

# Your Voice

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

'Giving YOU a VOICE'

## 50 + Forum Contacts

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Visit the Website at:  
**www.nul50plus  
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@yahoo.co.uk**

Treasurer:  
**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 4: DECEMBER 2008



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



## inside ...

- ◆ Dignity in Care Campaign
- ◆ Meeting with NHS North Staffordshire
- ◆ Brighton House, Silverdale
- ◆ 'I' Flat
- ◆ Extra Care Housing
- ◆ Details of Forum Programme for 2009

*and much more!*

## 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.

## Need more Information?

We are aware that not everyone has a computer and therefore cannot access our website.

If we refer to a fuller report being on the web and you would like a hard copy please let us know.

See contact details on the back cover.



Hello and welcome to our December Newsletter.

A very Happy Christmas to you and your family.

The membership continues to grow and this is pleasing and rewarding to those of us concerned with the administration side of things. However, it does bring with it an added burden and I would ask that you consider our appeal for members to join the Management Committee.

The AGM in January is detailed in the Programme section and I do hope you will be able to join us. We have managed to obtain a small amount of funding and have sufficient funds to add to that to enable us to offer a buffet after the AGM and Forum. It will be a great opportunity to meet up with you.

To avoid over ordering we do ask that you let us know if you intend to be with us on Saturday 31st January.

There are many concerns facing the older generation as we enter 2009 and we hope that the Forum will continue to give voice to those concerns at local, county and national government level.

May 2009 be kind to us all.

*Mike Reynolds, Chairman*

## Would you like to get involved?



We are searching for people to help us

The Forum can only continue if people are willing to come forward to serve on the Management Committee and to take on the offices.

Please contact either Margaret or Mike to discuss this matter further

Full contact details for Margaret and Mike can be found on the back cover of this newsletter.

# Your Voice

## YOUR FORUM needs YOUR HELP ...

We are searching for new Committee Members and Officers, to ensure that your Forum continues to grow and thrive.

With our membership now approaching the 250 mark the Forum can be seen as being successful and increasingly being able to ensure that the voice of older people is being heard.

However, the bulk of the administration and financial side of the Forum is being done by a very small number of people.

Our Treasurer, Eric has indicated that he is willing to stand for election for another year. Our Secretary, Margaret would like to have help with mailings and other similar tasks.

Your Chairman, Mike is unable to offer more time and would wish to see a Vice Chairman in place.

Is there anyone out there willing to "shadow" Eric and Margaret during 2009?

## 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.

Good day, I am **Eric Pemberton** and I am the treasurer of the 50+ Forum. I was born in Bromborough Pool, near Port Sunlight on the Wirral. After a spell in industry, I moved from Glasgow to Stoke-on-Trent, where I became a mathematics teacher.

I still remember trying to find a house, when being given the directions "Up bank and turn left". I never found the bank!! Eventually computing took over and I was still teaching IT, when I retired as Deputy Head Teacher of Holden Lane High School. A "relaxing" job at a 1300+ comprehensive school. I thoroughly enjoyed the teaching profession. I found youngsters respected me, as long as they thought I was being fair. However, I also believe that everyone should have at least one hobby that helps them forget work. I was a work-a-holic and in retirement, still am.

My main hobby for over 40 years has been scuba diving. You are never too old to try something new. I met a lady who started diving at the very young age of 70. She is now 82 and still dives in a quarry every other week, as well as diving abroad.

My wife Kathleen and I enjoy a number of hobbies together, such as wildlife watching, caravanning and walking with our dog Judy. We also enjoy new challenges. We helped to start a local branch of Staffordshire Wildlife Trust 16 years ago. Loggerheads Community Information Shop was started two years ago, as well as being heavily involved with the Loggerheads Parish Plan. Kath in her spare time loves flower arranging and Cliff Richard!! My latest project is to set up a local Community Nature Reserve on a piece of land being leased to our new group of volunteers in memory of two local residents.

**Eric Pemberton (Treasurer)**

## People Profile **Eric Pemberton**



**Eric is the Treasurer  
of the 50+ Forum.**

## 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 - [www.helptheaged.org.uk](http://www.helptheaged.org.uk) - will show the wide range of activities they are involved in and give details of help and advice available. You can contact Help the Aged by telephone on **020 7278 1116** or by email to [info@helptheaged.org.uk](mailto:info@helptheaged.org.uk)

## LINK - The Local Involvement Network

**LINK replaces the Patient and Public Involvement in Health (PPIH) groups and has the following objectives:-**

- ◆ To give everyone the opportunity to influence what health and social care services are provided in their area.
- ◆ To give everyone the opportunity to say what they think about their local health and social care services - what is working well and what is not so good.
- ◆ To give people the opportunity to check how health and social care services are planned, organised and delivered.
- ◆ To feedback what people have said about health and social care services so that things can change.

**Local groups are currently being set up in Staffordshire. For details of your nearest group and obtain further details of the powers LINK will have telephone 01785 887990.**

**HELPTHEAGED WE WILL**

**New Service from British Telecom**



British Telecom are offering a new service to **Existing Customers Only** who are in receipt of **Guaranteed Pension Credit.**

**The new service is called BT Basic** - the scheme offers line rental at £4.50 per month and that includes £1.50 worth of free calls.

If you are an existing customer of BT please call **0800 783 1675** for further details.

*Our thanks to Pat at Age Concern North Staffs for bringing this new service to our attention.*

## NHS North Staffordshire

Just as we got used to referring to North Staffs Primary Care Trust we are faced with a name change to **NHS North Staffordshire**.

We met with North Staffs NHS on 9th October when we posed a number of questions and concerns. Among the items raised were:-

- ◆ **Can a complaint be raised with PALS (Patients Advice & Liaison Service)?** This followed from a lengthy exchange of emails regarding our concerns on the action taken by PALS on receipt of a complaint. The forum were also concerned that the leaflets issued by PALS in the North Staffs area did not fully explain the role they played or the direct connection to NHS North Staffordshire. Examples of leaflets issued by Cheshire PALS were made available to NHS North Staffs as an example of good practice. NHS North Staffs communications team informed the meeting that they are currently reviewing the design of the PALS leaflet.
- ◆ **Will the GP Led Health Centre in Newcastle be PFI (Public/Private Finance Initiative) funded?** No it was being funded by central government. The forum expressed concerns that the centre would be run by private contractors; NHS North Staffs said that there was a possibility of a consortium of local doctors bidding for the contract. The centre was not intended to reduce the number of existing GP practices; although it would be possible to register at the centre its facilities would be open to all on a "walk in" basis.
- ◆ **Is there a policy for regular checks on staff coming into contact with patients for MRSA and other infections?** This followed an exchange of correspondence between the forum and the University Hospital.

**The following response has been received:** It is not NHS policy to screen staff for MRSA or other colonised bacteria. To do so would render staff members absent from work for lengthy periods of time whilst test results are returned and the decolonisation process is performed. In some people it is impossible to rid them of the bug altogether. However, all NHS members of staff who work within a

*(continued on next page)*

## NHS North Staffordshire

clinical setting are training regularly on the use of standard precautions to minimise the risk of infection and spread of hospital acquired infections. All staff have access to infection control policies and procedures and work closely with the Trust's Infection Control Nurses to undertake regular training and updates.

In addition, NHS North Staffordshire will be going live with the **"Clean your Hands Campaign"** from 1st November. This is in line with the National Patient Safety Agency and will be targeted at all Health Care Staff.

Approximately 30% of the general population carry the MRSA bug without symptoms or side effects.

Further questions regarding the classification of Alzheimer's, and other forms of dementia as an illness to allow for higher levels of funding and the provision of chiropody services in rural areas were raised.

A full report on these questions and responses received can be found on our website at [www.nul50plusforum.org.uk](http://www.nul50plusforum.org.uk)

**We meet again with NHS North Staffs on 29th January 2009.**

If you have a question that you would wish to be raised then please let us know. Please use the contact details on the back cover of this newsletter.

## Patient Advice & Liaison Service (PALS)

**The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)**

can be contacted on

**0800 030 4563**

or

**0845 602 6772**

**(ext 1888)**

PALS provide confidential on-the-spot advice and support.

We can help you to sort out any concerns you may have about the care we provide, guiding you through the different services available from the NHS.

For more information please visit NHS North Staffordshire's website

[www.northstaffordshire-pct.nhs.uk](http://www.northstaffordshire-pct.nhs.uk)

- click on the PALS link which will direct you to more information about the service.

## Extra Care Housing - Mill Rise Update

### Friends of Mill Rise

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

The group is constituted and has a bank account.

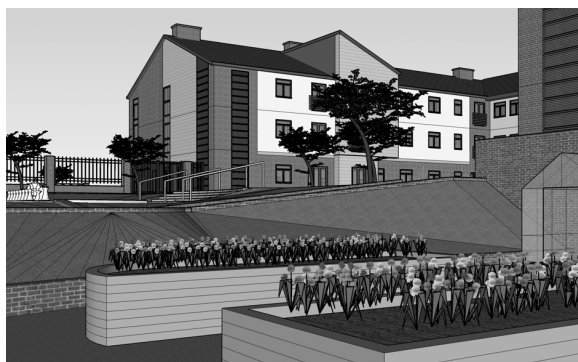
Thanks to a generous donation from Aspire Housing and some fund raising by way of raffles and a car boot that account already has a healthy balance.

Funds raised will be used to equip the activities room to ensure that residents have the opportunity to continue or take up interests.

You are very welcome to come along to the regular meetings.

For details of all future meetings, please contact

**Suzie King** on  
**01782 854904**



Work on this project is progressing well and a trip to Morrison's, Cross Heath will show just how much has already been done.

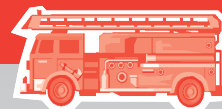
There has been considerable interest in this Extra Care Housing complex that is sited next to a new Health Centre. Those occupying the apartments will have GPs, dentists and other health care services on the doorstep.

The complex will contain a restaurant, an activities area and a hairdressing salon. The company providing the services needed by some residents have been appointed and will be giving a presentation at a meeting of the Friends of Mill Rise.

**Shared Ownership** - There are 20 two-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.

## Community Fire Safety Day



**Saturday 13th December 2008**

**Newcastle Fire Station  
10.00am - 3.00pm**

**Promoting safety especially over the Christmas period.**

**Father Christmas has been invited!**

**ALL ARE WELCOME.**

## Staffordshire Fire & Rescue Service

Staffordshire Fire and 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



**STAFFORDSHIRE**  
Fire and Rescue Service

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 FREEPHONE 0800 0241 999.**

## LONELY? ... North Staffs LINKLINE can help

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.

## PARKSITE ACTION GROUP

**Open 9.00am - 11.30am & 1.30pm - 3.30pm on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays**

- ◆ **Age Concern "Benefits" Clinics**
- ◆ **Computer Training Courses**
- ◆ **and much, much more!**

**Just call in or telephone 01782 660236 for full details.**

*Help Locally for Local People!*

## Brighton House

Brighton House in Silverdale is in the process of developing from a Long Stay Residential Home to a Resource Centre for Older People and their Carers.



In line with Staffordshire County Councils 'Changing Lives Policy', older person's services are becoming more community focussed with an emphasis more on supporting people to live independently rather than move into residential care.

Working alongside other agencies such as health and those in the Voluntary and Independent sector, Brighton House is aiming to become the 'hub' for community based services in providing short stay/respite care as well as rehabilitation care. Such care aims to support people back to independence following illness and hospital discharge.

The staff team is comprised of residential and day services staff as well as social workers, occupational therapists and physiotherapists who anticipate being joined shortly by staff from the health services such as Community Matrons and Intermediate Care. This unique team and its' location will mean that Social Services can combine their services and expertise under one roof in ways which can provide speedy access to services and advice to older people and their carers.

As well as centre based services, the team are looking to provide outreach services in the community and are currently working in conjunction with Newcastle Library on Reminiscence Therapy, with Keele University Bio-Mechanics Department on a Falls programme as well as pioneering use of new technology in exercise and well being and other therapy based services. Brighton House is also looking to develop Carers Support Groups where Carers will be able to access support, advice and training.

Clearly Brighton House will go a long way towards modernising and improving services in the area but in order to do this it is essential for the centre to integrate with its community and share its services with the neighbourhood in ways which promote the wellbeing and independence of older people and their carers.

- ◆ **The 50+ Forum is represented on committees planning the future at Brighton House by Brian Goodfellow.**

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**In this article, Mike Reynolds looks into how technology can help us to live independently and remain safe.**

## I-FLAT

*by Mike Reynolds (50+ Forum Chairman)*

**I recently visited a specially adapted flat in Newcastle to see for myself some of the items now available to assist us in our own homes.**

I arrived with my usual concerns as to the intrusive nature of modern technology but left heartened by the attitude of the company behind the setting up of the flat and the conversion of a Victorian terraced property to illustrate just what can be done.

The I-Flat (I for Intelligence) is an initiative of Medilink West Midlands who are dedicated to promoting good practice and modern technology to develop intelligent healthcare that will support independent living. If the time taken for several care personnel to visit a resident in their own home can be reduced the thought is that the time saved could be better used in ensuring that the resident received a longer and hopefully more useful visit sometime in the day.

**How will it work?** - I saw touch screens capable of monitoring blood pressure, blood oxygen content, heart beat rates and blood glucose levels. Not simply monitoring but capable of transferring the information direct to your own GP. GP practices in this region are currently being fitted with the necessary terminals to accept such data. The possibilities for monitoring closely those with long term medical problems are endless.

SMART ovens are now available that actually read instructions from a bar code on the packaging of chilled or frozen meals. A display gives clear step by step instructions to avoid mishaps in reheating. WIRELESS stop cocks can be fitted that will automatically be triggered to cut off the water supply should a sink or washing machine overflow.

On the entry door bell being rung a message is clearly audible reminding the occupant not to answer the door to unknown people. The same system reminds you to take your keys with you when you leave the flat.

**Would you like to find out more?**

Please take a look at the **Medilink** website for further information, at [www.MedilinkWM.co.uk](http://www.MedilinkWM.co.uk)

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## Dignity in Care

The NUL 50+ Forum welcomes moves from central government to address the whole question of dignity in care.

The Staffordshire Dignity in Care Campaign forms part of a national campaign to raise awareness of the need for people receiving care services to be treated with dignity.



The aim is to create a care system where there is a zero tolerance approach to the abuse of, and disrespect towards people who use care services.

Between January and May 2009 a range of events is planned across Staffordshire.

Visit [www.dignityincare.org.uk](http://www.dignityincare.org.uk) or ring **0207 972 4007** for more information on the campaign.

## NHS North Staffordshire Community Healthcare

**Aches & Pains? ... Call Physio Direct**

**Telephone: 08456 003 003**

**Monday to Friday: 8.30am to 4.30pm**

An NHS telephone advice line for people with back, neck, joint or muscular pain.

Available to all over the age of 16.

When you call you will speak to a qualified, state registered physiotherapist.

## Services that support dignity should:

- ◆ Have zero tolerance of all forms of abuse.
- ◆ Support people with the same respect you would want for yourself or a member of your family.
- ◆ Treat each person as an individual by offering a personalised service.
- ◆ Enable people to maintain the maximum possible level of independence, choice and control.
- ◆ Listen and support people to express their needs and wants.
- ◆ Respect people's right to privacy.
- ◆ Ensure people feel able to complain without fear of retribution.
- ◆ Engage with family members and carers as care partners.
- ◆ Assist people to maintain confidence and positive self esteem.
- ◆ Act to alleviate people's loneliness and isolation.

## AGE CONCERN Information and Advice Service - Opening Hours -

**Merrial Street Office  
Newcastle-under-Lyme  
Monday to Friday from  
9.30am to 1.30pm.**

Sessions also held in Kidsgrove and Silverdale to enable people to access the service.

## Aged 60 or over? Are you getting all benefits you are entitled to?

The local Pension Services realised £11m in new and additional benefits for North Staffs Pensioners last year alone.

Many over 60's are still missing out on extra benefits such as:

- ◆ Pension Credit
- ◆ Disability Living Allowance
- ◆ Housing & Council Tax Benefits
- ◆ Attendance Allowance
- ◆ Carers Allowances

Why not ask our Pension Service advisors to check your benefit entitlement? They will also fill in the claim forms and are happy to visit your home or you can call in at the venues listed (in the panel to the right).

To arrange an appointment or home visit please ring **0845 6060265** and ask to speak to your local North Staffs Pension Service.

The Pension Service is part of the Department for Work and Pensions.

## AGE CONCERN North Staffordshire

AGE CONCERN North Staffordshire run a drop-in information and advice service at their 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 (see left for opening times).

For further information ring **Age Concern** on **01782 238222** or **238282**.

## Pension Service Advisory Clinics

### Newcastle Library

Just call in every Friday from 9.30am - 1pm

### Silverdale Library

**(Appointment only)**  
every other Monday  
Next: Dec 8th & 22nd  
from 10am - 12 noon

### Chesterton Community

**One Stop Shop,  
Edensor Court**

**(Appointment only)**  
every other Monday  
Next: Dec 1st & 15th  
from 10am - 12 noon

## What Price Sustainability

*Our thanks to Trevor Stokes of Sustainable Staffordshire for this article.*

**In the first quarter of the 20th century, energy production became one indicator of the prosperity of a nation in the 'developed world'. Energy was required to produce the goods that consumers desired and the power to use them.**

The 1960's saw a car on every drive, followed by the 'throw away society' in the 70's; whilst the 80,s brought deregulation of borrowing, the need for two full time wages and 2 cars on the drive. People were encouraged to purchase on credit cards and that it was acceptable to go into semi-permanent debt. The 1990's and the 21st century brought new vigour to the demand for materialistic wealth, but by now scientists were going public with their concerns about global warming. The research group appointed by the government, in their report (October 2008), has declared the problem is real and the **reduction in the emission of 'greenhouse gases'** must be accelerated.

The effects of global warming are slow and insidious and have little effect on everyday life but the current financial crisis has become a major disaster overnight. **These events are opposite sides of the same coin.** The population of Britain is consuming resources at a rate three times more than can be sustained globally, on the back of £1450 billion debt.

For more details of Sustainable Staffordshire please contact **Community Council for Staffordshire** by telephone on **01785 242525** or by e-mail to **communitycouncil@staff.org.uk** - further information can also be found on the website at **www.staffs.org.uk**

New government legislation hits home to fine local 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 on 01782 742592.**

## Recycling

*Use your box & bag!*



**Recycling makes sense and can save us money!**

## Forum Programme for 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.nul50plus  
forum.org.uk**

**Saturday 31st January 2009**  
**Annual General Meeting**  
(followed by regular forum meeting)  
**at St. George's Church Hall, Newcastle**

AGM will run from 10.00am to 11.00am.  
Forum will run from 11.00am to 1.00pm.

**Thursday 19th March**  
at St. Giles' Church Hall, Newcastle  
from 10.00am to 12 noon

**Tuesday 19th May**  
**Joint Forum with Clough Hall Residents Association**  
from 7.15pm to 9.15pm

**Thursday 16th July**  
at St. George's Church Hall, Newcastle  
from 6.30pm to 9.00pm

**Thursday 10th September**  
at Oddfellows Hall, Ashley  
from 10.00am to 12 noon

**Thursday 19th November**  
at St. Giles' Church Hall, Newcastle  
from 10.00am to 12 noon

## Thankyou Comic Relief

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

