



Elders Council of Newcastle

Older People working for Older People

February – April 2018 Issue 80

We've moved!

You may have noticed that our address on the back page has changed. This is because we've moved back to MEA House; you'll find us on the second floor.

Our contact details are on the back page.

How to get there:

By bus: there are bus stops in John Dobson Street and outside the City Library in New Bridge Street.

By Metro: the stations at Monument and Haymarket are the closest.

By taxi: a taxi can drop you off right outside the front door.

By car: there is a car park beside MEA House (see map).



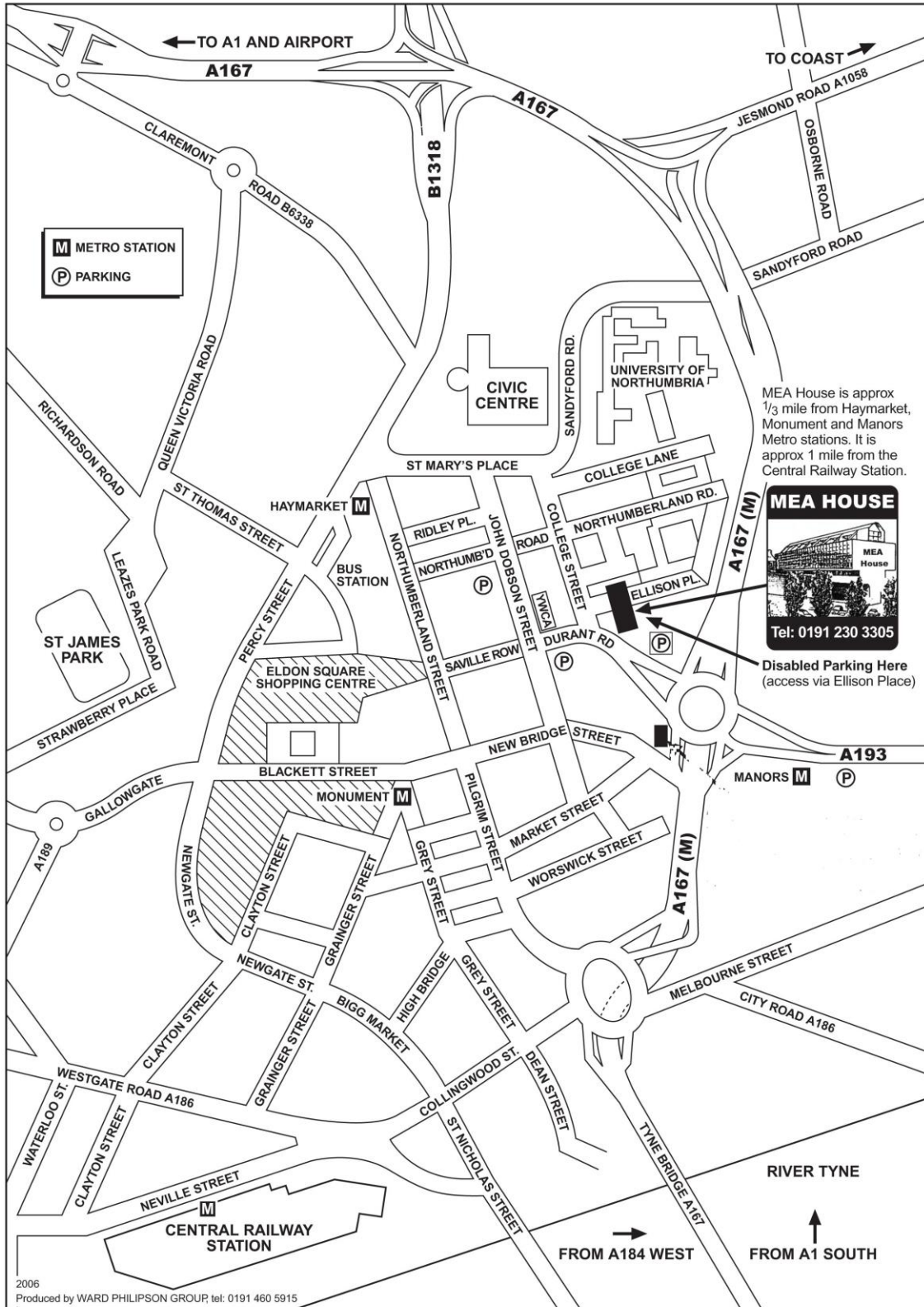
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Active Voices

We will be offering an Active Voices course at the St Martin's Centre, Byker on Wednesday afternoons, starting on the 14 February 2018, 12.00 noon – 3.00pm (sandwiches provided). If you are interested in being more active in your community and would like to meet up with like-minded people to share your ideas, join us for this course. It's free! To book a place, contact Deborah Dobinson or Susan Hylands at Workers Educational Association on 0191 212 6100 or email Susan at SHylands@wea.org.uk .

We've moved!



Elders Council at Work

Communication Group

We continue to broadcast once a month from a little studio in West Gate Community College. Our host station is the community radio station for Newcastle and Gateshead called NE1fm.

So:

1. Please tune in to 102.5fm at 2pm on Fridays 2 March (other older people's forums) and 6 April (arts in the north east).
2. Get in touch with us (0191 273 4727) to tell us what you thought of the show or to request a favourite piece of music.
3. **Volunteer to join the team** (again, 0191 273 4727).

Future Mile Castle Sessions

21 February	Steve Whitley – How the Newsletter Is edited; EC Radio; EC Bulletin
21 March	Would I Lie to You? – A panel game
18 April	David Hand (title to be decided)
16 May	Eric Neilson, author of book on ageing
20 June	To be confirmed
18 July	To be confirmed

We meet at the Mile Castle pub on the third Wednesday of the month.

We do want you to be aware of people who may feel lonely or left out and perhaps invite them to come with you for coffee/tea and a chat; we know how important it is to keep in contact with people, even if it's only to have a good moan! Although getting things off your chest can be helpful, it's also very good to find a positive spark that will bring a smile, as these are very catching.

We no longer receive the free refreshments, so when you arrive you need to go to the bar and pay £1.20. You'll be given a mug and you can go to the drinks machine at the end of the room and choose what you want. Once you have paid, you can have as many refills as you like; so if you intend to stay and have lunch, keep your mug.



Elders Council at Work

Transport and Highways Working Group

Killingworth Road

Nexus completed the new Metro bridge over Killingworth Road in the six weeks allotted and services were resumed on time. The Council is now working on other major road works at that point including the replacement of three main gas supply lines and substantial widening of the road to include proper pavements and a cycle way. The road is expected to reopen in Spring 2018.

We are still waiting for the revised plans for the nearby Haddricks Mill roundabout alterations and the Blue House Roundabout Proposals.

Blackett Street Pedestrianisation

We had advance notice that Newcastle City Council have proposals for a trial pedestrianisation of Blackett Street in the summer of 2018. However, we are waiting for exact details of what is planned so that we can evaluate the consequences. The Transport Working Group policy has always been that we support all improvements to City Centre access, including pedestrianisation, provided adequate alternative bus-stops can be provided.

As already mentioned, we cannot form a judgement until the proposals are published and we urge members, once they are published, to let NCC planners have their views.

Metro modernisation

We welcomed the news that the Government has agreed to fund the £350m Metro modernisation programme. This is a major scheme of investment to ensure that the region has a reliable Metro system for many decades to come.

The 11-year programme will see stations modernised, trains refurbished and miles of new tracks and cables installed. Whilst the completion is some years away, work is already under way to update the present facilities and Nexus tell us that large sections of track have already been replaced and stations have been improved to give passengers a brighter and better travel experience.

New smart ticket machines are in place at all 60 Metro stations. Electronic ticket gates are also being installed at 13 key Metro stations.



Elders Council at Work

Transport and Highways Working Group

Nexus tell us that we will benefit from:

- a more reliable Metro service
- a smoother and more comfortable journey
- brighter and more comfortable station waiting areas
- easier and more flexible ways of paying for travel
- reduced fare evasion
- securing a Tyne and Wear Metro service for years to come

As a Working Group we meet every two months in the City Centre and our next meeting is Wednesday 14 March at 2pm.

If you are interested in becoming involved, we will be delighted to see you. Please contact Anne Richardson on 0191 235 9905 for further details.

Housing, Health and Social Care Group

Last year we brought together the Elders Council's work on Housing, Health and Social Care into one group. The Elders Council has always advocated that housing, health and social care services should work more closely together, so it seemed only right that we should set the example by bringing our own activities together.

The group now meets quarterly, and we held our second meeting in December 2017. Here is a flavour of the wide range of activities we are currently involved in:



Housing Voices: in partnership with Care and Repair England, Northumbria University and Skimstone Arts, we are holding an event on 22 March from 5 to 9pm at Commercial Union House about housing choices. We particularly want to have conversations with people who are ageing without children (either because they don't have children or their children live far away) and older people who are looking after older relatives. If this applies to you and you would like to come, please contact anne.richardson@qualityoflife.org.uk or call 0191 235 9905.

Elders Council at Work

Housing, Health and Social Care Group

Lived experiences of home adaptations

We are in the final stages of the research about people's experiences of home adaptations led by Northumbria University. The report will be available shortly and we hope that the recommendations will lead to improvements to the ways in which people access home adaptations.

Future Homes

Elders Council has committed to being one of the partners in a newly formed Community Interest Company, which will take forward the learning from Future Homes. Future Homes is an exciting project which aims to develop affordable and adaptable housing for people at all stages of life. We expect to see rapid progress on the development of the five demonstrator units which will be built this year.

Urgent Care: Elders Council took the opportunity to hold a focus group on the use of current urgent care services. The government is planning changes to urgent and emergency care services. The demand for these services is growing and it can be confusing for the public to know which service is the most appropriate one to access. Sixteen members participated and their views were written up in a report and sent to Newcastle Gateshead Clinical Commissioning Group. One of the main issues for participants was the terminology used to describe Urgent Care Services. However, they did have a great deal to say about their experiences of using a range of services such as Walk-in Centres, GPs and NHS 111. Everyone uses the NHS and values its services enormously so there are concerns about future changes. We don't yet know what changes there will be but we will let you know when we get feedback from our report.

Home Care: Following on from the consultation we undertook in 2015/16, we continue to receive feedback on members' experiences of home care services. We are also conducting an informal investigation into different models of home care to see what we can learn from elsewhere.

Look out in the newsletter and ebulletin for opportunities to join in this work, either through participating in one-off events or by joining the quarterly meeting.



Elders Council at Work

Older Person Friendly City

The Draft Development and Allocation Plan was studied and debated by members and a response was forwarded to the City Council. The plan is intended to guide the future development of Newcastle. We expressed the following concerns:

Economic Prosperity

In the City Centre it is important to maintain the attractiveness of streets, with quality shopping and markets with clear signposting and basic amenities, e.g. seats and toilets. The retail economy is important for both residents and visitors, together with the hospitality and entertainment industry, which draws tourists to the region. In District and Local Retail Centres it is necessary to keep a balance between shops offering fresh food, and offices offering services, particularly in attractive neighbourhood centres.

Homes

Implement policies to ensure that:

- all new homes are built to Lifetime Homes Standards;
- specialist housing is located within neighbourhoods, not fenced off;
- a balance is kept between family housing and student accommodation to ensure mixed communities.

Transport and Accessibility

We support improvements for cyclists and public transport, but insufficient attention is paid to movement and circulation. It is necessary to invest in improving pavements and extending pedestrian crossing times.

People and Place

We support the preservation of the historic environment, which is crucial for an appreciation of the culture and character of the city; it is important for citizens, as well as attracting tourists, who contribute to the economy. Most of all, we need to preserve and enhance parks and green spaces in all neighbourhoods as they contribute to our health and wellbeing.

Older People ...

... are an increasing proportion of the population so it is important for us to have some say in future developments. Of course, we want our city to be economically prosperous, but we would like it to be age-friendly as well.

Future Meetings

The above comments on the Development and Allocation Plan provide a framework for future discussions in the year ahead, starting with plans for the future of parks. Interested members are invited to join the discussions.

Next Meeting

Monday 19 March, 10.30am-12.30pm in Room 01, 2nd floor, Commercial Union House, Pilgrim Street (opposite the Tyneside Cinema).

A hard act to follow

As Vera Bolter celebrates her 90th birthday, it seems only fitting that we acknowledge the enormous contribution that she has made and continues to make to the city of Newcastle upon Tyne. We often joke that Vera has never retired, because in her retirement she has carved out a whole new career in improving the quality of life of older people in the city.

We first met Vera in 1995 at Newcastle Healthy City Project where she was co-ordinating a very lively group of older people called 'Action for Health – Senior Citizens in Newcastle'. It would take a whole Newsletter to record the many and varied activities this group got up to. Highlights include: taking part in the Senior Games in Copenhagen (which provided the inspiration for the Elders Council's European Senior Games in Newcastle in 2006); 'Links to a Fuller Life' peer research, which led to the way to creating opportunities for older people to be researchers or co-researchers in their own right; activity days of all kinds, including a very successful falls prevention programme. The example set by this group was pioneering and provided the foundations and a model for the Elders Council.

In 1997, the group spread its wings further and established the Old Spice Drama Group. Who could ever forget them bursting onto the stage with a rendition of 'Do you wanna be my home help?' outwitting the Spice Girls with every note! Over the years, Vera was the author of the scripts for the many and varied sketches which Old Spice performed, getting messages across powerfully and with humour, hitting the mark in a way that several volumes of research reports or policy papers could never do. Old Spice performed at conferences, community events and used their performances as part of training sessions for social work students and proved to be a very powerful and creative way of giving older people a voice.

Vera has applied her creativity and energy to a very wide range of issues. In addition to leading the Elders Council's work on housing, health and social care over many years, she also set up the Older Person Friendly City Group through which she has led older people to conduct audits of older people's experiences of the city centre, parks and recreation areas, district centres and supermarkets and using the evidence gathered to hold the powers that be to account.

And let's not forget that Vera's beady eye would never miss the opportunity to put forward older people's views on key policy consultations from local and national bodies. Not content with working at a citywide level, Vera is now leading the Wellbeing for Life programme in Jesmond Library, creating yet more opportunities for older people to connect, be active, take notice, keep learning and give.

There are many of us who wish to thank Vera for giving so much and for creating opportunities for others to take part. She sets the bar high and it's a hard act to follow, but we've had a lot of fun and with her inspiration we've made a difference!

Happy birthday Vera!

It is now seven months since Information NOW (www.informationnow.org.uk) moved to a new platform so that it could create and develop features that make the website more accessible to you all.

So far, they are delighted with the results. They have had hundreds of registrations, which enables people to save the information that interests them in one place under Favourites and there have been over 100 new organisation listings. The website also has over 1300 events and activities to keep you connected, healthy and happy. Quite a lot of these events are free or cost under £3.

The latest article about self care and disability has had a positive response and so have the latest reports on ageing, housing and dementia in the Information NOW newsletter; to subscribe to this fortnightly newsletter, simply click on the “News” tab and enter your email into the pop-up box.

Here are four easy ways to encourage people to get the most out of Information NOW:

1. Show them the Information NOW website and the video 'How to get the most out of [Information NOW](#)', which is on the “About us” tab.
2. Show them how to [register](#) and use Favourites to save information and events in a calendar format personal to them.
3. Pass on a [postcard](#) or [bookmark](#) to someone who needs it. You can find these in all the libraries.
4. Do you have access to plasma screens that your team or the public use? Please show the [video](#) on the “About us” tab to help raise awareness.

Have you been wondering where you can take your dog when you want a drink or a cup of coffee?

Information NOW has updated the pets and animals article to include pubs and cafes in Tyne and Wear and Northumberland. If this is one of your favourite articles, then why not register on the site and save this article to your shortlist. You can then find the article quickly every time.

Things to do ...

Get fit through dance

Dance City now has 12 classes each week specifically for over-55s in tap, ballet, salsa, pilates, yoga and contemporary. The classes give you a chance to try something new, to reignite a passion for moving and to keep active. Our bodies were made to move and, regardless of age or ability, the teachers at Dance City believe that everyone can enjoy dance. They say that their classes have shown improvement in motor functions, coordination, mobility, and balance.

Feedback from one of the dancers:

“I have definitely improved my memory and developed more pathways. Feel sharper and more on the ball. I think after retiring you become mentally soggy and this sharpened my thinking even though it was a bit stressful.”

If you're interested in finding out more, please ring them on 0191 261 0505, go to their website www.dancecity.co.uk, or email them at info@dancecity.co.uk.



“My name is Rick and I’m 63 years old and I have had Parkinson’s disease for 13 years. I have attended a dance class for the last six years, three of them at Dance City and enjoyed every class.

“I love the way people move in synchronicity in a set routine. I love the way my brain tries to figure out a new move or dance sequence. Equally I am lost in myself when I try a sequence I know well. Both are wonderful.

“Dance has been well researched as a therapeutic medium. Balance, coordination, muscle stretching, companionship and group effort are all things studied and been found to be of benefit to the individual as well as exercising the brain when learning new routines. The class allows you to stand or sit down for each dance/movement session. The class is less dance and more movement which is great: no standing on other people’s toes; routines are based on the principle of Parkinson’s, which apply to all people over 50.

“New music and old music are the basis to each session. You follow a series of movements to the music; e.g., *Edelweiss* is a ballet warm-up and *Catch a Falling Star* is a series of stretching exercises. We warm up and warm down. The class lasts an hour.”

Things to do

Lunch Links

Are you over 55, seeking regular company and want to eat out? Why not join Lunch Links Breakfast Club? Meeting every Wednesday at The High Main, Wetherspoons, Shields Road, Byker from 9.45am.

You could also join Lunch Links Monthly Outings Group. Outings will take place on:

- Wednesday, 28 February: North Shields Fish Quay
- Wednesday, 28 March: Dobbies Garden Centre
- Wednesday, 25 April: The Salt House, Cullercoats



For further information on either of the above opportunities, please call Joanna or Trisha on 0300 300 7070 (charged at local rate).

Tai Chi for over 50s

Join expert instructor Dave Robinson at the Great North Museum: Hancock to learn the basics of Tai Chi Chuan, the holistic martial art.

- Reduce stress
- Improve your fitness
- Develop your posture, balance and coordination
- Gain self-confidence and meet new people

There are six sessions in the programme. The first session on Monday 19 February starts earlier than the others at 3pm and includes an introductory talk from the museum's Keeper of Biology Dan Gordon.

- Monday 19 February, - 3-4.30pm (includes talk from Dan Gordon)
- Monday 26 February, 3.30-4.30pm
- Monday 5 March, 3.30-4.30pm
- Monday 12 March, 3.30-4.30pm
- Monday 19 March, 3.30-4.30pm
- Monday 9 April, 3.30-4.30pm

Free (advance booking required). Please book your place by contacting the Outreach Team on (0191) 277 2246 or livewell@twmuseums.org.uk . **Places are allocated on a first-come first served-basis.**

In your locality ...

... West End

- Argentine Tango: Tuesdays 1.30-2.30 at Robert Stewart Memorial Church Hall. Only £1 per session. No experience necessary.
- How to Trace Your Family Tree: 8-week course on Tuesdays, 11.30-1.30 at Fenham Association of Residents. Only £1 per session.

For further information, please ring Clare Levi on 0191 273 7443 or email her at clare.levi@searchnewcastle.org.uk .

... Kenton

Kenton Ward Committee tell us that they are funding extra welfare advice sessions for older and vulnerable residents. In partnership with nearby wards and supported by the Active Inclusion Unit, they have made a significant difference.

The outreach project, based in the Kenton centre, has enabled more vulnerable and cash-strapped older and disabled residents to get the benefits that they deserve. Almost £2m in unclaimed benefits has been awarded by the DWP. Between April 2015 to November 2017, 571 residents on low incomes were advised – several with health-related conditions. About 150 older residents were awarded attendance allowance, pension credit, and carers allowance.

So successful has the project been that the Kenton committee has allocated another £8k from ward funds to keep the service going up to 2019. Kenton older residents and their carers can get free help from welfare advisers every Thursday, 10am to 12,30pm at Kenton Centre. Or they can phone 0191 277 2627.

... Newburn

Newburn Knitters

Newburn Library
Every Monday, 10.30am-12.30pm



If you love to knit and natter, why not become a Newburn Knitter and meet other like-minded people in your area?

No booking required; just turn up.
Over 50s only.

For further information, please ring **Frances Child** on **0191 2737443**

Information

Your care, your feedback

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

You can search online for all social care and health services in the city, as well as review and rate them using a star system. A feedback leaflet is also available for those who don't have internet access. The information you provide also helps Healthwatch Newcastle to analyse local trends, with the ultimate aim of making sure everyone in Newcastle receives great care.



They also have an app for smartphones and tablets, which makes rating and reviewing services and keeping in touch with them easier. The app is available for Android and iPhone. Just search for 'Healthwatch Newcastle' in the relevant app store.

To give feedback on services, please go to www.healthwatchnewcastle.org.uk/services.

For a copy of the feedback leaflet, please phone 0808 178 9282 (free from landlines).

Did you know ...

... that the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) has found that Britain's workers can look forward to the lowest state pension of any major country?

In Italy and the Netherlands, pensioners can expect a pension worth 80% of what they were getting when they were working; the average of all OECD countries is 63%; and in Britain the figure is 29%.

It's possibly too late for you to do anything other than protest, but please encourage your younger family members to think very carefully about the future.

Exchange your paper tenners

Last year, it was the old pound coin that was withdrawn from circulation. This year, it's the old paper tenner.

Please remember to spend or exchange your old paper ten-pound notes for the new plastic ones by 1 March, after which they are no longer going to be accepted.

Digital Deli

Free Computer Sessions

Learn My Way: basic computer training

This course supports people to develop basic computer skills which will help them to understand how to access and use the internet. One-to-one support is given to each attender.



The course is free and runs at the City Library over two 2½-hour sessions (10.30am to 1pm) on every Wednesday and Thursday morning. The course also runs at the West End Library, Condercum Road on Tuesday mornings from 10.30am to 1pm.

Expenses of £4 will be paid on production of a valid day-travel ticket.

Online Basics Plus and Job Club

This course supports you to develop basic computing skills, to help you access and use the internet.

To be eligible for this course participants must be:

- aged over 50
- a Newcastle resident
- unemployed or working less than 16 hours
- actively seeking employment

One-to-one support is given to each attender.

Dates: Wednesday 7 February and Wednesday 14 February; or Wednesday 7 March and Wednesday 14 March.

Time: 2-4pm

Venue: Newcastle City Library

On successful completion of this course, you will be eligible to join the over-50s job club, which will run every Thursday from 2 to 4pm.

Digital Deli

Free Computer Sessions

Microsoft Word at City Library

This free course, delivered by Newcastle City Learning, is for anyone wanting to learn how to use Microsoft Word.

They can show you how to create a Word document and/or how to update your CV or covering letters. They can also show you how to cut and paste text to put into different documents, forms and emails. If you want help with your CV, please bring it with you; a paper copy is fine but an electronic format would be even better.

Dates: Tuesday 20 February and Tuesday 27 February; or Tuesday 6 March and Tuesday 13 March; or Tuesday 20 March and Tuesday 27 March.

Techy Tea Party

These informal sessions are for customers who have a tablet, iPad or smartphone that they want to get more out of. Or for those who are interested in getting one but would like to have a practice first.

The sessions take place on the second and last Thursday of every month at the City Library from 2 to 3.30pm. Customers can book themselves a place on a date and time that suits them. Please note: if you have an iPad, you will need to bring your Apple ID; if you have a tablet, you will need your email address and password.

Time 2-3.30pm

Venue: Room 4, City Library

Get Online Champions Training

This course runs each month. It has been designed specifically for staff and volunteers from community and charity organisations who want to help others to get online.

Please ring Lisa Dawson on 0191 278 4292 for further information or to book a place on a course.

Correspondence

Dear Editors,

A few weeks ago, my husband and I went away for a short break. The morning after our arrival, my husband discovered that he had forgotten one of his medicines (the most important one), which he could not do without for more than a day.

We went into the town to find a pharmacy to see if they could help. The only one we could find was Boots in the main shopping centre. We explained the problem to the pharmacist, who had access to NHS Summary Care Record. After we gave her some basic information, she was able to gain access to my husband's drugs list and therefore provide him with the appropriate medication.

The whole thing took about ten minutes. We paid privately for the medication as it was not very expensive and we wanted to get on with our day. However, we could have gone to the Urgent Care Centre and obtained an NHS prescription, which would have been free.

Although there has been a lot of debate about the Summary Care Record, on this occasion it worked perfectly and saved our mini holiday, the pharmacist being very helpful and pleasant.

Yours truly,
Anita Davies



Dear Editors

I have collected and distributed my allocation of Newsletters and have just enjoyed reading my copy. I particularly like the fact that members can correspond and share their thoughts and ideas although you may not always agree with them. The latest issue has a letter from John Urquhart that refers to one of my previous letters on cycling. John brought a smile to my face as I pictured our members on a cycle bus pedaling around town. Perhaps instead of the money Newcastle council is wasting they could better spend it purchasing some cycle buses.

I would also like to add that I agree with Bob Weiner when he questions the money spent on these so called cycle lanes.

May your pen never run dry (or should I say your cartridge?).

Yours truly,
Allan Robinson

Correspondence

Dear Editors

I read with interest the letter from Bob Weiner regarding cycle lanes (November-January Newsletter, p19).

I totally agree that in these days of rapidly dwindling finances it must be questioned as to whether funding for cycle lanes should be a priority. I would, however, point out that, in the specific case referred to, it was not the strong cycle lobby in Newcastle that 'persuaded' the council to spend money. The money was in fact provided by the European cycle organisation, and was ring-fenced so it could not be used for anything else.

Clearly, the ideal scenario would be for the European organisation to divert their (obviously substantial!) funds to something like the NHS; unfortunately, we don't live in an ideal world!

Yours truly
John Telfer



Dear Editors

It's good to see so much correspondence on cycling in the pages of the newsletter, particularly as getting on a bike, electric bike or tricycle is perfect exercise for those in the silver years. But I need to correct some misconceptions in Bob Weiner's letter.

First, the motivation of the city council in promoting cycling is not primarily lobbying, but a perception shared by councils all over the country that more walking and cycling is desirable in place of driving, to counter the air pollution, obesity and threat of climate change which are challenging us all.

Second, according to the latest Bikelife report <https://www.sustrans.org.uk/bikelifenecastle> - over 700 cyclists a day use John Dobson Street, compared with 100 before the changes.

And third, the new pro-cycling developments in Newcastle are being funded by central government as they are seen as desirable and necessary, and not by the cash-strapped city council.

Yours truly
Tony Waterston

Correspondence

Dear Editors

With reference to the correspondence on cycling in the last two editions of your newsletter, I would like to respond on behalf of the City Council.

The Council was awarded funding from the Cycle City Ambition Fund (CCAF) to improve infrastructure for cyclists. Council policy is to encourage cycling and reduce congestion and the CCAF grant is specifically to develop facilities for cycling. In response to the comments made by Bob Weiner about John Dobson Street, the number of people cycling along there has increased from about 150 each day to 700. Buses are also able to run more efficiently and to timetable with fewer delays, thus benefiting passengers.

The Council prioritises walking and cycling in its transport policies and I'm very happy to come along to the Elders Council to speak to members about the work.

Yours truly
Arlene Ainsley
(Cabinet Member for Transport and Air Quality)

Editors' note: This correspondence is now closed.

Powers of Attorney – your questions answered A talk from solicitors Ben Hoare Bell

- What happens if someone can no longer make decisions for themselves?
- Do you need a Lasting Power of Attorney to make decisions for the person you care for?
- What are the different kinds of Power of Attorney ?
- What is Deputyship?

This is the second time Ben Hoare Bell have visited Newcastle Carers Centre. Carers found the last talk extremely useful.

When: Tuesday 10 April at 1:00pm
Where: Newcastle Carers Centre, 135-139 Shields Road

To book a place or for further information, ring. 0191 275 5060 or email info@newcastlecarers.org.uk

Dear Editors,

Newcastles of the World

In 2017 I planned a holiday that would take me to Australia to visit friends. I decided to use a bit of time to visit Newcastle in New South Wales as I had met Bob Cook, the representative from there, in Canada at the 2016 conference.

Bob and I emailed each other and agreed to meet one day in November when he (and his wife Lyn) would show me their Newcastle and talk to me about older people and their involvement in the community.

About two weeks before we met, I had to change the meeting date (by one day) so I emailed Bob from New Zealand. I still hadn't heard by the day I was to meet, which left me in a dilemma; I only had this day so decided I would go anyway. The train journey from Sydney to Newcastle takes about three hours but it's a beautiful journey as the train crosses the Hawkesbury River and follows it for many miles so you see marinas and if lucky wild life too.

Arriving at the brand new station in Newcastle, my heart sank as Bob wasn't there; I waited for the next train from Sydney just in case timing failed but no: he and Lyn weren't there. Not to be dis-heartened, especially as it was a gloriously sunny and warm day, I walked into town to the local council offices and explained why I was there.

They could not have been more helpful and within ten minutes I was sitting in the gardens with Stephen, a community development facilitator, who spent the next hour and a half talking to me about older people in his community.

There is a Youth Council, which allows opportunities to input into local community issues. But there is no equivalent for older people; there is nothing similar to our own Elders Council, which I found interesting and perhaps a question needs to be asked by the older people there. However, there is a multitude of groups and activities, over 80 of them, which feature in the Seniors Directory. The first two activities in the directory are all about surfing and swimming with large numbers of older people involved. Then there are ones we might be more used to such as scrabble and lots of musical offers. However, there is a focus on activities in the great outdoors. There is some funding available but, like here, it's often down to form-filling and bidding for cash.

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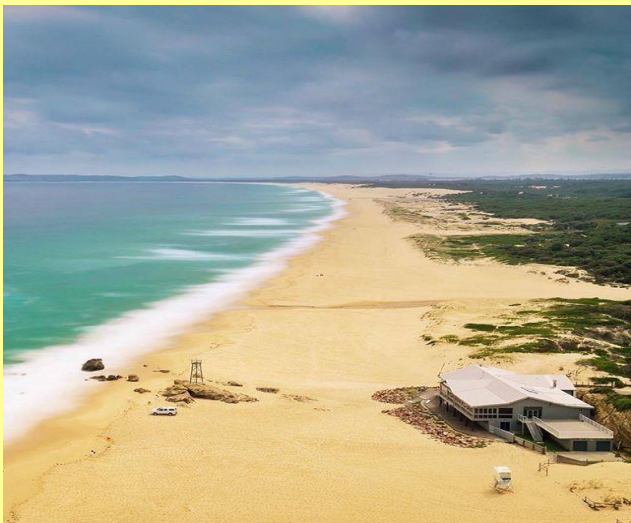
Correspondence

For those needing support to remain independent there is a home support programme; an assessment is needed to enter this programme and there are various levels and types of support available. Although some people will receive this free of charge, the majority of people pay towards the cost of the care.

Stephen showed me the latest university building (yes, they too are in the process of developing new buildings,) where I had some late lunch. I was so very grateful to Stephen and his line manager for giving me so much time.

And what happened with Bob? When I returned to Sydney, I received an email from Bob saying how he was looking forward to meeting with me tomorrow, the date originally planned! I just could not understand what on earth was happening and sent an immediate reply explaining all and just hoped it would reach him. I had been foolish in not taking any other means of contact.

When I returned home just before Christmas, I discovered that all the time I had been away ALL the emails I had sent had simply gone into my outbox and no further. So Bob had received none of my emails at all and I'm sure he and Lyn turned up at Newcastle station with a full itinerary for me. I have since emailed him from home with an explanation and apologies for this terrible mix-up. I hope he has forgiven me.



This is one of the beaches Newcastle, New South Wales, and it could be mistaken for some of our north eastern beaches, I think. However, here, for many months of the year, you can swim and surf in warm sea. Many older people's groups are set up for just this. I know of people in their late 70s who still swim competitively!

Yours truly,

Mary Nicholls

Donations and Gift Aid

Your generosity can help us make a difference

Some of you make individual donations to the Elders Council, and even small amounts add up and help us continue to provide the full range of activities which you can read about in the Newsletter.

Thank you!

If you would like to donate on a regular basis, how about setting up a standing order? We can help you arrange this through your bank or building society, and where possible can ensure that the benefits of Gift Aid can be taken. Please get in touch with Anne Richardson by ringing her on 0191 235 9905 or emailing her at anne.richardson@qualityoflife.org.uk.

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

But whenever you shop at one of the many participating stores or websites (for, e.g., hotels or rail tickets), the store or website gives a small percentage of the sale to the Elders Council.

Give as you live

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 24).

Name: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____

Please tick if you require a receipt (✓).

Poetry Corner

Fairies

Do you believe in fairies?
I'm sure you do like me
They can live at the bottom of the garden
I think I've two or three

Early in the morning when I get out of bed
I peep around my curtains to catch them unawares
I'm sure I hear them singing
Like little bells a-ringing

We're told when small about the fairies
The Christmas Fairy with Santa Claus
The Birthday Fairy who brings us gifts
The Wishing Fairy best of all

The next time you see a fairy
I'm sure it'll know you're there
Don't make a noise, just stay still
And enjoy the special sight at will

B. W. Hamilton

✂.....



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.

Updates from Age UK Newcastle

Have you made your will yet?



Age UK Newcastle is running a will day on Thursday 5 April. If you haven't made your will yet, please ring 0191 232 6488 to book an appointment with a solicitor.

The cost is £60 (£90 for a couple).

Information Session

'How can I save money on my Gas and Electricity bills?

If your group, coffee morning or other get together would like us to come to talk to you on:

- how to switch supplier
- the Priorities Services Register
- Warm Home Discount
- replacement boilers and insulation scheme
- locking cooker valves

please contact Julie or Linda on 0191 232 6488
or enquiries@ageuknewcastle.org.uk .



Newsletter Information

Newsletter Articles

If you would like to submit an article to be considered for the May to July 2018 edition of the Newsletter, will you please ensure that you forward it before Friday 13 April.

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 235 9905).

Electronic Version of the Newsletter

It costs about £1.35 per member to send out this newsletter, so would you be willing to have the newsletter sent to you electronically? If you would, it would save a lot of money every year. So please sign up for this service now by emailing anne.richardson@qualityoflife.org.uk: please put "E-mail newsletter" in the subject box.

Advantages to signing up for this service include receiving the Newsletter at least 14 days sooner than you would normally receive it via the post; getting earlier notice of events happening throughout the city; and seeing the various images in colour.

What are you waiting for?

Contact Details

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