



# New Year/Winter Newsletter



## Stepping into the New Year

With the festive period over for another year, the New Year also brings its challenges for individuals and charities alike. Whilst the news is full of worrying things like the cost of living crisis, at Communities Together East Anglia, we do our best to focus on solutions and support to help those most at need. The impact of loneliness and social isolation can be vast, and sadly can affect each and every one of us.

Recently I had a major operation, and this has given me time to reflect – both on how lucky I am to have such a strong support network around me to ensure that I can do what I need to do, get to where I need to get to, and be given the luxury of time to recover well. However, I am mindful that for many this is not the case and that being on your own when dealing with health challenges can be extremely isolating. It's a reminder to me, and all of our incredible team, of why what we do is so important, and why we need to be here to offer that friendly voice, listening ear or font of knowledge to people when they most need it – loneliness and isolation doesn't discriminate – it's not fussy and it can hit when we least expect it so please please please, if this resonates with you, and you need to hear that voice at the end of the phone, call us...we're here for you 365 days a year.

For the year ahead – we will be doing more of the same and looking to encourage, enable and support within communities to bring people together, over the phone, face to face and digitally to build stronger support networks and friendships.

Finally a huge thanks, to our team of staff and volunteers who all give their time over and above what is expected – thank you. If you think this could be you, and you can give an hour or more of your time on a regular basis to help us reduce loneliness and social isolation, then don't hesitate to get in touch. All the numbers you need are in this newsletter.

Wishing you a healthy and safe 2024!



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## Cost of Living Support

Mid Suffolk Council are offering support and guidance with the cost of living crisis.

There are many organisations offering help with money, support for families, looking after yourself and others and support with food.

For more information visit:

[www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/web/mid-suffolk/cost-of-living](http://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/web/mid-suffolk/cost-of-living)

## Keeping Homes Warm

Warm Homes Suffolk can help residents who are struggling to heat their homes in this winter period. Free home surveys could help you access:

**-Loft and wall insulation**

**-Winter warmth packs including free draught proofing and low energy bulbs**

**-Temporary loan of heaters if yours breaks down**

If your total household income is less than £31,000, your home has a low energy rating and you are not connected to mains gas you may also be able to apply for:

**-Solar panels and renewable heating including heat pumps**



Visit [www.warmhomessuffolk.org](http://www.warmhomessuffolk.org) or call on 0345 6037686

## Flu and COVID-19 Vaccine

If you are over the age of 65, have certain health conditions, or are a family carer you should be able to get the vaccines. If you are eligible for the NHS flu vaccine you can contact your local GP surgery to book an appointment, find a pharmacy that offers the vaccine or book online.

**If you are over 65 or in high risk group you should seek medical advice as soon as you feel unwell.**

## Staying safe in the colder months

### Keep your home warm

- try to heat rooms you spend a lot of time in, such as the living room or bedroom, to at least 18°C
- try to reduce draughts; you can fit draft excluders around doors cheaply
- keep your bedroom windows closed at night
- wear several layers of thinner clothing; this could keep you warmer than one thicker layer

### Look after yourself and others

- try not to sit still for more than an hour or so
- if you find it difficult to move about, stretching your arms and legs can also help keep you warm
- if you have visitors, it can help stop the spread of germs to ventilate the room for a few minutes before and after they arrive; you might be more comfortable leaving the window open during their visit, if it's not too cold
- keep in touch with loved ones and ask whether they are feeling unwell, or whether they need any practical help

### Seek financial support

#### Prepare your home

- regular servicing of your heating appliances can keep them working efficiently and for longer, saving you money
- insulation for water pipes to prevent them from freezing in cold weather
- loft insulation
- internal, cavity or external wall insulation
- double (or triple) window glazing



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## Winterwise Guide from the Connect Team

When the Winter Season is here it can be nice to get out our warm jumpers & coats, stay indoors more, watch TV when it's dark but we must remember that Winter can be a difficult time for many. The cold weather, shorter days & longer nights can cause us to have worries about our health, the cost of our energy bills, feeling more lonely/isolated and generally feeling out of sorts. Here at the Community Connect Service we want people to know that we are here to talk to anyone who has worries and concerns. There is a friendly voice at the end of the telephone 7 days a week, 365 days of the year between the times of 10.00am and 2.00pm.

We also have a supply of "Winterwise" guides that may help people to keep well this winter which is produced by Independent Age and can be sent to you.

### Below we have compiled a list of helpful telephone numbers: -

- **Customer First - Suffolk Social Care Services** 0808 800 4005 (free from landlines & most mobiles)
- **Samaritans** - 24 hours 116 123 (free calls)
- **Silverline** - for Older People 24 hours 0800 470 8090
- **Emergency Services** - 999
- **Non Emergency Services** - Police 101 NHS 111
- **UK Power Network** - to report electrical power cuts 0800 316 3105
- **National Gas Emergency Service** - to report gas leaks 0800 111 999
- **Emergency Water Supply** - to report no water supply  
03457 820999 - Essex & Suffolk Water  
03457 145145 - Anglian Water

We hope you are able to stay warm, healthy, and safe this Winter but if you have a query or problem, whatever it may be, why not give us a call on our Connect Line - **01284 334516**.  
Amanda, Aimee and Tracy are here to help.

## When the birds were your only company...

Bernie was a new volunteer with CTEA in the spring of this year. Audrey is an 83 year old lady who lives alone. They were put together as a match by our Befriending Coordinator, Jayne in May 2023.

Prior to Bernie meeting Audrey for the first time, Audrey had the support of our lovely girls in the Connect Team, however, other than her monthly call from them, she was very much on her own and housebound because she has COPD and needs constant oxygen.

When Jayne first went to visit Audrey in her home, she said she was very lonely, especially as one of her neighbours who visited weekly, had recently died, however she was so very cheerful and optimistic and couldn't thank Jayne enough for trying to find her a face-2-face volunteer befriender who could pop over on a weekly basis.

She explained that she often just has the birds in her garden for company and was worried about the winter months coming when it gets dark early, and her days are shortened.

Then along comes Bernie, an ex-nurse, perfect for Audrey and then the magic happened.

Bernie says:

"I am loving my visits to Audrey every week- we always have plenty to chat about!

Today we went for a wander around Eye as I took her out in her wheelchair.

She hasn't left the house since December last year. We sat outside the cafe and had a cup of tea then we browsed inside the co-op on the way back and spotted a few of the benches on the Eye Trail. Love my Audrey visits!"



**If you have a problem or query, whatever it may be, why not give us a call on our support line - 01284 334516 to see if we can help.**



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## Watch this space...

As we head into the New Year CTEA is excited to announce that we will be hosting a Golf Day at Stowmarket Golf Club in Summer 2024. Teams of 4 will be making their way around 18 holes with course games and competitions with food included. Start getting your friends and colleagues together and get practicing! More information will be available regarding the Golf Day in the upcoming months.



## New Year Word Search

F	E	T	A	R	B	E	L	E	C	I	X
U	I	H	J	K	I	N	G	D	A	H	C
H	F	R	I	E	N	D	S	A	M	A	L
O	A	H	E	W	V	Y	T	R	A	P	I
L	M	N	E	W	S	T	A	R	T	P	M
I	I	S	L	A	O	G	N	I	N	Y	B
D	S	P	A	I	N	R	I	N	G	N	I
A	G	L	O	N	L	M	K	G	J	G	N
Y	J	F	A	M	I	L	Y	S	I	N	G

- FIREWORKS
- CELEBRATE
- HOLIDAY
- HAPPY
- GOALS
- FAMILY
- NEWSTART
- PARTY
- FRIENDS

## Quiz Night

Plans are in motion for a charity quiz night in Spring 2024. Get your quiz hats on, get a team together and be ready for a great evening of quizzing and raffle prizes. Follow our socials for more information and to keep up to date for upcoming events.



**Did you know you can support Communities Together East Anglia by your favourite brands donating to us when you make a purchase?**

Simply open your web browser and access the easyfundraising website. Click on 'Sign Up' and search 'Communities Together East Anglia' when you search for your chosen cause. You can also download the easyfundraising App from the app store on your phone.



Scan the QR Code to access the cause page

## Winter Anagram's

CFERIAPLE

DHYALOI

TKECJA

GNBNIGNIE

ZIDAZLRB

RODLEC STERUTMEREAA

Our next Newsletter will be our Spring edition in March.



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