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Healthy Futures

Stories



Lyn Graney, 76, is a local resident of Clay Cross. She was born in the area and has lived in various villages locally throughout her life.

Lyn first came along to one of **North East Derbyshire District Council's (NEDDC)** *Water Wellbeing* classes with her husband, **Allan** who is living with arthritis. He had been told by his doctor that physical activity would help with his pain and when **Lyn** saw a poster for the class, she persuaded **Allan** to attend. She was already very active herself, walking for charity to support **Allan's** health conditions, however, none of those walks were suitable for him. As a carer she was able to attend for free too, that was also a motivation for her to attend with **Allan** without doubling the cost for them both. At the *Water Wellbeing* sessions **Lyn** and **Allan** registered to be part of the **Walking into Communities project**.

Once COVID hit and restrictions were placed on sessions, the team at NEDDC had to think of ways to keep people connected.

Debbie and **Jess**, from the wellbeing team ran some chair based exercises online, which **Lyn** and **Allan** both attended and which helped him to continue to move more while in lockdown.

Allan started to feel more confident with chair based exercises and on the advice of his doctor, started to attend physiotherapy which greatly improved his movement and his pain levels dropped. Lyn feels that by attending the chair based exercise classes, he felt he could complete the exercises that a physio asked him to do and that proved to be the case.

The class also helped **Lyn** to feel more connected to people as at the start of the classes there was a chance to chat and have social interaction and other activities and groups she'd also been involved in stopped.

When the third lockdown came **Debbie** and **Jess** wondered if some people may not have the confidence to join the chair based classes but would perhaps consider joining an online social club, so began an **online book club**.



Lyn immediately signed up to that and the group got together every other week to choose a book and once it had been chosen, rather than try and read the whole book in between sessions, instead decided to read a certain number of pages or chapters. This was to take pressure off the group and enable it to run at the pace of attendees. ***There was also plenty of time within the session for chat and catch up.***

Once restrictions were lifted, the group decided to meet in person. It was a little scary for some to meet in person and more difficult for others with health conditions and caring responsibilities so together, the group decided on a date, time and location which considered all of these factors and talked through some of the fears of the group.



Lyn has taken over the facilitation of the book club, which now meets in person, to allow **Debbie** and new colleague **Lynn** to explore other opportunities to support more residents in North East Derbyshire. It has also enabled the group to develop the club in a way that suits them but also means there's support from the team at *NEDDC* when they need it. This was also a step towards helping the group become self-sustaining and a long term asset for the local community in helping with social isolation once the *Walking into Communities* project ends.

Lyn is involved in another local community group – **The Wholey Place and Broadleys community group** and has been sharing details of, not just the book group, but all of the other opportunities available in the area. Through her connections with **Debbie**, she is supporting new people to attend different sessions and getting them involved in more activities.

Both **Lyn** and **Allan** have now joined **Forever Active**, a low impact exercise session with social time at **Sharley Park Leisure Centre**. This session was set up in partnership between the *Walking into Communities* project and *Sharley Park Leisure Centre*. **Lyn** had a fall last year and **Allan's** mobility is restricted so finding an opportunity to take part in safe activities such as **Kurling** and **Boccia** was important.

As a result of Lyn's collaboration with NEDDC, there have been many connections made and although many of the people Lyn connects with are older, they often want to know about family activities too as they look after grandchildren on a regular basis. As a result, more families can be active together through people like Lyn who support and connect their community.

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