



Carers 4 Carers

Finding support through supporting each other

June 2017

We are coming to the end of Carers' Week and I wonder if you have watched, heard or read any items in the media about it. Last Sunday on Songs of Praise, DJ Johnnie Walker and his wife Tiggy talked about how they responded to the need to care as each in turn found themselves coping with cancer. They also described what it was like to be the patient on the receiving end of that love and care and highlighted not only the very practical nature of caring but the huge emotional toll that can come with it.

Carers' Week has been about building Carer Friendly communities and removing some of the usual barriers that often exist in large organisations, making it difficult for carers to access services and information. By highlighting the needs of carers in the media, it may hopefully have triggered some thought processes in those who can make a real difference.

When on holiday I try not to talk about my role or jump on the bandwagon when caring is mentioned, but occasionally it pops out. On my recent break I met a couple unable to go on holiday for ten years because of their responsibilities and another gentleman holidaying for the first time after his wife died; I understood what both were going through. But for others, when I mentioned 'Carers' Week' they said 'What's that?' Currently untouched by caring, statistics suggest it might not be far away for them and the more we can educate the general public, the better prepared they will be.

OUR MONTHLY MEETINGS

Carers 4 Carers' monthly meetings take place on the **fourth** Friday of the month. We meet at the Kinton Village Hall, Mill Street, Kinton, CV35 0LB between 10.30 and 12 noon. We always 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. Come when you can and stay for as long as you are able.

Friday 23rd June— there have been several discussions about aids and equipment at our meetings lately so Kate Allen's visit is timely. She is an Occupational Therapist who has worked with the NHS for many

years but is now independent. She'll be able to answer your questions on equipment and aids designed to help you stay in your home and bring you up-to-date with some of the latest developments.

Friday 28th July— it might seem hard to think about the winter months now, but it is the perfect time to consider any changes you might need to make to your home energy. A member of the Act on Energy team from Wellesbourne will bring you up-to-date on the subject of energy in the home in time for you to be nice and cosy for the colder months.

Carers 4 Carers is part of the network of Omega Care for Life Meeting Point Support Groups

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PLOUGHMAN'S LUNCH WITH THE NCS

I have already mentioned briefly a couple of months ago that a team of young people from the National Citizen's Service will again be joining us to help us raise funds for the group. Last year each it was an Afternoon Tea; this year it will be a ploughman's lunch.



So, please, put the date in your diary—it's **WEDNESDAY 9TH AUGUST**.

But of course the team of youngsters aren't just helping us; we are helping them and part of the bargain is that we help them to come to an understanding of what the group is about, what we do, who we are and why we are needed. Isn't that a golden opportunity to spread the word and help these young people become aware of a very sizeable group of society that sixty percent of the population may become part of at some time in their lives?

The week before the lunch, the team will be visiting Kineton and it would be really great if some of you could join us for part of their time with us. The date is Monday July 31st and I am waiting for times to be confirmed. However, I think late morning will probably be easier for everyone. The venue will be the Methodist Church Hall.

CONTINUED SUPPORT AFTER CARING

My recent holiday has helped to highlight in my mind some of the reasons why carers continue to need support when caring comes to an end. Depending on who we are caring for and that person's condition, for many the inevitable will happen at some point. For those caring 24/7 there will be a sudden and huge gap in their life and many look for ways in which to fill it, sometimes by filling their diary too much so that once again they have no time for themselves.

The chance to travel is often taken up. The gentleman I mentioned overleaf had booked himself no fewer than 9 holidays! Having married late in life, I had been used to solo travelling before I met my husband and would call myself a fairly confident traveller. However, things are very different now—the world is a different place and I am a different person because of my experiences. I am also aware that I live in a coupled world and to my amazement found myself in a tour group to be the only female solo traveller. As no meals were included, I had no choice but to go out at the end of the day and eat an evening meal on my own. It was only right at the end of the holiday that my fellow travellers, all of them really friendly, realised what was happening and I was invited to join 'the girls', a group of four ladies from a U3A branch in Essex, all of them widows.

Caring is isolating, we know; many find friends and family melt away because they don't understand. Finding a companion to travel with, enjoy the theatre and do all those things it's pleasanter to do with someone else, can be hard. So we continue to support carers when caring comes to an end because we understand what can happen and it helps to be with others who understand.