

Carecent Newsletter – January 2024

Happy New Year all! Wishing you all the best of 2024.

This newsletter is easily my favourite as I get to update you all on what has been happening over the festive period and give an update on how our Christmas went!

Festive Period

We had a couple of lovely bits leading up the Christmas that we managed to get some of our customers involved in. One being the annual Christmas Tree Festival at York Minster – this year we asked our customers what Carecent means to them, and have used those words to fill our tree, along with all the other external agencies that we link up with and work alongside. Some customers gave us words about how they felt before accessing Carecent, showing how much a small breakfast community can make a difference.

One of our local PSCO's kindly offered to support us with this, and engraved all of the words onto wooden bits of cutlery 🍴🍴



Choir/Scratch Nativity

Many of you will be aware that we linked up with Deacon Judith Stoddart earlier last year to start a Choir. We are pleased to say it has absolutely flourished! There is a consistent group of customers who come every week, and have really took it in their stride. Vanessa who is our Choir leader even wrote a song around things that reminded our group of Christmas.

Over the festive period the Choir joined the Carol Service and Scratch Nativity at Central Methodist Church led by Deacon Judith. As you can imagine, anything to do with Carecent does not go as traditional or simple as people would expect - we had a male playing the role of Mary with possibly the deepest voice, a female playing the role of Joseph and a grumpy donkey that was also the Star at the same time!

I genuinely think it was the best Carol Service that there is (not that I am bias!!). It was great to see some of you there showing your support, but also joining in. Hopefully it will be an annual service for us as our Choir group enjoyed themselves!

Christmas Day

Christmas Day went over smoothly, with no blips or issues.

We welcomed around 55 guests, all who enjoyed a 3-course meal (most being donated by multiple people and groups!) with plenty of extra chocolate and sweet treats. I can honestly say we had 2 hours of laughter, joy and plenty of food.

Thanks to the generous donations after our Christmas Appeal, we were able to send everyone away with a £5 Greggs voucher, a toiletry gift set, a hot water bottle, fluffy socks and a chocolate orange.



The days following Christmas, we had people coming up to us saying how much of a great day they had, and that everyone was still 'buzzing' from how nice it was. Christmas time can be hard for many, but what showed was that Carecent are able to offer a little bit of sanctuary to those that need it, both for our customers and our volunteers.

Day-to Day Update

Things have been consistently busy for the last 3 months or so, a lot of older faces coming back to Carecent, as well as many new to us. There seems to be a lot of support needs appearing for those who access Carecent, whether it be those that are in properties needing support to fill in or understand forms and letters, or new customers needing signposted to all other external agencies.

We have linked in with CYC's Rough Sleeper Housing Navigators and offer a drop-in session at Carecent on a Monday, Tuesday and Friday morning during our breakfast service; meaning that those needing housing advice can immediately access it within the same place as they are getting a hot breakfast, shower, clean clothing and anything else we have to offer on that day.

This seems to be working well as it has also meant that services are picking up new rough sleepers, sometimes before they have even been found on the streets.

We also have regular drop in's with the following agencies:

- Hep C Testing and Treatment
- Sexual Health Clinic
- Gambling Addicitions
- Podiatrist
- Hairdressers
- Police/PCSO's

Walking Group

Our Walking Group is going well – this is on the *3rd Tuesday of every month.*

Our latest walk we decided to do something a bit special, since it was Christmas. We rented a minibus and went to Whitby, there's nothing better than the seaside in Winter! We even had a fish and chip lunch generously paid for by a lovely couple who had heard about our Walking Group.

Our other walks have been within York and just as enjoyable! We walked the City Walls and enjoyed some soup and Blue Bird Bakery bread afterwards.



Drama Group

We partnered up with an organisation called Night Light ([Home | Night Light Theatre \(night-light-theatre.co.uk\)](http://Home | Night Light Theatre (night-light-theatre.co.uk))) who plan and deliver Arts & Drama session within the Community, focusing on a trauma informed approach.

We ran a 10-week workshop which aimed to encourage participation, increase confidence, self-esteem, improve interpersonal skills. The same group of 10 individuals came to every session, and slowly became more confident with each other, and the end result was amazing.

At the end of the 10 weeks, the group were able to put on a performance to a closed audience. The difference in confidence and self-esteem from when the group first formed is honestly astounding. In the beginning everyone was a bit withdrawn, talking quietly, not wanting to put themselves 'out there'. At the end performance everyone had an excited energy around them and were passionate about their performances.

We are currently in discussions with the group at Night Light to see what other projects we could do with them! Watch this space.

Next Steps

In previous newsletters I have mentioned that we were looking at starting up a bike project, this is still underway, we have just hit a few hurdles on the way. We also have a couple of other projects and sessions planned, from mental health sessions to art classes and exhibitions, so watch this space.

We have also recently made some changes to our Executive Committee, which is exciting and will hopefully be a pushing force to making changes, developments and planning for the future.

Current needs

We had multiple deliveries over Harvest Festival from schools, churches and individuals, as well as monetary donations— our cupboards are now fully stocked and we have surplus of some items. We are still getting emails about our current needs, which are below:

- Tinned spam/corned beef
- Tins of hot dogs
- Sugar
- Jars of coffee



Lastly, I just want to say a huge thank you to everyone who has supported us throughout 2023. To all of our volunteers, those who regularly donate, those who have given one of donations, or those who simply spread the word about the work that Carecent does.