



# **The Echo**

**The Magazine of the Elders Council**

**Issue 105**

**May to July 2024**

## **Elders Council of Newcastle Annual General Meeting 2024**

Members of the Elders Council are invited to the 2023-24 AGM, to celebrate another year of activity and involvement of older people in Newcastle.

**Wednesday 17 July, from 2 pm to 4 pm**

(Registration will be from 1.30 pm)

Strawberry Fields, One Strawberry Lane Newcastle NE1 4BX

The formal business will be carried out at the beginning of the session, presenting the Annual Report and Accounts, before electing Trustees. Two Trustees will be retiring following completion of 3 terms. If you are interested in applying to be a Trustee, contact our office for information. They will be pleased to talk to you about this important role.

The AGM gives us all an opportunity to meet, to reflect on work in our communities over the year and, offer information about interesting opportunities available within our organisation.

Please complete the enclosed reply and proxy vote slips (if you are unable to attend then cast your vote via the slip) and return to the office address. Alternatively, email [info@elderscouncil.org.uk](mailto:info@elderscouncil.org.uk)

I hope you will reply as soon as possible, but no later than Friday 28 June, and advise if you require additional support on the day. I look forward to seeing you on 17 July 2024.

**Anne Raffle (Chair)**

## Active Voices course

It was with trepidation I attended the first Active Voices session. Within minutes I felt relaxed under the experienced guidance of Moira Riseborough, course tutor. We introduced ourselves to each other and



discussed the purpose of the course. Each week we engaged in discussions about topics like self-awareness, what made us cross, learning styles and a wide range of issues. We all became more at ease listening to each other stating our own ideas and opinions. We were in a safe place and no one was judging; there were no wrong or right responses. Throughout each session, key points from our discussions were written on a flip chart and were reconsidered at

### **Contents**

<b>LLARC</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Shining a light</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Treading the earth</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Coffee Morning</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Let's take a stroll</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Eat more protein</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Esther</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Music and me</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Pip, Irene &amp; Rita</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Tuneless Choir</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Know your bias</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Keeping your cool</b>	<b>22</b>

the end. Each week, as we became more at ease with our revived abilities to speak our minds, the course led us on to thinking about a project to work on together. Groups had produced practical creative artwork such as posters or bags with supportive slogans.

Our group decided to plan a relaxed inter-generational conversation between some Elders Council members and some young students to find out how they view each other. Perceptions of ageing by the young might be misunderstood and, equally, older people might have false notions about what difficulties the younger generation have to face.

I am grateful to the Elders Council for the opportunity to take part in this course. It gave me the chance to meet and develop. **Ron Bell**

## Thank you, thank you, thank you,

We need to say a great big thank you to all of you who saw our last front page telling how much it cost to print and post the magazine. You responded magnificently and so far we have received **£1,031**. The plan is to use this money to raise even more by crowdfunding. We are working to raise a full £8,000 that will pay for all the costs for 4 issues of the magazine.

We couldn't have dreamed about doing this without your support and those donations. You, and your family and friends can still donate anything you or they are able via our crowdfunding [www.spacehive.com/keeptheechoalive](http://www.spacehive.com/keeptheechoalive) or through the office. Thank you very much.

Many of you will have seen LLARC (Later Life Audio and Radio Co-operative) referred to in the magazine or Bulletin or *Older Voices* radio programme. It is an award-winning co-operative empowering older adults in the field of radio and broadcasting. It is a UK-wide network challenging ageism on the airwaves and we can say that *Older Voices* certainly does that.

None of the Older Voices team, apart from Steve (and that was just reading the news), had any experience of broadcasting and all have learned as they produced the programmes.



The Elders Council was fortunate as Dr Arlind Reuter, now researching gerontology at Lund University in Sweden, pioneered LLARC. In her post-graduate work, she spent time with the Older Voices team offering them support and ideas. Older Voices is a professional partner in LLARC.

We know that age is seen by many of the general public as dependency, deficit and sickness and it has become normalised. We know, as older people ourselves, that this just isn't true. Most older people well into their 80s and even 90s are relatively fit.



They have good functioning brains. We need to challenge ageism when we meet it (see page 20).

The OV team now do most of their recordings from home using Zoom. The photo is of Steve, Eddie and Halina from the Older Voices Team, paying close attention to the equipment.

There is a full article about this

that you can read using this link:

<https://tinyurl.com/2ntbaere>

---

## **We’ar Shining the Light**

At the beginning of February Anne Raffle and Mary Nicholls from Elders Council and Jane Buckton, Public Health Practitioner at Newcastle CC, visited Sunderland to meet with the people who created and publish, ‘We’ar Shining the Light’. The photos show some of the Sunderland team.

They don’t produce hard copies; you can only view this online here

<https://www.sunderland.gov.uk/article/28171/Local-news>

There were 164 ageing-well ambassadors and reporters recruited



during 2023 who then worked with ‘Yellow Jigsaw’, a media consultancy business. During the training period they met monthly, sometimes online and other times in person.

They learned a lot together, how to produce a newsletter; some media training; how to produce podcasts

and videos. Initially Jackie Nixon, Public Health Practitioner at Sunderland CC, edited the newsletter, but it has now been handed over to the reporters and they have a new editor.



The ageing-well ambassadors are recruited from over 55's in community organisations, as well as residents and local councillors. Their role is to act as voice everywhere they go, meetings, events wherever they might have an opportunity.

They meet every 6 weeks or so to keep up to date with any new message they might want to promote on behalf of older people.

The reporters have a different job. They decide on something that interests them then write about it. Scamming and Christmas with Jethro Tull at York Minster are two of the latest reports.

We took some of the EC material and they were especially interested in 'EC Rider' so perhaps one will be produced for 'We'ar Shining the Light' in the future.

It's all very new, a work in progress with a new editor and thoughts on where they hope to be in another year. We plan a reciprocal meeting later in the year so we will be sure to ask and report back.



## **Mary Nicholls and Anne Raffle**

---

### **Meet the EC at Kenton**

The drop-in planned to give people in the area some ideas about what the EC is and does took place on February 21 at Kenton Sports Centre in the community room.

It was a very busy room with tables of people chatting away as well as enjoying a light lunch of sandwiches, cake and fruit. There were plenty of examples of our work there with magazines, EC rider,



printed e-Bulletins and an advert from Steve Whitley for more people to join the OV radio team.

Clare and Tim spent time talking to groups about our work and encouraging those who expressed an interest to join as a member. Tim has been working in the area developing links and talking about how older people can get involved.

There were some established EC members there to help out with talking to people and asking what work the EC is currently working on. Photos were taken but they don't show the buzz in the room, just people sitting at tables! Photos can lie even if they haven't been photo-shopped.

We were able to welcome 8 new members by the end of the event. We hope they find us easy to meet and helpful if they wish to join a group or start any new group.

---

### **Broaden your horizons: summer outings with your bus and rail passes**

For many years, the Elders Council has produced *EC Rider*, which gives advice on day trips to interesting places using your bus and rail passes. Over those years, some members



have been very adventurous with a scenic bus tour to the Cumbrian coast and back or to North Yorkshire with a little help from a senior rail card. Others have found interesting places nearer home.

The Wellbeing for Life group at Jesmond Library discuss ideas from the experience of members, including advice on accessibility of the destinations and other places to visit. Go and join them to talk to experts and contribute your thoughts! They meet on the first Wednesday of every month at 10.30 a.m.

Bill Harbottle, author of *EC Rider*, was on *Older Voices 274* talking about trips out. The broadcast can be found by clicking the link.

[www.mixcloud.com/LLARC/older-voices-274-100324-getting-around-in-and-around-newcastle/](http://www.mixcloud.com/LLARC/older-voices-274-100324-getting-around-in-and-around-newcastle/) .

The next Jesmond Community Festival runs from **Saturday 4 May to Sunday 2 June**. There's more information on their website:

<https://jesmondcommunityfestival.co.uk/2020-event-guide/>

**EC Rider 2024 is out in June  
make sure to get your copy**

**Treading lightly on the earth**

I try to do my bit (however small) to tread a bit more lightly on the earth, so I was really disappointed to note the closure of Nil Living in the Grainger Market where I would regularly go to refill my shower gel, washing up liquid, laundry liquid etc. It takes a little bit of effort, but I was pleased not to be constantly buying new plastic bottles. I did a bit of research to find alternatives to Nil Living and have come across [Something Good – Something Good Newcastle Limited \(somethinggoodco.uk\)](http://somethinggoodco.uk), [NUCASA STORE \(@nucasastore\) • Instagram photos and videos](https://www.instagram.com/nucasastore), [Replenish by the Bay](http://replenishbythebay.com) and [Plastic-Free Shopping North Tyneside - Buy the Kilo \(buy-the-kilo.com\)](http://buy-the-kilo.com). I am gradually testing them out.

If you are happy to shop on-line, here are some options that have been recommended to me: [smol | planet-friendly home cleaning products \(smolproducts.com\)](http://smolproducts.com) for laundry and washing up liquids and [Sustainable Toilet Paper And Kitchen Roll | My Oceans](http://myoceans.com) for toilet paper and kitchen roll.



If you use any of these shops or know of any others, let us know so that we can share the information in our magazine.

Several years ago, I gave up owning a car. I wasn't using it very much and it was costing money and taking up parking space on the street. I decided that I would use public transport as much as I can (I am lucky as I have good bus routes) and rent a car when needed.

I joined Co-Wheels [www.co-wheels.co.uk](http://www.co-wheels.co.uk) which I use when I don't have the time to use public transport or it doesn't take me where I want to go. It's meant that I have changed my habits and I now think public transport first before resorting to booking a car. I am sure I have saved money too, although I haven't done the sums! Every little counts.

**Barbara Douglas**

## Care Coffee Morning

The Elders Council has been approached by Vinny Kennedy, an assistant professor and solicitor in the Law Department at Northumbria University. She wants to invite Elders Council members and supporters to a coffee morning to discuss help and support about care from the local council.

Some members of the Elders Council met with Vinny recently and are delighted that the Law Department is taking on a subject that is so important. We know it is so difficult to get reliable information. For example, did you know that:

- if you get assessed for care and support needs (in other words, a social worker or similar talks to you formally about any help you might need), a local authority is required, by law, to promote an individual's well-being.
- the law also states that local authorities need to take into account things such as: that the individual's wishes, feelings, views and beliefs need to be considered; and that the individual should be encouraged and supported to fully participate in decision-making.
- local authorities should take a *person-centred approach* to the provision of care and support. This means they ought to assess needs and then discuss with the individual how they will be met, not the other way round.



Some readers may remember that the Elders Council did a report a few years ago called *Managing the Home Care Circus*. This looked at what information might be useful if you are seeking care and support at home. We found out that the gap between the theory and reality is very wide indeed: there might be adult social care services but knowing where and how to access them is not easy and can be very confusing. So, we're pleased this coffee morning builds on the work the Elders Council has done over many years.

**Care Coffee Morning 10.30 to 12.30 on Wednesday 8 May  
At Northumbria University, City Campus East  
(just off New Bridge St.)**



Vinny told us she wants to ask older people what you think being “person-centred” means and how well-being could be better promoted. In return, you will get information about how care is paid for, either in a care home setting or in your own home. Your views and opinions will be anonymised but will contribute to research and the discussion about issues affecting older adults. This includes in articles for publication and conference papers.

Please contact Vinny who is looking forward to meeting you on [vinny.kennedy@northumbria.ac.uk](mailto:vinny.kennedy@northumbria.ac.uk) She will send you more information about this research and the purpose of the coffee morning so you can decide if you want to take part.

---

### **Moving Parts – Newcastle Puppetry Festival**

A team from the Elders Council helped to create puppets for the Kittiwake Parade that was held over Easter; we hope some of you saw it. They team cut, stuck and painted to create the puppets.



They made kittiwakes, cormorants, curlews and swallows. Moving

Parts Arts were the real movers and shakers, having the brilliant ideas, so that the volunteers who came to their workshop at the John Marley Centre could easily pick up the templates and the sticky tape and get stuck in! Here’s Barbara trying on the unpainted kittiwake head.

It wasn’t all hard work: there was tea (we can’t name all the varieties) and coffee and biscuits on tap and plenty to talk about, especially as friends not seen for a while arrived. Next time you see an opportunity like this, grasp it; you won’t regret it.

**Mary Nicholls**

## Seats in Newcastle city centre

Much of the seating in our city centre consists of simple slabs of wood or concrete that are low to the ground without a back or arms. These are not easy for many to use, and a lot of older people, and anyone who has difficulty sitting down or standing up unaided find them totally impossible. Insufficient seating provision is made for us.



As we know, the centre of Newcastle is currently undergoing major renovation works, and I have made frequent representations to the City Council urging them to include older person friendly seating whenever new seats are planned.

Consequently, I was not impressed to see these new seats in Saville Row. They appear to be hanging baskets. I'm sure they are great in Babylon, but are not suitable for older people in Newcastle! They are much too low, have no arms whatsoever, and the poles shown cannot be thought of as 'backs' for people to lean against. I was told that the designs would create spaces to: 'attract a wide range of people...'

I would suggest that people need somewhere to sit down while the children play, and for many parents and grandparents this is simply not possible.

Pictured here, the seating in Saville Row (the photo above) and an example of older person friendly seating in St Thomas' St.



If you would like to see more older people friendly seating in Newcastle city centre please contact The City Centre Transformation Programme Manager [jean.browne@newcastle.gov.uk](mailto:jean.browne@newcastle.gov.uk)

## John Telfer – Trustee

---

### Let's take a Stroll

I recently become a mobility scooter owner and I am discovering the pleasures and freedom, as well as the hazards and challenges this brings.

There is a commonality for those using scooters as well as those on foot. There are physical barriers that can exclude you such as buildings with no access for wheelchairs or prams; others with no ramps or handrails. It can make you anxious and frustrated.

There's the raised paving stone or pothole – a recipe for falls and fractured limbs.

The barriers created by people include: cars parked up on the pavement or blocking access points. Then what about articles left on the pavement such as orange scooters, children's toys, billboards and cafe furniture, overhanging or protruding bushes to name but a few.



Even more disturbing are bicycles and electric scooters being ridden often silently on our pavements. In my mobility scooter I have some protection but pedestrians have none.

As a final pick-me-up, for those of us fortunate enough to be going on holiday this year may I just add, railway companies and most airline companies offer free passenger assistance – an excellent asset to help keep you safe on your travels.

So, Bon Voyage and take care!

***Jenny Trew***

---

## **DiETING is out, protein is in!**

**by Dr Adrian Holliday, Sophie Barley and Lucy Moore,  
Newcastle University**

As we get older, we should focus less on what we shouldn't be eating and more on the foods we enjoy. Rather than being concerned with the newest way to lose weight, we should instead be thinking about the benefits to eating more.

Something that we should be eating plenty of is protein. Protein is important for all ages but becomes even more vital as we age. You might have noticed that you have less muscle than you did when you were younger and perhaps don't feel as strong. Losing muscle and strength as we age is normal.

However, slowing this rate of loss is possible with the right diet, and that involves eating enough protein.

Protein provides the building blocks and the stimulus to regenerate muscle. The most recent research evidence shows that older adults actually need more protein than younger people to achieve the same rate of muscle regeneration – nearly 50% more!

***So, let's get eating more protein...***

Most people eat enough protein with their evening meal. Good sources of protein include chicken, beef, milk, eggs, and tuna, and we can get protein from plant foods too, like lentils, chickpeas, nuts, and beans. We might eat a lot of these foods for our tea but tend not to have many at breakfast and lunch.



With some small tweaks, though, you can make a big difference. Why not try...

- Instead of toast and jam for breakfast, go for ham and egg on toast.
- Instead of cereal, opt for yogurt and granola with some added nuts and seeds. Better still, go for a high-protein yoghurt.
- For lunch, what about a chicken salad or tuna melt sandwich?
- If you often have a packet of crisps with your lunch, add some mixed nuts too.
- If this sounds like a lot of food, try having a glass of milk with your meals, or changing your morning cuppa for milk.

Whichever you try, eat what you enjoy and enjoy what you eat.

### **Healthy Ageing Event**

Hear what makes a healthy diet as you grow older and talk to the researchers. All are welcome. This will be followed by a healthy lunch (of course!)

**Date:** 14 June **Time:** 10.30 – 1.30 pm

**Venue:** Newcastle University (more detail later)

For more information or to book your place contact the EC

Phone: 0191 2072801

Email: [info@elderscouncil.org.uk](mailto:info@elderscouncil.org.uk)



## **Esther Salamon**

It was with great sadness that we learned of the death of Esther Salamon at the beginning of December 2023.

Esther was a trustee of the Elders Council (dates). She took a particular interest in housing and was on the steering group of our partnership project *Doorbells* with Skimstone Arts, Northumbria University and Care and Repair England.

Esther also represented the Elders Council on the national Housing Champions group and attended many events on our behalf.

Esther's creativity, energy and passion for social justice made her a very valuable member of the Elders Council. As a trustee, Esther took her responsibilities very seriously and was vigilant in making sure the organisation carried out its responsibilities well and effectively. In addition to her commitment to the Elders Council, Esther was the driving force behind *Independent Creative Living* ([independentcreativeliving.org.uk](http://independentcreativeliving.org.uk)) – a vision to develop affordable housing, primarily aimed at older “creatives” to enable them to age well in comfort and safety whilst continuing to contribute to their communities.

As tributes have flooded in from those she knew well to those who had only just met her, Esther's generous, insightful and creative spirit shines through. “It was a privilege to know her and I learnt so much about how to balance creativity and thinking outside the box, with rigour and sticking to your principles. Valuable lessons I will never forget.”

## **Barbara Douglas**

Absolutely loved that item about the wedding in November.  
All the best to both of them. Liz Scarff 31.01.24  
(Thanks Liz, your best wishes were passed on - Editor)





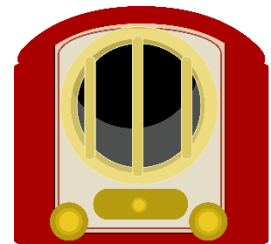
## Music, Music, Music

Each magazine this year has had a section on 'arts & culture' which is a broad label. Here it's music. We hope you enjoy the variety.

### Music and me

Being a child of the 60s my taste in music is quite eclectic. I started off listening to the wireless at the knee of my much older parents.

I liked comedy with music so The Goon Show, The Navy Lark and Life with the Lyons were particular favourites as well as Children's Favourites and Have a Go (who remembers Wilfred Pickles and his wife Mabel at the piano?).



Many of the programmes we listened to then would be banned these days for one reason or another but I remember that to us they were just good fun. My Mother only sang war songs (she remembered WW1) so I knew the words to them all despite being born a few years after WW2 ended.

From the age of about 6 to 14 I was in the school choir and we annually sang in competitions at the City Hall. I also sang in the Church choir and again at the City Hall for the Blaydon Races 100-year anniversary in 1962. However, at the age of 15 I discovered pop music, Juke Boxes and Radio Caroline and was hooked.

My favourite genres are Blues and Folk, and I have been lucky to see many old, and now departed, musicians in Newcastle over the years. I have a large box full of concert tickets and programmes which I occasionally reminisce over.

Despite all this I have a love for all types of music, including classical, and have a long-standing wish to go to a New Year's Concert in Vienna. There used to be a long waiting list but it's now the luck of the draw so I'd better put my name down...

Overall, music has been my lifeline and I choose what to listen to depending on how I feel at the time. I could not imagine a life without music and it is always on or available in our house.

**Anne Raffle**

## Pip, Irene and Rita

Three older people tell us about steel pans and how they came to play them. Pip first heard the infectious toe-tapping steel drums as a young woman and she loved it. Fast forward to the 2010s, and early retirement was near for her. Pip tells us what happened next.

“At the time, the Sage Gateshead was offering a music education programme for older people. I was delighted to read you could learn to play steel pans. It was a popular class and I had to wait a couple of terms before being able to join.

“The first session was daunting; it took me weeks to gain the confidence. But I was hooked; so much so, I persuaded a friend that she would love steel pans too and the two of us have been playing weekly ever since.

“We play with *Don't Panic* steel pan band. Although members have changed over the years, there is a nucleus of players who've been members for over 15 years. We have become good friends with differing interests but with a common goal: to become accomplished players.

“We play at events around the North East, including the Great North Run, and we've even travelled further afield to play, including a wedding in Cambridge!

“Turning up to rehearsals each week can become a challenge, especially during winter but the pull of steel pans far outweighs the inconvenience of the travel.

“After all this time I still feel a buzz when able to perform a new or particularly challenging piece of music. I appreciate that our tutor is confident that we can tackle difficult arrangements. There is the added bonus, too, of having made wonderful friends at the band and our rehearsals wouldn't be the same without meeting up for lunch before practice or coffee afterwards.”

This next bit is from the friend Pip persuaded to go along with her to those first sessions.



"From being young, I always wanted to play the drums! I used to annoy my friends, my teachers and anyone around me by constantly using two pencils to 'play' on the table. So, when my friend, Pip, told me she had joined a steel-pan beginner's group, I begged her to take me with her.

"I joined the beginner's group and later joined *Don't Panic*. I have loved being part of this group for the last 15 years. I enjoy the company of the others in the group and there's a whole age range and I like the challenge of mastering new pieces, but also love rattling off familiar favourites.

"Alongside that I at last got to play drums! I had lessons from Phil Davids at the Sage (now Glasshouse) as part of their 'Silver programme'. I now play drums weekly for another pan group; it's taken me 60 years or more to get those drums but I made it!

"As well as the obvious social benefits, I'm pretty sure that pans help my brain and coordination, which at 72 is a great help."

Rita could play a guitar and piano. She had tried out steel pans among the many instruments offered on courses for her teaching job.

She says, "I discovered through a friend that there was a class teaching steel



pans at Sage Gateshead. I loved it from the start and enjoyed the challenge of learning a new instrument and being part of a band. On retirement, I joined a second group *Don't Panic*, to learn a different pan, which certainly provides challenge and keeps the old brain active! We are still having fun playing today. I had worried that I might be bored when I retired but there's always something new and interesting to keep us busy and active."

---

## **Live Music in the King's Hall**

There's a very full programme of music that happens at the King's Hall in the city. The Live Music programme at Newcastle University includes lunchtime concerts and student performances, which are

free, un-ticketed, and open to everyone. Lunchtime concerts are usually on Thursdays (it's always wise to check before you go) and start promptly at 1.15pm, on a first-come-first-served basis. They last for between 45 and 60 minutes.



“Live in the King's Hall” lunchtime concerts are a mixture: sometimes, it's student performances or they can be a piano recital or some jazz, there's a whole range of musical genres. On other occasions it may well be a professional musician. There are other recitals too, all organised by the International Centre for Music Studies (ICMuS). All the concerts take place the King's Hall, Armstrong Building, Newcastle University, Newcastle, NE1 7RU. The Armstrong Building is opposite the RVI hospital, on Queen Victoria Road. Apart from some of the great music you may hear, King's Hall is a beautiful building and is used for prestige events like many graduation ceremonies. The building is accessible with accessible facilities and also houses the grand organ, seen in the photo.

The concert programme starts in September and ends in May, as the hall is then needed for graduation ceremonies. You could use your free bus pass into town, have an early lunch and then go onto a free concert. On a nice day, take a picnic and eat outside; there are plenty of seats.

The full details (about the concerts, accessing the building etc.) are on the University website <https://www.ncl.ac.uk/events/live-music/>

**Olivia Cameron**

---

### **Music and *Older Voices***

If you are invited to be a guest on the *Older Voices* radio show, you will be asked to think of a piece of music you would like to hear played on the show. Sometimes, it's entirely open to choose; but occasionally you might be asked to choose within the theme of the show.



The show always opens with 'The Sultans of swing' by Dire Straits, chosen by the communications team. There have been more than 250 shows and that means a lot of music has been played. The musical choices over that time show how completely eclectic we are; there's been skiffle from Lonnie Donegan, plenty of easy listening with the smooth voices of Frankie

Vaughan and Alfie Boe and naturally, Frank Sinatra. But there's also been rock, jazz, classical, spirituals, blues and American country, to name just a few musical genres.

As to the performers – well, some you would expect such as The Beatles, who are always going to be on a playlist of people who enjoyed the swinging sixties. However, there's also the wonderful voice of Nina Simone singing *Feeling good* and the beautiful sound of Emmylou Harris with *My songbird*.

Others include Gerry and the Pacemakers, *You'll never walk alone*, or a gospel choir setting feet tapping and hands clapping with *When the saints go marching in*.



Sometimes it's a piece of classical music; *The lark arising* by Vaughan Williams can bring tingles to your spine. The sounds of Vangelis in a mixture of instruments and electronic sound. Guests choose a whole lot of music.

What two pieces of music would you choose to hear if you were invited as a guest on *Older Voices* and why those two? You can let us know and we'll print a selection.

Contact details are on the back page.

---

## **Tuneless Choir Newcastle**

The Tuneless choir has been under the new management team of Debbie and Michael Gatens since the relaunch in April 2023. We meet on the first and third Tuesday of the month at Gosforth Parish Church Hall, 7pm - 8.30pm. Tuneless Choir is for people of all ages who love to sing but may not be able to sing in tune. Some of our choir members tell us that they have not passed auditions for other choirs or have been asked to leave once they start singing.





Others have family members asking them not to sing when the music comes on in the house or the car. But all are welcome at our choir!

There are no auditions, no parts, no judgement. We sing the songs projected onto the big screen, give ourselves a big round of applause and move on to the next song. We sing as if "no one is listening" and we definitely laugh as much as we sing - especially if a song doesn't go as well as it could!! We laugh and move on!

Some of our choir members come along with a friend or family member, and others come along by themselves. We appreciate how nervous people can be when they come along by themselves but our existing choir are extremely friendly and welcoming and people are soon talking to each other, making small friendship groups and sharing car lifts! It's a great way to meet new friends.

Singing releases endorphins – ("happy hormones") and our choir leave with a smile on their faces and a spring in their step.



Newcomers are always welcome. If you want to give it a go here's the contact details:

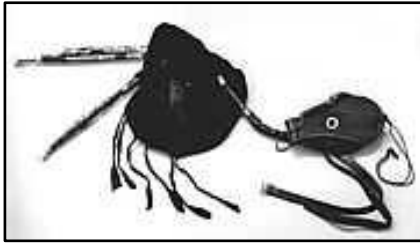
[newcastle@tunelesschoir.com](mailto:newcastle@tunelesschoir.com) or telephone 07905 303028

### Longframlington pipers

The Longframlington pipers are amateur players of the Northumbrian smallpipes. They hold a common view in wanting to learn to play and, most of all, to enjoy the unique gentle sound of the Northumbrian smallpipes.



The Northumbrian smallpipes are bellows-blown bagpipes from the North East of England. The pipes have a chanter with, typically, seven keys and usually four drones.



The chanter has a closed end and each of the notes is played by lifting only one finger at a time. This gives the Northumbrian smallpipes their distinctive sound.

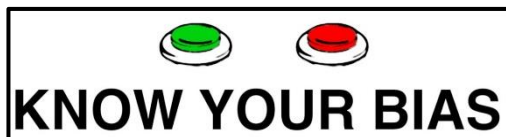
Meetings are held every Wednesday at 1.30 p.m. in the Memorial Hall, Rothbury Road, Longframlington, Northumberland, NE65 8AH. For players who do not have easy access to get to Longframlington, there is the option of joining by Zoom. Also, each Monday at 4.30, there is a Zoom-only session. The Zoom sessions include players in Europe and the USA as well as from around the UK.

The group caters for all levels of ability. It offers help to beginners and, when numbers allow it, more advanced players play together. There is always a "joint session", when everyone plays together, and the live session is followed by a chat, tea and cake!

All are welcome, including those who would just like to listen.

For more information contact: [susan@northumbriansandpiers.com](mailto:susan@northumbriansandpiers.com)

## Miscellaneous



This is an aspect of ageism that is difficult to challenge. People aren't setting out to offend as they aren't aware that their action or language is

ageist. Here Gill writes about her recent experience.

Craving a hot cup of coffee, I ended up in a city centre department store, hoping to relax and ease my sore feet after a morning's shopping.

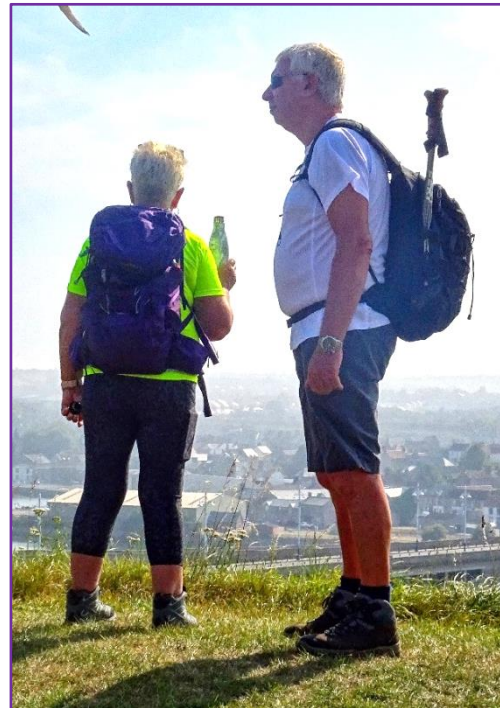
I reached the till, where the assistant tilted her head to one side – do you possibly recognise that look, and loudly mouthed a question about milk or cream, throwing in a patronizing "dear". Did she just assume my age meant I was hard of hearing and preferred to lip read and, therefore, would welcome a sympathetic head tilt? That I needed help with my order or had I forgotten the milk?

Next to me in the queue, a lively group, around the same age as me, was fresh from an invigorating walk through Chopwell Woods.

Despite their energetic chatter and animated laughter, they got the same tilted-head treatment. It seemed to dampen our collective spirit. I contemplated challenging the irritating assistant. But, it didn't seem worth it. It's so hard to make people aware of unconscious bias. I just vowed, under my breath, not to return.



Passing Newcastle University's King's Gate building on Percy Street on the way home, I noticed a window display under the tagline "Health and Ageing", featuring the tired cliché of wrinkled old hands. This just added to my annoyance, so I contacted the University,



questioning the need for such outdated, negative imagery. Why not show us older people enjoying outdoor activities such as the Park Runs, walking the dog, playing with the grandkids on the swings, enjoying a salsa class, socialising with friends, or on a trip to the theatre?

Their response? Website changes were underway, and my comments were noted. I took my concerns to a Professor at the University, who agreed these images missed the mark and suggested he take my comments to the relevant department for discussion.

But, months later, those clichéd photos still linger. Making Newcastle a great place in which to grow old? Let's start by ditching the stereotypical ageist images then – and make all of Newcastle's residents proud of growing older. What a privilege that is!

*A little update from Newcastle University: the whole area with the posters in the Kingsgate Building is going to be revamped in a couple of months and the posters will be removed. But, in the meantime, they remain in place.*

## **Gill Spoor**

Well done Gill for making your point and sticking with it - Editor

---

## **Keeping your cool**

It's bright and sunny outside today (February) but a cold 6 degrees. By the time this magazine reaches you, we're hoping to be enjoying much balmy weather with some warm sun on our faces.

Last summer we had some extraordinarily hot days when we were advised not to go out in the heat of the day. A timely reminder with how to enjoy the sun without losing our cool.



Here are AgeUK's recommendations for when you are out and about:

- ❖ Wear a sun hat and carry a bottle of water with you and take frequent sips from it.
- ❖ Wear light-coloured, lightweight cotton clothing if possible; it can help keep you cooler.
- ❖ Make sure any sunglasses you wear have a CE mark and UV40 label.
- ❖ Make sure you apply sun cream. You should use at least SPF 15 and apply it regularly.

When you are at home and it is very hot outside:

- ❖ keep the blinds down, the curtains closed and windows closed when it's cooler inside than out;
- ❖ put a damp cloth or a splash of water on the back of your neck, which can be better at cooling you down than a fan;
- ❖ try to eat more food that's cold and has a lot of water in it, like fruit or salad.

(Spring has been very wet- fingers crossed for summer!)

# Ways to Donate

Every penny counts! No matter how small, the Elders Council really values your donation.

Your donation will help us provide information to our members by printing and posting this magazine.

Each magazine costs about **£2.00** to print and post.

## **Direct payment**

Bank: Co-operative Bank Account name: Elders Council of Newcastle

Sort Code: 08-92-99

Account Number: 65079623

**Paypal** A quick and easy way to donate via our website  
<https://www.elderscouncil.org.uk/donate>

**Cheque** Post a cheque payable to the "The Elders Council of Newcastle" to the address on the back of this magazine.

**Cash** We also accept cash donations. Please ring the office to arrange collection.

**www.giveasyoulive.com** Log on to every time you shop online and nominate the Elders Council as your chosen charity. It costs you nothing and we receive a small percentage of the sale.

**Legacy** Some members have chosen to leave the Elders Council a legacy. By deciding to remember us in your will, you can really help the Elders Council to continue its work.

## **Gift Aid**

Let us know if you are a UK taxpayer and we'll send a Gift Aid form that you can sign and return to us. This allows us to claim gift aid from the government (there is no charge to you). You can also download the form from the donate page of our website.



# Magazine Information

## Magazine articles

Do you have a great article or an idea for one or an axe you want to grind for the next magazine? Then please send it to us by **Friday 7 June, 2024**, to us at [info@elderscouncil.org.uk](mailto:info@elderscouncil.org.uk) You may also post articles to us at the address below. Articles that are typed or word-processed are really appreciated but hand-written articles are fine.

**Please note the editor reserves the right to alter, adapt or change articles submitted to the magazine.**

## Contact details

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

Phone: 0191 208 2701

Email: [info@elderscouncil.org.uk](mailto:info@elderscouncil.org.uk)

Website: [www.elderscouncil.org.uk](http://www.elderscouncil.org.uk)

Registered Charity No. 1122424

## Magazine in other formats

We can make our Magazine available in alternative formats (e.g. in larger print or an audio CD). Please just let the office know what format you would like.

## Reminder

If you move, change your email address or telephone number, please let us know so that we can keep our records up to date.

**Photographs and images** Photographs and images are provided by Nick Lambert, the Elders Council and from Creative Commons unless otherwise credited.