

# Unite Carers in Mid Devon

## Winter Newsletter 2023



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### A WORD FROM OUR CHAIR

#### **A very happy new year to all of us at Unite Carers - Looking back and looking ahead**

We have had some tough times this year, every year brings its own ups and downs and yes, we were on a bit of a roller coaster last year. Tough times don't last but tough people do and we start this year with a lot of positives.

We ended 2022 by welcoming 3 new people on to the Unite Carers Board of Trustees: -

**Natalie Lee – Trustee and Treasurer** - We have been without a treasurer for several years so finding Natalie is a big bonus for us.

**Jack Bukin - Trustee and IT Expert** - Jack has exceptional IT skills and is helping to bring you the new-age digital face of Unite Carers by updating our office systems and developing a fantastic new website.

**Paul Fitzmaurice - Trustee and General Advisor** - We are so fortunate to have Paul on our board; his past experience and knowledge of charity work will be invaluable.

A very warm welcome to Natalie, Jack and Paul. Thank you for joining our Unite Team.

Added to the “New look Board” we have our highly efficient staff team of Sharon and Tracy, so from where I am sitting this year looks pretty good already.

It's been a busy year for fundraising; we received a cheque for £1004.20 from the Riverside presented at a little celebration gathering attended by Richard Froud our MP. The Soroptimists have recognised Unite Carers as their chosen charity this year and as, reported in the Autumn newsletter recently held a Beetle Drive to raise funds for us – a fantastic and fun evening for all.

Without the generosity of local organisations and of individuals who donate throughout the year, we could not deliver our high-quality service to our amazing band of unpaid carers. So, a huge thanks to all of our volunteers, staff and trustees and every good wish to you and yours for 2023.

**Bernice Philbrick – Chair of Trustees**



*Unite volunteers, staff and trustees  
at the Tiverton Soroptimist's Beetle  
Drive – raising funds for Unite  
Carers.*

## NEWS FROM OUR SUPPORT GROUPS

### **Cullompton Carers Coffee Group**

On Wednesday, 9<sup>th</sup> November the **Cullompton Carers' Coffee Group** were entertained by the talented Norman Ford and Arthur Wright who played a variety of Scottish tunes and on the electronic bagpipes and electronic snare drums. Thank you so much Norman and Arthur, you were wonderful.

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### **Tiverton Forget Me Not Café**

On the Tuesday, 15<sup>th</sup> November the FMNC were visited by 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 session was very interesting and informative and promoted lots of discussion on the subject. Thank you to Dave Monk for taking the time to join us, we hope you enjoyed all the lovely cakes.

### **Safe Stop Sitting Service**

Carers at our **Safe Stop Sitting Service** were treated to two entertainers – a foot-tapping singalong with Brian Lawless on his guitar on 23<sup>rd</sup> November and a musical medley by Norman and Arthur on the electronic bagpipes and drums on 14<sup>th</sup> December. Thank you to you all.

### **Tiverton Carers' Coffee Group – Exe Valley Oasis Group**

There has been a venue change for the Tiverton Carers' Coffee Group (for all unpaid Carers) and the Exe Valley Oasis Group (for unpaid Carers of people with dementia and other memory difficulties). The two groups will now temporarily be held at No. 4 Bridge Street, Tiverton, which is right next door to the Unite Carers office at No. 2 Bridge Street.

### **Groups supporting Parent Carers**

We have 3 groups giving friendship, help and activities to Parent Carers – the **Let's Unite at No 4** Peer Support Group that supports parent carers of school-aged children with any type of additional need or SEN, the **Parent Carers Group for Adults and Teenagers** with any type of additional need or SEN and our **Let's Unite Outdoors** Group which runs from April to October offering Forest School-type activities for all the family.

### **Uffculme Carers and Ex-Carers Group**

Our Uffculme group continues to thrive and recently met at Bridwell for Christmas mince pies and coffee. The Uffculme Group changes its meeting venue each month so if you are an unpaid Carer or an Ex-Carer please give us a call at the office to find out where the next venue will be. You are all very welcome to come along.

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

## **Singing To Remember**

**Singing To Remember** is a wonderful group for people with dementia and their carers. They meet at St James' Church Hall, Old Road, Tiverton every Monday from 2.00pm – 3.30pm, and are looking forward to welcoming old and new friends to an afternoon of chat and singing.

**We would like to reassure you that you are welcome to attend our groups if you are an unpaid carer or an ex-carer. If you have found support, friendship and comfort from our groups and then find that you are no longer in a caring role, we are still here for you. This may be because you have been bereaved or your loved one has moved into residential care.**

**We don't want you to feel alone. Come along to a Group, we can help to support you to attend, just give us a call.**

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

It's been another busy quarter for the Befriending Team and we continue to provide friendship and support to even more unpaid Carers with our face to face Befriending and Telephone Friendship services. For the period October to December 2022, we have had 26 new unpaid Carers register with us and 10 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 now have some new Befriending leaflets for distribution. If anyone would like one for more information, or if you are able to distribute any leaflets around your local area, please give us a call.

**As always, 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 if you can help.**

## NEWS FROM OUR DEVON CARERS AMBASSADOR – FIONA BLADON

### Utilities - Priority Service Register

Do you care for someone who is elderly, very ill, physically or mentally disabled, or who relies on power for their medical equipment? If they would be affected if their electricity or water supply were interrupted, they can receive priority support from their utility company. For more information about the Priority Service Register:

**For water: contact South West Water 0344 346 1010**

**For electricity: contact Western Power Distribution: 0800 6783 105**

### Online Winter Training Courses from Devon Carers

Devon Carers has released information for their Winter Training Courses, which are free online.

Topics include:

*Self-Care for Carers, Managing Stress, Sleep Workshop, Different Types of Dementia, First Aid Q&A, Thoughts, Feelings and Challenges and Looking after You, Looking after Your Relationships.*

For more information, or to register as an unpaid carer, visit the website: <https://devoncarers.org.uk/>

Devon Carers also run Peer Support Groups for carers of those with dementia, autism, mental ill-health, anxiety and self-harm, for example. Visit the website or telephone 03456 434 435 to find out more. There are face-to-face groups as well as online groups.

### CARERS NEED COFFEE.....



As I passed the radio, I pushed the button on Alexander Armstrong. The music was uplifting, but the news.... violent crime, death of "celebrities", the pound down against the dollar....

I tapped lightly on her door, opened it and crept in. She was fast asleep. She had tipped her water beaker over in the night and there was a puddle on the floor. I felt the edge of the bed under the duvet. It was wet. I turned and bent to pick up the crumpled loo paper on the floor beside the commode and my slippers squelched on the rubber backed mat. It was wet.

I closed my eyes against the hot tears which pushed defiantly between my eyelids and slid in salty tracks down my face. I left my urine-soaked slippers by the door and tiptoed out again.

A little while later, washed, dressed and breakfasted, Jane sat in her armchair watching the birds on the birdfeeder and happily chatting to Cathy, a lovely lady who came once a week to sit with her.

I struggled to restrain myself from running outside, arms outstretched, to embrace freedom. Okay, I was going food shopping and paying bills, but I was alleviated of responsibility and repetition for a few hours.

And I had coffee with other carers. Once a month, we escaped from our isolating bubbles of caring to socialise. Barriers down, no pretence. We were with other carers who knew and understood the frustrations, the smiles, the odd jokes, the endless heaps of washing, the tears, the joy, the pain, the fears, anxieties and uncertainties. We laughed, joked and swapped ideas and tips. We shared, we commiserated and we listened and most of all, we laughed.

## CARER'S CORNER

### Household Support Fund

Applications to the Household Support Fund (v3) have now closed. Intended to run until 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023, applications exceeded funds available in December. We will let you know when the next tranche is available.

### The Parish Church of St Andrews – Dementia-friendly Service Dates for 2023

- Wednesday 1st February - “The Light of Christ”  
A Service to celebrate Candlemas and the end of the Christmas season
- Wednesday 19th April - “Easter Praise”
- Wednesday 21st June - “Songs of Praise”  
Join us as we sing some favourite hymns.
- Wednesday 27th September - “Thanksgiving for the Harvest”
- Wednesday 6th December-“Christmas Carols”  
Come along and sing some carols as we celebrate this wonderful season.

All services start at 2.00pm for about 30 minutes followed by refreshments. Everyone is welcome but especially people living with and caring for those with dementia.

### The Devon Memory Café Consortium

The Devon Memory Café Consortium, of which Unite Carers is part of, is a membership group that represents memory cafes across Devon. On their website you can find information on memory cafes running across Devon. “The aim of the Memory Café Consortium is to support people living with dementia and their carers through the Memory Café Movement – making sure that they have access to peer support, information, advice and activities”.

The Memory Café Hub also offers free online training to volunteers supporting Carers of loved-ones with dementia, through dementia groups or 1:1 support. The website is: [www.dmcc.org.uk](http://www.dmcc.org.uk)

### Form Filling and IT Support for Carers

Unite Carers provides free form filling and IT (computer/tablet/smart phone) support for unpaid Carers registered with us. You may find this particularly useful if you are trying to access online training but are struggling to do so. If you would like to access this support, please call the office.

### Age UK - Digital Champions

Age UK also have dedicated Digital Champions on hand to support you to make the most out of the internet. Through free sessions delivered safely over the phone or face-to-face, they can guide you through the tasks that you want to do - Whether that be video calling family and friends, online shopping, or pursuing your hobbies and interests.

Call: 0333 241 2340 or email [info@ageukdevon.org.uk](mailto:info@ageukdevon.org.uk) to be connected with your local Digital Champion!

## **Foot Care from Age UK**

The Age UK Foot Care Service is now available in Tiverton as well as in East Devon and surrounding areas. For more information, please call 0333 241 2340.

## **Devon Communities Together**

Devon Communities Together are offering 1:1 support to individuals or households looking at how you can mitigate against the impact of rising energy costs and explore ways in which you could access additional financial and wellbeing support. For a confidential chat, please email [martin@devoncommunities.org.uk](mailto:martin@devoncommunities.org.uk) or call 07984 001542 / 01392 248919.

## **FOR PARENT CARERS - DiAS parent training session dates**

All sessions are online and free of charge.

### **EHCP Review Myth-busting**

Have you got an annual review of your child's EHC plan coming up? Then come along to a EHC Plan Reviews – Myth busting parent session and find out what you need to know and do.

Tuesday 7th February 2023- 10.30-12.30

To book a session please follow the link below to Eventbrite:

<http://soc.devon.cc/ooN3v>

### **Demystifying SEND**

This information session is for parents and carers of children with SEND, about how to find clear information and support.

Monday 30th January 2023- 10.30-12.30

To book a session please follow the link below to Eventbrite:

<http://soc.devon.cc/vp9bi>

### **Listening to your Child's Views**

An online session about helping a child with SEND express how they feel about school.

Wednesday 8th February 10.30-12.30

Book a place on these events on Eventbrite:

<http://soc.devon.cc/5jE4C>

## **JUST FOR VOLUNTEERS**

### **Volunteer Training**

We have recently sent an email to all Unite Carers Volunteers to invite you to attend a free NCFE Level 2 Award in Volunteering, in collaboration with South Devon College. If you would like to take part in the training you can sign up by emailing: [ivanmorton@southdevon.ac.uk](mailto:ivanmorton@southdevon.ac.uk) or [joeleftwich@southdevon.ac.uk](mailto:joeleftwich@southdevon.ac.uk)

You will need access to a computer/laptop/smartphone and the internet to be able to take part.

Please note, this is not mandatory training but please do feel free to take part in the training if you would like to.

### **What qualification will I gain?**

NCFE Level 2 Award in Volunteering

### **What is the duration?**

- Sign-up session - Within week starting 9 January 23 (via MS Teams) (13.00 to 14.00)
- Welcome session - Friday 20 January 23 (via MS Teams) (10.00 to 11.00)
- Course start - Friday 3 February 23 (MS Teams 3hr sessions per week for 6 weeks) (09.30 to 12.30)
- Course finish - Friday 17 March 23

### **Individual Volunteer Support Meeting**

As a Unite volunteer, we want our volunteers to feel valued and supported. With this in mind, you may be aware that you are entitled to an annual volunteer support meeting (Annual Volunteer Review) with a member of staff or Trustee.

You may have recently been invited by email to attend your annual Volunteer Support Meeting (Volunteer Review) if it has fallen due. This can be with us here at the office face to face, from the comfort of your own home via video link (Teams/ Zoom) or by telephone.

We'd also like to assure you that we are here to support you should you have any questions, worries or concerns regarding your volunteer role or the Carers that you support. Please do get in touch with us at the office. - the telephone number is 01884 257 511.

**In appreciation for all that you do to help others, we would like to invite all of our Unite Volunteers and Trustees to a New Year Celebration Party**



## FUNDRAISING NEWS

### Co-op Local Community Fund

Unite Carers is now 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, click here:

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

## AND IN OTHER NEWS....

### Potential New Group – Parkinson’s UK

**We have recently met with Neil Smart from Parkinson’s UK to talk about setting up a new support group for people who have Parkinson’s, their Carers and their families.**

**The current proposal is for a monthly group meeting for coffee in the White Ball in Tiverton, starting around 10am.**

**We would be delighted to hear your thoughts on this, particularly if you would personally find the group useful, or you know anyone who may find it useful, you are a professional working with people with Parkinson’s or if you would like to volunteer to support the new Parkinson’s Group. Thank you.**

### Wool needed for Knit and Natter Group

Mavis has a knitting and crochet group in Sampford Peverell. If anyone has any spare balls of wool lying around that they don’t need, please consider donating them to Mavis’s group. Donations can be made to the Unite Carers Office at No. 2 Bridge St., Tiverton.

### Office to hire

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.

### Newsletter by Email

Do you receive your Newsletter in the Post? Do you have an Email address that we could send your Newsletter to instead please? This would save our tiny Charity a lot of money. Please get in touch if you can help us by having your newsletter sent to you by email.

Additionally, 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.



And finally...

## **Spotlight On** – In this edition we turn the spotlight on **Neil Babbage**



Hi, my name is Neil Babbage and I have lived in the Tiverton area all my life. I was brought up on a farm and have been involved with agriculture all my life.

I volunteer at the Forget-me Not Cafe in Tiverton, chatting to the members and making a nice hot cup of tea for everyone! I have just started joined the Befriending Team and visit a lovely local couple.

I was first introduced to Unite Carers by Dawn Hampshire who asked if I would like to volunteer at the Forget-me Not Cafe when it was at the Post Hill Centre. I have been volunteering ever since, for almost 9 years.

In my leisure time I play bass guitar in a couple of bands, Soul Traders and Las Torders. I also enjoy being a part of the Tiverton Rifle Club. During the summer months, my motorbike gets more of an airing!

The best thing about being a volunteer is that I get to work with and meet lots of lovely people. I enjoy talking to people and hearing stories about their life.

If I can bring a little bit of joy and make a difference to people's lives by simply listening, then I find that very rewarding.

### **Unite Carers in Mid Devon**



**2 Bridge Street, Tiverton, EX16 5LY**

**Tel: 01884 257 511**

**Email: [info@unitemd.org.uk](mailto:info@unitemd.org.uk)**

**Facebook: [www.facebook.com/unitecarers](http://www.facebook.com/unitecarers)**

## UNITE CARERS SUPPORT GROUPS AND SERVICES – WINTER 2023

Who's it for?	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	Unite Carers 4 Bridge Street, Tiverton	4 <sup>th</sup> Tuesday	2 pm
All Carers & Ex-Carers	Uffculme Support Group	Locations change monthly – Please call the office	4 <sup>th</sup> Monday	12.30 pm
Cared-for people	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 and teenagers with additional needs or SEN	Carers of Adults and Teenagers With Additional Needs	Unite Carers 4 Bridge Street, Tiverton	3 <sup>rd</sup> Wednesday	10.30 am to 12 noon
Carers of primary-age children with additional needs or SEN	Let's Unite Outdoors	Wilcombe School, Tiverton	Seasonal – Please call the office	
Carers of School Age Children With Special Educational Needs	Let's Unite at Number 4 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	Unite Carers 4 Bridge Street, Tiverton	2nd Thurs	10.30 am
Dementia Carers and cared-for people	Tiverton Forget-Me-Not Cafe	Cherith Church, Tiverton	3rd Tuesday	2.00 pm to 3.30 pm

