

NEWSLETTER

APRIL-JUNE 2021



Welcome

Welcome to our first quarterly Better Together Newsletter. We have prepared for you an overview of only a few of the events and initiatives we organised and took part in to help reduce loneliness and social isolation in Norwich, Broadland, Great Yarmouth and South Norfolk areas. Happy reading!

To learn more about how we are able to support clients, visit our [website](#).

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Connecting Communities Through Art

The Art for All project ran a weekly Zoom group throughout the last year, bringing people together from across Norfolk with a shared interest in art. Those attending were of all ages and abilities and from all walks of life.

During one of their meetings, the group joined forces with Befriending Arts, an art group from the Isles of Lewis and Harris in the Hebrides, a very remote community, where some residents live very isolated lives. The meeting came about as a result of an art postcard exchange project that both groups were involved in when it was decided that it would be fun for our Zoom art groups to meet up and exchange art with each other. In addition to exchanging a rich diversity of creative ideas, it allowed an exchange of community, culture, and dialect.

We learnt how the Lewis and Harris group supported one member of their community who had become housebound through ill health, and how other members of the group collect items while on their walks, and delivered them to her doorstep. This not only kept her in contact with her community but also gave her something to look forward to when materials arrived for her to get creative with.

Overall, the meeting expanded everyone's social interaction proved fertile ground for creative ideas for working together in the future. We have some very exciting projects planned for collaborative working over the next few months.

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The 'Art for All' Zoom group has proved to be a safe place to enjoy and explore art without feeling any pressure. It has opened doors for me that I felt were just ajar.



Post a Smile

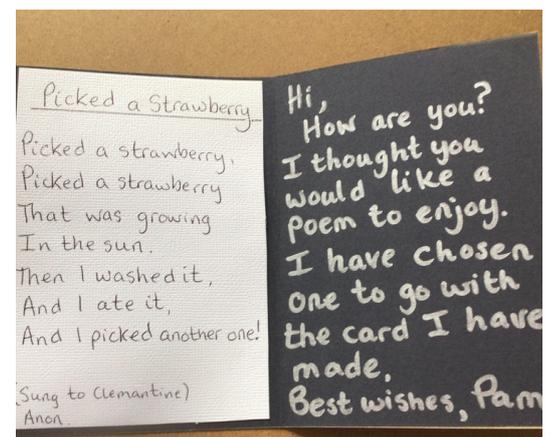
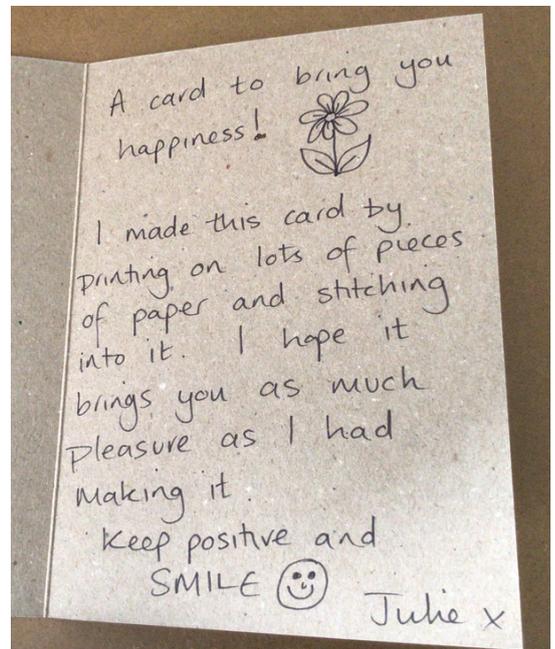
Post a Smile is a project that has been running throughout the pandemic, and is continuing to support people living in residential care. Volunteers wrote letters and created cards, with images or poetry, which were posted to residents in local care homes.

Residents benefited from hearing about all the positive things happening in their local community, helping them to feel connected; this was particularly important as they were unable to meet friends and relatives during this time. It also gave residents the opportunity to discuss the content of their letters with others, creating a shared experience and topics to stimulate conversation.

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Mary enjoys receiving her letters, and gets quite excited when they arrive. The pleasure your letters bring is immeasurable.

Residential Home Manager



Forum Event: What makes you feel proud of where you live

Two of the Better Together Life Connectors, Katie and Will, spent a lovely sunny morning chatting to members of the public at the Forum, Norwich, to find out from potential service users about what they would like to see more of in their community. Events like this give us the opportunity to learn from the people we talk to, and help us to create groups and offer the support they need to support their valuable ideas.

Loneliness Awareness Week

Better Together ran a co-ordinated social media campaign in partnership with CanConnect and Lily, and supporting the national campaign ran by The Marmalade Trust. #letstalkloneliness. We also distributed packs of sunflower seeds, which were prepared by volunteers and shared out in the community to promote the theme 'Growing hope for the future'. Children and adults alike have been growing the seeds and were encouraged to share sunflower plants with anyone who lives alone, or people they were aware of in their community who were going through a difficult time.

Alongside all of our projects, we have been working collaboratively with the **Jo Cox Foundation** to share ideas and resources with community projects throughout the UK. This is an ever-growing movement with the aim of building better and stronger communities and reducing social isolation for people of all ages and backgrounds.

LONELINESS AWARENESS WEEK 2021

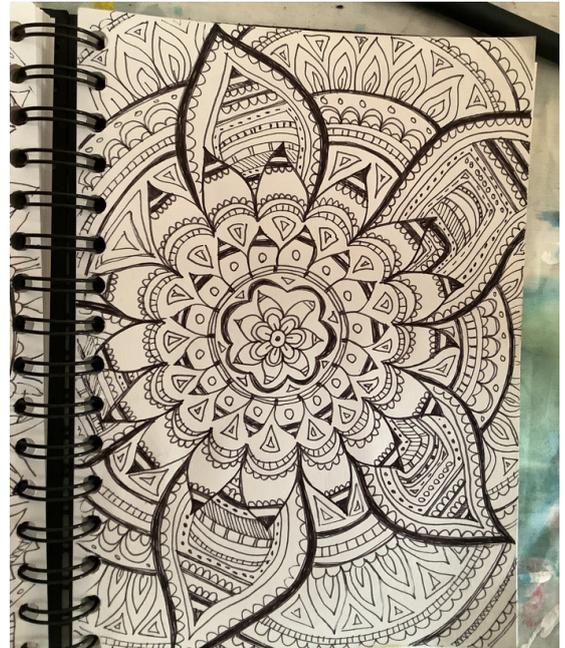
We all get lonely.

Let's overcome loneliness together.



Mental Health Awareness Week

During MHA week, daily inspirational messages on the BTN Facebook page, suggesting ways to maintain morale during these challenging times. Examples of some of the ideas included walking out in nature, taking note of surroundings or the birds that can be seen and heard, or taking time out for a lunchtime chat with a work colleague. We also ran a wellbeing art workshop and explored how people could use art to support their wellbeing.



The Better Together Show

Our Life Connector Will Dowe presents a monthly radio show on Future Radio which features a mix of great music and guest speakers, who discuss issues surrounding loneliness and social isolation and choose songs that have special significance for them. It is also an opportunity to highlight events and activities that are happening in their local community and to encourage people to get involved.

The purpose of the show is to provide a positive, confidence-boosting experience to listeners who are experiencing loneliness and to highlight the support that is available. The show is broadcast at 6pm on the first Saturday of each month and also available online, so can be accessed at any time and for people not in the Future Radio broadcast area.

You can catch up on previous shows at: <http://futeradio.co.uk/listen-again>



Future Radio is one of the partners of the Better Together service, and as well as providing the opportunity to broadcast the Better Together Radio Show, it will also be offering volunteering opportunities to contribute to the radio station. Find out more about our partners on the [Better Together website](#)

Online Cooking Show

We have been running weekly online cooking shows with top chef, Nigel Ramsbottom from Delia's Restaurant and Bar who shows viewers how to cook affordable, nutritious and tasty meals using everyday affordable ingredients and store-cupboard essentials.

Nigel cooks a different dish every week with a full costed ingredients list provided in advance, so people can see what they need to buy and how much the ingredients are likely to cost from budget supermarkets, such as Aldi, Lidl and Asda. The cookery shows are incredibly popular not only for their great cooking tips and menu ideas, but also as a regular, welcoming and friendly activity for people who share a love of food.



Find us at our future events

If you'd like to talk to us, we'd be very happy to see you at one of our events this Summer! Here's just a glimpse of what we're planning in the next few months::

- Holding Hands Art Project (August)
- Art exhibition displaying the art created by the 'Art for All' Zoom group during lockdown (August)
- Norwich Together Alliance visit to the UEA during fresher's week (September)

Other ways that you can find out more about what BTN has to offer include:

- Follow Better Together Norfolk on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#)
- Phone: 0300 303 3920

If you would like to be part of this great movement, we are always looking for volunteers to support us with our community projects.