

Volunteer News

The newsletter for our volunteers who support unpaid family and friend carers



17th December 2020

We would be pleased to receive contributions, photos, stories or updates for the newsletter. To contact us:

Call: 01992 58 69 69

Email: volunteer@carersinherts.org.uk

Visit: www.carersinherts.org.uk

Carers in Hertfordshire,
The Red House,
119 Fore Street,
Hertford,
Hertfordshire,
SG14 1AX.

Your Volunteer Team: Alex Daar,
Nicki Bird, Amanda Feron,
Jules Josephs, and Julie Hayes.

Making Carers Count

Training Event

The next safeguarding refresher session will be held on Tuesday 22nd December from 10.30am to 12pm noon via Zoom.

Please contact the office for further details or to book a place by calling 01992 58 69 69 or emailing contact@carersinherts.org.uk.

As you know, parts of Hertfordshire are still in Tier 2 but some parts are now in Tier 3. We have new Government guidance and restrictions to follow. Please click [here](#) for Tier 2 and [here](#) for Tier 3. For the latest advice to carers, please see our website: www.carersinherts.org.uk/taking-care-of-you/coronavirus-guidance



Welcome



Welcome to our December volunteer newsletter.

During this difficult year, we have been focused, with your help, on finding new

ways to support and keep in touch with carers. One of the positives has been seeing people on Zoom calls and we have found that carers have enjoyed keeping in touch this way.

On Wednesday 9th December, Nicki hosted our last Volunteer Network Meeting of the year. It was a fun, festive session and a



chance for us to get together via Zoom to thank our amazing volunteers. Some lovely Christmas jumpers were worn and the group enjoyed the Christmas quiz, which was won by Chris!

If you are speaking to someone who may be especially lonely or isolated due to the restrictions this year, then please let them know about our relaxed and informal Cuppa and Chat sessions for carers which are taking place by Zoom. Please click [here](#) to find out more.

We in the Volunteer team, along with everyone else at Carers in Hertfordshire wish you all a very happy Christmas and hopefully a much better 2021!

Alex Daar, Volunteer Manager

Bereavement Group Training

The bereavement service has now been running for 13 years and is always looking for new volunteers. At the moment we would especially welcome male volunteers to ensure a good balance. The volunteers are not counsellors but are trained and experienced volunteers who have time to listen with empathy and can provide a safe space for bereaved carers to express their feelings of loss.

Prospective bereavement volunteers recently attended a series of Zoom training sessions run by Pam Firth, independent counsellor for psychosocial palliative care and a great supporter of the bereavement team for many years. The course covered a wide range of issues surrounding bereavement, both theoretical and practical. Volunteers were introduced to the research on bereavement and given the opportunity to discuss the different aspects of grief and the ways that people try to cope with loss. They were then able to put what they had learned into practice through roleplay.



Sessions also focused on the devastating effect that the COVID-19 outbreak has had on bereavement and the hardship for people currently living in isolation. There has been a huge increase in demand for the service during the past few months and the current volunteers have risen to the challenge! I would like to thank them warmly for their commitment and efforts.

If you are interested in volunteering with the bereavement service, please email Julie Hayes at volunteer@carersinherts.org.uk. You can also phone the office and ask for Julie Hayes.

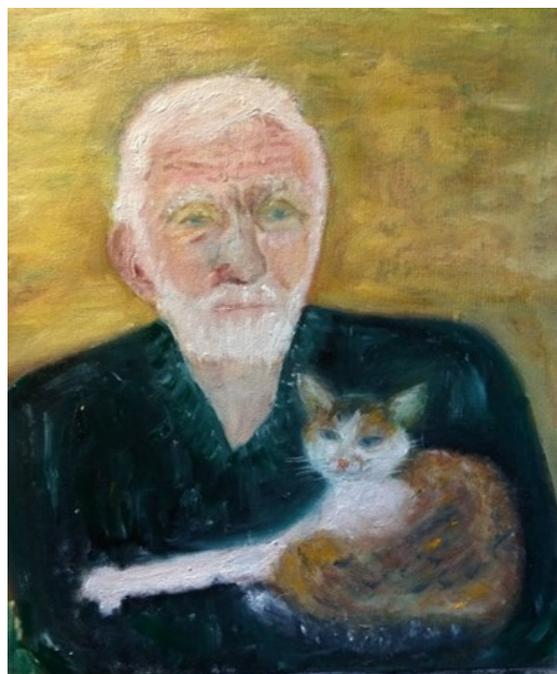
Chris, the bereavement group

Volunteer Artwork

Our volunteer Susan has been busy rediscovering her love of painting over the past months. She paints in oils and paintings take anything from a few days to a couple of weeks to complete. Here are two of her favourite lockdown series paintings. Thank you for sending them in Susan.



'Belles Blue'



Michael and the Cat - 'Companions in Lockdown'

Please share any photos of your own artwork or craft projects with us. We love to see them.

Good News to share



Congratulations to our volunteer Elaine on the birth of her granddaughter. Baby Lily was born at the end of August and will be celebrating her first Christmas this year.

Special Thank You

I would like to thank our volunteer Mick on behalf of us all for all his hard work in the office supporting our Keep in Touch calls. He has done a brilliant job.

Good luck with the house move !

Alex Daar, Volunteer manager

Opening Hours

Our office will be open and taking calls as usual throughout the holiday period, with the exception of the following dates:

Friday 25th December (Christmas Day)

Monday 28th December (Boxing Day substitute)

Friday 1st January 2021 (New Years Day)

On the days the office is open, phone lines are open from 9am - 5.30pm on Monday to Thursday and 9am - 4.30pm on Fridays.

Keep in Touch calls

On 7th December, the running of the Volunteer Keep In Touch (KIT) service changed from being managed by Alex Daar and supported by Mick Barnett. I would like to thank them for all their hard work in supporting and managing this team.

I now co-ordinate the Volunteer KIT service and we have been joined by Laura Mitchelmore as KIT Development Officer. We oversee the current team of volunteers and work on developing the service so it is sustainable beyond its original response to COVID-19.

There are 32 active volunteers making calls after a further four volunteers were trained on 9th December. Our goal is to have a minimum of 80 active volunteers to enable the KIT service to contact 1000 carers a month. In November, 540 carers were contacted. After the initial KIT training, volunteers are provided with a mobile phone, a headset, and information to start making calls. At present there are twice weekly Zoom sessions to support the volunteers.

Christopher and Dianne have recently joined us in the KIT team providing admin support. Their role is to prepare, send out and receive the lists of calls. We are aiming to recruit a few more administration volunteers as the service continues to grow. If you would be interested in joining please get in touch.

As we grow, we will be focusing on gathering specific information to help the charity provide more tailored support to carers. At the moment we are asking carers about their ability to access the internet and online support.

We still have a lot of work to do but it is very exciting to be upscaling the KIT service to support many more carers.

Cate Mitcham, Team Leader

Volunteer Fruit Cake Recipe

We are very pleased to have been sent a recipe from one of our volunteers for a boiled fruit cake. This sounds like it would make a lovely Christmas cake too, or just the thing to have a slice with a cup of tea on a cold wintery afternoon.

Ingredients

1kg mixed dried fruit (include about 50g of chopped candied peel in this)

200g glace cherries, halved

200g brown sugar (light or dark)

125ml rum or any other spirit or fortified wine (substitute liquid content with an equivalent volume of cold tea if you do not consume alcohol)

125ml water

250g butter

Half a teaspoon salt (optional)

1 tablespoon golden syrup or treacle

1 tablespoon vanilla extract (optional)

1 tablespoon grated orange zest (optional)

5 medium eggs, lightly beaten

250g plain flour

60g self raising flour

Half a teaspoon bicarbonate of soda

1 teaspoon mixed spice (optional)

Half a nutmeg, grated (optional)

Blanched almonds and glace cherries to decorate, if desired.



Instructions:

1) Put the fruit, cherries, sugar, spirit or tea, water, butter and salt into a heavy based saucepan. Stir well and bring to the boil over a medium heat.

Reduce heat to low, cover and simmer for 10 minutes, then leave to cool to room temperature.

2) Add the golden syrup or treacle, eggs, vanilla extract and orange zest (if using) and mix well.

3) Sift both types of flour, the spices and bicarbonate of soda together and fold into the fruit mixture.

4) Pour mixture into a greased and lined 23cm (9 inch) round cake tin and level with back of spoon.

Place almonds and cherries in circles over the surface to decorate if you do not intend to ice the cake.

5) Bake at gas mark 2/electric 150°C (130°C if using a fan oven) for approximately two and a half hours.

Check after an hour and a half and cover with foil if the top is browning too quickly.

6) Cool in tin. Remove from tin and if you like, prick surface with a cocktail stick and feed with 2 tablespoons of spirit of your choice.

Once spirit has soaked in, wrap with a double layer of baking parchment and store in an airtight tin in a cool place for up to three months.

Feed every few weeks if desired. May be frozen for 12 months.

Please send a picture of the cake if anyone tries this recipe and I'll put it in the next Newsletter.