



# GREY POWER MARLBOROUGH

## Advocating for people 50 +

### From our local President

Greetings to all,

Welcome to the July newsletter. As winter settles in, I hope you are finding comfort in a hot cup of tea or a warm fire. I have been brightening up my chilly winter by attending an art class which has helped bring colour to these grey winter days.

Last month I attended my first Federation Annual General Meeting in Wellington, a very enlightening experience and of course presided over by my predecessor here, our own Gayle Chambers, now national President. The event was most interesting with guest speakers including Winston Peters (MP) and Carolyn Cooper (Aged Care Commissioner). A lot of advocacy work is being done. Visits to Parliament have raised the following issues:

- shingles vaccine
- disparities in home care services
- lack of GP's
- rates rebate review
- accommodation supplements

And one of the most concerning that evoked a lot of discussion was:

- cognitive testing for senior drivers through GP practices. (Winston explained he was about to renew his drivers' licence himself, which of course resulted in a generous number of tips to help him pass the cognitive test – laughter ensued.)

And speaking somewhat automotively, Grey Power has a new sponsor – Carter's Tyres - who offer 25% discount off tyres to members. They can be found locally at Carter's Tyre

Service, 55 Main Street, Blenheim, 03 578 2030.

The Association unveiled their new logo, featuring a re-vamped owl. The owl symbolises knowledge and wisdom – qualities that reflect Grey Power's commitment to advocating and supporting our members. We hope to have the new image to show you soon.

And a big thank you to Richard and Hayley from The Little Café for donating two prizes in our competition last month - congratulations to the winners, Anne and Shirley!

Have you been to our website lately? If not, go to [www.greypowermarlborough.co.nz](http://www.greypowermarlborough.co.nz) where you will find lots of useful information on the discount book, community services in Marlborough, resources and all the latest news. And if you have any issues you would like raised, do not hesitate to contact me at [president@greypowermarlborough.co.nz](mailto:president@greypowermarlborough.co.nz).

So if you're not a member yet or would like to re-join, have a look and check us out. If you already are, thank you.

*Ngā mihi, Bron Mogredge*



## Advocacy report... less waiting for ops?

As mentioned in last month's newsletter, National President Gayle Chambers met with Prime Minister Rt Hon Christopher Luxon and the Minister for Seniors, Hon Casey Costello, on May 14. Advocacy at this level is an ongoing process, and Gayle and National Secretary Jo Millar also recently met with Health Minister Simeon Brown.

Says Gayle, "We were very privileged to get a meeting with the Health Minister, Simeon Brown, and he was very open to discussing our concerns. We focused on waiting times, both for surgery and the wait to see the specialist to be put on the surgery waiting list."

"Minister Brown advised that the government had put a further \$10 million into the health budget, tagged to reducing the waiting times. The government will be

outsourcing surgeries to the private sector to enable this to happen. Their goal is to reduce the wait time to 4 months rather than the 2 years (plus) it can often be at present. We enquired whether it would be beneficial to scope our members around the country to ensure their waiting times were being addressed. Minister Brown said that would be very helpful to identify any areas that were still suffering from long waiting lists.

"At the end of the meeting, Minister Brown congratulated Grey Power on our lobbying strengths saying we had a formal agenda, we knew what we were talking about, and we didn't waste his or our valuable time. He asked us to keep coming back to see him. Jo Millar and I walked away from these meetings feeling very positive that we're gaining respect at government level."

*To be continued.*

### Access and Mobility meeting

A number of things were discussed at the quarterly meeting at Council in March and the committee room was full to overflowing with people attending the meeting.

- Office for Seniors have created guidelines for businesses who want to be accredited with being an age-friendly business. The Chamber of Commerce is supporting this initiative.
- The Havelock community is actively seeking improvements on the roading network in Havelock to support better access to the shops and businesses as the community grows.
- All issues with trees and bushes blocking paths should be reported to Council on [trees@marlborough.govt.nz](mailto:trees@marlborough.govt.nz) or people can call and speak to a

customer services person on 577 8941.

- People who have a home in a residential retirement village can negotiate with village management for improved accessibility in their homes if needed.
- Marlborough Roads has moved to 28 Alfred Street (the old Skin Clinic) and can be reached at 520 8330 or by email at [admin@marlboroughroads.com](mailto:admin@marlboroughroads.com).
- Marlborough Lines Stadium 2000 cannot afford a second swimming pool hoist but will be happy to carry out all future maintenance on a second hoist if the community would be prepared to fundraise the \$20k needed to buy a hoist. (The weight limit for this portable hoist is about 130kg).

*Robyn Blackburn,  
Grey Power Committee member.*

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## Canine Friends

Canine Friends Pet Therapy is a nationwide organisation offering support and comfort in a variety of roles through visiting residential care homes, retirement villages, support groups, hospitals, hospices and educational centres.

Nationally there are over 700 volunteers and locally in Blenheim around 15. The association is in its 35th year since inception in NZ and is always happy to recruit new members to the group, which also offers social events for both dogs and handlers.

Here is what Tessa, one of our volunteers has to say. "After 12 months of providing Canine Therapy, my Swiss Shepherd Zara knows her way around Springlands Lifestyle Village. Once through the doors she trots off to the hospital wing, leading me, rather than the other way around, only stopping to receive a pat from residents or staff in the hallway. This is the highlight of Zara's week, visiting people who with no pets of their own are only too willing to adopt her for an hour a week as a family member. Eyes brighten, hands twitch and individuals implore her to come closer for a cuddle."

Diversional therapist Paula Hughes

says there are so many benefits to the programme. "The dogs perk the residents up," she says. "They love the interaction, and the touch and tactile benefits of being able to pat a dog. So many of them had pets before they came here, so they love being able to interact with a dog. They trigger happy memories and it brings a smile to their faces."

So what makes a good Canine Friend volunteer?

Says Blenheim Canine Friends liaison officer, Melanie Spence, "We are looking for dogs that are calm, friendly and well behaved, that are happy to interact with clients with a variety of needs and enjoy pats and cuddles. We have all sizes of dogs from mini Poodles to Huntaways. The owners must be willing to volunteer to undertake regular visits of about an hour at least once a fortnight. It is highly rewarding and often a great bond develops between the dogs, the volunteers and the recipients. New volunteers are always welcome."

If you are interested and think you have a good Canine Friend, please visit the website for more information at [www.caninefriends.org.nz](http://www.caninefriends.org.nz) or contact Melanie at 027 340 1870.



## Office snippets

- If you have paid online this year we should have emailed you a receipt for the payment. Discount Books and membership cards are available for collection from the office, Room 19, 25 Alfred Street, Blenheim. Please get in touch if you wish to have your card and book delivered or posted, [office@greypowermarlborough.co.nz](mailto:office@greypowermarlborough.co.nz) or 03 578 4950.
- The Discount Book is now available to view on our website, [www.greypowermarlborough.co.nz](http://www.greypowermarlborough.co.nz)
- A reminder that we sell hearing-aid batteries sizes A10, A13 and A312. \$6 for 6 batteries.
- Each month our office receives deposits of payments meant for Grey Power

Electricity. A reminder that if you do pay Grey Power Electricity, perhaps change their name in your online banking to Pulse Energy rather than Grey Power.

- The Grey Power Magazine is available online free for members at [www.greypowermag.co.nz](http://www.greypowermag.co.nz). To sign up, you will need your Grey Power account number, which is printed on your membership card or on your invoice. Otherwise, paper copies are available for the price of the postage, \$10, paid to the Grey Power Federation New Zealand bank account: 38-9018-0089518-00. The cut-off date for the June magazine was 30 April. You will receive the next four copies, even if they go into the next subscription year.

### Use that Discount Book!

- **We encourage you to look through your Discount Book. There are some great savings to be had.** Each month we would like to acknowledge the support shown to our members by some of the businesses: Green Contracting for Cleaning & Gardening, Grey Power Electricity, Harcourts Marlborough, Harrison's Flooring, Curtains & Solar, Health 2000 Blenheim, Home Maintenance

Blenheim, HRV, Interislander, Junkatron, K&H Window Cleaning, Laser Plumbing Blenheim.

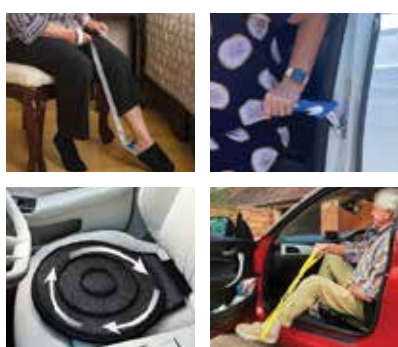
- As mentioned in Bron's message, Grey Power New Zealand have announced that Carter's Tyres are a new sponsor and offer 25% off tyres and 20% off other services to Grey Power members. They are at 55 Main Street, Blenheim, 03 578 2030.

### Events

- Wednesday 2 July, 10am – 12 noon, Falls Prevention are holding a "More Stable More Able" session at Queen Charlotte Yacht Club, Picton. Phone Amanda to book in or ask questions, 027 208 2780
- Thursday 3 July, 10am – 12 noon, "Online Accounts" and "Shopping for Seniors" session with Emily at Blenheim Library. Phone 03 265 4243 for more information.
- Wednesdays 10am to 12 noon each week, basic help with electronic devices, eg mobile phones, tablets and laptops, is available at Te Kahu o

Waipuna/Blenheim Library.

- Every 4th Thursday of the month, Older Persons Seminar. Each seminar has a local guest speaker who talks about a topic relevant to older people. \$6 entry, morning tea and lunch are included. For more information contact Donna on 027 385 2333 or email at [donna@stchristophers.co.nz](mailto:donna@stchristophers.co.nz).
- Every 4th Saturday of the month, 9am – 12 noon, the Repair Café meets at Crossroads/John's Kitchen, 2 Redwood Street, Blenheim.



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