

ActivLives is a small, grassroots charity, working in Ipswich and across Suffolk to:

- Support and motivate people to improve their own health and well-being and keep active
- Keep people connected with their communities to reduce social isolation and loneliness
- Help people remain independent at home and have happy, full and active lives.
- Provide access to learning, training and volunteering opportunities, to enable people of all ages and abilities gain skills, experience and meaningful employment.



The organisation has grown out of the successful One Ipswich - Town & Bridge Project, established as a pilot in September 2006, by the Local Strategic Partnership. In 2012 the project became an independent charity called ActivLives, to enable the organisation to grow, become more sustainable and develop existing and new ActivHubs across Ipswich and Suffolk.

ActivLives provides a wide range of opportunities for people to get involved, including community gardening, Men in Shed projects, Lunch Clubs, singing and physical / sport activities such as walking football, Boccia, Kurling, seated and standing exercise, health walks and social activity. These activities not only provide physical activity they provide a life-line for many people who live on their own. They give people a purpose to go out and an opportunity to be with other people in a safe and welcoming environment.



ActivLives has been working in Felixstowe since November 2013. After holding a successful health promotion and coffee morning in Old Felixstowe we were approached by the Hope Trust and asked if we would take over and run their OTAGO exercise classes in Walton. We were delighted to do so and have continued to work closely with them on this project and various others over the years.

Every Tuesday morning ActivLives delivers 2 exercise sessions at Walton Community Hall. These sessions are specifically designed to strengthen leg muscles, improve balance and improve general fitness. If you have visited a physiotherapist for knee or hip problems you will be very familiar with this type of exercise. The classes have gone from strength to strength, receiving referrals from health professionals as well as self-referrals. Although the exercise sessions are of a serious nature we always make time for refreshments and conversation. The group attracts men and women from all over Felixstowe and the neighbouring villages.

Thanks to the support of Felixstowe Town Council, the staff at the Town Hall and Town Councillors we have been able to ensure that the group has the equipment it needs and professionally qualified instructors. The award from the Felixstowe Town Council of £582 will enable us to train a volunteer in Chairbased Exercise to support the Walton Hub and provide

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exercise to a wider range of physical abilities. The volunteer will be attending a 3 day Chairbased Course during May / June 18. In addition to that, the new chairs at Walton Hall have made a tremendous difference to the group. Not only are they comfortable to sit on, they provide excellent stability.



In addition to our Walton sessions we run an Adapted Sports session at the Felixstowe Senior Citizens Centre on Saturday afternoons from 1:30 to 3:30 pm. This is a very lively group who play New Age Kurling and Boccia, a Paralympic sport. This group is currently full to capacity. ActivLives would like to thank Richard Holland and the Board of Trustees at the Senior Citizens Centre for their help and support in promoting and accommodating the new weekend ActivHub.

Both of these sports are very inclusive and suitable for individuals with limited mobility. This has meant that local residents, dependent upon wheel chairs, can access the activities. One member recently told me *“Saturdays are great fun, lots of laughter.....and a little bit competitive!!!”* As with all our groups there is always time for a well-earned cup of tea and a chance to talk tactics.



ActivLives is currently seeking funding to open another ActivHub in the South & West wards in Felixstowe, providing a varied programme of activity for participants aged 55 years and over. Watch this space..... Since the Walton OTAGO Sessions opened we have had 97 people registered. Our maximum capacity for each session is 15 people and on average we have between 12 and 14 people attending each session over 46 weeks. Between April 17 & March 18 we had 1186 attendances.

At the ActivHub on a Saturday we have 51 people registered and over the 41 x weekly sessions we have had 453 attendances. A waiting list has now had to be introduced as we are full to capacity, with an average of 15 – 18 people attending each week.

A Members Story

Ann discovered ActivLives through her daughter who had heard about our OTAGO exercise classes at Walton Community Hall. Ann had suffered from a stroke and wanted to improve her health, increase her muscle strength and work on her balance.

After an initial telephone conversation with Ann, explaining all about the group, she came along to observe the class and to have a cup of tea with the other class members. Since 7th November 2017 Ann has been a regular member of the group.

Ann has gone from strength to strength, she began by doing her exercises seated but now she is doing them standing. Ann's physical strength has improved as has her balance and confidence. When she was spoken to recently about the class, this is what she had to say *“I feel the class keeps me alive”*.

Ann aged 81 – Stroke survivor

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