

# York Older People's Assembly

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Autumn 2018



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## CELEBRATIONS IN YORK

Pensioners from all over Yorkshire gathered in York on 6th September to celebrate ten years of the concessionary travel pass. Using their passes to travel to York they came from Barnsley in the west to Goole and Hull in the east to the rally in St. Sampson's Square.

Pictured is Barry Bothamley - Secretary of the local branch of the National Pensioners Convention and Rachel Maskell MP for York Centra who were both speakers at the event.

In York the free bus pass enables you to travel from 9 am in the morning, an improvement on the national scheme which starts at 9.30 a.m. The pass is linked to the State Retirement Age which in 2018 is 65 for both men and women rising to 66 from October 2020.

The benefits of the pass are:

- its Free!!
- you can travel the length and breadth of England
- it reduces loneliness amongst older people
- it keeps more older people fit and healthy



## BOOTHAM PARK - REPRIEVE



<sup>^</sup> Ruth Hill, Operations Director for Tees, Esk and Wear Valley Mental Health Trust.

Following the closure of Bootham Park, NHS Property Services were intending to sell it on the open market to the highest bidder.

Representations were made by the Assembly and Rachael Maskell MP for York for the NHS to put the sale on hold while other options were considered.

Residents are now being asked to have their say about the future. Advisers have been appointed to carry out a feasibility study with a report expected by November 2018.

The MP has been on record as part of her campaign for a partnership between "York Hospital and the Council to use the site to provide health care and affordable social housing for key NHS staff".

Others have suggested the site could become a Care Home focussed on delivering services for people with dementia.

In the meantime ground work has started on the new purpose-designed 72 bed hospital on a site off Haxby Road. Building work is expected to be completed in early 2020 said Ruth Hill - Operations Director for Tees, Esk and Wear Valley Mental Health Trust.

## FREE TV LICENCE

Just a reminder. If you are over 75 you are entitled to a free TV Licence - saving you £150.50 a year. However, it does not happen automatically! You need to apply to TV Licensing. It is a simple procedure.

- by phone - ring 0300 303 9690 and choose Option 4
- have your National insurance Number to hand
- if you previously paid by direct debit they will then notify your bank or building society to cancel it
- they will refund any over payment and transfer the money to your bank or building society

It has recently been announced that from June 2020 the responsibility for meeting the cost of the Licence will transfer from central government to the BBC. The BBC however have cast doubt as to whether they can continue to subsidise this service from existing revenue income.

The government made the decision to provide the Licence free in the first place to those over 75. It is scandalous that they should now try to dump this responsibility on the BBC. The Assembly has written to Rachael Maskell to take this up in Parliament.

## DEVELOPMENTS IN THE PIPELINE TO BENEFIT OLDER PEOPLE

The number of people aged 85 or older who need round the clock help will almost double in the next 20 years. In response to these demands the Council, Housing Associations and Private Sector Partners have developed an "Older Persons Accommodation Programme". Included are:

The creation of "New Lodge" in New Earswick by the Joseph Rowntree Housing Trust which is well underway. It will offer 105 one and two bedroom homes with "extra care" support, tailored to meet individual needs. The apartments (pictured) include:

- help with housework, shopping and meals
- a regularly reviewed personal support and care plan
- a wide range of activities to support a friendly and social community

Residents can also enjoy a new cafe, library, post office, and a range of social activities at the New Earswick Folk Hall linked to New Lodge by a covered pathway.

70 of the properties will be available to rent with 35 on a shared ownership basis. In addition, a new residential care home is included in the development offering 45 one bedrooomed apartments with high quality care, 24 hours per day. All the accommodation has been designed to be dementia friendly both inside and out.

Within York, the Council has recently approved a comprehensive development of the former Lowfield School site in Acomb, which has remained vacant for 11 years following the demolition of the former school. This will provide:

- a total of 165 homes of which 40% will be affordable - a mix of rented and low cost home ownership
- some of the homes will be developed specifically for older people
- a new residential home on site offering 80 bedrooms
- a new health centre development on the site.

These are early days and the scheme has only recently received approval from the Planning Committee.



# INFORMATION FAIRS LAUNCH 14TH ANNUAL FESTIVAL

With the Guildhall out of use, the Assembly decided to continue to use St Sampson's Centre and, by special request, a reopened Spurriergate Centre for "one day only". The venue was visited by the Lord Mayor and Civic Party who met the various stallholders.

In addition, local Information Fairs were held at Tang Hall Community Centre and the Gateway Centre in Acomb. A steady stream of older people joined us - motivated we suspect by the offer from Age (UK) York for "New Slippers for Old" and the opportunity for free toe nail cutting.



^ Civic Party



^ Spurriergate



^ Gateway Centre

## IMPROVED ACCESS TO GPs OVER WEEKENDS

Proposals recently agreed will create 3 sites in York where patients will have access to a Surgery from 6.30 pm. - 8 pm. every week day and with additional slots available at weekends and bank holidays.

Appointments will be pre-bookable by phone or by contacting NHS 111. The sites are:

- Cornlands Road Surgery
- Stonebow Surgery
- Huntington Surgery

It is hoped this extended access will be available from the autumn. Initially it will be limited to patients registered with:

- Haxby Group
- Priory Medical Group
- York Medical Group
- East Parade
- Old School
- Front Street

- Unity
- My Health
- Jorvik/Gillygate

A recent press article claimed to highlight the best and worst performing GP surgeries in the Vale of York. This arises from an annual GP Patient Survey of 30 Practices. Detailed examination showed that the conclusions reached are extremely suspect. The response rate to a questionnaire was only 2% of patients. It is quite wrong to generalise from such a small sample.

As an example, Unity Health was ranked 16th out of 30 practices yet it has been put in "special measures" by the Care Quality Commission "as inadequate".

Superficially the only broad conclusions that can be reached are that smaller practices appear to have better results than larger practices.

## OVER 65's HOLD PROPERTY KEY?

The over 65's hold the key to unlocking the housing crisis and increasing younger people's chances of getting on the housing ladder. So says McCarthy Stone, having just completed a new development at Cardinal Court in Bishophill.

With over 81% of older people in York owning their own homes, the shortage of suitable property to allow them to downsize, if they want to, is a major challenge. But with a sale price in excess of £360,000.00 at Cardinal Court, this can only appeal to a minority.

# "BE INDEPENDENT" TRANSFERS BACK TO COUNCIL

4 years ago, the Community Alarm and Equipment Service was transferred to a non-profit making independent organisation. The hope was the number of users of the service would increase given the freedom to operate independently. Regrettably this has not happened with the number of individual users of the service falling from 2878 when the scheme was transferred to 2448 now.

However existing users of the service will continue to receive the high standards expected in the past. The value of the service cannot be over stated. Each month the Control

Room receives up to 9000 calls of which 650 needed re-assurance over the phone because of anxiety. In nearly 200 cases older people had fallen in their own home and received a personal visit from a member of staff.

The population in York of those over 75 is expected to rise from 17,200 by over 50% in the next 15 years to 25,800. Many of those will be living alone and the knowledge that help is only a phone call away is reassuring. The Assembly believes this is great value for money.

## CITY SCREEN

For those over 60 you can join the Silver Screen Club for free and enjoy discounted tickets at £6.40 for any film before 5pm on a Thursday. You can also enjoy free tea or filter coffee and biscuits.

**Picture  
house**  
York  
**CITYscreen**



The outreach service brings information and advice directly to your local area where a team of friendly staff and volunteers will be on hand to provide help with any sight or hearing problem that may be affecting you, a family member or friend.

### Where & When

To find out where the service will be next, please contact the **YOR|SENSORY** team on **01904202292**

### What

If you have been newly registered with a Certificate of Visual Impairment you will probably have questions.

You may have a hearing loss and have questions about equipment and services. We have specialist sight loss and hearing loss knowledge.

The sensory van offers a chance to speak with professionals who can offer further help and advice around things like benefits and daily life.



49 North Moor Road, Huntington, York YO32 9QN, 01904 202292, [www.yorsensory.org.uk](http://www.yorsensory.org.uk)

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Wishes**  
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