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Get ready to celebrate at this year's York 50+ Festival

Discover new experiences, make connections and create lasting memories – plan your festival favourites

Thursday 1 October to Sunday 18 October 2026

The York 50+ Festival is but days away! Led by YOPA (York Older People's Assembly) and Age UK York - together the voice of older people in the city - the Festival is a unique event that brings together a fantastic mix of talks, performances and social events tailored to inspire, entertain and connect.

This year we have over 80 events across 150 sessions, with something for everyone, featuring ballet, music to walking rugby, history, wills and comedy.

Dianne Willcocks, Vice Chair of YOPA tells us why we're proud to host the event again this year "Older citizens in York represent vibrant and visible communities who help to make York a culturally diverse and compassionate home for all generations. We welcome this exciting set of opportunities to celebrate and create new friendships...and to thank our generous civic and community support partners."

The highlight of the festival is our grand parade. Join us on **Saturday 3 October** for a vibrant day of celebration, connection and creativity as we mark the **International Day of Older People**. Commencing with our colourful **Mad Hatters-themed parade**, heralded by the Town Crier and stewarded by University of York students, the parade will set off from **York Theatre Royal at 1.00pm**, heading to York Museum Gardens for a musical interlude, before arriving at **St Helen's Square from 1.45pm–2.15pm** where we will have a special Mayoral greeting and tribute to our elders...and thence onwards to St Sampson's Centre.



Throughout the day in **St Helen's Square from 10.00am to 3.30pm** enjoy live music, community activities and festival atmosphere, including performances from choirs led by Nicola Betts and Musical Connections with the trusted Rotary Ainsty support point.

Everyone is welcome - come along, wear your favourite hat, celebrate later life and be part of a joyful day of music, friendship and community!

Simon Holmes, CEO, Age UK York added "We'd love to see you take part in this year's festival. Maybe try our **Beat the Boat Run Race on 4 October** or hop aboard to cheer the runners on! Alternatively if you like comedy, come to the **75 Years of the Goon Show** with a live performance of the much-loved comedy series, featuring two classic episodes on 17 October."

Also new this year are a series of special **Friendship Lunches** taking place at The Chopping Block in Walmgate, on 24 September, 8 and 15 October. And don't miss our **Information Fair at York Theatre Royal on 6 October**, bringing together a range of local organisations offering information, professional advice and support on services and opportunities available in the community.

Everyone can get active, have fun and try something new through a fantastic range of sports, leisure and wellbeing activities, including walking football and netball, swimming, table tennis, indoor bowls, ballet, Tai Chi, accessible yoga, dancing and mind and body classes.

There are also plenty of opportunities to connect, learn and share experiences through choirs, coffee and culture, games, conservation days, Sporting Memories, brain health sessions, historic walks and exploring local hidden histories.

Alongside these activities, a wide range of advice, information and creative opportunities is available, covering topics such as sight and hearing loss, relaxation, fire and road safety, will advice, Dementia Friends and AI, as well as creative workshops. There are



also opportunities to explore personal interests, manage ongoing pain, stay connected, learn new skills and enjoy new experiences within the community.

See our full programme [here](#)

We remain incredibly grateful to our sponsors, volunteers and partners for their generous support in helping us make the festival possible, including Clifton Park Hospital, Somerset House, Switalskis/Pryers solicitor, York Theatre Royal, St Sampson's Centre, Rotary York Ainsty, Fulprint, The Students' of York University, the children and staff of Knavesmire Cool Kids Club, York Food & Drink Festival and Patch.

Next steps

- Thursday 1 October 17.30-20.00 – Bob Towner Lecture [book here](#)
- Saturday 3 October - York 50+ day of celebration with parade from 13.00 at York Theatre Royal
- Tuesday 6 October, 10.00–12.00 - Information Fair York Theatre Royal

Have a question - Call us on **07965 246193** or email us yorkfiftyplus@gmail.com
Find out more <https://www.yorkassembly.org.uk/50-festival-26/>

For latest updates, follow us on



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About YOPA

York Older People's Assembly (YOPA) is an independent local charity which has advocated for, celebrated and supported older people across York and North Yorkshire since 2001. We are an organisation of older people, for older people and we work to achieve full citizenship for diverse older people across and within the wider community.

We aim to:

- Represent the views of older people in York to decision makers locally and nationally.
- Inform older people about services that are available.
- Identify where needs are not being met.
- Work with the local authority and others to make York an age-friendly city

As part of the 50+ Festival, this is the third year in which YOPA has successfully led a city-wide collaborative for International Day of Older People.

About Age UK York

Age UK York is an independent local charity which has been working in the local community to help older people for over 50 years. We have 100 dedicated staff and over 400 volunteers helping us to deliver services and activities for older people in York. Age UK York provides free, confidential and impartial information and advice on a range of issues relating to older people and those who care for and support them.

We offer a wide range of services to older people in York to enable them to live better lives. This includes information and advice, benefits and money advice, befriending services, carer respite service, Day Clubs and Home From Hospital support. All our work is aimed at improving the lives of older people in York. Age UK York encourages older people to speak out about local and national issues. We are here to make more of life in York.

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 mobilise the wider community to address challenges faced by older people. The theme for 2025, is the role older people play in creating resilient, sustainable societies.

