



Elders Council of Newcastle

Older People working for Older People

November 2017 - January 2018 Issue 79

£3,300,000,000 unclaimed!

Up to 1.4 million families are missing out on a top-up to their state pension, the government has said. Each family entitled to the money but failing to claim is missing out on an average of about £2,350 a year.

Am I eligible?

As a rough guide, you can make a claim if your weekly income is below £159.35 (for single people) or £243.25 (for couples). You might also be able to claim if you have savings. You don't pay tax on Pension Credit.

For advice on eligibility, ring the Welfare Rights service on 0191 278 7878 or Age UK on 0191 232 6488 or go to www.informationnow.org.uk.

How to claim your entitlement: Call the Pension Credit Claims Line free on 0800 991 234 to make your application over the phone. Before calling, you will need to have to hand:

- your national insurance (NI) number
- an idea of how much money you have coming in each week
- details of any savings and investments
- information on housing costs, such as mortgage interest, service charges or ground rent.

If you have a partner, you will need to give the same information about them.

Other contacts: gov.uk/pension-credit; textphone 0800 169 0133.

Another entitlement which is not being claimed is the severe mental impairment discount on your council tax. For example, if you or someone you live with is living with dementia, you are entitled to this discount and, if you didn't claim when the impairment was first diagnosed, you can have it backdated to that time.

For further information and advice, ring the Alzheimer's Society on 0191 298 3989 or the City Council on 0191 278 7878 and ask for "Council tax".

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Elders Council at Work

Communications 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 Friday 1 December (our annual panto), 5 January and 2 February.
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).

EC Fortnightly

Some of you are getting our new fortnightly ebulletin, the *EC Fortnightly*. As its title implies, it comes out every two weeks in order to update members on what's happening in the period between newsletters.

Subscribe to our
eBulletin



Only 494 members have so far subscribed to this service. If you have email, would you like to add your name to the subscription list? We think that you might find it a useful service to keep you up to date. If you want to receive *EC Fortnightly*, please ring Anne on 0191 208 2701 or email her at anne.richardson@qualityoflife.org.

Of course, *EC Fortnightly* requires a bit of work to put together. Would you be willing to join a small team of members to take responsibility for doing this? If you're interested, please ring Steve on 0191 273 4727; leave a voice message if he's not in. We would, of course, give you training in the technical aspects of putting the bulletin together.

Facebook



We also need volunteers to enable us to progress our decision to open a Facebook service for members. If you would like to join a small group to do this, please ring Steve on 0191 273 4727. Previous experience of Facebook is not a requirement but it would help.

Elders Council at Work

Housing, Health and Social Care Group

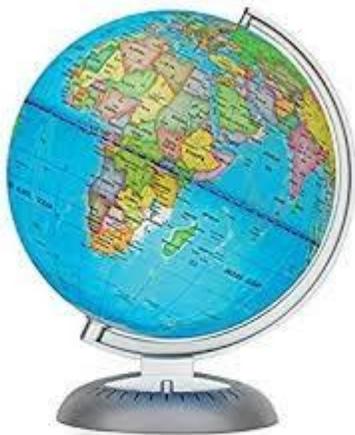
The newly-constituted Working Group held its first meeting on 22 September with the aim of considering all these issues in a joined-up way starting with an overview of our current work.

This includes participation in the Future Homes project; developing new models of multigenerational 'homes for life' as well as involvement in research into the impact – and finally – of adaptations to existing homes.

As health and social care services say that they are aiming to keep us out of expensive hospital and residential homes, as far as possible, home-care services have been increasingly important. So we shall have to follow up our previous enquiries into both the quantity and the quality of health and care services at home. Having a warm, comfortable home helps us to stay healthy but is not the whole story as we have other needs too, not only for practical help within the home, but also to stay socially connected with family and friends. It will be quite a task for the Working Group to keep up with understanding the combined impact of changes in any of these services. By planning them in an integrated way, the aim must be, not solely to save money, but to improve our quality of life. So there's quite a task ahead!

The next meeting of the working group will be held at 10.30am Friday 15 December. If you are interested in housing, health and social care and would like to be part of the group, please call 0191 208 2701.

Afternoon tea opportunity for Newcastle visitors



**Your passport to the
Newcastles of the World**

You will remember that three Elders Council members went to a Newcastles of the World (NoTW) conference in Canada last year. We reported back in the Newsletter together with some proposals. One idea is to develop a 'Newcastles passport' that allows visitors from one Newcastle to get special offers and treats if they visit another Newcastle. Now the scheme is launched and the EC is taking part by offering afternoon tea with EC members. We'll let you know how we get on but you will soon find out more on the NoTW website:

<https://newcastlesoftheworld.com/projects/passport/> .

Elders Council at Work

Transport and Highways Working Group

Bus Shelter Consultation

The contract to provide most of the bus shelters is coming to an end and the Council has drawn up revised criteria for the new contract. This will provide an advertising income stream to the Council which will cover the cost of repairs and new bus shelters.

A consultation exercise has been held which included the Transport Working Group and we gave some feedback concerning problems with redundant shelters, placing of timetables, too many buses at some stops, new shelters needed, adequate seating, proper design, orientation, location and the importance of Real Time reporting.

The Council have devised a “needs-based” criteria to be used for present and future provision of shelters. They include:

- proximity of an elderly care home/hospital, transport interchange and major retail area
- the number of buses stopping per weekday
- records of incidents of vandalism at the bus stop
- the possibility of advertising revenue from a proposed bus shelter

We will continue to monitor the arrangements.

Streets for People

A Streets for People project covering Heaton and Ouseburn, Jesmond, Arthurs Hill and Fenham has gained funding of up to £3m for changes to promote walking, cycling and sustainable travel.

Over a number of months, a team of urban designers has been working with local residents in these areas asking, “What changes would you make to your local streets to encourage you to cycle more, walk more or let the kids play in the street?” They are now finalising the proposals.

You can keep up to date with all of the developments by looking at their website: <https://streetsforpeople.org.uk/> .

Killingworth Road

Nexus completed the new Metro bridge over Killingworth Road 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 February.

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

Elders Council at Work

Mile Castle drop-in

This group meets each month at the Mile Castle pub at the junction of Westgate Road and Grainger Street and each session has a theme. If you have difficulty with the stairs, we can escort you to a lift.

In September, a couple of members talked about holidays that they had taken.

Elsa told us about the Taj Mahal. She told us how Mumtaz, for whom the tomb was built, died after her fourteenth pregnancy in seventeen years. Her husband, Shah Jahan, spent a fortune in building the magnificent tomb around her. He also had a sad end to his life, as his son had him imprisoned, although fairly luxuriously, in isolation. He was allowed a mirror from which he could see the Taj Mahal. On his death he was buried with Mumtaz.

Anita then talked to us about a very different kind of holiday she and her husband did about ten years ago. They are both keen cyclists and the holiday was to cycle across mainland Europe to Santiago di Compostela in Spain, a journey of approximately 1,300 miles.

They camped along the way (both are ex-army nurses) taking all their gear in panniers on the bikes. They had to cross three mountain ranges, the Pyrenees being the one separating France from Spain. They met many people following the same route as it's a pilgrim way. Pilgrims would wear the symbol of St James, a scallop shell. Anita and Fred also noted the Burgos Cathedral, where El Cid is buried. She took us to ways of travel most of just don't know, one of which is lighting your very small stove to cook your dinner in the rain.

They returned home on a plane with the bikes packed in a box (done in Santiago de Compostela) ready to take up cycling in the city. And Anita told us that her husband had had heart surgery the previous year!

It was a wonderful morning. Thank you, Elsa and Anita, for letting us see parts of the world through your eyes.

All are welcome to the Mile Castle sessions, which take place on the third Wednesday of the month from 10.30am. We want to see people coming into town to chat, have a moan if needed, and share time with others. If you don't know anyone to come with, be brave and come by yourself – there will be someone at the door to greet you and find you people to sit with.

- 15 November Information NOW (Kate Bowman)
- 20 December Charades and other Christmassy things

Elders Council at Work

Older Person Friendly City

Future of Parks

A decision about the future management structure of our parks is still pending. In the meantime over the summer, members have visited 14 of the main parks and noted their most attractive features and what we hope will still be available in the future.

We particularly value having an up-to-date notice-board to welcome you into the park (not just a notice-board telling you about what is forbidden) and then some safe level paths for a good walk around. Of course, some parks are on sloping sites, but it's still possible to have paths with easy gradients (Jesmond Dene, Elswick Park, Hodgkin Park). We seem to feel most comfortable where there is space for children's play and family activities – and there is now provision in all our parks of children's play equipment. But we also like to have seats of a good standard in tranquil areas where it's possible to look at trees, flowers and wildlife and contemplate the surroundings. Sometimes it's activities that draw us into parks. We notice the decline in bowling as an activity – although free tennis sessions were observed to be going well in Exhibition Park. Maybe we need a new generation of Senior Games to keep us active – and encouragement to use the adult exercise equipment (Exhibition Park and Newburn Riverside).

Of course, there are historical features too which are of interest, but it's only possible to enjoy what's on offer if basic facilities are on offer as well – what we really appreciate is access to a café or refreshments and **LOOS**, of course!

These are some of the things we really enjoyed and would recommend to visit:

Walker Park is recently upgraded, has an interesting connection with Robert Burns, and a good café; and is now a favourite place for John Smart.

Nuns Moor Park has pleasant seating areas, arranged activities and is now John Telfer's favourite place (although it's disappointing that the sensory garden is locked up).

Newburn Riverside has good level walking paths by the river with plenty of seats and picnic tables; also information about the historic Battle of Newburn is Vera's choice.

Jesmond Dene, Armstrong and Heaton Park are the best places for a good walk, which Bob enjoys, with a variety of trees and natural features as well as Pets Corner, and interesting buildings. Good range of information in the Visitor Centre and café and loos.

So just a few of the points from our visits – and in most cases parks are easy to access by public transport and/or have parking nearby. It is also noticeable on visits that an active Friends Group can make a big difference – keeping information up to date, organising litter picks, and opportunities to get involved. Whatever the outcome of consultations about future structure, we want to continue to have free access to parks and open spaces for our health and enjoyment.

Get Involved

Tell the Council

The City Council wants your comments on the Draft Development and Allocations Plan (DAP). Consultation closes on Monday 20 November.

The DAP is a plan to promote development and protect Newcastle's assets. It aims to provide greater certainty on the delivery of new housing and employment and ensure that Newcastle is a prosperous and sustainable city where people choose to live, work and visit.

Here's the link to the survey:

<https://letstalknewcastle.co.uk/consultations/info/231>

Here's the link to the website with further

information: <http://www.newcastle.gov.uk/localplan2>

If you don't have access to the internet, please ring 0191 277 1788 to ask for the times and venues of the drop-in sessions on 6, 9, 10, 14 and 18 November.



IT Classes Project

We have started the IT classes again. Working in partnership with volunteer students from Northumbria Students Union, Anne Richardson has arranged the following one-to-one sessions: 2.00 to 4.00 pm on Wednesdays 15 and 29 November.

Tuition is tailor-made to suit the learner, so, whatever IT issue you have, just go along and ask your allocated student how to resolve it. If you can take your own device along with you, so much the better.



Topics include setting up an email account; learning how to use your iPad; getting in visual touch with your friends and relatives through skype or facetime; or even learning how to use a computer for the first time. For further details or to register your interest, please call Anne on 0191 208 2701 or email her at anne.richardson@qualityoflife.org.uk

Information NOW

Information NOW (www.informationnow.org.uk) is aimed at people aged 50 and over who are residents or working in Newcastle and close by. It aims to keep people informed about how to keep happy and healthy, find activities and events that might interest them, and access local organisations who offer support, advice and resources in the City. Articles that have been published since August include: Hearing Voices and Hallucinations, Support Groups in Newcastle and the North East and updates to Universal Credit. The articles are well researched and laid out in an easy-to-read format with links to useful organisations as well. Our events and activities include anything from aqua to computer clubs, from dementia reading groups to music at King's Hall or St Nicholas Cathedral. We'll also keep you informed about Christmas lunches and outings through our events section.

Information NOW is also accessible to people with a first language other than English, with visual impairment or with neurological conditions. Just turn on the Recite Me function at the top of the screen and you can save the website with all the features that help you to use it. This includes: audio transcription of the articles and organisations, over 120 different languages, text sizing and a ruler.

We hope that you enjoy Information NOW. If you do, then why not go to our News tab and subscribe to our fortnightly newsletter to keep up to date with information, research, reports and events in the City. It's quick and easy to do. If you have any questions, please contact Kate Bowman or Carol Carey on 0191 208 2703.

Dates for you diary

NewcastleGateshead Initiative and Newcastle City Council have announced that this year's New Year's Eve event will take place on Newcastle's Town Moor.

The theme of the event is *East of the Sun, West of the Moon*, based on the legend of the wolf riders from Norse mythology. Walk the Plank theatre-group (<http://walktheplank.co.uk>) has been commissioned to orchestrate the sound-and-light spectacle and will build a massive theatrical bonfire on the moor and will put on a firework display.

Time of event: 4-6pm on Sunday 31 December.

Entry is free, although booking ahead online is advised as space is limited.

Mask Camp workshops: There will be an engagement weekend on Saturday 25 and Sunday 26 November at Northumbria University Students Union for anyone who would like to participate in making a combination of wolf/bird masks, accessories and lanterns for event participants.

For further information, please ring Alison Flanagan Wood (Arts Development Officer in the Council) on 0191 278 2958 or email her at alison.flanaganwood@newcastle.gov.uk.

Information

Which? guide on scams

The consumer magazine *Which?* has published a free guide on how to avoid scams. It has a pretty patronising title (*How can I protect my elderly relative from scams?*) but provides useful advice on such topics as:

- doorstep selling
- nuisance calls and texts
- unwanted post and scams
- staying safe on dating websites
- pension scams
- internet scams



If you would like a copy, ring 0199 282 2800 or go to www.which.co.uk.

Doorstep sellers



The police have sent us some advice about doorstep sellers (pedlars). They tell us that doorstep sellers must hold a certificate under the Pedlars Act 1871; this is granted by the police and paid by the seller. It allows the person named/photographed on the licence to sell anywhere in the UK. It is issued by the police force where the pedlar has resided for the past month and is valid for one year from the date of purchase.

If a doorstep seller comes to your house, please do not be pressured into buying from them. You have the right to ask to see their licence and, whether they have a licence or not, to demand that they leave.

The police further advise:

- Use a spy hole, chain or window to see who is at the door. If you do not recognise the person, speak through the closed and locked door.
- Look out for your neighbours and report any suspicious activity to police by noting down any information you have such as vehicle details.
- A pedlar's certificate is in no way an indication that the goods for sale are of merchantable quality.

In your locality ...

... Walker

Active Voices

Are you interested in becoming more actively involved in the life of your local community? Are you looking for an opportunity to make Walker a better place for older people? Would you like to meet like-minded people who are keen to make a difference to their local community? Then, if you are over 50, **Active Voices** may be right for you! The Elders Council of Newcastle, the Workers Educational Association (WEA) and Newcastle University have come together to offer **Active Voices** — a short course which aims to develop the skills and knowledge of people who wish to play a part in helping to make their communities more age friendly. It's informal, informative and it's fun!

If you would like to find out more about the course, which will start in January 2018, join us at St Martin's on Thursday 9 November from 10am to 12 noon. You will have the opportunity to hear from the people who took part in the first pilot course in Newcastle (*"I loved it, especially the 'bouncing' of ideas around the group."*) If you are interested for yourself or would like to find out more so that you can spread the word to others, please come along and meet us. To book a place, please contact anne.richardson@qualityoflife.org.uk or call 0191 208 2701.

... Kenton

How a little-known neighbourhood fund is being used in Kenton to help older citizens

The three Kenton councillors tell us that Kenton ward was one of 12 neighbourhoods across the country to have been picked by the Government's Communities Department to take part in its 'Our Place' – Neighbourhood Devolution project. 'Our Place', with a one-off budget of £78k, means putting the Kenton community at the heart of decision-making. By bringing the right people together, including residents, elected members and voluntary groups, the ward has been able to improve the quality of life for many citizens aged over 50.

Local groups felt that, as Kenton has an ageing population, with more than 3,000 residents over 50, a key focus should be on health and wellbeing. For example, a £25k grant has been given to the Kenton Park Community Association to help develop sports and leisure activities for men and women, many from disadvantaged backgrounds, at the local sports centre.

Other projects already granted funds include:

- trips and falls, led by Age UK Newcastle
- a knitting club
- pocket parks
- claim your entitlements (so far, an extra amount of nearly £17,000 has been given)

The small fund is managed by community activists and the local authority. Anyone who lives in the Kenton Ward can apply for a grant of up to £500. Ring 0191 277 2072 or email joe.hogan@newcastle.gov.uk.

In your locality ...

... West End

Search is a long-established older persons' charity, delivering advice and information, social and educational activities in the West End of Newcastle. Based on Adelaide Terrace in Benwell, the organisation offers a full weekly programme of activities, occasional events and a daily information drop-in.

Search has been busy consulting with older people in the outer west of Newcastle to find out which activities they would like to see developed locally. The results have shown that large numbers would enjoy improving their IT skills or attending gentle exercise classes.

Search has therefore teamed up with Newcastle City Libraries to develop weekly informal IT drop-in sessions at both the Newburn and Outer West libraries starting in November. This will give attenders the opportunity to bring along their own devices and gain some guidance on how to operate them. Search is also starting a weekly gentle exercise class, which will take place at Walbottle Village Institute from Friday 10 November at 1.30pm.

For further information on any new activities taking place in the outer west, please ring Search on 0191 273 7443, email them at frances.child@searchnewcastle.org.uk or go to the website at www.searchnewcastle.org.uk.

Dates for your diary



For the over-50s:
Christmas cuppa
Christmas quiz
Christmas raffle
Christmas entertainment



Search is providing all this on two dates: Wednesday 6 December from 11am to 12.30pm in Throckley Community Hall, NE15 9EL; and Tuesday 12 December from 11am to 12.30pm in the Church of the Holy Nativity, Hillhead Parkway, NE5 1DR.

Enjoy!

For further information, please ring Frances on 0191 273 7443.

Information

NHS Continuing Healthcare – your experiences needed

NHS continuing healthcare (CHC) is an ongoing package of care outside of hospital that is arranged and funded by the NHS, where a person is found to have a 'primary health need'.

Healthwatch Newcastle is aware of issues locally with CHC around delayed funding, decisions not to fund, delays to hospital discharge and information to support families through the CHC process. They are investigating these issues with service users, carers, relatives, the voluntary and community sector, service providers and commissioners.

As a result of their research so far, they have made an early recommendation to Newcastle-Gateshead Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) about the information that people receive about the CHC process. They have highlighted a film produced by Enabled City (see <http://enabledcity.com/chc/>). The film explains to people and families how the NHS decides if someone is eligible for NHS CHC.

Healthwatch have also produced a survey to gather people's experiences. If you (or someone you care for) live in Newcastle or Gateshead and have been through the CHC pathway in the past 12 months, or are starting the process, they would like to hear from you. The survey runs until 31 December 2017 and is available online at www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/NHS-CHC.

If you have any queries, or would like to find out more, please phone Kim, Healthwatch Gateshead, on 0191 477 0033 or email her at info@healthwatchgateshead.co.uk. If you don't have access to the internet and would like a paper copy of the survey, please ring Kim on the same number; she will either send you a paper copy or take you through the survey over the phone.

Northern Powergrid Priority Services Register (PSR)

The PSR is a list of all customers who need additional help or support during a power cut. The additional support they require may be additional communication, provision of a hot meal, a torch, or even a generator. This list of services is not extensive, nor is it guaranteed for every customer registered with them. They tailor their services based on individual circumstances at the time of a power cut.

Through your interactions you may meet and speak to a number of hard-to-reach customers, and Northern Powergrid is asking if you could help to raise awareness of the service.

You can signpost them to www.northernpowergrid.com for further information, register direct on their behalf using the online registration form or ring 0800 66 88 77.

Information

111? or 999?

111 is the NHS non-emergency number. Calls are free from landlines and mobile phones.

Call **111** :

- for medical help fast but it's not a 999 emergency;
- before going to **A&E** or another NHS urgent care service;
- if you don't know who to call or you don't have a GP to call;
- for health information or reassurance about what to do next.

For less urgent health needs, contact **your GP** or **local pharmacist** . If a health professional has given you a specific phone number to call when you are concerned about your condition, continue to use that number.

How does NHS **111** work?

The NHS 111 service will ask you questions and then give you the healthcare advice that you need or direct you to the local service that can help you best.

Where possible, the NHS **111** team will book you an appointment or transfer you directly to the people you need to speak to. If NHS **111** advisers think you need an **ambulance**, they will immediately arrange for one to be sent to you.

999 emergency

If there is a medical emergency, then call **999**. There is a difference between an emergency and urgent medical needs. A medical emergency is one that may be life-threatening such as :

- loss of consciousness
- acute confused state and fits that are not stopping
- persistent, severe chest pain
- breathing difficulties
- severe bleeding that cannot be stopped
- severe allergic reactions
- severe burns or scalds

For a fuller version of this advice, please go to <https://www.informationnow.org.uk/article/urgent-medical-help-available-nhs-111-nhs-choices-emergency/> .



**when it's less
urgent than 999**

Updates from Age UK Newcastle



Joining Forces Tyne And Wear

Age UK Newcastle wants to transform the lives of older veterans in Tyne and Wear and reconnect them with their communities by delivering a person-centred service; it will focus on care and wellbeing to improve the quality of life of older veterans. The programme will complement existing services (both Age UK and Veteran Support).

The service is for military veterans born before 1 January 1950. In this instance, “veteran” means having given at least one day’s service to the military; this includes the Merchant Navy and the Territorial Army as well as National Service.

The service aims to increase confidence and improve quality of life. It will help veterans access services and aims to reduce isolation and loneliness by offering tailored support to meet their needs and desires.

As well as a general advice and support service, Age UK can offer specific ex-forces help such as:

- applying for a veteran’s badge
- enquiring about medal entitlement
- MOD pension queries
- gaining service records
- offering to the veteran support and companionship from ex-forces volunteers
- military-focused meet-ups and drop-ins.

If you would like further information, please ring Gillian on 0191 235 9540 or email her at gillian.williams@ageuknewcastle.org.uk .

Updates from Age UK Newcastle



Stay Active, Keep Fit and Have Fun!

It's never too late to think about getting active. Join Age UK Newcastle's range of dance and fitness classes. Classes run each week at various locations across the city, on a pay-as-you-go basis.

Dance at Blackfriars, New Bridge Street, NE1 2TQ

Monday	Tap Dancing	09:45-10:15	£2.00
Monday	Line Dancing	10:30-11:30	£4.00
Wednesday	Line Dancing	10:15-11:15	£4.00
Wednesday	Line Dancing	11:20-12:20	£4.00

Fitness at Space 6, Commercial Union House, Pilgrim Street, NE1 6QE

Monday	Tai Chi for Beginners	10.15:11:15	£4.50
Monday	Tai Chi for Absolute Beginners	11:20-12:20	£4.50
Monday	Yoga	14:10-15:20	£4.50
Wednesday	Tai Chi	10:15-11:15	£4.50
Thursday	Even Fitter	10:30-11:30	£4.50

Fitness at Jesmond Pool, St. George's Terrace, NE2 2DL

Thursday	Exercise for Men	14:00-14:45	£4.50
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Tai Chi at GGVA, Rosewood Avenue, Gosforth, NE3 5DD

Wednesday	Tai Chi	13:20-14:20	£4.00
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Tai Chi at Denton Burn Community Association, NE5 2UQ

Wednesday	Tai Chi	14:00-15:00	£4.00
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To find out more about any of the Age UK classes, please call 0191 232 6488.

VOLUNTEERS

You won't believe what you can do!

Volunteer Tour Guides needed for the Victoria Tunnel



The Ouseburn Trust operates a programme of guided tours on most days each week within a 700-metre stretch of the Victoria Tunnel and is now looking for new volunteers to become tour guides. They are looking for people who will help to bring the history and heritage of the Victoria Tunnel alive and make a tour of it a wonderful fulfilling experience.

Volunteers will undergo a comprehensive induction and training programme and will be given full support by the existing current team of volunteer guides. Volunteers are fully reimbursed for travel and any other incidental expenses.

If you are interested or want further information, please ring Clive on 0191 230 4210 between 10am and 4pm (Monday to Friday).

Marie Curie

To carry out their work, Marie Curie need fundraisers. Would you like to be one of them?

You don't need to have experience or be an expert; you just need to be able to spend a bit of time having a baking sale, hosting a tombola, taking part in a sponsored event or doing whatever else takes your fancy.

To find out more, please ring Christine on 0191 219 1205 or 0781 041 7863; or email her at christine.carruthers@mariecurie.org.uk .

Volunteers Wanted



Search always has opportunities for volunteers to help with their activities and they are currently looking for people to fill the following roles:

Group Leaders

For a variety of activities, or if you have a particular interest that you would like to pass on. More specifically they need an IT tutor.

Bus Buddies

Helping older people to come to the services by lending a hand to access their transport.

Admin

Search always needs volunteers who can do a bit of admin or fill a reception role.

Shopping Assistant

Fancy helping someone do their shopping? Search combines it with lunch.

General Assistance

They have an ad-hoc need for extra pairs of hands for events and trips.

Whatever your particular interest, please get in touch: Search may be able to offer you a role.

Please ring 0191 273 7443 or email chris.tait@searchnewcastle.org.uk .

Correspondence

Dear Editors,

CAN THE PAST PLAY A PART IN YOUR FUTURE?

A number of members recently reviewed technology about improving conversation between young and older people.

One said: "After listening, I wondered what sort of things would interest me in later life and what would I want to be reminded of.

"I listed likes and dislikes about food, music, books, TV, hobbies. Important dates and events, school, work, marriage, family, and retirement. Holidays can bring back many memories; or naming old photographs for future generations. I often say, 'I wish I had asked more questions and listened properly to my elders.'



"As I was doing this, I thought about the type of life I would like in later life. What are the pros and cons of downsizing or adapting my home or having help? Many questions can be answered by using Information NOW and reading the Elders Council Newsletters, but it is also valuable to talk to family or friends. They may be concerned but unable to start the conversation, so it helps to say that you have been thinking about it, while you can.

"I found it refreshing to know that the importance of communicating with and learning from each generation is still recognised, with the young using their tools (mobile phone, tablets, etc.) to prompt conversations at the time it is most needed."

Yours truly,

Anne Raffle

Alice in Wonderland Northern Stage Production

When: Sunday 10 December 2017 either 11am or 3pm shows.

To receive a special 10% discount for either of these two shows quote **WHITERABBIT10** when booking tickets. This offer is subject to availability and offered on a first come first served basis.

Where: Northern Stage, Barras Bridge, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 7RH

For further enquiries or to book tickets: Tel. 0191 337 1638 or
Email hhiett@northernstage.co.uk .

Correspondence

Dear Editors,

Allan Robertson's and Tony Waterston's letters on walking and cycling are the tip of the massive iceberg of confrontation between pedestrians and cyclists as they battle for shared space. Sadly, cycleways along busy roads are not the answer as these force cyclists to breathe in air pollution at a rate several times greater than inhaled by pedestrians. Already one in thirteen of Newcastle's population die an early death from air pollution, but for cyclists on busy roads, the increased health risk squanders any cycling health dividend.

Cycling is the new form of social discrimination: many of us would like to cycle, but can't, as bell-less cyclists sail by, flaunting their independence. The answer to this confrontation is a new breed of citizen-peddallers – a cross between cyclists and pedestrians who power cycle buses, popular on the Continent.

Compulsory stops should be placed by every charity shop, as, post Brexit, recycling will be a necessity. We should go even further than our continental cousins and replace the proposed new metro trams, at a hideous price of £4.5 million each, with cycle trains, which will get rid of the obesity problem. Extra energy from cycling passengers can recharge high-energy-density flywheels.

This letter may seem a bit of a joke but not in fifteen years' time when we cannot afford the 53 million tonne oil bill for transport and rediscover that one of the most effective energy storage systems in the world is the human body.

Yours truly,
John Urquhart



Dear Editors

I am writing in regard to the letter from Mr Waterston concerning cycle lanes. In her address to the Elder's Council AGM, Councillor Jane Streater made reference to the strong cyclists' lobby group in Newcastle. I therefore presume that it is through the actions of this group that the City Council was persuaded to spend considerable sums of public money on turning John Dobson Street into the finest skate-board park in the North East (incidentally thereby also making one side of John Dobson Street completely pedestrian/wheelchair unfriendly).

While cycle lanes are probably quite a good idea, I question whether they should be a priority given the acute funding crises in just about all the public services.

Yours truly
Bob Weiner

Are you computer savvy?

Almost a third of older people have never used a computer, according to a new survey published during the summer.

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) Internet Access study also shows a wide gap between social media use by young people and those aged 65 or over. The ONS study revealed that 90% of UK households have an internet connection, up from 61% a decade ago. However, 30% of over-65s said that they had never used a computer; and only 27% of older people said that they used social media, compared to 96% for 16- to 24-year-olds.

The findings of the study have led to calls from the voluntary and community sector to ensure that older people are not digitally excluded.

Andrew Kaye, head of policy at Independent Age, said: “Older people in general are much less likely to shop online, do internet banking or use social media. As long as this is the case, it’s really important that people still have a choice about how they access goods and services; otherwise, we risk disadvantaging a large group of older people by going digital by default.”

David McNeill, Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations digital director, said that it is working with charities to increase their digital skills and those of the people charities support. “The rapid growth in internet access and use demonstrates how integral it has become to our daily lives. However, the high level of use hides significant inequalities,” he said. “We know that one in five adults lack basic digital skills which can help them to save money, communicate or apply for jobs. People who are older, on low incomes or have a disability are most likely to be digitally excluded, yet perhaps have the most to gain from being confident online. These people need the support to develop the skills, as well as have access to the right devices and affordable connectivity, to fully benefit from being online.”



Editors' Note:

See pg. 7 for information on the IT Classes Project as well as dates of future sessions.

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 298 2701 or emailing her at anne.richardson@qualityoflife.org.uk.

Give as you live

It's Christmas shopping time. So 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

My Bloody Ordeal

On the doctor's request,
I was to have a blood test!
Off I went with the nurse
With a smile, I did not curse!
One success, then a flop:
The blood just came to a sudden stop
Try as she might, it would not work.
Was it me being a jerk?
I was cheerful, I did not cry
As someone else had another try
They tried and tried all in vain (vein)!
At the very least I was not in pain.
Oh dear me!! I'm in a fix,
I think they're up to number 6!
Left arm, right arm, they both refused
How we joked we were bemused!!!
Try the jugular was suggested,
Please not that I requested
Success at last, they meant no harm,
But I'm black and blue down each arm!
Although I've to come back in a week
I write these words with tongue in cheek!

Eileen De-Voy



✂.....

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

My Grenfell Tower

I wasn't there when the giant flames
Started to leap around the flats,
Acrid smell choking the lungs,
Windows cracking with splintered glass,
Desperate sound of frightened voices
Trying to go down the single staircase,
Cries of children woken up from sleep –
Their innocent dreams turned into nightmares,
The heat burning living flesh,
Only charred remains later retrieved.
Fire-fighters pouring water with multiple jets,
But finding the battle too hard to fight.
I wasn't there but watched on TV,
Like countless others glued to the box,
The white tower slowly turned into
A blackened monument – a squat finger
Raised in a sign of defiant anger.
I wasn't there to suffer like all those
Whose lives were cut short and
The friends and relatives who must live through it all.
I feel guilty that I wasn't one of them
But consoled by the thought that
People in power had been jolted and know that
Grenfell Tower is watching that justice is done.

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Newsletter Information

Newsletter Articles

If you would like to submit an article to be considered for the February to April 2018 edition of the Newsletter, will you please ensure that you forward it before Friday 12 January.

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 £1.35 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

Elders Council of Newcastle
Room 2.36, 2nd Floor, Biomedical Research Building
Campus for Ageing and Vitality
Nuns Moor Road
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE4 5PL

Tel. 0191 208 2701 Fax. 0191 208 2705
Email: info@qualityoflife.org.uk
Website: www.elderscouncil.org.uk
Registered Charity No. 1122424