden,
It was now just a dark shade of fawn.

The auctioneer looked and then muttered,
“It’s probably made of good oak,
I’ll just ask for £10 as a starter
Any more would just be a joke.”

The chair just stood there in silence,
Could no one remember the time,
It was loved and used by so many,
That their pride in it helped it to shine.

It had rocked when bombs kept on falling,
And people were shaking with fright
It had also swayed mothers with babies,
As they nursed them to sleep every night.

And whenever children had parties,
The chair was the favourite you know,
They’d all make a smart line and try to behave,
Then laugh as they each had their go.

But the families are now all departed,
So the chair just sat there in gloom.
But then was heard the voice of a woman
Somewhere inside of the room.

“Oh! darling don’t you think it is perfect?”
He smiled as if to agree,
“Let’s buy and repair it together,
Make it special for you and for me.”

Now restored the chair has a new life,
All complete it now rocks in the sun,
And glows as though it remembers,
The auction and then the outcome.

And if rocking chairs had conversation,
It would say, and I’m willing to bet,
“I may be quite old and quite creaky
But there’s life in the Old Rocker yet.”

Ann McAnelly

Newsletter Information

Newsletter Articles

If you would like to submit an article to be considered for the November/December 2016 edition of the Newsletter, will you please ensure that you forward it before Thursday 13 October.

Newsletter in other formats

We can make our Newsletter available in alternative formats (e.g. in **larger print** or audio tape or an audio CD). Please just let Anne know what format you would like (0191 208 2701)

Electronic Version of the Newsletter

It costs about £1.20 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?

Contact Details

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