



# GREY POWER MARLBOROUGH

Advocating for people 50 +

## From the President's Desk

In April, I found myself in a situation of having no way to get to Wairau hospital and back from an eye injection appointment. My husband was in Nelson and I did not like to rely on friends. What to do? I then remembered the St John Health Shuttle, left a phone message - you have to give them 24 hours' notice - of when I needed to be at the appointment, and when I would be returning home. I got a message soon after to say that I was all booked in. That night I also got a phone call to tell me exactly what time I would be collected.

Two shuttle volunteers came to pick me up. One was the driver and the other to assist me if I needed help in and out of the vehicle. They were both so welcoming. They dropped me off to my appointment in plenty of time and I gave them an approximate time of when I would be finished. Appointment concluded, I met the team outside the front entrance of the hospital and they took me home. They advised that sometimes there is a bit of a wait if someone else is due around the same time to take home. Being a volunteer service with payment by donation, I gave \$20 as I thought a taxi would have been over double that price.

I will use this service again if I have a need; it was door to door with very empathetic volunteers that made me feel safe.

New Committee member needed.

Brian McNamara has resigned after sixteen years on the Grey Power Marlborough Committee. As president and publicity officer, Brian focused on providing relevant and up to date information for our senior cohort, and will be missed by the committee for his personality, editing skills and fellowship. We wish him the very best.

This leaves an opportunity for someone with skills in media, writing, research and marketing to join our committee to support seniors locally and nationally. If you are interested, please contact me at [president@greypowermarlborough.co.nz](mailto:president@greypowermarlborough.co.nz) or 021 053 8707.

Gayle Chambers  
President



## Grey Power seminars

Grey Power Marlborough held two well-attended seminars in March. Speakers, including from Ministry of Social Development, Community Law, Stadium 2000, and Civil Defence Emergency Services, all offered great information to those present who went away feeling they had gained worthwhile knowledge

from attending.

We are holding another Seminar Session on 30th May at 10.15am in the Nativity Church hall. Broadly, the topic will be 'planning for the future'.

We also hosted a Prostate Cancer Awareness evening with seventy men and women attending. Thanks

to Murray Eyles from the Marlborough Prostate Cancer Support Group for arranging these speakers from all over New Zealand who gave a very down to earth overview of men and their prostate journey. It was good to see so many women there who would be supporting men through this diagnosis.

## Benefits of an EPA

Enduring Powers of Attorney (EPA) allow a person to make choices for another when they are deemed to lack the capacity to make rational decisions. Ask around for the best deal.

[www.justice.govt.nz/family/powers-to-make-decisions/the-court-and-enduring-power-of-attorney-epa/](http://www.justice.govt.nz/family/powers-to-make-decisions/the-court-and-enduring-power-of-attorney-epa/)

Not having a power of attorney can mean upsetting consequences such as a longer hospital stay. Older people have waited up to five weeks in hospital beds due to not having the legal representation to be discharged; or have difficulty moving easily into a residential care home from hospital.

If a family member suddenly loses capacity, an application for a welfare guardian goes through the Family Court. This legal process can be time-consuming, meaning hospital patients continuing to pay rent or electricity bills, because no one has the power to end living arrangement agreements for them.

## The Winter Energy Payment

The Winter Energy payment, made from 1 May to 1 October 2024, helps people keep their homes and families warmer and healthier over winter. The payment is made automatically to those eligible with their other benefit and pension payments.

Couples and people with dependent children will get \$31.82 a week and single people will get \$20.46 a week. Someone getting a Foster Care Allowance may receive a higher rate. Contact the Ministry.

This year, clients paid weekly

got a part Winter Energy Payment during the week of 6 May. The first full Winter Energy Payment comes in the week of 13 May. Similarly, NZ Super and Veteran's Pension senior clients get a part payment on Tuesday 7 May. The full amount comes in their next one on Tuesday 21 May.

Couples getting NZ Super or Veteran's Pension can switch the payment to their partner's account by calling the Ministry's Seniors line on 0800 552 002.

While overseas, seniors get the payment up to 28 days. If away

longer, contact the Ministry to avoid paying back overpayments.

Clients redirecting their benefit for power costs can increase this amount over winter by getting in touch with the Ministry.

People can choose not to get the Winter Energy Payment, or start getting it again after stopping previously. Fill out the 'Stop or Restart Winter Energy Payment' online form, or call the Ministry.

Learn more on the Work and Income site [www.workandincome.govt.nz/products/a-z-benefits/winter-energy-payment.html](http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/products/a-z-benefits/winter-energy-payment.html)

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## Flu and cold season are back

Flu viruses and the common cold can be just as life-threatening in our senior cohort as COVID. Medical professionals suggest the following when getting those initial symptoms of the 'lurgy'.

If you have flu/cold type symptoms, take a COVID (RATS) test; whether positive or negative, the initial

treatment is to stay warm, stay home, rest, drink plenty of water, take Paracetamol to minimise discomfort.

If symptoms persist, or get worse, consult your GP medical practice for what to do next.

Above all, do not wait too long before seeking advice if you are feeling very unwell.



## Office Snippets

- Thanks to all members who have paid their subscriptions already!
- It is never too late to pay your subscription, or to join. It just means that you cannot access the discounts and membership benefits until you are a financial member. Pay online or come into the office, open from 9am to 1pm Monday to Friday.
- If you have not received or have misplaced an invoice, contact the office. We will email or send out a new one.
- If you find the Farmers car park very busy, try the Clubs of Marlborough car park just across the road. Walk into the building from Alfred Street by Citizens Advice Bureau and Age Concern. Our office is along the corridor.
- Please let us know when changing contact information such as addresses, or if you switch from a landline to a new mobile phone number. It helps speed things up.
- Since we send out extra information via email, give us your email address if this interests you.
- We also use Facebook to pass on relevant information from other groups. Look up Grey Power Marlborough.
- ChargeOn offer their very popular E-Bike coaching courses again on May 26. Contact Emma on 027 624 5368 or email emma@wheelwoman.co.nz for more information, or to book in. Save \$50 by using the code BCOUNCIL24. Beginner level courses 10-12pm and 1-3pm. Book also online at www.chargeon.co.nz

## The impact on seniors from Council Rates increase

From July 1 Marlborough homeowners' rates increase by 12.5%. Though the council has explained why this rate rise is necessary, it will still impact hugely on seniors.

In the 2018 census, 10458 people, 22% of our population, were aged 65 or over; this will have grown since. Many people

on fixed incomes struggle already with the current cost of living. Due to this rates increase, seniors who rent will probably face a rent increase.

Senior home-owners can apply for a rates rebate, if they qualify, as can those living in a retirement village. Community Services card holders

certainly should apply. If your funds are limited, it is worth applying - you may get a reduction.

Council employees are happy to go through the application process with you and are very understanding that it is difficult to ask for help to ease your financial burden.

## Men's breakfast

St Christopher's and Nativity churches are combining to offer a men's breakfast which they hope to make a regular event, either combined or separate.

The Nativity Church eldercare coordinator, Bianca Shepherd, invites Grey Power men as well to come together

on the 18th May for a morning of fellowship, food, and a guest speaker.

Saturday 18 May, Faith Food Fellowship at 9am at St Christopher's Lounge in Redwoodtown.

Cost is \$10. Register at info@nativity.org.nz or office@stchristophers.co.nz

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