



Carers4Carers

Finding support through supporting each other
August—September 2021

Life is very gradually returning to some degree of normality for some. For others, it is very much a case of 'the new normal'. Just over a week ago, I attended a music course where, for the first time in at least 18 months, I was able to sing and make music with others. I was also able to mix and eat meals socially with others. The pay-off was very much a case of 'suffering for one's art' as we sat inside with the huge doors and windows wide open with a howling gale blowing outside. To see us sitting with so many layers on, including fleeces and hoods up, you would never have guessed it was August! I hadn't realised how much I had missed so many aspects of musical creativity. I also hadn't realised quite how exhausting, both physically and mentally, making music for six hours a day would be after such a long fallow period. It reminded me how much we need to interact with each other in our daily lives, to support each other and bring each other joy.

We have missed so much over these last 18 months and there are groups of people in our society who have been affected more than others. As carers, because of what you do, you are so often isolated and I know many of you have struggled. But you're a tough bunch because you press on and 'just get on with it'. Why? Quite simply because, in the majority of situations, there is no other option and coincidentally, you probably love the person you care for.

That brings me neatly to our up-coming visit to Compton Verney, which we hope will have happened by the time you receive this. We have a bumper turn out this time and we will be joined by some new members who have come to the group quite recently. It is, of course, an ideal opportunity to get to know each other and you are such a warm, friendly and supportive group, that I know you will be welcoming to new members as always.

Plans are going ahead with our first return to a face-to-face meeting at the Village Hall in Kington next month. I think Lisa must have had Risk Assessment forms coming out of her ears the last few months as the situation continues to change and we have to consider how we will adapt. You will find more details of the precautions we will be taking later in the newsletter.

OUR MONTHLY MEETINGS

Our monthly meetings, normally held on the 4th Friday of the month at Kington Village Hall, are currently suspended. We plan to restart on 24th September.

BOOSTER /PHASE 3 VACCINATION



Plans are being formulated now to offer a 3rd booster dose of the COVID vaccine, alongside the flu jab this autumn. The over 70s and clinically extremely vulnerable will be given priority.

Warwickshire County Council has made arrangements with volunteer transport providers within the county to offer transport to vaccination appointments for residents with no other safe way of accessing a vaccination site. Residents are, however, advised to ask households and bubbles for assistance in the first instance, in order to ensure there is sufficient capacity.

Drivers will use PPE and maintain appropriate cleaning schedules. This transport is currently being provided free of charge. For residents in the Warwick and Stratford areas needing to book transport, please contact VASA on 01789 262889 and press option 1. Lines are open Monday to Friday, 9 till 4 p.m. Alternatively email transport@vasa.org.uk.

VASA also provide journeys to medical appointments if they have available drivers. There is a charge for this service.

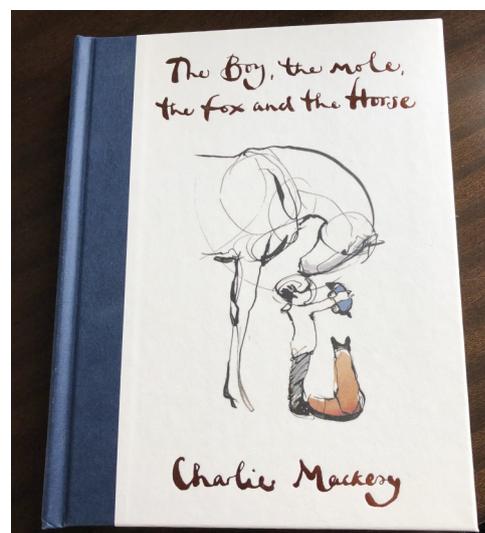
A BEAUTIFUL BOOK

Have you ever bought a book to give as a present and ended up reading it yourself before wrapping it up? Be honest; I bet you have.

Last night, I read the most beautiful and wise book I think it has ever been my pleasure to pass on as a gift. Browsing a shop the other day, looking for inspiration for a present for my sister-in-law's birthday, I spotted a book I simply knew I must have. From time to time I have seen Charlie Mackesy's drawings on Facebook and heard him mentioned periodically in the media but had never seen his book. I suppose I hadn't been in any shops!

"The Boy, the mole, the fox and the Horse" is for dipping into or reading from cover to cover. On each page are simple but effective pen and ink drawings accompanied by hand written messages of kindness, compassion and vulnerability, warmed with something that will make you smile. Who can resist a mole that loves cake! If you're feeling a little low, it's a perfect but gentle pick-me-up.

...and in case you're wondering, yes, I shall buy myself a copy next time I go shopping.



WE'RE MEETING UP AGAIN NEXT MONTH—HOORAY !!

We know that many of you will feel extremely anxious about joining in with any indoor group activity and that is entirely understandable. As a result, we are introducing mitigations that some may consider to be over-cautious, but for which we make no apology. While we want to keep the overall feel of our meetings the same, we want everyone to feel comfortable and so there will inevitably be differences. So here goes: here is some of what we are planning. Final details will be available next month when we will have more up-to-date guidelines.



★ We will continue to follow the principles of: Hands – Face – Space – Fresh Air ★

We will set furniture out to allow as much as possible for social distancing whilst still enabling social (non-physical) engagement.

There will be a limit on numbers attending and members will be asked to book a place in advance. Once booked in, you will be given a time slot during which to arrive to reduce congestion in the entrance hall.

Those wishing to attend the Companionship Group must also be booked in in advance.

We will take your temperature on arrival.

Hand sanitiser will be readily available and we will request face masks to be worn.

Refreshments will be served at tables and members will be asked to remain seated except for comfort breaks.

Doors and windows will be kept open to enable circulation of air. You are advised to dress appropriately!

We may stagger leaving at the end of the morning and use alternative exits for the able-bodied.

Activities planned for members of the Companionship Group will be prepared to take account of ease of hygiene routines.

Those of you familiar with the hall will notice some physical changes. There is now a new fascia on the exterior of the building and a new soundproof screen between the two halls has been installed. The toilets are soon to be refurbished and there are other improvements in the pipeline which will benefit members of our group attending meetings.

LINKS AND SIGNPOSTS

We aim to use this back page for links to items we have mentioned throughout the newsletter. They will then be easy for you to find. The links are also uploaded onto our website, so if you can't find your newsletter, you can find them here:

<https://www.carers4carersonthefosse.org.uk/Links/>



LINKS MENTIONED IN THE NEWSLETTER—they are all trustworthy

More about Trading Standards, scams and rogue traders: www.warwickshire.gov.uk/doorstepsellers ; www.actionfraud.police.uk/. Report fraud directly to Action Fraud on 0300 123 2040 or Citizens Advice Consumer Helpline on 0800 223 1133.

If you have received an **email** which you're not quite sure about, forward it to the **Suspicious Email Reporting** Service (SERS) at report@phishing.gov.uk.

Spam and scam text messages should be copied and forwarded to 7726 (spells SPAM). This will help your provider to investigate and block the number.

Carers Trust Heart of England—www.carerstrusthofe.org.uk; 024 7610 1040 Option 4

Warwickshire CRESS Service please email warwickshirecress@carerstrusthofe.org.uk or call 02476 258816 (Out of hours: 07979 503 133).



VIRTUAL COFFEE MORNING

During this period of lockdown and limited social contact, we have offered you the opportunity to chat each month via Zoom. It was the best we could offer but not everyone likes it. However, those who did participate seem to have enjoyed them. In the past, we have not held a meeting during August and so we have decided not to hold a Virtual Coffee Morning this month. As our face-to-face monthly meetings will be returning next month, we are not anticipating resuming the Zoom meetings. However, as nothing is certain at the moment, we cannot say this will definitely be the case!

POSITIVITY CORNER

This month, I'd like to share two beautiful quotes from Charlie Mackesy's book "The boy, the mole, the fox and the Horse"

"What is the bravest thing you've ever said?" asked the boy.

"Help." said the horse.

"What do we do when our hearts hurt?" asked the boy.

"We wrap them with friendship, shared tears and time, till they wake hopeful and happy again."

