

Unite Carers in Mid Devon



Summer Newsletter 2023

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A WORD FROM OUR CHAIR

By the time you are reading this the longest day will have come and gone as the evenings begin lengthening into cosy winter nights. But let's not write summer off quite yet, still lots of sunshine hours to enjoy. Forecasters are predicting some pretty hot weather coming our way. We need to take care, high temperatures can be hazardous, so plenty of fluid and keep cool.

In May, I went to one of the Safe Stop group meetings in Tiverton where I was made very welcome by Jenny and her team. This wonderful service that we provide means carers can leave their cared for person over 2 1/2 hours to give them a break. We also have a safe stop group in Witheridge and a new Carers' Coffee Group in Crediton.

Towards the end of June Sharon and myself were invited to the Bellway Homes housing development in Willand to receive a cheque for £400.00 On arrival we were surprised to find ourselves the centre of a full Photo shoot with a professional photographer from Reading who took about 100 photos of us. No warning, no make-up artist, no hairdresser or wardrobe department. So watch out for us on a billboard near you looking slightly weather swept. It was an experience and actually we looked quite natural!

To mark Dementia Awareness Week, and wearing my Unite Carers Trustee's hat, I hosted a stand at Cullompton Library together with Tracy and our volunteer Jean on 15th, 17th and 19th May.

On June 8th, to mark Carers' Week we held an open day at Number 4 Bridge Street with balloons, bunting and homemade cake. A really good occasion as those of you who joined us will I am sure agree. Sharon and I posted ourselves outside on the pavement distributing leaflets, information and invitations to step inside for cake and coffee. Tracy and Tina hosted the inner gathering which at times was quite lively and several people associated with Unite and Carers came along for support and



Bernice and Sharon receiving a cheque from Bellway Homes in Willand – just one of the pics from the photoshoot!

advice (and of course friendly chatter and cake). We were nicely surprised at the interest shown by passersby. An event well worth the effort. Thank you to those that came along.

I am very pleased to tell you that our Trustee Pat is back in action having recovered from a fall resulting in a broken lower limb. Good to see you back Pat.

Our staff continue to maintain the high level of services provided by Unite to unpaid carers in Mid Devon. I cannot speak too highly of both Sharon and Tracy; their hard work and diligence is a credit to us and Unite Carers are fortunate to employ this special team. Of course, none of this would be possible without the most important ingredient, our dedicated army of volunteers - **We Salute You!**

Bernice Philbrick – Chair of Trustees

NEWS FROM OUR SUPPORT GROUPS

NEW GROUP – Crediton Carers' Coffee Group

Our Crediton Carers' Coffee Group has returned. The new group is on the 3rd Thursday of each month, starting at 11am at the lovely @100 Café on Crediton High Street. Please do drop by to meet Tracy for support, advice and a chance to chat with other carers over a cup of coffee or tea, on us. The group is open to all unpaid carers, there's plenty of parking available and great coffee.

Tiverton Forget Me Not Café



The Tiverton Forget Me Not Café, for dementia Carers and their loved ones, has been very busy since I last wrote to you. In April we had a visit from the Devon and Somerset Fire & Rescue Service who gave an interesting and informative talk on fire safety AND we were treated to music and song with Caroline on the guitar. In May we celebrated King Charles III's coronation with a cream tea and in June, Brian came along with his guitar for a singalong to songs from yesteryear and some of us even tried hula dancing.

Tiverton and Witheridge Safe Stop Sitting Groups

Norman and Arthur will be providing some of the entertainment at the Tiverton Safe Stop group on 12th July with toe-tapping renditions on the electronic bagpipes and drums (see Spotlight below on Norman).

The Safe Stop groups offer unpaid Carers an opportunity to take a break from caring while their loved one is kept safe and thoroughly entertained by our Safe Stop team.

The Witheridge Safe Stop group is the 3rd Tuesday of each month from 10.30am- 12.30pm at Witheridge Parish Hall while Tiverton Safe Stop runs twice a month on the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of each month at Cherith Church, Tiverton from 10am-12.30pm. There is a cost of £10 for each session, which includes refreshments. We are very flexible and encourage Carers to stay with their cared-for person if they wish, leave them safely with us if they wish, or a combination of both – whatever is best for you. If you would like to go along to either the Tiverton or the Witheridge group, and you haven't been before, please do give us a call at the office.

Cullompton Carer's Coffee Group

Norman and Arthur will also be appearing at the Cullompton Carers' Coffee Group on 9th August. This group is facilitated by Jean and runs on the 2nd Wednesday of each month, starting at 10.30am at The Hayridge.

Tiverton and Cullompton Ex-Carers Lunch Group

The Tiverton and Cullompton Ex-Carers Lunch Group is an extremely popular lunch group facilitated by Veronica (Ronnie) Stone. It's on the first Monday of each month at different lunch venues each time and if you are a former unpaid carer looking for fun and friendship, you can find it here. Please call the office to find out the venue for the month.

All of our Carers' Support Groups are free to attend, with the exception of the Tiverton and Witheridge Safe Stop groups.

NEWS FROM OUR BEFRIENDING TEAM

Our dedicated volunteer Befriending Team has expanded over the last few weeks to provide even more support to unpaid Carers through our free face-to-face Befriending and Telephone Friendship services. We are now proud to say that we have 28 volunteers giving 1:1 Befriending and Telephone Friendship support and a further 10 volunteers available to provide form-filling, IT support and Counselling For Carers.

For the period April to June 2023, we have had 19 new unpaid Carers register with us and 15 new requests for 1:1 Befriending support. We warmly welcome each and every one of you to Unite Carers.

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

We are currently looking to recruit befriending volunteers who have lived experience of caring for a child, teen or adult with additional needs, who would be able to give specialised support, advice and friendship to others in a similar position. Age and gender irrelevant. If you think this could be you, please contact us at the office on 01884 257511 for an informal chat or email tracy@unitemd.org.uk. Thank you.

NEWS FROM OUR DEVON CARERS AMBASSADOR – FIONA BLADON



The **Lions Club *Message in a Bottle*** could prove helpful to you in the event of an emergency. Consider keeping a bottle for yourself and for the person you care for. The bottles and information forms are available free from your health centre, doctor's surgery, chemists and from some other venues like community centres and churches. The scheme was set up by the Lions Club International and the costs of running it are borne by local Lions Clubs.

As the name suggests, information regarding personal and medical details is stored in the plastic bottle in the fridge. If the emergency services are called to your home and see a “green cross” label, they will be alerted to your membership of the scheme and look for the bottle in the fridge. Fix one label to the inside of your front door (or the door most used to access the premises) and the second to the outside of the fridge door.

To complete the form, you will need to add:

- Your full name and brief physical description
- Your doctor's name and the surgery address and telephone number
- A brief description of any medical conditions you are suffering from - your doctor or carer will help if you are uncertain
- The names, addresses and telephone numbers of two persons who may be contacted in the event of an emergency - sudden illness or accident
- Details of any pets which may be on the premises and need to be cared for
- If you are a carer, you will need to add information about the person you support

In addition, it is helpful to include your repeat prescription list, which is produced every time a repeat prescription is ordered. This information is of great value to the ambulance service as paramedics are able to administer drugs, but they need to know of any medication you are taking already to eliminate the risk of drug interaction.

The form also has a space for a passport size photograph to help with identification if there is more than one person living at the premises.

You may like to ask a relative, neighbour or Unite Carers to help you to complete the form. It can be useful to have a “spare” copy as, if called, the paramedics will take the one from the bottle.

CARER'S CORNER

Walking For Health Groups in Mid Devon

Rollers and Strollers – Cullompton – on the 1st Friday of each month – 10.30am-12pm

For people using wheelchairs, mobility scooters and pushing buggies, as well as people on foot.

Tiverton Twalkers – Wednesdays weekly - At various locations across Mid Devon

Friday Strollers – Tiverton – Fridays monthly

Both Twalkers and Strollers meet at 10.15 am for a 10.30 am start.

Please call the office for more information or see Facebook:

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



The Living Room

Are you lonely and looking for company? The Living Room is a drop-in community café in Tiverton with free refreshments open from 10am-12pm every Tuesday at St George's Extension (in Beck's Square Car Park, behind Boots). Everyone welcome!

Parent Carers - SEN Support in schools: A guide for parents and carers from DiAS

DiAS has published a new booklet about SEN support in schools. It's aimed at parents and carers, and it covers four main areas:

- What SEN support is and the kind of support that is, and should be, available in all schools.
- How support is planned and given in school, including the graduated response and school plans.
- Reasonable adjustments – what these are and what's possible in schools.
- Getting specialist help and assessment – what to do if support doesn't seem to be enough or right, and your child is still struggling.

Available as a PDF and a printed booklet, it takes parents and carers step by step through SEN support in schools, as well as setting out the law and everyone's rights and responsibilities. It's full of practical tips and advice and based on the questions the DiAS enquiry line staff get asked every day.

You can find out more and download the booklet here: <https://devonias.org.uk/new-guide-to-sen-support-in-school/>

If you'd like a printed copy please contact DiAS directly: Devon Information Advice and Support (devonias.org.uk) or call the enquiry helpline, 01392 383080 - open 10am-3pm, answerphone before 10 and after 3pm.

Autism and Us Parent Programme - Autumn Term 2023

Support from the Communication and Interaction Team - Education and Families (devon.gov.uk). Support for parents/carers of Devon primary and secondary children who are either on the autism assessment waiting list or who have received a diagnosis of autism.

The 'Autism & Us' programme is being offered for the Autumn term for parents/carers of Devon primary and secondary school children, pre or post diagnosis. For families of children and young people who are currently on the autism assessment pathway, in addition to families of CYP who have received an autism diagnosis.

Attending the 'Autism & Us' parent programme gives you an opportunity to further develop your understanding of autism and look at practical solutions to managing and supporting your child's needs, whilst also connecting you with other parents/carers.

Four weekly live online sessions, approx. 2hrs each, related to the following themes:

Autumn Term 2023			
Topic	Programme 1	Programme 2	Trainer
Autism overview	Thurs 14 September 10am to midday	Tues 31 October 4.30pm to 6.30pm	Paul Lamanna
Communication	Wed 20 September 10am to midday	Tues 7 November 4.30pm to 6.30pm	Laura O'Shea & Melissa New
Understanding and supporting behaviour	Thurs 5 October 10am to midday	Tues 14 November 4.30pm to 6.30pm	Laura Matthews
Sensory	Thurs 12 October 10am to midday	Tues 21 November 4.30pm to 6.30pm	Kevin Jones

Apply direct by email to: educationlearnersupport@devon.gov.uk to secure a place on any of the topic-based workshops. They will confirm your booking request and provide you with a direct link to the event. The sessions will be delivered online 'live' via Microsoft TEAMS.

Unpaid Carer's Surveys

If you would like to share your views on being an unpaid carer, there are two surveys here that may interest you:

The Dementia Carers Count Family Survey 2023 can be accessed by clicking here: [Family Carers Survey 2023 | Dementia Carers Count](#) – Takes around 15-20 mins to complete and you have a chance of winning a £50 Asda voucher in a prize draw.

The Carers UK State of Caring Survey can be accessed by clicking here: [Will you help us gather more vital evidence about caring? \(carersuk-news.org\)](#) – Takes about 30-45 mins to complete but the questions are relevant and informative in some cases.

JUST FOR VOLUNTEERS

Volunteer ID Badges

Are any of our face-to-face Befriending Volunteers without an ID badge? If so, please do get in touch with us, preferably by email with a head and shoulders picture of yourself, and I will send you a new-style ID badge with a lovely new lanyard. If any of our Group Volunteers would also like a new ID badge and lanyard, please do feel free to get in touch – all welcome to apply!

Volunteer Training - Dementia Awareness Training

We have access to Dementia Awareness training from the Devon Memory Consortium for our volunteers.

This online training course is designed specifically for people volunteering at memory cafes but would be useful for volunteers supporting at any of our Carers' Groups, or for volunteers supporting carers 1:1 with befriending and telephone friendship, or simply to expand your knowledge of dementia.

The course is delivered through a series of nine films and is illustrated throughout with the voices and experiences of people living with dementia.

The course is made up of 9 separate modules

- What is dementia?
- Memory
- Everyday tasks and recognition
- Perception
- Emotional impact
- Nothing to do with dementia
- Communication
- Different realities
- Behaviour – does it matter?

You do not need to register for the course. To access the course please click on the link below:

<https://memorycafehub.org.uk/dementia-awareness/>

and then click on the separate videos at the bottom of the page to watch them.

If you would like to watch the training videos but you do not have access to a PC, laptop or smart phone, or are having difficulties accessing the videos through any medium, please do get in touch with us at Unite. We will be able to help guide you or provide the use of a laptop in a quiet space in our offices. If you have taken part in the free volunteer training, please can you let us know so that we can update your training records.

Carers - if you would also like to take a look at the Dementia Awareness Training online, please do.

FUNDRAISING NEWS – HOW YOU CAN HELP

Tesco Bags of Help

Our Tesco's Bags of Help in the Tiverton stores ended on 30th June and we should hear shortly if we have been awarded the top prize of £1,500. Thanks to everyone who put the little blue voting tokens in the box for Unite Carers – Let's Unite Outdoors.

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Unite have been successful in making it through to the next round of Tesco Bags of Help in the Cullompton store. If we make it to the community voting in-store, this will help support our Cullompton Carer's Coffee Group.

Eyes Down for Bingo anyone?

Tiverton Charity Bingo is on every Wednesday at Westexe Sports and Social Club in Tiverton. If we attend in August or September, Unite will receive a donation. Contact Sylvia White for more information and thank you to Kathy McMillan for putting our name forward. Doors open at 6pm, eyes down at 7.30pm.

The Benefact Group's Movement For Good Awards

Carers, volunteers and other friends of Unite can nominate us to win £1,000 from the Benefact Group just by clicking on the link below and choosing **1099188 Unite - Carers in Mid Devon**. Ends September. Thank you to Jean Milne for voting and for letting us know about these awards.

[Movement for Good - Nominate a charity for an award.](#)

Tiverton Soroptimists

The Tiverton Soroptimists have once again chosen Unite Carers as one of their supported charities of the year and we very much look forward to taking part in fund raising events in the coming months. More news on these as they arise and everyone is welcome to come along and join in the fun. We'd also like to take this opportunity to say THANK YOU to the Tiverton Soroptimists for their continued and faithful support of Unite Carers in Mid Devon.

Co-op Local Community Fund

Just a reminder that Unite Carers is part of the @Co-op Local Community Fund. This means that you can go into your local Co-op Store and sign up for a membership card to support Unite Carers. Each time you shop, a little of your spend is matched by Co-op to be donated directly to Unite Carers. You can sign up in store (nearest is Willand but there are others in Dulverton, Exeter and Wellington) or to find out more about the project and to choose Unite Carers as your cause, Ctrl Click here:

<https://membership.coop.co.uk/causes>

If anyone has any fundraising ideas, please do let us know – thank you.

Sharon has been working hard building networks with some of our local companies and, in case you missed our Facebook page, we'd like to take this opportunity to say a big THANK YOU to:

- Heathcoat Fabrics
- Bellway Homes
- Barratt David Wilson Homes
- The Lost Kitchen

And thank you to Sharon too

AND IN OTHER NEWS....



Unite Carers Open Day

On 8th June Unite Carers held an Open Day in recognition of Carer's Week. Thank you to everyone who came along to have a chat with staff and volunteers - and I think we can all agree - the homemade cakes were absolutely delicious!



The day Barratt Homes and David Wilson Homes came to Tiverton



On 5th July, staff teams from Barratt David Wilson Homes (part of Barratt Developments) visited the Unite Carers offices on Bridge Street and gave them a spruce up, DIY SOS style, all courtesy of Barratt and their amazing staff.

On behalf of everyone at Unite Carers, we would like to say a massive thank you for the wonderful work you did to make our offices look bright and sparkling again. We'd also like to thank Barratt David Wilson Homes for their generous monetary donation to Unite Carers.

In case you're wondering what Sharon and Tracy did on the day - we made the tea, handed out biscuits, washed paint brushes and rollers and generally just got in the way.

Mavis's Knitting Group - Does anyone have any spare wool they can donate to Mavis's knitting group in Sampford Peverell? If so, please bring it into the office. Thank you!

And finally...

Spotlight On – In this edition we turn the spotlight on **Norman Ford**



I recently retired from a role in UK agriculture where I was variously known as an advisor or as a consultant. This entailed a lot of time spent listening to farmers, but the main aim was to help them make better decisions about how to run their farms and businesses and to bring about change, for example, moving away from producing food mountains to producing for the market, i.e., for the supermarket.

I've now found a use for my listening skills as a Befriender with Unite. I don't feel I do very much really. I just regularly pick up the phone and have a chat with a carer who may feel a bit lonely or unappreciated, or who wants to get something off their chest. At the moment the carer I support happens to be one of my fairly near neighbours; it's amazing how little neighbours talk to each other these days! But I'm sure we both benefit from the experience. The guy I'm supporting at the moment is in his 90s and like everyone in that age group, he's got a fantastic story to tell.

Now that I'm retired I spend most of my time either playing golf or cycling to the golf course! That's where I met Roy Grantham, former Chair of Trustees at Unite Carers, and that's how I got involved with Unite.

In between times I play the Great Highland Bagpipe in a band in Exeter and also in a band in Auckland, New Zealand which is where we shoot off to in winter to see the grandchildren! Let me know if you need a bagpiper!

Contact us:

Unite Carers in Mid Devon

2 Bridge Street, Tiverton, EX16 5LY

Tel: 01884 257 511

Email: info@unitemd.org.uk

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



Unite Carers Support Groups Summer 2023

Who's it for?	Group Name	Location	With	Day in month	Time
All Carers	Bampton Carers' Coffee Group	The Swan, Bampton	Denise	1 st Tuesday	10.30 am - 11.30 am
All Carers	Crediton Carers' Coffee Group	@100 Café, High St, Crediton	Tracy or Sharon	3 rd Thursday	11.00 am - 12.30pm
All Carers	Cullompton Carers' Coffee Group	The Hayridge, Cullompton	Jean	2 nd Wednesday	10.30 am - 12 noon
All Carers	Tiverton Carers' Coffee Group	Unite Carers, 4 Bridge St, Tiverton	Denise & Fiona	4 th Tuesday	2 pm
All Carers and Ex-Carers	Uffculme Support Group	Locations change monthly – Please call the office	Jackie	4 th Monday	12.30 pm
Cared-for-people	Tiverton Safe Stop Sitting Group	Cherith Church, Tiverton	Jenny	2 nd and 4 th Wednesday	10.00 am - 12.30 pm
Cared-for-people	Witheridge Safe Stop Sitting Group	Witheridge Parish Hall, Witheridge	Jenny	3 rd Tuesday	10.30 am - 12.30 pm
Carers of adults and teens with additional needs	Carers of Adults and Teens with Additional Needs	Unite Carers, 4 Bridge St, Tiverton	Jenny	3 rd Wednesday	10.30 am - 12 noon
Carers of school-aged children with additional needs	Let's Unite Outdoors	Wilcombe School, Tiverton	Katie	Seasonal April-October	Please call the Office
Carers of school-aged children with additional needs	Let's Unite at Number 4	Unite Carers, 4 Bridge St, Tiverton	Jenny	1 st Wednesday	9.30 am - 11.30 am
Dementia Carers	Culm Valley Oasis	Padbrook Park Hotel, Cullompton	Audrey & Veronica	3 rd Monday	2.30 pm - 4 pm
Dementia Carers	Exe Valley Oasis	Unite Carers, 4 Bridge St, Tiverton	Denise & Fiona	2 nd Thursday	10.30 am
Dementia Carers and Cared-for-people	Tiverton Forget Me Not Cafe	Cherith Church, Tiverton	Denise & Fiona	3 rd Tuesday	2 pm - 3.30 pm
Ex-Carers	Tiverton and Cull Ex-Carers Lunch Group	Locations change monthly – Please call the office	Veronica	1 st Tuesday	12 noon