



SPRING 2023 Newsletter

CAERPHILLY PEOPLE FIRST

Music Sessions with RecRock

The group has been enjoying taking part in music and wellbeing sessions with Dan from RecRock, funded by Cwtsh. RecRock is an organisation which works with people to improve their skills and confidence through music and other creative activities. The group has written and filmed their own song, taken part in karaoke sessions, and played instruments including drums, guitar and keyboards. As the weeks go on, members are growing in confidence and love performing new songs.



On St David's day, the group took part in a concert which featured musical performances from music wellbeing groups run by RecRock in Caerphilly County. The event was a massive success, with a great turnout there to witness the brilliant musical performances.

Caerphilly People First members Sophie, Natalie, Morgan, Richard and Chris were among the singers at the White Rose Centre in New Tredegar, where songs by The Police, Elvis, George Ezra, Dusty Springfield, Elton John, Alicia Keys, The Beatles, and many more were performed. A big well done to everyone who performed and attended (and sang along!), and thank you to Dan from RecRock who put the concert together. It can be very nerve-wracking to perform in front of people, but everyone did brilliantly.

Funded by **CWTSH**

Mindfulness Sessions

Caerphilly People First members have been enjoying relaxing mindfulness sessions with Dr Andrew Lewis from Equanimity at Libanus Lifestyle Centre in Blackwood. We have learned how to practice mindfulness and how it can overcome anxiety. Any type of meditation will help slow down overthinking, but mindfulness meditation is a particularly good place to start. Even a small amount of meditation can be beneficial. We have learned how deal with anxious feelings, how to relax, and how to eat mindfully, and we have learned about living in the present moment by observing thoughts, feelings and sensations as they arise.

Andrew is brilliant at helping people to relax and overcome feelings of anxiety, and the sessions have been beneficial in so many ways.

Art and Wellbeing

Since the last newsletter was published, Caerphilly People First members have completed their art course with Elizabeth from the Islwyn Arts Art and Wellbeing project, funded by the CCBC Community Empowerment Fund. The team came together to produce two group artworks on the theme of nature – including butterflies, hedgehogs, wasps and bees. The canvasses look fantastic, and we'd like to thank Liz, who's been amazing to work with. This is feedback we received from one of our members and volunteers, Morgan, who attended the art and wellbeing project:

When Elizabeth first came to Caerphilly People First, everyone was looking forward to see what she had lined up for us. As the weeks went on we found that the arts sessions were really enjoyable. Today was the last session with Elizabeth, but at some point she's going to be coming back to do more creative things with us. After these sessions I have more confidence to draw and be artistic.



Cookery

Caerphilly People First has been running weekly cookery sessions funded by the Comic Relief Community Fund in Wales. This project encourages people to eat healthier and become more independent. Learning how to cook and establishing healthy eating patterns is one of the most important lessons we can learn. During the sessions—attended by 30+ people each week—the group has made leek and potato soup, chicken fajitas, pizza, spaghetti Bolognese, beef burgers, mashed potato, rice krispies cakes, pancakes, hunters chicken, sausage casserole, lasagne, and tuna pasta bake.

The food has been delicious and the positive feedback from the group has been great to hear. It has been lovely to see everyone coming together, learning new skills, becoming more confident in the kitchen, catching up with friends, and most of all, having fun. Thank you so much to everyone who has volunteered at the sessions - you really are appreciated and we couldn't do it without you.



Funded by

**Comic Relief
Community
Fund in
Wales**



Wellbeing Project

In February we launched our wellbeing project, funded by the Gwent Regional Partnership Board RIF. We provided all participants with a copy of the health profile and a guide on how to fill one out. Health Profiles give people important information about you, which will help them to give you the right care at the right time. We also held a healthy eating quiz and discussed the benefits of vitamins C&D.

Everyone who takes part will receive a wellbeing goodie bag made up by our volunteers. The bag will contain vitamins C&D (supplements), herbal teas, adult colouring books, and gel pens (for relaxation). We've also added some pocket tissues as there seem to be lots of people suffering from cold and flu.



Easy Read Workshop

We were recently visited by Laura Griffiths and Julie Jones from Learning Disability Wales who wanted the views of our Reconnect Focus Group on a couple of easy read documents they have produced. Our members discussed the documents and decided they were easy to understand, with appropriate pictures and clear text, and advised that no changes needed to be made.

Gardening

After a winter break, Caerphilly People First have once again been working on our allotment plot at TARAGGAN Educational Gardens & Nursery in Gilfach. During the first session back, the group had a look at the space we have and how we can best utilise our plots. Sophie wants to grow sweetcorn, Morgan wants to grow carrots, Sam wants to grow beans, Chris wants to grow potatoes, Anthony wants to grow courgettes, and Gethin would like to grow grapes. We have purchased the seeds for these items and we can't wait to see the results. We'd like to thank John from TARAGGAN for giving us so much advice and help.



Health Meeting

Ffion and Natalie recently took part in an online meeting with Swansea University, attended by health professionals and other People First groups. Ffion and Nat spoke about their experiences of COVID and lockdown.

Ffion talked about how she struggled with her mental health, anxiety and depression during this period, and how happy she is now things are back to normal and she has regained her freedom. She also talked about her experiences of having the vaccine. Natalie spoke about how frightened she was before having her jabs, and how ill she was afterwards. Despite this she is glad she had the vaccine because it meant that she could start seeing her family again and make a return to work with Caerphilly People First.



Relationships and Sexuality

Caerphilly People First recently held the first session in our Relationships and Sexuality course. This was run by Ffion and Lisa from Innovate Trust. During the session the group discussed what sex is, keeping yourself and others safe, sexually transmitted diseases, pregnancy, consent, and different types of contraception. Even though this can be a very sensitive topic, everyone joined in, and there was much laughter from the group.

Warm Spaces

Thank you to Sophie Morgan and Tracy Tregaskis, for volunteering at our first Reconnect through Breakfast session at Rhymney Community Centre. This is an initiative funded by Cwtsh and Bute Energy, which aims to provide a warm space and free breakfast for people. The ladies did a fantastic job serving crumpets, toast, croissants, and teas and coffees.



Funded by

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