



REPORT FOR WEST MERSEA ANNUAL TOWN MEETING 28TH APRIL 2022

I am Chairman of Mersea Community Support and for those of you who don't know, we are one of the newer charities on the island, registered in 2015. We are organised by 7 Trustees and at the present time we have 43 volunteers.

Our initial aim was to serve the elderly and vulnerable residents with lunch clubs and mobility equipment enabling them to stay in their own homes BUT the Charity Commissioners felt we were too restrictive and we had to agree a new statement of objectives which meant providing facilities to improve the condition of life of those residents who have need by reason of youth, age, infirmity or disablement, financial hardship or social and economic circumstances. This means we support all residents whether babies, school children, young parents, the retired, the elderly, the physically or mentally disabled, drug addicts, alcoholics, offenders, unemployed, in fact any resident!

So, what do we actually do?

Mobility Equipment This is a FREE service. We now have 150 items of equipment which we loan out including wheelchairs, walking frames, commodes, raised toilet seats, toilet frames, wheeled shoppers, walking sticks and crutches. Some items we have purchased but we regularly have items donated to us which we can use. We ask for a small deposit to ensure the item comes back but more often than not the deposit becomes a donation which enables us to replace some of the older pieces of equipment. On average we loan out 2 or 3 items a week.

Lunch Clubs We now run two a week, Tuesdays and Fridays. We have a different leader and team of volunteers for each of the two days and most of the volunteers hold recognised Level 2 Health & Hygiene certificates. Tuesdays consists of a two course lunch with tea or coffee, prepared and cooked in our Hall kitchen and Fridays is always Fish and Chips bought in from the Island Fish Bar accompanied by a dessert and tea or coffee. The charge at present is just £5 per meal. At the present time we have 25 residents attending each of the lunch clubs and several of those are transported to the Community Support Hall by the Lions Bus. We do have a couple of couples attending the Lunch Clubs but most of our diners live on their own and most of those attending for the first time don't know any of the other diners but within a few weeks they are chatting to each other like long lost friends. It can become quite noisy!

Coffee Craft Mornings These are held twice a month in the Hall allowing residents to come along for two hours to chat over a cup of coffee and bring their craft with them. We have 12 – 14 attending and the crafts include knitting, card making, weaving, decoupage, sewing and art. We make no profit, the charge is just a £1 for the coffee and biscuits.

Monthly Meeting with a Speaker This is an evening meeting which any resident can attend along with our volunteers to listen to various speakers. Subjects covered recently include Hospital Radio, Refresh Mersea, Acorn Village, Tai-Chi, Camp Jojo, Freedom Boat Adventures, Rotary and Age Concern. Again there is no profit made, £1 for volunteers and £2 for guests.

Saturday Coffee & Bric a Brac This is our main fundraiser. We are open every Saturday come rain or shine 10 – 12 and literally sell anything that has been donated to us including books, crockery, clothes, tools, toys, puzzles and even electrical items as we have our own PAT testing equipment. The sale is complemented by coffee, bacon rolls and cakes at extremely reasonable prices served in the Hall. The event is another opportunity for lonely residents to meet up and have a chat without any obligations. Many a friendship has been formed on a Saturday morning.

Financial Support Within the objectives of the Charity we are able to give out grants to organisations or individuals and since we started we have given out nearly £5,000 to various projects on the island including Proud of Mersea, the Scouts, Refresh Mersea, Camp Jojo, Freedom Boat Adventures, Lions Bus, New Age Kurling Kits for the MICA and Splash Jackets for the School Kayak Club.

Hall Hirings Our Community Hall is available for hire to all island organisations and individual residents. At the present time it is used by the Rainbows, a Bridge Club, three Art Groups, the Out of Tuners singing group and a Pilates group as well as several groups using it for their committee meetings.

We are participating in the upcoming Platinum Jubilee celebrations by offering FREE teas and cakes in our Hall on the afternoon of the High Street Party and we are spearheading yet another Community Open Day in October. I feel we are fulfilling our role on the Island to the best of our ability at the present time and are probably as full involved as we can be with the community.