

York Older People's Assembly

Unit 24, SPARK: YORK

17-21 Piccadilly, York YO1 9PB

Registered Charity 1101018

Email: yorkolderpeoplesassembly@outlook.com

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Tel: 01904 412832

Website: www.yorkassembly.org.uk

COVID ROUND UP

The government have recently announced that Covid Vaccinations will be made compulsory for all staff working in Care Homes for older people. Staff must be vaccinated within 16 weeks or be redeployed away from contact with residents or face losing their jobs. Whilst persuasion is to be preferred the safety of residents is paramount. With over 40,000 residents dying from Covid this change is long overdue. Two doses will be obligatory for anyone who provides nursing or personal care. Workmen, visiting NHS staff and hairdressers must also be double jabbed, but visiting family and friends will be exempt.

Age (UK) have contacted over 40,000 older people to understand what their priorities are coming out of the pandemic. In rank order they are:

- ◆ Timely access to health care
- ◆ High quality social care
- ◆ Enough money
- ◆ Support to end loneliness



In the answers about access to health care particular concerns related to delayed treatment at hospitals, the move to telephone appointments and difficulty in contacting their GP. These concerns have been shared with NHS England and the Government.

On a more positive note, the requirement that any Care Home resident must self isolate for 14 days if they go outside the home for a visit has been scrapped.

PAYING FOR SOCIAL CARE

The Prime Minister's first pledge made on the steps of Downing Street in May 2019 was to "fix the crisis in Social Care once and for all", including a promise that no one need to sell their home to pay for care.

Yet in the Queen's Speech in May 2021 nearly two years later, there was just a single line which said "proposals to reform social care will be brought forward".

What has made the delay even worse was that the assets needed for people to pay the full cost of their social care have not changed over 10 years. So if you have assets, including the value of your house, exceeds £23,250 you pay the full cost of care. Had that threshold risen in line with inflation this would have been £30,486. Only if your assets are less than £14,250 will your costs be met by the state and paid through your local council.

The Dept of Health and Social Care said "we are committed to bringing forward a plan for social care reform this year to ensure everyone is treated with dignity and respect".

CARE HOMES UPDATE

Oakhaven: It is understood that this former council elderly persons home in Acomb, which has stood empty for over 5 years will be sold to Burlington Care Homes based in Bridlington. It is also understood that many of Burlington's existing homes have been rated "requires improvement" by the Care Quality Commission, the independent body charged with assessing the suitability of elderly persons accommodation. Not a good recommendation for a new scheme!!



Haxby Hall: Plans have been approved to modernise and extend the existing Council elderly persons home to provide 65 en-suite bedrooms including 18 specifically for those living with dementia. A new restaurant and bar, a hairdressing salon and a home cinema will enhance the existing services provided. The development will be undertaken by Yorkcare who will also take over the management of the scheme. They are an award winning care

home provider based in East Yorkshire. Three of their existing homes are rated as "outstanding" by the Care Quality Commission and the organisation is one of the highest rated care providers nationally.

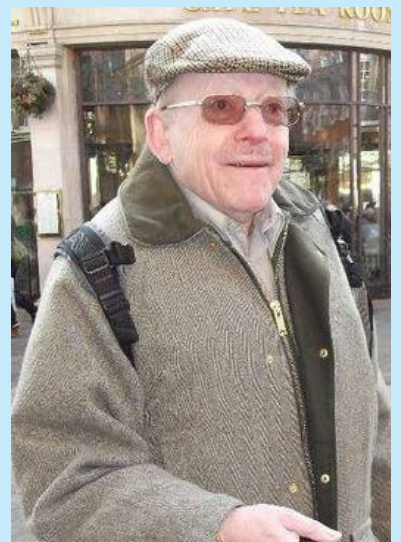
Minster Grange: This private care home in Haxby Road has been put "into special measures" by the Care Quality Commission following a string of failings. This included shortage of staff, non answering of phones, lack of variety of meals and lack of procedures for those required to self-isolate.



PETER SCOTT – LAST WORD

Peter died aged 75 on the 25th April. He was a staunch supporter of the Assembly, regularly attending our Open Meetings and may be remembered as the "man with the microphone" enticing those attending to make their contribution to the discussion. He was a retired Civil Engineering Technician on the railways and often used "railway speak" in conversation. So, if you asked him the time he would reply "the 10:41 to Kings Cross should be leaving York Station".

He was an active member of the Transport Salaried Staff Association for over 50 years. He was much involved in the church as a sidesman at All Saints, Pavement. He was also well known at Poppleton Road School where he was an active friend. A great loss.



HAMMER TO CRACK A NUT

The Queen's Speech announced that in future all electors will have to present valid photo identification at the point of voting. Ministers have yet to set out how it will work in practice or when it will begin.



For those who do not possess the necessary photo identification they can apply to their Council for a “free voter card”. How that would be different to the existing poll card we already receive is not clear. Such a scheme is already in operation in Northern Ireland.

In 2019 there was only one person convicted of voter fraud in the entire UK. It was to a man who had voted twice in the European Elections. Hardly a justification for creating another set of bureaucratic rules which are more likely to affect older or disabled people who are less likely to have the necessary photo identification e.g. passports etc.

ON THE BUSES

York Bus Forum has listed its priorities for consideration by the Council as part of York Bus Service Improvement Plan. Graham Collett, an active Assembly member, is Vice Chairman of the Forum and shared the submission with us. The top priority is: “A modern (less than 5 years old), low emission, fully accessible (with easy wheelchair and pram access) bus fleet with audible and visual stop alerts by Summer 2022, progressing to a zero carbon fleet by 2030”.



In the short term the new electric buses on Askham Bar (Route 3), Designer Outlet Route 7) and Monks Cross (route 9) all have audible and visual stop alerts fitted. Representations by the Assembly over a number of years is clearly influencing future decisions.

NHS PLAN TO SHARE PATIENTS' DETAILS – DELAYED

From July 1st NHS Digital was due to collect information stored on family doctors' systems on the treatment, referrals to hospital and appointments people have made in the last 10 years. It would include details of their mental health, drugs taken and diagnostic tests undertaken. The date for this action has been put back to the 1st September.

Patients have received no information on how this information would be used and by whom. The website claims that the data collected and held centrally would be anonymised but says “we sometimes share it with other organisations so that they can use it to improve everyone's health and social care”. The website also says “sometimes we allow the use of data that could identify you”.

The Assembly believes that the crux of GP relationships relies on trust, transparency and honesty. We believe this could be compromised. Dr. McGregor, Chair with of the local medical committee, warned “that the information could be used by insurance companies to raise premiums”.

You have the right to opt out of these arrangements called “GP Data for Planning and Research” (GPDPR), by writing directly to your GP, or there is a helpline on 0300-303-5678 if you require further information.

NEW EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT AT YORK HOSPITAL

A multi-million pound investment at York Hospital will create a brand new two storey extension and 8 bed resuscitation area to increase capacity and improve care for patients.

Work is due to start shortly on the £15 million project, which will also deliver improvements in the waiting room, consultation and treatment areas. It will provide 12 new discreet cubicles for rapid assessments to take place. The new remodelled waiting area will include a separate area for children, with nappy changing facilities.



INTERNET USE BY PEOPLE AGED 75 HAS ALMOST DOUBLED

The proportion of people 75 and over using the internet has nearly doubled in the past 7 years. Figures from the Office for National Statistics show that the number of older people going online has shot up from 29% in 2013 to 54% in 2020.



However, in York it is estimated 15,000 residents are not online, most of these being older people. One in six of those 65-74 do not have access to the internet rising to 40% for those 75+.

The Community Furniture Store and Changing Lives received a grant to provide access to IT equipment donated by businesses and the general public. The aim is to help eliminate digital exclusion – not just during the pandemic – but for good. Already 70 pieces of equipment have been provided free of charge to satisfied customers.

Individuals must apply through a community support worker for a laptop, tablet or desktop. If you do not have a support worker then contact Age (UK) York tel 01904 627995 for assistance.

THE SHAME OF BEING SCAMMED!

A resident of York has shared their experience of being scammed and is happy to make it known more widely to avoid the mistakes made.

“In March 2020 I was contacted out of the blue, both by phone and on the web resulting in losing over £8000. The call was from “Amazon” claiming I had subscribed to Amazon Prime services and I was entitled to a refund. This duly appeared on my online bank account but only subsequently did it emerge that a larger sum had been transferred from my own deposit account”. If you would like a copy of the whole story – contact the office, in the meantime be wary if:

- ◆ you have been contacted out of the blue
- ◆ you are being offered something that sounds too good to be true
- ◆ you have been asked for personal or financial details
- ◆ you are being pressured into making a decision
- ◆ you are being asked to keep the offer a secret
- ◆ the contact details are vague
- ◆ there are spelling and grammar mistakes in the writing

