

York Older People's Assembly

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BLUE BADGE BAN – OVERTURNED

The commitment by the new Labour council elected in 2023, to overturn the Blue Badge Ban which restricted access to the centre of York, is being honoured.

From January access to the centre will be from Goodramgate and from 1st March similar arrangements apply for access from Blake Street. This is a significant improvement over the earlier date given – Easter.



Blue Badge holders will need to present a valid Blue Badge to barrier staff who will arrange for the sliding bollards to be opened to allow access. The action taken has been warmly welcomed by York Disability Rights Network amongst others who have campaigned to reverse the ban.

In addition, following representations from the Assembly and others, the existing application forms to receive a Blue Badge are to be reviewed. It is generally agreed the current forms are complicated, difficult to understand and very repetitive.

The Assembly believes the take up of Blue Badges should be encouraged and any barriers should be eliminated wherever possible. Recent information shows there are 3188 people benefiting of whom 1280 were automatically entitled. The remainder are on discretionary criteria, including difficulty walking due to pain or breathlessness and other disabilities.

ENERGY BILLS SHOULD FALL FROM THE 1ST OF APRIL 2024



Thanks to a mild winter and lower gas prices, the energy cap could fall from £1928 to £1690 from the 1st of April.

A reduction of 12.3% could equate to a saving of around £20 per month. The cap itself is based on a typical household energy use.

In addition, the standing charge on a pre-payment meter will in future, be the same as for those paying by direct debit or standard credit.

HOME INSTEAD BRANCHES OUT

Home Instead have been providing home care services in York for over 15 years. It is one of 250 offices nationwide. A recent inspection by the Care Quality Commission has rated its services overall as “Good” and “Outstanding” for its care services.



“TAKE A SEAT” – MAKING YORK MORE AGE FRIENDLY

Home Instead are thrilled to be working with a City of York Council initiative called “Take a Seat”. This initiative is all about making York more accessible to older people who may have reduced mobility but want to get out and about and maintain the quality of life they have always enjoyed in York.

“We see through our work how older people can be isolated and marginalized and we want to play our part in making York more friendly.”

HOW CAN BUSINESSES DO THEIR BIT TO BE AGE FRIENDLY?

Businesses taking part in the “Take a Seat” scheme display a sticker to indicate that facilities are available for use in their premises, with no obligation to make a purchase. From research gathered, residents have said they would benefit from having more places they can rest and need access to more toilets when they are out and about.

Home Instead are working with local organisations to ask whether they have a seat, facilities or both, that people can use in York. This is particularly important to older people, those with disabilities or long-term conditions, whether they are a local resident or someone visiting the City. Upon agreement, the business displays a sticker in their window making it clear for visitors to see. There is also a map for the participating organisations. We have had great interest in the initiative already, with a growing number of businesses wanting to be involved. For more information contact Home Instead on 01904 690884 or email: info@york.homeinstead.co.uk.

HELP IS AT HAND

The January Assembly open meeting received presentations from York Neighbours (Kallum Taylor) and the lead for Social Prescribing as part of the York Centre for Voluntary Service (Lucy Fieldhouse).

York Neighbours – over 65 and need a hand with one off tasks, or just want someone to talk to or feeling isolated?

- Practical one-off jobs e. g. changing a light bulb, collecting a prescription or helping with shopping.
- Regular phone calls – offering an opportunity to chat with someone who cares.
- Individual and group outings – from afternoon teas, to concerts, to bowling.

Kallum advised there are 74 volunteers as part of the service which is free to use. Currently there are 524 Neighbours who keep in touch. They have received over 3000 phone calls.

To contact York Neighbours, ring **01904 891627**

Social Prescribing – what is it? - It is an approach which connects people to activities, groups or services in the community, to meet the practical, social and emotional needs that affect their health and well-being.

Overall, this is aimed at improving health and enjoyment in life by:

- lowering stress and anxiety
- reducing isolation and loneliness
- generating more motivation and energy
- improving moods
- instilling more confidence



Lucy told us that there are 16 social prescribers based at GP surgeries and 6 at the hospital. Each prescriber produces a personalised care and support plan, which could include creative activities such as art, dance and singing or at a more practical level, counselling - with cost-of-living issues featuring highly.

To get in touch and seek more advice, ring **01904 437911**

RETIREMENT AGE TO BE LIFTED TO 71!!

A recent report released by the “International Longevity Centre” proposes that the existing retirement age is lifted to 71.

Currently those born before April 1960 receive their state pension at 66 and those born after will receive it at 67. The longer-term plans are that the age is raised to 68, which will affect those born after April 1977.

The National Pensioners Convention which represents over 1.5 million members said the proposals “in no way reflects the harsh reality of getting older in the UK”.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING MONDAY 18TH MARCH, 2PM, FRIENDS MEETING HOUSE AT FRIARGATE

We have invited two speakers:

- A GP with direct experience of frailty amongst older people who is part of the integrated frailty hub delivered by Nimbuscare at Acomb Garth
- A key staff member from the Falls Prevention Service which is aimed at reducing the risk of falls in your home.

YORK 50+ FESTIVAL

Following the very successful York 50+ Festival which included a novel event held outside the Mansion House, featuring Eco Angels sculptures, the Assembly is planning for the 19th Festival later this year. It will incorporate The International Day of Older People.

There were 127 events in last year’s programme, which included a wide range of different activities to try out or take part in.

We are setting up a working group to carry out the variety of work involved in the Festival. Would you be interested in planning, publicity, fund raising, encouraging groups to get involved or do you have any suggestions from your organisation or group that could take part?

Please contact Mary Cannon, York 50+ Festival co-ordinator by phone on 01904 332613 or 07920 162034 or email marycannon3988@gmail.com.



DOUBTS ABOUT DOCTORS SURGERIES

The autumn edition of this Newsletter shared information arising from the 2023 NHS – GP patient survey. Top of the list was the practice at Dalton Terrace. Yet the headline in the Press dated 20th February was “patients put at risk of harm by GP surgery”.

This arose from a Care Quality Commission inspection. And it refers to the same practice Dalton Terrace. They can’t both be right!! The Inspectors found “the practice was unable to demonstrate that staff had the skills, knowledge and experience to carry out their roles. There were inadequate systems to assess, monitor and manage risks in patients’ safety”. Overall, the rating given was “requires improvement.”

Healthwatch has just launched a new project to understand people’s experience of GP practices – good and bad. They have developed a survey for people to share their thoughts, https://www.smart_survey.co.uk/s/ftmz4b/

Paper copies will be available at the Open Meeting of the Assembly on Monday 18th March..

Not to muddy the waters, Jim Cannon, Chair of the Assembly, who is a patient at Dalton Terrace speaks very highly of his experience!!



MINSTER GRANGE CARE HOME – CLOSED

The 62 bedded care home at Haxby Road, closed in January 2024 after a damning report by the Care Quality Commission (CQC). The independent watch dog gave the home an overall rating of “Inadequate” following previous inspections, where the overall safety of residents was at risk by insufficient staffing levels, creating potential harm to residents. This was the fifth inspection where concerns about leadership had been highlighted.

The building owned and managed by the Maria Mallaband Care Group (MMCG) has been sold to a provider of specialist mental health services.

Staff and residents have been offered alternative accommodation within 5 of the other homes run by MMCG within a 20-mile radius of York.



ROWNTREE’S HELP OUT WITH AFFORDABLE HOMES

A significant contribution in meeting the need for more affordable housing in the City is proposed by the Joseph Rowntree Housing Trust.



Plans for 114 homes comprising a mix of 1, 2, 3 and 4 bed properties have been submitted to the Council. Of the total, 14 would be accessible bungalows designed specifically for older people and those living with disabilities.

Built off Sim Balk Lane and close to the Askham Bar Park and Ride site and Tesco the scheme offers 60% rented homes and 40% shared ownership where the buyer purchases a share in the home and the remainder is rented from Rowntree's.



Home Care and Live-in care

Being able to live at home can be one of the most important comforts in an older person's life. Family and friends can't always be there, so Home Instead is here to help.

Owners Ann-Marie Roche and Luke Norbury take pride in helping people to achieve their aim of remaining as independent as possible in their own homes.

Tailored Services

Designed around you – bespoke packages of care built around individual needs and outcomes.



Longer Calls

The standard length of our visits is 1 hour or more – we also deliver companionship and respite care to meet your needs.

Dedicated Team

All our care professionals are introduced so there are never any strangers. Small local teams ensure continuity and you'll receive a dedicated time slot.

01904 690884

care@york.homeinstead.co.uk
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