



Saturday 28th September 2024



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It's a wrap! Butterflies have fluttered all over York to honour International Day of Older People

Celebrating the success of International Day of Older People York

It has been a celebration that has been blessed by the goodwill of the people of York, both old and young which has truly given older people more visibility in our wider communities. As part of the 50+ Festival, this is the third year in which York Older People's Assembly (YOPA) has successfully led a city-wide collaborative for IDOP with a celebratory series of events from 24 September to 2 October 2024.

Councillor Margaret Wells, Lord Mayor of York said *"When I was a child, one of the most important people in my life was my granny. She took care of me, brushed my hair, fed me, and supported me in so many ways. She made a huge impact on my life, and older people play a significant role in everyone's lives. Both the Sheriff and I have had strokes, but that doesn't stop us - we're still enjoying life. I want to thank YOPA for today and also celebrate St Sampson's Centre's 50th anniversary with their butterfly cakes. Butterflies are essential to the world, starting as caterpillars and transforming into something beautiful. That's what older people are - they go through their own transformations and make an incredible contribution to us all."*

Professor Dianne Willcocks, IDOP Convener explains *"We can safely say that together we have achieved huge success, visibility and validation for older people living their best lives, alongside the younger members of our vibrant York community. I extend my heartfelt thanks to each and every one of our incredible supporters who made this possible."*

Speaking of Saturday's parade, she added *"Seventy of us have paraded proudly, waving our banners and slogans, unfurling butterfly wings, dancing to the rhythm of the music. Our message to the people of York is clear: we're here, we're vibrant, and we're valuable, caring contributors to the community. Today has been a day filled with sunshine and a perfect example of what York excels at - coming together, sharing joy, and bringing happiness to others."*



Jim Cannon, chair of the York Older People's Assembly (YOPA) added *“It’s incredible how many people have stopped us as we’ve walked by, showing that older people are still alive and kicking. I want to highlight the phenomenal effort Dianne has put into this event. The weather has been beautiful, and as we strolled through the Museum Gardens and the streets of York, many people, including children, have shown great interest in what we’re doing.”*

Carl Wain, Information and Social Action Manager, City of York Council, is a great supporter of IDOP and YOPA. He explains, *“We run a group called Age Friendly York, which is part of a World Health Organisation initiative that spans over 1,000 cities worldwide. Today has been wonderful. This is the first year we’ve effectively linked IDOP with the 50+ festival, and it’s been fantastic to raise awareness of older people and their positive contributions to society. Often, the imagery surrounding older adults is quite negative, but here we have people dancing in the streets, which helps to change those perceptions. I’ve contributed very little; the majority of the work has been done by the residents - it’s their event and they’ve done a cracking job. IDOP is all about inclusivity, and there’s a parallel to York Pride. If there’s a desire to continue this effort, there’s real potential for growth, just as York Pride has experienced.”*

The day's highlights featured the York St John University student-led grand butterfly parade, which was met with great enthusiasm, including butterfly giveaways to every curious toddler. The giant eco-models from Parkinson's Creatives and the warm greeting from the Lord Mayor and Sheriff added to the festive spirit.

It was filled with imaginative, interactive activities and performances, alongside a public film screening showcasing our esteemed elders and voluntary contributions. Beautiful memories and dreams installations adorned the city centre, while the serene yet striking T'ai Chi gathering at the Pavilion drew eager participants.

These moments are a testament to the generous, professional, and creative efforts of numerous groups, hosts, and individuals, coming together for a true celebration of community.



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To relive these moments, take a look at our [YouTube channel](#), where you will find many fabulous films including Memories and Dreams of York's elders, Silver Swans, Parkinson's Creatives, Dementia Forward and some fantastic highlights of our parade.

Hear from a few people involved in the amazing celebrations:

- **Paul Neary**, runs the York T'ai Chi clubs around York and led an amazing T'ai Chi demonstration in the Museum Gardens for IDOP. "T'ai Chi is a form of moving meditation that allows you to reconnect with your body. What they are doing here is truly wonderful."
- Member of the York Parkinsons Group, **Isobel Thomson** tells us why she is here today. "To take part in the parade and wave a butterfly banner. It sounded like fun. People enjoying themselves always makes an impact and I've met some new people."
- **Tim Cave**, Chair of Humanities at York St John University student union, tells us about his involvement as a steward at today's parade. "It's great to have visibility and show we are recognising the older generation who are very much an important part of the city. We must remember that they have built the city as it is today."
- **Prenika Anand**, who has just started a PhD in Safety of Artificial Intelligence talks about the importance of today's events. "I want to encourage such initiatives and show the community that we care. I aim to contribute to a more inclusive technology policy that is inclusive and participatory."
- **Chantal Kinsella**, founder of Bronte House, kindly sponsored the butterfly buns, expertly made by 'Lottie Loves, handmade by Charlotte', for the 50th birthday celebrations at St Sampson's Centre. "I'm passionate about helping support people with dementia. It's great to be supporting local people raise awareness of the contribution that older people make."
- **Simon Holmes, Chief Executive, Age UK York** told us "Age UK York collaborates with other charities to support and empower older individuals, providing them with assistance as well as amplifying their voices. Today has been a fantastic opportunity to unite people, raise awareness, spark interest in learning more, and engage younger generations, helping to break down and dispel myths about older adults."
- **Philip and Doreen** said "It's been great to come together and raise awareness for the deaf community. Even in 2024, many places like cinemas and theatres still lack proper facilities. Today has provided a sense of connection. Being deaf can often feel very lonely."
- **Derek and Joan Willcock** said "Everyone is having a laugh and the weather is marvellous. I'm glad to see so many people out today. Married for nearly 70 years, we're 90 and 93 and have climbed every mountain in the country. It's great to be involved in today's event."
- **Issy Sanderson, Parkinson's York** "It's wonderful to see so many people here today. We've had children come along and make their own butterflies. Have a wonderful day and it's great to see so many butterflies fluttering all over York."
- **Meg and Graham Reddier** "We've come from Hull to join the IDOP parade today. We represent "Back to Ours" a charitable arts organisation who work with older people who are isolated. It's important to remember that life doesn't end when you get old. Never stop and enjoy it while you can."



Saturday 28th September 2024



- **George Wood, Secretary,** York Older People's Assembly (YOPA) "I've been involved with YOPA for several years, and today has been wonderful – we couldn't have asked for a better day. It has been all about raising awareness and shifting perceptions about older people. I'm 78 and still running half marathons – next week, I'm taking part in the Great Scottish Run."

ENDS

Find out more

- Find out more on the YOPA website <https://www.yorkassembly.org.uk/idop/>
- And our YouTube channel <https://www.youtube.com/@YorkOlderPeoplesAssembly>
- Email us yorkolderpeoplesassembly@outlook.com
- Follow us on social media
 - x.com/IDOPYork
 - linkedin.com/in/idop-york
 - instagram.com/idopyork/
 - facebook.com/

We gratefully acknowledge the support from Rotary Ainsty York.



And we are forever grateful to all our partners

- Age-friendly York
- AgeUK York
- Hornsey Consulting
- Older Citizens Advocacy York (OCAY)
- Parkinson's UK York
- St Sampson's Centre
- York Interfaith Group
- York Older People's Assembly
- York St John Students' Union
- York Theatre Royal

together with ...

- Ask Italian York
- AWOC - Ageing Without Children
- Debby Cobbett
- Dementia Forward
- Fulprint
- Jorvik Silver Swans
- Joseph Rowntree Housing Trust
- Hartrigg Oaks
- Kirkham Henry Silver Swans
- Minds & Voices
- Neal's Yard
- St Helen's Church
- Up and Running
- York Art Gallery
- York Carers' Centre
- York Mind
- York Minster
- York Playback Theatre
- York T'ai Chi



About YOPA

As part of the 50+ Festival, this is the third year in which York Older People's Assembly (YOPA) has successfully led a city-wide collaborative for IDOP. We are an independent local charity which has advocated for, celebrated and supported older people across York and North Yorkshire for over twenty years. We are an organisation of older people, for older people and we work to achieve full citizenship for diverse elders across and within the wider community.

About the International Day of Older People

Each year on October 1, people across the world mark United Nations International Day of Older People to raise awareness of opportunities and challenges faced by ageing populations, and to mobilize the wider community to address difficulties faced by older people.

