

# Your Voice

have  
your  
say!

The newsletter of the  
Newcastle-under-Lyme 50+ Forum

**ISSUE 2: JUNE 2008**



*See back cover for details of how to receive copies of all future Newsletters and details of how to take up membership.*



**HELP THE AGED WE WILL**

## inside ...

- ◆ North Staffs LINKLINE
- ◆ Extra Care Housing Update on Mill Rise
- ◆ Making the most of Free Bus passes
- ◆ “Just checking” Electronic Surveillance
- ◆ PALS service - we need your views
- ◆ Access to Care

*and much more!*

Your Voice is supported by  
Help the Aged & Give It Sum

# Newcastle-under-Lyme 50+ Forum

Welcome to this second issue of **'Your Voice'**.

**We all like good news and the forum received some very good news in early April.**

Our application for funding to the Give it Sum fund (administered by Comic Relief) was successful and we are to receive a total of £19,396 over the next 2 years. This will allow us to administer the forum until June 2010 and to produce the Newsletter quarterly to the same date.

We are very grateful for the confidence placed in us by the Give it Sum fund who have helped us in the past. Robbie Williams is a big star but he never forgets his roots and his generosity in the financial support he gives this fund does him great credit.

So we can sit back and relax? Hardly, as the hard work done so far now needs to be increased to cope with the growing membership and the changes in adult care being proposed.

We would welcome contact from anyone who feels they may be able to play a part on the administration of the forum. The easiest way to find out what might be involved is to come along to one of our Management Committee meetings and see how we work.

**Interested? ....** call **Mike** on **01782 628855** or **Margaret** on **01782 852810**.

**Remember .... IT IS YOUR FORUM.**

Please be in touch be it to agree or make critical comment.

*Mike Reynolds Chairman*

## THANK YOU!

*Newcastle-under-Lyme  
50+ Forum would  
like to take this  
opportunity to thank*

**Help the Aged**  
**Staffs County Council**  
**Aspire Housing**  
**Newcastle**  
**Borough Council**  
**The Scarman Trust**  
and  
**Newcastle Community**  
**& Voluntary Support**

*for supporting us  
either by way of  
grant aid or practical  
assistance in kind  
since our launch.*

## You write!



**In our next issue (hopefully out in September 2008) we want to include your thoughts.**

Please write to us at  
**10 The Mews,  
Moreton Parade,  
May Bank,  
Newcastle-under-Lyme,  
ST5 0TR**

**Please appreciate that space is limited.**

**Be brief.** Letters may be edited and reduced in size. The Editor's decision is final.

Full address and contact details must be included, not necessarily for publication but for verification.

**We look forward to receiving your letters.**

## **Still Driving ?**

**But for how much longer?**

There are moves towards more stringent conditions being placed on the issue of further licences to those in the 70+ age group. Medical checks and driving ability tests are being mentioned.

Those of us over the age of seventy may have to face the prospect of getting from behind the wheel before becoming a danger to ourselves and other road users.



Significant improvements in public transport may go some way to making the decision to give up driving more palatable but can they ever reach the standard to make them a viable alternative to the convenience of our own vehicles?

***What do you think?***

***Please let us have your views.***

## **Care in the Community?**

**Are you receiving help in your own home from a private contractor?**

Is that help satisfactory? Good or bad we would like to hear from you.

# Newcastle-under-Lyme 50+ Forum

## People Profile

### Brian Goodfellow



**Brian is a founder member of the 50+ Forum having been at the very first meetings when the embryo forum was under discussion.**

**Over the next few issues we plan to introduce you to members of the Management Committee.**

Hi there,

I am **Brian Goodfellow** - a member of the Management Committee. I was born in Hartshill and went to school there. I live on Westbury Park with my wife Pauline, we have two grown up daughters Victoria and Bridget.

My working life began at the age of 15 at British Steel - Shelton; where I worked until I was made redundant through the cessation of steel making after 27 years.

My initial contact with the forum was quite by chance. As I had worked in a voluntary capacity at the hospital for some 12 years it was natural for me to represent the forum with both the hospital and NHS Trust. I hope to be a Governor when the hospital becomes a Trust Foundation hospital. This should happen sometime in the next 12 months.

## Newcastle Friendship Centre

**Newcastle Friendship Centre** is an independent social group open to all over 50s. We have around 40 members and arrange a monthly pub lunch, theatre trips, various outings and weekly ten pin bowling for fun. We meet, usually with a speaker, in Newcastle Library on the first Tuesday of each month at 1.30pm. **You are very welcome to join us.**

**A speaker from the Friendship Club will be at our meeting in July on Thursday 17th July at St Giles' Church Hall (9.30am for 10am).**

## Help The Aged

Help the Aged have provided us with a grant to produce the first issues of this Newsletter.

We have received encouragement and practical financial support from them since our launch. The Help the Aged Policy Department works to influence Government policy both locally and nationally. A visit to their website will show the wide range of activities they are involved in and give details of help and advice available.

## Age Concern North Staffordshire

Age Concern North Staffordshire run a drop-in Information and Advice service at the Age Concern Office in Merrial Street, Newcastle (opposite the Police Station).

If you need information or advice about any issue at all, please drop in for a chat with one of the Advisors (Monday to Friday from 9.30am to 1.30pm).

Sessions are held in Kidsgrove, Madeley, Wolstanton and Silverdale to enable people in those areas to access the service.

**For further information please ring the Age Concern office on 01782 238222.**

HELPTHEAGED WE WILL

### contact details

Telephone: **020 7278 1116**

E: [info@helptheaged.org.uk](mailto:info@helptheaged.org.uk)

Visit their website at:

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

## New Community Centre & Extra Care Housing in Madeley

Madeley Community Development Project Group (MCDPG) will be submitting plans to NULBC to replace the existing village hall with a splendid new £1 million community centre.

The new building will be three times the size of the present hall and will have a main hall, function rooms, a bar and a café, a police point and may even include a post office.

The community centre will be physically linked to the extra care residential scheme being developed by Housing 21. The MCDPG and housing 21 are working closely together.

# Newcastle-under-Lyme 50+ Forum

## North Staffs Primary Care Trust

Regrettably our scheduled June meeting had to be cancelled due to changes in staff at the PCT. We will be seeking ways of reintroducing this quarterly meeting with a minimum of delay.

### Update on North Staffs PCT Board Meetings

We continue to be represented at these public meetings and will endeavour to raise any of our members concerns while the previous regular quarterly meetings are suspended.

Contact the PCT on **01538 487234** or via their website which can be found at - [www.northstaffordshire-pct.nhs.uk](http://www.northstaffordshire-pct.nhs.uk)

### Chiropody Update

Many thanks to all who sent in the completed questionnaire.

The PCT advise that the information gained will be taken into account when the whole question of chiropody is reviewed.

## We need your help

We are going to carry a full article on PALS in our next issue and need YOUR HELP.

Have you ever contacted PALS?

Was this an enquiry or a complaint?

How do you feel about the service you received from PALS?

Contact us via any of the ways shown on the back cover.

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## Patient Advice & Liaison Services (PALS)

- ◆ confidential advice and support to families and their carers,
- ◆ information on the NHS and health-related matters,
- ◆ confidential assistance in resolving problems and concerns quickly,
- ◆ explanations of complaints procedures and how to get in touch with someone who can help,
- ◆ and information on how you can get more involved in your own healthcare.

To contact your local PALS, please call on the following FREEPHONE numbers -

Tel: 0800 3898832 (for Newcastle area)

Tel: 0800 0304563 (for Moorlands area)

Come along to our next Forum meeting ...

## More on LinkLine



You can telephone us during our opening hours which are 9.30am to 12.30pm, on Monday, Wednesday and Friday - where one of our volunteers will explain how North Staffs LinkLine works. If you phone outside these hours you can leave a message on the answer phone and we will get back to you on the next working day.

**CALL US ON  
01782 710436**

**They have ambitious plans for the expansion of the service in the Borough and we hope that any statutory agencies reading our Newsletter will make contact to see how they can support this valuable project.**

## North Staffs LinkLine

We are indebted to **Sue McKenna** for providing us with details of this great service.

The first calls were made in July 2007 after this voluntary project was set up by two local churches, Our Lady & St. John the Baptist, Ashley and Our Lady & St. Werburgh, Clayton.

We have started small and have made it very clear that this is a service that is available to anyone who needs it irrespective of faith and most importantly it is **free**. All volunteers are CRB checked.

We phone each of our clients at least once a week, more often if they need it. We have a chat about anything and everything. If they need help or advice we try to point them in the right direction or in some cases we will make the contacts on their behalf. We pass on important information on such things as reminders for flu jabs, scam alerts from Trading Standards, free electric blanket checks and information from statutory agencies.

What has become increasingly apparent is that a person does not have to be housebound to be lonely or feel isolated.

Our clients come from areas served by Newcastle Borough, such as Wolstanton, Kidsgrove, Mow Cop, Ashley and Clayton.

**If you would like details of becoming a volunteer with this service please ring Sue McKenna on 01782 710436.**

# Newcastle-under-Lyme 50+ Forum

## **Extra Care Housing - Mill Rise Village on the way ...**

Following on from the last newsletter, you will see that the steel frame has now gone up on site, and work is well underway.



St. Mary's Primary School in Knutton will be helping us to put together a time capsule in June and will help to plant it on site. The Friends of Mill Rise group has been meeting monthly and future meetings have been planned. Guest speakers regularly attend meetings and cover a number of topics from welfare benefits to interior design.

### ***Shared Ownership***

If you currently own your home but you feel it doesn't meet your housing needs, you may wish to consider purchasing an apartment at Mill Rise Village. We have twenty 2-bed apartments available to purchase on a shared ownership basis. If you are successful in securing an apartment at Mill Rise you will need to sell your existing home before moving into the development.



### ***Shares are available at:***

- ◆ 50% with rent payable on the share retained by Aspire Housing, or
- ◆ 75% with no rent payable on the share retained by Aspire Housing

**Eligibility:** You must be aged 55 or over and able to afford the ongoing costs (service charge, sinking funds and care costs) of living in the scheme. You may be entitled to claim benefits for some of these costs depending on your circumstances. We will begin marketing the scheme over the summer and will have indicative costs to purchase a shared ownership apartment at this time.

**To register your interest  
and to receive our sales  
brochure, please contact:**

**Parwin Khaliq  
Tel: 0800 0279774**

# Your Voice

## FREE Electric Blanket Check

**1st and 2nd  
September 2008**

Final details of times and locations yet to be arranged but these checks will take place at Newcastle and Kidsgrove Fire Stations.

**Free Replacement blanket for those failing the test!**

Please ring  
**01785 898547**  
in August for full details



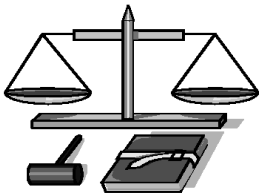
## Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service

**They provide a FREE safety check of your home. The visit will take around 20 minutes of your time and could save your life!**

During that visit you will receive advice on smoke alarms and the best places for them to be located as well as planning of escape routes and all other matters concerning fire risk and safety within the home.

**What do you need to do ? ....**

ring **Neil Broad** at Newcastle Fire Station on **01785 898547** or you can email to [n.broad@staffordshirefire.gov.uk](mailto:n.broad@staffordshirefire.gov.uk)



**We are fortunate in Staffordshire to have a very active and efficient Trading Standards working hard to safeguard us.**

Staffs County Council Trading Standards "Watchdog Scheme" is the first of its kind in the country, where individual members of the public, or community groups, can act as the eyes and ears of Trading Standards in their local area. If you would like more information on this scheme please contact **Cath Wohlers** (Community Development Officer) on **01785 277835**.

## Trading Standards

**Consumer Direct**  
Tel: **08454 04 05 06**

**Community Safety Team**  
Tel: **01785 277836**

**Fraud & Special Investigation Emergency**  
Tel: **07773 792 252**

**Trading Standards Confidential**  
Tel: **01785 33 03 56**

## Care in the Community

### “Just Checking” in Staffordshire

**Future care package plans may include the optional installation of electronic equipment. Here Jim explains what is involved.**

Telecare is the name given to technology that can be used to monitor and assess risks for vulnerable people living in the community. There are a range of devices and one of the most popular with Staffordshire is called "Just Checking". It is growing in popularity as more and more people wish to live independently in their own homes for as long as possible. Staffordshire Social Care and Health teams want to help people achieve their wishes and are working with local people and their families with new technology to help us all understand potential risks and find innovative ways in which to reduce or manage them. We were one of the first Councils to work with Just Checking and we are seen as one of the leading authorities in the country with our use of this system.

The Just Checking system allows people with dementia or memory loss, to continue to live independently. It monitors a person in their home, and provides a chart of activity via the internet.

We are very grateful to  
**Jim Ellam**, Service Manager -  
WellBeing (Older People)  
Cannock Chase for this article.

There is a very good demonstration of how it works and answers to commonly asked questions on the "just checking" website at - [www.justchecking.co.uk](http://www.justchecking.co.uk)

Just Checking is portable equipment that can be easily installed within any household to monitor and store information about activity day and night. Staff from Social Care and Health will discuss its potential with service users and their carers and explain that it works by fitting PIR sensors in the main rooms of the property and the front and back door. These detect movement - a little bit like a burglar alarm system does. The difference is that "Just Checking" captures the activity via a mobile phone link and can display this onto a chart on a computer screen which can only be accessed through a secure password. If the person agrees to it being used it can be fitted in 20 minutes and both the Social care staff and family can be given access to the password protected website to view the screen. There is no charge for using this service. *(continued next page)*

# Your Voice

The information can be used to identify if there are risks around someone leaving their home during the day or night. It can show patterns of behaviour which indicate disturbed days and nights. It can provide objective information in situations where people are unable to give a detailed account themselves and is widely considered much less invasive than having someone sitting in the home to see what might happen.

If you have access to a computer please visit the web site above or ask a relative to check out the site for you. **What do you think of the use of modern technology as part of a package aimed at keeping us safer in our own homes?**

## **Post Office Closures in Staffordshire**

**Under current government proposals, 2500 sub post offices around the country will be closed between October 2007 and July 2008.**

Post Office Ltd. is currently carrying out 'consultations' in all areas, focussing not on whether to close post offices, but whether satisfactory alternative services are available to customers.

In Newcastle Borough, five post offices are due to fall under the axe:- **Alsagers Bank, Abbots Way Corner - Clayton Road, High Street (May Bank), Drayton Street (Higherland) and High Street (Mow Cop).**

These decisions have certainly not been made on the grounds of non-viability. May Bank Post Office for example, is not a loss-making business. It is a thriving, busy, popular and extremely viable. It is open 46 hours a week, its Post Office ATM located outside is accessed over 1000 times a week and around 900 customers per week use the post office services. There are 26,065 people living within one mile of the branch and a large proportion of elderly people live nearby. Post offices are a lifeline for many older people, and other vulnerable members of society who do not have access to the Internet or who depend on visits to their local post office for social contact and purpose. They are at the heart of a community. Losing the local post office means that surrounding shops suffer loss of business and the local infrastructure falls further into decline.

*We trust that you have all expressed your opposition to these proposed closures under the consultation process that ended in early June. We are grateful to our friends at North Staffs Pensioners Convention who have led the opposition so effectively in this area.*

# Newcastle-under-Lyme 50+ Forum

## Active Learning ~ Active Brain

The **Adult and Community Learning Service** at Staffordshire County Council are here to offer you opportunities to learn new and interesting skills, such as art, digital photography and local history while you keep your body fit.

We can offer small groups of four to eight people the chance to take part in a short six week course in any of the above subjects whilst on a walk.

Instead of just rambling over the countryside or strolling through town you could be exercising your brain too by learning to sketch, learning to use a digital camera or learning something about the area you are walking through.

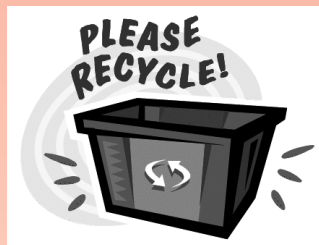
If you would like to go on a sketch walk, photography walk or a local history walk course, please call or send a text to **Amanda Darlington** on **07800 626 586** and let her know what you would like to do and when.

When we have enough people together we will start the course. Courses will cost £12 for a 12 hour course.



## Recycling

*Use your box & bag!*



*Makes sense  
and can save  
us all money!!!*

New government legislation will apply severe fines to all councils failing to meet recycling targets.

**If you do not have a blue box and bag or need a replacement you can order one by contacting:**

**Waste Management**  
Telephone  
**01782 742592**

## **Out and About for FREE**

### **Have you got your bus pass?**

**Member Peter Parker writes on the full use he is making of the extended facilities now available to all aged over 60.**



It has to be noted that the statutory requirement is for off-peak travel only. However, here in Staffordshire S-O-T City Council, Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council, Moorlands District Council, Stafford Borough Council, South Staffordshire District Council and Lichfield District Council have enhanced the scheme to any-time travel. However, in the rest of England it can only be used after 9.30am Monday to Friday but all day Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays.

The new bus pass came into effect on 1st April 2008 to be used throughout England, replacing the old pass which could only be used locally. The funding of these passes is slightly different to the funding of the old passes resulting in a number of advantages but some minor disadvantages. In the past passengers could travel from North Staffs to adjacent counties (Cheshire, Shropshire and Derbyshire) using direct services before 9.30am and return before 9.30am but now while the outward journey can be made before 9.30am the return journey must be made after 9.30am. Should a holiday be taken within about 100 miles of North Staffordshire it is quite feasible to do the journey by bus, places such as Southport, York, The Derbyshire Peak district, Worcester and Hereford although not on a direct route can be reached in a maximum of 6 hours. The bus pass can be used on other journeys once you reach the resort of your choice in other parts of England.

Thanks Peter. We hope that other members are making full use of their bus passes.

**To make enquiries regarding free bus passes please call in at the Civic Offices in Merrial Street or telephone NULBC on 01782 717717.**

*When calling in person you need to take proof of residency within the Borough by way of a utility bill e.g. Council Tax, Gas or Electric.*

## Fair Access to Care?

We are indebted to **Barbara Stoddart** for the following article.

The current system used by local authorities to decide whether or not a person is eligible to receive social care services in their own home is called '**Fair Access to Care**' (FACS).

The 'Fair Access to Care' framework was set up in 2002 to provide a guideline to councils for deciding the 'eligibility' criteria for adult social care. In following these guidelines, councils are required to take into account their local resources, local needs and costs.

This framework is divided into four bands that are supposed to describe the seriousness of the risk to independence or other consequences to the individual, if their needs are not addressed.

*These are:*

1. CRITICAL
2. SUBSTANTIAL
3. MODERATE
4. LOW

Increasingly local authorities are only helping those people that they assess to have 'substantial' or 'critical' needs. This means that many vulnerable, frail older people are being assessed as having 'moderate' or 'low' needs and are ineligible for care. This could be despite them having difficulty getting their own meals, cleaning

or shopping, or just coping with everyday tasks.

At the very time when a small amount of appropriate assistance is vital to prevent a person falling into the 'critical' or substantial category, - none will be forthcoming. They will be offered no help from Social Services, but will have to try and find and finance their own paid help, or rely on 'informal' carers. If they have no friends or relatives, they will be left to 'sink or swim'.

This system effectively rations care on the grounds of cost, and means that we are failing to meet the preventative needs of vulnerable older people.

Currently the CSCI (Commission for Social Care Inspectorate) - the body responsible for overseeing care services, is carrying out a review into the way in which local authorities operate 'Fair Access to Care'. They are looking to see whether it is being interpreted differently across the country and

*(continued next page)*

# Your Voice

## Let us know ...

if you or a relative have been assessed in the Moderate or Low category?

If so do you or they receive assistance from Social Services?

Your views are important to us and can be taken forward in our discussions with the agencies concerned.

whether we have another 'postcode lottery'. They are also looking at ways to 'improve' the system.

Surely the best way to improve 'FACS', is to restore the provision of good quality care to older people in their homes, and ensure that well-qualified, accountable, local authority staff delivers it. Currently 'Fair Access to Care' is actually 'Unfair Access to Care'.

## Thursday 17th July 2008

“Living Life to the Full”

St. Giles' Church Hall, Newcastle  
10am - 12 noon

## Thursday 25th September

Madeley meeting with Bill Cash MP

7pm - 9pm. (awaiting confirmation from Bill Cash)

## Monday 17th November

“Safety in the Home”

Quaker Meeting House, Newcastle  
10am - 12 noon

## Saturday 31st January 2009

Annual General Meeting

St. George's Church Hall, Newcastle  
10.30am - 12.30pm

## Forum Programme



*We endeavour to theme each forum on a current issue and in consequence last minute decisions are taken.*

## Thankyou Comic Relief

Thanks again to Robbie and all at **COMIC RELIEF** for all the encouragement and support.



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*17th July, at St. Giles Church Hall (10am).*

# Your Voice

The newsletter of the

Newcastle-under-Lyme 50+ Forum

‘Giving YOU a VOICE’

## 50 + Forum Contacts

Ring us on:  
**01782 628855**

Email us:  
**jm@mreynolds73  
.freeserve.co.uk**

Visit the Website at:  
**www.nul50plus  
forum.org.uk**

Chairman:  
**Mike Reynolds**  
E: **jm@mreynolds73  
.freeserve.co.uk**

Secretary:  
**Margaret Coley**  
E: **margaretcoley  
@yahoo.co.uk**

Treasurer:  
**Eric Pemberton**  
E: **Eric@ericpemberton  
.wanadoo.co.uk**

## Membership of the Newcastle-under-Lyme 50 + Forum

Membership is open to all residents of Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough who are in the 50+ age group.

Members will receive future copies of this Newsletter posted to their home address and will have the right to vote at forums and the Annual General Meeting.

To take up membership we ask only that you agree to having your contact details (name, address, telephone number and email address (if available) recorded on our Database.

This Database is not shared with any other organisations and your contact details will NEVER be divulged without your permission.

To take up membership please email any of the people named (*see contacts box to the left*), ring on the number shown, or write to

**NUL 50+ Forum, c/o 10 The Mews,  
Moreton Parade, May Bank,  
Newcastle-under-Lyme ST 5 0TR**

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