



Carers 4 Carers

Finding support through supporting each other

March 2018

How lovely it was to welcome four new members last month to our meeting. Thanks to publicity, networking and various agencies in the area, we are getting the word out that support is available. It's so important that people who don't realise they are carers, usually because it seems to be just part of family life, are reached, so that they don't feel so isolated and alone.

Isolation and loneliness are well known to be significant causes of poor health. The Warwickshire County Council's website describes 'wellbeing' as feeling good and doing (or functioning) well. This, in turn, means having positive relationships, having some control over one's life and a sense of purpose. It's one of the reasons why we offer carers activities designed to help you feel better, opportunities to chat and exchange ideas and moments of TLC with Anita. If you feel better, you will care better. I don't pretend for one moment that it's easy, but hopefully we can help towards that goal.

It may seem early, but Easter will fall before our next newsletter so I'd like to take this opportunity to wish you all a restful break. Don't eat too many chocolate eggs!!

OUR MONTHLY MEETINGS

Carers 4 Carers' monthly meetings take place on the **fourth** Friday of the month. We meet at the Kineton Village Hall, Mill Street, Kineton, CV35 OLB 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.

March 23rd—Paul Thompson, community volunteer from Springfield Mind, will explain the Five Ways to Wellbeing. This was used as the basis of our successful application for funding from the County Councillor's Small

Grants Fund.

April 27th— Paper, Print and Texture—a creative wellbeing workshop led by community artist, Penny Vigers. This is the morning to release your inner Picasso, but if he's not there, don't worry, you don't need to be to be an artist or able to draw. Anita will also be with us to offer you some relaxing TLC. You should be thoroughly chilled by the end of the morning!

May 25th—Michael Howard, the service manager from Warwickshire's Wellbeing Service, Carers' Trust Heart of England will be with us.

Carers 4 Carers is part of the network of Omega Care for Life Meeting Point Support Groups Reg. Charity No. 1120322

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HELPING YOU FEEL BETTER

I've touched overleaf on the feelings of loneliness and isolation that many carers feel. Carers UK have reported that 8 out of 10 carers have felt lonely as a result of looking after a loved one. They have identified that one of the main causes of loneliness is understanding—or lack of it. The Jo Cox Commission on loneliness talks about combatting it 'one conversation at a time'. Last August, the commission shed a spotlight on loneliness amongst carers for a month. Carers UK encouraged carers to write anonymous open letters to someone who had helped them feel less lonely. A number of carers have told me that they find it helpful to write their feelings down and here I'm sharing excerpts from two of the letters:

From a parent of a child with an addiction:

For months I kept myself hidden, till the day I went to a carers' meeting. I felt, I can do this.

I took to my feet to tell of my pain/anguish. I burst into tears. Not as strong as I thought, but you held my hand and said I done good.

Everyone there understood how I felt and the support has been ongoing ever since. What happened that day has given me the strength to talk, inform others and I have learned to cope with the feelings of guilt, shame and the stigma.

I'd always enjoyed going to carers' events in the past but I booked into one when I was feeling low and I was dreading going. I pushed myself to attend but I was quieter than usual. One carer noticed I seemed a bit reserved. All she said was, "how are you Janet?" and I burst into tears.

I told her how I was feeling and that I'd had enough. My life felt like the exact same day over and over again. Nothing was new, nothing was changing and I felt like a robot with no time for my real feelings to come to the surface. I cried throughout the whole conversation. It was the release I needed, but I never managed to tell her just how nice it was to have an opportunity to talk to another carer who understood. It might have only been one short chat, but she made me feel much better for weeks.



**ONE KIND WORD
can change
someone's
entire day.**

Giving release to our feelings can be so cathartic. If writing them down helps you, have a conversation with your piece of paper.