



**Disabled People's Forum**

Minutes of a meeting of the Disabled People's Forum held on Teams, Friday 4 June 2021 at 11.00 am.

Present            Martin deRosario (Co Chair), Alex Rex (Northants Community Foundation), Pete Middleton (individual), Paul Meadows (SEND4Dads), Graeme Wilson (Northants Sport), Rashmi Shah (Individual), Kit Nicolas (NHFT), Debs Burns (West Northants Council), Paul Thompson (SEMLEP), Dawn Panter Northamptonshire Carers), Anthony Dumi (NHFT), Debbie MacColl (West Northants Council).

**1. Welcome, Introductions and Apologies**

Everyone was welcomed to the meeting and introductions were made around the table.

**2. Minutes of the Last Meeting and Matters Arising**

Minutes of last meeting were agreed as a true record.

Matters arising – Debbie had been in contact with Rockin' Road Runner about joining in with their event but unfortunately, due to the current Covid climate, they had not felt confident enough to start planning anything yet.

**3. Dementia Carers**

Northamptonshire Carers supported over 60,000 carers across the county, aged from 5 years to 102! Many supporting people with more than 1 long term condition and also having health issues of their own. The Charity was set up over 30 years ago and now had over 90 staff and 100 volunteers.

Dawn stated that there were over 8,200 people with a dementia diagnosis in the county. Not everyone wanted to be diagnosed and labelled but others did as it opened the door for support and medication where necessary. She said she was glad to see Pete who did so much to raise awareness as hearing from those with lived experience was extremely valuable and Pete was doing some amazing work.

There was a backlog of people waiting for a diagnoses due to the pandemic which had now been taken up as a piece of work to see how they could be supported whilst waiting. Also the whole experience of diagnoses was being improved and brought down to 9 day process. Working with memory assessment to set up hubs, one in Brackley and one in Corby where people could access tests, activities etc. Support was also given out in the community for those with dementia, carers assessments, medication where appropriate, signposting to support. But what about the carers?

Their needs were always put to the bottom of the list. Northamptonshire Carers took a holistic look at the Carer's individual needs, from breaks, gym memberships, help with benefits and all sorts of activities. Recently these activities had to be over Zoom but they had still managed a whole variety of activities from bird watching to sit and keep fit. Face to face activities were picking up and it was intended to have a blended approach in future. The choir was dementia friendly and open to Carers and the people they were supporting.

Dawn highlighted the need to bust myths around dementia, it was not just an old persons condition, and it was important that people were supported to lead good, fulfilling lives.

The hub of everything was the helpline - details below.

**Central point of contact: Northamptonshire Carers' Support Line**

01933 677907 (Mon –Fri 9am -5pm) [carers@northamptonshire-carers.org](mailto:carers@northamptonshire-carers.org)

This service is open to Carers, families, people with dementia as well as professionals.

Graeme stated that Northants Sport had worked with the Charity on several occasions and if there were any gyms/organisations that they had not had a good response from to let him know and he could help start the conversation also any gaps that might be identified.

Pete started that Carers were not only fully aware of the work still to do, but also the importance of the relationship between the wellbeing of the Carer and that of the person they were looking after. Lockdown had been such a challenging and tough time for Carers, not being able to have any respite from the person they were caring for. He also asked if the provision for carers from social prescribing had been explored. Dawn stated that they had been awarded the contract for Wellingborough. It was not linked to GP surgeries and there were strict criteria and would be community based for both carer and patient.

<https://www.northamptonshire-carers.org/Pages/Events/Category/2021-carers-week>

**2021 Carers Week**

Carers Week is an annual campaign to raise awareness of caring, highlight the challenges unpaid carers face and recognise the contribution they make to families and communities throughout the UK.

4. **Community Information Exchange**

Please share anything you would like to promote in our weekly newsletter to [debs.burns@westnorthants.gov.uk](mailto:debs.burns@westnorthants.gov.uk)

Rashmi stated that he was very concerned about the VOI scooters being left all over the place. It made things very difficult for the visually impaired to navigate. This was seconded by Pete. **Action: Debbie to continue efforts to get someone to attend the next meeting.** He also informed the group of the Northamptonshire Black Communities Together launch next week (invite sent separately).

Anthony – NHFT – Maternal Mental Health Service hoped to have a launch date soon and would be able to give more information at the next meeting.

Kit – currently working on a community project with QStory which had specific links to those with disabilities looking at improving public messaging about trans people. There was a lot of dangerous misinformation out there and a disturbing trend for stopping autistic trans people from accessing services, this had been upheld in Court. There were some organisations for help including Q Space for young people and Trangst for adults.

Kit was also working on another project in her role with NHFT, Volunteer to Career Pathway and Peer Support Workers training programme and agreed to give a presentation at a future meeting.

Paul SEMLEP – Paul was working at top level strategy level so was unsure what he had to offer the group. Working on removing barriers into work and with close involvement with Track NN. Trying to work more with employers and although the county was above the national average there were still cold spots. There were some new community grants coming through over the next few months to help provide training advice aimed at target groups which included those with disabilities, ethnic minority groups, women returning to work, over 50's. Paul will send links when available.

Alex – NCF – various grants available including made by Sport for organisations using sport to work with young people and Family Food Aid tackling food poverty. Anyone requiring more information visit the website [Northamptonshire Community Foundation \(ncf.uk.com\)](http://Northamptonshire Community Foundation (ncf.uk.com)) and contact Alex by email [alex@ncf.uk.com](mailto:alex@ncf.uk.com)

Paul – SEND 4 Dads were organising some social events again with a foot golf event for Father's Day. He was currently looking for funding opportunities.

Graeme Wilson – Northants Sport - Northants Local Offer were looking for articles & things to promote in their next SNIX newsletter for young disabled people up to 25 years old + their families. Deadline for submitting them is next Friday 11th June. Please send to [LocalOffer@northamptonshire.gov.uk](mailto:LocalOffer@northamptonshire.gov.uk) [Special Needs Index \(SNIX\) - Special educational needs and disability \(SEND\) support \(northamptonshire.gov.uk\)](mailto:SpecialNeedsIndex@northamptonshire.gov.uk) [Local Offer \(northamptonshire.gov.uk\)](http://northamptonshire.gov.uk)

The visually impaired have a go day in conjunction with British Blind Sport was well received - [First 'Have a go Day' for people with visual impairments is a success | Fish-A-Bility project Has People Hooked on Angling!](#)

A recent project delivered by Northampton Nene Angling Club (NNAC) has proved to be a massive success in attracting a large number of participants from a variety of groups facing inequalities.

<https://www.northamptonshiresport.org/news/2021/05/fun-had-by-all-at-have-a-go-day-for-people-with-visual-impairments>

Although Park Runs were unable to start again yet, Junior Parkruns at Northampton's Racecourse and in Daventry at the Sports Park had started again. More details can be found using the links below.

[Northampton Racecourse junior parkrun home | Daventry junior parkrun | Daventry junior parkrun](#)

Graeme also asked if there were plans to widen the forum to encompass what had been Daventry and South Northants Council. Debbie responded that we already had members from across the county but could promote the forum more actively.

Pete had contacted North Northamptonshire to enquire whether there were going to be any forums for the North and was waiting for a response.

5. **Items for the Next Meeting**

VOI scooters – tbc

Northamptonshire Fire Service – Recruitment and Positive Action Events

Perinatal and Maternal Mental Health Services

6. **Date of Next Meeting**

11am Friday 6 August 2021 by Teams