

# Unite Carers in Mid Devon

## Autumn 2022 Newsletter



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### A WORD FROM OUR CHAIR

Where did that lovely summer go? I hope you coped well with the unusually high temperatures. As we drift into Autumn and the changes in the weather, I reflect on a few events and changes within our charity.

We are fortunate to have Tracy on board now as a permanent member of staff. Unite is very proud of Tracy and her success in the London Marathon on 2<sup>nd</sup> October, and some of us actually saw her on TV. The money raised by her amazing effort goes, in a very generous gesture, to Unite Carers. If you didn't know about Tracy's achievement and would like to donate, you can still do this directly through the office. Thank you for all your kind donations so far.

We are very grateful to the Tiverton Branch of the Soroptimists for identifying us as their chosen Charity for the year. The Soroptimists are a global organisation working at local, national and international levels to educate empower and enable opportunities for women and girls. On Friday 7<sup>th</sup> they held a fund raising evening for Unite Carers and the Bees For Development charity - A Beetle Drive. If you have never been to a Beetle Drive, I thoroughly recommend it. Great fun and although my table didn't win the prize we did go home with several raffle prizes between us.

It was good to see so many of you at the AGM on 14<sup>th</sup> September, we were pleased to have the Mayor and the Beadle join us. We seldom get an opportunity to sit and chat so this provided a welcome opportunity to do just that over a cup of tea and some very tasty scones.

We are always looking out for new volunteers especially someone you may know who has an hour or two to spare, so please do invite them to give us a call and we will do the rest.

Keep well and wrap-up warm, fingers crossed we will have a mild winter.

**Bernice Philbrick – Chair of Trustees**



*Bernice attending the International Dementia Awareness Month at Cullompton Library recently*

## NEWS FROM OUR SUPPORT GROUPS



### Let's Unite Outdoors

What a lovely time we all had for the last session of the year of our **Let's Unite Outdoors** family group (for children and carers of primary aged children with special educational or additional needs). Katie, our wonderful forest school teacher, supported by Steve and Tracy hunted for bugs, helped to build dens, make mud pies, and most popular of all, helped to build a camp fire on which to roast marshmallows, make Smores and enjoy hot chocolate bought along by parents. Our Let's Unite Outdoors group in Tiverton provides a safe, supportive space for children to play, learn and make friends if they want to, and opportunities for parents to chat to others who understand. The sessions re-commence in the Spring (May) and run until September. In the meantime, parent carers can seek support from our two groups for parent carers of children with additional needs – Let's Unite Peer Support Group on the 1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday of each month, starting at 9.30am and the Carers of Adults and Teenagers with Additional Needs on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of the month, starting at 10.30am.



### Cullompton Carers Coffee Group

On Wednesday, 9<sup>th</sup> November Carers going along to the **Cullompton Carers' Coffee Group** will be entertained by the talented Norman Ford and Arthur Wright who will be playing a variety of Scottish tunes on the electronic bagpipes and electronic snare drums (volume adjustable) followed by audience requests. Thank you to our wonderful group leader Jean Milne who is helping to facilitate this. The group begins at 10.30am at the Hayridge Centre, Cullompton.

### Tiverton Forget Me Not Café

Our popular **Forget Me Not Café** - for carers and the people they care for - continues to thrive, ably lead by Denise Butt. On the Tuesday, 15<sup>th</sup> November the group is being joined by specialist Dave Monk from the Illegal Money Lending Team, to give a talk and advice on Loan Sharks – how to spot and take steps to avoid. The group begins at 2pm at Cherith Church, Tiverton. Please telephone the office if you would like to attend the talk but don't usually attend the FMNC group.

*The December session of the Forget Me Not Café will be a week earlier than usual on 13<sup>th</sup> December starting at the usual time of 2pm.*

### Safe Stop Sitting Service

Our **Safe Stop Sitting Service** in Tiverton is giving vital respite to unpaid carers across Mid Devon and our tiny charity - Unite Carers - is one of a very small number of organisations who are offering this service at present. Lead by the extremely experienced Jenny Tower and supported by a team of excellent volunteers, the warm and welcoming group offers a safe space for adult loved ones for 2 and

a half hours where they will be entertained with an array of enjoyable and thought-provoking activities. On Wednesday, 23<sup>rd</sup> November the group are being treated to a foot-tapping Christmas singalong by Brian Lawless on his guitar. Jenny has invited carers and their loved ones from the Forget Me Not Café to join them and refreshments are available. If you would like to go along, please call the office on 01884 257 511 so we have an idea of numbers.

Plans are afoot to establish further Sitting Service groups in more rural areas, possibly Halberton and Witheridge, so please do let us know if you would like to be able to access another SSSS group at a location near to you, either as a carer or a volunteer.

***Please note – There may be some date changes for Groups due to be held on the 3rd and 4th weeks of December due to Christmas and the New Year. We will notify you by email but please do check in with the office to confirm. Thank you.***

If you are interested in joining or supporting any of our groups, we'd be very happy to chat to you. Please do give us a call us at the Unite Office – 01884 257511 and ask for Sharon or Tracy.

## **NEWS FROM OUR ADULT CARERS BEFRIENDING TEAM**

The Befriending Support Team continues to expand with several new requests for face to face Befriending Support from unpaid carers and a really positive response from volunteers coming back on board after covid restrictions. Between June – Aug 2022 Unite Carers registered 15 new unpaid carers and had 5 new requests for Befriending Support. For the period to date – September and October 2022 - we have had 14 new unpaid carer registrations and 8 new requests for Befriending Support. We warmly welcome each and every one of you to Unite Carers.

Befriending Support can be either in person over a coffee and a chat or through telephone support, or a combination of both. We try our best to match you with a like-minded person and if there's ever any problems, we're here to help. It's all about what works best for you.

Befriending Support isn't only available for new Carers to Unite. If you are feeling lonely and would like someone to talk to on a regular basis, please do get in touch with us; we're here to make life just a little bit easier for you.

We would love to recruit more volunteers of all ages to our Befriending Team, particularly from men to support men, so please do get in touch to find out more.

## **NEWS FROM OUR DEVON CARERS AMBASSADOR – FIONA BLADON**

### **FREE Access to Leisure Centres for Unpaid Carers in Mid-Devon.**

All unpaid carers in Mid-Devon, ***and now including parent carers***, are currently able to access their local Leisure Centres with FREE annual membership, as part of a pilot running until the 31st of December this year. Free entry to the facilities at the Leisure Centre is being provided to unpaid carers on production of their Carers Passport from Devon Carers.

The Leisure Centres taking part in the pilot are:

- Culm Valley Sports Centre in Cullompton
- Exe Valley Leisure Centre in Tiverton
- Lords Meadow Leisure Centre in Crediton

More details on the facilities, opening times and location of the centres can be found on the Mid Devon Leisure website. Unpaid carers can access all activities, but classes and courts are advised to be booked in advance.

The trial was implemented following representations from Carer Ambassadors for improved access to leisure centres. This was then raised by Cllr James McInnes with the Devon Districts Forum, of which Cllr Bob Deed, the Leader of Mid Devon District Council, is the current Chair.

Unpaid carers can obtain a Carers Passport by registering with Devon Carers.

For information please visit the Devon Carers website, email [info@devoncarers.org.uk](mailto:info@devoncarers.org.uk) or contact the Devon Carers Helpline on 03456 434 435. The Helpline is available Monday to Fridays from 8:00am to 6:00pm (except bank holidays) and on Saturday from 9:00am to 1:00pm.

### *I am a Carer*

*"I am on call 24/7, 365. I don't finish work at 5.00 pm".*

*"I don't get paid holidays – in fact, I don't get holidays".*

*"I don't get paid sick leave – I can't be sick".*

*"I do get comfort from knowing I am doing my best for the person I care for and  
I do get occasional moments of pure joy with my loved one".*

*"I am a carer for my father who has dementia".*

*I wonder if Devon Carers could help?*

### **Carers' Rights Day is Thursday 24 November 2022**

Devon Carers will be at the Exeter Corn Exchange between 10.00 am and 4.00 pm to give information and advice to help support you, as an unpaid carer.

If you cannot visit Devon Carers in Exeter, we are also holding information and awareness stands across Devon. For more information visit:

[www.devoncarers.org.uk/information-and-advice/my-rights-as-a-carer/carers-rights-day/](http://www.devoncarers.org.uk/information-and-advice/my-rights-as-a-carer/carers-rights-day/)

## **CARER'S CORNER**

### **Dementia Carers Count**

Dementia Carers Count is a fantastic organisation that offer lots of useful information, tips, advice, crisis support and free training, specifically for people who care for loved ones with dementia.

They have a Facebook page here: <https://www.facebook.com/DemCarersCount>

And a website here: [www.dementiacarers.org.uk](http://www.dementiacarers.org.uk)

Or you can call for support by telephoning: 0800 652 1102

### **The Herbert Protocol**

The Herbert Protocol form can be used in the event of an adult with care and support needs going missing. It contains vital information about the person at risk that can be passed to the police right at the point the person is reported missing.

Recording this information ahead of time, and keeping it regularly updated, will greatly reduce the stress associated with trying to recall detailed information in an emergency situation.

If you would like a printed copy of the Herbert Protocol form, please come along to the Unite Carer's offices at 2 Bridge Street, Tiverton (please call first), or please do get in touch with us and we'll get one to you. You can call the office on 01884 257511 or email [info@unitecarers.org.uk](mailto:info@unitecarers.org.uk)

### **Are you on your own this Christmas?**

Age UK are offering a free Christmas lunch at the Old Heathcoat School Community Centre for anyone who is on their own this Christmas. Call 01885 251 155 to book.

## **JUST FOR VOLUNTEERS**

A note to our invaluable Volunteers – Please don't forget to claim your volunteer expenses. We know that many of you kindly don't want to claim, but if you do claim, you can always donate back using gift aid – see Sharon for more details or call the office.

## **FUND RAISING NEWS**

### **Beetle Drive**

We are immensely grateful to the Tiverton Soroptimists for naming Unite Carers as their Charity of the Year. On Friday 7<sup>th</sup> October a very willing group from Unite Carers attended a Beetle Drive raising funds for Unite Carers and Bees for Development, an international charity working to elevate poverty and providing a sustainable income through bee keeping. The evening was so much fun and very well attended, so much so that several extra tables needed to be bought in to accommodate everyone. The game truly was inclusive and fun for all, with children as young as 5 playing along with the adults.

Funds raised from the evening, and from other funding raising events, will be presented to Unite Carers at the end of the fund raising period. Thank you Tiverton Soroptimists!

## London Marathon

On 2<sup>nd</sup> October staff member Tracy Downs ran the London Marathon in aid of Unite Carers.

It was my first London Marathon and I was extremely nervous and not feeling very well at all for 2 days before, but I dosed myself up on the start line and had a fantastic time. I took lots of pictures, most of which didn't come out, and finished in a time of 5hrs 33mins. The crowd, the other runners and the organisers were incredible, lots of music to keep you going and lots of cheering. What a fabulous experience and I feel so lucky that I got a place.



As you can see, I wore my dad's Brentford FC football shirt for the run - Dad was a lifelong supporter of The Bees, as am I. Dad died from mesothelioma on 21st March this year after a 5-month battle. My mum, my brother and I were Dad's carers in those last few months and I thought of him often as I ticked along, especially as I was getting tired - it was nothing compared to what he had to endure. We did it Dad!

I'd like to say a massive thank you to everyone who has donated to Unite Carers and for everyone who wished me well. We have raised around £300.

## Curry and Quiz Night

Uplowman Village Hall will be holding a curry and quiz night partly in aid of Unite Carers. The date is still to be confirmed for this and it should be another fantastic evening. More details to follow.

### CONTACT US

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Website: [www.unite-carersinmiddevon.org.uk](http://www.unite-carersinmiddevon.org.uk)

Facebook: [Unite Carers in Mid Devon | Facebook](#)

Registered Charity No: 1099188  
Company No: 4779388

**If you would like an adapted newsletter – large print, translation, dyslexia friendly colours, please do get in touch with the office and we will be happy to help with this.**

For those of us that use **Facebook** the Unite Carers Facebook page is worth taking a look at. You can find it by clicking here:

[Unite Carers in Mid Devon | Facebook](#)

Or by searching Unite Carers in Mid Devon in the Facebook search box.

**Please like and share!**

## AND IN OTHER NEWS....

Unite Carers are now part of the Eastern Devon Unpaid Carers Prevention Steering Group. The group is a strategy group of NHS and LCP (local care partnership) professionals, organisations providing support and services and unpaid carers themselves, who meet monthly to steer services and support where it is needed most.

Tina's MS Group (see Spotlight On... below) is now recognised and associated with the national MS Society. Well done Tina.

Unite Carers will have a brand new website soon – watch this space!

The Unite Carers facility at no. 4 Bridge Street is available to hire – please call the office for more information and to book. Photocopying also available at very reasonable rates.

**And finally...**

## **Spotlight On...** In this edition we turn the spotlight on **Tina Webber**

Hi, my name is Tina Webber. I moved to Tiverton 5 years ago from a little village in South Devon called Buckfast and I have been volunteering for Unite Carers for 8 years. In my 20s I married and had 3 boys and between them I have 2 lovely grandsons.

I was diagnosed with MS in 1999 and my life changed a bit. When my boys left home, and finding it difficult to hold down a job with my MS, I asked myself – What could I do?

Previously I have worked in a residential home, as a home help and a childminder. I started to look for a charity to volunteer with and came across Unite Carers in Mid Devon. It was a great fit for me as my boyfriend (at the time) lived in Tiverton and it was a great way to get to know new people. We married in 2017.

I began my Unite Carers journey with Befriending and then I began helping at Tiverton Kids Who Care Club Nights. I think my first trip with KWC Young Carers was a day on the beach at Saunton Sands, and I was hooked from then on.

I started helping in the office printing, photo copying and doing some work on the database. I enjoyed helping some lovely people and making some great friends. As a volunteer I'm constantly meeting new people.

Later I started running "Tina's Craft Corner" for young carers at the Kids Who Care Club Nights in Tiverton, Crediton and Cullompton. This then led to doing activities at the Forget Me Not Café with Jackie Quaif. After the pandemic the opportunity came up to become a Trustee for Unite Carers and here we are.

I also run a lunch group separate to Unite for people with MS. Being a volunteer gave me the confidence to do this and volunteering continues to boost my self-esteem and confidence.

## UNITE CARERS SUPPORT GROUPS AND SERVICES – AUTUMN 2022

Client Base	Group Name	Location	Day in the month	Time
All Carers	Cullompton Carers Coffee Group	The Hayridge Cullompton,	2nd Wednesday	10.30 am to 12 noon
All Carers	Bampton Carers Coffee Group	The Swan, Bampton	1st Tuesday	10.30 am to 11.30 am
All Carers	Tiverton Carers Coffee Group	Riverside Club, Tiverton	4 <sup>th</sup> Tuesday	2 pm
All Carers & Ex-Carers	Uffculme Support Group	Various Locations	4 <sup>th</sup> Monday	12.30 pm
Cared-for	Safe Stop Sitting Service	Cherith Church, Tiverton	2 <sup>nd</sup> & 4 <sup>th</sup> Wednesday	10 am to 12.30 pm
Carers of Adults & Teenagers With Additional Needs	Parent Carers Coffee Group	Unite Carers 4 Bridge Street, Tiverton	3 <sup>rd</sup> Wednesday	10.30 am to 12 noon
Carers of Primary Age Children with Special Educational Needs	Let's Unite Outdoors	Wilcombe School, Tiverton	Seasonal contact Unite	
Carers of School Age Children with Special Educational Needs	Let's Unite Peer Support Group	Unite Carers 4 Bridge Street, Tiverton	1st Wednesday	9.30 am to 11.30 am
Dementia Carers	Culm Valley Oasis	Padbrook Park, Cullompton	3rd Monday	2.30 pm to 4.00 pm
Dementia Carers	Exe Valley Oasis	Riverside Club, Tiverton	2nd Thurs	2.00 pm
Dementia Carers & Cared-for	Tiverton Forget-me-Not Cafe	Cherith Church, Tiverton	3rd Tuesday	2.00 pm to 3.30 pm