

## Engage With Age BIG LOTTERY funded HOPE Project

This year Engage With Age commenced its new four year HOPE project, funded with a grant from the Big Lottery Fund's Reaching Out: Connecting Older People programme and was officially launched at the annual Belfast City Council Seniors Convention at the City Hall in May. The HOPE project works to develop 'hubs for older people's engagement,' working in 6 neighbourhoods across Belfast and targeting those older people who are less active and most at risk of social isolation.

Working with a range of partners especially local Housing Associations Trinity, Fold and Clanmil the HOPE project is establishing 'hubs' where older people can meet others of their own age group and take part in a range of activities in sheltered housing schemes and other locations across Belfast and Castlereagh.

The project employs two full time Community Outreach Workers and a part-time Volunteer Co-ordinator and over the past few months has been supporting scheme co-ordinators and residents to develop a wide range of activities in and around the common room in various sheltered housing schemes and other venues such as church halls. Other less active older people living in the wider communities, especially those living alone, are being encouraged to come and take part in the 'hub' activities.



Recent activities in the 'Hubs' across Belfast have included bus runs, summer barbeques, Jubilee celebration parties, colour breathing therapy, indoor games, keep fit etc and are all helping to enhance the community spirit and build good relations among local residents both in and around sheltered housing schemes.

If you like to know more about getting involved in the Project as a participant or volunteer, we would be delighted to hear from you, **please contact the HOPE project staff at the Engage With Age office on 028 90 649 649.**



Clockwise: 'Crafty Ladies' enjoying a singalong ; Having a go at New Age bowls ; Summer outing to Carrickfergus ; Pampering day at Brookvale Fold ; Enjoying the music, summer barbeque at Inverary Fold

# INDIVIDUALS

## Activities & Information

### Volunteers for HOPE!

**Volunteer:** (noun) vol-uhn-teer - "a person who voluntarily offers himself or herself for a service or undertaking; a person who performs a service willingly without pay."

Now that the recently launched HOPE project is well and truly up and running, Engage With Age is currently seeking enthusiastic volunteers to assist with the organisation and running of the various hub programmes.

People give their time in many ways without realising they are volunteering. At Engage With Age we wish to recognise, support and reward all those who are involved in the HOPE project, as well as invite new volunteers to help in the established hubs and the new hubs opening soon. New hubs will be opened throughout Belfast during the coming months and years. Hubs operate on regular bases, depending on the specific hub so volunteering could be weekly, fortnightly or monthly.

All volunteers in HOPE will be supported by a Volunteer Co-ordinator and will have opportunities to meet regularly, attend social gatherings and relevant training courses, eg first aid, boccia training, using the digital film archive, and so on. At one of our established hubs, twelve volunteers recently attended the Level 2 Certificate in Food Safety provided by Belfast City Council.

Volunteers in HOPE can expect a multi-dimensional role, helping with activities such as serving refreshments during the activity; supporting, advocating & recruiting new members; driving and picking up external hub members to bring them to an activity; perhaps using a particular hobby or skill to lead an activity (eg card making).

Volunteers are vital to the success of the HOPE project and we will be depending on dedicated, enthusiastic individuals! **If you would like further information about volunteering with the HOPE project or wish to apply to become a HOPE Volunteer, please contact the Volunteer Co-ordinator Tara Collins on 0755 368 1555 or email: tara@engagewithage.org.uk**

### 'Keep Her Lit'



**Congratulations to Alison McClean, scheme co-ordinator at Dean Crooks Fold in east Belfast** who was selected to carry the Olympic torch during its passage through Northern Ireland in the summer on its way to the Olympic stadium in London.

The journey of the torch through Belfast created great excitement for all and was a great honour for Alison in recognition of her charitable work for the benefit of others.

Photo - 'Alison McClean with the Olympic torch

### 'Going For Gold' senior citizens health and well being event

It has been an exciting year in the UK especially in the lead up to the London 2012 Olympic games, with many people being inspired by the successes of local competitors. To coincide with the Olympics opening ceremony on Friday 27th July a new Older People's Health and Well Being multi-agency group decided to run an event to promote physical activity for the over 50s across Belfast.

The Ozone / Belfast Indoor Tennis Centre was the venue for the 'Going For Gold' seniors health and well being event, which drew over 100 older people from across the city and the organisers received great feedback from those taking part. For many it was the first time to engage in any physical activity for a long time, others were already quite active but wanted to try something new or get ideas for activities for their seniors' groups. Activities included boccia, new age kurling, short tennis, indoor bowls, tai chi etc but also the more adventurous were able to try the rowing machines, or for those looking for something more relaxed there was always the alternative therapies and health checks available.

All participants came away inspired to keep themselves fit and active as much as possible and further events like this planned across Belfast, further details to follow.



Photos - 'Rowing for Gold' at Ozone Centre ; Sports coach delivers session of chair aerobics ; 'Anyone for tennis'



# GROUPS

## Activities & Information

### Sharing Memories of working life in the Shipyard



Engage With Age were delighted to be involved in a recent project in the Braniel area of Castlereagh which brought together younger and older people to reminisce and share memories and celebrate the legacy of those who worked in the Harland & Wolff shipyard. This year there has of course been much talk about all things Titanic, but perhaps less about the skill, craftsmanship and sacrifice of those workers who built the great ships at Queens Island.

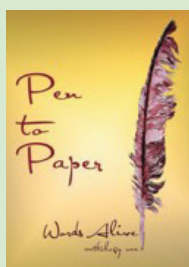
The 'What the Yard Means to Us' inter-generational project initiated by the Rev John Wonnacott was a great success and brought together younger people from Dreamscheme and former shipyard workers from the Braniel estate and neighbouring areas. Using the Digital Film Archive and H & W memorabilia supplied by East Belfast Historical Society the project captured former yardmen's fascinating stories, jokes and experiences of working life in the shipyard and made a lasting impact on everyone who took part!



Photos – Yardmen reminiscing (left); Sharing stories of working life in H & W (above)

### Words Alive Writing Group put 'Pen to Paper'

The Words Alive creative writing group continues to meet on a regular basis and in 2012 produced their first anthology of stories and poetry. Copies are available from the Engage With Age office if you would like to read some of their work....



### 'Celebrating Local Heroes!'



Local east Belfast older men's group 'Stokers Jokers' recently had the pleasure of the company of Belfast sporting legend Wayne McCullough. Wayne brought along his boxing medal and WBC belt and gave the group an inspirational talk about his very successful boxing career and new life in America.

Not surprisingly none of the men were looking to trade punches with the 'pocket rocket' as he is otherwise known, but all were fascinated by his story of hard work and determination which led Wayne to boxing stardom – an example to all of us!

Photo – Robert & Jim with boxer Wayne McCullough

### Macular Disease Volunteer Speaker

#### Macular Disease Society



The Macular Disease Society has volunteer speakers available to deliver informative, positive and inspirational talks in the Belfast area.

Many of the speakers are affected by macular disease, enabling them to give a first hand account of what it's like to be affected by the most common cause of sight loss in the Western World, as well as providing information on what support is available locally.

To book a speaker contact Engage With Age on 028 90 649 649. For more information on macular disease, contact the Society's helpline on 0300 3030 111 or visit [www.maculardisease.org](http://www.maculardisease.org).

This project has been made possible by the Big Lottery Fund.

# FORUMS

## News & Activities from Across the Forums

### South Belfast Lifestyle Forum

South Belfast Lifestyle Forum is the network for older people's groups in this part of Belfast. The Forum meets on the morning of the second Tuesday of the month in Donegall Pass Community Centre.

At the monthly Forum meetings members share information on services and activities for older people. It is also an important opportunity for Engage With Age to distribute this kind of information. The Forum strengthens the links between groups and promotes more social interaction and participation by older people.

Through the Forum the members seek to challenge and influence organisations, agencies and the political processes in N Ireland to develop new services and to improve existing services to better meet the needs of older people.

This year the Forum has a new Development Officer from Engage With Age, Theresa McVeigh, providing support. With her help the Committee is planning a programme for the Forum to include outings, social events, short films, demonstrations of new skills, techniques and crafts and hopes to host networking meetings with other older people's forums.

The Forum hopes to take advantage of the Making Connections programmes running in the museums on Wednesday afternoons, organised by the Live and Learn Team. Our participation in Making Connections started with a visit to the Folk and Transport Museum on 10th October for a look at the William Conor drawings and paintings. One of the curators, Amanda Croft, talked about the pictures and how she felt about them. It offered those of us present a new way to look at them. It was a pleasant and relaxed afternoon.

With assistance from the Ulster Orchestra, the Forum is attending the Orchestra's Christmas Joy Concert in December. It will allow the members who are unsure about going out in the city at night to go to the concert in the Ulster Hall feeling safe in the company of friends. It promises to be a lovely evening.

Contact: Theresa McVeigh Tel. 028 90 699 192 Mobile: 075 9339 1241



### Belfast East Seniors Forum

It was a Cracker!

Over 170 older people from across Belfast and beyond came together for a Christmas Cabaret event at the Royal Antediluvian Order of Buffalos (RAOB) Club on Church Street.

This event has traditionally been held there and is known as 'Santa's Shindig'. It has been a massive success in previous years. There was a Professional Stage Magic Show, Musical Entertainers and other fun activities.

The Belfast East Seniors Forum were the hosts of the event in partnership with the RAOB. Tom McNaught, the Grand Secretary, said "the RAOB are delighted to work in partnership with Engage with Age and the Belfast East Seniors Forum in bringing older people from across the city together for social gatherings". A week earlier, the RAOB also hosted a Christmas Star event for 70 older people who have participated on Engage with Age programmes. This included people who have dementia and other health problems. The volunteers were amazing on both these events and we cannot thank them enough. We also thank the staff at the RAOB for their hard work and support.

The WRVS, a UK based age positive charity with over 400,000 volunteers, helped to fund these events and have been very supportive of our work to reach out to isolated older people.

#### 'Belfast East Seniors Forum events and activities'



### NEED HELP PAYING YOUR RATES BILL ?

The Lone Pensioner Allowance is not means-tested, therefore you do not have to provide information about your income and savings to be eligible. It is an entitlement to a 20% reduction in rates for any pensioner in Northern Ireland who :

- Is aged 70 years old or over and
- Lives alone (may be some exceptions to this) and
- Owns their own home.

You can claim this as well as other benefits. Home owners should contact Land & Property Services to apply on 0845 300 6360.

If you don't own your own home call the Northern Ireland Housing Executive on 08448 920 902.



## Castlereagh Lifestyle Forum

Castlereagh Lifestyle Forum meets on the first Thursday of the month in Grace Baptist Church in Tullycarnet. The Forum provides a network for older people's groups from across all of the Castlereagh borough, i.e. Dundonald, Tullycarnet, Gilnahirk, Braniel, Cregagh, Newtownbreda and Carryduff. The membership continues to grow. There are now 14 groups represented on the Forum. There are also several older people who have joined the Forum as individuals as well as being represented through their membership of their local group.

In September at the AGM the new committee was elected.

For the future the Committee is reviewing what the Forum wants to achieve and how it works. As part of this process the Committee is having a look at the values and standards which govern how things are done so that the members can be assured that the Forum is managed to the highest possible standard.

**The Forum has adopted these values:**

- Actively seeking participation and supporting older people to take part in decision making
- Being inclusive, respecting differences and embracing diversity
- Being person focused, creating energy and fun
- Promoting positive messages about age and older people
- Being empowering, challenging inequalities, promoting fairness and social justice
- Building strong and enduring relationships
- Being open and honest
- Valuing and respecting all contributions
- Exercising mutual respect
- Sharing and learning from each other
- Being creative, innovative and embracing change

Over the past year the Forum completed a digital photography project, working with Belfast Exposed, in which the participants produced beautiful current self-portraits and from their youth.

The project finished with an exhibition in the gallery at Cregagh Library. Two portraits of one of the participants, Eddie Gregson, are shown here.

There have been outings that the members of the Forum and their guests enjoyed, to the Fermanagh lakes and to Comber.

In October the Forum held its annual Table Quiz, this year in Belmont Bowling Club. There was an excellent turnout with many friends of the Forum present. The atmosphere at the quiz is often competitive but always friendly. This year the team from Greater Belfast Seniors Forum (G6) was the winner. There were ballots and lots of prizes so many people went home with a little something to cheer them up even if their team did not win.

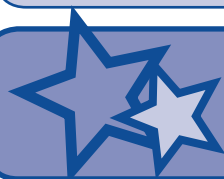
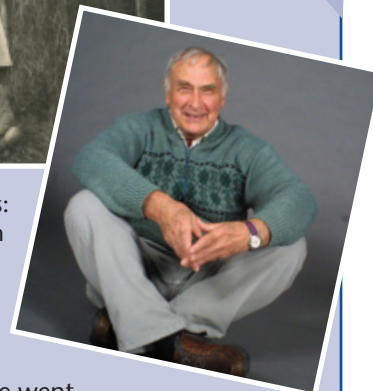
Contact: Theresa McVeigh Tel. 028 90 699 192 Mobile: 075 9339 1241



Photo:  
Helen Proctor with Shopmobility scooter



Photos:  
Edward Then  
and Edward Now



## NETWORKS

News & Activities from Across the Networks



### 'Travelling On' - improving transport for older people

Working with the Greater Belfast Seniors Forum (G6) and looking to the future, Engage With Age seeks to improve transport services used by older people, both in Belfast and across N. Ireland. In our Travelling On project Engage With Age, the seniors' forums, Channel 56, Translink and the Arts Council NI made a short film by the same name. The film tells the story of older people's experiences and problems in using the buses. Translink plans to use the film as an aid in driver training.

Jimmy Spratt MLA and Chair of the Assembly's Regional Development Committee launched the film in Brookvale Fold in Belfast. At the launch the actors and interviewees in the film, all members of seniors' forums in Belfast, were able to see the film for the first time. They were joined by friends and family and the participants in another part of the Travelling On project, Minding The Time.

In Minding The Time, participants worked with the broadcaster Malachi O'Doherty in creating an archive of stories from years ago. These are recorded on the website, [www.mindingthetime.blogspot.com](http://www.mindingthetime.blogspot.com) Translink brought to the launch one of their very old buses which brought back memories for the people present.



## 'Diamond Champions' - recognizing the contribution of older volunteers in NI



East Belfast & Castlereagh Diamond Champions ;  
Joan Christie, Dame Mary Peters  
with Diamond Champion volunteer Bill Morrow



East Belfast and Castlereagh Diamond Champions with  
Claire Keatinge, Commissioner for Older People'.



CELEBRATING THE ROLE OF  
OLDER VOLUNTEERS

To celebrate Her Majesty The Queen's Diamond Jubilee, Engage With Age, working in co-operation with WRVS, an older person's organisation based in UK, called for nominations from across the UK for "Diamond Champions", older people who volunteer in their local communities and go the extra mile to make a real difference to others' lives. The Prince of Wales and The Duchess of Cornwall this year agreed to be joint Patrons of the hunt for the Diamond Champions in recognition of the important and valuable role played by older people in communities throughout the UK.

Diamond Champion nominees are over 60 and the aim has been to find volunteers who make an extraordinary difference to their community by giving up their own time to help others. Sixty entries were shortlisted for each region by a judging panel and were presented recently with a specially designed Diamond Champions badge and certificate by Dame Mary Peters and Joan Christie at a local celebration event on 17th October in the Titanic Belfast building. From the shortlist, a regional judging panel selected 10 people to join 70 others from across the

UK at a royal residence to meet Their Royal Highnesses, The Prince of Wales and The Duchess of Cornwall in the autumn.

Olympic legend and Belfast Lord Lieutenant Dame Mary Peters, stated:

*"The Diamond Champions is a wonderful idea where we can celebrate and support those who have given their lives in support of their communities. Volunteering can help people to feel involved in their local community and can also give people a real sense of purpose and fulfillment".*

Engage With Age Manager, Margy Washbrook commented:

*"Engage With Age supports older people to keep actively involved in their communities and is delighted to be able to help facilitate the Diamond Champions campaign which recognizes the extremely valuable contribution older volunteers make to local areas throughout Northern Ireland. It is an important acknowledgement of the huge amount of volunteering carried out by older citizens on a daily basis"*



# GREATER BELFAST SENIOR FORUM (G6) NEWS

The Greater Belfast Senior Forum meets monthly in Belfast City Hall with 3 representatives from each of the 6 older people's forums in Belfast covering North, West, South and East Belfast, Greater Shankill and Castlereagh. Mary Morrison, from Castlereagh Lifestyle Forum is the current Chair.

The meetings are very lively affairs with much discussion, challenge and many ideas about improving the lives of older people in Belfast. The G6 representatives feed back information to local forum members on a monthly basis to ensure as many people as possible have their views heard.

Throughout 2012 the G6 has had meetings with several policy makers and political representatives including

- Assembly Minister for Regional Development, Nelson McCausland
- Minister of State, Hugo Swire
- Junior Ministers responsible for older people's policy, Jonathan Bell and Martina Anderson
- Bernie Kelly, Chair of Belfast City Council Cross-party Reference Group for Older People
- Translink
- Iain Deboys Local Commissioning Group and Healthy Ageing Strategic Partnership
- Maire Heaney, Belfast Health and Social Care Trust

All of these meetings are a platform for raising issues of concern for older people in Belfast on a regular basis.



## Aiming to maintain health and independence - Belfast Health and Social Care Trust REABLEMENT Strategy

Engage With Age is involved with a number of other community and voluntary organisations in Belfast, including AGE NI, Bryson Care and Extra Care, in discussions about how we can contribute to supporting the Belfast Trust's Reablement plans for older people. The intended goal of reablement is to

- improve the quality of life of older people in Belfast
- deliver positive outcomes for those who need support,
- maximize their independence and wellbeing
- create opportunities for increased participation and active ageing

From September, beginning in East Belfast, everyone who would have been offered domiciliary care packages will be referred to the Belfast Trust reablement team for a 4 - 6 week assessment period. Depending on the support people need to regain their health and independence, community and voluntary organisations will then step in to provide services and help on an individual basis. Reablement is a timely and targeted intensive intervention to maximise long term independence and appropriately minimise ongoing support required through learning or re-learning the skills for daily living.

The idea is that the reablement strategy will work to also prevent people from having to be hospitalised except when absolutely necessary, by ensuring that they get professional and appropriate care and support in their own communities.

Prevention is broadly defined to include a wide range of services that,

- Promote independence
- Prevent or delay the deterioration of wellbeing resulting from ageing, illness or disability
- Delay the need for more costly and intensive services

Prevention services represent a continuum of support ranging from the most intensive services through to early intervention. The emphasis is on maximizing people's ability to function and can be defined on three levels.

Primary prevention promoting wellbeing: this is aimed at people who have little or no particular social care needs or symptoms of illness.

Secondary prevention/early intervention: this aims to identify people at risk and to halt or slow down deterioration and actively seek to improve their situation.

Tertiary prevention: this is aimed at minimizing disability or deterioration from established health conditions or complex social care needs.

The challenge for the Voluntary and Community sector is to play a part in enabling reablement service users to gain access to mainstream life as citizens and to take active steps to prolong their independence.

# Boiler Replacement Scheme Announced



The Minister for Social Development recently announced the introduction of a new Boiler Replacement Scheme, to be administered by the NIHE Grants Offices. The scheme which commenced in September 2012, is for owner occupiers whose total gross income is less than £40,000 and is to help with the cost of replacing boilers which are 15 years or older with new boilers. Householders may also wish to convert from oil to gas or to a wood pellet boiler.

The amount payable will depend on your total income, with those earning less than £20,000 receiving £700 for replacing their boiler rising to £1,000 if controls are also being installed.

For those earning £20,000 or more but less than £40,000 the grant is £400 for replacing their boiler, rising to £500 if controls are fitted.

## Eligible?

If you think you may be eligible to apply for the allowance, you can register now by contacting phone: 0300 200 7874



*Campaigning for Warm Homes*

## Northern Exposure – Be prepared Keep your home warm this winter

The Northern Exposure Project in Belfast is managed by NEA NI and is funded by the Public Health Agency.

The Northern Exposure project can help you get your house ready for next winter.

### Did you know?

- Cavity wall insulation can save you up to 35% of heating costs
- Loft insulation can save you up to 20% of heating costs

Grants are available through PowerNI and Warm Homes for; Homeowners or private renters who are on certain benefits or low incomes.

### Grants are available for;

- Loft Insulation and Cavity Wall Insulation
- New gas central heating systems – if you currently don't have any central heating, or you have Economy 7, bottled gas or solid fuel central heating, or in certain cases if boiler is more than 15 years old and has completely broken down beyond repair.

To check if you're eligible for a grant or for any further information please contact Angela Gracey, Project Coordinator on 028 9023 9909 or email [angela.gracey@nea.org](mailto:angela.gracey@nea.org)

