

York Older People's Assembly

St Sampson's Centre

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ALL CHANGE AT THE COUNCIL

Following the local elections on May 4th, Labour has taken control of the City of Council from the coalition of Liberal Democrat and Greens. Changes are shown below:

Party	Councillors Pre May	Councillors Post May
Liberal Democrats	21	19
Labour	17	24
Conservatives	2	3
Green	3	0
Independents	4	1
TOTAL	47	47

Although Labour won an extra 7 seats on the Council, they only have a majority of 1 over all other parties.

Councillor Claire Douglas (pictured) becomes the first woman to lead the Council and said her early priorities were:

- Ensuring full access for all to the City Centre – reversing the blue badge ban.
- Ensuring all primary school children get a free school meal.
- Tackling the shortfall of affordable housing in the city



A BIG THANK YOU TO HARRY PUNTER

Whilst an increasing number of members receive our newsletter electronically, YOPA relies on volunteers to deliver it in paper form.

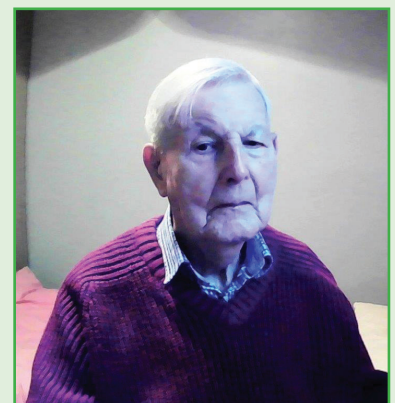
A special thank you in this edition is to Harry Punter who has recently celebrated his 90th birthday and together with his wife Susanne delivers all the newsletters in Strensall.

Harry was born in 1933, left school at 14, and worked for de Havilland aircraft company in Hatfield, Hertfordshire until he retired in 1992. During that period, he worked in Sydney, Australia and on the Airbus in Toulouse.

He became a magistrate in Hatfield and in 1998 on moving to York became a magistrate on the York Bench.

He has been undertaking voluntary work all his life, joining York Older People's Assembly when it was formed in the 2001. He has been room steward, both at the Treasurer's House and Fairfax House and a guide with the Association of Voluntary Guides in York, where he still works on the Information Desk one day a week.

Shakespeare was quite right "Age cannot wither them nor custom stale their infinite variety".





HOSPITAL WAITS REDUCED

York Health Trust has reduced the number of patients waiting over 18 months for treatment from 692 at its peak to 192 in April 2023. These are not “routine appointments” but very complex cases. Some progress – but much still to do.

ENERGY BILLS – SAVINGS AND HEATING COSTS

Because of the escalating fuel costs in recent times, the Government introduced a limit on the amount you can be charged for gas and electricity, which has been extended to the end of June 2023. The average household cap was set at £2,500 a year and from the 1st of July to 30th September 2023, this will reduce to £2,074.

Additionally, most homes automatically received a £400 discount on their energy bills between October 2022 and March of this year. Other measures you can take to lower your bills include:

- reduce boiler flow temperature to save up to £100 a year
- turn appliances off at the socket to save up to £70 a year
- install an energy efficient shower to save up to £55 per year
- wash clothes at a lower temperature at i.e. 30 degrees to save up to £40 a year
- switch to energy saving light bulbs to save up to £55 a year

A TRIBUTE TO THE ASSEMBLY

It was rewarding to receive an email from Martin Biggs, one of our members, who wrote *“I am just writing to say how useful I found the latest Spring Newsletter, full of useful and interesting information. Many thanks indeed”*.

INFORMATION FAIR THURSDAY 13TH JULY 10AM – 1PM

The Assembly has organised an Information Fair at Bishopthorpe Village Hall, Main Street, Bishopthorpe YO23 2RA. Information stalls and representatives from services that support older people in York will be attending. You will be very welcome, do bring a friend!

IVY LODGE – CARE HOME HAXBY

The scheme has recently been rated as “outstanding” by the Care Quality Commission and out 1413 homes in Yorkshire and the Humber is one of the top 20 in the area. Ivy Lodge’s philosophy is “that care is focussed on making residents feel at home not in a care home”.

Ivy Lodge has recently received the award from the U.K’s leading review guide



HEALTHWATCH – YOUR HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE CHAMPIONS



Healthwatch is an independent organisation making sure NHS leaders and other decision makers hear your voice and use feedback to improve care.

They are launching a survey to find out people’s experience of Urgent Care Services in the York area. They want to understand what is working and what is not about urgent treatment including GP out of hours services and urgent treatment services but NOT A & E and 999 services. All information gathered will be anonymous with a report giving recommendations for improvement.

Sian Balsam – Healthwatch Manager (pictured) said “we want to hear from as many people as possible” it will be helpful if anyone in receipt of this newsletter who has direct experience could contact Healthwatch as suggested below.

The closing date is July 14th. Copies can be obtained from Healthwatch at Priory Street or by phoning 01904 621133.

BOOTHAM PARK HOSPITAL

We reported in the last newsletter that imaginative proposals from “Enterprise Retirement Living” to transform the former hospital into an “Extra Care Scheme” for older people had received support from the Assembly.

We have now been informed that the scheme has fallen through, due to it not being financially viable. We await further news.



CARE HOMES PET VISIT

Barchester’s Ouse View Care Home in Fulford were delighted to welcome a therapy pet on a special visit. The chocolate labrador named Bruno received much attention from residents who enjoyed petting him as well as asking many questions about working with dogs from the dog handler from “Pets as Therapy”.



CENSUS DATA REVEALS THOSE WITHOUT CENTRAL HEATING

Out of over 12,000 people in York over the age of 65 and above, 243 have no central heating at all, with potentially severe consequences for their health and well-being.

Perhaps the new Council, with one of its priorities the state of housing in the city, could attempt to identify those older people who lack central heating and help address the problem as well as finding suitable alternatives.

The simple message is *Keep Well – Keep Warm.*

AGEING WITHOUT CHILDREN (AWOC)

AWOC is for all those who have never been able to have children, whose children have died or moved away or never wanted children. The question is “who will speak up for me and lend a hand when I can no longer cope on my own?”.

AWOC has regular socials and invited speakers provide an opportunity to share experiences. Contact Sue Lister on 01904 488870 for more details.

CELEBRITIES SEEK COMMISSIONER FOR AGEING

The charity “Independent Age” is launching a campaign for the appointment of a Commissioner for Older People and Ageing.

Radio 2 veteran Tony Blackburn aged 80 expressed his concern with the cost-of-living crisis and the price of electricity in particular. He said, “I have been really moved watching the news and seeing older people not been able to heat their homes and sitting there with blankets around them. It really shouldn’t be like that in a country that is one of the most prosperous in the world”.

He is joined by Sir Geoff Hurst aged 81 and Selwyn Pattison from the detective series “Death in Paradise” amongst others.

Similar appointments already exist in Wales and Northern Ireland. Hopefully the new Council in York will appoint “an older person’s champion” to take forward similar issues raised locally.

CHANGE OF OFFICE LOCATION

The Assembly is leaving its office base at SPARK, to relocate to the city centre. Some of you may have noticed the change of venue from the heading on this newsletter.

From the end of June, we will be based at the **St Sampson’s Centre, Church Street, York, YO1 8BE.**

The phone number has also changed and is now **07965 246193.**

It will be invaluable to join with another charity working for older people in York. The office is staffed on Monday and Thursday mornings only.

KEY CONTACT AT THE COUNCIL

Councillor Jo Coles (pictured), who represents Westfield ward has been appointed as the lead member for “Health, Wellbeing and Adult Social Care”. In particular, she will be responsible for services to Older People including residential homes, respite and home care amongst other duties.

She said “I want to see the Council taking a more public health centred approach to how we make decisions and develop wider policy changes which help to make the city fairer. Because at the moment, across the city 83% of residents are in good health, with 17% saying they have some limitation in day-to-day activities. But the numbers in poor health vary significantly across the city – as do other health indicators.

It is not okay that man in Westfield ward will live 10 years less than a man 3 miles down the road and a woman who lives next door to him, will live 8 years less than a woman she sits next to on the bus.

Vulnerable adults, needing social care support need to know the Council will be there for them – whether

they are in hospital and want to get home, suffering a mental health crisis or a carer for a loved one with dementia.



A Labour Council will want to give disabled adults and older people choice and control over the support they need by listening to them and the people who support them.

Which is why It’s really important we get it right – and right first time. We are exploring options that will enable us to provide more care for people at home or close to home.

We know from a survey of carers last year that the numbers feeling encouraged or supported has fallen by 25% in just a couple of years. We will set up a social care forum for the paid and unpaid caring work force, so we have clear opportunities to identify problems, provide support and show appreciation.

We are keen to hear from people with their views on how the Council can do things better to improve the quality of life for older people.”