

thevoice

Gateshead

Older People's Assembly

Your voice in Gateshead - Autumn 2008



Dear Member

So far this summer we have been very busy arranging and attending events throughout the Borough.



This can be very difficult at times without the support of our fantastic volunteers.

We are however,

always needing more people to help us with the work we need to do. **COULD YOU HELP?**

We are starting to plan our Annual General Meeting and hope it will have the same amount of success as last year.

Our theme for this is going to be “Recognising the contribution of Older People as Volunteers” Maybe YOU could be amongst those people who will receive an award.

You will be receiving information from us about the AGM very soon. We hope to have a very entertaining day.

I look forward to seeing you soon.

Best Wishes

Esther Ward - Chair



INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- News and information
- About services that affect you!
- Read about what happened in Leeds!



- New look members pages!



Become a member of Gateshead Older People's Assembly. It's Free! Fill in the form on the back of this newsletter

Access All Areas

We can make 'The Voice' available in a number of different formats, for example cassette, CD, large print or community languages. Get in touch with Chris or Kerry at the office, if you'd like to receive your newsletter in another format. You can contact them on **0191 438 1721** or pop into the office at 65 High Street, Felling.

This Newsletter was Produced with the Support of:

the
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 **Gateshead**
Council

Meet the Committee - Iris Dodds



How long have you been involved with the Assembly?

I became a member of the Forum in 2002. After that, I became a volunteer. Later on I became a Committee member. In 2007, the Forum changed it's name to Gateshead Older People's Assembly and I was elected Secretary.

What sort of things have you done?

I've helped with outreach work, recruiting new members. I've also represented the Forum at meetings. More recently, with some of the other members of the Committee, I helped to produce a survey, which was hard work but very rewarding.

How did you know what to do?

The members all help each other but the Assembly have also arranged for me to attend training sessions which have been a great help to me.

You've obviously done a lot. Has it been worthwhile?

Definitely! I've watched the Assembly grow and move premises several times. We have new offices at 65 High Street, Felling and the Assembly now has over 1700 members.

Taking part in events has given me great satisfaction. The meetings are relaxed and friendly. I have found my work with the Forum and the Assembly extremely enjoyable, interesting and rewarding and I have made many friends. I hope I have been an asset to them.

Thank you Iris, you certainly are an asset!

The International Day of Older Persons

The International Day of Older Persons will take place on 1st October 2008.

The main aims for the day are to:

- Celebrate the huge contribution older people make to our society and economy
- Create a positive view of later life and tackle outdated stereotypes
- Raise awareness of the opportunities and entitlements for older people across society
- Ensure older people don't feel excluded or isolated from the rest of society.

Gateshead Older People's Assembly Annual General Meeting

- **Wednesday, 1st October 2008**
- **Registration 10.15 a.m.**
- **Gateshead Masonic Hall, Alexandra Rd, Gateshead, NE8 4ED**

All members are welcome to attend the AGM and you should by now have received your invitations and nomination forms. (Many thanks to our volunteers who helped to get them all packaged and sent – a big task!)

It promises to be a great day, with guest speakers, entertainment and a delicious buffet lunch. Please let us know if you're coming along, so we can make sure that everything's in place. This is particularly important for catering purposes – and don't forget to let us know if you have any special dietary requirements.

This year we will be celebrating volunteers. Without volunteers, your Assembly and other

voluntary organisations would not exist – we are always keen to recruit more volunteers to continue the work and make our 'Voice' in Gateshead even louder, particularly as this is the Gateshead Year of Volunteers.

We will also be celebrating the International Day of Older Persons which coincides with our AGM. If you would like to attend but have difficulty in getting to the Masonic Hall, please contact us. We may be able to help.

Join Us! We need your help!

Gateshead Older People's Assembly is growing all the time and there is so much to do.

In the last few months, our volunteers have helped at events, encouraged new people to join and even made cups of tea. They've also taken part in focus groups, answered surveys and, importantly, helped prepare large post runs, including sending out this newsletter to almost 1,800 members.

As the Assembly grows, there are more and more roles for volunteers and we really need

your help. If you can spare any time at all, and would like to play a part in the increasing growth and success of Gateshead Older People's Assembly, please contact us.

You can telephone us on 0191 438 1721 or why not call into our office at 65 High Street, Felling. We'd love to meet you!



*If you were King or Queen for a day
how would you improve Gateshead?*



Local people are being given a unique opportunity to take part in decisions that will affect the long-term future of Gateshead.

Gateshead Council is drafting a Local Development Framework (LDF), that will set the pattern for the way the borough's land and buildings develop over the next 20 years.

The LDF will eventually replace the Council's Unitary Development Plan which currently sets out our policies and proposals for land use, transport and the environment forming the basis for the consideration of all planning applications.

Big plans for Gateshead

A key part of the process is to get people's views on where Gateshead wants to be in approximately 20 years time, asking big questions such as;

- ***How can we improve residents' quality of life?***
- ***What is unique or special about Gateshead and how can we make the best use of it?***
- ***How can we be a good place for modern business?***

Have your say

Efforts are now being made to consult as wide a variety of residents as possible, right across the borough giving them a chance to have a say if they were King or Queen of Gateshead for a day.

For more information contact the Spatial Development Team on 0191 433 3000 or write to us at: Spatial Development, D&E, Civic Centre, Regent Street, Gateshead, NE8 1HH.





The Pension Service - Local Service

Local Service is the Face of the Pension Service providing a visiting service for those customers in the 60+ age group.

They provide a variety of services, including:-

- Benefit checks to ensure that you're receiving all the benefits you're entitled to;
- Help with completing benefit application forms;
- Dealing with queries about benefits you are already receiving;
- Verify documents so you don't have to send them to the pension centre;
- Providing a bereavement visiting service to help customers with benefits at this difficult time;
- Undertaking appointee visits to assist customers when they become incapable of managing their own affairs.



They can visit customers in their own home and aim to arrange and complete any visit within 10 working days of receiving the request.

If you wish to make an appointment to see a Customer Liaison Manager,

**Please call The Pensions Local Service on:
Tel: 0191 5543140 or 0191 5543138
Text Phone: 0845 60 60 285**

P.S. The Pension service has now merged with the Disability and Carers Service and is now known as The Pensions Disability and Carers Service.

Just a call away

An Urgent Care Team has been set up in Gateshead which patients and carers can contact by telephone. They are available seven days a week, 24 hours a day. They are made up of highly-skilled nurses who will provide clinical assessment, treatment and ongoing support. They work closely with other health providers, local authorities and the voluntary sector.

Bev Atkinson, director of provider development for NHS South of Tyne and Wear, said: "Our urgent care strategy recognises the need to

give patients more choice about where they are treated by developing services closer to home. The urgent care teams are there particularly for patients who may not be able to access services due to mobility problems or because they feel too unwell to attend a walk-in centre or GP practice."

**The Gateshead team
can be contacted on
0790 8414 673.**

Source:
The Evening Chronicle



TOP GEAR - move over Lewis Hamilton, here come Marjorie & Betty!

This summer, the Assembly was invited to attend the Link-Age Plus Evaluation Conference in Leeds. We were delighted to attend, particularly when we found out that there was an indoor kart track

Pole Position

Committee members Betty Law and Marjorie Scott were keen to come along to the conference but hadn't really planned on karting. In fact, neither of them even have a driving licence but the temptation proved just too much.



First, they had to get into the right gear



Then it was the safety briefing



Round this track at speeds up to 45 mph in tiny karts!



Nothing to it!

Link Up

Link Up was the Gateshead arm of the national Link Age Plus pilot programme.

They were a great help with the development of the Assembly over the last two years, in addition to various other older person's projects in the Gateshead area.

The Link Age Plus pilot has now ended but it is hoped that the projects supported by Link Up will continue to go from strength to strength.

The Assembly certainly will!





Parkinson's Disease

There are more than 5,000 people living with Parkinson's disease in the North East of England.

Parkinson's is a progressive neurological disorder resulting from the loss of the chemical messenger dopamine within the brain and affects learned voluntary movements such as walking, talking, writing and swallowing.



As the condition progresses it impacts on all aspects of the person's life and the lives of those around them including their carers. There is currently no known cure, and it can often be difficult for people living with the condition to know where to turn for information and advice.

The Parkinson's Disease Society (PDS) has a strong network of branches and support groups across the UK.

The Society has local groups across the North East, including Gateshead, Newcastle and North Tyneside. Groups provide a place where people affected by Parkinson's can go for information, share experiences with others and take part in a range of social activities.

The PDS will be appointing a team of Information & Support Workers this year to provide local one-to-one support to people with Parkinson's and their carers across the North East.

For more information about Parkinson's disease, the PDS and its groups and events in the North East:

- ***visit www.parkinsons.org.uk***
- ***telephone the free, confidential PDS Helpline on 0808 800 0303, Mon to Fri 9.30am to 9pm, Sat 9.30am to 5.30pm***
- ***email: enquiries@parkinsons.org.uk***

The Shelter logo, featuring the word 'Shelter' in a red, sans-serif font inside a white rounded rectangle.

Shelter has launched a new Community Care Advice Service.

If you are finding it difficult to get the help and support you need speak to one of their advisers on 0844 515 1601. They don't provide care services but they might be able to help you get them.

Independent Age

Independent Age is a national charity which aims to promote independence and alleviate hardship by providing financial and practical assistance to those who are over 70.

They are looking for volunteers in the Gateshead area to go out and visit those they support

and offer friendship. This volunteering is not a weekly commitment and you could expect to visit approximately 6 people 3 or 4 times a year.

For further details:

Contact Kay White on 0191 2365039 or by **email:** kay.white@independentage.org.uk or www.independentage.org.uk

Elderly divide

THE poorest elderly people are more than twice as likely to die than the richest over a given period, a new study has found.

The English Longitudinal Study of Ageing (ELSA) found that among those previously interviewed in 2002-03, those in the poorest fifth of the population were more than twice as likely to have died by 2008 as those in the wealthiest fifth of the population.

Total wealth for the over 50s reportedly increased by 39% between 2002 and 2006, largely due to rises in house prices.

The study also found employment rates for people in their 50s and 60s were found to have risen in recent years.

Individuals were found to be less likely to leave full-time work if their partner was working, with men especially likely to continue working beyond state pension age if their partner was still in employment.

Meanwhile, those with the least education were least likely to work beyond state pension age and among working people aged 52 to 69, those with least wealth were also most likely to have onset of a work disability and to stop working.

Nexus

Nexus are introducing the Bridge Card to help anyone who may need additional support whilst travelling on buses.

If you have difficulty using public transport because of age, disability or illness or simply lack confidence, you can carry a Bridge Card. Simply show the card to transport staff and they will recognise that you may need extra help during your journey.

The Bridge Card is free, and you can get one from Nexus Travelshops, day centres and public libraries.

Pension Credit Rule Change (Backdated Payments)

Pension Credit guarantees everyone aged 60 and over an income of at least:

- **£124.05** a week if you are single
- **£189.35** a week if you have a partner

If you apply for Pension Credit and are eligible, you may be entitled to receive a payment backdated for up to 12 months from the day you were first entitled to the date you first applied.

From 6 October 2008, it is proposed to change this period from 12 months to three months. If you want to apply for more than three months in the past, please make sure you submit your application before 6 October 2008.

To apply for Pension Credit, you must be at least 60 or within four months of your 60th birthday.

It does not matter if your partner is under 60.

To apply for Pension Credit call 0800 99 1234

3 cheers for getting older!

In our last issue, we asked you to let us know what you thought were the 3 best and 3 worst things about getting older.

The members of the North East Adult School Organisation* discussed this at their recent meeting, following which Lillian Burns wrote to us on their behalf to say:

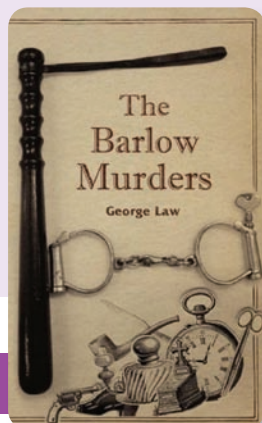
Best	Worst
Time to do what you want, when you want	Losing your partner
Free perks - bus pass, eye tests, TV licence, prescriptions, help with fuel bills	Aches and pains
Knowledge of life to pass on to others	Loss of energy and ability to do what you'd like to do

George has the Write Stuff!

"The Barlow Murders" is the debut novel of Assembly Committee member, George Law. It is set at the turn of the twentieth century in the (fictional) northern town of Barlow and follows the work of the local police force as they tackle murder the old-fashioned way.

George has also written several local history books, which are published by Gateshead Library – "Tales From Around the Felling", "More Tales From Around the Felling", "Tales From Around Tyneside" and "Tales From Around the North-East".

"The Barlow Murders" is published by Athena Press and costs £5.99.



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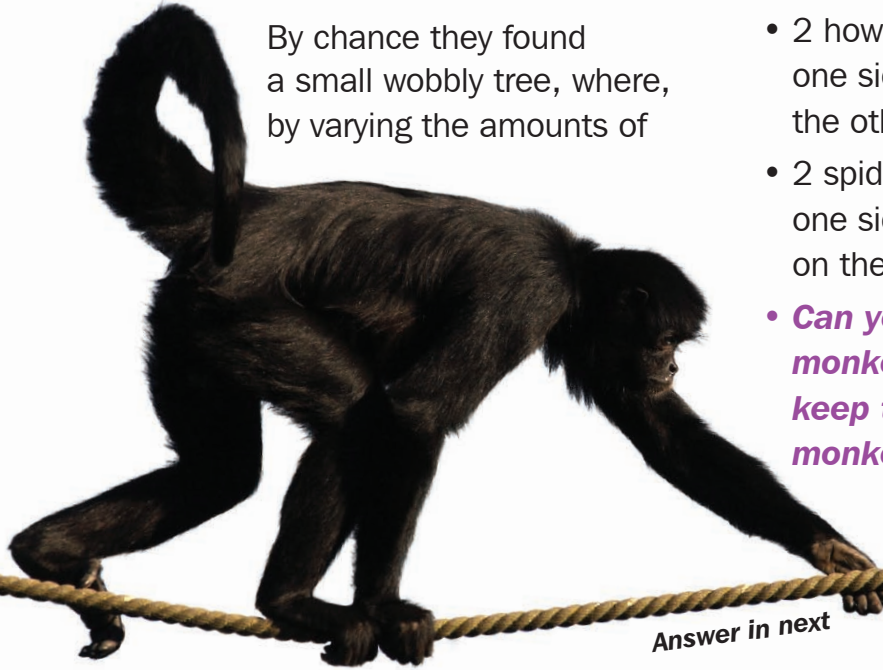


"I'm not stealing it. I'm moving it closer to my house"

Monkey Puzzle

Three types of monkeys were amusing themselves in the jungle. (**Monkeys of the same type weigh the same**)

By chance they found a small wobbly tree, where, by varying the amounts of



Answer in next issue or, if you can't wait, contact the Assembly

Autumn Fun

monkeys on each side they could keep the tree in an upright position.

They found out that:

- 2 howler monkeys and 1 squirrel monkey on one side balanced with 4 spider monkeys on the other side
- 2 spider monkeys and 1 squirrel monkey on one side balanced with 3 howler monkeys on the other side
- **Can you work out how many squirrel monkeys on one side it would take to keep the tree upright with 4 howler monkeys on the other side?**

Dingbats

Can you find the 3 familiar phrases hiding in these dingbats?

K
C
CLOCK
R
O

ONCE
TIME

SOMEWHERE
RAINBOW

The Last Word

A man to his friend:

"At my house I always say the last word".

His friend:

"What is the word?"

The man:

"I am sorry. Forgive me"



Let's Hear YOUR voice

Do you have any tips or advice to share, poems, stories, jokes or points of view?

Please contact us at our office:



Gateshead Older People's Assembly, 65 High Street, Felling, Gateshead, Tyne and Wear, NE10 9LU



Telephone: 0191 438 1721
Fax: 0191 469 6854



E-mail: admin.assembly@btconnect.com



This edition produced by Chris Barker

Gateshead Older People's Assembly Membership Form

Name: Mr/ Mrs/Ms:

Address:

Postcode:

Tel:

E-mail:

Signature:

What is your Ethnic Origin:

For monitoring purposes could you please complete the following

Please tick which age band you are in:

50-59 60-69 70-79 80-89 90+

Would you like to participate in any of the following?

Events Committee Office Focus

Other

Do you have any special requirements?

Vision Speech Hearing Mobility

Other

How did you find out about us?

Literature Event Word of mouth TV / Radio

Web / Other

Many thanks, please return form to:

Gateshead Older People's Assembly

65 High Street Felling, Gateshead, NE10 9LU. Tel: 0191 438 1721.