Elders Council Annual General Meeting

It was good to see so many members at our Annual General Meeting on 6 July at the Royal Station Hotel. We had a very full and varied meeting which was opened by Councillor Jane Streather, Portfolio holder for Public Health and Housing. Jane commend Elders Council on being such a vibrant, forward-thinking organisation, and the important role it plays in encouraging and enabling older people to have a voice in policy and service development. She talked about the ambition to make Newcastle a healthy city, embracing the learning from what it means to be an age-friendly and a dementia-friendly city. Jane also outlined some of the progress being made by the city council to improve the availability of different types of housing in all parts of the city. She concluded by outlining the key elements for a good life: a decent income; a good home; access to a healthy diet; opportunities for exercise; social connections and intellectual stimulation.

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Maureen Tinsley (Chair) presented the Annual Report (see http://www.elderscouncil.org.uk/annual-reports) with Alan Gowers talking about housing; Keith Pimm on the importance of being digitally connected; Halina Figon on the Active Voices course; and Cath Smart on the informative and fun sessions at the Mile Castle.

At his last AGM as Treasurer (although he continues to be a very active member), Bill Ions presented the Annual Accounts.

Maureen thanked Dorothy Ternent, Bill Ions, John Smart and Anita Davies for their invaluable contribution as trustees over many years and welcomed Halina Figon, Esther Salamon and Steve Whitley to the Board.

Members were given the opportunity to discuss the Strategic Plan which has been developed by the Board with members of the Elders Council’s working groups.

The AGM ended with a rousing speech by the Elders Council’s patron and Local Hero John Grundy. John decried the stereotypes of older people and drew attention to the aspects of the Elders Council’s work which demonstrated the contribution which older people make to the life of the city, in particular “Nothing about us without us”. He concluded by giving his key points for a good life: basic security; knowing that you will be looked after if the need arises; living in a supportive community; having a purpose in life – being active and involved and having fun!
### Maureen Tinsley (Chair)
My background includes experience in the NHS – managing counselling services in GP practices in Newcastle and North Tyneside. On retirement, I ran my own business for five years. This background fostered my business development skills and strategic thinking, which I bring to Elders Council development.

I joined the EC board through my interest in the development of suitable housing for older people and continue to value the opportunity to influence policy in this field.

### Steve Whitley (Secretary)
In my working life, I taught linguistics, mainly with students who wanted to work with children. I joined the Elders Council in 2003 and this is my second stint as a trustee.

I am interested in communication and co-ordinate the Communication Working Group (newsletter, radio, social media, etc.).

### Nick Lambert (Treasurer)
I am a recently retired chartered accountant with a degree in Law. I spent the first half of my working life in practice, becoming a partner in Grant Thornton. For the second half, I spent twenty-five years with Newcastle-based Orchard Information Systems as Finance Director. I am a past President of the Northern Society of Chartered Accountants. I joined the Board of the Elders Council earlier this year.

### Mary Nicholls
My background is in education, working mainly in primary education. I joined the Elders Council and have been a trustee for several years; it’s interesting and challenging. I participate in projects, like "Active Voices" and help with planning for the Mile Castle. I volunteer for other organisations too, which I enjoy. As well as this, I sing in a choir, play steel pans, enjoy cooking and am learning calligraphy.

### John Telfer
After training and working as a lawyer, I have spent many years working with and for people with disabilities. I became increasingly aware that barriers faced by older people are often similar - although distinct. I am proud to be a trustee of the Elders Council, which has allowed me to push for joint working, so promoting the important requirements of older people whilst maintaining our independence.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Background and Experience</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Esther Salamon</td>
<td>I have long experience managing multi-disciplinary projects across voluntary, public and private sectors. Areas of expertise include interim management, governance, project and organisational development, fundraising, and strategic planning and review. I am developing a housing initiative for older artists and other creative professionals who wish to move into a smaller home, maintain their independence and creative production in a safe, stimulating and creative environment, while contributing their skills and knowledge to the vitality of the region.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Violet Rook</td>
<td>I have been a member of the Elders Council for five years; I was elected a trustee in 2015. I am involved in the Transport Group and the Communication Group. A retired nurse and midwife and a tutor in local colleges. My ability in organisation and helping older people is shown via my activity in the community, being a governor in school, college and the ambulance service. I’m also a Parish Councillor, connecting the generations.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Julie Irvine</td>
<td>I am a long-standing member of the Elders Council, believing in the need for a collective voice for older people. Before retirement, I worked in both social and community work, employed in a variety of roles across the statutory and voluntary sector before teaching social work education at Northumbria University. I therefore bring to the Board professional and personal knowledge of research and our health and social care systems, together with some skills in working in partnership.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Halina Figon</td>
<td>I started my career as a translator/interpreter, moving overseas to work in the travel and tourism sectors. Living in politically sensitive developing countries propelled me to work as an environmental awareness consultant committed to poverty reduction. I collaborated with NGOs on EU/donor-aided projects impacting on SMEs, health and educational issues, culture and heritage conservation. I am an advocate for lifelong learning, volunteering and participation in arts and culture that combine to add zest and enthusiasm to Elders Council members.</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Alan Gowers
I have been a member for four years and a trustee since 2016.

My career was spent in consulting and project management in the UK and overseas. I have gained insight on most aspects of Elders Council work through its working groups and as member of the Strategy and Finance Task Force. My areas of current special interest are housing, health/care services, funding plus research and inclusion projects.

Cath Smart
I was a teacher of French, initially in school and then for adult evening classes, finishing with much private tuition to small groups, pairs and individuals of all ages and abilities.

I bring to the Elders Council strong organisational skills, a friendly, welcoming demeanour and the ability to converse with anyone, whatever their situation.

From the Elders Council, I gain much knowledge, much experience and a great sense of community.

Mile Castle drop-in
As per the Annual Report, the Mile Castle continues to inform, entertain and help people keep connected socially.

We have always left August as “blank” in that people are very welcome to come along and enjoy each other’s company but we have nothing at all arranged.

For the next months the following are planned but, as always, there is the knowledge that sometimes things don’t go according to plan although we try to keep to it. However, whatever happens you will be welcomed and find friendship and information that’s as current as we can make it.

Wednesdays at 10.30am:

- 20 September     Keeping Your Home Cosy
- 18 October       Moneywise Credit Union
- 15 November      Information Now
- 20 December      A Christmas Cornucopia!

Come along and try it out; and if you’re shy come with a friend.
Equality and diversity
Members of the Hospitals Trust Equality, Diversity and Human Rights team (EDHR) have met with us to discuss how they are progressing on issues of importance to older people. Based on our experiences as service users, and as carers, we welcomed in particular some of the developments for patients and their carers following a diagnosis of dementia (for example, a nurse-led clinic to support patients attending the memory clinic, with a named person to contact).

The “Forget-me-not” scheme offers a way for patients to record information about themselves that they would like staff to know, and a Carer Card ensures flexible visiting times for an anxious relative. There is also a memory café at the Melville Unit in the Freeman for newly-diagnosed patients and families. Also of interest are initiatives to ensure that the nutritional needs of older people are met.

Wellbeing
We continue to work jointly with the Friends of Jesmond Library to organise sessions on the first Wednesday of the month offering information about the Five Ways to Wellbeing, as well as tips on what to do. Recent sessions have focused on “Take Part in Art”, resulting in the production of collages, now on show in the library. Equally important was a session called “Healthy Feet and Walking for Wellbeing” and “Enjoying being out and About”. We plan further sessions on “Dancing – Then and Now”, “Hobbies and Pastimes”, “Staying Well” and the occasional seasonal celebration.

Reorganisation
The Board of Trustees has decided that there should be more integration between health, social care and housing; it has therefore decided to bring its work on these areas together into one group, as presented in its Strategic Plan. So in future the working group will be called the Housing, Health and Social Care Group and will deal with those topics in an integrated way.

Transport and Highways Working Group
A couple of updates on heavy rail and light rail.

Central Station
Members of the Working group were able to visit the Central Station as guests of Virgin Trains East Coast, who manage the operation.

The visit included a tour of the station including the station announcer’s office, the ticket offices and the train simulator room. The proposals for extending catering facilities and franchises in the refurbished foyer were also explained and should give additional choice to rail travellers.
Metro
The guest speaker at the last meeting of the Group was Huw Lewis, Customer Services Director of Nexus, who reported on the following issues:

- Metro: Nexus now directly operates the Metro. Staff have transferred and all have had refresher training. A new management team is in place and the key issue for them to deal with is that of reliability of rolling stock. Despite this, Huw was able to report an improvement in punctuality for the quarter ending June 2017.
- South Gosforth (Killingworth Road) bridge: the line over the bridge will be closed for five weeks while the road is widened and a new bridge put in place. The line will open again by 2 September.
- Cycle trial: there were no significant problems revealed by the trial. The next step is to hold a period of consultation.
- Mobility scooters: mobility scooters are incompatible with the Metro as it is currently configured, especially at stations; so the ban will remain. But power chairs and manual wheelchairs are allowed.
- Future plans: Nexus has asked the government to grant them £435m to renew the old train fleet. Talks about this request continue; if the funds become available, it will take five years for a new fleet to become operational.

Finally, to report that, in addition to the closure of the Killingworth Road Metro bridge, there are major road works taking place at that point and the road will remain closed until February 2018. The works will include the replacement of three main gas supply lines and substantial widening of the road to include proper pavements and a cycle way.

We are still waiting for the revised plans for the nearby Haddricks Mill roundabout alterations.

Summer outings with your bus-pass
There is still time to get your copy of the very useful and popular leaflet on interesting places to go by bus this summer. Get your copy off our website www.elderscouncil.org.uk or send a self-addressed A4 envelope with a large-letter stamp on it to Anne Richardson (address on the back page).

This 2017 edition of the leaflet is the last compiled by Mervin Dixon and we repeat our thanks to him for all the work he has done on previous leaflets and for the pleasure that he has given to so many older people. Readers will be glad to hear, however, that, hopefully, Bill Harbottle will take over, helped by Mervin and Richard Rook.
The future of parks and open spaces in the city continues to be a major issue for the working group. The recent consultation exercise revealed many reservations about the public accountability of any future charitable trust (see Keith Pimm’s letter on pg.18 of the May/June issue of the Newsletter), as well as the practicality of managing the range and variety of over 33 parks and recreation areas. Yet it is vital for public health and wellbeing that there continues to be free access to outdoor, attractive and enjoyable spaces and activities. In the meantime, members of the working group will be out and about doing a systematic survey of the main parks, checking on amenities and activities, and particularly looking out for what is most enjoyable and fun. We plan to have our evidence ready about what is going well now and therefore what we would like in the future if there have to be changes. So if you are out and about in your park, please share your observations with us. We would like to hear of any good experiences – and even those not so good.

The Local Development Framework will be the subject of consultation starting in October. The title may not sound very inspiring but it is important because it is really the ways and means that will enable our aspirations for a healthy, thriving city to actually happen. So we need to be ready to participate in discussion and debate about the future of the city. In the meantime, members have been involved in two other planning issues.

**Tall Buildings Scoping Report**
A draft supplementary planning document (SPD) was published for consultation. This is all about the City Council having the power to control the number, design, height and siting of tall structures. Members agreed that there should be controls over developments, with particular attention to locations close to historic buildings, and also any sitings in clusters which could overshadow surrounding buildings and result in uncomfortable wind-flow patterns. It is also important to have attractive arcades at ground level rather than faceless blocks of masonry. Attention must be paid to the skyline, which should not be dominated by a mass of tall structures.

**Stephenson Monument/Westgate Road**
Following the recent changes in traffic circulation around the Central Station area, it is now being planned that the former traffic island on which the Stephenson Monument stands should be upgraded to become an attractive public space. This area is of historic importance, honouring Stephenson’s contribution to the industrial development of the region, but also close to some remains of the Roman Wall and of the city wall. So
it is important that pedestrians have easy and safe access and that traffic circulates freely; but it is also important that there is appreciation of links with the past history of the city, with refreshed interpretation boards and some comfortable seats.

**Jesmond Community Festival**

Over three weeks in May, community organisations in Jesmond joined together to put on 129 events for residents and friends, with increased attendances and enthusiastic participation by both young and old. Elders Council members helped to organise two of those events.

**Fun and fitness for the over-50s**

This event was held in Jesmond Dene Visitor Centre. It included Easy Exercise to Music, led by Joan Holmes, and a presentation by the Friends of Jesmond Dene about their regular activities, such as:

- Adopt a Plot
- organised walks
- looking after the nature area
- looking after the archives

The fun part of the afternoon was provided by Rookie Sports, who got everyone involved in testing their skills in hitting targets (soft balls only, of course). And they had lots of ideas for follow-up activities (see [www.informationnow.org.uk](http://www.informationnow.org.uk) and insert "Rookie Sports" into the search facility for further information).

**Put a Song in Your Heart**

Fifty-five older residents of Jesmond, Sandyford and South Gosforth enjoyed a wonderful afternoon's entertainment at Chapman House (the Junior Department of Newcastle High School for Girls) on 18 May, as part of Jesmond Community Festival (see photo). The event, jointly arranged by the school and the Elders Council, included a performance by dancers from the school; and the audience took part in a musical entertainment provided by Kathryn Davidson and friends. A quiz was set by Don Perry and the delicious tea was provided by the school. Pamela Denham acted as compere for the afternoon and free transport was provided by the festival organisers.
Elders Council at Work
Communication Working Group

Facebook

The Elders Council is going to dip its toes into the 21st century: we intend to start a Facebook group and send out regular e-bulletins.

We'll need a group of members who are willing to learn how to set up a group and then commit some (not much, we foresee) time to managing it.

Do you know a fellow member who would be willing to do this? If so, please ask them to put their name forward. Or, better still, have a go yourself – it should be fulfilling. Please ring Steve on 0191 273 4727 or email him at steve.whitley@phonecoop.coop.

E-bulletins

This Newsletter is now being published quarterly. But we still want to keep you informed about what’s going on in between editions. So we’ve decided to send out a regular e-bulletin. We’re not sure yet whether the bulletins will be published weekly or fortnightly, but we intend to be guided by your feedback. So, if you’re on email, please let us know what you think when you get your first bulletin and the ones that follow.

Radio

Everyone’s tomorrow – today!, the Elders Council radio programme, is broadcast on wavelength 102.5fm from 2 to 4pm on the first Friday of every month. Please tune in and let us know what you think of the show. Or send us requests for us to play your favourite piece of music – we’ll do our best to oblige.

Each broadcast has a particular theme. In August, it was “My favourite Newcastle building”; the September theme will be “Underground Newcastle” and in October we hope to be telling you about the Elders Council and social media (see above).
Travelling can be tricky for people with a disability, elderly people, mums-to-be, people carrying infants, injured people, or those less able to stand, including people with hidden disabilities and conditions.

**Tyne & Wear METRO** has introduced a badge scheme that they hope will help to make sure that these people can get a seat when they need it.

**What should an able-bodied person do if they see someone with a badge?**
If they see someone with a badge and they are sitting down, they should get up and offer them their seat. Nexus would like to encourage passengers to be kind and offer their seat to those that are less able to stand.

**I am less able to stand myself. Am I expected to move for badge holders?**
No. It is recognised that many passengers who need a seat might not have a badge. Nexus trust people to use their common sense and show kindness where they can.

**How do I get a badge?**
You can pick up a badge from a Nexus Travel Shop.

**Do I need to show evidence of my condition to apply?**
No. If you need a badge, Nexus will not give you the third degree to prove your need for a badge; Nexus expect you to be honest and use your common sense.

**Do I have to explain to other passengers why I need a seat?**
No. Not everyone is comfortable with asking fellow passengers to give up a priority seat and explaining why this is necessary. The purpose of the badge is to eliminate the need to explain the reason for needing a seat.

**What about Priority Seats?**
The badges work alongside priority seating and are not intended to replace them. Priority seats are located close to the doors, so they are more accessible than the other seats. Priority seats should be given up to people who need them more, such as those with a disability, elderly people, mums-to-be, or people carrying infants.
Heike Pichler, a lecturer at Newcastle University, has advice on communicating with older people. She writes:

Language, whether spoken, written or signed, is central to our quality of life and sense of autonomy. It enables us to build social relationships, maintain contact with family and friends, and exchange information with service providers. Yet some individuals’ ability to produce and comprehend language can be affected by ageing-related changes to the brain, muscles and hearing. For example, someone with memory problems or hearing loss may find it difficult to process long sentences or talk in noisy environments.

In their attempt to promote effective communication with older people, younger adults often adopt so-called “elderspeak”: they reduce the length of sentences, simplify their grammar, use basic vocabulary, repeat utterances, slow their speaking rate, elevate their pitch or volume, and exaggerate intonation. Some aspects of elderspeak (e.g., simple sentences) can increase comprehension, particularly among older people living with dementia. However, others (e.g., slow speech rate, exaggerated intonation) may in fact impair comprehension. Crucially, because they are not deaf to its patronising nature, healthy older people who are repeatedly exposed to elderspeak may suffer a loss of self-esteem, withdraw from social activities, or even experience more rapid mental decline.

Key to successful and rewarding communication with older people is that we avoid stereotyping their mental and linguistic abilities, and that we take the following steps:

- minimise background noise;
- face older people when speaking with them, with our lips at the same level as theirs;
- speak in short and simple sentences when conveying important information;
- use visual aids (e.g., pictures, diagrams) to help comprehension of important points;
- genuinely listen to them.

Improved communication can contribute to older people’s social and mental wellbeing as well as their sense of independence. Moreover, those who frequently use language as part of their lives evince slower linguistic decline. So, let’s talk more with older people and let’s fully support their advanced storytelling skills.

Editors’ note: We older people understand the value of Heike’s advice; it’s younger people and professionals who need it. So please show this article to your younger friends, family and others.
Free Friendship Service for older people
Loneliness is a growing problem for older people. Over one million older people say that they always or often feel lonely.

Good company and conversation is enjoyable and important for our wellbeing. A regular telephone call or visit from one of Independent Age’s volunteers can make all the difference. It provides the chance to have a regular chat with someone friendly and trustworthy.

Their volunteers are people who enjoy listening, talking and getting to know people. They are trained by Independent Age and have the checks you would expect. Some older people receive regular phone calls and some receive visits at home. The first step is for the older person or representative to call Independent Age. They will discuss your needs and preferences, and then together will work out what would work best for you.

If you would like to find out more about their Face to Face friendship services on Tyneside, which include Step by Step extra support, or about volunteering opportunities, please call Harriet or Kay at the Newcastle Office on 0191 731 4000 or email harriet.critchley@independentage.org; or you could visit the website: www.independentage.org. For information or advice, please ring the helpline: 0800 319 6789.
Have You Made Your Will?

Age UK Newcastle would like to offer you the opportunity to come along to their Will Open Day on Wednesday 27 September to see a solicitor and make your will.

The cost is just £50 (or £80 for a couple).

To find out more or to book an appointment, please contact the Advice & Support Team on 0191 232 6488.

Lasting Power Of Attorney: New Service

A Lasting Power of Attorney (LPA) allows you to give someone you trust the legal power to make decisions on your behalf about your finances and/or your health and welfare in case you later become unable to make decisions for yourself.

There are many reasons why you might be unable to make decisions for yourself. For example, you could have dementia, a mental health condition, a brain injury or a stroke. If you cannot make decisions for yourself, it is called “not having capacity”.

If you have not made an LPA and you lose the capacity to make decisions regarding your finances and or your health and welfare, then an application may need to be made to the Court of Protection to appoint a deputy to manage your affairs and make decisions on your behalf. This can be costly and time-consuming.

Age UK Newcastle’s Advice and Support Team are now offering an LPA Form Completion Service to complete simple, straightforward LPAs. All staff have been trained.

The cost is £200 for a single person and £300 for a couple, which, claims Age UK, is a rate much reduced from that charged by most solicitors. Or, if you trust yourself to navigate some fairly complex forms, you can go to www.gov.uk, find the necessary forms and register your LPA for a fee of £82 (£164 for a couple).

For further information about the Age UK service; please ring 0191 232 6488 or email enquiries@ageuknewcastle.org.uk.
Reading Friends: Volunteers Needed

Reading Friends is a Reading Agency UK-wide befriending project funded by The Big Lottery. The project aims to empower, engage and connect vulnerable and isolated older people, people with dementia and carers through social reading activities. Only four pilot projects have been selected in the UK; one of them is being delivered in partnership by Age UK Newcastle and Newcastle City Libraries.

The partnership needs volunteers or ‘reading friends’ who will work with their target groups of customers regularly on either a one-to-one basis in their own homes or with groups of people in a community setting such as a sheltered housing scheme or a library. The reading friends will be using reading materials developed by the Reading Agency to stimulate conversation and discussion and help address loneliness and increase social interaction. As this is a pilot project, the volunteers will also provide feedback to inform the evaluation and further develop the scheme.

To find out more, please ring Yvonne Shanley, Volunteering & Befriending Manager, Age UK Newcastle, on 0191 235 9903 or email her at yvonne.shanley@ageuknewcastle.org.uk.
Things to do…

Challenge your mind with Explore Lifelong Learning

Explore Lifelong Learning provides a varied programme of expert-led learning created to challenge your mind and deliver new experiences. Check out a range of free taster events and the full programme at: www.weareexplore.org.uk.

An interesting event to start with might be a talk by John Grundy, the Elders Council patron.

When: Saturday 23 September  
Time: 1 to 2pm  
Venue: City Library  
Topic: His book *The history of Newcastle*

Please book your place by:  
ringing 0191 261 1633 or  
on their website at www.weareexplore.org.uk.

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Wellbeing for Life Sessions

Wellbeing for Life sessions take place on the first Wednesday of the month 10.30am-12.00 noon at Jesmond Community Library. This has been organised jointly by the Elders Council of Newcastle and Friends of Jesmond Library.

There is no age limit, but the target audience is older people aged 50+, and in particular older people who would like an opportunity to meet socially in the library to hear about fitness-related, creative or simply sociable activities and events happening in the area.

For more information call Jesmond Library on 0191 281 2385 or  
email enquiries@jesmondlibrary.co.uk.
Things to do…

… Outdoor Activity

Pushing the Possibilities .. learning through adventure!

The “Pushing the Possibilities” project offers older people aged over 55 the chance to learn through outdoor activities. The programme gives you the chance to have fun, learn new skills, develop more self-confidence, meet new people and lead a healthier life. Learning through adventure is a powerful way of building confidence and changing people’s views of their own abilities and possibilities.

You can learn more about the project by dropping in on their open day at 13 Walker Terrace, Gateshead, NE8 1EB any time between 10am and 3pm on Friday 8 September. Or you can ring Nick on 0191 267 1579, email him at nickcoates.wing@gmail.com or visit the website at www.wing.org.uk.

Meet me at St. Martin’s

Are you over 55?

Would you like to meet new people or try a new activity?

Why not pop along to one of the relaxed and friendly Meet Me at St. Martin’s groups?

From social groups, exercise classes, lunch club to crafts, they have something for everyone!

There is no need to book, just pop along and see what’s on offer.

For any further information please contact Gail or Lynn on tel 0191 2764002 or call in to St. Martin’s at Roman Avenue, Byker, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2RJ.
Support Services

Lip Reading

Deaflink are working with the Workers Educational Association to run a lip-reading course for people with an acquired hearing loss. The course lasts for 11 weeks, starting on Wednesday 13 September.

**When** 1.30 to 3.30pm on Wednesdays

**Where** Deaflink, 11 Tankerville Place, Jesmond, NE2 3AT.

**Cost** £58.50 (free to students on means-tested entitlements)

For further information, please ring 0191 212 6100 or enrol online at [www.wea.org.uk](http://www.wea.org.uk) (course reference C2523305).

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Newcastle Vision Support

Newcastle Vision Support is the new name for Newcastle Society for Blind People, which is celebrating its 150th anniversary. As part of the celebrations, a conference was held in Newcastle on 24 July with thought-provoking presentations by Selina Mills and Hannah Thompson, pointing out some of the benefits which blind people have brought to all of us (Talking Books being just one of the examples). Bill Norman gave a fascinating whistle-stop tour of the history of the organisation, which will be published by Tyne Bridge Publishing on 12 October – World Sight Day. Given the significant percentage of older people who are visually impaired, there are opportunities for the Elders Council to work with Newcastle Vision Support in the future to address our common aim of improving the quality of life of all older people in the city.
Digital Deli

Did you know?

A recent Ofcom report showed that a quarter of over-75s are now using tablet computers, and nearly half of internet users aged 65-74 have a social media profile.

Are you internet-savvy?

Get online
Newcastle Library is offering free computer training for anybody who wants to learn how to get online. There are various courses available, so you need to ring to find out which one would suit you.

Learn how to:

- use a computer
- send an email
- shop and pay bills online
- search for jobs and apply for benefits online

If you live in Newcastle and need support to get online just call 0191 277 4100 or email getonline@newcastle.gov.uk and tell them your needs.

Techy Tea Party
These informal sessions are for anyone who has a tablet, iPad or smartphone that they want to get more out of. Or for those who are interested in getting one but would like to have a practice first. Topics covered include basic settings, how to secure your device, general navigation and downloading apps. The sessions take place on the second and last Thursday of every month at the City Library, 2.00–3.30pm. You will be able to book a place on a date and time that suits you.

(Please note: If you have an iPad you will need to bring your Apple ID; or if you have a tablet you will need your email address and password).

Booking instructions:

For more information and/or to book a place on a course go to the Newcastle City Libraries Eventbrite page or call 0191 277 4100.
The British Red Cross are setting up a new project which aims to tackle social isolation and loneliness by re-connecting people with their local community.

Loneliness and social isolation can affect anyone of any age. Research has found that people from many walks of life can be affected by loneliness including young mums, those with health and mobility issues, people dealing with bereavement, divorce or separation and those who have recently retired or seen their children leave home. The project aims to offer positive encouragement, practical help and emotional support to assist people to build up confidence for up to three months.

Are you caring, patient and keen to learn new skills?
Currently the project organisers are looking for volunteers who would like to get involved. Through just a few hours a week, you can make a difference to someone experiencing loneliness and social isolation. From having a chat over a cup of tea, to joining them at a local community group, your support could help people towards a brighter and better-connected future.

For more information, please telephone 0772 520 2941 or email ElswickCC@redcross.org.uk.

Would you like to help medical students get a good bedside manner?

Part of the course for first and second-year medics at Newcastle University is to practise their clinical skills on real people. They examine your reflexes, muscular strength, knees/shoulders, eyes, chest, for example – nothing intimate, though.

The people who volunteer for this say that it’s really worthwhile. You get to help the students and that help is really appreciated by them.

If you’re interested, please ring John Higgins on 0191 208 6965 or email him at john.higgins@newcastle.ac.uk.
Volunteering makes you stand out from the crowd

Listening Link
Would you like to make a difference to someone’s life? Are you friendly and good at listening? Newcastle Carers would love to hear from you.

Newcastle Carers is a small charity based on Shields Road in Byker. They support carers – those who look after a family member or friend who is ill, disabled, has mental health problems or is misusing drugs or alcohol. For example, they may be looking after a parent with dementia, a partner who has had a stroke or a child with a learning disability.

Listening Link Volunteers
Listening Link is a volunteer telephone support service for carers. Each carer is matched with a volunteer who will call them regularly for a friendly chat.

Speaking to a volunteer offers carers a chance to share their worries or concerns, providing support and encouragement so that they feel less alone. Being a carer can feel very isolating. A friendly voice on the other end of the phone can make a huge difference.

In your volunteer role you would be asked to telephone the carer you have been matched with, from your own home, usually once a week. Volunteers must be over 18. All volunteers are provided with out-of-pocket expenses, training and support. Newcastle Carers work with people from diverse communities and welcome all enquiries.

If you are interested in volunteering for this important role, please contact Alison Neill for more information on 0191 275 5060 or at alison@newcastlecarers.org.uk.
Dear Editors,

Allan Robertson writes in the May-June 2017 edition of the Newsletter understandably of the danger to cyclists of riding on the road and suggests that cycling on the pavement be allowed in future.

As a 73-year-old who rides on the roads every day, I sympathise as roads are indeed dangerous and many motorists don't understand cyclists' need for space. Both elderly people and children won't cycle on a road for this reason.

However, as a campaigner for better facilities for cycling, I can't support Allan's proposition as it will cause conflict and anxiety, particularly to vulnerable people who also need their own pavement space.

The answer is clear: separate space for cycling which takes part of the road and not the pavement, and has a barrier to prevent cars from driving onto it. This is the solution which is used all over Europe and is spreading across the UK, though far too slowly.

The support of the Elders Council for mandatory cycle lanes on all busy roads within the city would help us to meet this objective sooner rather than later!

Yours truly,

Tony Waterston

Editors’ note: An example of the “separate space for cycling” that Tony advocates can be seen on the southbound carriageway of the Great North Road in Gosforth, adjacent to ASDA.
Dear Editors

I am a professor of Geriatric Medicine at Newcastle University and I love working with older people.

Within the next ten years the number of people on the planet living over the age of 60 will reach one billion; this is something that has never happened before. It is a cause for celebration that humanity has never had so much knowledge, wisdom and experience as we do now. Older people are at the front line of the human ageing experience and turning 60 years old has given me cause to reflect upon, and celebrate my own ageing.

I have decided to celebrate with a series of activities that I love, and use these activities as a focus for fundraising for causes dear to my heart. So this year I am doing the following activities:

• a 1000km bike ride;
• swim a mile in open water – in Loch Lomond in Scotland;
• climb Helvellyn – the third highest mountain in England;
• sail across the Atlantic.

I completed the bike ride in June (Northumberland to Lincolnshire and return); the swim is scheduled for August, the ascent of Helvellyn in September and I am setting off across the Atlantic towards the end of November.

I am using these activities as a focus for charity fund-raising for causes dear to my heart, including Age UK – the UK’s largest charity working with older people.

You can follow my progress and make donations by visiting my “Just Giving” page for Age UK at https://tinyurl.com/ybtm9yqt.

Yours truly,
Stuart Parker
The latest edition of The Golden Guide, the free daily living guide for over-50s in Newcastle and North Tyneside, is now available. It covers “Out and about”, “Home and community”, “Health and wellbeing”, “Finding out about care”, “Money matters” and has a list of useful contact numbers.

You can get your copy through the post by ringing 0191 386 5918 or you can visit www.goldenguide.org.uk.

DATE TO REMEMBER: SUNDAY 15 OCTOBER

Why?

Because that’s the day by which you should have got rid of all your old pound coins. From that day, they cease being legal tender.
Things to do …

The Scotswood Natural Community Garden …

… is offering free workshops in August and September.

- Friday 11 August: Summer wildlife watch
- Friday 18 August: Big summer picnic
- Friday 25 August: Natural crafts

All the above take place in the grounds of the John Marley Centre and last from 10am to 12.30pm.

And then on Friday 8 September they’re organising a trip to Durham Botanic Garden. If you want to go, please let them know by Tuesday 29 August.

For further information and to book for the Durham trip, please ring Leanne on 0191 200 4706 or email her at leanne@sncg.org.uk.

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 Corner

Sleep

My world wants to go to sleep:
Eyelids, heavy, want to shut.
There’s a kind of a hush in this
City library that wraps me –
I am cosy in a cocoon.
This half-sleep, half-awake state
Seduces those who are ready.

But I didn’t know it’s coming.
I was too busy mouthing my wrath –
Why this? Why that? Why me?
I was losing my way.
Then came this trance
Out of the blue, and in an instant
I am in its embrace.
So sleep, dreamer, sleep
And forget the world.
At least for now.

ASIT MAITRA

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.
A Day at the Park

Off to the park we did go
Four of us in tow
Sandwiches put into a box
I don’t suppose we’ll see a fox
Drinks we’ll buy on the way

Into my bag a ball was put
Two small bats was a must
We got there many like us
We all settled down no fuss
Plenty of room no need to crush

A radio was playing nearby
Children’s laughter, a baby’s cry
Then out of nowhere an ice cream van
Everyone formed a queue to buy
Lolly, cornets with flakes to try

A lovely day was had by all
Litter picked up none left behind
Look after your park that’s near to you
I’ll leave you now and say goodbye

Brenda Hamilton
If you would like to submit an article to be considered for the November 2017 to January 2018 edition of the Newsletter, will you please ensure that you forward it before Friday 13 October.

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)

It costs about £1.35 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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