



Carers 4 Carers

Finding support through supporting each other

May—June 2022

I do hope those of you able to join us last month enjoyed making your ceramic tiles for our Anniversary project. Judging by the laughter and the smiles, that's a 'yes'. It was an opportunity to be creative, enjoy yourselves and indulge in some talking therapy all at the same time. Wow! The Companions will be making their tiles in a couple of month's time and, if you missed last month, that may be an opportunity for you to catch up. I can't wait to see what they'll look like when you've all painted them!



.....and now for something completely different. We all know how important it is to keep moving but if your knees or hips hurt, it's tough. The temptation to stay put is very great. That's when something gentle and enjoyable is so helpful. Tai chi helps to strengthen your body whilst also increasing flexibility and improving balance. This is so important as we get older and can help towards the prevention of falls. I'm sure we will all, carers and cared-for, benefit from Sharon's brief introduction to Tai Chi.

OUR MONTHLY MEETINGS

Carers4Carers meets on the **fourth** Friday of the month, except in December, when it's the second Friday. We meet at Kineton Village Hall, Mill Street, Kineton, CV35 OLB, 10.30 a.m. until 12 noon. We start with time for coffee and chat and then, if a speaker or workshop is scheduled, this will usually begin at about 11 o'clock.

It is no longer necessary for carers to book in advance to attend the meeting. However, we request that anyone wishing to bring their loved one to attend the Companionship Group contacts us in advance so that we can be sure that we can provide appropriate care.

Friday 27th May - This month we'll be learning a little about the very gentle art of Tai Chi. It's so gentle, you can do it sitting down, so don't worry if working up a sweat isn't your thing! Our Tutor, Sharon, will work with both the Companionship Group and the Carers, in turn. Anita will be with us to offer some of her lovely TLC with a mini hand or neck massage.

Friday 24th June— We know that a lot of you love music of all sorts of genres. It's some time since Jasmin came to see us. This month, Catherine, from Chiltern Music, will be visiting to offer us a Music Therapy session. We will have a break from our usual format and this time carers and cared-for will enjoy the session together.

Carers4Carers is part of the network of Omega Care for Life Meeting Point Support Groups Reg. Charity No. 1120322

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SINGING FOR THOSE LIVING WITH DEMENTIA

So many people enjoy music. Our tastes are often very personal and we respond differently to different types of music. In the past, we have enjoyed visits from Jasmin with her harps and other instruments. Looking at the pictures of her last visit, everyone looked so happy. You don't need to have a great voice to enjoy singing a good tune.



There has been lots of research into the benefits of music.

Because it helps reduce heart rate and blood pressure, it can relieve muscle tension and improve pain management

It triggers those feel-good hormones, endorphins, we talked about a couple of months ago and so eases depression, anxiety and agitation.

It can help improve attention and concentration, thinking, memory, speech and non-verbal communication skills.

All of these areas can be affected by dementia and so making music can have a really beneficial impact on those living with it.

Engaging with music can help people with dementia develop relationships with others and improve their wellbeing. It can help them express their feelings and ideas, encourage physical exercise and movement and encourage social interaction, so reducing isolation.

We can often be surprised by how well musical memories are preserved in those with dementia and that is because key areas of the brain linked to musical memory are relatively undamaged by the disease. Listening and engaging with music can therefore act as a prompt for reminiscing and help people to tell their story and share their personal history. It can help a person with dementia connect with the past by evoking memories, feelings and emotions that they might find difficult to express.

Many of these benefits above are, of course, relevant to carers resulting in more effective caring. As well as reducing anxiety and distress, it can lighten the mood and help them connect with their loved ones, especially those who have difficulty communicating.

I am sure next month's music session with Catherine will give you lots of ideas for using music with your loved one. Following on from the Hot Topic evening at Hastings House earlier this month, which focussed on Dementia, I'm pleased to tell you that a Music for Dementia group will be starting in June locally, time and place to be announced. For those able to travel further afield, there are also groups in Leamington, Stratford and Southam run by the Alzheimer's Society. Do ask if you would like more details.



Fake Ukraine Fundraisers: back in March, I warned of scammers trying to profit from the goodwill of people wanting to help those affected by the war in Ukraine. Action Fraud has received 196 reports about fake emails purporting to raise money for those affected. Scammers are also using a variety of methods to con donors, which includes selling charity t-shirts. The Government's advice is to give through registered charities. You can check whether a charity is registered, their name and number at: www.gov.uk/checkcharity.



Pre-payment Meter Customers beware. Fraudsters target people who use pre-payment meters. They offer a cut price deal on the doorstep, offering, for example a £50 meter top-up for a cash payment of £25. However, the scammers use cloned keys to top up the energy credit illegally. The energy companies will not receive payment for energy used and the customer ends up paying twice.

ARE YOU ABLE TO ENJOY A MORNING OR AFTERNOON OUT?

My Mum used to love it when I used to ring up and offer to take her out. She was elderly, unable to walk more than a few steps and blind. However, she still loved to go out, hear the birds sing, feel the sun and the breeze on her face and enjoy a cuppa and a piece of cake. It was worth the effort on my part to pile the wheelchair and other aids into the car to see the uplift in her spirits after an outing.

The summer is a wonderful time to visit gardens and homes. In June, the annual art weeks for Warwickshire Open Studios will be welcoming visitors. It's an opportunity to view some amazing creative talent, often in the artists' own studios and see some of them at work. Some artists work on their own but others form a small group to display their work. Look out for the colourful brochure telling you all about it.



Penny Varley, who was with us last month, is one of 11 artists who will be exhibiting their work at Newbold House, Church Lane, Newbold-on-Stour, CV37 8TW. The art forms on display include textiles, jewellery, painting, wood-turning, and ceramics.

There are other more local studios so why have I chosen to highlight this particular exhibition? Well, that's because refreshments will be served at this venue and Carers4Carers will benefit directly from the profits raised. So, if you are up for a little outing, why not pay them a visit? Support the artists and us too. The venue is open 10 a.m. until 4 p.m. on 18th and 19th of June (Saturday and Sunday) and also 23rd—26th June, that's Thursday through to Sunday. Some of our volunteers will be attending some of those times, contributing cakes and helping to serve the refreshments. See you there!

IMPORTANT CONTACTS AND LINKS



- Carers Trust Heart of England— www.carerstrusthofe.org.uk; 024 7663 2972 (option2)
- To make a consumer complaint, obtain consumer help and advice or report an issue to Trading Standards, please contact the Citizens Advice Consumer Service on 0808 223 1133.
- For consumer or business help and advice, including details of an approved trader scheme, please visit our website: <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/tradingstandards>
- Advice on scams and rogue traders: Report fraud directly to Action Fraud on 0300 123 2040 or Citizens Advice Consumer Helpline on 0800 223 1133. More advice available at: www.warwickshire.gov.uk/doorstepsellers ; www.actionfraud.police.uk/.
- Healthwatch Warwickshire— www.healthwatchwarwickshire.co.uk ; 01926 422823 (9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on weekdays) and email info@healthwatchwarwickshire.co.uk
- **Silverline**—available 24/7 as well as a befriending service www.thesilverline.org.uk/ . Email: info@thesilverline.org.uk or phone 0800 4 70 80 90
- Warwickshire County Council: www.warwickshire.gov.uk/ 01926 410 410 . For social media go to their facebook page: www.facebook.com/WarwickshireCountyCouncil or search 'Social Media' on the website for details of dedicated links such as Instagram and Twitter.
- **Searchout Warwickshire**—the replacement for the Warwickshire Directory can be found at <https://searchout.warwickshire.gov.uk/>
- **AbilityNet** offers free help with all things digital to carers, older people and disabled people of any age. Phone 0800 048 7642 during office hours.

POSITIVITY CORNER

A time to reflect and perhaps to smile



Carers rarely choose to be carers. The role can emerge gradually if the health of our loved one declines almost imperceptibly or it can be thrust upon us suddenly following a major health trauma such as a stroke, heart attack or accident. However much we love the person we care for, life can become a relentless routine meaning you have little or no time for yourself. It's time for someone to look out for you. Do accept help if offered by family or friends.