

Your Voice

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

'Giving YOU a VOICE'

50 + Forum Contacts

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@yahoo.co.uk

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Eric Pemberton
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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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Your Voice

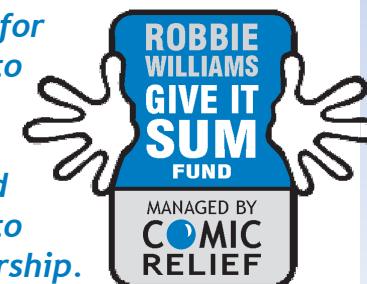
have
your
say!

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

ISSUE 3: SEPTEMBER 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

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- ◆ Foundation Trust Hospital
- ◆ GP Led Health Centre in Newcastle
- ◆ Fair Trade
- ◆ Extra Care Housing
- ◆ Our 200th Member
- ◆ Handyperson Service

and much more!

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

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Welcome to our third Newsletter; 2008 seems to be flying along at an alarming rate.

Our membership is close to 200 at the time of writing and that is a tremendous increase from the 40 members the Forum had at the last AGM. Of course, I am delighted to have such strength in numbers but I have a slight concern. Whilst numbers were small I had a real chance of knowing you individually but the increase means that my opportunity to have contact with each member becomes difficult. However, I do wish to assure you that the elected Management Committee I have the privilege to lead will be just as keen to represent your views no matter what level our membership numbers reach. Increasing membership will, I hope lead to more people coming forward to take an active role in the running of our Forum.

To find out more I suggest that you come along to one of our monthly Management Committee meetings. Come as an observer and under no obligation to undertake any particular role. Attendance at the meeting will give you an insight into the range of activities needed to ensure smooth running and also allow you to see how our representatives to various statutory agencies report back. **Interested?** please get in touch with any of the people listed on the back cover.

There is so much going on at the moment that concerns those of us in the 50 plus age group. You will find articles on the moves to establish a Foundation Trust Hospital and the opening of a GP Led Health Centre in Newcastle next year. These two projects are also to be the centre of an additional Forum to be held in October (see page 15). Thank you all for your continuing support.

Mike Reynolds, Chairman

THANKS !

*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!



We want to include
your thoughts in
'Your Voice'

Please write to us at

**10 The Mews,
Moreton Parade,
May Bank,
Newcastle-under-Lyme,
ST5 0TR**

Space is limited so
please be brief. Letters
may be edited and the
editor's decision is final.

Full address/contact
details must be included,
for verification.

*We look forward to
receiving your letters.*

IMPORTANT NOTICE

From time to time some articles in this Newsletter will publicise services available. Please note that the Newcastle-under-Lyme 50+ Forum has no responsibility for the standard or cost of such services. Readers wishing to utilise any of these services must ensure its suitability for themselves.

STOP PRESS ... Our 200th Member!

Congratulations to **Margaret Dobell** who joined at the Midsummer Mayhem event in the Lyme Valley.

Margaret who lives in May Bank was among 26 new members joining at the event.

Our membership now stands at 221.



Congratulations to all those who have encouraged membership. To mark the occasion Margaret received a gift token.

Just a thought

"If you had to identify, in one word, the reason why the human race has not achieved and never will achieve, its full potential, that word would be **MEETINGS.**"

Not sure where that quote comes from so sadly cannot attribute. I do know that I have sat in quite a few and left asking myself **"What was the point?"**

We work hard to make our meetings interesting and informative. Let us know if you feel we fall short of that target.

People Profile Margaret Coley



Margaret is Secretary of the 50+ Forum.

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

Hello, I'm **Margaret Coley** and I've been the Secretary of the 50+ Forum since January 2007. Born and bred in London I met my husband Brian when I was still at school. We both went to College in Nottingham and married while we were students.

When we eventually settled in Chesterton in 1983 it was our 6th home in 13 years! Our daughters Clare and Marie still live at home and my father came to live with us in 2002. He bravely cared for my mother, who had dementia, until only a few months before she died. He is now 93 and I am the envy of my friends as he does all the ironing and helps out in many ways!

Supply teaching led to me becoming a Primary and then Secondary school governor and I was also on the Corporation of Newcastle College for 10 years. During 25 years of living in Chesterton I have taken part in many community activities and particularly enjoyed the time I spent with Chesterton Community Forum and the One Stop Shop.

The 50+ Forum is still young but by using its members' experience and knowledge it will be of benefit to many in the years to come.

LONELINESS

10%(968,780) people aged over 65 in the UK say they are always or often lonely (figure is taken from Help the Aged Report 2008). **North Staffs LINKLINE (Tel: 01782-710436)** are one of the local organisations addressing this situation. Please ring them for details.

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.

The following extract is taken from the Help the Aged Spotlight Report 2008

“Depressingly pensioner poverty in 2008 remains at around the same as it was in 2007. More than one in five pensioners still lives below the poverty line, and deep poverty afflicts 1.2 million older people”

“Help the Aged is calling on the government to commit to three steps which, if taken, would substantially cut the numbers facing retirement in poverty. These are the immediate introduction of an earnings link for the basic state pension: the payment of a full basic pension to all pensioners; and, most importantly, the automatic payment of all means-tested benefits. We all grow older. So isn't it time we recognised a few things? That older people have the same hopes and fears as anyone else. That older people, with their £trillion in housing equity and the £200 million they spend each year, are an economic force to be reckoned with. That older people's wisdom, patience and experience are an even more valuable resource than their money. That, in short, older people deserve no more and no less than equal treatment.”

HELPTHEAGED WE WILL

contact details

Telephone: **020 7278 1116**
E: info@helptheaged.org.uk
Visit their website at:
www.helptheaged.org.uk

Good News!

The Help the Aged Spotlight Report 2008 has revealed some positive trends

- ◆ The proportion of older people who feel their quality of life has improved over the past 12 months rose from 7% to 9%.
- ◆ The proportion of people aged 60+ in Great Britain taking up their entitlement to concessionary fares rose from 56% to 63%.
- ◆ The proportion of people aged 65+ who had never used the internet fell from 82% to 71%.



Small enough crumbs of improvement but Help the Aged and Age Concern are constantly seeking ways of influencing government policy with the active support of many smaller organisations like the NUL 50+ Forum and our friends at North Staffs Pensioners Convention.

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.

A date for your diary

The **Age Concern AGM** will be held in the Assembly Rooms, Merrial Street, Newcastle on **Thursday 23rd October 2008 at 1pm**. All are welcome to attend.

The future for Age Concern ...

The funding to enable Age Concern to continue this service beyond March 2009 is still not in place. We are aware of the help that many of you will have received from calling in to see the staff in Merrial Street. We trust that bids to cover the running costs will be successful and we can look forward to this presence in our town for many years to come.

Marketing Events

September 2008

Monday 15th

9.30am - 1.00pm
Silverdale Library

Wednesday 17th

Customer Service Roadshow
Newcastle Town Centre
(outside the Guildhall)

Friday 19th

9.30am - 1.00pm
Wye Road Community Centre, Clayton

Monday 22nd & 29th

9.30am - 12.30pm
Newcastle Civic Offices



Extra Care Housing ~ Mill Rise Update

Progress on the construction continues with work on the roof and the external walls well underway.

The floors and staircases have now been fitted and the internal apartment walls are in the process of being assembled.

Shared Ownership

There are twenty 2-bed apartments which are available to purchase on a shared ownership basis.



If you are interested in purchasing an apartment please call **0800 027 9774** for a brochure and application form or visit one of the marketing events (detailed in the column to the left).

Friends of Mill Rise

A group of people who have expressed an interest in Mill Rise meet regularly to discuss updates with Aspire Housing and to raise queries on design and equipping of the apartments.

You are very welcome to attend these meetings; please contact **Suzie King** on **01782 854904** for more information and details of future meetings.



Focus on: **FAIR TRADE**

Most of you will be familiar with the concept of **Fairtrade**; but if you want to know more about Fairtrade in general then read the section at the end of this article.

The **Newcastle-under-Lyme Fair Trade Group** has been trying for some time to gain Fairtrade status for the Borough. The Council passed a resolution approving the move in the autumn of 2005 and an independent steering group was formed to take this forward.

Forum member **Hilary Jones** is a founder member of the **N-U-L FairTrade Group** and our thanks go to her for the following article.

An application was submitted to the Fairtrade Foundation in 2007 but was unsuccessful. It was deemed that only 2 of the 5 essential goals had been reached. More cafes, catering establishments, work places and community organisations using Fairtrade products were needed. If you could assist with this process by identifying and encouraging Fairtrade usage wherever you can and passing on the information to the Group (e-mail: fairtradegroup@newcastle-staffs.gov.uk or telephone **01782 632895**). We are particularly interested in gaining more work places and community organisations.

Examples of other ways in which **YOU** can help to promote Fairtrade:

- ◆ Look out for and buy Fairtrade products in your local shops and supermarkets.
- ◆ Support those outlets which serve Fairtrade drinks and snacks.
- ◆ Support the Farmer's Market in Newcastle Town Centre on the third Friday of every month. This also provides an opportunity to purchase locally sourced produce.
- ◆ Encourage Fairtrade drinks and snacks to be sold at the places where you work, where you socialise or where you have your hair done.

(continued opposite)

N-U-L Fairtrade Group

Membership of the Fairtrade Group is free and open to anyone over the age of 11.

You can join the group by sending your contact details to the e-mail address (see page 8) or by writing to the group at:

**The Civic Offices,
Merrial Street,
Newcastle-under-Lyme,
ST5 2AG**

A Borough Fairtrade Buying Guide is available on request.

Anything that membership can do to hasten the day that our Borough gains Fair Trade status will make a difference to those in the developing world anxious to support themselves and their families.

- ◆ Provide funding to support our local publicity. Please send your cheques made payable to **Newcastle Fair Trade Group** to the address listed to the left.
- ◆ Keep the Fair Trade Group informed of any new outlets or products sold within the Borough, not currently listed in the Buying Guide.

General Information about Fairtrade

Fair Trade in its broadest sense is about better prices, decent working conditions, and fair terms of trade for all producers but particularly for farmers and workers in the developing world. Fairtrade is a trading model which guarantees a fair price to farmers in local co-operatives. It ensures that a premium is paid for produce supplied through these co-operatives, which can then be invested in local community projects such as electric lighting, schools and health programmes. It ensures that these producers are not unfairly treated by market forces and mass economies and uses those very same market forces to create a market for ethical produce. The FAIRTRADE mark is an independent product certification label found on products that meet international Fairtrade standards. More than 2,500 products now carry this mark in the UK.

For more information please access the Fairtrade Foundation website at www.fairtrade.org.uk or ask the Group to send you more information.

Staffordshire Fire & Rescue Service

Staffordshire Fire & Rescue Service provide a **FREE** safety check of your home. The visit will only take around 20 minutes of your time and it 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.

For advice and to arrange a home visit - ring **Neil Broad** at Newcastle Fire Station on **01785 898547** or you can email him on n.broad@staffordshirefire.gov.uk



Who can do that Job? the Beth Johnson Home Improvement Agency!

Do you need a handyperson to carry out those little jobs that are really difficult to get done?

Whether it's gardening, decorating, changing tap washers, unblocking sinks, fitting curtain rails and curtains, replacing WC seats, replacing ball valves, small joinery work, or simply changing light bulbs, help is at hand.

There is a charge and you will be advised of this when the handyperson calls to assess the work required. Services are available to all older people who own their own homes or are tenants with repairing responsibilities.

Handyperson Service



Priority is given to work that reduces the risk of injury, the risk of security and risk to health.

Contact: **Lisa Bridgwood**
Tel: **01782 203566**
(Mon - Fri: 9am - 5pm)

Find out more

We are grateful to **Lee McManus** a member of Clough Hall Residents Association for this article.

Lee will be speaking on this subject at Hollingwood Sheltered Housing, Hollingwood Avenue, Kidsgrove, at 7pm on **Tuesday 9th December**.

All are welcome to attend.

Equity Release

Over the last few years the cost of living our lives has increased at a frightening rate. Basic goods and services like food and fuel are stretching people's budgets to breaking point. More and more people are turning to Equity Release, **but what are the facts?**

There are two main types of equity release available:

1. **Lifetime Mortgage**
2. **Home Reversion Scheme**



The **Lifetime Mortgage** is essentially a mortgage loan that is secured against your property that you don't have to make mortgage payments on. Instead the mortgage interest charged (typically about 6%) is rolled-up to be paid when the scheme is ended. You continue to own and live in your home. After you and your partner have died or moved into long-term care, your house is sold and the amount you borrowed, including rolled-up interest is paid to the lender. Anything left over, after costs, passes to your or your partner's, estate.

With a **Home Reversion Plan**, you sell all or part of your home, but you continue to live in your home. After you and your partner have died, your house is sold and the proceeds are split between the home reversion provider and your or your partner's, estate.

There are plenty of things that need to be considered before you make any decisions and independent financial and legal advice is something you should always consider. You should also check that you are claiming all the benefits that you are entitled to.

The amount you can release on both schemes depends on your age and state of health.



University Hospital of North Staffordshire

The move towards gaining Hospital Foundation Status

"NHS Foundation Trusts are a completely new kind of organisation. They are about the NHS being run locally by local people rather than by politicians in central government."

The hospital is seeking to become an NHS Foundation Trust and the brochure accompanying this issue of the Newsletter (**being sent out to members only**) is designed to inform us of quite what is involved in seeking and attaining this status. They are looking to involve patients, the public and existing staff much more in:

- ◆ Telling them when they get it right and when they don't.
- ◆ Helping to steer and agree their plans.
- ◆ Help them to be the best in more and more clinical services.
- ◆ Helping them to be the best employer.

We feel that this is a real move by the present leadership team to encourage people to be "a part of the future of the hospital" and is not the usual token gesture to satisfy central government that we are being involved. Your views are needed and we ask that you please complete the questionnaire in the brochure.

This is the first time that the hospital has asked the 50+ Forum to distribute a questionnaire and we do hope that you will feel able to respond.

Please ensure that you return the completed form to the return address shown on the form; make sure you include the Freepost RRYX-CZHH-YU8G to avoid having to pay postage.

(continued on next page)

Community Drop In Events

The Community Drop In events listed below are going to be run along café lines; they will not be presentations.

They give you the will to include nurses, cleaners and representatives of many of the ancillary staff. It will be a real chance to hear their views on the future of our hospital and to ask your questions.

Tunstall - Monday 29th September
(10am-7pm) at Floral Hall

Hanley - Monday 13th October
(10am-5pm) at the Dudson Centre

Cheadle - Wednesday 15th October
(10am-7pm) at the Methodist Church

Leek - Monday 20th October
(10am-6pm) at Leek Council Building

Stafford - Thursday 23rd October
at the Gatehouse Theatre

Fenton - Monday 27th October
(11am-7pm) at Fenton Community Centre

Newcastle - Friday 7th November
(10am-7pm) at Holy Trinity Church

Biddulph - Thursday 13th November
(10am-7pm) at the Council Hall

Stone - Monday 24th November
(10am-5pm) at Walton Community Centre

Kidsgrove - Wednesday 26th November
(10am-7pm) at Victoria Hall

Longton - Friday 28th November
(10am-5pm) at Longton Central Hall

Diary Date

University Hospital Trust AGM

Thursday 25th September 2008

at the

Medical Institute Hartshill, S-O-T

(opposite Noah's Ark pub)

It will commence at 2pm and is an open meeting.

Full reports on the progress of the hospital complex for the period 1st April 2007 to 31st March 2008 will be given.

YOU ARE VERY WELCOME TO ATTEND.

- ◆ **Displays and staff will also be at the Potteries Shopping Centre in Hanley on: Tuesday 16th and Wednesday 17th of September.**

New GP Led Health Centre

NHS North Staffordshire are pleased to announce the arrival of a new GP Led Health Centre within Newcastle town centre next year.

The health centre will be run and managed by GPs and will offer access to a range of GP and other services from 8am to 8pm, seven days a week.



The practice will be open to residents or non residents of North Staffordshire and will offer both registered and unregistered patients, pre-bookable appointments and walk-in services.

Patients will be able to access an appropriate Health Care Professional within 24 hours, and access any GP within 48 hours. Emergency appointments will be seen on the same day and an appointment with any GP or Health Care Professional can be booked up to 4 weeks in advance.

The broad range of services on offer will assist in keeping patients healthy, as well as treating long term conditions.

The new Health Centre is not intended to replace the existing primary care services; rather it will provide extra services and increase access to primary care closer to people's homes or work.

◆ The Health Centre will open in April 2009.

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Forum Programme 2008 / 2009



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

For more details about our forums

please telephone
01782 628855

or visit the website at
www.nul50plusforum.org.uk

Come along to our additional forum meeting to find out more

Come along to our additional forum meeting to be held on **Thursday October 16th at St. Giles Church Hall, Newcastle (10am)** to find out more about this centre; and have your say on this new service and the moves for our hospital to gain Foundation Hospital status.

Thursday 25th September

Madeley Meeting with Bill Cash MP

Madeley Village Hall,
Furnace Lane, Madeley
7pm - 9pm. (Refreshments from 6.30pm)

Thursday 16th October

ADDITIONAL FORUM MEETING

Foundation Hospital and New GP Led Health Centre

St. Giles' Church Hall, Newcastle
10am (Refreshments from 9.30am)

Monday 17th November

Safety in the Home

Quaker Meeting House, Miller Street,
Newcastle (10am - 12 noon)

Saturday 31st January 2009

Annual General Meeting

(followed by regular forum meeting)

St. George's Church Hall, Newcastle
AGM will run from 10am to 11am.
Forum will run from 11am to 1pm.

Recycling

Use your box & bag!



Recycling makes sense and can save us money!

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