

Fred Forster — alive and kicking

ageing matters *in Ireland*



Fred Forster (77) is still game for his favourite sport - rugby

Pages 8-9

Age Action talks to IMF and warns against cuts to most vulnerable

Page 3



Spending Patrick's Day with our new president Page 10

Age Action

Ireland

For All Older People

This booklet is a publication of Age Action. It is published 10 times a year.

PUBLISHER Age Action Ireland Ltd

ADDRESS 30-31 Lower Camden St, Dublin 2

TELEPHONE +353 1 475-6989

FAX + 353 1 475-6011

EMAIL info@ageaction.ie

WEBSITE www.ageaction.ie

AGE ACTION IRELAND LTD Company Limited by Guarantee Registered in Ireland No. 198571 Charity No. CHY 10583

CHIEF EXECUTIVE Robin Webster

INFORMATION & PUBLISHING Gerard Scully & Eamon Timmins

COPY-EDITING AND DESIGN Catherine Osborn

■ Cover photo:
Fred Forster, who kicks off his 68th season playing rugby this year.
See Pages 8-9

Making Ireland a level playing field

The stirring deeds of Fred Forster on the rugby field (see pages 8-9) have led me to think of applying the concept of the level playing field to human rights.

Fairness is as crucial in everyday life as it is in sport. Without fairness, our attitudes to others can become bitter and jealous, damaging any sense of unity, and divisiveness is more common in periods of stress and hardship like the present. There seems to be so much blame going at present – public v private, unions v employers, employed v unemployed and, more worryingly, nationals v non-nationals and young v old. Perhaps it's time for all of us to remember Jung's analysis that we dislike most in others our own worst faults.

So what can we do to create a greater sense of togetherness and turn Ireland into a level playing field for all? At a personal level, we could do more to help each other as friends or even through the kindness of strangers. One of my lasting memories of the two cold winters was the sight of people rushing to help others who slipped in the ice. There are truly remarkable people who help others all the time, but the rest of us shouldn't wait for more ice.

More generally, we need to give more thought to what kind of country we want Ireland to be. If, for example, we want Ireland to become the best place in the world in which to grow older, how do we start?

There is growing evidence from all over the world that more-equal societies are the more successful and better for everyone, especially the most disadvantaged. (See *The Spirit Level: Why Equality Is Better for Everyone* by Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett www.equalitytrust.org.uk)

The first step is to encourage the Irish Government to support the United Nations Human Rights Council in promoting greater protection of economic, social and cultural rights even in the current crisis and to turn its commitments of last year into rights-centred policies and plans.

The next step is to press the Government for an ambitious and inspiring National Positive Ageing Strategy underpinned by a rights-based approach and an appreciation that ageing is a life-long process in which we all share from birth. Such a strategy would not regard different generations as separate tribes but as the same people at different stages travelling on the same journey of life, with many more interests binding us together than dividing us.

One stark fact underscores this common bond. One of the key reasons more people are living past 80 in Ireland today is the quality of care that they and their mothers received in early childhood.

Robin Webster

IMF warned against State Pension cuts

An Age Action delegation met with the International Monetary Fund recently to outline the reality of life in Ireland in 2012 for older people.

We sought the meeting following comments in an IMF report on March 2 which proposed cuts in the universal supports for older people (such as free travel and free gas/electricity units for over-70s) and called for an assessment of the “appro-

priateness of the real State Pension rate”.

“We highlighted the importance of universal supports for older people such as the travel pass and the Medical Card, and listed all the cuts and new charges which older people on low, fixed incomes were now struggling to pay,” Age Action chief executive Robin Webster said.

Distress

“We explained the distress which speculation about the State Pension, the travel pass and free fuel units

were causing to people who depended on these for their well-being.”

During the meeting with the IMF’s resident representative in Ireland, Peter Breuer, Age Action also stressed the key role which the State Pension plays in keeping older people out of poverty.

“Mr Breuer listened attentively and assured us that the issues raised at the meeting would be sent on to Washington, along with the detailed briefing document we provided,” Mr Webster said.



Backache ranks no.1 in the list of most frequent ailments.

Pressure on the intervertebral discs is significantly higher when seated.

Incorrect seating means stress on the spinal column.

All Zerostress chairs and sofas provide ergonomically shaped upholstered backs and promote a healthy and relaxed seating position.

As such the vertebral column experiences optimal relief and neck support.

Hand-made in Germany with a comprehensive 5 year warranty




Experience the comfort of Zerostress chairs and sofas today at Sienna Home Furnishings





Sienna Home Furnishings
Tramore Road Business Park
Waterford City
Tel. 051 595 005
www.sienna.ie

Only 90 minutes from Dublin on M9 Motorway



sienna
home furnishings
www.sienna.ie



■ Galway Mayor Hildegard Naughton and Age Action's Pauline Power cut Age Action's 20th anniversary cake during the opening of our new computer training room in Galway.

Computer room opening marks anniversary

A dedicated computer training room for older people was officially opened at Age Action's offices in Galway city last month, as part of the latest expansion of our award-winning programme to provide older people with IT skills.

The training room at Age Action's offices at West End Square, Small Crane, was officially opened by Galway Mayor Hildegard Naughton. Over 120 older people have already been trained there since the room was opened earlier this year, and over 2,000 older people in Galway city and county have developed their computer skills since Age Action's Getting Started programme began in 2007.

"We are running 10 classes a week in this room and, together with the classes in local libraries and other facilities around the county, it will help us meet the huge demand from older people who want to learn how to use computers," Getting Started Development Officer Niamh Hennelly said.

Getting Started classes are also being provided in Ballybane Library, the Galway City Library, Oranmore, Ballinfoyle, Loughrea, Portumna, Ballinasloe, Tuam, Ballygar, Oughterard and Gort.

"The impact of these classes on the quality of life of the learners has to be seen to be appreciated – it is literally opening up a new world to people and changing their lives," Getting Started national coordinator Pauline Power said. "From learning to surf the internet, to using email and Skype to keep

in contact with family and friends abroad, computers are greatly enriching the lives of older people."

The current challenge for Age Action in Galway is to recruit more volunteer tutors. "We need volunteers who can give two hours a week, for a minimum of four weeks," Niamh Hennelly said. Training is provided for tutors.

The new training room has eight desktop computers and laptops. It also has wireless internet so that people can bring their own laptops if they wish.

The official opening of the training room on March 9 coincided with the 20th anniversary (to the day) of the foundation of Age Action. A birthday cake was cut to mark the occasion.

For further details of classes or to volunteer as a tutor, contact Niamh Hennelly at 087-1956047 or 091-527831.

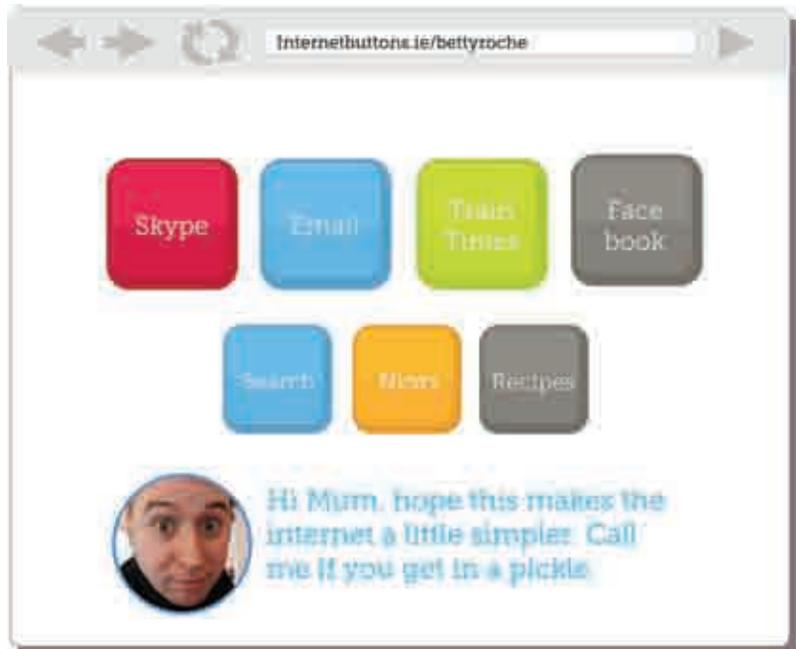
UPC launches Internet Buttons

A new initiative to increase the use of the internet among consumers who are new to the net, was launched by UPC and Pat Rabbitte TD, Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources, on Monday, 26th March.

Designed by behaviour change company We Are What We Do, Internet Buttons is a free web tool that allows those confident on the net to create an easy-to-use customised web browser for family members, friends or neighbours who are new to the internet or find it confusing. At internetbuttons.ie users can set up a page of buttons, or pick from ready-made buttons, which link to sites and services the person they're helping might find useful or enjoyable.

Internet Buttons removes all the complicated bits of the internet and makes it easy to keep going back to the places to the websites users like. These Buttons are saved on their own personalised URL (e.g. internetbuttons.ie/bettyroche), so they can be accessed from any computer. Internet Buttons is being made freely available for all to use at www.internetbuttons.ie by UPC.

While designed to assist all new internet users, it is particularly aimed at



encouraging internet use among older people. CSO and Eurostat studies have shown usage of the internet in Ireland among the age group 65-74 year olds is below the EU average – 74% of older people in Ireland never use the internet compared to 67% across the EU. Experience in the UK shows that Internet Buttons is an extremely useful way of increasing web usage among this age group.

Pat Rabbitte TD, Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources, commented: “If we are to create a truly inclusive digital future for Ireland, it is crucial that internet usage increases among those currently not online. Internet Buttons is a really useful tool in this regard, helping to show non-users just how

simple and useful the internet can be.”

Internet Buttons is a UPC initiative which reinforces the company's commitment to the promotion of digital inclusion.

Dana Strong, Chief Executive of UPC Ireland said: “Internet Buttons is a new initiative that forms part of UPC Ireland's Digital Inclusion Programme. As Ireland's leading media operator providing digital TV, broadband internet and digital telephony services to homes and businesses, we are committed to establishing a digitally inclusive society where the benefits of the internet and wider communications technologies are enjoyed by all.”

Check it out under www.upc.ie or www.internetbuttons.ie



■ Age Action's Lorna Roe (centre) at the UN meeting in Geneva with Jacqueline Healy, National Women's Council of Ireland (left), and Meghan Doherty, Action Canada for Population and Development

Age Action briefs UN council on health and housing rights in Ireland

Last month Age Action's Lorna Roe travelled to Geneva to address the United Nation's Human Rights Council.

The presentation took place as part of the final stage of Ireland's Universal Period Review. This review examined Ireland against a set of human rights standards and included listening to the views of Irish charities.

Age Action first made a written submission to the UN Human Rights Council on health and housing

rights in Ireland, concentrating on areas of concern for older people.

Ms Roe spoke on behalf of a coalition of other Irish NGOs to the council and made a presentation to the UN on the effect of the recession, poverty and Irish mental health services.

That day (March 14) the Irish Government accepted 100 out of 127 proposals put forward during the review, including the recommendation to set up a complaints procedure for economic, social and cultural rights under which Ireland would be answerable to the UN. This now means that

any citizen can complain to the UN, for example, about living in poverty in Ireland or not having access to necessary health services.

Age Action would like to thank Amnesty Ireland for their support in making the trip happen. "It was a useful trip, highlighting the issues of older people's groups and groups representing the vulnerable, before the United Nations and its member states," Ms Roe said. "As the UN continues to work on preparing for a Convention for Older People, this will be an area for continued work in the future for Age Action."

Property tax must consider ability to pay

Age Action has warned the Government that its plans to introduce a property tax must recognise that many older people own their own homes, but may not have the income to pay the proposed tax liability on it.

The vast majority of older people own their own home (79%), according to census figures. Yet currently in Ireland 10% of older people live on incomes deemed below the poverty line. Many others live on incomes just above the poverty line. For the majority of State Pensioners, the State Pension is their main source of income.

Age Action has written to the inter-departmental group on property tax to highlight this situation and was recently invited to make an oral submission.

Age Action believes a combination of the following solutions is needed in the new legislation to protect low income older people:

- **A minimum income threshold** for property owners, below which they are exempt from paying property tax, would protect older people on low incomes.



■ **Property tax must recognise that many older people own their own homes but no longer have the income to pay property tax.**

- **A property tax “circuit breaker”** would work on a sliding scale for other low income households which are above the income threshold but would still struggle if forced to pay the full property tax bill. It would limit the percentage of a qualifying person’s income that could be paid for property tax. Circuit breaker programmes run in 18 US states, with with qualifying groups ranging from older people and people with disabilities, to families and individuals on low incomes.

- **Concessions for specific household circumstances** would recognise that the tax could cause greater hardship for many to meet their full

property tax liability. In the UK, there are council tax concessions for carers, people living alone, and those with a disability or mental impairment. We believe everyone who is in residential care should also qualify.

- **Limits on annual increases** in property tax rates would be needed to protect older people on fixed incomes who have lived in the same house for decades, in an area where property values may be rising fast due to market forces (such as “gentrification” in traditionally low income areas). Without measures to control the rate of property tax increase, older people would be forced to sell their homes.



■ Fred Foster (red shorts) in action for Newbridge against London Irish last November

Fred is in a league of his own

Tipperary native Fred Forster is looking forward to the new rugby season, which kicks off this month in his adopted home in Nevada. It will be his 68th season playing, and he is as enthusiastic now as he was when he first played as a 10-year-old.

Fred (77) is a walking ad for positive ageing and a player whose passion for rugby would put players a quarter of his age to shame. “I have played all my life,” he said. “The only reason to quit is if you get an injury which stops you playing, or you get tired of it.”

Fred divides his time between his home in Newbridge, Co. Kildare, and his home in Nevada,

in the United States. Last season he played 10 matches, including one for Newbridge against London Irish veterans, games for the Nevada Old Boys, the San Francisco Señors (which he founded in 1966), and a seven-a-side tournament in Cuba. This season is already shaping up to be a busy one, with two games in Nevada in April, as well as trips to Canada and Turkey.

As a veteran player, there are some protections that increase with age. Different colour shorts identify the age of players and the level of protection provided by the rules. So players between 60 and 64 can wear red shorts, which mean they can be “claimed and held” by the opposition but not tackled to the ground. Protections increase for players aged

up to 79 years old (gold and purple shorts), who must not be touched or tackled, but can be blocked or have the ball knocked from their grip.

“I never paid much attention to the colour of my shorts and always wore black until mid-2011 when someone gave me a pair of reds,” Fred explains. “I thought I would try it, so now I find it easier as I do not get hit as hard. However, lots of teams don’t pay much attention and clobber you any way.”

Fred also recommends Shigeru Llewellyn’s *Rugby for Elderly Gentlemen*. “He has some good survival tips such as: always let the ball bounce; don’t hit anything that’s coming towards you; and buy the dummy – the most dangerous players are your own team mates; and several other tips such

as retaliate first!”

His family are generally supportive of his rugby. “My wife, Victoria, just thinks I am a fool” he said. “She is, however, a rugby fan and was president of Newbridge for three years.” Fred and Victoria got married on a rugby pitch in San Francisco in 1994, at half time during a match. Fred played the first half and quickly changed into a white tux for the ceremony, which was officiated by the match referee.

However, a love of rugby alone is not enough to get Fred to the start of his 68th successive season. Regardless of the restrictions on physical contact, players need to be physically fit as they still play on a full-size pitch. Fred exercises five times a week, for between 30 and 60 minutes each day. He aims to burn between 400 and 500 calories in each session, which may vary between cycling, the gym or the pool (where he does running in the water). “My left knee is

a bit sore, so I baby myself and only run about once a week,” he said.

The former Colleges Intermediate Sprint Champion (1951) has had a lifelong love of sport and exercise, and also enjoys tennis, golf, skiing and water skiing. “I do a lot more exercise than the average man my age,” he said. “If I have to miss exercise for three or four days, I do not feel as mentally alert. Exercise is important for longevity, and it also keeps me in good spirits.”

Fred exudes positivity: “I am a can-do man – I can do anything. I do not think of myself as old. It annoys me when I see other men of 50 walking like they are 90, not because of their legs but because of their mental attitude – they think they are old. Without thinking about it, they drag their feet. It comes down to their individual laziness and lack of spirit and lack of motivation to do anything.”

He has spent most of his working life in the US

as a civil engineer building nuclear power plants, and later as an entrepreneur in the property sector. Fred believes one of the biggest differences for older people between the US and Ireland is the health service.

“The Irish health system is messed up when it comes to taking care of older people,” Fred believes. “They are told by the doctor ‘you take those pills and then come back and see me’. The doctor is king and often fails to explain to people what he is doing. It is not that they are incompetent, but their practice is lousy when it comes to explaining to patients.”

Fred is a believer in preventative medicine. He gets a blood test and visits his doctor every three months. He is on daily medication for a heart condition, but otherwise demands explanations from his doctor for any other medication he needs.

This, combined with his healthy lifestyle and positive attitude, have left him raring to go for another season.



■ Fred in Action: “I am a can-do man – I can do anything.”

Fred – in his own words – on his age

Chronological	77
Wisdom	85
Physical capability	35
Maturity	25
Sexual prowess	30
Mental alertness	50
Financial earning	55
Overall age	about 50



■ Pictured at Áras an Uachtaráin on St. Patrick's Day were (from left): Marie O'Gorman, Claire Murphy, Sabina (Wife of the President), President O'Higgins, Robin Webster and Beth Nunan.

Patrick's Day with our President

President Michael D. Higgins and his wife, Sabina, graciously entertained representatives of many volunteer organisations at their home on St. Patrick's Day. Four of us represented Age Action – chief executive Robin Webster, one of our directors Claire Murphy, and members Marie O'Gorman and myself.

I arrived outside the Áras an hour before the designated time. The President and his wife had already that morning attended a special Mass before presiding over the annual procession in Dublin. So many cars had lined up on the avenues outside, where a festive atmosphere prevailed.

Once the gates had been

opened, a pretty young Garda checked each visitor's invitation, and we drove to a designated parking area. After alighting, we could have sat into a mini-bus to drive the short distance to the house but chose instead to walk through the lovely old spacious lawn, with elegant trees, shrubs and flowers.

We climbed the steps to the main entrance, hung our coats and entered the long, wide, elegant hallway lined with busts of all our past presidents, from Douglas Hyde to Mary Robinson. It was too early for President McAleese's bust to have joined that interesting list.

A few hundred of us made friends while queueing to shake hands and be photographed with the President and his wife in an elegant drawing room. Graciously the first couple stood for more than an hour until they had greeted and chatted

with every guest, as if each had been the first. Stamina beyond belief must be an essential quality for the highest public office in the land.

The President delivered an erudite and humorous talk, speaking as if the ideas were just striking him then.

We listened, relaxing, to this brilliant introduction before settling down to enjoy a classical Irish concert that opened with poet Eilis Ni Dhuibhne reciting her newly composed poem as gaeilge. This was followed by equally entertaining Irish music and song until it was time to go. The President and his wife were travelling to Galway to attend two more functions that evening.

It was a memorable St Patrick's afternoon for so many volunteers with a generous President and his wife.

— Beth Nunan



■ **Dave Henshaw, from Athy, Co. Kildare, taking part in last year's abseil in Dublin, said: "I would advise anyone to do it."**

A walk down the wild side

Age Action is urging Munster people to take part in one of the province's most thrilling "walks" – down the side of the 17-storey Clarion Hotel in Limerick!

The adrenaline will be pumping on April 28 when the expert abseil team running the event set up on the roof of Ireland's tallest hotel at Steamboat Quay. During the day, the charity will try to break two Guinness World Records – for the oldest abseiler (currently held by a 97-year-old in the US) and for the greatest number of people to abseil down a structure in one hour.

"People around Limerick will have seen firefighters abseiling down the building as part of training exercises, and window cleaners on the outside of the Clarion," abseil organiser Rhona O'Connor said. "But on April 28, thanks to sponsorship by Bluebird Care, members of the public will get a unique opportunity to experience an unforgettable adventure."

Age Action organised its first abseil last year when almost 50 people abseiled down

the Irish Life offices in Dublin city centre. One of the oldest abseilers that day was pensioner Dave Henshaw (71), from Athy Co. Kildare.

"I have had a stroke, two hip operations, a heart attack, a by-pass and I have got a tumour, and I thought 'nothing can kill me if none of them have not killed me'." Dave said. "I really enjoyed the abseil and would advise anyone to do it."

To take part in this year's abseil, participants must pay a €65 registration fee and then raise a minimum of €250 for Age Action. In return they will receive full training and equipment for the abseil.

Age Action is interested in getting clubs from the region to recruit abseilers. "One of the options we are interested in is a joint venture between Age Action and your club where the sponsorship money raised is split 50/50 between both groups," Rhona said. "If you are interested in this please contact us."

To register or for further information, contact Age Action fundraiser Rhona O'Connor at 01-4756989 or email roconnor@ageaction.ie



■ The Lord Mayor of Dublin, Cllr Andrew Montague, with some of the mature learners at the pre-conference workshop at the Mansion House.

Conference focuses on lifelong learning

Age Action co-hosted a conference last month which brought leaders and academics of Later Life Learning together with learners. Over the two days those leaders became learners and the learners led the leaders, during what was a truly a brilliant interactive conference.

The conference, entitled “New Dynamics of Learning and Ageing: Research, policy and Practice” took place at NUI Maynooth on March 21 and 22.

Age Action co-hosted the event with the Association for Ageing and Learning in the UK and with The Worker’s Educational

Association in Northern Ireland. Presenters and speakers came from near and as far away as Malta, Italy and Portugal.

The conference was held in St Patrick’s College, Maynooth, a centre of excellence in education in Ireland. It seems fitting that presentations were given in Renehan Hall, which was the meeting room for Irish bishops when they met as a body in the 19th century. Historically, education and religion have been linked for centuries in Ireland. Breakfast, lunch and dinner were served in Pugin Hall, designed by the English architect Augustus Pugin in 1893. The gothic architecture added weight and distinction to the subjects under discussion. The president of the univer-

sity, Professor Philip Nolan, opened the conference on Wednesday morning.

Papers were presented on a range of topics, including: memory and strategies used to remember by older learners; teaching music to older people; volunteering and learning in later life; ‘Spring Chickens – A Northern Irish Theatre Group; and tutoring older people in residential settings.

There were six main presentations in the conference.

Dr Ted Fleming, a senior lecturer and director in NUI Maynooth, gave the Liam Carey talk named to honour the pioneer of Adult Education in NUI Maynooth. The lecture was named ‘Cinderella or Princess? History and other narratives of adult education in a uni-

versity’.

Dr Fleming outlined the historical and social background in which Liam Carey worked. He described briefly some of his achievements and gave a sense of the models of adult education that took hold in the 30 year history of adult education at Maynooth. He also mentioned some challenges that face adult education in a university today.

Dr Marvin Formosa, a lecturer in social gerontology in the European Centre of Gerontology at the University of Malta, spoke about his most recent book *Lifelong Learning in Later Life: A Handbook on Older Adult Learning*. He spoke also about lower figures of participation for older learners from a working class background and/or from ethnic minorities, as well as men and older adults living in rural communities.

Professor Susan Hallam is professor of Education and Dean of the Faculty of Policy and Society at the Institute of Education in the University of London. She has researched the areas of active music throughout the lifespan and reported how participants in her research attributed significant social, emotional and health benefits from music making.

Martina Ni Cheallaigh, representing the European Commission, who is a coordinator of the Adult Education Policy,

spoke about the opportunities that exist in the European Agenda for Adult Learning and the Bruges Communiqué to address this deficit. The European Year of Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations, 2012, provides an excellent opportunity to better define the field of learning in later life, situate it in the context of wider European policies and to develop synergies with related areas such as employment, social inclusion, sport, health, consumer affairs, environment, etc. The presentation described the emerging developments as well as the contribution of the Lifelong Learning Programme to active ageing.

Louise Richardson, vice president of the AGE platform in Europe and currently working as a consult-

ant on ageing issues, spoke about the European Year of Active Ageing providing the opportunity to highlight the varied and innovative learning activities available throughout the EU.

Professor Tom Scharf, Director of the Irish Centre for Social Gerontology at NUI Galway, presented a paper that challenged policy makers, practitioners and researchers to consider approaches to ageing policy that reach beyond the prevailing active ageing frameworks.

— Margaret Fitzpatrick

If you would like to hear more, or to receive Dr Ted Fleming or any other speaker’s presentation, please contact Margaret Fitzpatrick on (01) 475-6989 or email u3a@ageaction.ie

Pre-conference workshop

On March 20, the day before the main conference began, a pre-conference workshop took place in the Mansion House in Dublin.

This event was chaired by Michael Kenny from the Department of Adult and Community Education in NUI Maynooth. The aim was to get inspiration and thoughts from mature learners in Ireland.

Age Action was struck by the contribution made by Life Long Learners in a discussion of how, why and when people learn, as well as their barriers to learning. It was an engaging morning. The Lord Mayor of Dublin joined in the discussion and added that it appeared that Lifelong Learning groups seemed predominantly attended by women – a point often raised and debated.

Seanad reports on rights of older people

Age Action has welcomed the publication last month of a Seanad committee report on the rights of older people, which addressed a number of key issues for older people in Ireland.

The Report on the Rights of Older People is the first by the Seanad Public Consultation Committee, and followed widescale consultation with interested organisations, including Age Action.

Its recommendations include the provision of rural taxi vouchers for older people who are unable to use the Free Travel Scheme because they live in areas not served by public transport.

The report noted that 37% of older people eligible for the Free Travel Scheme cannot avail of it because they have no access to rural transport. It recommends that a portion of the Free Travel Scheme budget be allocated towards the cost of the proposed taxi voucher scheme.

The report also recommends the regulation of all commercial suppliers of home care packages, and a HealthStat audit of all community care services for

older people to enable the State plan for future community-based care needs for older people.

Other recommendations were:

- New mental capacity legislation to be introduced as soon as possible, to include the establishment of the Office of Public Guardian;
- Greater clarity regarding available entitlements for older people to be made a priority and given statutory footing.

Allowance to those who fail the 'Habitual Residency' test because they have return to Ireland (to care for someone at home);

- All patients receiving end-of-life care to be automatically eligible for a medical card once the diagnosis is made.
- "The lives of many marginalised older people in Ireland would be significantly improved if the report's eight recommendations were acted on by



■ The report urges a HealthStat audit of all community care services for older people.

- The Government to be urged to advance the case for drafting a new UN Treaty on the Rights of Older People to fully understand how existing human rights apply to older people and to be effectively enforced as part of the UN system;
- A format to be found to pay the Carers'

Government," Age Action spokesman Eamon Timmins said. "The challenge now will be for the Senators and older people's groups to work to ensure that these proposals are progressed and implemented."

The report is available at <http://www.oireachtas.ie/parliament/media/michelle/FinalReport1.pdf>

People urged to keep watch on older neighbours

Age Action has urged everyone to be vigilant about the needs of their older neighbours, especially those living alone.

The call was made after the discovery of a pensioner's body at his home in Wexford town. It is believed he had been dead up to three months. A passerby who was alarmed at the sight of a Christmas tree in the house with the lights on alerted gardai.

Age Action believes the incident should be a wake-up call for every community. With more than a quarter of older people in Ireland living alone, and loneliness being one of the greatest problems facing many older people, communities have to be vigilant, they have to make special efforts to involve older people in community activities and to remain in regular contact with them, Age Action said.

U3A MEETINGS



© Dublin City U3A
Meetings last Tuesday of month, (not June-August), 11am, at the Chester Beatty Library. Contact John Roche, (01) 201-7490

© Blackrock U3A
Contact Eileen Larkin: (087) 4128607, (01) 455-7653

© Ballyroan U3A
Meet every 2nd Monday at 11am in Ballyroan Library. Contact Al Connor: (01) 490-3212

© Ballymun U3A
Meetings every 2nd Monday, 2pm in Ballymun Library. Contact: Vera Butler (01) 842-2256

© Lucan U3A
Meetings 1st Thursday of the month, Ballyowen Castle. Contact Gretta Rabbitte: (085) 710-4853

© Blessington U3A
Meetings 3rd Tuesday of each month. Contact Anne Cowie: (045) 865-159

© Sutton/ Baldoyle U3A
Meet 2nd Wednesday each month, 10.45am-12.45pm, Baldoyle Library. Email u3asutbal@gmail.com or just come along. Or visit <https://sites.google.com/site/u3asuttonbaldoyledublin> or www.twitter.com/U3Asuttonbaldoyle

© Active Virginians U3A
Meet every week. Contact Ann Brodie at (049) 854-8232

© Maynooth U3A.
Maynooth Library
Meet every 2nd Friday 11am. Contact Helena Kirkpatrick: (01) 628-5128

© An Cosan U3A Tallaght.
Meet every 2nd Thursday.

Contact Imelda Hanratty: (01) 462-8488

© Waterford U3A
Contact Terry (Theresa) Moloney: (051) 876542 or email tmoloney@wit.ie

© Monaghan U3A
Contact Mary Beagan: (047) 75942, (086) 3314439

© Roscara U3A,
Co Roscommon. Contact Helen Waldren: (094) 962-1233

© Tramore U3A
Meetings 1st Thursday each month, 11am, Coastguard Station, Love Lane, Tramore. Contact Mollie Hunt, molliehunt@eircom.net

Email Age Action Education Officer Margaret Fitzpatrick at u3a@ageaction.ie or (01) 475-6989 for information.

Annual membership application

We/I wish to join Age Action Ireland and enclose € membership fee, plus € voluntary donation = € total payable to Age Action Ireland Ltd

- €20 Individual — retired/unwaged
- €40 Individual — employed
- €60 NGO
- €200 Statutory body
- €500 Corporate

Name

Organisation

Address

.

.

Tel

Fax

Email

Contact person

Signature

Date

Please return to:

**Age Action Ireland Ltd,
30/31 Lower Camden Street,
Dublin 2**

Tel: (01) 475-6989

Fax: (01) 475-6011

Email: info@ageaction.ie

Anniversary tea tickets going fast

Tickets are selling fast for the two afternoon tea parties being organised in Dublin and Mayo next month to mark Age Action's 20th anniversary celebrations.

Bring your friends and neighbours for an Afternoon Tea Party packed with entertainment and fun, featuring some of Ireland's most popular singers.

The first event will be a lovely traditional



Afternoon Tea, and the entertainment for the afternoon will be provided by everyone's favourites – Sonny Knowles and Tony Kenny.

They will perform some of their well known hits – “My Son”, “Any Dream Will Do”, “Butterfly Kisses” from Tony and “My Child”, “When the Snow is on the Roses”, and of course a wave from Sonny.

Date: May 8

Time: 2.30pm to 4.30pm

Tickets: €20 (€15 euro each for groups of five or more)

Venue: Burlington Hotel, Upper Leeson Street, Dublin 4

The second Afternoon Tea Party will be held in the Mount Falcon Hotel in Ballina. This will be the first joint Age Action and Garda Community Relations event for older people in the West. We are delighted that Tommy Marren from Mid West Radio will be our MC for the day and that Sandy Kelly, “The queen of Irish country”, will entertain us along with other performers from the area.

Date: May 29

Time: 2.30pm to 4.30pm

Tickets: €20 (€15 euro each for groups of five or more)

Venue: Mount Falcon Hotel, Ballina, Co. Mayo



These events are kindly sponsored by Bluebird Care, and the cream cakes are being provided by Superquinn.