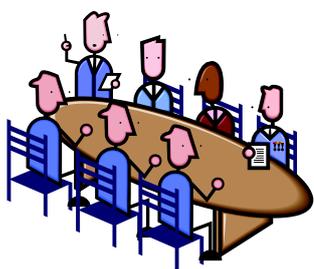


## The Elders' Council – The Story So Far ---- (February 2012)

In 2001 the Elders' Council was launched and adopted two aims

**“To provide an effective voice for the elders’ organisations and elders resident or active in the City of Newcastle upon Tyne on issues concerning The quality of life, health and wellbeing of elders in Newcastle.”**

**“To realise the potential of elders as a creative and active resource for the community”**



A committee was elected and working groups were formed on issues members said affected the quality of their lives. Over the years the number of working groups has varied but has included groups on; transport, health and social care, communications and housing among others. The groups are generally led by a trustee.

**In 2002** the Elders' Council received a grant from the Northern Rock Foundation to cover the next two years. This secured the immediate future and provided funding to help with further development.

**In 2003** The Elders' Council Action Plan '**The Way Ahead**' was published and was presented to Newcastle City Council, and was adopted as the basis of the City's strategy for its older population.

**In 2004** The Council allocated funding to support a strategy aimed at improving the quality of life of the City's older people. The City Council continued funding from that date onwards.

It led to the formation of **The Quality of Life Partnership** (QoLP) which brought together the Elders' Council, Age Concern (now Age UK Newcastle) and Newcastle Healthy City. A Programme Board is set up to co-ordinate the work of the Partnership.

**In 2005** under the umbrella of the Partnership a number of new services are gradually put in place. These include:

- **A Trades Register** – a database helping older people find friendly tradespeople they can trust
- **Information NOW** (Newcastle Older People's Website) -- a comprehensive information resource bank for older people.



**In 2006** The Government required all Local Authorities to have a strategy for an ageing population. 'The Way Ahead' was used as the basis of the strategy, which was drafted jointly by the City Council and QoLP.

**In 2007** '**Everyone's Tomorrow**' (Newcastle's Strategy for Older People and an Ageing Population) is agreed by the City Council. Responsibility for implementation

of the strategy was given to an Older People's Strategic Board (OPSB) which was set up along similar lines to the Programme Board (which it replaced).

**In 2008** The Elders Council becomes a **Registered Charity** and a **Company Limited by Guarantee**. As a consequence the committee became a Board of Trustees.

**In 2009** Launch of a series of Information Days. These include Powers of Attorney, Keeping Warm, Enjoying the Arts and Living Independently.



**In 2010** Launch of 'Just What I Need' (JWIN) campaign. The Elders Council contribution is the establishment of a group of volunteers to present JWIN information to community groups.

**In 2011** Newcastle signs up to the World Health Organisation's Dublin Declaration on **Age-friendly Cities and Communities**. This is followed by a very successful Policy Cabinet on Promoting Active Ageing.

**In 2012** Due to the financial crisis, Newcastle City's funding was severely reduced. This led to the demise of one of the partner organisations, Newcastle Healthy City, as well as a significant reduction in the funding the Partnership received from the City Council.

A new partnership is forged currently known as the **"Age-friendly City Group"**

This includes the Elders Council, Age UK Newcastle representatives from both universities, the city council and representation from the newly formed Clinical Commissioning Groups; the group is chaired by the councillor with the portfolio for the Age Friendly City.

In 2013 we received some funding which we used in work on a large programme of work, **"Bridging the Gaps"** looking at ways to reduce isolation and loneliness through peer to peer support. In 2015 we published our **Manifesto** and in 2016 received a grant to work through **"Community Conversations"** helping older people grow in confidence and be more knowledgeable about their neighbourhood.



**In 2016** the Board of Trustees worked with Northumbria University post grad. students on a review of the Elders Council; this clearly directed the Board to focus on: internal clarity; external communications and building capacity. Alongside these the trustees also worked on strengthening governance. Currently trustees have a **Strategic Plan** in place to take them to a position of independence buying in support and bidding for funding from grants and possibly contracts.

During 2016/17 we held an **Information Day** on Your Home, Your Choice as well as involvement in an innovative group developing new housing exemplars for the future.

We dipped toes into **Crowd Funding** for a specific project and raised enough to send two members to the Newcastles of the World conference in Canada.. Partnership with **Workers Education Association and Newcastle University** gave a small pilot project on Civic Engagement this has helped with capacity building with trustees. The project is called **Active Voices** and the Elders Council intends to develop more courses in different parts of the city to offer older people more opportunities to engage in their local communities.

For more detailed information see:

[www.elderscouncil.org.uk](http://www.elderscouncil.org.uk)

[www.qualityoflife.org.uk](http://www.qualityoflife.org.uk)

[www.informationnow.co.uk](http://www.informationnow.co.uk)