

# North Yorkshire Council

## Care & Independence Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Monday 20<sup>th</sup> April 2026

### Report of the Older People's Champion

North Yorkshire is England's largest County by land area, covering over 3,300 square miles with a population of 620,000 people. The population is spread across a mix of rural, coastal and market towns, each with distinct characteristics and needs. 35% of residents live in rural areas classified as 'sparse' or 'super-sparse', this rurality presents challenges such as access to services, digital connectivity and transport.

North Yorkshire has a significantly older demographic than the national average. Around 26.4% residents are aged 65 and over, reflecting the County's popularity as a place to retire and the national trend of an ageing population. 49.3% of North Yorkshire's population is aged 50+

North Yorkshire has one of the oldest populations in the country and by 2043 one in three people will be over 65. As people live longer, we expect to see more age-related health issues like dementia, falls and long-term conditions.

You can find more information and take a look at the Director of Public Health's Annual Report '[Live, Age and Engage 2024/25: Healthy Ageing in North Yorkshire](#)' Their work is focused around four Health Ageing priorities, working with the Age-Friendly Network and other older people.

- Health and reducing inequalities
- Housing
- Financial security and employment
- Making North Yorkshire an age-friendly place

**Millions eligible for free shingles vaccine urged to come forward:** UKHSA data shows that fewer than half take up the free shingles jab. Fewer than half of adults are taking up their free shingles vaccine in the first year of being eligible, according to latest [UK Health Security Agency \(UKHSA\) data](#).

Figures published show that only 42.1% of those turning age 66, who had been eligible since their 65th birthday, had received their first Shingrix dose by October 2025. Among those turning age 71 who have been eligible since turning 70, vaccine uptake coverage stands at 53.5%.

Shingles is a painful condition caused by reactivation of the chickenpox virus. It can cause weeks of severe pain and long-term complications including nerve damage.

**Flu Vaccine:** What is Flu? It's a highly infectious viral illness that affects the respiratory system – including the nose, throat and lungs.

Who is at risk? Older adults, pregnant women, children, those with Long Term Conditions, carers and close contacts, frontline health and social care workers.

When you are invited to attend for a vaccination make sure you take it up as if you've been vaccinated, you are less likely to catch or spread flu, it also reduces the risk of passing it to your family and friends, colleagues and the vulnerable.

**Covid Spring Booster Vaccination:** Are you eligible? I have been contacted by my Doctors Surgery advising me that I am eligible for a Covid Spring Booster Vaccination, I've booked in. Better to be safe

## **New 10 year plan for pioneering approach to care and housing**

People are due to be able to live longer in their own homes with the support they require as part of a proposed expansion of care and housing services across North Yorkshire over the next decade. The County is seen as a leading light nationally in providing support for people with a wide range of care, support and housing needs through North Yorkshire Council's much-lauded Extra Care programme.

A series of housing developments tailored to the needs of communities has been introduced to ensure older and disabled people remain living independently in more than 1,500 apartments in towns and villages across the County. The Extra Care schemes offer both purpose-built housing as well as on-site care workers available around the clock, and some developments also host facilities such as a library, a shop or a café.

But an increasingly diverse range of needs has led to the proposed new 10-year programme which would see more Extra Care facilities being built alongside similar services for younger adults who may need care.

The proposed 10-year blueprint takes into account the vast rural areas of North Yorkshire while also targeting resources where they are needed the most.

There are more than 500 people who are on waiting lists after expressing an interest to live in an Extra Care scheme in the County, with the highest levels in Scarborough and Harrogate. However, there is also significant demand in deeply rural locations such as in the northern areas of the Yorkshire Dales, including Wensleydale and Swaledale.

While the focus of the Extra Care programme has been on older people since its inception in North Yorkshire more than 20 years ago, the new plans are due help meet the increasing needs of the working age population who require specialist support to live independently.

The new approach would adapt the current model of Extra Care facilities, which each traditionally have 60-bed accommodation of one or two-bedroom apartments across 28 sites in North Yorkshire, to provide more flexible schemes to cater for demand. A typical Extra Care scheme costs in the region of £20 million to develop, with funding coming from the owner and operator of the scheme, a national grant from Homes England as well as a contribution from the Council.

The proposed new model would be centred on three main themes to ensure Extra Care residents have their own front door to their accommodation to allow independent living, a high-quality place to live, and care and support when they need it.

The plans are due to see the introduction of more flexible types of accommodation including Extra Care Plus schemes to support people with higher levels of need. Extra Care Mini facilities could also be introduced with smaller facilities to meet demand in more rural locations. Village models are also detailed in the proposed new approach to provide large sites spanning more than five acres that would include support, community and council services. The new programme would also help to provide supported housing and care for people with learning disabilities, autism or mental health needs.

## **Care & Support Hubs**

In January 2025 the Council's Executive Committee approved up to five Council-run Care & Support Hubs to deliver specialist residential care provision in January 2025; in particular the new Hubs will provide specialist bed-based intermediate care and specialist residential dementia care. The programme will be delivered over five to ten years with individual full business cases to be brought forward for approval for each of the five locality-based Hubs.

Phase One prioritises bringing forward proposals for Care & Support Hubs in Harrogate and Scarborough. These areas have been prioritised due to increasingly high levels of demand, as well as the significant gaps in the current care market capacity to meet demand for specialist residential care in Scarborough, and escalating and unsustainable costs of specialist provision in the independent sector care market in Harrogate. Extensive collaborative work has been underway this year involving key partners and people with lived experience to develop detailed spatial designs and shape the staffing and service delivery model. This work will continue to enable us to bring forward our proposals on the first two sites for a decision later this year.

### **Housing, Dementia & Rurality**

In August I attended the Housing, Dementia & Rurality Evidence Showcase in the Forum at Northallerton organised by The Curiosity Partnership, York University. There was a lot of discussion around housing and dementia, thinking outside the box and collaborative housing and innovation in care – a very interesting event.

**Intergenerational Communities:** The APPG Inquiry (All-Party Parliamentary Group) on Housing and Care for Older People brings together two separate themes: the need for more accommodation specifically tailored to meet the needs of an ageing population; and the wish for many people to live in mixed-age communities that bring different generations together.

**Connecting generations:** 'Adding years to life and life to years' - We need to celebrate, inspire and support the growth of an age-friendly society through connecting all ages. It's not just about bringing together different ages into one room, there are shared benefits - enhances learning and skill sharing, increases understanding and sharing of experiences, reduces loneliness and social isolation, reduces ageism, and boosts well-being.

The Public Health team are linking with our extra care facilities, early years and Children and Young People plus looking at rural groups. The aim being to promote the good practice happening across the County, and also encourage others to join in – linking organisations together to support them and offering training where needed.

### **Elderly residents hit by rising costs**

In 2024 the Government took away our Winter Fuel allowance, in 2025 they re-introduced it for some, unfortunately we seem to be an easy target, and we are left wondering what is going to happen next – take away other benefits, tax our state pension? What the Government is forgetting is that we have worked hard during our working life to provide for ourselves once no longer of working age.

Independent Age, the national charity focused on improving the lives of people facing financial hardship in later life, warns elderly Britons on low incomes are increasingly cutting back on essentials, including food, to keep up with rising Council tax bills. The charity says 27% of older people can barely afford basic costs, up from 23% two years ago, while concern about Council tax among those earning under £15,000 has jumped to 44%. With band D bills rising across the UK and water costs up sharply, some are limiting heating, laundry and even

toilet flushing. The charity is urging a national water social tariff and higher Warm Home Discount.

- **Pension Credit** – The latest data (23/24) highlights that only 62% of people eligible for pension credit in North Yorkshire are claiming which means that an estimated £22,774 million is unclaimed each year. North Yorkshire Council are now live with a pension credit campaign, so if customers ring the Customer Service number (0300 131 2 131) and say "Pension Credit" they will get through to an advisor who will transfer the call to the appropriate Income Maximisation team. They will check for eligibility and assist with the claim and the team will also look into other benefits residents are entitled to and might not be receiving.

Information on barriers to people claiming pension credit: [DWP breaks down Pension Credit barriers to help people claim £4,300 boost - Yahoo Life UK](#)

- **Crisis and Resilience Fund** – this is a new three year Government initiative running from 1 April 2026 to 31 March 2029, replacing the Household Support Fund and Discretionary Housing Payments which ended 31<sup>st</sup> March. As I am writing this report, further information is being collated. Again – people are encouraged to call NYC Customer Service number to talk to a member of the team.

**Warm Homes Local Grant:** Do you want a warmer, more energy efficient home but not sure where to start, the Warm Homes Local Grant scheme may be able to help. North Yorkshire has received £5.9 million in Government funding to provide free energy-saving improvements for low-income households in privately owned homes. This can include insulation, head pumps and solar panels – all aimed at reducing energy bills, tackling fuel poverty and cutting carbon emissions.

Eligible residents who apply will receive:

- A home energy survey to identify the best improvements
- A clear plan and timeline for the work
- Full installation at no cost to the resident
- Post-installation support.

Residents can check their eligibility and register their interest through the Council website [www.northyorks.gov.uk](http://www.northyorks.gov.uk)

### **Choices 4Energy:**

Healthy and sustainable homes, Wellbeing service: Our Home Energy Advisors offer free impartial advice to residents through home visits, telephone assessments and local community events. Our Wellbeing Advisors offer free home safety and wellbeing checks.

The aim is to support customers with energy advice and fuel poverty related initiatives across North Yorkshire; ensure residents feel warm and health in their home, whilst saving energy and money; offer funding for energy efficiency measures where available; signpost to other funding partners, services and voluntary organisations.

More information can be found at [www.northyorks.gov.uk/Choices4Energy](http://www.northyorks.gov.uk/Choices4Energy) or by emailing [Choices4Energy@northyorks.gov.uk](mailto:Choices4Energy@northyorks.gov.uk) or calling Customer Services on 0300 131 2 131 and ask for 'Choices4Energy'

### **Sport and Leisure**

North Yorkshire Sport and Active North Yorkshire are exploring how a systemwide approach to movement, play and sport can encourage people in North Yorkshire to be stronger and more active for longer.

**Active North Yorkshire:** Proposals for a new membership scheme are designed to give residents fairer access to our leisure and wellbeing hubs and result in a consistent and simpler pricing and membership structure across the County to encourage more people to live healthier and more active lifestyles. It is proposed that Senior concessions would be brought in line with state pension age to create a fairer and more consistent approach across the County. The concession membership for customers currently aged 60 to 65 would be honoured in line with the new concessionary price.

Active North Yorkshire (ANY) is building a whole-county approach to help older adults stay active, connected and independent. Their offer goes far beyond gym sessions – it's about community, confidence, falls prevention, social connection, long-term condition support and reducing the inequality gap by making sure everyone, wherever they live, can access the right support.

ANY delivers a wide, flexible offer available across the County. The offer is stronger in some areas than others, but as Active North Yorkshire develops, they are aiming for a consistent, equitable offer across the County. What is on offer?

Physical Activity for all levels: Falls Prevention classes; Strength, Balance and Flexibility classes; Condition-specific programmes; General classes suitable for older adults; Social, Community and Outdoor activities and much more.

They collaborate with the Public Health team and the Healthy Ageing Partnership to align their programmes with prevention priorities, share insight and jointly design approaches that support healthy ageing across communities.

It's good to keep active

**NY Sport Partnership Day:** I attended the official launch of the Movement, Activity and Sport Fund by Mayor of York and North Yorkshire, David Skaith. The purpose of the Partnership Day was to:

- Consider movement, activity and sport and its impact on daily life
- Bring together colleagues from across York and North Yorkshire to tackle the challenges of inactivity and inequality
- Inspire delegates to take action to increase the opportunities for movement, activity and sport.

I'm a big believer in exercise for health and wellbeing and had a brief chat with the Mayor when he visited Northallerton about exercise and older people, I'm hoping he will give some thought to our ageing population.

**Dancing for Wellbeing:** A lady called Jackie Terry-Schuhmann runs classes for wellbeing around Harrogate, Knaresborough, Boroughbridge and Nidderdale. Angela Rippon had been in touch with Jackie about a National Day of Dance – 2<sup>nd</sup> March. The event was held at the Pavilions with sessions in the morning and in the afternoon, it was a great day with not just elderly people there, there were people with disabilities, dementia who all thoroughly enjoyed themselves. Dances can be done standing up or sitting down, waving pompoms and scarves and always ending in tea and cake. Shortly after the event Angela Rippon attended one of the classes and Jackie sent me the video. We would love to get some funding to hold a bigger event – perhaps at the Convention Centre.

**Care Providers Come Dance with me:** I always look forward to being part of the panel to judge the entries to this event. I can see from their Newsletter that momentum is starting to build across North Yorkshire, our Care Providers are amazing and make this event full of fun, they also join in with the dressing up. Numbers are increasing year on year, and I think I am safe in saying there is representation from all over the County. The videos are hilarious and fancy dress very imaginative, I don't know the tune for this year, but I know we are going to be entertained.

**Falls Prevention:** People aged 65 and over have the highest risk of falling, with 30% of people older than 65 and 50% of those over 80, falling at least once a year. The human cost of falling includes:

- Pain
- Distress
- Loss of confidence
- Loss of independence
- Increased isolation
- Depression

A fall is defined as an unintentional or unexpected loss of balance resulting in coming to rest on the floor, the ground or an object below knee level.

Falls prevention is a very cost effective intervention – there is clear evidence that comprehensive integrated falls prevention and management programmes reduce the incidence and severity of first falls, and proactive preventative management of 'first fallers' reduces the likelihood of a more serious fall.

A cross Council falls prevention work programme is being developed, led by Public Health, focussing on identifying people who are at risk of falling before they do so.

**Getting to Hospital appointments:** What is non-emergency patient transport? This is for people who cannot travel safely to appointments due to medical or mobility needs. This is planned transport to and from appointments, it is different from emergency ambulances and 999 services.

Questions are being raised around hospital transport as there have been changes to the eligibility criteria. The changes have recently been implemented, Healthwatch recently investigated this, they were told that people were struggling to get to hospital appointments because they no longer qualify for non emergency patient transport. Others have said the support available is unclear, inconsistent or not realistic for where they live and the help they have around them.

Yorkshire Ambulance Service delivers patient transport locally under contract but is not responsible for changing the national eligibility rules. We need more information and consultation on what the changes are. Further information can be found at:

[Getting to healthcare: what people told us about patient transport | Healthwatch Northyorkshire](#)

The older you get the more you realise how precious life is. You have no desire for drama, conflict or stress. You just want good friends, a cosy home, food on the table, and people who make you happy

- Get out everyday regardless, staying inside people disappear
- Speak to someone out loud – a real person, not on the phone or a screen – a cashier, neighbour, someone walking their dog
- Keep making your own decisions

- Prepare for the day when you can no longer do
- Make sure you are still needed by someone

## **New Mobile Library**

Rural communities are benefitting from better library access as a new mobile library vehicle brimming with books and signposting to other key services has taken to North Yorkshire's roads. The former supermobile library, which was in service for 14 years has been replaced with a smaller more versatile vehicle. It is visiting 41 communities every four weeks, comprising 23 existing stops and 18 new ones. There will be one that comes to a stop near you, to find out more search 'Mobile Libraries' on the North Yorkshire Council website [www.northyorks.gov.uk](http://www.northyorks.gov.uk)

2026 is the National Year of Reading, a nationwide celebration of reading in all its forms, so North Yorkshire Libraries' has been running an Adult Reading Challenge! It's your perfect excuse to discover brilliant books your way! Whatever you are interested in, whether it's music, sport, gaming, gardening, fashion, food, films or travel, your library is the gateway to reading more of what you love. Make this the year you boost your wellbeing, find fresh inspiration and open new doors.

**Home Delivery Service:** Did you know the Libraries run a Free Home Delivery Service for those people that are housebound? This is a monthly service that is run by volunteer pickers and drivers. Contact your local library for more information.

**Dementia Bags:** I went along to the launch of the Memory bags at Skipton Library, the initiative is also supported by Dementia Forward. The Memory bags are a portable collection of items, books and activities for individuals or groups to share at home, in the library or out in the community. They aim to promote conversations between people with memory loss and their family and friends. There are five bags based around the themes of countryside, garden, home, seaside and sport. They are available at the moment from Scarborough, Harrogate, Skipton and Northallerton libraries, local libraries can order them on request. All you need is your library card.

**Digital Switchover:** I joined a Rural Services Network Zoom briefing on BT Digital Switchover. The switchover is happening and for most will be straightforward, the change from analogue to digital will benefit everyone, this aligns with the Government's ambition that everyone will have access to full fibre or gigabit-capable broadband by 2025! They obviously don't know rural North Yorkshire!

**What is happening?** The Public Switched Telephone Network (PSTN) will move to digital phone services, BT and most providers are migrating customers regionally from 2025 onwards with PSTN fully retired by January 2027. Why is this change happening, the analogue system is old, failing and spare parts are no longer made.

The Social care commissioned service is with Medequip Connect and moving the equipment from analogue to digital is almost complete. You need to wait until your phone/broadband provider to contact you, they will:

- Explain the change
- Send a new router or digital-voice adapter if needed
- Book a migration date
- Explain next steps for telecare users

Easy Step-by-Step Checklist:

1. **Your provider contacts you** – keep the letter.

2. **Tell them if you use telecare** – they must treat you as a priority.
3. **Contact your telecare service** – check equipment compatibility.
4. **Upgrade any incompatible devices.**
5. **Ask for a battery backup** if you rely on your landline.
6. **Test everything after migration.**

**It's Never Too Late To Learn:** Thousands of people across the County are taking advantage of a diverse range of adult learning courses, building new skills, boosting their confidence and opening the door to fresh careers. From maths to vocational subjects, our Adult Learning Service offers the flexibility people need to fit learning around their lives, with new courses being offered at the start of 2026.

The impact is clear with previous participants sharing glowing testimonies about how the courses have not only helped them progress in their careers but also allow them to embrace a host of new skills.

Among those who have signed up is Veronica Piercy who has learnt key digital skills at the age of 93. Veronica, a retired social worker who used to be employed with the former Inner London Education Authority, had some basic understanding of using a computer but wanted to expand her knowledge to better engage in the digital world.

“This course has done me a world of good to get out of the house and meet new people. I feel as though I am part of the new digital world now and am enjoying it very much,” said Veronica, who lives in a village between Pickering and Kirkbymoorside – see video clip [Age is no barrier to gaining IT skills](#)

She added: “My teacher Marie Nicholson has been so patient and supportive explaining everything nice and slowly. I particularly enjoyed gaining an understanding of online safety. I would definitely recommend enrolling on a course with the Council’s adult learning service. If I can do it at 93, so can you!”

[Learners praise courses that help to boost skills and careers | North Yorkshire Council](#)

## **Age Friendly Network: Voice & Representation - Ambassadors**

Good news! The recruitment has gone well with 11 people expressing interest. Current locations of those expressing interest include Catterick, Haxby, Bishopthorpe, Derwent/Malton area, Bedale/Northallerton, Skipton, and Thornton-le-Dale. Plans for the Ambassador launch event on 8<sup>th</sup> April in Knaresborough, are now underway.

The ambassadors will help shape the programme and will get involved in projects that are important to them. Early ideas include arranging walking audits to assess how age friendly an area is; training the ambassadors as community reporters so that they can write news articles celebrating ageing and co-delivering training on ageism and supporting older people.

## **Age Friendly Employers Pledge**

I am afraid I have failed in my promise to persuade NYC to sign up to the Age Friendly Employers Pledge, I first mentioned this about three years ago and have asked every year being told of the many things the Council does for its employees, which are appreciated. I asked the Chief Executive for some words of explanation –

“The Council has a significant proportion of older workers who we value and who are able to draw on a range of benefits that the Council offers along with other employees. We do not feel

that the Age Friendly Employers pledge would add to this. It would therefore be tokenistic with an administration overhead. The Council has a strong track record of recruiting and retaining older workers which is borne out by our age demographic, we have more challenges in recruiting younger people to the workforce.”

We are planning to hold a workshop in the summer for older workers to gather insight into any issues and what further support is needed.

**A Cashless Society:** A Cashless Society is an economic system where physical cash—banknotes and coins—is replaced by digital transactions, such as credit cards, mobile wallets, and online banking. Proponents highlight improved security, convenience, and faster transactions, while critics raise concerns about financial exclusion, privacy risks, and reliance on technology.

I think we should have a mixture of the two, it's easier to budget your money if you are using cash, but more convenient to use a card at appropriate times. How do we teach the young about money? How do we give our grandchildren some pocket money? There is much talk about keeping young people safe and away from phones and screens, so we need an element of cash.

What do you think?

**Dying Matters Awareness Week 2026:** This will take place from 4<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup> May. The mission of Dying Matters is to break down the stigma and taboo of talking about death and dying, but sometimes it is hard to know where to start.

During the Awareness Week there will be events in Knaresborough organised by Knaresborough Connectors, keep a look out for further information.

### **Age without limits day – Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> June 2026**

This Age Without Limits Day focus is on the power of questions - **Let's question ageism** Questions spark curiosity. They interrupt habits. They make us pause a little longer and think a little deeper. And when it comes to ageism - one of the most normalised and overlooked forms of discrimination - questions are an incredibly powerful tool for change.

We know that negative assumptions about ageing remain widespread. You've probably heard comments like: *“Stuck in their ways”, “Bit of a dinosaur”, “Time to slow down”*.

These everyday phrases may seem harmless but, repeated across a lifetime, they shape how we treat others, and how we see ourselves. They chip away at confidence, influence decisions, and limit opportunities in work, health, relationships and community life - **Question it!**

**Ageing Well Health Fair:** Ageing Well Health Fairs have been held in Selby Abbey, an interesting venue, I went along and found lots of information. There were workshops on Nutrition, Falls Prevention and Pain Management Support; there was basic health observations and wellbeing advice; clinical frailty and neighbourhood teams together with local services, groups and support. We hear a lot about getting our blood pressure tested, so I had mine done, my details were taken and was told to contact my GP. The system works as my GP contacted me!

**Accessible North Yorkshire:** This is an extension of Take a Seat that was launched in Ripon before Covid, at the last Scrutiny Board meeting I reported Take a Seat being launched in Richmond. Since then I was invited to the launch of Accessible Ripon, organised by the

Ripon Disability Forum, they have a website with lots of information and an interactive map showing where and how many benches there are, dropped kerbs, accessible toilets etc. They believe in open discussions and working together to make sure that people with disabilities are included in the community. Funding had been received from the Town Council, the BID, Helen Carmichael, Public Health Officer, was also involved

I am on the steering group for the Town Investment Plan for Northallerton and hope that we will be able to include some of the things that have been done in Ripon.

Take a Seat has been launched in Richmond and was featured on BBC News. Home Instead had been instrumental in launching it together with the Town Council, I went along with Helen Carmichael to meet them in Edwinas Cakes in Frenchgate, Richmond, a lovely little cake shop with a sticker on the window inviting people to Take A Seat. This is a great idea and particularly useful in Richmond where there are a lot of shops that are not easily accessible because of steps. Shop owners are given support on how they can become more accessible; there is always a warm welcome.

It is hoped that these initiatives can be replicated across the County making North Yorkshire accessible for everyone.

**Ageing Well:** I attended an Ageing Well event at the Catterick Integrated Care Campus at Catterick Garrison (CICC) with Carly Walker, Public Health Manager, which had been organised by the NHS and MOD, together with other providers including CFY, YAS, NY Sport, Head of Place NY at ICB Frailty strategy and others. Talk was of Cross Cohort themes, military to civilian, Frailty, Enhanced Care for older people; Hospital@Home – a virtual ward; Data intelligence from Leon Green who used to be with Public Health at NY but now at the ICB. It was a very interesting day.

The CICC is a major new healthcare facility being delivered through a partnership between the NHS and the Ministry of Defence. The £110 million development will bring together a wide range of services in one location, including primary care, rehabilitation and mental health support, service both military personnel and the local civilian community. It is hoped the construction will be completed by Spring followed by a phased opening of services later in the year.

**NY Fire & Rescue Service – Older Drivers:** This was a Teams meeting set up by NY Fire & Rescue Road Safety Partnership; we have the second highest age range over 65s; the concerns around this are focussed on effects of medication; memory issues; Dementia; eyesight and arthritis; cataracts; neurological conditions. We were advised that 1 in 10 people over 65 take more than 10 types of medication every day and there are 191 medical conditions that can affect drivers. There are many warning signs when older people are driving including being aggressive, clipping kerbs, driving excessively slowly; scrapes and dents plus others; spoke of the lack of public transport.

There is Driver refresher training and Older Driver Workshops run by the North Yorkshire Fire Service; there was one of their courses in Easingwold but unfortunately I was unable to attend. The meeting was part of Adult Safeguarding week.

Throughout the year the NY Fire & Rescue Service (NYFRS) also offer free Home Fire Safety Visits. They are very supportive of our healthy ageing work across the County.

**International Day of Older People – 1<sup>st</sup> October**

The International Day of Older People is celebrated annually on **October 1st** to recognize the contributions of older people and address issues affecting their lives, such as health, social isolation, and rights. Established by the UN in 1990, it promotes age-friendly environments and highlights the opportunities and challenges of global ageing.

With the help of Carly Walker, Public Health Manager, we held our first event in Northallerton in 2021, since then the event has gone from strength to strength with many organisations/providers throughout North Yorkshire taking part. Knaresborough Connectors are always first off the blocks organising a fun filled day with singing, dancing and lots more.

A great day with tea and cake – what a way to celebrate 😊

**Christmas in the Town Hall:** On Christmas Day I can always be found in the Town Hall in Northallerton in charge of the kitchen! I have done this for a few years down and really enjoy seeing those people, mainly older people, who would be on their own at Christmas or not able to afford the trimmings of Christmas, we also have people that go out and deliver a meal to those who are unable to get to the Town Hall; this is funded by the goodwill of businesses and people around Northallerton and other donations, everyone goes home with a ‘pressie’ bag of useful things.

**In conclusion: I make no apology for the length of my report; there is so much information that I believe needs to be circulated. I hope what is in the report is helpful and that I have facilitated you to look further into some of the subjects.**

A person’s most useful asset is not a head full of knowledge, but a heart full of love, an ear ready to listen, and a hand willing to help others.

**And finally,**

*Old age is golden, I’ve heard it said,  
But sometimes I wonder as I crawl into bed  
My ears are in a drawer, my teeth in a cup,  
My eyes on a table until I wake up  
As sleep dims my vision, I say to myself:  
Is there anything else I should lay on the shelf?  
How do I know that my youth is all spent?  
Well, my get up and go has got up and went,  
But in spite of it all I am able to grin  
When I think of the places my get up has been!!!!*

Old? Me? Oh No! I’m in the prime of my life – somewhere between the young and restless, and the old and senseless 😊

Councillor Caroline Dickinson  
North Yorkshire Council’s Older People’s Champion