

# York Older People's Assembly St Sampson's Centre Church Street, York YO1 8BE

Registered Charity 1101018

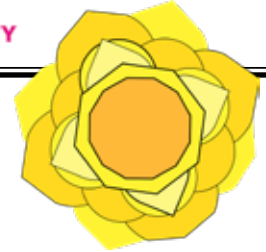
Email: [yorkolderpeoplesassembly@outlook.com](mailto:yorkolderpeoplesassembly@outlook.com)

**SPRING 2025**



Tel: 07965 246193

Website: [www.yorkassembly.org.uk](http://www.yorkassembly.org.uk)



## York 50+ Festival: The Fun Begins Now!

Many will recall with a smile - and will have joined in - the rich mix of 50+ Festival Programme activities led by YOPA last autumn.

This was complemented by the joyous festivities created for the UN International Day of Older People (IDOP), where we were supported by good friends in AgeUK York, OCAV, St Sampson's, Parkinsons Creatives and many more.



IDOP 2024

Preparations for this year's Festival are now getting underway for what will be the twentieth iteration of the 50+ Programme and our fourth IDOP where once again we aim to be the voice for elders in our city and to 'show off' the many and different, positive faces of older citizens and their many contributions to community life.

The 50+ Programme will be led by Jenny Collieson, Vice Chair of AgeUK York and the IDOP Programme by Dianne Willcocks, Vice Chair of YOPA.



50+ Festival Event

Dates to remember are Saturday September 27th for the IDOP-day and a period, likely-to-be, September 20 - October 4 for the 50+ Programme ... with further information to follow.

Do note these dates in your diary. And do get in touch with Jenny (via [jenny.collieson@ageukyork.org.uk](mailto:jenny.collieson@ageukyork.org.uk)) or Dianne (via [d.willcocks@outlook.com](mailto:d.willcocks@outlook.com)) should you wish to be involved in any way; we would love to hear from you!

## York 50+ Festival Needs Volunteers ...

to support our acclaimed 50+ Programme of many & various activities; and to support our International Day of Older People creative & celebratory activities

**Do you have skills & experience in ...**

Marketing; Film Editing; Fundraising; Visual Display; Arts & Crafts; Choirs & community music-making?

**E: Dianne Willcocks [d.willcocks@outlook.com](mailto:d.willcocks@outlook.com)**

Let's have a conversation!



# Bob Towner

## OBITUARY

On 4th January 2025, York Older People's Assembly lost one of its greatest supporters when Bob Towner died aged 81.

Bob was born and brought up in Caversham, Reading. He excelled at sport, particularly rugby and cricket and played at county level. Bob studied Industrial Chemistry at Loughborough then worked as a manager in the paints division of ICI in Slough.

Bob was elected as a councillor in Reading and was, for a time, the youngest Leader of a Council in the country. This experience led to a change of career into local government and he was appointed Deputy Director of Housing in Hillingdon and then Director of Housing in Haringey.

In 1985, the family came to York, where Bob took up the role of Housing Director and set about transforming the Housing Department.

Under his leadership, Tenants Choice was introduced, where council tenants, who had previously been told what they were getting, were given choices when needing new bathrooms, kitchens and colours of their front door. Repairs by appointment and the Tenants Charter followed.

A major refurbishment and improvement of the Bell Farm Estate was implemented. Several sheltered schemes for older people were built including the award-winning City Mills.

One of the first things that he did was instigate the building of The Peasholme Centre for homeless people, which also provided accommodation for women, who had previously not been catered for. York won awards for Excellence in Public Service for his pioneering work.

In 1995 Bob became Director of Community Services, a combined housing and social care department. Glen Lodge and Barstow House residential care homes were converted to extra care sheltered accommodation. The Housing Department won government and architectural awards, and tenant satisfaction was one of the highest in the UK when Bob retired.

After leaving the local authority in 2000, Bob became a consultant and was involved in housing inspections. He became a board member of several housing associations and was a member of the York Primary Care Trust and a trustee at York Hospital.

Bob was a major driver of York Older People's Assembly. He was Chair in 2013 until 2018. He was a Trustee and produced our quarterly newsletter over many years until December 2024. At Open meetings, he was always asking the challenging question so he could report hot topics in the Newsletter.

Bob came back onto the Executive Committee in November 2021 and had a 100% attendance record since then - that is dedication! George Wood said, "Bob saw a lot of change at YOPA - at critical times of change in personnel he kept things together - he was always there."

Bob's interests were walking, gardening, cricket, politics, cats and real ale and red wine.

A Just Giving page is being set up to allow people to donate to YOPA in Bob's memory - see below for the link or scan the QR code

*We'll miss you, Bob.*

Jim Cannon, YOPA Chair



[https://www.justgiving.com/page/fiona-samuel-3?utm\\_medium=FR&utm\\_source=EM](https://www.justgiving.com/page/fiona-samuel-3?utm_medium=FR&utm_source=EM)

# PENSIONS, WILLS AND LASTING POWERS OF ATTORNEY

In response to Members' suggestions, we focussed on money, pensions, wills and lasting powers of attorney at our January Open Meeting.

Jenny Wright from the Money and Pensions Service (MPS) gave an overview of financial wellbeing across Yorkshire. She shared information on how to use free MoneyHelper resources with links to the support which is available around pensions, scams and investments. Jenny also explained why it's important to talk about money and the positive benefit that can have on our mental wellbeing.

**See [www.moneyhelper.org.uk](http://www.moneyhelper.org.uk) or phone 01159 659570 (MPS).**

Jenny responded to Members' questions on many matters, including: links to the pensions ombudsman; inheritance tax; the old versus new state pension; the risks of withdrawing from pension contributions; and how a spouse's pension works.

We have been fortunate to be sponsored by Harrowells Solicitors for the 50+ Festival in recent years and Amaya Huntly, Partner, talked to us about Wills and Lasting Powers of Attorney.

Amaya answered many Members' questions, including regarding: enduring versus lasting powers of attorney; disputes over care costs; assisted dying; the role of executors; and pension inheritance.



In addition, AgeUK York have recently appointed Neville Ward to help raise awareness of these topics and he described aspects of his work, including chargeable assistance with certain forms. Contact via [www.ageuk.org.uk/york/](http://www.ageuk.org.uk/york/) or 01904 63406.

OCA Y also offer free advocacy support: Contact via [oldercitizensadvocacyyork.org.uk](http://oldercitizensadvocacyyork.org.uk) or 01904 676200.

## 2025 DIARY DATES FOR YOPA OPEN MEETINGS

**MONDAYS AT 2pm**

**AT FRIENDS MEETING HOUSE,  
FRIARGATE**

**17TH MARCH • 19TH MAY • 21ST JULY  
15TH SEPTEMBER - NOTE AGM  
17TH NOVEMBER**

**SPEAKERS AND TOPICS WILL BE  
ANNOUNCED NEARER THE DATES.**

**ALL WELCOME!  
FREE TO ATTEND**

## St Sampson's Café and Social Centre

**on Church Street is now open**

**10AM - 4 pm**

**Monday - Saturday.**

**And Sammie's is their new  
Grandparents' Café  
every Friday in the Annexe,  
10AM - 2PM (term time only)**

**For details see  
[stsampsonscentre.co.uk](http://stsampsonscentre.co.uk)  
or call 01904 652247**



## YORK PENSIONERS GAIN £1,000'S IN EXTRA INCOME

Getting the help you're entitled to really can make a difference of £1,000s. Make sure you're not missing out on

- Pension Credit
- Household Support Fund
- Council Tax Support or Council Tax Discounts

Pension Credit gives people extra money to help with their living costs if they're over State Pension age and on a low income and can also help with housing costs.

Last autumn, the council wrote to over 300 households, advising them that they might be eligible for Pension Credit and offering advice and support on how to apply for it.

By the end of the year, a third of these households had applied for their Pension Credit and secured ongoing eligibility for the Winter Fuel Payment, gaining them an average of over £6,000 a year in increased benefits.

To claim Pension Credit, you can:

- claim online at [www.gov.uk/pension-credit](http://www.gov.uk/pension-credit) if you already claim State Pension and there aren't any children or young people included in your claim.
- call the Pension Credit claim line and they can fill in the application for you over the phone on **0800 99 1234**.

## YOPA NOTICES

### VOLUNTEER VACANCIES

YOPA is searching for ...

- A new Chair of the charity to take over from Jim Cannon upon his retirement from the role at the September AGM
- An Editor for this Newsletter, which was produced for many years by the late Bob Towner
- Trustees to join the Executive Committee

To find out more about these volunteering opportunities, please contact Jim Cannon [YOPACHair@outlook.com](mailto:YOPACHair@outlook.com) or 07818 047232

### MEMBERSHIP

You are invited to support YOPA by joining as a Member, at only £5 per year.

For details and a Membership form, please contact

[yorkolderpeoplesassembly@outlook.com](mailto:yorkolderpeoplesassembly@outlook.com) or **07965 246193**.



## Home Care and Live-in care

Being able to live at home can be one of the most important comforts in an older person's life. Family and friends can't always be there, so Home Instead is here to help.

Owners Ann-Marie Roche and Luke Norbury take pride in helping people to achieve their aim of remaining as independent as possible in their own homes.

### Tailored Services

Designed around you – bespoke packages of care built around individual needs and outcomes.

### Longer Calls

The standard length of our visits is 1 hour or more – we also deliver companionship and respite care to meet your needs.

### Dedicated Team

All our care professionals are introduced so there are never any strangers. Small local teams ensure continuity and you'll receive a dedicated time slot.

**01904 690884**

[care@york.homeinstead.co.uk](mailto:care@york.homeinstead.co.uk)

[www.homeinstead.co.uk/york](http://www.homeinstead.co.uk/york)