

York Older People's Assembly
Unit 24, SPARK: YORK
17-21 Piccadilly, York YO1 9PB

Registered Charity 1101018

Email: yorkolderpeoplesassembly@outlook.com

Winter 2020



Tel: 01904 412832

Website: www.yorkassembly.org.uk

HAPPY CHRISTMAS & A VIRUS FREE NEW YEAR

VACCINE ON THE WAY!!

The development of a Coronavirus vaccine which promises some immunisation, may be possible before Christmas.

The results of tests showed it to be 90% effective and Britain has pre-ordered over 100 million doses of which 10 million may be available this year.

Britain's Deputy Chief Medical Officer Professor Van-Tam said older people would be first in line for the vaccination. "Far and away age is the biggest priority for people who most need the vaccine. You can expect a theme of increasing age being the highest priority".

The recommendations are to prioritise those in care homes, followed by people aged 80 and over as well as health and social care workers. Next are those over 75 and then over 70.

The Assembly says "bring it on" as quickly as possible. Saving more lives is crucial when over 55,000 have already died in Britain because of the epidemic.



NEW CARE HOME IN BURNHOLME

As part of the comprehensive redevelopment of the old Burnholme School site, an 80-bedroom care home named Mossdale is due for occupation in January 2021. The scheme will be managed by HC-One (HC stands for Health and Care). They are Britain's largest care home operator with 329 properties across the country. 25% of the beds in the development are reserved for nominations from the Council.

The scheme will meet the needs of those requiring nursing and/or residential care and those with dementia. The scheme has been developed around a central courtyard garden and is adjacent to the new library/cafe and community centre.



INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR OLDER PEOPLE

OCTOBER 1ST

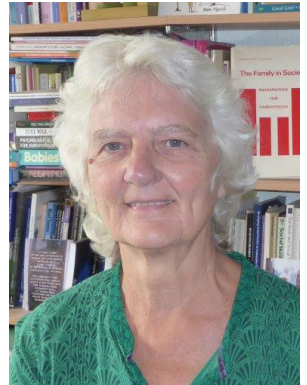
We normally celebrate this day by incorporating an event into the Festival Programme held in the Autumn. Because of the Coronavirus the Festival could not go ahead. Instead the Assembly organised a “Zoom” session and invited 4 speakers to contribute. A summary of their presentations is included below.

YORK HUMAN RIGHTS NETWORK

– Marilyn Crawshaw

Marilyn highlighted the effects on older people of the pandemic including

- concerns about differential death rates from Covid between young and old and the way older people were moved out of hospitals to care homes with no prior testing
- the governments blanket approach to anyone over 70 – labelling them all as vulnerable
- the very use of the term “vulnerable” created a charge of stigmatizing older people
- care homes having little knowledge of human rights and Public Health refusing to publish information on Covid-19 cases occurring in homes.
- preventing loved ones having access to residents in care homes
- reliance on technology to communicate during the lock down despite the fact that many older people do not have access to email.



“MYSIGHT-YORK” *(formally York Blind and Partially Sighted Society)*

– Sally Chignell

Sally drew attention to the effects of the pandemic on blind and partially sighted members

- the inability to use a sighted guide – in accordance with Government guidance preventing shopping.
- unable to use a guide dog during the lock down
- unable to visit libraries to collect audio books.
- lack of contact with neighbours and friends to help with practical tasks about the home.



MySight-York has therefore introduced “Keeping in Touch” - a regular phone call to members highlighting areas of concern and relieving isolation.

“Socialise” - whereby a group of friends can meet via a computer, phone or face to face (socially distanced of course) to share ideas and provide mutual support.

OLDER CITIZENS ADVOCACY YORK – (OCAY)

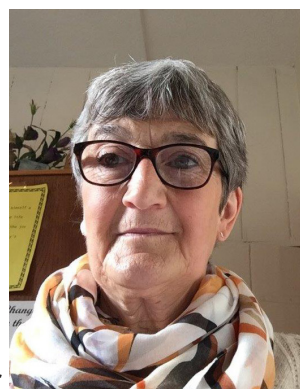
From the 19th March OCAY moved from face to face delivery of services to a service by telephone. In the past 6 months 155 older people have sought advice and help with an increase in the number involving Housing Issues and Financial Support.

Volunteers have been supported through “Zoom Peer Support” sessions and training has been provided for those unfamiliar with Zoom.

So, the final message is that OCAY is still open and can be contacted:

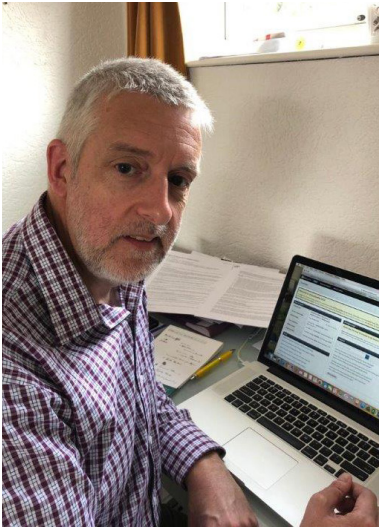
by phone on 01904 676200 or info@ocay.org.uk

Ruth Potter Charity Manager



ONLINE - OUR CHOICE

Paul Vittles - Age (UK) York



Paul summarized the problems of “digital exclusion” and the ways we can move forward to achieve “digital inclusion”.

It is estimated that 15,000 York Residents are not on-line, most of these being older people. One in six 65-74 year olds do not have access to the internet rising to 40% of those aged 75+.

A Covid-19 emergency fund has been established administered by the council which provides equipment and support for those without a mobile phone, internet access or laptops. The equipment will be provided free of charge – subject to financial checks – but the free internet package part is limited to 3 months.

In respect of laptops the main focus will be re-using existing equipment which has been donated via Age (UK) York and held by the Community Furniture Store. They undertake a “tech check and wipe” for security. The equipment will be made available with appropriate training support and reassurance. Age (UK) York have published a guide for potential donors to follow.

Whether we like it or not technology will play an increasing part in all our lives. The Assembly will encourage as many older people as possible to benefit from these changes. During the current crisis “online is now a lifeline”.

MASKS ON BUSES

Many members have queried what action can be taken when a minority of bus users still abuse the requirement to wear a mask. In particular, can a driver refuse to let a passenger board if they are not wearing a mask? First York have advised “it is your legal requirement to wear a face covering when travelling on public transport unless you have an exemption. The driver cannot enforce this, but you may be liable to a fixed penalty notice of £100 if you refuse”.

VISITS TO CARE HOMES DURING LOCKDOWN

Many residents living in care homes have not seen their loved ones in the same room since March. For many residents these visits have provided vital personal care, helping them to eat, wash and keep mobile. But more than that, it provides an opportunity to connect people to their memories and life outside the care home and prevent them feeling isolated and alone.

In a last-minute U turn, the Health Secretary, Matt Hancock has finally bowed to pressure from residents, relatives and charities to let residents receive visits in a “Covid-safe way” using social distancing and protective equipment.

The draft guidance however, does not go far enough. The Assembly believes designated family members should be given “keyworker” status allowing them to be regularly tested like staff working in the care home and to have personal contact with the care home resident.

Visits at windows, outdoors or through screens is not enough.



BE INDEPENDENT

This service, which provides reassurance and home visiting where necessary, grew out of the “Warden Call” service established some 30 years ago. They are now expanding the choices available well beyond the “pendant” or wristwatch which many will be aware of. Set out below is a brief description of the alternatives to help you remain independent in your own home.



be independent.

community equipment and response service

Kerry Mainprize / Assistive Technology Review Manager
e:be.independent@york.gov.uk
tel:01904 645000



Assistive Technology

Providing innovative technology and solutions for living as independently as possible.

“People have enriched lives within their own communities through a choice of technology and support”



GrandCARE

A large touchscreen which can provide activity and health monitoring, medication prompts, as well as easy communication. No computer skills are needed for the resident to fully engage in all of the touchscreen features.

GPS Tracking Watch

Sim card pre installed, single button help request. Tracking profile with automatic location alarms

Safe zone can be personalised which sends alerts to nominated responder (family, carer, health professional) if the user travels beyond the designated safety zone. Two way speech module built in, allowing quick easy access to help whenever, wherever you are.

Brain In Hand

Designed to alleviate anxiety that can arise from day to day activities and aids in solving problems for yourself.

Solve problems more independently;
Cope with change and new settings;
Manage anxiety and develop confidence;
Remember things and organise your time;
Take part in more activities and opportunities.

If you are interested in discussing the suitability of any of the products, please phone 01904 645000 to find out more.

HERE TODAY GONE TOMORROW

We understand that Sharon Houlden (*right*) who joined the Council as Director of Health, Housing and Adult Social Care as recently as Spring of 2019 has already left to join another Council in the South of England. This shows real commitment to the City!



CONFUSION REIGNS

City of York Council have been issuing a “Residents Update” since the coronavirus epidemic occurred. A recent edition contained the following:

- People should only travel for essential reasons
- You can still go on holiday outside your area.

Do as you like then!! Every day is a holiday for those of us who are retired!