

**Felixstowe & Villages Carers Group – Report to Felixstowe Town Council –
on the benefits of the Grant Awarded to our community Group of £400 in June 2023**

We are a small community group who meet once a month to provide Carers who are looking after a family member or friend an opportunity to socialise with other carers who understand their situation.

Following Covid our membership was greatly reduced. Five of our carers lost loved ones and two of our cared for lost their carers. At our meeting in January 2023 we had only seven attendees. We had reached a stage where the income only just covered the room hire but not the Public Liability Insurance (£64). It was clear that we needed to attract new members in order to survive.

The grant of £400 from Felixstowe Town Council enabled us to afford a more attractive programme of events, more diverse and interesting activities in order to attract new members.

Since the middle of last year our programme has included:-

- ACTIVLIVES – games of Kurling & Boccia
- Yoga for. balance and strengthening posture.
- Watercolour painting tuition.
- Crazy Golf on the seafront.
- Suffolk Art Link Friends Around The Table, creative workshop
- Tea & Cake at Goslings
- A Board Games Afternoon/ Christmas Buffet
- Artlink – creating poems workshop – incredibly good
- Laughing Yoga
- A talk on how WW1 &. WW2 changed the lives of women in Felixstowe

Without the grant we would not have afforded to have the vast majority of these activities.

We have publicised our group through the Felixstowe Town Council Quarterly Magazine, the Old Felixstowe Community Association Quarterly Newsletter, Spotlight on Felixstowe, Flyeronline, The In Touch magazine and Suffolk Family Carers. We mention the support of Felixstowe Town council in our articles as requested.

Without having such an attractive and interesting programme of events to offer it would not have been possible to gain the interest of potential new members within the community.

Having said that we have lost several of our members in the last year due to illness, poor mobility and the loss of the person being cared for. Fortunately we have managed to attract new members to offset this. Last year we had twelve members and we now have a total of seventeen members.

Our average attendance at the moment is eleven, which should increase in the warmer months as people become more mobile. Some members also like to pick and choose which meetings they want to attend.

The future for us is bright. Suffolk Artlink are working with us on a fully funded project called "Creative Boost". The aims are to empower Carers and the Carers group itself through creative activity. Suffolk Artlink hopes to create a digital resource through this project that can be made available to other carers and the general public.

This activity will take place over six of our monthly meetings and we hope that it will attract new members to our group through poster design/ surgery screen adverts . Other sessions may include wellness diaries, time lapse video/ photography on mobiles/ iPads, poetry etc...

It is clear that without the grant from Felixstowe Town Council our group would not have survived and we would all like to thank you so much for this support which has meant so much to our group.

Dennis Weston

Chairman & Treasurer

Felixstowe & Villages Carers Group. 14/3/.2024

