



The Echo

The Magazine of the Elders Council

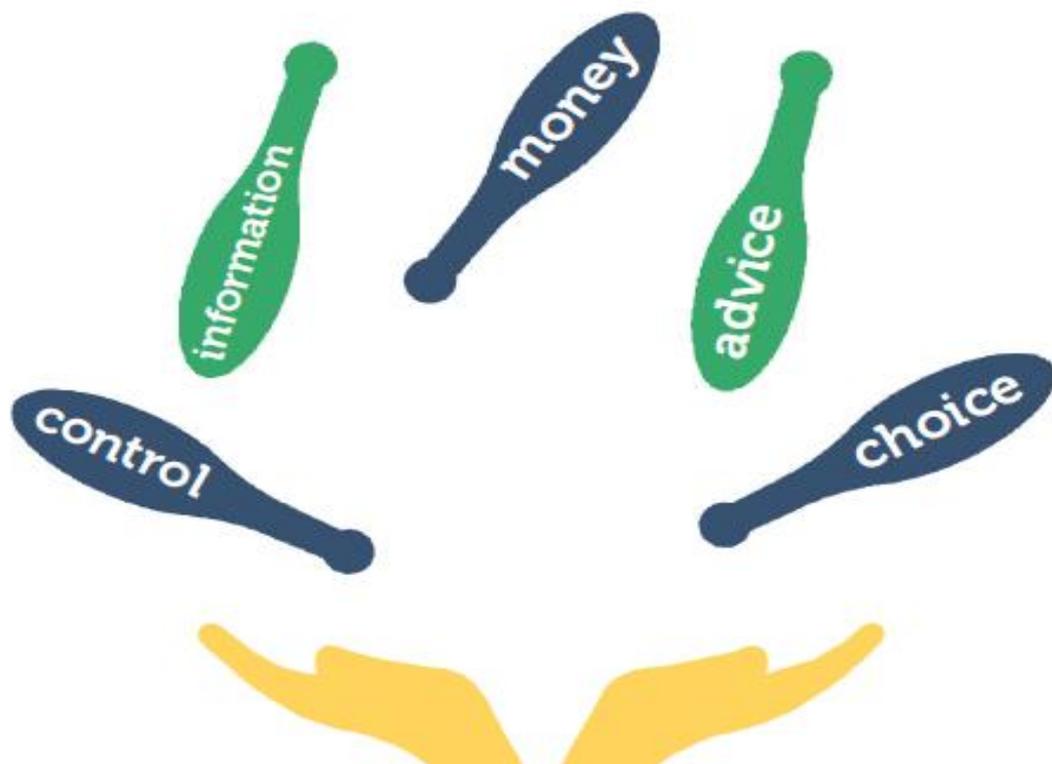
Issue 92

February – April 2021

Managing the Home Care Circus

**Voices of Experience: thinking ahead
about care at home**

A report by the Elders Council of Newcastle
November 2020



Managing the Home Care Circus

We all want to live in the place we call home with the people and things we love, in communities where we look out for one another, doing the things that matter to us.

Do you agree with this statement? It's from a new organisation called 'Social Care Future'. Surely, most of us want to stay independent even when we need some support to do so. Why then, is this so difficult to think about and actually achieve?

The Elders Council decided to find out what advice our members would give to anyone thinking about getting some help to stay at home when daily activities are getting hard to manage. This followed the decision at the last EC AGM to make 'social care' a priority. Our investigation focused on 'home care' (the official term often used for getting paid support to manage). Now we are pleased to announce the launch of a report based on all our work! It is called

Managing the Home Care Circus.

Voices of Experience: thinking ahead about care at home

We deliberately chose the notion of a circus when talking about something as personal as support in the home. The idea came from an EC member who wrote about being the 'ringmaster of my own care services'. Trying to 'jump through hoops' and 'juggle balls in the air' seemed to exactly describe the experience of many older citizens.

Our report seeks to inform our members and, more generally, older people in Newcastle about home care. So, we looked at older people's understanding of social care as well as evaluated organisations that offer useful advice. In the last issue of 'The Echo' we reported on the very mixed understanding people can have about social care in general. We also stressed the need for effective sources of information. Our report identifies two particularly useful sources of information and advice about home care:

InformationNOW

This is a website for adults, carers and families living in Newcastle and has a wealth of valuable and local information about a whole range of topics including home care. Contact them on www.informationnow.org.uk

Independent Age

This is a national charity that provides free impartial information and advice on its website. It also has a free telephone helpline on 0800 319 6789. It can provide leaflets and guides on home care as well. Contact them on www.independentage.org

However, the main findings came from a number of interviews with older people who had personal experience of home care. A number of themes emerged.

Key messages

1. Be proactive in asking for help;
2. Plan ahead: start thinking early about the future;
3. Seek advice and support;
4. Get assessed and know how the system works;
5. Find out about specific services and the costs involved;
6. Sort out legal and financial matters.



Over the next few months, the Elders Council plans to share these findings across the city. We will look at each of these points in more detail in future editions of 'The Echo' as well as share our report with Newcastle City Council and other relevant organisations. There will also be interviews on 'Older Voices', the Elders Council's own radio show. The Elders Council is also creating an animated video with 6 characters talking about their experiences.

All Elders Council members will soon get a copy of the report by email but, if you would like a paper copy, then do please contact the Elders Council office. We want this report to go to as many people as possible to do share it widely! **Report by Julie Irvine**



During the pandemic, being connected on-line – whether via a smartphone, tablet or laptop – has

proved a real life-line for many of us. We’ve been able to meet up with others or do our Pilates or activity sessions via Zoom and Teams. We’ve ordered our prescriptions; booked our GP appointments; booked our time slot at a National Trust property or gone to the theatre from the comfort of our sofas. Most importantly, we have been connected to others.

We have also worried about those who are unable to connect in this way because they don’t have suitable equipment or access to the internet. So, we decided to do something about it! We have been successful in our application to the Postcode Community Trust to purchase tablets, wifi and provide a tech buddy to enable people to dip their toes in the water. If you have been feeling out in the cold and would like to take the first step to getting on-line, please get in touch with us. To qualify for this opportunity, you must be 50+ and resident in Newcastle upon Tyne.



If you are a confident IT user and have a few hours to spare to support others, we’d love to hear from you too! We are currently recruiting Tech Buddies to provide

regular, friendly, one to one individual support to people who have no knowledge of, or find it difficult to use the internet and are unsure where to start and how to use it safely. As a Tech Buddy you will be given training and support. Contact us if this opportunity appeals to you.

Elders Council would like to thank the Postcode Community Trust for making this fantastic opportunity possible through the grant awarded to Elders Council. Postcode Community Trust is a grant-giving charity funded entirely by players of People’s Postcode Lottery. So, let’s make 2021 a winning year for us all by learning how to stay connected.



Northumbria University students are also very keen to support us in resolving an IT problem or learning something new! All sessions will be delivered on Zoom or Teams. If you have an IT issue you would like to resolve, get in touch and tell us what your question is, and we will endeavour to match you with a student who can help.

Search, in the west end of the city, have already made a start in helping older people get to grips with all things digital. Their 'Digital Buddies' project offers the chance for people to borrow a tablet from them that is set up with access the internet. Then all that is needed is the motivation to practice and to learn with the right support.



Madiba, a volunteer, made it possible for Mrs P from Fenham to regularly video call and see her family by helping her learn how to use a tablet. Mrs P lives on her own , she said, **"I wish I'd learned this a long time ago"**.

It can be difficult to explain things over the phone or keeping 2 metres apart – but not impossible. More and more older people are realising digital skills can offer rich experiences. Patience and perseverance can work wonders.

Mrs A is in her 90s, recently widowed and living alone, she didn't have the interest in technology before the pandemic started. She had socially distanced support sessions on her doorstep! Search helped her learn to make video calls to her family.

Mr B lives on a low income and has some health issues. The lockdown meant that he found himself quite isolated. He likes football and music and the tablet Search lent him gave him a connection with the outside world and the motivation to pick up new digital skills

'The good advantage to learn how to use the tablets is we can do it by ourselves and no need to ask someone for a hand. I can go on the internet and talk to friends.'

Ann's Story

You can teach an old dog new tricks

We spoke with Ann, one of our members, about learning to use a tablet.



Ann bought a tablet just before the first lockdown in March at the behest of her family. She hadn't used a computer or a tablet before. She managed to get the wireless network installed before the lockdown began.

When she switched the tablet on, she was worried at the "pinging" noises it kept making. She didn't know what they were or what they meant and was too worried to touch anything. So much so, she switched it off, put it in the box it had come in and put it away in the wardrobe under a towel!

When her daughter phoned, she was persuaded to have another go. Ann is a keen bridge player and knew from bridge playing friends that she could play online. Her bridge-playing friends kept encouraging her to keep going, too.

The first learning session lasted a long time via a phone call from her very patient daughter, who said things like, "What can you see on your screen?" and "Can you see that little - - -." Ann says it was often frustrating for both of them and her daughter would say, "OK, let's have five minutes" or "Take a breather, mam." Her daughter set up an email for Ann so they could then send written information as well.

Ann was then able to search for the Bridge Base Online (BBO) and register with them and has been playing bridge online ever since. She can play locally or with others anywhere in the UK or indeed the world. She often plays in competitions.



She's also learned to shop online for her food shopping (her daughter used to check her list at first); mistakes made sometimes benefitted neighbours, who received the over-ordered goods!

Ann said that one day she somehow lost her Wi-Fi connections and got quite panicky. But when she calmed down, she found in the box that the tablet came in a card with numbers and these were the pass codes. She opened up settings and, using the passcodes, reconnected. She was, rightly, very pleased with herself as she was managing things without always asking family or friends.

Ann now uses Zoom (video platform) for gentle exercise as well as, over the Christmas holidays, connecting with family both here and abroad; she emails, shops and of course plays a lot of bridge!

She would recommend older people having a go: it can be done. She says that you learn over time and you make mistakes but that doesn't matter; as she says, "You can't break it; just press the keys and try."

There's no doubt you do have to persevere, but that's true of learning anything, isn't it? Ann's next step is going to be learning how to take and send photos and create photo albums. We can't show you a photo of Ann as she hasn't learned that bit yet!

In case you're interested, Ann is 77.

Is our City Centre age-friendly?



This is the question a number of Elders Council members have been exploring with students from Newcastle University. For some years, Elders Council undertook audits of the city to determine whether it is older-person friendly. Our last report on the City Centre was published in 2006, so we decided it was time for a refresh.

Given the current restrictions on getting out and about, rather than pounding the streets, this project is being conducted via zoom with approximately twelve older people. Others have agreed to be telephoned by the students so that they can give feedback and contribute ideas.

We started with a provocation session on 06 November 2020 at which Professor Rose Gilroy set out some of the benefits of a city friendly to older people, together with some of the barriers facing not only those wishing to use the city, but also planners and developers trying to give effect to those wishes. Graham Grant from the City Council then outlined some of the council's proposals, particularly the issue of enabling older people to easily and effectively access the city, as well as getting around the city.

At our first focus group session, we were asked to imagine what we would do if we were offered an empty unit in the city centre and had no financial or other constraints.

A wide variety of suggestions were forthcoming, ranging from a residential building to a hub providing general information and a space to try out the latest designs in home adaptations and technology. We also wanted a 'chatty café' and, of course, public toilets and changing places. And lots of urban greening!

The students are putting together a report based on our suggestions and their research which will be presented to participants and Newcastle City Council on 12th January 2021.

Our thanks go to the students – in particular for their technical expertise, and to Dr Zan Gunn from the School of Architecture, Planning and Landscape at Newcastle University for her continued enthusiasm which has meant the project has gone ahead despite the efforts of Covid-19. **Report from John Telfer**

Newcastle Transport Forum

The Newcastle Transport Forum usually meets about three times per year at the Civic Centre.

Due to Covid-19, in November it was held virtually

via Zoom. There were representatives from from the Elders Council, as well as various environmental groups in the city and Tyne & Wear Public Transport Users Group.



The topics under consideration included the City Council's highway measures in response to the pandemic, such as widening city centre

pavements (for example, Grey Street) for social distancing requirements. Some bridges used as rat-runs by motorists, such as Salters Bridge and Stoneyhurst Road Bridge, have been closed to traffic. Measures have been put in place to encourage the more sustainable modes of cycling and walking. Unfortunately, the pandemic has resulted in a marked decrease in the patronage of public transport as buses and Metro have been perceived as unsafe.



Transport North East has published its North East Transport Plan. The plan contains almost 300 schemes, such as extensions of the Tyne & Wear Metro, dozens of highway upgrades and major improvements to walking and cycling infrastructure. This can help create and sustain 100,000 jobs if the government can be persuaded to fund its wide-ranging projects over the next 15 years.



The vision is to give a “green, healthy, dynamic and thriving North East”. Just click on this link below to see and go to the Transport Plan: [Transport Plan - Transport North East](#) There is also a consultation on the Northumberland Line, which is the old Blyth & Tyne railway line to Blyth and Ashington. It is hoped that this could be open by 2023.

Elders Council representatives spoke in favour of city centre electric-powered vehicles and longer crossing times at pedestrian crossings to support older and disabled people.

The proposed Tyneside Clean Air Zone, scheduled for January, is delayed due to Covid-19 and a legal challenge to the City Council.

Richard Rook, Transport & Highways Working Group

Walk along the Tyne This is from **Bill Harbottle**, who makes such a significant contribution to the *EC Rider*, the Elders Council leaflet helping you get out and about using your bus pass. A new *EC Rider* was in preparation last year but of course the pandemic stopped that in its tracks along with all the other things we’ve missed this past year. Bill reminded us that included in the leaflet were one or two walks and here’s Bill’s text from the draft copy of the unpublished *EC Rider*.



A Walk Along the Banks of the Tyne

Catch either Go North East Service 12/12A from Eldon Square or Stagecoach 22 from Market Street (direction Throckley) and alight at the last stop in Newcastle Business Park; the journey takes only 10 minutes. Follow the path down to the river and enjoy a three-mile walk back to Newcastle. Years ago, this was a thriving industrial area and you will see a number of information boards explaining the history of the area. Now all is peace and quiet and you will see wading birds. Admire the impressive disused coal staithes at Dunston.

You pass seven iconic bridges. First is the 1983 Redheugh Road Bridge followed by the 1906 King Edward Rail Bridge, which carries the East Coast Mainline over the Tyne. The Metro Bridge is number 3 followed by my favourite: the High Level Bridge designed by Robert Stephenson and opened by Queen Victoria in 1849 – rail traffic on top and pedestrians and buses below. We now arrive at the Swing Bridge designed by Lord Armstrong; it rarely swings now but rotated 6000 times in 1924. The penultimate crossing is the Tyne Bridge, symbol of Tyneside and opened by George V in 1928. The walk ends at the Gateshead Millennium with stunning views opposite to the Sage and Baltic Buildings. The regular Q3 bus will take you back to the Haymarket bus station.

Bill reminds us that we should follow government advice on travel and this can change so you will need to check what restrictions are in place. It may also be advisable to check that these buses are still running!

He tells us he's done a lot more walking since March 2020, just locally, and suggests that many of us could be surprised at just how near we are to parks and open spaces and could enjoy walks, even short ones, as time outside helps with keeping active and could refresh our spirits as we look forward to spring.



Come and join us - Zooming back to Wellbeing.

Pamela Denham and Chris Clarke organise the Jesmond Wellbeing for Life group. In late summer they began to think about how to help older people in Jesmond stay connected during the pandemic. They decided to try and encourage people to use Zoom and join in. Around 20 people joined the first time, for some the first time they had used Zoom. And, in October, Zooming into Wellbeing was born.

It was wonderful to meet old friends again and welcome new faces to share experiences of Lockdown and other memories.

In November we enjoyed chatting to a group of the Northumbria students from **Project ICE** at a virtual coffee morning and learnt a lot.

On 2 December we held our traditional Christmas Celebration where we were entertained with an amazing tale of a Christmas coincidence, we listened to Christmas music, went on a voyage to Antarctica and ended up with a Quiz and sharing Christmas memories.

We have Zoom meetings planned on the **first Wednesday** in the month up to April. At some stage we expect to be back in the Library – perhaps in May for our familiar session on “Getting Out and About with your Bus Pass”?

If you were coming to the library sessions and are missing us or have not been to our sessions before and want to join in, please contact Chris or me via info@elderscouncil.org.uk

Help to get online and use Zoom is also available – we are all still learning! (Read the articles on pages 4,5,6 and 7 for more help.)

If you prefer to wait until we are able to meet in the Library again, please let us know how to contact you. Looking forward to seeing you there. **Pamela Denham**

Gardens, Susan Pownall is thinking of Spring

The relaxing period during the Christmas and New Year festivities is my time for contemplating my garden and the new season. 2020 has seen more people turning to their gardens where a safe, healthy and exercise laden pastime has become a highlight during the universal health pandemic.



I always start off with good intentions and by this time have already ordered my flower and vegetable seeds, all awaiting their allotted sowing time. So often, my plans are bigger than my garden, to coin a phrase, and I end up compromising on what I want to grow and what I have space for.

In the flower garden, Autumn or Spring are the best times for splitting perennial flowers to give away to friends or in the case of my allotment site – putting on the 'free to a good home' shelf. Theoretically a space-making exercise, I then proceed to fill the gaps. A perennial border is the easiest to manage and in 2020, I sowed a variety of plants for that purpose, trying to include colour all year round. I now have hollyhocks for the back of the borders, foxgloves which self-seed, lupins, delphiniums, rudbeckia, pyrethrum and geum to name a few but all will bulk out year on year.

Bulbs fill the gap in that plan perfectly too. After the glorious springtime burst of crocus, early iris reticulata, narcissi and tulips, I plant masses of summer bulbs including iris Germanica which flower in June, nerine for late summer, bearded iris rhizomes, peony, allium, crocosmia, and those lovely highly-scented oriental lilies. You can buy summer flowering bulb collections which are suitable for pots as well as the borders, depending on how much space you have. Just so easy.

I always over-estimate the size of my veggie patch too! My maxim now is to grow what I like to eat – and in moderation. I do not need a huge brassica patch – one cabbage lasts me a week! However, I love leeks, new potatoes, salad, spinach, French beans and courgettes. Added to my two apple trees, ample strawberry and raspberry beds, one Victoria plum and one amazing greengage tree, I have rounded off with three different types of blueberry bush, which prefer ericaceous compost and are therefore in huge planters. My diet is not 5-a-day – more like 10 a day. And all fresh and healthy food.



Just can't wait to get started again.

Sandy Irvine writes:

Online shopping is booming It is not hard to see why. Prices seem much lower and shopping from home can be a real boon, especially for the less mobile. But there are real costs for society. There is the huge carbon footprint of e-commerce (all that data transmission, processing and storage, etc). Yet we desperately need to cut those emissions to prevent catastrophic climate breakdown.

More CO2 emissions come from all those delivery vehicles, plus a cocktail of air pollutants. Already crowded roads are further congested. Then there is all the packaging waste. Nearly 33% of solid waste in the USA comes from just e-commerce packaging.



Online shopping is also killing off local stores, places to which we can walk, cycle or get the bus and where we can actually try out things. Unlike local stores, profits from online sales are not recycled in the local economy.

Furthermore, some argue that electronic retailers do not pay taxes in full nor cover the costs for the damage their activities cause. Prices are also kept artificially low by the poor pay and working conditions.

If you do shop online, you can still shop more carefully. You can order in a way that there is only one delivery, not several. It is especially important not to buy things online that you might have to return. In Germany alone, every third online order is returned (70% for clothing) with over 250 million return packages a year. Also prioritise delivery services that use recyclable cardboard.

What's in an Icon? (A symbol or representation)

In early September, The Centre for Ageing Better – supported by Public Health England (PHE) – launched a free online competition to rethink the symbols and icons commonly used in public to represent ageing and older age groups. Barbara Douglas was invited to join the panel to choose the winning design. Here are her reflections on the experience:



I was delighted to be invited to be part of the Centre for Ageing Better's panel and excited to see how designers would 'reinvent' the icon which we have all learned to hate.

As the designs came through, I quickly realised what an impossible challenge it is. How can you create an icon which reflects a 50+ year age-span? Do you either annoy those who are less mobile by showing people who are fit and active? Or annoy those who are fit and active by portraying them with walking sticks which they would NEVER use? Or do you try to avoid all those pitfalls and come up with something which doesn't really mean anything to anyone? It was noticeable that in trying to avoid these pitfalls, some designs incorporated all the stereotypes we were trying so hard to avoid.

As a panel, we quickly dismissed the idea that we need a street sign, alerting drivers to the fact that there are older people about. Where would you put it? Why not just make sure that we have speed limits and adequate crossing times that would work for us all, no matter what our age? However, we could see value in an icon which could be used for public information denoting that the information particularly applies to older people. We also liked the idea of an icon we could use on publications.

During our Zoom judging session, we groaned and laughed and shared our likes and dislikes. In the end, we were all able to agree on this winning design: The things I liked about this design are:



The body shapes clearly show that they are older people without the older woman needing a bun, which featured in so many of the designs;

There is a man and a woman, but they are not necessarily a 'couple' – getting away from the stereotype that if you are older, you must be in a heterosexual couple!

They are having fun and, importantly, they are breaking out of the triangle which, to me symbolised breaking through the barriers of ageism and creating a new narrative on ageing.

My favourite of the 'runners-up' is this one. It made the deadline by the skin of its teeth and the designer wrote: 'This piece is called I'm off and it represents that older people are free, busy and onto the next thing. They are leaving the stereotype images of ageing behind.' I laughed out loud and it reminded me the active members of EC who never have a moment to spare!



SwaG Design, who created the winning design, are doing further work to produce a series of icons which will be available in February 2021. Watch this space! **Barbara Douglas**

Dear team

First, I should like to thank you all for keeping on producing *The Echo* for us. Always filled with such useful and interesting information, it certainly helps to keep us connected and moving forwards.

Being quite a slow reader and until this year just a bedtime reader, the need to spend more time indoors has changed my habits a bit! I also needed to get a bit of structure to my previously quite busy life. So, after breakfast and having been out to get my newspaper, I sit down to read a Poem for the Day, and then tackle some 'classical' books or those of previous eras to try and stretch

my mind a bit, or broaden my vocabulary. So, I've read some works by the Bronte sisters, Jane Austen, a wonderful translation of Homer's Odyssey, and now I'm ploughing through a very wordy Henry James book. Perhaps Dickens comes next, or maybe Bill Bryson. Anyway, I still have my lighter bedtime books and literary friends with whom I can discuss and learn more. Lockdown isn't all bad news. Take care and again many thanks. **Sue Tideswell**

June Thexton



It was with great sadness that we learned of the death of June Thexton. Older people in Newcastle, including those who may never have met June, have a lot to thank her for.

Together with Mary Dodds, June was one of the founder members of the Newcastle branch of the University of the Third Age (U3A). She

led their 'Talking about Art' group for many years, sharing her passion for art with others in very relaxed, enjoyable and informative sessions. As a retired teacher, June knew how to engage people and excite their interest in learning.

June was also a founder member of the Elders Council, helping to shape the development of the organisation from the early days when it started as the Older People's Network. She was a Board member for many years, continuing to build the relationship between the Elders Council and the U3A.

June was a passionate advocate for lifelong learning. At a time when government funding for lifelong learning was fast disappearing, she led the Elders Council's Lifelong Learning Group in seeking to find ways of creating opportunities for older people to be creative, to learn and to contribute. It was under her guidance that

the Elders Council developed the very ambitious plan of taking over the banqueting suite in St James's Park to hold an exhibition and a conference showcasing the creativity of older people. Held over two days in 2002, 'IMAGE Aspirations grow with experience' attracted a wide range of exhibitors and performers from tap dancers to Chinese opera and from crafts to model engineers, all illustrating the talents and ingenuity of older people, if they are just given an opportunity. We may not have succeeded in changing the government's mind about investment in lifelong learning, but we certainly demonstrated the very varied interests and skills of older people and the value of learning and creativity to their wellbeing.

June was also an artist and silk painter. It was a joy and a privilege to be given one of her beautiful silk scarves or a cushion cover as a present. When we moved into new offices in MEA House, June



decided to brighten up our small meeting room with beautiful silk painted banners with scenes of Newcastle. As soon as we can return to the office, they will come to light again and probably remind us how much the city centre landscape has changed. But June didn't want to showcase just her own work; she encouraged us to set up a 'Gadgies' Gallery' and we invited members to send in their contributions. Our meeting room quickly turned from a rather corporate space into a mini-gallery of paintings, embroidery and creative writing – altogether a much more inspiring place!

As June found it more difficult to come to meetings in person, she continued her interest in the Elders Council, always curious about how things were going and contributing ideas. She sowed the seed of the idea for the Mile Castle coffee mornings, which was picked up by Mary Dodds, who found the venue and got it started.

June has left us with a great legacy, not only in the physical artefacts which we can still enjoy but perhaps more importantly in the unassuming way in which she helped to make things happen so that older people can enjoy a rich and fulfilling later life.

Thank you, June.

Barbara Douglas

John Reid



It is with great sadness that we bring you the news that our friend John Reid died last December shortly after being taken to hospital. He was 80 years old.

John grew up in Scotswood, leaving school at 14. He delivered papers as a boy and gathered broken wooden crates from the old Green Market, which he chopped up and sold for firewood. He was not a man to stand still: he was regularly on the allotments for 5am and was a much-appreciated volunteer with many organisations. He taught sign language to the deaf, taught braille to the blind, was a registered carer and

hospital volunteer and sat on nine boards at one point. John knew lots of people and was well respected.

He worked as a blade sharpener, a long-distance lorry driver, had two cafes, a general dealer, a haulage business and accumulated a vast knowledge of all he was involved in. John raced motorbikes and sidecars on Bamburgh beach competitively, raced stock cars, flew glider planes, did parachute jumps and was a weight-lifter.

As a lorry driver, he suffered a nasty accident that had a permanent effect upon his eyesight. As a result, he became a valuable source of knowledge on how to help those visually impaired with, for example, reading: it was he who insisted that the Elders Council newsletters should be printed with largeish print on pale yellow paper. He was often forthright (but inoffensive) in his views and Steve remembers that once he was telling him about a consultation that he'd had in the ophthalmology department at the RVI: "Ah tellt im, Steve," he said, "ah tellt that consultant that e'd got that treatment wrang!"

Steve first knew John as a trustee of the Elders Council. He then came into the radio group as one of its first members and took on the gardening slot and our monthly piece of verse – usually about nature. He became a really valued member of our team and we

were very sorry to lose him when he had to move out of his house and go into care. Never again shall we hear the inimitable story of how the family accidentally cooked the cat in the coal-fired kitchen oven.

As a gardener, he worked 2½ allotments on Fenham Hall Drive, using one of them to help clients from Newcastle Carers to learn how to garden. He himself was very successful, winning over a hundred awards every year for his produce, most of which he gave away to fellow Elders Council members and others who needed it. He loved robins and made friends with one which used to visit him on his allotment.



It was not only material things that he gave: he was also generous with his time. He was a carer for his wife for a long time and then volunteered as a carer for others. And he gave a lot of time to the Elders Council, being a trustee, a member of the radio group, the Reading Group and the newsletter editorial group; and he was an enthusiastic envelope stuffer for the newsletter.

John Reid: what a man; what a life. He'll be badly missed.

Anne Richardson, Susan Pownall and Steve Whitley

Information and Advice



The Red Cross provides a range of services and here is another that you may find invaluable if you are a carer or someone you know is a carer.

Do you look after a relative or friend? Have you ever thought about what would happen if you had an accident or were delayed on your return home?

Register with the local Red Cross and they will provide free short-term support for the person you care for until alternative arrangements can be made. They operate 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

If you or someone else you know could benefit from this service, please call 0191 273 7961 or email Carerscard_Northeast@redcross.org.uk

When you'll get your vaccination

Public Health England have published a list of priorities for getting the Covid-19 vaccine. Of course, some of you reading this will already have been vaccinated. But, if you're still waiting, here's where you are in the queue:

Priority	Risk group
1	Older care home residents and their care staff
2	Everybody aged 80 and over; health and social care workers
3	Everybody aged 75 and over
4	Everybody aged 70 and over; those who are clinically extremely vulnerable
5	Everybody aged 65 and over
6	Those in an at-risk group aged between 18 and 65

There are four vaccination centres in Newcastle: the RVI, the Centre for Life, the Eagles on Scotswood Road; and Gosforth Race Course. Please attend at the place and time that you'll be given when you're contacted; if you're offered a place which you find difficult to get to, ask for a change of venue.

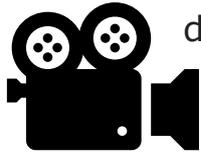
Please don't phone to ask your GP. You will be contacted. And remember: you'll be back again for the booster at a later date.

A member of the Elders Council tells us that he's had his first shot of the Pfizer vaccine at Gosforth racecourse.

Everything went very efficiently, from the letter of invitation from his GP practice, to the detailed directions of how to get to the vaccine centre, the number of volunteer helpers (some just lay people, some retired nurses), the job itself and the supervised 15-minute wait afterwards to make sure that he had suffered no nasty after-effects.

His advice: get vaccinated; you're helping not only yourself but all those around you.

Welfare Benefits PowerPoint videos



Covid19 has brought about many new challenges for disabled people, and also to organisations that help to support disabled people with information and advice. At Disability North we have continued to provide one to one support for claimants of disability benefits, with remote appointments via telephone or Zoom. We have also put together PowerPoint presentations which have helped to replace some of the talks and workshops we would have usually delivered here at The Dene Centre or at other organisations across the region.

Here are links to two new PowerPoint Presentations. The first is about Personal Independence Payment and, the second is about Disability Living Allowance. Both videos provide basic information about the benefits, along with tips and advice on how to make the claim and complete the application.

A link to the videos can be found here: <http://www.disabilitynorth.org.uk/independent-living-support/welfare-benefits/>

If you any questions relating to the presentations, or need any help with a welfare benefit application or review, please contact us on 0191 2840480 or email reception@disabilitynorth.org.uk

Disabled Facilities Grant from the Government Budget Statement (November 2020)

We were pleased to see that the 21-22 expenditure review from the government included a national allocation of **£573 million** towards local delivery of Disabled Facilities Grants to support more older and disabled people to live independently at home for longer. **We don't yet know how much of that will be allocated to our region.**

If you need help with improvements to your home to make it more comfortable and easier to live independently for longer, contact Care and Repair Newcastle for further information telephone 0191 211 5836. You can also look at their website for more information. [Care & Repair Newcastle \(careandrepairnewcastle.co.uk\)](http://careandrepairnewcastle.co.uk)

Benefits Advice

There is a very useful section on the Newcastle City website offering information on where to get advice on a whole range of things including: Citizens Advice (phone 0808 278 7823); Food Banks (no phone number given); Moneywise Credit Union (phone 0191 276 7963) and Your Homes Newcastle (phone 0191277 1190).

These are only a selection of organisations and as they are all separate organisations, we can't give you a single point of contact phone number. This is the link that will take you to the booklet.

<https://www.newcastle.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Where%20to%20Get%20Advice%20December%202020.pdf>

Competition



There was a winner of our photo competition last issue. As more than one of you knew the answer, we had to draw the winner from the hat.

That winner was **Sandra Ramshaw** and the voucher for £25 has been sent to her. Congratulations!

The photo was the entrance to the Vagrants Ward of the Workhouse (Later the General Hospital) and is on the lane running alongside St. Nicholas Cemetery.

The question below was set by Sandy Irvine, a member of Older Voices, the Elders Council radio team.

What links: Oxford, Tiffany, Ritzy, Ikon, Central Park Diva and Liquid?

There isn't a prize this time just the pleasure of telling us the answer and it does keep your brain ticking!

Donations and Gift Aid

Your generous donations help the Elders Council to continue to provide the full range of activities that you can read about in the Magazine. You can donate on a regular basis by setting up a Standing Order, please request a form from the office; or an occasional donation is welcome too. Over the years, some members have chosen to leave the Elders Council a legacy. By deciding to remember us in your will, you can really help the Elders Council to continue its work.

If you prefer to send a cheque please make it out to: The Elders Council of Newcastle Ltd. and complete the form below and send it with the cheque to the Elders Council office (the address is on the back page)

Name:
Address:
Post Code:
I wish to donate £ to the Elders Council of Newcastle

If you would like us to claim Gift Aid relief, (this doesn't cost you anything) please complete the relevant boxes below:

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 claim 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.	
Signed	

Give as you live. Please help the Elders Council by logging on to www.giveasyoulive.com every time you shop online and nominate the Elders Council as your chosen charity. It costs you nothing and we receive a small percentage of the sale

Magazine Information

Magazine articles

If you would like to submit an article to be considered for the next edition of the Magazine, please ensure that you send it to us by **Friday 12 March**, to us at info@elderscouncil.org.uk

Magazine in other formats

We can make our Magazine available in alternative formats (e.g., in larger print or an audio CD). Please just let the office know what format you would like.

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