

Sevenoaks District - Community Grant Scheme 2020/21

Appendix A

This Appendix sets out some example case studies and quotations from beneficiaries of the Community Grant Scheme 2020/21.

Telephone Befriending - North West Kent Volunteer Centre

Mr B aged 78 contacted us in May 2020. We were in lockdown and client had been told to shield. His sister who lives in Dartford was unable to visit as she was also shielding but was hard of hearing. Mr B had no other family, and he was finding it more difficult with lockdown and especially as phone calls with his sister were becoming more difficult due to her hearing problems.

Mr B asked if there was someone who could visit him, due to lockdown it was explained that we could not provide this service but would happily place a telephone befriender with Mr B. We arranged a local volunteer in the view of progressing to a face to face if lockdown ended. Initially it was reported that Mr B was quite tearful at the beginning of the calls, informing the volunteer that he would still enjoy a drive out to his friend's house or a game of boules on a Saturday or Sunday, he enjoyed his garden and would happily go for walks locally when the weather was good. However, he informed his befriender that even his garden was not bringing him enjoyment anymore. These conversations became worrying for the volunteer.

We at the office sent the volunteer some information about gardening, he was wanting to find a common conversation point with Mr B and started to also have an interest. They began discussing the volunteers garden and Mr B started to give tips about when to prune and the volunteer sent some photos of some greenfly and Mr B took great delight in giving tips on how to treat the fly. Mr B even sent some information about how to stop the frost on the volunteer's plants during the winter. Mr B's mood had changed from the initial calls and there is now a common enjoyment between the volunteer and Mr B. Once again Mr B was able to enjoy his garden, discussing with the volunteer about plants and flowers and which are easier to manage.

Our volunteer says, "I never thought I would get as much out of volunteering as I have and look forward to the secret tips from Mr B. I never thought I would be pleased to inform Mr B when he finally got rid of the greenfly."

Online Exercising - Age UK Sevenoaks & Tonbridge

As in-person Pop Ups were unable to take place during Covid 19, the Health and Wellbeing Co-ordinator started running weekly online Zoom classes for older people with access to a tablet, phone or computer. The classes were open to all older people who needed help with strength, balance and mobility as result of not being able to be as active as usual and who also wanted some social interaction with others.

Mrs A and Mrs B attended one of the first Zoom meetings. They are sisters but due to the fact they are vulnerable and have restricted mobility, they had not seen each other for 6 months. This was compounded by the fact that Mrs B has been very unwell.

Only Mrs A had had access to a computer but the Health and Wellbeing Co-ordinator managed to contact Mrs B's daughter who brought her laptop to her mother's house and joined in the Zoom class with her mother. Seeing Mrs A and Mrs B smiling was priceless and watching them interact and socialise, albeit virtually, was very rewarding.

The outcomes for these two ladies is that their mental and physical well-being was improved greatly by the fact that the class facilitated their reunion. In addition the class promoted the mental and physical well-being of the other participants as they were able to interact socially and benefit from the physical exercises in the session.

Testimonial from one of the sister's daughters:

"Great class this morning thanks. Mum is really enjoying your classes every Tuesday and does her best to do all the exercises. She has recently been diagnosed with mixed dementia but your class remains one of the highlights of her week - if not THE high point! We are just going to take a day at a time and help her to retain her independence for as long as possible. Just thought it might be useful for you to know."

Counselling Support - Sevenoaks Counselling

E is 17 years old and made contact for counselling because of loss of confidence and very low self-esteem. She has a younger brother who has special needs and was at home from his residential school. She was normally very able, hardworking and quiet in school. We used video calls and she attended five sessions. The counselling focused on her family life at home, the difficult changes that she was coping with, and her self-esteem. We also looked at her contact with friends and how she could maintain this. In the final session we created a chart with all her strengths and abilities. She visibly relaxed as she took this to heart and began looking forward to university entrance in due course.

Mediation Services - West Kent Mediation

This case was referred to us by a housing association and was causing so much anti social behaviour that one tenant was at risk of losing her tenancy.

The two parties concerned live in a block of flats above and below one another, and Miss S has reported on many occasions excessive noise. Both parties have mental health problems and have stated that this dispute was affecting their mental health.

The mediators telephoned both parties to introduce our service and look at a way forward. Miss B stated that she would prefer telephone mediation as she would feel uncomfortable on a zoom call with her neighbour. After several calls we had some issues to work with and both party offering small gestures and acknowledging

a willingness to resolve. They also both agreed the small gestures will reduce the amount of stress they were under. We left them for two weeks for them to work on the gestures and look at other ways of moving forward.

After two weeks we contacted both party's they had agreed a plan to move forward, it was agreed that noise levels will be kept to a minimum between 10pm and 8am. This was emailed to both parties and both agreed.

Music Group - The Lewis Project

“Thanks to this project young people get the same opportunity to increase their confidence, make great friends and participate in music making some very talented musicians. All of these are important aspects of positive mental health.”

Parent Support - Fegans

“This whole situation of Covid 19 has been really stressful for families like us as the routines changed everything becomes a struggle but I looked forward to a couple of hours to myself and being able to talk about the challenges I faced.”

“The advice around family rules has made a huge difference. Your worker understood that our clever children would take advantage of any loopholes and explained how to involve the girls in planning the rules. Now the girls are more accepting of a consequence and when frustrated, exhausted and at our wits' end, we no longer feel the need to go way over the top and 'cancel Christmas' to feel in control.”

Support Services for residents experiencing domestic violence - DAVSS

Margaret said “Thank you! You lot were great! I don't usually reach out for help and you guys laid it on a plate. Your organisation gave the impression that you really cared. Thank you for all that you do.”

Youth Club - Eden CT

During the restrictions we were able to do some socially distance walks in bubbles. One of our young people (X) planned a walk around the outskirts of Edenbridge. The process involved her looking at a local map and with guidance learnt how to orientate a map using a compass. She then plotted the route she wanted to take the group on learning the different map symbols with regards to footpaths etc. On the day of the walk she led 12 other young people and 4 leaders around the route she had plotted. It was a warm and sunny afternoon and all of the young people had lots of fun just being able to get out and safely socialise with friends, it was also a great opportunity to get some good exercise in, the walk itself lasted just over an hour. X learnt some new skills in map reading and leadership.