

We have a new Chair



After the retirement of Mary Nicholls, the Board of Trustees has elected a new Chair for the Elders Council – Maureen Tinsley. We asked her to write something about herself and her aspirations. She told us:

“On taking over the role of Chair of the Elders Council, I’m writing to let you know something of myself, my interest in the Elders Council and my hopes for the organisation.

“Not a native of Newcastle or the North East, I have made my home here for the last 20 years. Originally from the south, I moved here to work in the NHS within the framework of community mental health services. My first task was to visit all GP practices in Newcastle and North Tyneside asap, with only the aid of a tattered Ordnance Survey map – no satnavs then!

“Eventually retiring, I discovered the Elders Council through an interest in co-housing for older people and began to get to know the wide range of concerns that the organisation engages with. Whilst on the Board, I have been the EC lead on dementia and together with the Tyneside Cinema and other partners, initiated the successful Dementia Friendly cinema programme. – Cont. -

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We have a new Chair

I work with the EC Transition Group, reviewing the governance of the organisation; I continue my involvement with housing issues.

“I take over as Chair at an exciting time for the organisation. Like many voluntary bodies, we need to ensure our continued existence as a financially viable organisation. Whilst listening and representing our current members, we need to find ways of reaching minority communities. We need to make our organisation relevant to the needs of **all** older people across the spectrum: to the recently retired as well as those looking forward to the Queen's congratulatory telegram. I look forward to working for and with all of you.”

The new members of the Board of Trustees are Cath Gerrard and Julie Irvine; trustees continuing in post are Alan Gowers, Mary Nicholls, Violet Rook, John Smart, John Telfer and Dorothy Ternent; there is one vacancy; and the officers of the Elders Council are:

Chair: Maureen Tinsley	Deputy Chair: Bill Ions
Secretary: Anita Davies	Deputy Secretary: Dorothy Ternent
Acting Treasurer: Bill Ions	Deputy Treasurer: Vacant

You will see that, as before, we are having difficulty in filling the post of Treasurer, so we are looking into advertising for a trustee with finance and fundraising skills. Could that be you? If you want to know more about this opportunity, please ring 0191 208 2701 and ask that Maureen call you back.

Elders Council at Work

The Mile Castle Drop-in Sessions

The Mile Castle continues to hold a regular session on the **third Wednesday of each month at 10.30am**. The activities vary from month to month: sometimes we have a speaker or it could be a quiz or a different activity altogether.

We're not trying to be anything other than a group who meet and welcome any older person to come along and meet others, find out what may be happening in the weeks ahead and enjoy some conversation.

Sessions will take place on:

- 23 November
- 21 December

We hope to see you there!



Elders Council at Work

Transport and Highways Working Group

Bus-passes: We have been asked to remind you that ticket machines on buses in the North East now indicate whether a bus-pass used by older and disabled passengers is valid. Where a pass is not valid, the customer may be asked to pay the fare and the pass may be confiscated by the driver.

While misuse of bus-passes is not widespread, the new check (known as hotlisting) is being brought in to reduce the risk of fraud and misuse of concessionary bus-passes. It is believed about 2.5% of passes are being misused. This may happen because:

- the pass has been reported lost or stolen and a replacement issued;
- the pass is being used fraudulently by someone other than the rightful holder; or
- the holder is no longer entitled to concessionary travel.

Stagecoach: The Transport Working Group recently had a visit from Malcolm Bell, one of Stagecoach Depot Managers, who talked about a number of new double-deck buses which are being introduced as well as new single-deck buses coming in November, which will operate on Services 6/7/8.

Nexus is spending £540m on building the new Metro trains and is turning to its passengers to help shape what the carriages look like; go to www.nexus.org.uk/consultation. Nexus, which owns the Metro network, is urging you to get involved in a new project which will help shape how new rolling stock on the network is laid out. *To fill in a questionnaire, please go to <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/Metrocars>; and for more information on the collaborative design process Nexus are running with Newcastle University's Open Lab, please go to <http://metrofutures.org.uk/>.*



In July, Nexus and the North East Combined Authority agreed a plan to create a joined-up Metro and rail network, which could see expansion to Newcastle's West End, Northumberland and County Durham.

Summer Outings: Members have undertaken successful trips to Durham, Coquettale (on Northern Spirit buses) and Carlisle. Also to Ashington and Newbiggin.

If you want to take advantage of what is left of the autumn, you can download a copy of the leaflet from our website. Or you can get a free printed copy by sending a large-letter stamp (75p) to Anne or by calling her on 0191 208 2701.

Elders Council at Work

Older Person Friendly City

City Centre developments will be the focus of discussions at the next meetings of the working group. Over recent weeks we have been notified of the 'development frameworks' being adopted by the City Council for some parts of the urban core, that is, the City Centre and adjoining areas. There have also been announcements in the press about developments led by NE1, which is the partnership of businesses in the City. Some of the issues of concern are as follows:

East Pilgrim Street Regeneration Area is between New Bridge Street, the Swan House roundabout, and Pilgrim Street. The comments we made previously in 2009 are still valid in considering the Development Framework which has now been adopted by the City Council:

- the importance of a 'cultural hub' linking City Library, Laing Art Gallery, and the buildings of historic interest;
- retail developments to be linked to existing shopping areas to maintain the compactness of the city centre;
- safe, unobstructed pedestrian circulation;
- attractive buildings and green open spaces with seats.

These are just a few points we made seven years ago and that we shall continue to watch out for when developments start.

Northumberland Street and Bigg Market have recently been highlighted as areas where the businesses that are part of NE1 are taking a lead in developing Northumberland Street into 'one of the best retail and leisure destinations in Europe'. And a lottery grant has been awarded to transform the Bigg Market into a pleasant area for eating, drinking and walking around. Both these areas are vital parts of the city centre in which we all have an interest. So it is important that older citizens have a say about the way these areas are developed.

We have also been notified about consultations to agree development frameworks for two areas adjoining the city centre: **Science Central West** and **Forth Yards**, on the west side of the city.

The working group would welcome members willing to help with discussions – and comments – about the details of these areas.

The next meeting will take place on Monday 21 November, 10.30am-12.30pm at Broadacre House, Market Street East.

Elders Council at Work

Health and Social Care Working Group

Future of the NHS – and Social Care Services

Over recent weeks scarcely a day has gone by without some reference in the national media about a crisis in funding for the NHS, in particular the pressures in Accident and Emergency (A&E) services. Then there's the number of GPs, and the reduction in budgets for adult care services, and the closures of some care homes which have ceased to be profitable businesses. The source of these financial pressures is often said to be older people who are living longer but still with long-term health conditions that make us dependent on services and/or occupy hospital beds for too long.

So what's to be done? We have been engaging with Healthwatch, which supports Champions of users of health services. And we have been in discussion about a programme to support self-care by organising courses about improving health and wellbeing for yourself and for others around you. This is an initiative by Newcastle Gateshead Clinical Commissioning Group. As readers of the Newsletter will know, we have been stressing the importance of access to information and advice so that we use services wisely. What more can we do? The Working Group looks forward to further discussions – and not just discussions but actions – to follow up the report of the Director of Public Health outlining a programme to promote a healthier city.

**IF YOU CARE ABOUT THESE ISSUES,
COME ALONG AND JOIN THE DEBATE.**

The next Working Group meeting will take place on Friday 18 November, 10.30am-12.30pm at Broadacre House, Market Street East.

Communication Working Group

Listen in to your own special radio programme

Everyone's tomorrow – today! That's the name of the Elders Council radio programme. It's broadcast on the first Friday of every month from 2 to 4 in the afternoon. Just tune to 102.5fm, listen in and tell us what you think.

Or you could listen through the internet:
<http://ne1fm.net/webplayer> .

Our Christmas broadcast will be on Friday 2 December; the programme will include a panto performed by members of the team, a piece on this year's Fenwicks window, a memoir telling us about Christmas as an evacuee, lots of music and a look at saturnalia.

Best of all, why not join the radio team? Just give us a ring on 0191 273 4727 and ask for Steve.



Report

We got there!

Elders Council goes to the Newcastles of the World Conference

You may recall that members of the Elders Council and others generously raised enough money to send Julie Irvine and Dorothy Ternent to the *Newcastles of the World* conference in Canada this September, where they were joined by our former Chair, Mary Nicholls, who got there independently. On their return, they wrote us the following report:

“A huge thank you to everyone who made it possible to send TWO delegates to the *Newcastles of the World* conference in Canada. Your generosity meant that we exceeded our target through our crowdfunding. There was lots of creativity shown in raising funds: from a large coffee morning held in Fenham, holding several raffles (including one for a vintage doll) to selling items to auction. It all goes to show what a generous lot Elders Council members are!

“We wanted the Elders Council to be represented as the conference theme this year was ‘An ageing population and how it affects the community, family and youth’. Newcastle upon Tyne prides itself on being an age-friendly city but we hoped we could learn more from other ‘Newcastles’. So off we went to Newcastle in Ontario, where we



met over 70 delegates from 13 Newcastles across the world including Neuchatel in Switzerland, Newcastle in South Africa and, oddly enough, Shinshiro in Japan.

“What did we do during the conference?”

“It was a packed programme, with days starting at 8.30 or earlier in the morning and a mid-evening finish, so not much free time! There were speeches and discussions about music as a form of social cohesion, and also its benefits to health and wellbeing, specifically in relation to dementia, Parkinson’s and aphasia. There was also a focus on urban design and employment. Two

We got there!

youth group presentations were given with an intergenerational emphasis, one of which was a proposal about singing in our castles that could be streamed live. Our own Mary Nicholls made an impromptu speech about the Elders Council approach and civic engagement that went down very well. We told everyone about 'our' organisation as we are so proud of what we do in our Newcastle and think that others could learn from us. It was not all work of course; we were also taken out and about in a yellow school bus to see their Newcastle and its surroundings – it was such treat to walk around a huge apple orchard!

“What did we learn about approaches to ageing?”

- We all know it's true but it's nice to have it confirmed: our Elders Council in Newcastle and our city are very much 'ahead of the game' in terms of partnership and listening to the voice of older people. We were given other examples of associations and strategies being developed but these tended to be 'top down' with a focus on recreation and health promotion.
- The importance of improving the built environment for older people – an area that Neuchatel, Switzerland takes seriously.
- The significance of social connections, with music and singing as key activities that everyone can enjoy.
- That suitable housing and good transport are issues that affect older people across the world.
- The impact of older workers is changing employment patterns.



“What will happen now?”

“We might be interested in the following proposals that came from the conference:

- a 'Newcastles of the World Passport' which offers special discounts and activities if you visit another Newcastle.
- Developing a 'Choirs in the Castles' event.
- An exchange programme for older people.

“Ideas are welcome but we promise to keep you informed about developments.

“And finally, thank you again for all your efforts and generosity; we really are grateful to everyone.”



We got there!

Crowd Funder Donations

The Elders Council would like to give a **big** thank you to all those people who donated to enable Dorothy and Julie to attend the Newcastles of the World Conference in Canada.

We offered different rewards to people in return for pledging various amounts of money, and for those people who pledged £20, we promised to include their name in this edition of the Newsletter. The names of these generous people include:

Irene Bacon	Hazel Moir	Susan Simpson
Susan Broatch	Jeanie Molyneux	Ray Sirotkin
Elizabeth Carrington	Mary Nicholls	Jane Streater
Greta Heron	Nicky Norton	Dorothy Ternent
David Herbert	Keith Pimm	June Thexton
Julie Irvine	Anne Richardson	Elaine Thomson
Jean Mackenzie	Pat Richardson	Susan Tideswell
Shiela Manley	Andy Robertson	Sally Young

Thank you so much to you all!

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, the store or website gives a small percentage of the sale to the Elders Council.

Simples!



Give as you Live®

Important Announcement

Tyneside Cinema wins a North East Equality Award 2016

We're thrilled to announce that the Tyneside Cinema won a North East Equality Award for their Dementia Friendly Cinema at an awards presentation on 20 October. The Dementia Friendly Cinema project was initiated by the Elders Council, who provided seed funding to start the project, and most recently the Ballinger Trust has provided a grant to support and deliver a further three-year Dementia-Friendly Cinema Programme.

Screenings are open to everyone and anyone. They screen the films with the lights up a little and sound down a touch in their beautiful Classic auditorium. Pop along; sing along to the action onscreen, and above all, HAVE FUN!

The following films will screen as part of Dementia Friendly Cinema over the coming months at the Tyneside Cinema, Pilgrim Street at 1.30 pm on Thursdays:

Funny Face – 24 November 2016
White Christmas – 8 December 2016
The Wizard of Oz – 26 January 2017
King Creole – 23 February 2017
Singin' in the Rain- 30 March 2017

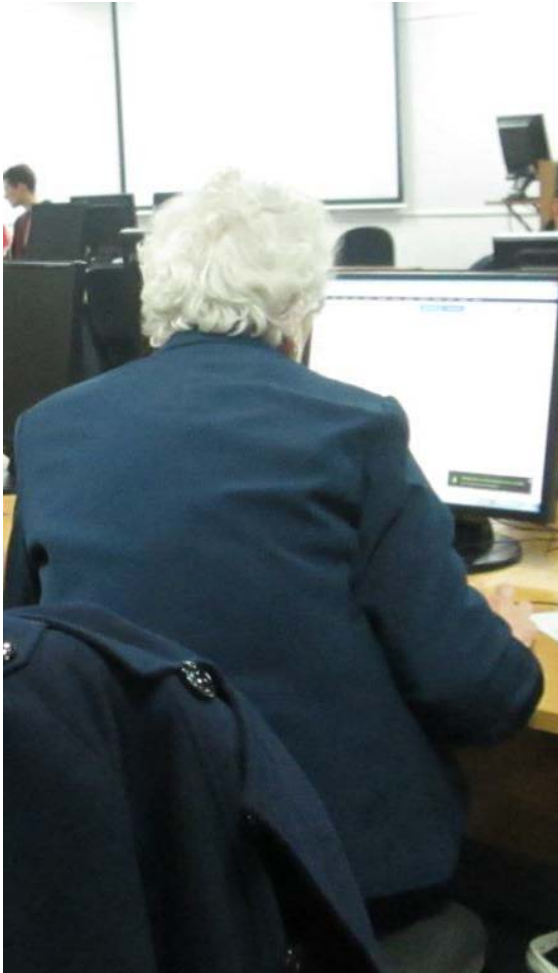
Tickets cost £4.50 and carers go free.



Visit their website www.tynesidecinema.co.uk
or call 0191 227 5500 to book tickets, join the Dementia Friendly Cinema mailing list or to find out more.

Exciting Opportunities

An exciting role: Elders Council Digital Champion



The Elders Council is seeking a volunteer who can act as our digital champion. If you're outgoing, approachable and a good networker with an interest in all things digital, then we'd like to hear from you! The role will include:

- training as a digital champion and working with the Elders Council to pass on that training to other members;
- keeping in touch with opportunities for older people to develop and maintain their digital skills and helping the Elders Council to promote these;
- helping with the development of the Elders Council's online and social media presence;
- identifying opportunities for the Elders Council to work in partnership with other organisations to provide more opportunities for older people to get online;
- helping with the re-launch of Information NOW (www.informationnow.org.uk) and promoting it to older people.

If you are interested and would like to know more about the role, please call Barbara Douglas on 0191 208 2701 or ask for an application form (it's short and simple). Anyone applying for this volunteer role must either be a member of the Elders Council or willing to join. Completed applications to be returned by 2 December.

I want to volunteer as a



**Digital
Champion**

Exciting Opportunities

Elders Council seeks Arts and Culture Champion



The Elders Council is looking for a volunteer who can act as the organisation's arts and culture champion. The role will include:

- keeping in touch with opportunities for older people to engage in arts and culture and working with the Elders Council to encourage older people to participate;
- identifying opportunities for the Elders Council to work in partnership with arts and culture organisations to develop new activities;
- keeping an eye out for interesting ideas and opportunities which we could bring to Newcastle.

If you are interested and would like to know more about the role, please call Barbara Douglas on 0191 208 2701 or ask for an application form (it's short and simple). Anyone applying for this volunteer role, must either be a member of the Elders Council or willing to join. Completed applications to be returned by 2 December.

I want to volunteer as a



**Arts and Culture
Champion**

Information

The Kittiwake Trust

... runs two libraries – one where they hope that you will return the books more or less on time, and another where they hope people will never bring the books back!

The first is The Kittiwake Trust Multilingual Library in Eldon Garden, where they currently have more than 7000 books in almost 70 languages (more if you include dictionaries for languages where we have no reading books). They have been open for just over a year and work entirely with volunteers. They were delighted a few months ago when Professor David Crystal, the eminent linguist, agreed to become their patron. He visited the library at the end of April and gave a talk on the importance of libraries and multilingual libraries in particular. See http://david-crystal.blogspot.co.uk/2016_04_01_archive.html.

They also host language classes, conversation groups, story-time in various languages, and offer space for meetings of local refugee support groups. For details of current activities, watch their Facebook page.

Their other project is Borderline Books in Gateshead. They collect books no longer needed by libraries, bookshops, publishers and readers. They sort and stamp them and redistribute them free of charge to organisations working with people who are marginalised in some way – women's refuges, homeless people, refugees, care homes, people struggling with drug and alcohol dependency and very-low-income families. Again, they currently work exclusively with volunteers.

And if you belong to an organisation which would like books for your clients/members, please note the contact details below.

Enquiries about volunteering for either of these projects are welcome; just ring Amina on 0780 870 4307 or visit in person (very suitable for bookworms!). For further information, go to www.kittiwaketrust.org.uk, www.multilinguallibrary.org.uk and/or www.borderlinebooks.org.

Pension scams

Citizens Advice in a report called Too good to be true say that most people (76%) feel confident that they can spot the signs of pension scams such as cold calling, unusually high investment returns or offers of free advice. But only 12% were actually able to do so when a scam was presented to them.

With the new pension “freedoms” given by the last chancellor, you are warned that the vultures are circling and they’re after your pension pot. Remember: if a package looks *too good to be true*, it almost certainly is – don’t touch it.



Newcastle Carers Carers Voice

Do you want to have your say? Carers Voice events invite carers to get together, share information that will help them in their caring role and talk about their experiences in order to develop carers' services for the future.

There will be four Carers Voice events per year that will focus on the topics that are most important to you and give you a chance to have your say. The first event will be held on National Carers Rights Day.

When	Friday 25 November from 10am until 12 noon
Where	The Carers Centre 135-139 Shields Road, Byker, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 1DN (Near Byker Metro Station)

National Carers Rights Day focuses on sharing information that is useful and important to carers.

The event will give you the opportunity to meet professionals who may be able to help you in your caring role. It will include stalls held by representatives from other organisations, such as the British Red Cross and a local solicitor's firm, as well as a chance to chat to Carer Information and Advice Workers. There will be a showing of the film that a group of young adult carers have made to raise awareness about their experiences.

During the event, you will be asked for your ideas about future Carers Voice events and carers' issues that are important to you.

Refreshments will be provided.

To book a place:

Please contact our Information Line on 0191 275 5060 or 0787 410 0043.

Digital Deli

Email? Skype? Shop online?

The award-winning Northumbria Student Union IT Classes Project will take place on Wednesday 16 and 30 November, 2.00-4.00pm at Northumbria University Campus:

The sessions will continue in 2017 and we'll let you know the dates in the January edition of the Newsletter.

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.

New look Information NOW is coming soon!



We are currently working on improving www.informationnow.org.uk to make Newcastle's older people's website even easier to use and we need your help. We are looking for some good news stories about how Information NOW has helped you, a friend or a loved one.

Have you used Information NOW www.informationnow.org.uk to find:

- information and advice?
- local services and activities?
- how to plan ahead?
- how to help someone else?

Please tell us your stories so that we can learn more about how you're using the website; and we'd love to use some of your stories to help spread the word about Information NOW.

Contact Lauren Hoy at lauren.hoy@qualityoflife.org.uk or telephone Wednesday to Friday on 0191 208 2703.

Learn My Way Basic IT course: two 2½-hour sessions of basic computer and accessing the internet training. These sessions are perfect for anyone who wants to learn how to gain access to the internet, set up an email address, attach documents and find out about online security. A certificate will be presented on completion.



Venue: City Library (travel to the City Library will be reimbursed on production of a valid day ticket (£3.95)).

Each person must attend two sessions. Dates of sessions are:

- Thursday, 1 December, 10.30am-1pm
- Thursday, 8 December, 10.30am-1pm

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:

- Thursday, 10 November, 2-3.30pm
- Thursday, 24 November, 2-3.30pm
- Thursday, 8 December, 2-3.30pm

To book a place for either of the courses 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).

Plain English, please!

In its largest ever local government study, VisibleThread, an organisation which measures documents and websites for clarity and consistency, has identified that 82% of local government websites do not meet target readability standards.

South Tyneside does quite well in the survey but Newcastle comes 86th out of 191 local authorities.

Please get your act together, Newcastle, and write so that readers can understand what you mean.

Things to do...

Elderberries

Would you like to meet new, like-minded people and spend more time outdoors? Scotswood Natural Community Garden would like to offer anyone aged 55 and over the opportunity to take part in a brand new project – the Elderberries.

Help staff and other volunteers at the garden with conservation and horticulture tasks such as growing vegetables and maintaining wildlife habitats at weekly drop-in gardening sessions. Enjoy a shared lunch using produce from the garden while you're there. You can even formally gain new skills by taking part in a nationally-accredited horticulture course.

In addition, you can get involved in a programme of nature-based activities. Learn about environmental arts, wildlife identification and photography as well as gardening.

Finally, make sure that your voice is heard by becoming a member of the Older People's Forum. Help to shape the project and feed your ideas directly to the Trustees.

For more information, please ring Leanne on 0191 200 4706 or email her at leanne@sncg.org.uk.



Scotswood Natural Community Garden

promoting education in nature, the environment and sustainable living

Did you know ...

... that you can take part in determining Newcastle's budget for 2017-18? Just click on <http://www.newcastle.gov.uk/news-story/council-save-ps30m-next-year> .

Try something old, learn something new ...

In our Newsletter we try to advertise various activities happening under the heading of 'try something old, learn something new ...' and that is exactly what our member Anne Wilkinson has done. In our November-December 2015 Newsletter, we displayed some photos of her beautiful handmade patchwork quilt designs, which she learnt to do from a book and also from picking up some hand-sewing template tips from a lady in Saigon. Most recently she popped in to the office to show us some of her new Christmas-inspired creations, which are displayed below.



Thank you, Anne, for sharing these with us; they are stunning!

Johnny's easy tips for maintaining health and strength

A broom is not just for cleaning!

This exercise is to help strengthen your grip.

- Hold a stick (broom or mop) in both hands, upright with one end planted on the floor.
- Then twist as if you were trying to both open and close a jar at the same time. In other words, grip the stick firmly and twist your hands in opposite directions.
- Combine your breathing with each twist, so breathe in as you relax your grip and then out as you tighten and twist your hands.
- Relax and then repeat but reversing the direction of your twists.
- Repeat this exercise as often as you wish or feel able.

By Christmas you should have a grip of steel and a toned upper body to boot!

Good luck and please let us know how you're getting on.

Things to do...

Lively Older Women Wanted For New Project

Older women challenging stereotypes and celebrating life

For more than twenty years Newcastle University's Karen Ross has been researching the ways in which women are represented in media and popular culture. Her research (and that of many others) shows that, as women get older, they become less visible and where they do put in an appearance, they are often shown in a narrow range of stereotyped roles and contexts.

Project

Her project aims to challenge those gendered and ageist images by working with older women to tell their own stories and show the richness and diversity of their lives in relation to their family, their friends and their communities. This is a three-part project and you are invited to be as involved as you want – with all three bits or just one or two.

Part 1 – digital story-telling

Do you have an interesting story to tell about how you are challenging stereotypes of the “typical” older woman? If so, Karen wants to hear from you. Your stories will be gathered together and will become part of an existing archive of stories from the North East.

Part 2 – photography exhibition

To celebrate the wonderfulness of women and to mark International Women's Day (8 March) 2017, Karen has teamed up with a local professional photographer, and, together with your



help, they will create an exhibition of the brilliant diversity of the older women of the North East.

Part 3 – flashmob event in Grainger Market

You the participants will decide the exact shape of this event, which will take place on International Women's Day. One possible idea is for women to wear men's suits and a mask (of a famous older person) to prompt shoppers to look at them (the idea being that older women are generally invisible and this “happening” makes them visible). After perhaps ten minutes of mingling, the “mob” then come together and perform something like a song or a poem, perhaps with a participant acting out the poem. The flashmob will be filmed, fly-on-the-wall style, to capture the public's reactions to the women as they move through the market. The film will then be edited to produce a ‘short’ which will be included as part of the photography exhibition.

If you are interested in being part of the project, in any way, please ring Karen on 0779 888 4110 or email her at karen.ross@newcastle.ac.uk.

Information Board

Are you, or someone you are caring for, struggling around the home?

If you, or the person you are caring for, are starting to struggle with things like:

- bathing
- toilet
- going up and down the stairs or
- getting in and out of your home

Then simple equipment, such as a raised toilet seat or grab rail, may be the answer.

My Equipment Newcastle is Newcastle City Council's online self-help tool. You will receive professional advice to help you choose equipment for your home without having to wait for an assessment.

Go to <https://www.myequipmentnewcastle.org.uk> .

Time for a cuppa?

A dementia-friendly afternoon tea club meets in All Saints' Church Hall, West Avenue, Gosforth, every Tuesday from 3 to 4.30pm. Everyone's welcome. Cost: £1.50, for which you get refreshments, entertainment/activity.

For further information, please ring Jude at Chain Reaction on 0300 300 7070.

St. Martin's Centre ...

... run the following regular activities:

Art Group – Mondays 10am-12pm .
£1 per session

Chair-based exercise – Thursdays
1.00-2.00pm. £1 per session

One O'clock Club – Thursdays
1.00-3.00pm. £1 per session
A support and social group for over 55's.
This group offers a range of different activities along with occasional outings .

For further information, please ring
St. Martin's Centre on 0191 276 4002.

VOLUNTEERS

You won't believe what you can do!

Can you chew gum and walk at the same time?

The Clinical Ageing Research Unit (CARU) is looking for volunteers to participate in a research study investigating brain activity during different walking tasks. The study aims to understand differences in brain activity between younger and older individuals and how different tasks affect the amount of activity.

- Are you aged between 60 and 85 years old?
- Are you able to walk for five minutes unaided?
- Are you available to attend one 3½-hour testing session at CARU?

If you are interested in participating or know someone who may be and would like further information, please contact **Dr. Annette Pantall** or **Dr. Rodrigo Vitorio** using any of the contact details listed below.

Address: Clinical Ageing Research Unit,
Campus for Ageing and Vitality,
Institute for Ageing and Health, Newcastle
University, NE4 5PL

Tel: 0191 208 1247 or 0191 208 1272

Email: annette.pantall@newcastle.ac.uk

or rodrigo.vitorio@ncl.ac.uk



ADVERTISEMENT FEATURE

At Cranlea care home, we are privileged to be in the heart of the Kingston Park community. Our dedicated Activity Coordinator Michele arranges regular activities and events, as we highly regard the importance of engagement to boost a person's well-being.

Our home is operated by Anchor, England's largest not for profit provider of housing and care for older people with almost 50 years' experience. We are proud holders of 'Anchor Inspires' internal accreditation for delivering the highest quality and standards of care for residents living with dementia. We have a pre-bookable respite bed at Cranlea for anyone who needed a break in a safe, caring environment as the weather turns colder.

Lynn Day, our Home Manager, is passionate about exemplary residential care being provided at Cranlea. She previously won a place at the National Finals of the Great British Care Awards after being named the North East's Registered Home Manager of the Year 2015.

If you are thinking about care for a loved one, please contact us on 0800 0854167 or come and visit and we will be happy to support you.

Alarm equipment and 24-hour response to keep you safe at home

Over 4,000 Newcastle residents live safely and independently in their own homes thanks to Ostara's 24-hour response and support service.

Based in South Gosforth, Ostara supplies and installs simple and discrete alarm equipment such as pendant alarms, pill dispensers and fall detectors, all connected to their 24-hour response centre.

If an alarm is activated, Ostara's 24-hour response centre is alerted immediately, putting the wheels in motion to get customers the help they need, whether that is sending the emergency services if necessary or dispatching an Ostara 24-hour response officer to check the customer is ok.

Prices start from £5.95 per week with no installation or cancellation charges. Request a free information pack by visiting www.ostara.org.uk, emailing contactus@ostara.org.uk or calling 0191 277 7470.

Correspondence

Dear Editors,

I am seeking information about how widespread the practice of electricity companies, rent departments, water boards and alarm system suppliers is of sending demands for money in totally cavalier and unchecked ways. My experience in the past 16-18 months is as follows:

Electricity Board: After failing to read my meter, or send in a bill for 14 months, they sent a bill which stated that my monthly direct debit payment was to be increased from £48 per month to £542 per month. Yes, £542 and they sought to have the bill cleared within three months. "Has the world gone mad?" I asked myself, then asked Npower, the electricity supplier, whose only explanation was that the computer sees a figure and spits out a bill accordingly! I asked what they thought the effect on someone of a less strong constitution than I would be. Blank response. It took two visits to the Citizens Advice Bureau to get it sorted to a reasonable amount plus a large one-off payment. The responsibility for the size of the bill was theirs, as they had made no attempt to read the meter, or contact me about the growing amount in 14 months. I had a direct debit in place so assumed all was well. It has taken since then to pay off the 'debt' in addition to paying the forecasted bill for the following year. I told them that I intended to change my supplier once this was paid off. This was in late June this year; they then wrote off the £85 outstanding balance 'as a gesture of goodwill'. However, they still managed to take out of my bank the high monthly payment just before my time with them ran out. Another phone call was needed to sort that out!

Water Board: When I was once more living on my own, I had a water meter fitted last year. The monthly payment was settled at £20 per month. Less than two months later I had a bill which stated that my monthly payment was to be increased to £80 per month. After I challenged this, the meter was checked and found to be faulty. My monthly payment is now £15 per month.

YHN Rent Department: Without warning I was sent a demand for £243 rent arrears. I was somewhat taken aback as I pay by Direct Debit. After speaking to a somewhat arrogant person, then to a defensive manager, it was agreed to check my account. It was subsequently found to be the fault of someone in the rent department who had changed my rent due for some reason or other. The rent was adjusted back to the proper amount, but still no word of who was responsible.

Care Alarm Service: This system was already installed when I took over the flat where I live, and people told me the rent included any payment. However, again without any prior warning I received a demand for £519, which could be paid off at £51 per month. Upon enquiring where this charge was coming from, I was told that the funding for the alarms had been withdrawn, and users would have to pay the charge as stated. I immediately asked for the alarm to be removed and after waiting for a person to come to my house for a signature, this was done. However, after a few days I received a demand for £64.64 so that the account could be changed. I challenged this on the

Correspondence

ground that I had received no prior warning of the charge, and then not in time for me to cancel without penalty. Eventually this charge was cancelled.

In all of the above situations the outcome was due to my challenging and arguing my case. In some of these dealings, the fault was with the supplier. I am outraged that this goes on and older people who are unable or unwilling to take on the people concerned would have been caused a great deal of distress and money. Just how widespread is this? And how do we get to know the faceless, nameless ones responsible? I am 78 years old, and fortunately still have a voice, and no worries about using it. But what about all those other older people who wouldn't always know how to begin challenging these outrageous demands which are sent out regardless of the consequences to those who receive them? Something needs to be done to protect the most vulnerable amongst us.

Yours faithfully,
D. Connelly

Editors' note: We are delighted that she was able to resolve these unfortunate problems by challenging her suppliers. It's important to speak up if you think a mistake has been made and you are being charged incorrectly. If you have problems with your energy suppliers, you can get help from Energy Services or contact Citizens Advice for assistance. (Contact details can be found on www.informationnow.org.uk).

Dear Editors

I recently had work done in my bathroom. This gave me much to ponder but the issue of clutter was not – at that stage – one of them.

It involved clearing out the bathroom and it was only when it became difficult to find places to put everything while the work was being done that I started to realise just how much 'stuff' was in a room I had always thought of as purely functional.

I also thought how much lighter, better, and altogether more enjoyable the room was once I had taken everything out and that many of those 'essentials' were really not needed at all – certainly not there!

This just made me realise that clutter is all around us, and no matter how vigilant we think we are, there is always more.

(Stuff accumulates to fill available space!)

Yours truly
John B. Telfer

Editors' note: see articles about decluttering on www.informationnow.org.uk.



An Xmas Dilemma

What will Santa do, oh dear!
He's got a real problem this year
New houses, and there are lots
They don't have any chimney pots

How will he deliver all his toys
To all the eager girls and boys?
There is no chimney for him to descend
Will this bring Xmas to an end?

No mantelpiece to hang your sock
Santa will be in for a nasty shock
Can you help with his plight
And help deliver on Xmas night?

Send your solution to Santa's grotto
Before Xmas Eve and you get blotto
Your letters go to Mr Claus
At Lapland. Please help because
Lots of kids will be very sad
And mam will blame it all on dad

If you can help and lend a hand
Send your message to
Santa dot com slash Lapland

Eileen De-Voy

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 (✓).

✂.....

Poetry

Letter

Her letter drops through my letter box
And lies there like a primed grenade.
I touch it gently while my heart races.
As I tear open this plain envelope
Her letters strike me with a sword's sharp edge.
My hands feel wet with blood.
She is hurt, she writes in darkest ink.
Her pride is splattered in little bits.
How could I not let her join in
My daughter's twenty-fifth?
It is untrue, I stay convinced.
But my life starts to fracture.
She will not pick up her phone,
Letting her answer-machine repeat and
stutter.
Letters keep coming in daily batches
To feed and nourish my hungry front door.
But her silence persists like a black veil.
One day the postman rings the door bell.
A registered mail – a small pink box:
Inside a piece of perfumed white silk;
I inhale deeply and kiss it with my hungry lips.



Asit Maitra

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

New Orleans in Dreams

Billie Holiday, Satchmo, Hodges, Cotton Club
New Orleans fades away from the hub
History repeats itself it is sometimes said
Let us hope jazz, blues, stride piano is not dead

From work songs working river boats
Life sounds of New Orleans now in quotes
Mississippi life no more music led
Now quiet long before folks go to bed

That haunting trumpet Satchmo style
Will live through history for a while
That mighty Mississippi still flows on
As ghostly sounds from where life has gone

Hopefully life will return some day
So ride on river and let that music play
Sometime history will tell the tale
Of jazz, blues with Satchmo's voice to hail

So sadly music from deep south right now
Is no more played like greats – and how
That sax, trumpet, clarinet, flute, trombone
Big base drums stride piano stand alone

Blues songbirds – Bessie Smith, Billie Holiday
Jazz queen Sarah Vaughan best on her day
Paul Robeson a real gift to all in voice
From blues, work songs, spirituals by choice

New Orleans has left its joyous mark
To leave this world of jazz blues in the dark
Some day our greats will rise once more
When old Mississippi opens another new door

John Reid



Newsletter Information

Newsletter Articles

If you would like to submit an article to be considered for the January/February 2017 edition of the Newsletter, will you please ensure that you forward it before Thursday 8 December.

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?

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