



Carers 4 Carers

Finding support through supporting each other

January 2024

If we're not too far into January when you receive this, I'd like to wish you all a happy and peaceful New Year. I do hope you were able to take even a short break at some stage over Christmas; if you were spending it with family, perhaps they shared some of your responsibilities.

My Christmas was spent in Cornwall, visiting my niece and her two teenage boys and sharing a cottage with my brother and sister-in-law. It was lovely to have a change of scene and we enjoyed some soggy walks in between the downpours and a brief visit to see the sea. I appreciated the extended time spent with family but also the opportunity to offer some support to my niece who is going through a tough time at the moment. She is fortunate in that she has a wonderful friend living just a few doors away and together they go for long dog walks and she is able to open up about her fears and anxieties. Talking is so important.



Now, we look forward to another year. What will it bring? Globally, the picture isn't at all rosy and some will say it puts our own situations in perspective. Yes, that can't be denied, but we shouldn't allow that to diminish our own challenges. Everyone deserves support and help.

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 the main part of our meeting will start at about 11 o'clock. It is not necessary to book in advance for either the Carers' Group or the Companionship Group. However, if you'd like to know more or would like to introduce yourself before joining us for a meeting, you are welcome to get in touch by phone or email.

Friday 26th January— our area is extremely fortunate to have **Shipston Home Nursing** on our doorstep. Last Autumn, Andrew Revell their Executive Director, wrote an article for us about the services SHN offer. This month, Andrew will join us to give you more information than could be included and also give you an opportunity to ask questions.

Friday 23rd February— Wendy Waters and

the two Carer Champions from Hastings House Medical Centre will explain the new provisions being put in place to provide more support for carers. As a Social Prescriber, Wendy will also explain more about this role which, for some, can be a bit of a mystery.

Our companions will enjoy their own activities, refreshments and lots of opportunities to chat.



Carers4Carers is part of the network of Omega Support Groups Reg. Charity No. 1120322

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THE STATE OF CARING IN THE MEDIA



During the first week of January, the newly extended BBC Breakfast programme has been focussing on care. Their first programme, on January 2nd, looked at unpaid care. Did you see it? Unfortunately, I missed it but Carers UK, which contributed to the programme, carried a report on it on their website. The news item highlighted the intolerable strain many unpaid carers face looking after older and disabled loved ones with limited support

To illustrate this, Carers UK member Dorothy Cook spoke powerfully about caring 24/7 for her husband and the challenges of doing so without the help she needs from health and care services. She also spoke about how it affected her personally in terms of her own health and wellbeing. During the programme it was reported that of carers nationally, according to the most recent State of Caring survey, 79% report feeling stressed or anxious, 49% are depressed, while 44% of carers have put off health treatment because of their caring role.

I am sure many of our members will be able to relate to these figures.

Alongside this news item, **Helen Walker, chief executive of Carers UK, issued a press release in which she said:**

“Our social care system has received a chronic lack of attention, commitment and funding from the government for far too long and this is having devastating consequences for hundreds of thousands of unpaid carers and the people they support - not to mention the care sector and the wider economy. This must change in 2024 if we are serious about meeting the needs of people in our society. As we begin the new year, we ask this and any future government to recognise the enormous societal and economic value unpaid carers contribute and we call on them to return their investment. Ensuring carers have access to practical support, can prioritise their own health and wellbeing while caring, and remain financially resilient is crucial for the overall health of the country.”

In the past, I've provided statistics on the economic value unpaid carers contribute to the country. They make startling reading. The last figure I had in my head was £126 bn, which was more than it cost to run the NHS. The most recent figures, provided by Carers UK, are not dissimilar, especially when taking into account rising costs and inflation.

- Unpaid carers in England and Wales contribute a staggering £445 million to the economy every day – that's £162 billion per year (Petrillo and Bennett, 2023).
- The value of unpaid care is equivalent to a second NHS in England and Wales, which in 2020/21 received an estimated £164 billion in funding (Petrillo and Bennett, 2023).

CarersUK is a campaigning organisation which organises fact finding surveys and research and uses this information to influence Government policy and actions. They campaign for lasting change. But that's not all they do. If you have internet access, I do recommend you take a look at their website. It is a mine of information, advice and support. For instance, they are currently

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A look back at 2023

SUPPORTING CARERS

*92 carer attendances *19 companion attendances *6 new carer attendees
*20 telephone support calls

MONTHLY MEETINGS

*Wool felting *Fire Service *British Motor Museum *Samaritans *Act on Energy *Red Cross *Christmas Baubles *Herb Centre *Music and singing
*Hand massages *Relaxation *Swapping ideas

NEWSLETTERS

*10 newsletters sent to over 50 carer members and to a further 50 professionals including local GP surgeries

VOLUNTEERS

Volunteer co-ordinator supported by 4 volunteers *Assisted by part-time administrator * Professional carer sponsored by Unique Senior Care

OUTREACH

*Hastings House GP surgery *Shipston Medical Centre * Chedham's Yard
Kineton Farmers' Market Local Warm Hubs *King's Big Help Out

OUR THANKS TO:

*Omega *WCC Carer Innovation Fund * Kineton Parish Council *MidCounties Co-op *Hospital Saturday Fund *Birmingham Hospital Saturday Fund *WCC Councillors' Fund *Member contributions

Each year, your volunteer team takes a look back at the previous 12 months at the activities that we have offered. Patting ourselves on the back isn't the purpose of the exercise although it's gratifying to know what we have achieved. It's something we are required to do when we receive grants so that funding bodies can be sure that we are providing value for money. We also use this information to influence our planning for the upcoming 12 months as it can help us to see any shortfalls or imbalance in what we offer.

We hope you will be interested in seeing this visual overview that Lisa has put together. As always, we welcome your feedback; we hope those of you attending our meetings enjoy being able to participate in a quick straw poll at the end of our mornings. Here are a couple of quotes to round everything off:

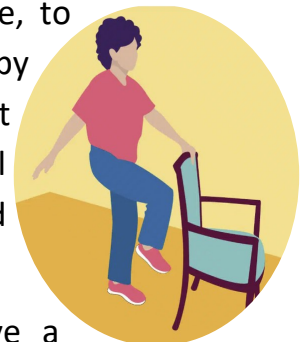
“a wonderful group, providing so much care and support for carers”

“When I speak about the group I always say that I've learnt more from the group than anywhere else”

running a 'Carers Active' programme to encourage carers, where possible, to keep active, for the benefit of their own health and wellbeing. Backed by research, the programme offers advice on different types of activity that could fit into your daily life as well as online sessions. There is also plentiful advice including financial support, advice on technology and equipment, and looking after your own health and wellbeing.



You can find Carers UK at www.carersuk.org/. They have a telephone helpline, **0808 808 7777**, open 9—6 p.m. on weekdays or you can email enquiries advice@carersuk.org. There is a further email address for general enquiries: info@carersuk.org



IMPORTANT CONTACTS AND LINKS



- **Caring Together, Warwickshire**, the carer support service for Warwickshire carers. Phone 0800 297 5544 or visit www.caringtogetherwarwickshire.org.uk
- For consumer complaints, consumer help and advice or to 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 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/>
- **Act on Energy**— for information about energy efficiency and hardship support. Phone 0800 988 2881 or visit actonenergy.org.uk/
- **Samaritans**— phone 0116 123. Information about others ways of getting in touch can be found at <https://www.samaritans.org/>

BOOKING YOUR TRANSPORT TO OUR

Please let us know if you would like a seat on the Back&4th community bus by **Friday 19th January**. If you're not sure whether you can come, it's still worth ringing up and booking a seat. It's easier to cancel it later if necessary than squeeze it in last minute. Use the phone number or email address below to let us know and we'll be in touch the following week with a pick-up time. We request a small contribution towards the cost for those able to pay it.

POSITIVITY CORNER

A time to reflect and perhaps to smile. It's a bit late now for New Year resolutions but it's never too late to decide to love yourself.

**Remove 'shoulds'
from your vocabulary
this year.
Start your journey of
self-love now.**

KELLY MARTIN