



# Carers 4 Carers

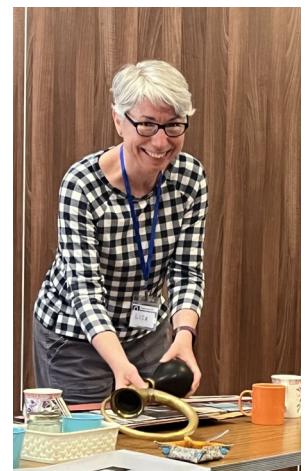
Finding support through supporting each other

June 2023

It was so lovely to have a full meeting last month. We hope that the carers and their loved ones who came along for the first time enjoyed it and that they felt welcome. It can be daunting to walk into a room full of people that you don't know and it is our aim that anyone doing so can quickly feel comfortable and at ease. For those bringing loved-ones to join our Companionship Group it can be a particularly anxious moment so it's really important that you let us know what we can do to help. As carers, we can be very protective of those we love and I can remember at times finding it difficult to let go and allow someone else to help, even though I knew it would help us both.

It was also good to renew our acquaintance with the four volunteers from the British Motor Museum. They brought with them a huge selection of photographs, documents and artefacts which certainly brought back memories, including the vintage Rover that some of our members enjoyed sitting in. Some of us now know what a 'big end' is and Lisa couldn't resist playing with the horn!

As I write, we are coming to the end of Carers Week. This year the theme is "Recognising and supporting carers in the community". You can find out more overleaf.



## 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 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 23rd June**— Barbara and volunteers Mark and Phil from the Samaritans will join us to explain what support they can offer to anyone with a need to talk. Read a little more inside the newsletter. **N.B.** the date; June has 5 Fridays and we meet on the 4th.

**Friday 28th July**—a meeting with no speaker. This gives more opportunity for talking to each other. Those of you who enjoy portable

hobbies such as art, needlework or knitting but find you have no time for it are welcome to bring a small project along. Anita will be on hand to offer some delightful mini-massages and we will round off the morning with some music for carers and companions.

**Friday 25th August**—our annual visit for coffee to the National Herb Centre at Warmington. More details next month.



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

[www.carers4carersonthefosse.org.uk](http://www.carers4carersonthefosse.org.uk)

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## KEEPING RECORDS

We have often talked about the importance of keeping notes and records and in the first of two articles, Lisa gives you lots of suggestions about what to record. As a health professional as well as a former carer, she is able to speak with 'two hats' on.

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Sitting in a work meeting the other day, I was reminded how difficult it can be for carers to explain what problems they (or their loved one) are having. I also had personal experience of this when caring for my parents. Carers can find themselves attending lots of appointments with a variety of professionals and for a variety of reasons – weekly therapy appointments, annual medical reviews with specialists, care needs assessments with social services, care home funding reviews to name but a few. It very often falls to the carer to give an accurate picture of how things are currently and, importantly, how things have changed. It is no wonder that after an appointment, many carers think, “now why didn't I mention that?” I know. I have been in that situation.

Some areas to consider (not exhaustive and may not be applicable in all cases):

- Walking, getting in / out of a chair, bath or shower, going out, falls and getting up from a fall
- Making needs known, talking, understanding, using the phone
- Reading and writing
- Problems chewing and swallowing or help with eating / drinking; needing reminders to eat or drink or having food cut up
- Forgetting or refusing to take medication; having difficulties taking tablets
- Continence issues
- Emotions including anxiety or depression,
- challenging behaviour
- Washing, dressing; help using the toilet
- Preparing drinks, snacks and meals
- Shopping
- Managing finances, appointments etc.
- Household chores including washing and ironing
- Interests and leisure activities
- Specific problems with thinking skills; memory, concentration, planning things, getting lost, not recognising people
- Medical diagnoses and conditions
- Vision and hearing

Think about how things have changed within a specific time span. Thinking back to events such as birthdays, Christmas etc. can help you remember what things were like. What could your loved-one do then that they cannot do now?

My main piece of advice is to note things down as they occur rather than rely on memory and include the date. It is also helpful to note down how regularly something happens. Is it every day, every week, occasionally? Is it a reaction to certain circumstances or particular people? Is it unpredictable and unexpected or can you anticipate that it may happen and have a plan in place. That is not to say that it is not still a problem but it is all useful information.

These points can also be used for you, as a carer, to explain and give examples of your own difficulties and the pressures you may be under and how things have changed for you.



## CARERS WEEK

As I write, we are coming to the end of Carers' Week. As the week is always at the beginning of the month it doesn't fall easily to be included in our programme of activities. There has been a programme of activities and events running in various parts of the county and those of you who are registered with Caring Together, Warwickshire, should have received information about these. So far, I've not seen anything in the media about the week, which is disappointing.

Cllr Margaret Bell, Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care and Health in Warwickshire said: "Carers Week is a great opportunity to show appreciation for those with caring responsibilities and to remind everyone about the wellbeing and wider support available to them across the county." She added: "I would like people to think about their responsibilities for others and whether they recognise their caring role. To get support, it's important you register as an unpaid carer through your GP or via the Caring Together website. By registering, you can have a conversation about your unique circumstances and get the support you need."

This, of course, reiterates the messages that Carers4Carers regularly puts out. Contact details for Caring Together are on our back page. The opportunity to talk through your personal circumstances through the means of a Carers' Assessment is a valuable one and I would urge you all to take it up if you haven't already. Registering with your GP is also valuable. You may remember that earlier this year I mentioned I was involved with a project at Hastings House, together with our Primary Care Network to make surgeries more "carer friendly". Much of value is coming out of this. If you are a patient at the surgery, look out for further information.

A Carer's Pack has been produced containing lots of useful information and this is being sent to everyone on our mailing list.



### THE SAMARITANS

Mention the Samaritans, and most people automatically think 'suicide'. There are times when carers may reach crisis point, but it doesn't mean they are necessarily suicidal. Having someone to talk to, who may be outside the situation, can be half the battle. The Samaritan's organisation is all about ensuring that everyone has someone to talk their worries over with. They are completely non-judgemental and there is nothing you cannot tell them if you want to. A problem shared really is a problem halved, even if only briefly.

You can contact the Samaritans 365 days of the year, 24 hours a day. The call is free on 0116 123. (just 6 digits is correct).



### WARWICKSHIRE OPEN STUDIOS

For those of you able to do so, it's great to be able to get out and about, especially now the better weather has arrived. Enjoying meeting others, indulging in tea and cake and looking at beautiful things can be a gentle way of passing a morning or afternoon and you don't have to go far. This month, there are several local venues participating in the scheme and one of them is at Chedham's Yard in Wellesbourne. The dates are 17th and 24th June and 1st July, 11—4. I will be there with my Hemiola Crafts on the first and last dates. Profits from my sales will be donated to Carers4Carers. Look out for the brightly coloured brochures giving details of this and other venues.

## IMPORTANT CONTACTS AND LINKS



- **Caring Together, Warwickshire**, the new statutory carer support service for Warwickshire carers. Phone 0800 297 5544 or visit [www.caringtogetherwarwickshire.org.uk](http://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](http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/doorstepsellers) ; [www.actionfraud.police.uk/](http://www.actionfraud.police.uk/).
- Healthwatch Warwickshire— [www.healthwatchwarwickshire.co.uk](http://www.healthwatchwarwickshire.co.uk) ; 01926 422823 (9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on weekdays) and email [info@healthwatchwarwickshire.co.uk](mailto:info@healthwatchwarwickshire.co.uk)
- **Silverline**—available 24/7 as well as a befriending service [www.thesilverline.org.uk/](http://www.thesilverline.org.uk/) . Email: [info@thesilverline.org.uk](mailto:info@thesilverline.org.uk) or phone 0800 4 70 80 90
- Warwickshire County Council: [www.warwickshire.gov.uk/](http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/) 01926 410 410 . For social media go to their facebook page: [www.facebook.com/WarwickshireCountyCouncil](http://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/](http://actonenergy.org.uk/)

## 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 16th June**. 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

