

# The PAL Gazette

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www.engagewithage.org.uk info@engagewithage.org.uk Facebook: EngageWithAgeBelfast Twitter: @Engage\_With\_Age All information correct at the time of publication.

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## Engage with Age Front Page Poems



### 'Memories of War'

The siren's scream woke us from our sleeping  
And mummy rushed in, and took us in her arms.  
We then huddled in the air raid shelter weeping,  
Trying to stay safe, away from harm.  
I had to leave to escape the nightly sorties,  
Six years old, confused, sent away.  
Though the World War reaching Belfast was in the 40s  
It's etched on to my memory like yesterday.  
The morning I was sent up to the country  
We cried and cried and cried on the platform.  
I knew no-one, I was scared, and I felt lonely,  
Sent to an unknown place, a stranger's farm.  
I was frightened, missed my mummy, how would it be?  
What was going to happen, I didn't know.  
At least there was someone waiting there to meet me  
And while I didn't want it I had somewhere safe to go.  
Now, ghostly children in Kyiv are boarding trains.  
I can't believe it's happening again.

By the 'Secret Sonneteer'

# LIVE LIFE TO THE FULL

Belfast City Council's Age Friendly Belfast campaign has been working with and on behalf of older people in Belfast since 2014. The campaign aims to enable older people over the age of sixty to "live life to the full".

The scope of Age Friendly Belfast's work has included: strategic work with health providers; initiatives such as Positive Ageing Month; the Older Volunteer Awards; working with local neighbourhoods to make them dementia friendly; and activities such as walks, tea dances, and the Age Friendly Convention. Every three years Age Friendly Belfast produces a new Age Friendly Plan and work has been taking place on the new plan.

Have Your Say on the new Age Friendly Belfast Plan.

Age Friendly Belfast has been talking to older people in the city to find out what will be important for the next three years. There have already been meetings and conversations. Here are the issues that have been highlighted so far:

- **Getting Out and About** - accessible public transport and places where it is safe and easy to walk.
- **Making Connections** - it is important to meet up with other people and we know that the pandemic has made this very difficult



• **Health and Wellbeing** - we know that it is difficult for older people to be as active as previously in order to stay fit and healthy. We also know that accessing health services and appointments can be a real challenge for people, particularly in the past couple of years.

• **Financial Security** - this means better employment opportunities, better access to benefits and entitlements, and better protection from financial scams and fraud. We also know that poverty, and particularly food and fuel poverty are affecting more and more people.

Age Friendly Belfast is interested in your views

1. Are these the right things to focus on to help older people live well in Belfast?
2. What one thing could be done to make things better in these issues?
3. What is already working well for you in Belfast?

Please send your feedback to [seniorsinfo@belfastcity.gov.uk](mailto:seniorsinfo@belfastcity.gov.uk)  
You can also contact Age Friendly Belfast by telephone on **07967 646146** or **07713 684705**.

## Covid Response Contact Numbers

If you are in East or South Belfast and have any Covid related emergencies here are some useful numbers:

**East Belfast Covid Helpline:**  
07783 631114 (Mon-Fri 9.30am - 4.30pm)

**South Belfast Covid-19 Helpline:** 07394 569 155



## PAL Gazette News



**GET INVOLVED!** Would you like to join the team that helps put the Gazette together? You can help by writing articles, collecting recipes, searching for competitions, even helping with the mail out.

Call Lois on **07595 261253** if you would like to join the PAL Gazette team.

In the meantime, keep sending in your stories! We love your recipes, special stories, and poems.

Call Lois on **07595 261253**

Or if you use email, send them to [info@engagewithage.org.uk](mailto:info@engagewithage.org.uk)

## Quick-fire Phone Competition!

The 5<sup>th</sup> person to call **Lois** on **07595 261253** will receive a £10 Tesco voucher. **Calls will be taken 10am-6pm, Monday-Friday.** Competition closes 21st April 2022.

Winner announced in next edition.

**Winner of March Edition 23 was June Patterson.**



# Support Numbers

If you need some support, the following services can help.

## Covid-19 Community Helpline:

For information, advice and guidance, from Advice NI. **Tel: 0808 802 0020**

## Age-friendly Belfast:

Call to get information on key Belfast City Council services. **Tel: 07713 684705**

## Check-In and Chat:

A new Age NI/ Commissioner for Older People telephone service for people over 60 who may be isolated and fancy a chat. **Tel: 0808 808 7575**

# HERE TO HELP

To reach the Engage with Age team see numbers below.

We are always happy to receive your phone calls so our mobile numbers are:

**Eamon Quinn 07710 993036**

**Cathy Chambers 07468 695593**

**John McCandless 07729 516576**

**Eileen McQuillan 07423 702721**

**Caleb Armitage 07436 174793**

**Our telephones are available during office hours and weekdays.**

If you phone and we can't answer, please leave a message and we will return your call.

## Send your letters to:

**The PAL Gazette, Engage with Age, East Belfast Network Centre, 55 Templemore Avenue, Belfast BT5 4FP. Or you can email: [info@engagewithage.org.uk](mailto:info@engagewithage.org.uk)**



# Parks of Belfast

Now that the weather has (mostly) improved, it's good for us to get out and about a bit more. We all know that getting some exercise, such as going for a walk, is not just beneficial to our physical health but can also help improve and maintain good mental health too. In saying that, we can all relate to falling too easily into a bit of a rut and becoming bored with our normal routines. So why not take advantage of the sunshine we're hoping for and explore some of the wonderful (and free!) public spaces that are right on our doorstep in Belfast?

East Belfast is home to Victoria Park. You can access the park via the underpass and pedestrian entrances on the Airport Road from Sam Thompson Bridge and the Sydenham Bypass. If you're using public transport, take the Metro 3a bus to Inverary Drive. According to Belfast City Council, the idea of creating a public park near the Connswater River in east Belfast was first suggested by the Harbour Commissioner in 1854. Progress was slow because the land was very marshy, inaccessible, and generally unsuitable for a public park. After many meetings, surveyors' reports and drainage schemes, Victoria Park opened in 1906. It was landscaped by Charles McKimm, who also built the Tropical Ravine in Botanic Gardens. An outdoor swimming pool was added several years later. The central area of the park became a popular spot for soccer, bowling and cricket. The park now features a lake which is home to water birds such as swans, geese, ducks, herons and migrant waders. The playing fields have soccer pitches, a bowling green and even a cycling and BMX track! A poetry trail, which features ten nature-themed poems written by local primary school pupils and etched onto metal plaques, also provides a pleasant route around the park. Other features include flower and rose beds and horticultural displays.

Next we'll head to South Belfast on the Metro no. 8 for Queen's University or the Metro no. 7 to College Park to find one of Belfast's most famous parks, Botanic Gardens. Established in 1828 by the Belfast Botanic and Horticultural Society in response to public interest in horticulture and botany, it was originally known as the Belfast Botanic Garden. The site was sold to the Belfast

Corporation and re-opened as a public park, known as Botanic Gardens, in 1895. The gardens contained exotic tree species and impressive plant collections from the southern hemisphere, many of which can still be seen in Botanic Gardens. Today the gardens boast tropical plants, giant bird feeders, a rose garden, an alpine garden, mature trees, flower beds and sculptures. They are also the home of the iconic Palm House and Tropical Ravine. Although the Palm House is currently closed, you can enjoy the Tropical ravine between 1pm and 4pm on Mondays, and 10am - 4pm the rest of the week. Botanic Gardens also hosts a wide range of events through the year, ranging from Belfast Mela to pop concerts. And if our ever-changing weather decides not to play nice, you can spend a very pleasant few hours exploring the many exhibits in the Ulster Museum.

Glider route G1 in the direction of McKinsty Road from Belfast city centre takes us to the west of the city and Falls Park. In June 1866, Belfast Corporation bought 101 acres of land on Falls Road from the Sinclair family. Some of the land was set aside for the building of Belfast City Cemetery, but the rest was earmarked for a new park. As the land initially fell outside the Belfast city boundary, the area was not considered a public park until the Public Parks (Ireland) Act was passed in 1869. The area now known as Falls Park was established in 1873. From 1924 until 1979, Falls Park was home to an outdoor swimming pool, known locally as 'the Cooler'. It cost £3,000 to build and was fed by the Ballymurphy Stream, which still flows through the area today. The park features many mature trees, beautiful flowers, horticultural displays and grass areas. Recent improvements to the park have included a free outdoor gym, which is suited to all ages and abilities for those wanting to get a little extra exercise!

The final destination on our whistle stop tour of Belfast parks is The Waterworks in North Belfast. You can get to the park on Metro no. 1A through to H from the city centre, and enter the park from either the Antrim Road or Cavehill Road. The Belfast Waterworks were established in the early 1840s by the Water

Commissioner. The site supplied water to the city's factories and residents for 20 years before demand began to outstrip supply. In 1897 a public meeting was held to decide the future of the Waterworks and a suggestion was made that the site should be used for water-based activities. The site's owners, the Water Board, were initially hesitant, as their operation licence only extended to providing the city with water and they did not want to sell their land to the Belfast Corporation. Following an Act of Parliament in 1889, the Water Board were allowed to use the Waterworks for leisure, provided they spent no more than £500 a year on the site. Tom Boyce, a boating contractor who operated the Ormeau ferry across the River Lagan, was commissioned by the Water Board to provide 12 rowing boats for the site. Public bathing and diving were allowed.

Swimming galas and speedboat racing began in 1929. Model yacht sailing was allowed in 1933. Belfast Corporation bought the Waterworks in 1956. They decided to partially fill in both of the site's reservoirs for safety. Since then, the upper pond has been stocked with trout for the local angling club and two manmade islands have been added to



encourage waterfowl to breed. Generations of families have visited the Waterworks on a regular basis, with the birds being one of the main attractions. You can find greylag geese and mute swans, as well as mallards, tufted ducks, coots, pochards, goldeneyes, cormorants and great-crested grebes in the park. You can also find redwings and fieldfares feeding on the grass.

Of course, these 4 parks are only the tip of the iceberg. There are over 40 parks, playing fields and open recreation spaces listed on Belfast City Council's website. Many of them have won Green Flag awards between 2011 and 2021. So why not get together with some friends or family and explore some old favourites and find some new places to spend time in the great outdoors this summer!

## WORDS ALIVE

### "Into the Mystic" by Annie Kate Kearney

Grannie Annie was a soothsayer.  
Not for highbrowed things - crystal ball, the divining rod, tarot cards or examining palms.  
Annie kept it simple - she read the leaves - yes tea leaves!

I watched fascinated when she gathered the tools of her trade,  
Cups and saucer from her precious china cabinet.  
Her best teapot she got as a wedding present too long ago to remember,  
A packet of Punjana tea, bought on the tick, from the local shop.  
A group of ladies would gather in the tiny living room,  
The victims or clients would have tea from a cup and saucer  
Served with Annie's homemade tattie apple

Made on her beloved griddle.

The ladies would drink the tea from the delicate cup to the final drop, afraid of dropping it.  
They had to turn the cup upside down on the saucer and spin around three times in a clockwise direction.  
Granny would delicately raise each precious cup one by one by the base and gaze into it as if studying a museum piece.

Everyone held their breaths and you could almost smell the excitement in the room from the assembled ladies waiting in anticipation of the revelations.  
In her best Belfast accent, Annie would dole out her predictions.

# WHAT'S ON

## WALKS

There will be walks in South Belfast on Tuesdays in April at 2pm and in East Belfast on Wednesdays at 2pm.

If you are interested in taking part contact Caleb Armitage for more details via phone on **07436 174793** or via email on [palproject@engagewithage.org.uk](mailto:palproject@engagewithage.org.uk)

## KIT GROUP

Every Thursday 2pm

The Keeping In Touch Group (KIT Group)

Dee Street Community Centre, 12-16 Dee Street, Belfast BT4 1FT.

## T'AI CHI

Every Friday 11am at Inverary Community Centre, Inverary Avenue, Belfast BT4 1RN.

## DANCE GROUP

Every Friday at 2pm, Inverary Community Centre. Contact Caleb to join in.

## FAMILY TREE GROUP

Meeting on the 13th April and 27th April in South Belfast at Ballynafeigh Community Development Association.

## DEMENTIA FRIENDLY GROUP

Mondays, 2pm, Inverary Community Centre, Inverary Avenue, Belfast BT4 1RN.

## CLASSIC BOOK GROUP

A new book group, meeting monthly, reading titles we are all familiar with that are also freely available online. The group meets in Café Refresh in the Skainos Centre on Newtownards Road Belfast. April's book is "Lord of the Flies" by William Golding.

In all instances above, please call/ email Caleb to let us know you're coming.

Call Caleb on **07436 174793** or email [palproject@engagewithage.org.uk](mailto:palproject@engagewithage.org.uk)

## ONLINE EVENTS

### Chocolate Bingo

7.30pm Thursday 14th April (Father Ted special - costumes welcome) and Thursday 28th April.

For zoom link email [eamon.quinn@engagewithage.org.uk](mailto:eamon.quinn@engagewithage.org.uk)

### Jim's Pub Quiz Without a Pub

Via Zoom, 7.00pm Thursday 21st April 2022.

For zoom link email [eamon.quinn@engagewithage.org.uk](mailto:eamon.quinn@engagewithage.org.uk)

**Over the Easter week there will be a break in activities between 18th - 22nd April. Please always call the leader in advance to check that the activities are taking place.**

## Have Your Say with the Greater Belfast Seniors Forum Heat or Eat?

It's a small mercy the incredible increases in energy costs are coming when we are getting closer to the summer. But while we will need to heat our homes less in the forthcoming months, the surges in energy prices will affect us in many ways beyond keeping warm.

Everyone, no matter what age they are, will be affected by this crisis. Nick Menhinick, vice chair of the G6, says: "It's not just older people who will feel this increase. My children are in their 50s, my grandchildren in their 20s and 30s, and all of us are going to feel it."

People across Northern Ireland have been already experiencing energy price increases. New year price increases on some tariffs went up by 70%. The energy market in Northern Ireland is slightly different and less diverse than in the Great Britain, but the impact on prices will be similar and there is more to come.

Nick says: "We hear through the media that there will be increases, and we've experienced some already, however, there is a lack of information from energy providers. I hear one company saying they won't put prices up yet, then I hear others will increase by 25%, then 50% for others. We need better information, even if it is companies saying they can't give the answers yet but will do in the near future."

Nick points out, the increases won't just affect home heating, but any activity that uses energy. Which is almost everything. Energy price increases will affect business and industry, the cost of food, general goods. Taxi fares will become more expensive and if you are an older person who can't use public transport then it will affect how connected you are to your community and to services.

Nick says: "To me this is really the number one issue. I was advised to increase my monthly payments by over 100%. I don't want a large bill to pay at the end of the year when they come to settle up. And I live in a reasonably modern home, well insulated, with limited costs. For me, energy price increases "out Covid" Covid as the issue

we need to talk about. Over the next few weeks lots of prospective MLAs will be asking for your vote. Why not ask them what they will do about this issue in return for your vote?"

### What Can You Do?

Here is one useful thing to do. Contact National Energy Action NI.

National Energy Action was set up across the UK to enable people struggling with their energy costs and consumption to get help. In Northern Ireland it is an independent charity that provides advice and support, campaigns of behalf of those experiencing fuel poverty, undertakes research and shares learning, and campaigns to improve the quality of advice given to consumers.

The practical ways they can help include: advice and guidance; check if you are getting the benefits you are entitled to; help your home become more energy efficient.

National Energy Action has a huge library of information on ways you can cope with the increasing cost of energy and its services can be accessed in person, by telephone, or online.

**To find out more, contact the National Energy Action NI by telephone on 028 9023 9909 or visit their website on [www.nea.org.uk](http://www.nea.org.uk)**



## New Activities

**Friday Activities will recommence in May** in Donegall Pass Community Centre, Apsley Street – register for a place. 4 consecutive weeks commencing on 11th May 11am – 12.30pm (Tea./Coffee on arrival). Various activities every Friday inc Chair Yoga, Tai Chi, Crafts and other activities.

**For all of these activities contact: Cathy Chamber by email: [cathy.chambers@engagewithage.org.uk](mailto:cathy.chambers@engagewithage.org.uk) or by phone 07468 695593**

## The Questionnaire

**Name:** Susan Steenson

**Position:** Walk Volunteer

**How do you enjoy spending your free time?**

I enjoy spending time with my daughter, Sarah, and with my cat Marley! I also like to keep active, going to yoga, walking and when the weather permits, swimming in the sea!

**Why are these activities important to you?**

Keeping active is good for my wellbeing and I enjoy seeing friends and catching up with a coffee and bun after.

**What is the best thing about living here?**

You can drive to the sea and the mountains with ease, there are lots of lovely places to walk. I like being close to family and friends.

**Favourite Pastimes?**

I like going to the theatre and cinema, and also going out for a meal with my daughter and friends. On a sunny day, I love to be outside reading my book with a cup of coffee. I also love going on holiday.

**Favourite Film?**

"The holiday". I love watching this every Christmas with my daughter.

**Favourite Food?**

A slice of cake, I have a sweet tooth!

**Tell us something about you that not many people know.**

I run 5k twice a week.

**What advice would you give to young people?**

Travel, see the world and be sure to spend time doing things that you enjoy.



**We are delighted to welcome back 'Anne's Crafty Corner'**

## Anne's Crafty Corner Foam Egg Shapers Stick On Easter Decorations

### Materials

- Embroidery cotton and needle
- Small Chocolate egg
- Small piece of ribbon

### Method

- Leaving a 2 inch space at top of egg do a large running stitch round the double egg shape
- Decorate, fill with eggs and stick a ribbon loop in the open space to hang it up and to prevent the eggs falling out.





# APRIL WORD SEARCH



Enter our Word Search competition for a chance to win a £10 Tesco voucher.

Find the following eight words hidden in the word square above:

- GAZETTE • CHOCOLATE • EASTER
- BUNNY • HOT CROSS BUN • WEATHER
- POMPOMS • GOLDEN

To enter, phone Lois Kennedy on **07595 261 253 on weekdays, 10am-6pm**. Please note due to the popularity of competitions all correct entries are placed in a draw and the winner chosen at random.

The winner will be announced in the next edition of The PAL Gazette. **Entries for this edition's quiz need to be in by 21st April.**

The winner of last month's Word Search was June Patterson.

## Night Blessing

Submitted by Audrey Lynas

*'May you leave your worries of today behind as you step into tomorrow. There will be plenty of challenges and uncertainties ahead without you carrying the problems and fears of today too. May you have peace, grace and strength for the day ahead.'*



## Can You Read This Clearly?

Can you read this paper clearly? If you need a magnifying glass, phone or text Eamon on **07710 993 036**.

We will send you one through the post for free.

## Home Safety Measures for SENIORS



Seniors are prone to accidents due to health factors. A fall or injury can be fatal for them. Prevent falls by:

01. Ensuring railings are sturdy for all stairs in the house.
02. Fastening all rugs on the floor to avoid slipping.
03. Removing electrical wires and cords from walkways.
04. Making sure that all walkways are well-lit and have accessible switches.
05. Installing grab bars in the toilet and shower and adding non-slip rugs in the bathroom.

## OLD JOKES HOME!

**What do you get when you pour hot water into a rabbit hole?**  
Hot cross bunnies.

**What do you call a mischievous Easter egg?**  
A practical yoker.

**Why did the Easter Bunny have to fire the duck?**  
Because he kept quacking all the eggs!

Submitted by our Anonymous Phone Caller who loves a joke.

## Jim's Tea Time Quiz

Answer each of these five questions correctly for your chance to win a £10 Tesco voucher.

1. Which British actor died whilst still filming his supporting role in Ridley Scott's *Gladiator*?
2. On August 19th 1969, Soviet tanks rolled into which country?
3. The chemical symbol Y denotes which uncommon metal?
4. In mythology, Romulus and Remus were brought up by which animal?
5. Which is Britain's oldest Sunday newspaper, Published for the first time in 1971?

The winner of last month's quiz was **Margaret McDougal**. To enter, phone **Lois Kennedy on 07595 261253 on weekdays, 10am-6pm**. Please note, due to the popularity of competitions, all correct entries are placed in a draw and the winner chosen at random.

**Entries for this edition's quiz need to be in by 21st April 2022.**

The answers to the last quiz were:

1. Bob Marley 2. Sea Creature 3. Ian Fleming 4. SOS 5. Cranium

## Jim's Pub Quiz Without a Pub

On the third Thursday each month via Zoom

To join in email [eamon.quinn@engagewithage.org.uk](mailto:eamon.quinn@engagewithage.org.uk)



## Recipe Hot Cross Bun Pudding

Put an Easter twist on a classic bread and butter pudding with this delicious recipe.

### Ingredients:

- 6 traditional hot cross buns
- 60 g unsalted butter
- 6 egg yolks
- 1/4 cup caster sugar
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 2 cups milk
- 300 ml cream
- Icing sugar

### Method:

1. Slice each bun into 3 pieces, butter each piece and layer in an oven dish, making sure the pieces overlap as shown.
2. Whisk together the egg yolks, sugar and vanilla until pale, then whisk in the milk and cream. Pour this mixture over your hot cross buns and set aside for 15 minutes.

3. Preheat your oven to 180. After the 15 minutes is up, place your dish into a roasting tray, and pour in enough boiling water to come half way up the outside of your oven dish.

4. Bake for 35 minutes or until set and golden. Dust with a little sifted icing sugar and serve.



## Scams reported to the PSNI in February 2022

- |                   |                   |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| 13 doorstep scams | 72 internet scams |
| 10 postal scams   | 179 phone scams   |

Total money lost to scams?

# £333,035

## Don't be the next victim.

Keep up to date with the latest scams:  
[facebook.com/scamwiseni](https://facebook.com/scamwiseni)

**scamwiseni**  
PARTNERSHIP

Engage with Age thanks its supporters and funders:



Belfast City Council

