



Elders Council of Newcastle

Older People working for Older People

January – February 2017 Issue 75

Reporting to our members



**Wishing all members
a happy and healthy
New Year!**

From articles in the Newsletter and at our AGM, you will be aware that for the majority of 2016 we have been reviewing and then working on several aspects of the organisation. We have been thinking about the constantly changing context in which we work; funding is an ever-present worry and we need to show how effective an organisation we are, otherwise it may well be curtains for us. We need to build a robust and resilient organisation that can demonstrate its worth.

As a result of this review, we have put in place a set of rules and procedures for good governance; we are working with a smaller Board; and the time people can serve on the Board or in a particular officer role is now time-limited to allow for new people to come forward with new ideas and energy.

The Board of Trustees commissioned Lauren Fridlington and Laura McKay, both qualified with a Master's Degree from Northumbria University, to work with us on how we create an organisation that's fit for purpose in the 21st century. The Board of Trustees accepted their report as a working document at their November 2016 meeting.

Many of you will have worked with Laura and Lauren as they did quite a few workshops with different groups of people: the Board of Trustees; members from

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Reporting to our members – cont. -

working groups; people who were not members; younger people as well. They also conducted interviews with individuals from organisations with whom we often work.

As a result, a small group, consisting of all the officers, two other Board members and Barbara Douglas is now working on the recommendations from Laura and Lauren to:

- develop a business plan and fundraising strategy for the organisation
- make sure everyone has a clear understanding of what the Elders Council is and what it does
- review how we communicate with you and everyone else
- have clear roles and responsibilities for members; training and development programmes; audits of the work we do to measure the impact.



As well as this, we need to consider whether we truly represent older people when we do not have a very diverse membership. Most of our members are from one ethnic background and we have little idea of the cultures represented or any groups people may identify with; for example, how many of our members are single people without children? or how many identify as lesbian, gay or transgender? or how many are from an Irish or Polish background?

We do need all of you to know what we are doing and we always welcome comment, which can be addressed to the editor or to any of the contact addresses and telephone numbers on the back of every Newsletter.

Finally thank you once again to everyone who took part in any of the work conducted by Lauren and Laura: it is invaluable.

Elders Council at Work

Communication Working Group

Everyone's tomorrow – today!

We hope that you enjoyed our December broadcast, especially our panto and the contribution made by the little boy outside Fenwick's window.

There's no broadcast in January, so our next one is on the afternoon of Friday 3 February, when we shall be investigating the benefits of music for older performers and listeners.

So please tune in to NE1fm on the wavelength 102.5fm at 2 o'clock on Friday 3 February and then write and tell us what you thought of the programme. If there's a topic that you'd like us to deal with in future broadcasts, please let us know.



Housing Group



In its September meeting the Housing Group decided to look into the possibility of organising a Housing Information Day during Spring 2017. An organising committee has been set up and is currently busy reviewing potential housing topics that will be of interest and help to members and non-members in the over-50 age-group. The intention is that the topics and the event will also be of interest to family members, friends and advisers who are, or may be, concerned in current and future housing issues and advice. In addition to priority topics, the organising committee is looking into finding good event partners and a suitable venue.

Members' suggestions on housing topics that are of concern to them and that they would like to see covered at the event are warmly welcomed. Please send your suggestions to the Editor (contact details on the last page of this Newsletter) or to Alan Gowers (algowers@gmail.com).

Elders Council at Work

Older Person Friendly City

The Working Group is still busy working our way through recent planning development frameworks for various parts of the city. These documents are important because they set out what kind of developments can – or cannot – be allowed in specified locations.

Developers probably resist restrictions on their plans but it's important from the citizen's point of view that there should be some control over unwelcome developments. So we have just been busy submitting our comments on:

Maintaining Sustainable Communities and Urban Core Housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

A very long title for an apparently small extension of existing policies to extend control of the spread of Homes in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) in residential areas and the growth of purpose-built student accommodation in the City Centre. The context for seeking these powers is that the growth in student numbers at our two universities has resulted in the loss of family housing in some neighbourhoods as properties have been converted into HMOs. In some cases, this can undermine a local community as students are transient part-time residents without a commitment to the area. Some streets are blighted by neglected gardens and houses. It is noticeable in the City Centre now that vacant properties and any vacant sites are being taken over for student housing. It is important for our

local economy that our universities flourish and that students come to study here; but we need to have a balance between provision for our local permanent residents and for a transient and visiting population. So we have forwarded our views in support of the proposed extension of controls. At the same time, we have also commented on the vision for Sustainable Communities referred to in the document. As older people we are most likely to benefit from – and also contribute to – strong local communities where there is support between neighbours. We would all like to live in a city that is age friendly. But we know, in the end, it is people who make communities, so we all have a role to play in sustaining them. We hope that this extension of planning control will help, even though it is not the complete answer for community development.

If you are interested in these and other issues about the older person friendliness of the areas in which we live our daily lives, then join us at our meetings on the following Mondays, 10.30am-12.30pm:

- 16 January
- 20 February
- 20 March

Agenda, minutes and venue details are available from the Elders Council office.

Elders Council at Work

The Mile Castle Drop-in Sessions

Our last meeting in November was one full of difficulties. First of all, the pub had double-booked the room we normally use so they had offered us a smaller space promising to ensure the room was booked in our name for the whole of 2017. Then the lady who was coming with her “old fashioned sweeties” was ill and so didn’t arrive and because staffing was short at the pub it took a while to get the tea and coffee sorted out.

However, we’re rarely daunted by small irritations and there’s always something we can do. We had also invited Sophie Mitchell from Tyne and Wear Museums to come and talk to us about the Live Well programme the museum service are organising with older people in mind, so she was able to talk to us about that and encourage people to go along to the consultation meeting and express their views.

As well as having one or two leaflets with items of potential interest, Mary Nicholls used her phone to pull up the Elders Council website to show people how to find out what’s happening in localities (there’s a lot). We asked everyone to spend a few minutes in thinking what it was they enjoyed about coming to the Mile Castle and then to add anything they think could add to it or suggest things they would like to do. The caveat was that whatever they suggested had to require no funding as the whole enterprise runs on goodwill alone. Finally, we had a short quiz with prizes.

Having looked at the responses, the three things mentioned most are:

- People enjoy the social aspect
- The diversity of the events (quizzes; talks; games, etc.)
- Learning something new, however small
- Laughter
- Several commented they had made new friends

People did come up with ideas of what we might try and do and the following is a selection:

- Five-minute talks from members who have had interesting/exciting/unusual parts of their history to tell
- More on outings with a bus-pass
- A “show-and-tell” hobby morning
- Book show and swap
- Bingo; beetle drives; board games

People have appreciated the speakers and the other activities; most of you enjoy a quiz.

The small organising group will work on the ideas although we are not promising anything except to do our best to have a good morning together.

Elders Council at Work

The Mile Castle Drop-in Sessions

The next meetings are (always the third Wednesday of the month):

- 18 January: Newcastles of the World – Dorothy Ternent and Julie Irvine talk of their experiences in Canada
- 15 February: Souvenirs – a talk by Penny Grenham

If you enjoy it, please come with a friend who you think may enjoy it too.

Health and Social Care Working Group

There are two major concerns which will be the focus for the Working Group in coming months.

Learn to Prevent is a programme being promoted by the City Council Public Health Team. At the November meeting we had an interesting presentation and discussion with a member of the team. There will be opportunities for Elders Council members to get involved in the programme. After all, it is in our best interests to stay healthy and active for as long as possible so it is always useful to have some tips on what to do. Preventing falls is one of the objectives and we can all benefit from learning how to avoid them (especially if the Council agrees to mend our pavements).

A Sustainability and Transformation Plan (STP) has been published for consultation by the NHS in Northumberland, Tyne and Wear and North Durham. This is a lengthy document and has proposals to "improve services", to have more integration between health and social care, and at the same time to reduce costs because the gap in funding for these services is getting wider. So far, there have been some comments about the clash between these objectives, to improve quality while at the same time cutting costs. And it is not clear at the moment how the policies outlined in the draft document will work out in practice at local level.

It will be important to get involved in the debate so it is intended to join forces with other organisations, such as Healthwatch, to understand these proposals and to watch out for any effects on our local services.

These topics will be on our agenda at the next meetings on Fridays, 10.30am-12.30pm:

- 20 January
- 17 February
- 17 March

Agenda, minutes and venue details are available from the Elders Council office.

Elders Council at Work

Transport and Highways Working Group

Throughout the city, there are a number of major road development schemes currently underway and more are planned.

In their *Rationale for investment and associated roadworks*, the City Council (NCC) has explained why they are making these proposals; basically, they want to develop a system which boosts the local economy and at the same time gives us free, safe and reliable movement around the city. It goes some way to explaining why this short-term “pain” is needed and should lead to long-term “gain”.

The City Council’s hierarchy of users, as agreed in the Local Plan, is to provide for people:

- on foot;
- on bikes;
- on buses and in taxis;
- delivering goods and services in freight; and then
- in cars.

Transport Working Group members continue to monitor all projects from consultation through to completion and subsequent assessment and present our views to NCC at every available opportunity.

We note that, at the current time, roadworks are substantially completed at Central Station, Cowgate Roundabout, John Dobson Street, Church Road/Salters Road, Regent

Centre/Broadway, Westmorland Road/Western Boulevard. The Haddricks Mill/Killingworth Road developments are just about to start.

The original Blue House Roundabout/Osborne Road scheme was withdrawn and consultations are currently underway to come up with a revised plan for this area.

The planned changes to St Mary’s Place/ Barras Bridge/Percy Street are under review but some changes will be introduced on a trial basis.

Finally, NCC has a long-term ambition to pedestrianise Blakett Street in the City Centre and recognise that there is a need to communicate to everybody the vision and rationale for this pedestrianised core to the city centre and therefore the requirement for a bus loop running around it. The Transport Working Group view on this is that we support the proposal provided that alternative access, suitable for the needs of older people, is provided.

The question of road improvements in the City is a highly emotive one and is subject to a huge diversity of views. Even in the Transport Working Group we have differences of opinion, and that is just as it should be. We have received a number of views from Elders Council members and always consider them in our thinking in order to achieve a balanced view. If you feel strongly about something, please do write to the group via Anne Richardson. (contact details on pg. 28).

Elders Council at Work

The governance of the Elders Council



In the past year the Board of Trustees have been working at reviewing, up-dating and changing the way the organisation is governed.

The Board of Trustees is responsible to ensure that the organisation follows the document that governs us; this is called the “Memorandum of Association of the Elders Council of Newcastle”. It tells us what we can and cannot do, how we elect members to become trustees, how the Board of Trustees elects officers and a lot more.

One item which **all** members need to know is one which the Charity Commission requires that all charities have in their governing document; our version reads:

*Every member promises, if the Charity is dissolved while they are a member or within twelve months after they ceased to be a member, to contribute such sum (**not exceeding £1**) as may be demanded towards the payment of debts and liabilities of the Charity incurred before they ceased to be a member.*

Which means to say that, in the unlikely event that the Elders Council is bankrupt and cannot pay its debts, each member will have to pay **no more than £1** towards covering what we owe.

We are a solvent charity and have no expectation of becoming bankrupt as far ahead as we can see, so please don't worry about it but we do need to make sure that you are all aware that all members are responsible.

We will, when new membership forms are made, be adding this information to it so new members know right from the start.

Elders Council at Work

Money Matters – Council budget

This year Newcastle City Council went all interactive in presenting to the public their 2017/18 proposed budget. Four members of the Elders Council (EC), together with four young people from the Newcastle United Foundation, were invited to St James' to attempt to find cuts of £30m to achieve a balanced budget.



Our Council are faced with the requirement to find these savings; our panel engaged electronically in an exercise in deciding which services should be cut. What would be the result, for instance, of reducing rubbish collections or children's services? We soon found out what the effects would be and realised just how difficult it is to make any reductions.

Although a game for us, these choices are unavoidable even though they will have serious consequences for some Newcastle residents. Our panel discussion was very lively and there were some valuable suggestions. It was also an opportunity for us to be reminded of the full range of services that the Council is responsible for.

Still on the topic of budget proposals, Elders Council members consequently met with the Director of Wellbeing, Care and Learning of Newcastle City Council to hear their detailed plans for saving the required £30m. This is a valued annual invitation for the Elders Council and enables us to respond on your behalf and from an Elders Council perspective. Watch out for details in the next edition of the Newsletter.

Exciting Opportunities

Pushing the Possibilities - *Continued*

Pushing The Possibilities (PTP) courses were reported on very enthusiastically by one of our members in the September/October edition of our Newsletter. We are pleased to learn that *the pushing of possibilities goes on*, as our member reports:

“Graduates of this year’s Pushing the Possibilities course were given the chance to have a three-day residential “extender” course. Essentially this involved planning and taking part in a hill walk. Eight of us met up in Gateshead on the first day. There we kitted out and then travelled by minibus with our instructor/guide (Nick Coates) to Coniston Coppermine Youth Hostel, in the heart of the Lake District National Park.

“Our first evening was spent settling in, preparing and enjoying the evening meal, making up packed lunches for the

next day, and being briefed on the next day’s hill walk. Next morning, we walked for the entire day, reaching the Lakeland peaks of Swirl How and The Old Man of Coniston (both around 800 metres high). We all revelled in the experience of being well fed and well equipped for hill walking. The excellent instruction in good safety procedures and the correct use of walking poles was appreciated and invaluable. Our enjoyment of the wonderful scenery was enhanced by Nick’s frequent enlightening commentaries. Eight or so miles of hill walking are not that easy, but, as eight of us can say, it can be done! It gives a great feeling of achievement. After an excellent evening meal, we had a quiz, which tested our local and general knowledge. Our third and final day was easy. We breakfasted, packed up the equipment plus picnic lunch then drove to Keswick for a nice, but tame, tourist walkabout. From Keswick we travelled back to Gateshead to unpack and store the gear.

“This PTP residential course improved our wellbeing by stimulating our physical, mental and social skills capacities. The eight diverse individuals steadily became one comfortable walking group. I haven’t been in a youth hostel for 60 years; they now have warm showers and communal living certainly has its rewards! It is almost as



Exciting Opportunities

Pushing the Possibilities - *Continued*

long since I spent any time in the Lake District but it is only this time, through Nick's well-guided hill walk, that I really appreciate how very much it deserves to be an "area of outstanding natural beauty". Of course, we were blessed with the most perfect weather, which helped our enjoyment. But I suppose eight miles of hill-walking in the rain would be an even bigger achievement!

"I now feel that Pushing the Possibilities never stops! A group of 15 PTP veterans (including me) are next off on an eight-mile walk in Weardale. After

that we will, I am very sure, be planning and arranging more activities with the support of Nick Coates and Wing."

By the way, Wing will be holding open days starting in the spring. They will have on offer of four Pushing the Possibilities courses plus two three-day residential extenders. So do get in touch with Nick Coates to get on this year's list and find out what PTP you can do for you. Ring him on 0191 487 9356; or email him at nickcoates.wing@gmail.com . The website is at www.wing.org.uk

Changes to the Age UK Active Ageing Programme

Age UK tell us that they are now holding some of their activity classes at Broadacre House in Market Street.

The classes that are moving are:

Monday	Yoga	2.10-3.20pm	£4.50
Tuesday	Keep Fit	10.30-11.30am	£4.50
Wednesday	Tai Chi	10.30-11.30am	£4.50
Thursday	Even Fitter	10.30-11.30am	£4.50

There are no changes to their other activities.

As with all their activities, you do not need to book in advance; just come along and see if it's the class for you. Have a chat with the tutors if you have any questions about the activity.

For further information on the classes at Broadacre House and Age UK's other classes, please contact the Advice & Support Team on 0191 232 6488 or email enquiries@ageuknewcastle.org.uk .

Funding Opportunity

Funding of £250 to £1000 available!

Do you have an idea for a small project which will create community activity and bring people together to benefit your neighbourhood? Does your activity fit in with one of their five aims?

- A Safer Newcastle
- Health and Wellbeing
- Skills and Employment
- Environment
- Children and Young People

Who Can Apply?

To be a 'positive person' you just need to live in the area and get together with one or more other people to plan your project. You don't need to be part of a group already to apply.

Round 2 deadline for applications is 16 January 2017; projects must be completed by 31 March 2017.



For more information and/or an application form, please contact:

Sue Wannop on 0191 277 3536 or

Vicky Hartley on 0191 277 1788 or

Email positivepeople@newcastle.gov.uk .

Home Support

‘How to make your house cosier and cheaper to run – the story of how one Newcastle household did that’

Are the members of your group interested in learning how to make their homes warmer and cheaper to run? Then book this **FREE** talk from the WEA North East Green Branch.

The speaker shares the steps he and his wife took to reduce their energy bills by over 60%!

(The speaker, Steve Emsley, has an extensive knowledge of energy efficiency and renewable energy, and wrote a weekly column for the Newcastle Evening Chronicle ‘Go Green Campaign’ between 2007-2012).

Some of these steps can be taken in a rented house, others are more in depth and relevant to home owners.

The talk consists of 30 mins talk and 30 mins of question time.

It is very accessible, includes lots of pictures and would be of interest to those with no knowledge of the subject and those already interested.

For further information

contact:

Ruth at
going.green@wea.org.uk or
phone 0191 212 6100 if your
group would like to book the
talk.



Home Support



Age UK Newcastle tell us that they aim to make older people's lives easier; so whether you're bothered about benefits, perplexed about your pension, or worried by your will, they have staff who can guide you through every situation.

Their Home Support service offers everything from help with cleaning to 24/7 live-in care. They provide companionship and support to help you to get out and about, on a regular basis or as a 'one-off' on an outing, special occasion or a hospital appointment. They can support you on a holiday or a short break so that you and family can enjoy the time together.

You may have been unwell or had a stay in hospital and need an extra pair of hands; they can help you with this until you get back on your feet. Moving house and the task of packing is often daunting; they can do that for you and give your new home a one-off clean. For those who need extra help their staff are specially trained in conditions like dementia, MS, and Parkinson's and can offer 24-hour live-in care for your peace of mind.

If you would like to find out more about any of the services they offer, please do not hesitate to contact one of their team on 0191 235 9900.



How do I know if I need to switch my gas and electricity supplier?



If your group, coffee morning or other get-together would like Age UK to come to talk to you on how to switch supplier, the Priorities Services Register, Warm Home Discount, replacement boilers or insulation schemes, then please contact Julie or Brenda on 0191 232 6388 or at enquiries@ageuknewcastle.org.uk.

Home Support

Try Ostara free for six weeks

Ostara supports older and vulnerable people in Newcastle to feel safe and secure at home. And, for a limited time, Ostara is offering new customers a free six-week trial with no set-up costs and free cancellation at any time. A menu of equipment suits individual needs, including pendant alarms, fall detectors and pill dispensers. It is a 24-hour service, 365 days per year, with free installation and cancellation. A fleet of response cars and a team of response officers are always on hand. Contact [Ostara](#) to request a free information pack. Book a free no-obligation six-week trial [online](#) for a relative quoting SIXFREE. [Email](#) or call 0191 277 7470 for more information (subject to availability; terms and conditions apply).

YHN Handyperson Service

[Your Homes Newcastle's \(YHN\) Handyperson Service](#) is available to older and vulnerable YHN tenants and Ostara Flex customers who need help with small, practical jobs. They aim to make lives easier and homes safer. The Concierge Response Service, who provide the Handyperson Service, has a fleet of vans and a dedicated team of staff ready to take your call.

All staff carry ID, wear YHN uniform and drive a clearly branded YHN Concierge Service van.

The Handyperson service is charged at £35 per hour (this could include more than one job if time allows) and all payments must be paid up front.

For further details and to see whether you can access the service, please ring 0191 278 1977.

Orange Box North East need your help for families

This local social business, based in Byker, recycles unwanted furniture back into our community, particularly to those who really need it. They collect and redistribute furniture, household and electrical items to families and individuals on a low income and offer a free collection of single items, as well as full house-clearance services. So if you have any donations of good quality items of unwanted furniture, household items and white goods, let them know on (0191) 224 2116. For more information, visit their [website](#) or [Facebook](#) page.



Do you have a spare room

Would you like to help someone who is homeless?

There are people in our region who have nowhere to live and need help and support. Hosting is a response to this problem, which is on the increase across the UK. Volunteer hosts provide a room for someone to stay in their own home, with the support of a project.

There are two projects in our region: Action Hosting and Nightstop. Both risk-assess every person needing the service and match them with the most suitable host for accommodation.



The basic role of the host is to provide the guest with:

- a warm, supportive, and safe environment
- a bedroom, clean bedding, and towels
- laundry and bathroom facilities

Hosts are trained, and vetted, and supported by project staff.

What is Action Hosting?

Action Hosting helps homeless destitute refused asylum seekers. Hosts provide a place for them to sleep, for an agreed amount of time. The guest will work with an Action Foundation support worker to look at their future options.

If you are interested in Action Hosting, please contact Vicki Harris at hosting@actionfoundation.org.uk or on 0191 231 3113.

What is Nightstop Northeast?

Nightstop provides emergency accommodation for any homeless person over 16 years old. Hosts, in addition to the facilities listed above, provide breakfast and an evening meal. Project staff work with the guest to secure longer-term accommodation and address issues that caused their homelessness.

If you are interested in Nightstop, please contact Kester Young at nightstopne@depaulcharity.org.uk or on 0191 253 6161.

Information

It's even more important than a will. Do you have a Power of Attorney?

Protect your family and yourself: get a Power of Attorney this Christmas via a new, far cheaper way from Money Saving Expert.

It may seem a strange subject for the festive season. Yet this is a family time. And while presents under the tree are lovely, a Lasting Power of Attorney (LPA) protects you and your family from the huge stress, hassle and cost if you were to lose your faculties without one. **Only 14% of people have a Power of Attorney.**

In brief:

- **If you lose your faculties, relatives can't just access your money, not even to pay for your care or mortgage.** One person develops dementia every three minutes; others lose capacity through strokes or accidents. It's often quick. And when your family are already having to deal with your condition, without an LPA, the only way to take charge of your finances is via the Court of Protection.

With an LPA you nominate a trusted friend/relative to take control of your assets **ONLY** if you lose capacity. It's a bit like an insurance policy in case the worst happens. While many write wills, few do LPAs, even though they're possibly even more important. Every grown-up with assets, of any age, should consider doing one. Die will-less and you don't choose where your assets go. Yet without an LPA, your assets could be locked down just when they're needed.

- **[New £69.50 Which? Power of Attorney codes](#).** An LPA is a legal document for which you pay the Government £110 to register (£74 in Scotland). If you have simple circumstances and know what you're doing, you can DIY via an online form. However, that's a risk, while the gold-standard solicitor-drafted LPAs cost about £500.

A new halfway house is Which?'s legal services. You fill in a questionnaire and the LPA is populated for you; then – crucially – it is checked by a paralegal. The standard cost for the financial LPA is £139, but Martin's Money Saving Expert has got promotional codes to get it half-price: [Full info in Which? codes](#). (You still need to pay Government registration fees on top.)

Sort future medical care & your (living) will too. Martin has focused on the financial LPA, but you can also set up a [Health & Welfare Power of Attorney](#) to give loved ones authority over your treatment, and a [living will](#) (officially 'an advance decision'), where you can refuse certain medical treatments if you lose capacity in future. Plus, while you're at it, do consider making a will if you don't have one.

Digital Deli

Email? Skype? Shop online?

The award-winning Northumbria Student Union IT Classes Project will start up again in 2017 at Northumbria University Campus:

If you have an issue with your computer/tablet/mobile phone that you'd like help with, just let Anne Richardson (0191 208 2701) know that you'd like to go along and she will tell the student helpers to expect you. **Please note: places need to be booked.**

You don't need to attend all sessions; it's entirely up to you whether you attend one, some or all classes. A list of some of the topics you might be interested in learning about includes:

- setting up an email account
- using YouTube
- transferring files
- using Skype (to talk face to face with the grandchildren?)
- learning how to use your iPad
- online shopping
- creating shortcuts

Sessions are **FREE** and participants are given one-to-one support from friendly student volunteers.

For further details or to register your interest, please call Anne on 0191 208 2701.

Techy Tea Parties

Techy Tea Parties: perfect for anyone living in Newcastle who wants to learn more about iPads, tablets or Smart phones; all levels accommodated. iPads and tablets are available for those who want to have a try before they buy.

Venue is City Library; places must be booked. Dates of sessions are:

- 26 January
- 9 February
- 23 February
- 30 March

To book a place or for further information, please ring 0191 277 4100 or go to <http://www.eventbrite.co.uk/o/newcastle-libraries-3037748424> (to book online you need an email address).



Things to do...

Change is in the air



Do you care about where you live and your community? Would you like to be part of making changes and improvements but aren't quite sure how? Working in partnership with the Workers Educational Association (WEA), Newcastle University and Byker Co, the Elders Council is piloting a short informal course to explore ideas and learn together about how to bring about change. Initially we are inviting Elders Council Board members and working group members to take part in a pilot course. We will also be running a course with a group of Byker residents. If this sounds like something you would like to take part in, please contact anne.richardson@qualityoflife.org.uk or call 0191 208 2701. We will put regular updates in the newsletter about the course and future opportunities to take part. Piloting this course is the Elders Council's response to the recommendations from the Community Conversations project and our recent review, both of which highlighted the need to create more opportunities for people to develop their skills and interests in community action.

News from Search Project

Search is the older people's charity in the west of Newcastle. Here are some activities in 2017 you might like to try:

Boundary Mill Stores Shopping Trip, Thursday 12 January

Find some bargains in the January sales on our trip to Boundary Mill Stores, Shiremoor. Our coach will take us directly to the large out-of-town shopping centre. Once there, you can find bargains and afterwards find the café for a well-earned cup of coffee. The coach departs from the Benwell Lane Lidl car park at 10.30 am and returns for 2 pm. Ring 0191 273 7443 to book your seat (only £2).

Calling all you Creative People

The Chain Reaction project at Search is getting creative with Carnival Arts. This arts-based programme will include some Newcastle Winter Festival activities. We will engage with the carnival artists and participate in a variety of dance, music and costume-making workshops up until March 2017.

If you would like to get your creative juices going and also partake in some cake, coffee and any of the carnival activities mentioned, please contact us at Search on 0191273 7443.

Try something old, learn something new ...

Johnny's Exercise Tips

This is one that I really love and practise regularly. It's a natural exercise, by which I mean that it requires no weights nor any machines. It can be done anywhere. It's based heavily on the Chinese martial arts and it simply uses the resistance of your own strength.

Simply stand with your legs slightly apart (shoulder width) with your arms by your side.

Breathe in through your nose as you lift both arms up to your chest with elbows pointing downwards, palms facing forward.

Push both arms forward as if you were pushing something away.

Breathe out through your mouth as you push out, keeping both arms level.

Don't lean forward; keep your back straight throughout the exercise and push slowly and hard as if you were pushing away something stronger than yourself.

Push until your breath is finished, let your arms drop, relax and then begin again. You are the one who determines how hard you push and how many times you repeat.

This is an exercise for life. It can even be done sitting down!

Don't forget your breathing: it's a vital part of the exercise.



Good luck! And please let us know how you get on.

Information Board

Newcastle City Council Customer Services moving to City Library

From March 2017, the [City Library](#) will be the new home to the city centre's Customer Service Centre (CSC).

The CSC will be moving out of its current location at the Civic Centre and will become the first of a network of community and information hubs that Newcastle City Council hopes to set up across the city. These will provide local people with easy access to the services they need in one convenient location.

This new hub will offer customers easy-to-use self-service options that will mean customers are dealt with more quickly and waiting times are reduced. Other support will be on hand for customers that really need it.

Newcastle City Council look forward to welcoming the Customer Service Centre and its customers. If you have any queries, please speak to a member of staff, either at the library or Customer Service Centre. The number to ring is 0191 278 7878.

Cycling on pavements

Cycling UK remind us that cycling on the pavement is against the law. That law has been clear since 1888 (s85[1] of the Local Government Act), which means that it is illegal for cyclists to cycle on "any footpath or causeway by the side of any road made or set apart for the use or accommodation of foot passengers". So you have a perfect right to challenge a cyclist who is riding on the pavement.

VOLUNTEERS

You won't believe what you can do!

Thinking about drinking



If you have any experience of drinking alcohol and are over 65, a researcher at Newcastle University would like you to get in touch to take part in her investigation of what older people think about drinking.

If you are interested in finding out more, please ring Bethany Bareham on 0191 208 2056 or email her at b.k.bareham@newcastle.ac.uk.



If you agree to take part, you get a £10 Love2shop voucher as a thank-you.

Wellbeing for Life Session

The next Wellbeing for Life session will take place on Wednesday 1 February, 10.30am – 12.00 noon at Jesmond Community Library. The theme for this session will be falls prevention. 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.

Correspondence

Dear Editors,

A friend of mine recently was to meet with a small group of friends for lunch in Newcastle. Unfortunately, she had mixed the date and arrived the following day. She is in her early 80s and isn't as confident as she once was, so being alone wasn't a very good start to what should have been a happy occasion.

However, the staff at the restaurant could not have been kinder. They found her a well-placed table, brought coffee and a magazine and offered to try to contact her friends. She felt much less anxious as a result and was able to order and enjoy her lunch despite eating it in splendid isolation. The staff kept an eye out for her and without overwhelming her stopped to say a few words (not just "Is everything alright?"). She was able to have a second cup of coffee but couldn't quite manage a pudding. But she did go on to do a little Christmas shopping feeling very pleased that she had had an enjoyable lunch alone.

The restaurant was Miller and Carter on Mosely Street in Newcastle. I did call in to say thank you and I have written to the manager to thank his most professional and kind staff. I did enjoy my meal there too on the previous day and felt readers would appreciate knowing just how good some customer relations are. Well done, Miller and Carter staff! I hope they have a fabulous Christmas.

Yours truly,
Mary Nicholls



Dear Editor,

In the latest issue of the Elders Council Newsletter, you were kind enough to publish a letter from me in which is catalogued the 'disasters' of dealing with various supply agencies, and what I had to do myself to put matters right.

I now write to let you know what has happened as a result of publishing that letter. I had a telephone call from the Rent Department of YHN to offer 'profuse apologies' for the mistake they had made with my rent, and the distress caused as a consequence. I was informed that there is now a new manager in place, and hopefully after reading my letter there will be some training given to staff in how to handle customer queries in a more helpful and less defensive manner. Thank you: it really does pay to let the Elders Council know what is wrong; sometimes good things happen as a result.

Best wishes,
Dorothy Connelly

Editors' note: What a result! It's good to know that YHN read our newsletter and good to know that they take necessary action.

DON'T OVERLOOK THE NORTH-EAST'S OLDER WORKERS: THE OVER-50S WHO NEED HELP MORE THAN EVER BEFORE

A Newcastle City Councillor tells us that, although unemployment has fallen, one group that has been overlooked is the over-50s. True, many men and women in this age cohort are in paid jobs in the North East; yet the stark reality is that thousands remain “economically inactive” and excluded from the labour market.

In Newcastle about 1,000 50 to 64 year-olds claim job seekers allowance and thousands more have been “parked” on disability benefits: the “hidden unemployed”. A growing minority of the over-50s, having experienced redundancy in their working lives, have been forced into self-employment with a precarious income.

Thousands of former working-class, blue-collar workers living in the most de-industrialised neighbourhoods across the region are the victims of globalisation and automation, which has caused long-term unemployment leaving them consigned to the economic scrap heap.

Large numbers of older men and women have low skill sets, physical or mental ill-health and few qualifications. They're less likely to be equipped to compete in a digital, fast-paced job market which favours IT savvy youngsters. Competition for unskilled jobs is fierce; 85 applicants per job is not uncommon.



The Carnegie Third Age Programme, which champions older people, notes that campaigns against ageism are having some impact. High street giants like M&S and outdoor retailers like B&Q adopted schemes 20 years ago to help applicants over 50. And the Government's decision to appoint an Older Workers champion is a step in the right direction. Central Government needs to re-prioritise adult skills and education to improve the life-chances of the “left behinds”. Adult education has been starved of resources. Opportunities for adults over 50 to update their skills have been cut to the bone. Yet, these are the things that could help the older workers to get back onto the ladder.

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. (See pg. 8)

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 (✓).

Report

Violence against older people

Despite extensive research around sexual violence internationally, there remains an important gap in relation to older women. There have been very few studies specifically examining sexual violence against women aged 60 and older, and the national crime victimisation survey (the Crime Survey for England and Wales) does not collect data on experiences of sexual violence from those aged over 59. Consequently, older survivors of sexual violence have been invisible.

A study conducted by Hannah Bows at Durham University aimed to address these gaps. Through analysing police recorded data, the study found around 150 reports are made each year of rape or sexual assault by penetration offences involving a victim aged 60 or over. Most victims are female and most perpetrators are male. The majority of offences occurred in the victim's home; however, the second most common location was a care home. Most perpetrators were younger than victims; 66% were aged under 60.

Sexual violence can affect anyone, at any age, but for older people it may be more difficult to report to the police or to disclose to family or support services for a range of reasons: older victims might feel they won't be believed; that sexual violence doesn't happen to older people; they might feel embarrassed about being raped 'at their age'. However, there are services out there that can help you. Age UK Teesside, Age UK Gateshead, Rape Crisis Tyneside and Northumberland, and Durham University have been working together to raise awareness and have created a guide which you can read for free, which gives some basic information and advice. Just ring 0191 222 0272.

✂.....

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

A Reluctant Shopper

Seated in my car I fume
As the traffic stay standstill.
On the other side, the wrong way,
I watch cars and buses moving smoothly.
From my persistent inner voice I hear:
Turn round and join them.
Get back home now, and rest
And let your eyes feast
On the lazy morning sun and the quiet
Of the bright deserted street.
Take time just to do nothing. Let earth
Go spinning on its way.
Suddenly my car starts to crawl, and I sense
A tighter stranglehold on me.

ASIT MAITRA

Home Safety Checks and Safe-and-Well visits from Tyne & Wear Fire and Rescue Service

Tyne & Wear Fire and Rescue Service is committed to achieving its vision of creating the safest community by reducing the risk of fire in domestic premises through Home Safety Checks.

The Safe-and-Well checks are carried out in addition to their home safety check and are available to anyone over 65 years of age living in Newcastle and are aimed at primary falls prevention.

Firefighters can visit your home, where you may be at the greatest risk from fire, and offer advice on fire safety tailored specifically to your needs and where necessary fit free smoke detectors.

They are currently targeting their resources at those households most at risk, but will attend to you as soon as possible if you request this service.

Request a Home Safety Check

To request a Home Safety Check in your household, complete the Home Safety Check Request Form at www.twfire.org; or you can contact them on 0800 032 7777.

Newsletter Information

Newsletter Articles

If you would like to submit an article to be considered for the March/April 2017 edition of the Newsletter, will you please ensure that you forward it before Friday 10 February.

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?

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