

**Minutes of the Dudley Carers Forum Meeting held on Wednesday**

**3rd April 2019, 11.07 – 13.00 at**

**The Queens Cross Network Centre**

**Wellington Rd Dudley.**

**Website:** [**www.facebook.com/dudleyCarersForumFundays**](http://www.facebook.com/dudleyCarersForumFundays)

Chair for the Meeting L Murray

**Present:**

J Grainger, M Pardoe, D Cook, P Acutt, J Corbett, B & M Anderson, P Bartley, S Ridgway, E Pearson, W Harbach, M Walker, F Waldron, V Drew, L & V Murray, J & W Cartwright, A Woodall, L O'Malley and J Mundon .

**Apologies:**

None.

**Chairman’s Welcome:**

Lee welcomed everyone and thanked them for attending. Lee informed us that we had been accepted for Tesco Bags of Help, see AOB for more info.

**Minutes from last Meeting:**

Two amendments were brought to the table. Firstly a spelling mistake that Barry and Marilyn’s surname is Anderson not Anderton.

Secondly that since the last meeting a grant of £100 has been received from the British Motor Museum to help towards costs of our tip in February. The cost of that event now shows a small excess of £10.30.

After recording these amendments the minutes were agreed as a true record. Proposed by Paul Bartley and seconded by Val Drew. No further objections were raised.

**Matters Arising:**

Following last month’s agreement to engaging a speaker offered by Ilisha Temple Ramsay Health Care will be our speaker for August.

**Monthly Report:**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Event** | **Number attending** | **Duration Hours** | **Total Hours respite** | **Total Nett cost £** | **Cost per hour respite £** |
| 14 March Active Carers | 11 | 4 | 44 | 66.78 | £1.52 |
| 19 March Day trip to Shugborough | 8 | 8 | 64 | 436.35 less grant and payments 464.55 nett 28.20 excess | £-0.44 |

**Income** from March Raffle £21.00

**Expenses for March**

Bursaries (3x£60/12) £15.00

Printing £16.99

Postage £12.32

Printer Paper £15.34

Active Carers £66.78

**Total £126.43**

An expensive month, Active Carers having cost nearly half the figure. Printing and postage reflect the cost of the quarterly newsletter and the printer paper will last some time.

* March speaker – Sarah Nixon, West Midlands Police
* Day Trip to Shugborough
* Active Carers Second Pilot.
* Officers attended the launch of the second round of Innovation Fund and made some useful contacts.
* Represented at Sounding Board
* Represented at Coffee Morning arranged by the Carers Hub
* Quarterly newsletter distributed.

Jane has put in the following report to the Carers Hub in hopes of securing further funding.

**Active Carers (pilots) Evaluation Report**

Two pilot sessions have taken place in February and March 2019.

The first session, centred round health and well being was poorly attended. Of only four who had booked places one cancelled due to a doctor’s appointment and a second was unwell on the day. A further ten joined us un-booked (from carers café) but only for the mindfulness session. They dispersed before I could get contact details and invite them for the afternoon session or get any feedback.

The second session offered Tai Chi, sketching and a speaker on local history with humour. This was attended by 11 carers.

Of the activities offered over the two days the most enjoyed was the sketching lesson. On asking of other activities they would like to see provided, arts and crafts including watercolour and acrylic painting were amongst the most popular. Also suggested was music and Tai Chi but in shorter sessions.

Most carers would like to see activities carried on over a number of sessions in order to gain greater knowledge. Although stand alone sessions would be appropriate for some subjects. The majority felt that they would like to see sessions delivered monthly and would be happy to contribute £3 to £5 towards the costs.

Further comments reflected the relaxation enjoyed and suggestions of including other groups using the centre. And we could possibly go off site for activities sometimes.

The dramatic increase in numbers, possibly reflect the increased advertising. During this period we are also seeing a rise in requests to join the Forum database and take up of the Social activities being organised by the Forum.

The aim of Active Carers is to offer respite. Activities can be tailored to educate, deliver exercise and health programmes, or simply entertain.

Jane Grainger

March 2019

**Treasury Report: Jane Grainger**

Help Line £1197.09

Bank £125.94

Cash £59.14

The yearly accounts are now complete. Lee Murray to organize independent inspection in readiness for the AGM in early October.

The application for funding from the Innovation Fund has been changed. We appear to fit enough of the criteria but must find another organisation to collaborate with.

**Feedback from Community:**

A new co-ordinater for Rethink has left the post. Rethink looking to restart groups within the Dudley Borough, so watch this space.

**Social Activities:**

Places for our social events are slowly picking up. It helps greatly if you can indicate which trips you wish to take in as much advance as possible. Also remember that you are welcome to bring along family and friends on most events. We do not aim to make a profit and prices quoted are to just cover our costs.

Canal Cruise still needs people to book as numbers are low, so Lee asked if he could offer some seats to the Chit-Chat group, a vote was taken and carried unanimously.

As trips draw nearer they will also be advertised on Black Country Radio in hopes of reaching new members or at least filling seats to reduce losses.

**Any Other Business:**

We have received an email regarding our application for Bags of Help.

‘Congratulations!   
  
We are delighted to let you know that your application to the Tesco Bags of Help Grant Scheme has been successful and your project will be put forward to a customer vote in Tesco stores during May and June 2019.   
  
What happens next?   
  
Your project along with the other two successful projects in your region will go forward to a vote in Tesco stores where their customers will decide the outcome by voting for their favourite project each time they shop. Voting will take place from Wednesday 1st May 2019 to Sunday 30th June 2019 and we will notify you at the end of July 2019 confirming the amount of funding you will receive.   
  
The project with the highest number of votes across your region will receive £4,000 (or the amount that was requested up to this value), the second placed project £2,000 (or the amount that was requested up to this value), and the third placed project £1,000. To re-iterate, if you are first in the vote, you will receive the amount that you requested in your application.   
  
Please note, whilst we are happy that you promote the fact that you are in an upcoming round of voting, this does not mean that you can start to save tokens for when your group is the vote. Please make this clear in any promotion around your project, including anything in social media. Each store has a finite number of tokens and we must ensure that these stay in circulation at all times and that the current projects secure the maximum number of votes.   
  
Please see below a list of stores taking part in the voting on your project. Feel free to share this list of stores amongst your supporters and within your community.   
  
2386 HIGHLND RD DUDLEY EXP DY1 3BT Express   
2780 KINGSWINFORD EXPRESS DY6 9HP Express   
5549 GORNAL DUDLEY EXP DY3 2DA Express   
6197 Dudley DY1 4RP Extra   
6700 PENSNETT EXP DY5 4JD Express   
6716 GOSE PUB KINGSWIN EXP DY6 8QE Express   
  
  
To check the location of any of the above stores, please go to the Tesco website here:   
http://www.tesco.com/store-locator/uk/   
  
To vote, you will need to make a purchase within store of any value. You will receive one token per transaction and it's not necessary to purchase a carrier bag in order to receive a token.   
  
Additionally, please note the below advice in terms of do’s and don’ts before and during the voting period:   
  
Don’t:   
  
- Tamper with the voting unit otherwise your project may be void from the vote   
- Influence customers casting their vote at the voting unit   
- Take more than one token from the self-serve checkouts (where applicable)   
- Encourage supporters to hoard then submit multiple tokens in the voting unit   
- Promote your project in store without permission from the Store Manager   
- Collect Bags of Help tokens from stores that are not within your region to vote for your project   
  
Do:   
  
- Cast your vote as soon as you receive your token for a project in the current voting round   
- Only submit Tesco Bags of Help token to cast your vote   
- Maximise promotion of your project during the voting period by making best use of PR and Social Media guidance  - https://www.groundwork.org.uk/Sites/tescocommunityscheme/pages/bags-of-help-communications-guidance   
- Encourage the local community and your supporters to get involved with Bags of Help voting   
  
Please note, if you do not adhere to this guidance, this may affect your grant award.’

Skittles Night again on the 24th of May and Tickets will be £10, so book early. See Lee for venue and numbers.

All of the Forum’s printing is currently done on a printer belonging to Martin and Jane, and it has given great service using HP Instant Ink contract that cuts ink costs by about 70%. But sadly it is now showing signs of wear. A number of options have been investigated including Laser printers and different makes. It was agreed unanimously to purchase a new printer spending £50 to £100, a HP model so that Instant Ink may continue.

There's been some work done by Healthwatch regarding the Transforming of the Care Program, if you wish to fill in a small survey at: [www.healthwatchdudley.co.uk/surveys](file://C:\Users\Forum%20User\AppData\Local\Packages\microsoft.windowscommunicationsapps_8wekyb3d8bbwe\LocalState\AppData\Local\Packages\microsoft.windowscommunicationsapps_8wekyb3d8bbwe\LocalState\LiveComm\8a05562b070cd858\120712-0049\Att\2000212c\www.healthwatchdudley.co.uk\surveys)

The Ring and Ride accessible transport service used by many went into administration on Friday 22nd March making its future uncertain. Some reports claim that Ring and Ride will continue to provide a service. Igo bus routes were transferred to Diamond within days.

Paul Astley brought to our notice an Inaugural support meeting for People who receive **Direct Payments** in Dudley organised by DudleyCIL. The group is aimed to share experiences, support each other, be a ‘Voice of the People’ in terms of Direct Payments in Dudley and try to influence other changes people who have direct payments said they would like to see. The first meeting of the group will take place at Queens Cross Network on **Tuesday 16th April at 1.30pm till approx 3pm.** Tea/coffee and Easter themed light refreshments will be provided. If you would like to attend please let them know by email: [info@dudleycil.uk](mailto:info@dudleycil.uk) Tel: 01384 348095 or mobile: 07989515771

**Speaker:**

Our Speaker this month was Angela Katic from Dept for Works and Pensions answering questions and concerns on Universal Credit.

Questions asked:

**Q - Will severely mentally ill be exempt from having to apply online. Even with help this will be a major problem?**

A - Under managed migration I believe the claim will move across with minimal disruption to the claimants, but we have no official guide as yet.

**Q – Is there room, or availability for evidence of illness, i.e. psychiatric report, care plan, social worker reports etc?**

A – All personal circumstances are taken into account, we would expect the claimant to have advised us of all their conditions so we can tailor their commitment to their needs, or switch them off if they are not capable of work, we would look at all the evidence supplied.

**Q - There is concern for all those who are unable to sit at a computer and fill in forms**

A – Phone claims are available to have a “phone claim”  you can also phone to make  an on line claim then just maintain the claim digitally, home visits are available for support, appointees would be recommended if a claimant is not able to maintain their own claim, or seeking support from family or trusted friends.

**Q - What about people with no internet access, who live in remote areas or find travelling difficult?**

A – Home visits are available for support, and again phone claims.

**Q – Are there trained individuals available at public computers to help?**

A- Yes at citizens advice, or at the Jobcentre itself.

**Q – Why should people be forced to share personal data in a public area like a library?**

A – There are several options where claims can be made and maintained in a private manner.

**Q – What about the gap between payments, Will managed migration close this gap?**

A - If they were on a previous benefit this will have been paid in arrears, so they are yet to receive their final payment, also advances are available as above. We have no guidance on managed migration at this present time.

**Q – Will notification of renewal be sent automatically?**

I’m not 100% sure what this means but, their statement of payment will be available to them about 4 days before their payment each month is due so they can access their claim/ phone regarding their claim and know exactly how much they will receive. Yearly they will be prompted to access their account to declare all their circumstances have not changed. If declaring a change some changes can suspend payment until the change has been verified and this is the claimants responsibility to report the changes correctly and provide the evidence where needed.

**Q – How will people with difficulties report changes?**

People will difficulties would normally already be receiving support from someone for day to day living, they can use family friends to support them, come in to the jobcentre or citizens advice for support, and have a home visit or have an appointee to maintain their claim for them. They can phone the service centre to report the change and seek advice from there.

Additional discussion raised the following

Help to claim is a new service provided by Citizens advice from 01/04/19 – They can help to make an on-line claim and support the claimant to use their account and do everything they need to up to their first payment. They can also offer money/debt advice.

Home/public place visits are also available to claimants who have a health condition, are housebound, in hospital, or vulnerable, these are DWP staff that will help them to make a claim and gather all the evidence needed.

Phone claims are available for claimants who cannot maintain their account digitally.

Benefit calculator and entitled to calculators are available on Gov.uk

How to claim UC step by step guide is also available on gov.uk

Disability specialists are available within the Jobcentre to support claimants with physical and mental health conditions.

New claim advances are available from day 1 of their claim, provided they have verified their ID. They can verify their Id on-line and apply for an advance on-line.  They decide on the repayment schedule based on their affordability this can be anything up to 12 months, they do not have to take the full advance available to them, they can re-apply again if they need any more before their first payment, the first payment will be their full allowance provided their housing and people who live with them have been verified minus the advance repayment. In addition they can also have change of circumstances advances if they change address etc, budgeting advances are usually to start work or for help with white goods (fridges etc)

Claimants that are unable to maintain their own claims can have an appointee to assist them; this can be a personal acting body such as a family member or friend or a corporate acting body such as a support worker provided by Dudley Council.

Angela is happy to answer further questions as they arise. These can be sent to Jane@thecaresforum.co.uk

**Time and Date of next Meeting:**

The next Meeting will be held on the 1st of May 2019 at the usual time at the Queens Cross Network Centre.

**Close:**

Meeting closed 13.00.