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WCT Update

NEWS, VIEWS
AND REVIEWS

Issue 1 • Summer 2018



Welcome!

Welcome to this the first issue of WCT Update, a regular newsletter for stakeholders of the Worcester Community Trust and a wider audience of interested parties and individuals, who will welcome the chance to keep up to date with the wide range of projects that WCT is organising.

WCT contributes hugely to the well being of citizens of Worcester, in particular those who fall between the cracks of everyday life and need support and a chance to be part of a wider community, whether it be the young people who need past times to keep them occupied and away from difficult influences, young adults who need help and support to live normal lives or older people who have to overcome the challenges that later years bring – from loneliness to eating properly and simply meeting up with others like them for whom life becomes more complex as the days go by.

Enjoy the information and the stories we bring you in these pages and we hope that your eyes will be opened to the excellent work that the Worcester Community Trust does day in, day out across the city and that you will feel able to share these stories with others and support the work of WCT either directly or indirectly through the work you do or the contacts you have.

Helen Scarrett





Young Carers Youth Club – caring for the young carers

It's a simple concept. Offering a chance for young carers to put aside their caring responsibilities just for an evening so they can relax and enjoy themselves without waiting for that call to run up stairs, or go to the shops, or help move a relative who is bed bound.

We would all be shocked to find out the actual number of youngsters out there in our community, caring for other members of their family and without whom, the family would simply fall apart.

The Young Carers Youth Club is delivered in partnership with the Worcester Youth Support Services (YSS) providing positive activities and support for children and young people who care for other members of their family, offering fun activities including boxing fitness training, chess, pool, drama, gaming, dance, music and cooking.

It's a chance to be free of their responsibilities for an evening and the chance to build friendships with other youngsters who share their experiences day to day. The group meets in two age groups – 7-12 years old and 13 years and older – with around 20 individuals in the younger group and around a dozen in the older group.

Is this a worthwhile project? Here are a couple of the young people, who as a result of their experiences are perhaps older than their years. Josh says: "Young carers has sculpted me into what I am now.

If they weren't here, I would really struggle. The activities are really great."

Shakira chimes in with: "If young carers went, I don't know what I'd do. I am really stressed at the moment with looking after my brother and coping with GCSE's. If I didn't have this place, I wouldn't be able to breathe."

Seems like it's a project that needs our support in a big way...

For more details about The Young Carers Youth Club call 07749 467402 or email adam@worcestercommunitytrust.org.uk

A self-referral form and a professional's referral form can be found, along with lots of other information, at the website: yss.org.uk/worcestershire-young-carers

Supporting our older people

It'll come as no surprise that many of the activities under the WCT umbrella target help at our older residents in the city.

One of the most valuable programmes WCT runs are the fortnightly Snack & Chat lunchtime sessions at Dines Green, Horizon, Tolladine and Ronkswood Community Hubs. Running from 12 noon till 2pm, older residents are offered a two course home cooked meal with a pudding and a drink at a price of just £3.50. It's a great way for older people who don't get out much and for many, it's an opportunity to talk to other people that really doesn't present itself that often in their day to day lives.

The chance to chat and share experiences is a valuable one for the twenty or so people we welcome to every session and it adds to their wellbeing in so many ways. Take a look on the WCT website where we've added some videos of these sessions – it's a brief insight into just how important these sessions can be!

WCT also organises other events for older members of the community. One recent event that was enjoyed hugely by a group of our older members was a day trip to Stratford-upon-Avon. They did some sightseeing and some shopping, but it was the journey there and back that was most revealing with peals of laughter all the way there and back – and laughter is key to general wellbeing and sadly something that can be rare in older people's lives.

Singing is another great element of well being. This Easter, WCT organised an Afternoon Tea Party at Dines Green where the Poppy Sisters performed for the gathered audience and brought back a load of happy memories in a singalong. At other events in recent weeks, we organised a Frank Sinatra tribute act at the Ronkswood and Tolladine Hubs and the lovely Debbie Parry performed at the Horizon Centre.

These events help to bring back happy memories for our older members and it gives them a chance to chat about their personal memories and helps them to make new friends.

For more information call 07785 998502 or email sharon@worcestercommunitytrust.org.uk



Helping address the issues of domestic violence

The WCT DAWN Project – Domestic Abuse Working Network – is already seeing impressive success in its attempts to address this complex issue across the city of Worcester. The number of women it has helped since its launch is now well over 500.

Referrals come to DAWN from a number of sources – direct from women who hear about the service, or via the police and children’s social care services in the city.

The support DAWN offers is far more than simply helping to provide protection for these women. Many of the women who seek support are struggling because they have young children, they have low confidence levels and many do not understand the impact of domestic abuse on their children, who witness it and suffer directly or indirectly from it.

One young woman who approached DAWN for help recently, we’ll call her ‘K’, had the added problem that her ex-partner knew where she lived, causing huge anxiety as to whether he might turn up or not at any time of the night or day. DAWN was able to organise additional security measures for the young woman’s flat and provided her with a personal security alarm.

In addition, DAWN delivered a bespoke Freedom programme to the young woman, tailored to her specific needs, to help her understand the tactics her abusive partner had adopted. This led to an understanding of the impact of the abuse she was suffering on her self esteem. It also helped her to understand the impact of the abuse on her children and reflect for the first time on her own childhood experiences.

“We were able to provide a much more holistic support package for her, including helping her to set up a new bank account and to attend a solicitor with her to get further orders to protect her children from her ex-partner,” says Jo Jefferson from the DAWN project. “We also got her involved with ‘Mums and Tots’ so she could make friends with other young women her age and with similar experiences. The package has helped her hugely.”

DAWN is a free, confidential and non-judgemental service, providing tailored, one to one support for women who are experiencing or have experienced domestic abuse. It’s a perfect example of how Worcestershire Community Trust, can, through its unique ‘modus operandi’, deliver cost effective and hugely beneficial services that benefit the city of Worcester.

Awareness of the service has to be shared by word of mouth, as for many who might need its help, access to written information about it may put those women in some danger from their abusive partner or ex-partner.

Please share the contact details as widely as you can through communication methods at your disposal – visit worcestercommunitytrust.org.uk/wct-in-action/dawn or call **01905 20922.**



The Job Coach initiative is delivering the goods!



WCT’s Building Better Opportunities Job Coach initiative continues to grow, with a second Job Coach – Julia Wathen – recruited and working alongside Mark Steadman the original Job Coach.

Several new recruits have been accepted for the scheme and Mark has in particular been targeting the Asian community with a number of Asian women on board working through the Horizon Hub.

Coaching can prepare for a range of jobs. Recent sessions included a dedicated Teaching Assistant Workshop for six ladies interested in becoming teaching assistants. Over the last three months, BBO has accepted six new clients to the programme – two men and four women. Five clients have left the programme – two going into employment and three into job search – so a highly successful quarter for a new project.

Worcester Community Trust is proud to have gained funding to employ its original job coach under a national scheme called Building Better Opportunities. This project is jointly funded by ESF and the Big Lottery Fund.

Mark Steadman joined our team back in February 2017 and works from each of the Community Hubs in Worcester. Mark is qualified to deliver Information, Advice & Guidance and has several years of experience in supporting individuals into education, training and employment.

Building Better Opportunities has a specific focus on those who are out of work, including those that may be claiming JSA, ESA, Universal credit or Income Support.

Individuals on the project can expect 1:1 tailored support that will identify areas that can be improved on. Each individual will have their own action plan and will be fully supported throughout.

One woman who has benefitted hugely from the scheme is Rebecca. She has set up her own dance school at the Horizon Community Centre and its for children aged four years of age and older with different sessions every Monday depending on age. Rebecca has five children of her own and that has made it difficult for her to achieve her aim, although her family has been very supportive.

“I have enjoyed working with Mark,” says Rebecca. “The support he has given me has been brilliant – he makes me feel that I can achieve my goals. I have attended a number of training courses and now feel confident I can make this happen!”

“It has been a pleasure to support Rebecca over the past twelve months,” says Mark Steadman. “She has worked hard to achieve her goals and to ensure she is fully trained and ready for this big adventure. I hope the dance school develops well and is soon established here in Worcester.”

“People often come to us low on confidence, apprehensive or thinking they aren’t good enough. We can help boost their confidence and get them on the right path,” he continues.

If you feel you would benefit from this support or would like further information please call Mark on **07391 017681** or email mark@worcestercommunitytrust.org.uk or call Julia on **07741 194261** or email julia@worcestercommunitytrust.org.uk

The JOY Project is making huge strides

The JOY Project is a women only community project which provides support to enable women to gain a variety of skills, enhance their confidence and empower them to make their own informed decisions. Each woman on the JOY Project will access a journey tailored to their specific abilities.

Women are being supported both individually and in group settings, helping them to access various courses and training, assisting them to learn new skills, growing independently, and achieving their dreams. They will receive help accessing advice, support in developing friendships – all designed to enable women to make informed decisions for their future.

The JOY Project is offering a variety of programs, courses and support aimed to build women's confidence and gain skills. Amongst the really helpful courses available to them are Confidence Building, Jewellery Making, DIY, Building Communication Skills, Basic Computer Awareness, Employability Skills, Mindfulness, Rights and Responsibilities, a Volunteering Programme and Knitting – a varied bunch, but some really valuable opportunities for women to take advantage of as they look for new things to do and new paths to follow.

One of the women on the JOY Project – we'll call her 'T' – is not un-typical of the people JOY has been set up to help. 'T' came to the Worcester area, not knowing anyone in the area. She had suffered in an abusive relationship and had to escape. She had moved into Refuge accommodation in the city and has since been housed by the local housing authorities. She did not know the area well – if at all, doesn't drive and understandably felt isolated. She had lost all trust in people, was very anxious and was building a belief that she couldn't do anything of value for herself. She attended a Coffee Drop In session where after a short talk she agreed reluctantly, to complete an enrolment form. The JOY team gave her 1:1 support and helped her to set some short-term targets to set her off on a new journey. All she knew was she wanted to help people – she didn't know who or how.

After listening to 'T' the JOY team continued her 1:1 support, gave her a JOY passport and



Empowerment star, and she completed some initial tasks given to her. The team helped her to look into finding volunteering work with Barnardo's and found some courses for her to attend and helped her complete a number of application forms for jobs in the city.

The outcome considering the dark place she was in when the JOY team had first contact with 'T' is amazing. Through the 1:1 support she received from the JOY team, and encouragement to apply for jobs, she was successful in getting a managerial job, much above her own expectations of what she might be capable of achieving. She engaged well with the JOY team and gained confidence in them. Her self-confidence grew in leaps and bounds, and she took cookery and First Aid courses. She continued to attend Coffee Drop In sessions.

She helped to facilitate the new Freedom programme and was growing in confidence as she grew to know her surroundings, how to access things and places. She felt so confident indeed that she travelled to London on her own using public transport, something that would have been well outside her capabilities when she first had contact with the JOY team. She was empowered enough to take the actions she needed to get her divorce and sort out the financial element of that divorce.

This is just one story from the JOY team – there are many others and it proves that providing the right level of support, helping women to regain a level of self-confidence and continue providing that essential 1:1 support can rejuvenate the lives of people who have very little going for them when we first come into contact with them. It's a great project that is helping women across the city to find a new pathway.

JOY Project Manager is Ruth Heywood – call **07341 568621** or email joy@worcestercommunitytrust.org.uk

Building confidence in the Building Block

How many of us can genuinely say we wouldn't benefit from some DIY skills training? Most of us cause more damage than it's worth before we're thankfully stopped from creating total havoc!

The facilities at the Building Block in Warndon and the courses available there are worth their weight in gold as many who attend will tell you! The centre next to the community centre in Warndon is currently offering DIY level plumbing, plastering, woodwork, tiling, electrical and brick laying courses on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday evenings to paying customers – willing to part with a little bit of cash to gain useful DIY skills they can take home with them.

The centre's team delivers DIY training to women on the JOY Project on Monday and Thursday daytimes – free of charge to learners because they are funded by the JOY Project. The centre delivers CSCS – Construction Skills Certification Scheme - course to special needs groups on Tuesday and Thursday

daytimes and to the main group on Wednesday daytimes – all free to learners funded by Worcestershire County Council.

An acquired brain injury group gets free woodworking skills training on Mondays during the day, and the facilities are used by a home school group on the first Wednesday of every month and every Saturday by a church group – for which they pay a small donation.

The numbers are stacking up with a total of 131 learners in the first quarter of 2018 – 62 of those are evening class learners, 15 have been on the JOY Project and eight are in the acquired brain injury group. Although the courses in the evenings are not accredited, all learners in the first quarter completed DIY courses to a high level and the JOY Project learners saw hugely improved self-confidence and some created items for their own homes.

Of the 23 learners who attended to gain their CSCS cards that will help them to get into work, 22 passed their test and the one who didn't quite make it is booked to retake. Evening classes are fully booked and there are waiting lists for some courses. Not surprisingly the plans for the next quarter were 'more of the same' with the addition of accredited electrical courses and a women's only CSCS course to meet the demand from women to get access to electrical work.

Email peter@worcestercommunitytrust.org.uk for more information.



Computing for beginners – learning the basics

Living without access to computers is becoming increasingly difficult as there is an assumption by most businesses – including banks and shops – that everyone has access to a computer and can do their business online.

Sadly that isn't the case and we're constantly hearing of older people in particular who become isolated because their families have moved away – sometimes overseas – and they cannot take advantage of lower priced utilities or purchases because they can't buy online.

So it makes huge sense to provide these people with a modicum of IT training – introducing them to computers – helping them to stay in touch by email or social media with sons and daughters in Canada or Australia, and being able to converse with their suppliers online to take advantage of the benefits that many companies have built in to communication online.

Every week there is a Computers for Beginners course running at Warndon Hub which introduces individuals to the wonders of a computer and the possibilities that a computer opens up to everyone if they can harness the power of in particular emails and social media options. Apart from the immediacy of communication online, once you have access to a computer – either your own or via a library or public service area, its cheaper and quicker and it allows those you want to communicate with around the world to send you photos and videos of themselves and their families. It's a very personal way of communicating with those you love and many older people who felt computers were beyond them are now regularly in touch with loved ones up and down the country and across the world through the medium of computers.



"It's a bit daunting for many of those who come along to our courses," says Paula Morris "but it's great to see the penny drop and see older people in particular getting to grips with a computer and sending their first email or logging on to Facebook and communicating with sons or daughters overseas that they have traditionally had to wait for letters to arrive! The ability to have on-going conversations in real time is a huge eye opener to many who are new to the technology and thankfully, many of the people who are initially very wary of even touching the keyboard are quickly finding they can use a computer even if it's a learning process over a few weeks!"

It's a great opportunity for people who have managed to avoid using computers this far in their lives to add new skills and a new way of communicating at a time when they can feel cut off from family and friends and at a disadvantage when it comes to communicating with their electricity, gas or telephone company. Online banking is within reach for many who live a distance from their banks or for those where bank branches have been shut down. And if they are not well, they can use a computer to order their groceries and have them delivered. Access to a computer and a little education on how to use it, can open up a whole new world!

Reading and writing help from basic English courses

A recent addition to the excellent range of courses available to people in Worcester from WCT is the 'Basic English – reading and writing for Adults' course being run at Horizon Centre during term times.

For those of us who cope well with reading and writing it's difficult to imagine how people who can't, manage in every day life, but some people manage to hide their inability to read and write very well – well into later life.

These courses are designed to help local people who struggle with reading and writing – to get to grips with the language and slowly but surely begin to read and write letters, words and then phrases, that will open a heavy door between them and enjoying books, newspapers and magazines. It's incredibly frustrating if you're an older person and you have young family members or friends who copy easily with reading and writing – chatting happily and reading books and from the screens online. And to begin with it may seem like this is a step too far – that they will never be able to master the art of reading fluently or writing a letter to friends and family, or perhaps to a company they need to complain to or to ask for help.

But like so many things in life, with a little effort and a lot of help from the tutors on these courses, things will start to drop into place and before you know it,

you'll be taking your first book home to read in the comfort of your own home. And with a grip of reading and writing, even a little at first, life will become more complete and interesting and you'll wonder how you managed before.

"These courses really do excite us here at Horizon Centre," says Ruth Heywood. "We see these people arrive for the first lesson, clearly lacking confidence and unsure of what they have let themselves in for. But once they see they are with a group of people who are in a similar situation, all keen to learn but not knowing how to take those first steps, the enthusiasm and effort they put into the classes is incredible and we rarely have any difficulty enticing them back for a second or third class as they increase their abilities to read and write, week in week out."

It's a course worth finding more out about – it's a life skill that everyone should have available to them.

For more information contact Ruth Heywood, Project Manager on **07341 568621** or email joy@worcestercommunitytrust.org.uk

Alternatively, contact bookings@worcestercommunitytrust.org.uk for more information.



WCT projects

Check worcestercommunitytrust.org.uk or [@wctrust](https://twitter.com/wctrust) or [facebook.com/WorcsCommTrust](https://www.facebook.com/WorcsCommTrust) for availability.

Building Block

Construction Skills Centre teaching plastering, block work, tiling, carpentry and more.

BBO Job Coach

Building Better Opportunities Job Coach has a specific focus on those furthest away from the job market.

JOY

A women-only community project which provides support to enable women gain a variety of skills, enhance their confidence and empower them to make their own informed decisions.

DAWN

The Dawn Project is a free, confidential, and non-judgemental tailored service for women who are experiencing or have experienced domestic abuse.

Snack & Chat

Offering a hot healthy two course meal but also a warm and friendly environment where individuals feel safe and at ease and support to address issues.

Extend

Exercise class for the over 50s to improve strength, balance and increase stamina.

Reconnections

A service to reduce loneliness and social isolation in Worcestershire, run by Age UK in partnership with Worcester Community Trust and others.

Courses and activities

Delivered by our partners providing a range of opportunities for learning and active engagement.

Volunteering

W.C.T. offers opportunities for practitioners in training from all courses run by Worcester University and volunteer opportunities across the organisation.

Community Projects

Opportunities for community engagement both in and around our centres.

Community Connectors

Working closely with members of the public and partners to deliver drop in sessions to support the socially isolated and those with low level stress and anxiety.

Youth Work

Providing positive opportunities and experiences for young people aged 10-19 years including fitness, arts and crafts, beauty workshops, dance, cooking and sports that will unlock potential, make their voices heard and create a greater sense of community and responsibility.

Kidzplay Play Schemes

For children aged 5-10 years providing fun and educational activities in the summer holidays.

After School Clubs

For children aged 5-10 years with lots of fun, learning new skills including sports, cooking and arts.

Toddler Groups

Baby and toddler group (term time only) with the support of W.C.T. and Action for Children.



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