



Carers 4 Carers

Finding support through supporting each other

July 2023

Phew! Thank goodness it's a bit cooler. In fact the other day last week I would say it was cold. Last month's visit by Barbara and Phil from Samaritans was extremely informative and those of you attending found it helpful. I've included a short article inside, summarising the most salient points. Also inside is the second article on keeping records and notes to help with contact with health and social care professionals. It really is an important part of the Carer's role to do this and can make life easier for you so it's worth the effort. This started out as being a series of two articles but I can feel another one coming for September on preparation for going into hospital.

Last month, Volunteer Val and I accepted an invitation from Sophie Hilleary, High Sheriff of Warwickshire, to attend a service at Chadshunt Church followed by tea and cake at the House. On a very hot afternoon we enjoyed the coolness of this beautiful little church. As Sophie is spending this year visiting the County's support services and volunteer groups—and plans to visit us—the address by Rev'd Nicki was very



much a personal and poignant reflection on the role of caring and, in this instance, on the effect dementia can have on the whole family, not just the individual.

There will be no newsletter in August. However, I may send out an email/letter if there is anything I need to let you know about.

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 0LB, 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 no longer necessary to book in advance for either the Carers' Group or the Companionship Group. However, if you'd like to know more before joining us for a meeting, do get in touch by phone or email.

Friday 28th July — this will be one of our meetings with no speaker that I know many of you enjoy. Anita will be with us to offer some TLC and we'll finish the morning with some music for carers and companions together. I know a number of you enjoy knitting, sewing or other creative pastimes but have little time for it. If you have a portable project you would like to bring with you, please do. Social

creativity can be very relaxing.

Friday 25th August—our annual visit for coffee to the National Herb Centre at Warmington. The times are the same and it's a lovely relaxing morning. Details overleaf.

Friday 22nd September— We have felt for some time that a session on First Aid would be useful and so this month we will have a visit from the Red Cross.



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

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KEEPING RECORDS

Last month, Lisa gave you lots of suggestions about the sort of things to record when keeping notes and records about the person you care for. These will help with medical appointments and any assessments, such as Continuing Health Care. If you missed last month's article, the newsletter is available on our website or please ask for a paper copy.

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It's tempting, sometimes, to jot things down on the back of an envelope and, if a call comes when you are not expecting it, this can be the only answer. However, it is worth being organised about your record keeping so that you can refer back to it easily.

At one stage, when I was caring for both my mother and my husband, I kept notes in the same book, Mum at the front and Derek at the back. At this stage, it worked as neither had particularly complicated needs. After my mother passed away and my husband's condition started to deteriorate, I started a new book which I kept in a folder along with the great stack of paper communications I acquired. I still have it and recorded everything that was discussed at all appointments, home visits and those phone calls, whether medical or to do with social services. The problem was, it was all jumbled up. While everything was dated, the notes about the optician were immediately followed by the visit of the occupational therapist, then the Parkinson's consultant. I am sure you can see the pattern. If I wanted to recall something quickly and I couldn't remember when it happened, it took a while to find it. The other problem was that, needing to review what I had written, I couldn't always read my scrawled notes!

So, looking back, what could I have tried? A ring binder can be easy to organise with dividers but finding small ones can be difficult. It's helpful to have something you can pop in a bag and carry with you. It's possible to find notebooks with coloured sections, or divided by tabs which would make it much easier to separate important information. Another solution is to use an ordinary notebook and use sticky index tabs or page markers to separate your sections.

What sections are useful? This will depend a lot on personal circumstances but certainly I would include appointments and communications with or about:

- Your doctor/surgery
- Your consultant
- Other hospital appointments
- Social services
- Benefits, such as Attendance Allowance and DWP
- Tests and results and other metrics such as weight, blood pressure etc.
- Your own observations regarding aspects of your cared-for's condition
- A dated list of written communications
- A phone log

At the end of the day, if you have the energy after visits to the hospital etc, you might find it helpful to make time to look back over your notes and make sure that they are clear and legible and think about whether you have forgotten anything.

Did anyone ever tell you that part of the job description of a carer is being a secretary?

VISIT TO THE NATIONAL HERB CENTRE

We have been visiting the National Herb Centre for an informal meeting in August for a number of years and the staff in the Bistro there always look after us well. You are welcome to join us for coffee/tea anytime between 10.30 and 12 noon. I know some of you have stayed on for lunch afterwards and often enjoy perusing the plants there too.



Your first cup of tea or coffee is on us, up to the cost of a filter cup of coffee, for which you will be given a token. If you would prefer a 'posher' cup of coffee and perhaps a sweet treat, then we ask you to pay the difference. A space in the Bistro is reserved for us but you are asked to place your orders at the counter. We're happy to help with this if you need it.

The staff like to have an idea of numbers so we will have a list available at the July meeting. If you are unable to come in July, then please either email or phone us by **Friday 18th August**. Back&4th Community Transport has been booked for this visit and I would really like to encourage you to use it. As usual, pick-ups are available from addresses in and around Wellesbourne, enroute to Kineton or in and around Kineton. A pick-up can also be arranged from Wellesbourne Village Hall if you wish. Again, please book this by **18th August**.

SOME NOTES ABOUT LAST MONTHS VISIT BY SAMARITANS



I think many of us were interested in how the Samaritans organisation was started in 1953 by Chad Varah in London. Seventy years later, it is a national organisation with over 200 branches across the UK and Ireland with about 22,000 highly trained volunteers.

While the organisation was set up to support anyone contemplating suicide, it provides that and more. It is a listening ear for anyone who wants and needs to talk. They offer a helpline for support for people who are in distress, but not just feeling suicidal.

They are:

- 100% confidential. Records are not kept and telephone numbers not recorded.
- They are 100% non-judgemental.
- Samaritans can be contacted at any time, day or night, and they are there for anyone who needs someone to listen without judgement or pressure

Every 10 seconds, Samaritans respond to calls for help. Their website explains that they are "not only for the moment of crisis, we're taking action to prevent the crisis. We give people ways to cope and the skills to be there for others. And we encourage, promote and celebrate those moments of connection between people that can save lives."



Recognising situations where people can reach crisis, they also work in partnership with Network Rail to reduce suicides on the railways and in schools, prisons, hospitals and communities.

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 MAY MEETING

Please let us know if you would like a seat on the Back&4th community bus by **Friday 21st July**. This gives us time to send pick-up details for the driver. 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.

POSITIVITY CORNER

A time to reflect and perhaps to smile

Doctors diagnose, nurses heal and carers make sense of it all.

Brett H. Lewis

Take a moment to pat yourself on the back, because carers wear a lot of hats.