



Newsletter Spring 2022



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Celandines, Catkins and Covid

When I was little, the first signs of spring were always very special. The sight of the glossy celandine flowers and leaves bursting through the warming soil was a sight for sore eyes. As were the catkins dangling side by side in hedgerows next to the pussy willows. A sure sign that the cold winter months were finally behind us.

It's over two years since the pandemic pushed us into lockdown. Who could have predicted that we would spend so many months away from work, away from loved ones, and in fear of what the virus could do to our health? We are all desperate to believe that its worst effects are, like winter, behind us too.

The reality is that the jury is still out on how much risk the Covid variants pose a risk to the most vulnerable amongst us. Caution is still needed for those who are vulnerable on account of ill health. It is also the case that many of the public health safeguards like mask wearing have been lifted. The unity that bound us together as we clapped NHS workers is no longer quite so evident. It is also the case that extra pressure will be put on the voluntary sector as life appears to get back to normal.

Many of us hoped that once the pandemic was over, there would be a new way of working, one where we attached greater value to the basic needs in life; where looking out for others would be something to cherish.

Just like in the first days of spring, we are setting out on a fresh path. I am proud that Beth Johnson Foundation is full of new ideas to help bring to life the creativity that so many local residents are looking to foster. Our volunteers and those we care for are justifiably looking to springtime to grow new shoots; to find new ways of working. So welcome to our spring newsletter. I hope it inspires volunteers and members alike, to renew our commitment to working alongside our colleagues in health and local government to enrich the lives of the people we support.

Enjoy, and please let us have your feedback on our plans and ideas.



Joan Walley, DL
Patron, Beth Johnson Foundation

Two Years and Beyond...

My, how time flies. In many ways, the pandemic seems to have been around for ever, and it may be hard to imagine the routines of our lives before 23rd March, 2020. We can perhaps recall the milestones, or specific events that sharpened our understanding of the perceived reality during lockdowns, and the regular changes, whether anticipated or imposed upon us, during the last 24 months. Yet for some, time has gone slowly as they live in a world that is so different; where they have had to accommodate the many harsh changes that have endured.



At the BJF we are proud to have maintained our support services throughout the pandemic, albeit delivered in many different ways. We have listened to our members, volunteers, funders and stakeholders throughout, and have delivered many sessions alternatively on line. We are only just returning to a blended form of support, where we can offer face-to-face and on line meetings according to personal preference. We have purchased a communication Owl, technology that allows us to integrate more easily and clearly between people meeting in person at Parkfield House and those preferring to Zoom © in from home.

At the second anniversary of the pandemic on March 23rd, we are delighted to be collaborating with local and national partners again, in recognition of this important event. We are working with the Stoke on Trent Council and Marie Curie to ensure that our local communities have an opportunity to reflect and remember those who have died during the two year pandemic period. We are holding a memorial event at Fenton Park on March 23rd, at 11 o'clock, in conjunction with the Lord Mayor, to remember those loved ones no longer with us across our local communities. We will commemorate this two year anniversary with a service and dedicate six park benches, with individual inscribed plaques to highlight thoughts, feelings and emotions around our losses during this time. To encourage individuals to sit and ponder, or talk with others, for a while in beautiful surroundings. The Stoke on Trent council have been pivotal in making this event happen. Thank you.

Whilst reflection remains important at this time, it is also time to look to the future. A future that may be different; a future that is inspiring; a future where we continue to support and help our ageing communities. A future where every one of us a BJF is determined to make a difference to our local, ageing communities. In addition to the various amazing projects that we currently manage, we have recently, (with support from the Board of Trustees), introduced a number of initiatives at the BJF to constructively

inform our future work. We have established a sub group to ensure we engage and consult with members in all that we do; we have appointed a Volunteer Manager to ensure a consistency of recruitment, training and co-ordination of our growing army of volunteers, which remain so important to us. We have developed an inclusivity and diversity strategy, to parallel our existing policy, ensuring equality and inclusivity across all ageing populations in our local communities.

We were also invited to be the England Lead for Global Intergenerational Week, 25th April – 1st May. This is the third year of this free, online event, and the first time that it has gone global. Seven countries from across the globe have joined us to inspire individuals, groups, organisations, local/national government and NGO's to fully embrace intergenerational practice, connecting people of all ages especially the younger and older generations. The campaign will celebrate good practice, ideas, moments and opportunities local to us where different age groups come together, and intergenerational friendships can be formed! Show your support by signing up your Organisation/Group/Setting and getting your logo on the Global Intergenerational Week page. <https://www.bjf.org.uk/about-us/what-we-do/global-intergenerational-week>



So, here at the BJF we remain excited about the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead. This year is special to everyone at BJF, as we celebrate 50 years of the Foundation; 50 years of championing positive ageing. So much has happened during these 50 years, and (like the pandemic) what has gone before is definitely shaping our future as we move forward.

We have organised a programme of events across the year, and we look forward to welcoming you all to join us in celebrating the work of Beth Johnson, fifty years after this inspirational woman established the Foundation to help to realize her vision for a better life for older people in Stoke on Trent.

Emerita Professor Sue Read,
CEO, Beth Johnson Foundation



The Support We Have Provided

During the Covid lockdown we regularly reported on the support we continued to offer to our clients through telephone calls, online virtual Zoom groups and by other means. As lockdown restrictions ease, we are beginning to return to more activities that involve direct client contact but always with due regard to Covid safety.

Here is a summary of the direct client support we have provided with our projects and work streams in the three months of the Winter quarter, December through to February. These figures do not include all the background work that we do to support people, or the hours put into managing our volunteers and activities.



Thank you to all our staff and volunteers for continuing to provide excellent person-centred support despite the considerable challenges that Covid has presented over the last twenty months.

BJF Listening and Engaging

BJF aims to promote the voices of older people and to recognise the wisdom and valuable contributions that you, as older community members, make to our society.

We are committed to listening to the voices of older people and taking actions to include your ideas and views in our future development.

The pandemic has been particularly difficult for older people who may have been bereaved, isolated, shielding and excluded. As we start to recover from the effects of the pandemic, we want to work with you to understand your wishes and needs.

What does the future look like for you?

What are you looking forward to?

What are your concerns and worries?



BJF wants to work with you to plan next steps together, providing the activities and services you want and need.

Linking in with our 50th Anniversary Celebrations and focussing on our theme of Positive Aging, this Spring we will be talking and listening to all our group members as well as staff, volunteers and Board members.

We will be asking what Positive Ageing means to you and how BJF can build on your ideas to truly reflect the needs of older people in North Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent for the next 50 years!

**We want to hear your ideas:
join the discussion and get involved!**



Linking Generations Northern Ireland

A big HELLO! from the LGNI team.

It is hard to believe that nearly 2 years later the pandemic is still bringing uncertainty, anxiety and new demands as to how we go about our daily lives, but there are brighter days ahead! We have been working hard as a team and through our brilliant networks we have been able to keep innovating, test our resilience and most importantly promote intergenerational work. We believe it is more crucial than ever to keep connected, and there are loads of ways we are continuing to support the people with work with by combining our knowledge and expertise with their enthusiasm to keep generations connected.



At a time when we can't deliver projects face to face and depend on local people to take local action LGNI has increased and further developed their training offering to support Care Home Staff, College Students, and School pupils. By empowering people and building capacity within specific settings we aim for the development of sustainable intergenerational initiatives!

Check out how this approach has worked as part of our Connecting Care Homes to Community project [Connecting Care Homes and Communities – Linking Generations NI](#)

We've been working hard to develop and promote Virtual Connections, Christmas themed connections and the sharing of ideas through our network meetings and upcoming Global Intergenerational Week Campaign. Check out our latest newsletter and all of our activity via [LGNI Newsletter February 2022 \(campaign-archive.com\)](#)



Vicki Titterington, Manager – Linking Generations Northern Ireland



Linking Generations
Northern Ireland

[Visit the Linking Generations Northern Ireland Website](#)

Healthy Generations - Coming into bloom...

The last two years have seen us living in stormy times, metaphorically and literally! Storm Eunice recently reminded us of the power of Nature, and of the need to support and care for each other during difficult times, which is something that our members have excelled at throughout the pandemic.

And now, like the spring flowers emerging from the earth following the dark months of winter, we at Healthy Generations have come through the two years of lockdown and can now finally see the project blossoming in the way we initially envisaged. We are now able to deliver sessions and engage with beneficiaries face to face after those long dark months.



In response to the restrictions brought in during the Covid-19 pandemic, the project remained close to its overarching aims. We increased our online support for older people; to give them the skills to embrace technology, to find information and to try new things that would help them with their own health and wellbeing. Using Zoom for virtual meetings and delivery of online sessions, we were able to giving older people the opportunity and confidence to join online support groups, both within the project and externally.

Our various virtual support group sessions have included mindfulness, quizzes and entertainment, poetry sessions, art and local history. We have also offered tailored bereavement friendship groups and telephone support to lonely and isolated older people.

'Physically distanced; Socially connected'

We have been fortunate to use our digital and virtual time to produce three wonderful booklets, capturing our memories as a lasting keepsake of our journey that will remain for all to view beyond the lifetime of the project (click on links below to view our booklets)

[Covid-19 Survival Cookbook and Other Stories](#)

[Creative Reflections; Life during Covid](#)

[Zooming Down Memory lane](#)



During the past two Years, our lives have been subject to such disruptions due to Covid. Healthy Generations has been our lifeline. We have learnt new skills such as art and poetry and made new friends. Since coming out lockdown, we have met folk who have had help from Beth Johnson and they speak very highly of the people who have helped them. They also say they don't know how they would have got through these past 2 years without the folk at Beth Johnson. Thank you Jane, Clare, Amanda and all at Beth Johnson for your help and kindness.

Our resilience as a project and with the full support of the beneficiaries and funders of the project has grown unexpectedly. More recently, as we continue to weather some great storms we are once more ready to embrace new challenges, celebrate our successes.

My art stopped at school, then restarted with two charities, two years ago. I was average at school. Hope you all are safe in the storm, equally as dangerous as the pandemic you've all braved admirably. Regards

Volunteering

Our team of volunteers continued to support us throughout and took to their new roles, embracing every opportunity to remain involved. This now will enable them to move on, go beyond Healthy Generations and on to other roles within BJF.



We are now approaching the final phase of the project, building from the experiences and taking with us the pride in being able to say we have come through this and we have supported beneficiaries through some dark and worrisome times into the bright new future and beyond.

Hidden Treasures

by HG member Dorothy

Beneath the leaves there lies God's Hidden Treasure,
The little snowdrop whose beauty is beyond measure.
This flower is so white and pure,
But it is so strong and that's for sure.
For the winds wail and blow.
Then comes the hail and the snow.
This little plant weather's the storm,
To herald the Spring and the newborn.
Though it's life on earth is not very long.
The message it brings is very strong.
Now we have these past two year,
Faced life's storms and lived in fear.
Covid 19 meant our lives are not the same,
Then came the storms which they gave a name.
Yet even though we have been knocked about,
Through it all there is no doubt!
That others have shown love without measure.
Just like the snowdrop, we are God's treasure.



Healthy Generations continues to provide Heath & Wellbeing sessions and Zoom Group Social Support sessions. We are always looking at new areas of work, exploring different themes and ways to engage with the local community.

For anyone interested in attending our sessions or further information please do contact the team:

Jane Snape 07939 321841

Amanda Carter 07867 003313

Clare Dawson 07458 021350

Email: Healthy.generations@bjf.org.uk

[Visit Healthy Generations on the BJF Website](#)

or visit our **[Facebook Page](#)**

BJF Carer Support Service

Digital Inclusion for Older Carers

As the second year of life during the covid pandemic draws to a close, it seems appropriate to reflect on the progress that has been made in fighting this new, unknown threat that we have all faced. As we navigate our way through a new 'normal' and celebrate the return of being able to plan simple pleasures as covid restrictions ease, people have more freedom than they have had in a long time.

But we know there are many people out there who will still feel unsettled at the thought of venturing out – especially if they are caring for someone who could be at risk of serious complications if they fall ill. Ongoing isolation and the inability to safely access support with their own wellbeing will continue to be an issue for many people.

Informal carers play a vital role in supporting others, often family members with long-term health conditions. With ageing populations, the need for their role is increasing, and there are more than two million informal carers in the UK aged 65 or over. Older carers' face multiple additional challenges; pride can prevent them asking for support, their own declining health makes the physical aspects of the caring roll more difficult, they have concerns around who will care for their loved one if they can no longer fulfil the role. All this while coping with their own multiple losses, often restricted lives, social isolation and loneliness.

But the **Beth Johnson Foundation Carer Support Service** is here to help. We have worked with older people and carers to understand the needs people have in accessing support and information online. We can offer 1:1 support to help explore the options that are available to use digital tech to access information, make new connections and look after your health and wellbeing.

Our recently launched **'Friday Friendship – Carer Catch Up'** zoom group – provides an opportunity for Carers in Stoke-on-Trent to meet other carers in a supportive, informal environment from the comfort and safety of home.



Carer Support Service
Digital Inclusion for Older Carers
**Online Positive Ageing and Wellbeing support
for Older Carers in Stoke-on-Trent**



Join us for a catch up, bring a brew,
time for a break and some company for you!
'Friday Friendship – Carer Catch up'
Friday mornings on zoom 10-11am
For more details contact Amanda:
Tel: 07867 003313 or email carers@bjf.org.uk

BJF Beth Johnson
nsc. putting carers first
NHS
City of Stoke-on-Trent

Carers say that providing care can be extremely rewarding, but it can also bring with it many challenges. The emotional and physical demands of caring for a loved one and focussing on their wellbeing often means that the carer neglects their own. Finding support and building connections with people safely remains harder than ever.

We can support people in Stoke-on-Trent who are 50+ and are in a caring role to become more confident in using digital technology, to find online information and to understand the use of apps. And we can connect carers to BJF's Healthy Generations project where they can join other people in a range of creative groups and activities to build social connections and reduce isolation.

The caring role can be diverse, and many people do not identify themselves as Carers and do not seek help and support. If you know anyone who is aged 50+ and provides care to a family member, friend or neighbour, then please get in touch!

To find out more about the BJF Carer Support Service or make a referral contact:

Amanda Carter on 07867 003313 or email carers@bjf.org.uk

[Visit Carers Support Service on the BJF Website](#)



The Beth Johnson Foundation Carer Support Service, is delighted to be a partner to the **Stoke-on-Trent (SOT) All Age Carers Service** led by **North Staffs Carers**. This valuable service provides a single point of access for Carers of all ages and ensures that Carers have access to a wide range of support services, information, advice and guidance. The service brings together a range of partners to provide holistic support; enabling Carers to feel better supported so they are able to make informed choices about their caring role and own health and wellbeing. For more information about the SOT All Age Carer Support Service visit:

<https://www.carersfirst.com/s-o-t-all-age-carers-service>



Greater Cheshire Clinical Commissioning Group
East Staffordshire Clinical Commissioning Group
North Staffordshire Clinical Commissioning Group
South East Staffordshire and Sandwell Peninsula Clinical Commissioning Group
Stafford and Cannock Chase Clinical Commissioning Group
Stoke-on-Trent Clinical Commissioning Group



A Social Prescriber' perspective - The road travelled and journey so far

The past two years have presented us as individuals with many personal challenges but in the world of Social Prescribing the biggest obstacle has been keeping people connected. Services were forced to close their doors, in some cases ceasing altogether and social isolation hugely increased. Out of the dark though many services rose to the challenge and got creative in how they could deliver their services. Many moving over to telephone and virtual delivery of their services, many services naturally evolved to fit the times. One of my noted observations was that in beginning to offer telephone/virtual groups/support, doors opened to those who were already isolated prior to the pandemic, those that had physical health/mental health issues that restricted them from attending community based activities/groups. This new way of communicating and socialising has pushed many to learn how to get to grips with technology and the wonderful benefits that can come with using the virtual world as a way of staying connected. Services adapted to provide support to those that may need it, enabling them to use the likes of Zoom/face-time/signing up to Facebook. The new normal from a social prescribing perspective is that people can see and are being offered more ways of connecting than prior to the pandemic. From 70+ year olds who had never entertained the use of technology now communicating with family/friends via FaceTime and Facebook; to those now confident enough to attend physical groups because of the confidence they have gained attending virtual groups first.

The creative thinking and collective approach of the community and services has meant that the position we now stand in is one of strength, creating opportunities and growing options of connection with an even more open view of what is needed to meet the needs of the communities around us. We will all have our own version of the new norm whatever that may look like, as long as people know they have options the new norm can ever evolve.

Discovering new opportunities, supportive growth of already established services, linking with community centres, libraries, community hubs and visiting groups all aids the strength of the Social Prescribing role and gives us the pathways to enable change, and evidentially we are seeing this with many of our patients. The recognition of Social Prescribing and the notable need in the community for this type of support is evident in the ever increasing referral numbers that are coming through. The future is bright and with Spring here and Summer fast on its way I look forward to the next leg of the journey for Social Prescribing and connecting many more people to services, support and others via face to face, phone or virtually.

Lianne Burton, Social Prescriber Link Worker

Community Health Champions

The Beth Johnson Foundation is working with VAST (Stoke Voluntary Action) to develop a team of Volunteer Community Health Champions for the City.

Community Health Champions are local adults who volunteer to improve the health of people in Stoke-on-Trent. The role of a Community Health Champion is all about talking with people, and most importantly, sharing good information on health-related matters. Champions lead by sharing health messages in a friendly and helpful way.

We have six Champions within BJB and we have mainly been focussing on promoting positive messages and dispelling myths around COVID testing and vaccinations to ensure everyone can make the right health decisions and protect themselves.

As we come to the end of Covid Safety measures, the project will be working on ensuring understandable, accurate and accessible health information is available to help residents make better choices for their long-term health and wellbeing.

The Beth Johnson Foundation is proud to support the Community Health Champions initiative. We have talked to group members about their experiences in the pandemic, listened to their views and voiced their ideas to VAST and to local MPs. We will continue to cascade information through our volunteers and staff to users of our services and the wider community.



We are currently promoting the very important message that vaccination is our best defence against illness, and the precautions of HANDS, FACE, SPACE, FRESH AIR - still work! As we cautiously progress into a life beyond lockdown let's all do what we can to keep each other safe.

For more information on Community Health Champions please visit:

<https://chc.vast.org.uk>

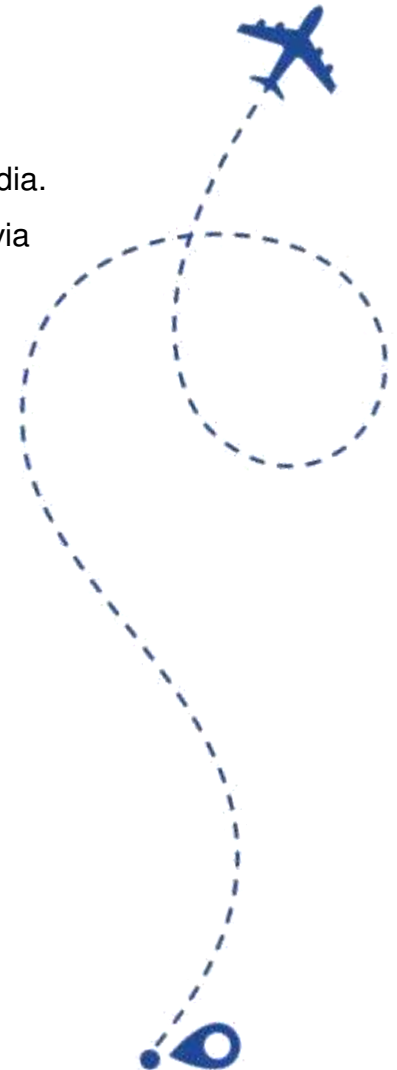
The Lull Before the Storm and the Covid Years


By HG member and Volunteer, Steve

February 2020 and the world news is spreading fast.
This covid thing, surely a storm in a tea cup wont last.
Finishing the Golden Triangle after nearly 3 brilliant weeks in India.
We arrive in Dehli, news of airport closures, texts my friend Sylvia
We arrive in Dubai , we are told the last flight from Dehli.
Emirates are grounding their planes texts our friend Stanley
We stay at an airport hotel overnight
The hotel is empty something isn't right.
Check in for Manchester as normal all seems well
Yours is the last Emirates plane today texts Michelle
What's going on we start to think
Is the world closing are we on the brink?

March 2020 Pandemic is declared by the WHO
We have our belated Christmas mates meal in the Plough
We say shall we hug, kiss as we say goodbye
Why not we say as we stand under the blue sky.
Mothers day lunch the dreaded lockdown awaits
The ladies relax, drinking not thinking of our fate
Lock down ground hog day minus one!
Boris defines on TV what must be done

April 2020 to whenever I can't remember
Walking every day in the sun 'till September?
I moved to Preston so Veronica was in my reach
Then one fateful evening walking on the beach
She fell on the concrete, broke her ankle
He foot is swollen, blue, at a right angle
I left her at the hospital alone that night
Looking through the glass outside at midnight
No more walking, no more afternoon teas in the sun
Convalescung with two sticks in covid is not much fun





75th anniversary VE day, paint the pictures, make the bunting
Virtual afternoon Tea on Zoom is exciting and we are laughing
We design a staycation for a few days in sunny Anglesey
Social distance, meals and tickets in advance, Earl Grey Tea.

Christmas 2020 and all gatherings are cancelled by the government
Drop off the presents, wish season's greetings from the pavement.
Panto is cancelled, holidays are postponed
Its like being abandoned, and disowned.

2021 what new rules are instore.

Please Boris I cant take anymore

Meet two friends from Leeds in Skipton for Tea in the Park

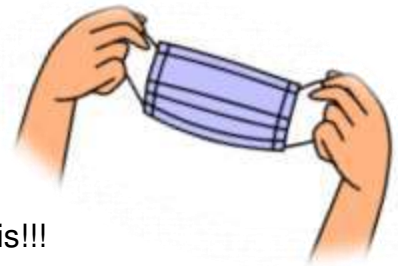
Can only stay for a couple of hours before it gets dark

The rain is lashing down as we sit on the park seat

We decide to sit in one car with masks on and eat – sorry Boris!!!

Veronica goes back to work half and then full time.

Stuck in Preston, not funny, depressing till dinner time.



Then I found the BJJ through the New Vic zoom

It was like a breath of online spring-clean broom.

Poetry, art and local history on-line classes we do

Nice people to zoom with through and through

Have a joke, tell the stories, recite the poems, draw and feel content

Shakespeare, Van Gogh, Guyana, Lunar men, talking in my stoke accent



Now I think back to times and quality of life lost over the last two years

What will happen next, what will materialise, cause us to have more fears

Patient Information Education & Resource Centre (PIER)

2022 is bringing lots of new and exciting programmes to the PIER project which we will be delivering from our new home.



The impact of Covid 19 on the Haywood Hospital has meant that that we have been unable to work from our usual location within the outpatients department and although we are gradually getting back to normal, restrictions in health care settings will continue for some time to come. With this in mind we have temporarily relocated the PIER project to a community venue at the

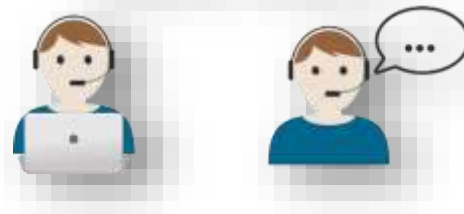
Port Vale Community Hub in Burslem.

This change in venue has meant that we have needed to rethink how we deliver our services to support patients and carers with arthritis and related conditions.

We have a number of programmes that the PIER volunteers will be taking forward in 2022.

- A new patient telephone service, using online information to support and signpost callers.
- An online directory of arthritis services made available on the Haywood Foundation website
- Quarterly themed events, where members of the public can come along to gather information and chat to our volunteers.

SUPPORT



Dates and times of these new programmes are to be confirmed and will be available very soon.

Tai Chi



Our weekly Tai Chi Sessions remain as popular as ever with over 30 people attending at two community venues.

- Port Vale Sports Hall, Burslem. Thursday 1.30pm to 2.30pm
- The Quaker Meeting House, Leek Thursday 4pm to 5pm

If you are interested in either of these sessions please contact June: june.brammar@mpft.nhs.uk

Have you got a Bright Idea?

We want to enhance the lives of people with arthritis and could support any ideas you have with funding. This could be any amount up to £10,000.

Among the Ideas that have funded recently are:

- New patient friendly chairs in the outpatient department
- The introduction of clearer signage at the Haywood Hospital
- A specialised wheelchair to support one of our volunteers.
- Supportive aids for the physiotherapy department



If you have any Bright Ideas that could bring about improvements for Haywood Hospital patients and visitors please get in touch with June who can give you details of how to get involved.

We couldn't do any of these activities without the input and commitment of our PIER volunteers who continue to adapt and travel with us on our new PIER activities.

We do hope that in time the PIER will return to its home at the Haywood Hospital but until then we will continue delivering our programme 'wherever we lay our hat'.

June Brammar, Project Manager

Discover Digital



Our new BJF Discover Digital Project is busy recruiting Volunteer Digital Friends who help older people to develop their digital confidence and skills.

BJF Digital Friends are getting ready to spread the word and help people to find out more at a series of Engagement Events that we are organising in our community.

This exciting new project will bring BJF Digital Friends together with older people aged 55+ who sign up as Digital Learners.

Digital Friends can support Learners to take their first steps to getting online, connecting with friends, exploring hobbies, and using basic digital skills for a range of daily tasks. We will help Learners to find training that suits them and apply for funding for equipment available through the Stoke-on-Trent Discover Digital Programme.

In February we helped to organise and deliver an event attended by a range of local services and organisations to help them find out more about setting up their own Digital Champions project. We have written a Code of Practice for Digital Champions to help make sure we all provide great quality support for people in Stoke-on-Trent.



Help us make sure that nobody gets left behind in the digital age. If you would like to become a Digital Friend, please email volunteering@bjf.org.uk or call 07770 016978

To find out more about Discover Digital in Stoke-on-Trent you can check the VAST website <https://vast.org.uk/discover-digital/>

BJF Volunteer Voices



Our volunteers have a long history of working together to support older people in our communities. As part of our outreach work Volunteers Jon, David, Hazel and her dog Tilly joined a community event at Staffordshire University's new building, Catalyst.

We shared information about B.J.F. Discover Digital and enjoyed meeting people and taking part in the Catalyst activities.

Jon "had a brilliant day!" meeting people and promoting Discover Digital. "I enjoy helping out as a Volunteer because I enjoy being able to help other people do things that they had not been able to do before." **Jon**

Hazel, Jon and David talked to people about their Volunteer role with B.J.F. and shared their thoughts on some of the challenges for older people using digital technology. Sharing their ideas for better digital support with Staffordshire University Staff will help older people in our communities to get better support in future.



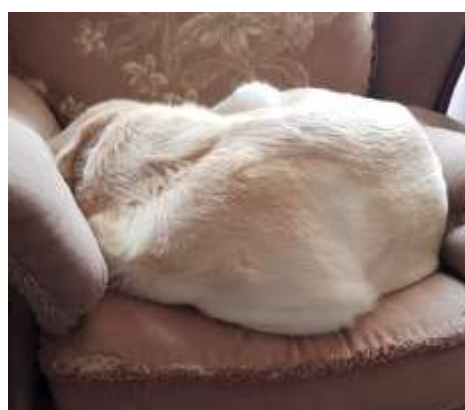
“Volunteering has helped me to develop my listening skills...I’ve loved meeting new people, many with interesting stories to tell.” **David**

We took time out to chat and to enjoy all that Catalyst Celebrations had to offer. Hazel made full use of the accessible facilities for non-sighted visitors, including a guided audio description of a creative dance performance and guided exploration of a 13-foot-tall Puppet operated by 5 world-class puppeteers and contemporary dancers.

When interviewed by a member of the Appetite Team afterwards, Hazel said “it was the best audio description I have ever heard, it made me really feel part of the performance, it was amazing.”



Tilly enjoyed meeting everyone too and after a hard day’s work made sure she took time for lots of rest and relaxation.



“Thank you for giving me and my guide dog a wonderful chance of meeting and interacting with some very truly inspirational people, sharing, helping, and supporting people we wouldn’t have met if I hadn’t become a Volunteer at BJJF... It was an amazing opportunity and experience. I can’t wait for the next one!” **Hazel**

We are looking forward to many more community events, reaching older people and seeing our Volunteer Team go from strength to strength.

Dementia Advocacy

The past two years for the dementia advocacy project has proved to be roller coaster of emotions, both on a personal level for staff members of the project and for the project itself. In the first instance, the project had a new colleague join the project at the start of the Pandemic. Commencing at the start of the Pandemic resulted in not being able to be introduced to the project in the manner that would normally happen. We had to be inventive during this time using other methods to enable the new person to gain knowledge about the project. After two years' we can safely say the new member on the project has managed to become a valuable member of the dementia advocacy team.

At this time, the project was hearing about many clients sadly dying due to COVID; indeed during a period of eight days in the early part of the Pandemic we had ten clients who died. As the Manager was working from home therefore not able to receive appropriate support, it had a huge impact on her wellbeing resulting in her having to take time off from work. Taking time off enabled her to recharge her batteries along with giving her time to reflect on her sadness of the deaths of her clients.

The project in the initially stage of the Pandemic struggled to support clients especially those in care homes who were at an advanced stage of their dementia. We used various methods to support clients from Zoom calls to face times calls to simply telephone calls knowing all along that these methods were a poor second to face-to-face visits. Using virtual methods in care homes proved to be particularly difficult especially when the issue clients had related to the care homes

Meetings to facilitate the peer support group the project supports who had previously met physically were put on hold, resulting in Zoom meetings held weekly for members able to access Zoom.



Photograph showing guests invited to our Zoom meetings

Because of using Zoom, for the peer support group we were able to invite DEEP members from different areas highlighting issues members had were prevalent in the whole of UK. Members from BJJ were keen to ensure that those not able to zoom continued to feel part of the group. With that in mind, members wrote letters to those not attending Zoom meetings ensuring they sent photographs alongside regular telephone calls to members.

Moving forward meetings for the peer support group are back to normal and the group are presently working on a new and exciting Enquirers project funded by Innovations in Dementia.

The project is also looking forward to the possibility of working in partnership with other organisations keen to share knowledge and explore opportunities to expand the dementia advocacy project.

Referral rate for the Dementia advocacy project has risen month-by-month, referrers fully aware that we are carrying out face-to-face visits. We can safely say that the team involved in the Dementia advocacy project are looking to the future of the project with enthusiasm!

Betty Machin, Dementia Advocacy Manager

[Visit Dementia Advocacy on the BJJ Website](#) or visit our [Facebook Page](#)

Happy Anniversary!

Spring is in the horizon and we might see the end stage of the Covid-19 pandemic in the very near future. This should be an excellent start for our 50th anniversary celebrations.

We should celebrate not only our 50th anniversary, but that the Beth Johnson Foundation has demonstrated its ability to move quickly and easily in adjusting to the harsh restrictions imposed on us. This in itself is a good reason for celebrating.

Half a century is behind us, I have no doubt that together the next half will be even better. A fantastic programme of events has been organised and what is left now is to materialise it and most important to enjoy BJJ's success.

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY!

Professor Ziv Amir

Chair – Beth Johnson Foundation (On behalf of the Board)

Beth Johnson Foundation

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