

SPRING 2024 NEWSLETTER

CAERPHILLY PEOPLE FIRST

RECONNECT THROUGH COOKERY



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COMMUNITY
FUND

Our Reconnect through Cookery sessions continue to be a massive success, with up to 55 people attending each time. During recent weeks members have prepared and cooked cheese pie, jacket potatoes, cottage pie, lasagna, carbonara, chicken stir fry, pizza, Welsh faggots, and spaghetti bolognese. Every meal is served with salad or vegetables prepared by the members. We have also enjoyed desserts including home-made Welsh cakes and banana desserts.



Each week also includes a quiz, and bingo, and some weeks include a disco, where everyone sings and dances along. Some weeks are themed (St. David's Day, Easter), when attendees are invited to dress up.

Everyone who helps out does a great job, from the people who prepare the food, to the people who cook the food, to the people who do the dishes. Your hard work and dedication make this group a huge success. Thanks also to Zoe and Cheryl from the Caerphilly Parent Network, who volunteer at every session.

The feedback we receive is lovely to hear. Everyone enjoys coming together to learn new skills, increase their confidence, and reconnect with friends. Thank you to the National Lottery Community fund for making this group possible – the difference it is making to so many individuals is immeasurable.

CRAFTS SESSIONS

Since our Crafts sessions restarted in February, members have made Valentine's trees, love heart wooden plaques, decorated tote bags, and personalised Welsh-themed canvas wall art. Arts and crafts are a fantastic outlet for self expression, patience, concentration, planning, mental health, and wellbeing. Thank you to Cheryl Smith and Zoe Dummett for volunteering to facilitate these sessions.



RECONNECT THROUGH MUSIC



Since January our weekly music group, Reconnect through Music, run by RecRock, has been taking place in Libanus Lifestyle Centre in Blackwood. The aim of the project is to create a sense of belonging between individuals who are isolated, lonely, stressed or feeling low in mood.

Every week up to 30 members almost blow the roof off the little chapel on the hill with their singing, dancing and instrument playing. The group has had great fun performing their favourite songs by artists including Status Quo, Leona Lewis, Phil Collins, John Denver, Will Smith, Neil Diamond, Kylie Minogue, Barry Manilow, Robbie Williams, the Righteous Brothers, Queen, and George Michael. The group also celebrated St David's day by performing songs by our favourite music Welsh artists, including Tom Jones, Duffy, Will Young. In recent weeks we have also written a song about walking and keeping fit, which we have now recorded vocals and filmed a video for.

These sessions are a great way to improve physical and mental health, alleviate stress and build confidence. Members have reported that they love how they can express themselves freely through music.

NATIONAL COUNCIL MEETING

In March, Ffion and Christy attended the All Wales People First National Council residential meeting in Cardiff. On day one, Joe Powell, Director of All Wales People First spoke about the role of the National Council. We then broke up into small groups and had a discussion about what we like and don't like about being National Council representatives.

We then talked about National Actions (when reps bring up issues from their groups). Caerphilly People First's national action was that some of our members receive limited care hours, which means they have to choose which activities they attend, which leads to them missing out on other activities.

We finished day one with an item called Sub-Groups, where Reps were able to decide which sub-group to join. The groups were: Members (how more people can be self-advocates), Campaigning (what campaigns Reps want to start or join), and Position Statements (what Reps want All Wales People First to say about big issues).

Day two began with Joe Powell giving his Chief Executive's report, followed by proposals to make changes to the All Wales People First rules at their next AGM.

Next we heard from Simone Aspis from the Free Our People Campaign. This is a UK-wide campaign to get people with learning disabilities and autism out of inappropriate hospital settings. Reps voted yes unanimously to join this project.

Our last speaker of the meeting was Dan Biddle, a social entrepreneur who has written a proposal for an All Wales People First business. Reps agreed with the proposals and All Wales People First will take these ideas forward.

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH WALES TRAINING

Volunteers Natalie King and Amy Jones recently took part in a simulation exercise at the University of South Wales, the aim of which was to train midwifery students and learning disability student nurses. Nat played the role of a pregnant female who is visited in her flat by a midwife, and Amy played the role of a female giving birth on a labour ward. Nat also played the role of a mother who has given birth to her child, is caring for her along with her partner Darren, and is visited by a midwife and a learning disability nurse.



People with learning disabilities are increasingly likely to become parents, and are entitled to have access to the right support to do this. The students did an amazing job, and we hope that the knowledge they gained during the training exercise will improve the care and treatment people with learning disabilities receive in the future.

GARDENING AT TARAGGAN

In February we returned to TARAGGAN Educational Gardens and Nursery after our winter break. Since then we have planted carrot seeds, cauliflower seeds, oregano seeds, pepper seeds, tomato seeds, and coriander seeds. Because the weather hasn't been great, we've also worked indoors in the bottle shed, where we have planted broccoli seeds, courgette seeds, and parsley seeds.



AUTISM REALITY EXPERIENCE

Christy and Stuart recently took part in the Autism Reality Experience, a hands-on training experience that allows people to walk in the shoes of autistic people and understand the challenges that they face. The aim is to encourage greater empathy and understanding for what it might be like for autistic people.

The experience was designed by autistic people who agreed that it was as close as physically possible to what they themselves experience, and it was definitely an eye-opening experience for us, which gave us a greater understanding of the experiences of autistic people.

MULTIPLY SKILLS FOR LIFE

The group recently took part in the 'Counting Your Way to Good Health' programme with the Skills for Life Multiply project. We talked about health, what might affect your health, and how to improve your health. The group were given a fitness tracker each, which they will use to track how many steps they take, with the aim being to reach 10,000 steps per day. In the following weeks the group learned about the types of foods we should eat and types of foods we should avoid in order to keep our weight down and stay healthy.

A group of us also went on a walk in the Sirhowy Valley with our guide Brian Hayter. Brian handed out maps of the route, with some locations on the route marked with a number. There were 11 numbers in all, and each one represented a letter. The numbers were located on benches, fences, and wooden posts. At the end of the route, once the group had matched the numbers to the letters, the word written on their sheets was ACHIEVEMENT.

Congratulations to everyone who took part, and completed the walk.



WINTER WARMTH PROJECT



Our member Amy, who now lives independently, joined us for the launch of our Winter Warmth project. Ffion and Amy talked about the cost of living crisis and shared tips on how to save money and stay warm in the home. Over the following weeks Amy delivered 'Winter Warmth' project training to our members Sophie, Lisa, Gethin, and Rees, during which Amy showed them how to fill up a water bottle safely, and how to bleed radiators. If you receive

this training and live independently you will receive a blanket, a hot water bottle, a set of radiator keys, and easy-read information to take home.

If you would like to access this project please contact Ffion at 07488 350518 or email her at ffion@caerphillypeoplefirst.org



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