Stay Well, Stay Safe, Stay Connected

Community Connect on Tour

MAVIS the Bus

On 24th February the Community Connect team took to the streets of Weston-super-Mare in MAVIS (Multi Agency Vehicle In Service), a striking purple bus with special advice areas on board.

Our service is all about engaging with older citizens and we do this through free home visits, but also by providing a real presence in the Community so that older people are aware of the services on offer.

On the day, the team was extremely busy, giving out advice on issues like social groups and activities, learning opportunities, keeping fit and active, carer support, money matters, volunteering opportunities and feeling lonely and socially isolated.

Look our for Mavis in the future, as Community Connect intends taking her out again to both rural and urban areas across North Somerset.

If you want to speak to somebody on the telephone, or to arrange a home visit, call 01934 888 803 or email communityconnect@curo-group.co.uk

North Somerset senior citizens invited to free event where the message is ‘Life Starts at 50!’

On Wednesday 6 April, older people from across North Somerset are invited to take part in a special event looking at the challenges and opportunities they face in their communities.

Taking place at Portishead’s Somerset Hall, the ‘Life Starts at 50’ event is being run by Senior Community Links (SCL), a network of people aged 50 and over who work together to bring about positive changes for older people across North Somerset.

Jack Bailey, Service Manager for housing and support organisation Curo, said: “It’s a great pleasure to support the Senior Community Links. This day promises to be a fascinating and useful day for anyone 50 or over who lives in North Somerset. SCL members have identified key areas where they have concerns and we’ve used this information to find guest speakers. Over the day speakers will consider the implications of digitalisation for older people, the future of health and care in the county and a range of other issues facing people living in our rural areas.

“Participants will be able to chat to organisations like Curo, Community Connect, Age UK, Healthwatch and Carers Trust Phoenix about the services they offer. We’re also holding a question time session for participants to quiz our panel of experts.”

The event is free to anyone aged 50+ living in North Somerset and includes a free buffet lunch.

Anyone interested in booking a place should contact Community Connect by 25 March on 0300 123 2463 or SCL@curo-group.co.uk or visit www.curo-group.co.uk/communityconnect.

If you would like this Newsletter in a different format please get in touch
Coffee and Company

Many of Community Connect’s customers live in rural communities. As villages change with families working longer hours the opportunities for day to day contact reduces and there is potential for older residents to become more isolated and lonely.

In Redhill the Reverend Andrew Hemmings, with Village Agents, Tina Huckle-Mills and Lyndsay Newman have set up a coffee and company group monthly on Wednesdays between 10.30AM and 12.30PM. There is home made cake, lashings of hot tea and coffee and a lot of great conversation happening at the back of Christ Church in Redhill.

The local community are keen to expand the group and offer a warm welcome to any residents of Redhill or the surrounding area. For more information contact Tina or Andrew on: tina.huckle-mills@curo-group.co.uk (07967 345922) or andrewhemming@btinternet.com (07584 124198)

Scam Awareness

Community Connect are working closely with North Somerset Council Trading Standards team to raise awareness of scams that are happening in our communities. Our team of Wellbeing Workers and Village Agents have been trained to help spot potential scams, but also to offer support to people where they have been a victim of this sort of crime.

This sort of thing can happen to anybody and when people feel taken in it can lead to a loss of confidence and feelings of loneliness and isolation. We want to work with people to help them spot potential scams, to keep them safe and secure in their home, and to rebuild confidence if they feel they have been ‘scammed.’

If you feel that you have been a victim of a scam or think that someone is trying to scam you now please call Trading Standards on 03454 040506. If you want general advice about your wellbeing, isolation or loneliness as a consequence of a scam please contact Community Connect on 01275 888803.

Loss and Bereavement Support Group

The ‘Loss But Not Forgotten’ group offers peer support to people who have experienced a significant loss in their lives. Six months ago Community Connect helped members of the community to create the group which now meets every other Friday (from 12.30 to 2.30pm) at the Carlton Centre in Carlton Street, Weston-super-Mare.

A member of LBNF said ‘We all experience bereavement at some point in our lives and we all live it in different ways. Here you will find people who understand this and will listen and support you without judging. We are not counsellors, just people like you. We can’t provide specialist support, but we can give you a listening ear and a smile, whatever the stage of your bereavement’. Upcoming dates for the group are: 1st and 15th April

For more information contact Community Connect on 01934 888 803.
IN YOUR COMMUNITY

‘Man v Fat’ & Walking Football at Weston-super-Mare Football Club

Community Connect are working with Weston-super-Mare Football Club and ‘Seagulls in the Community’ to promote Men’s health awareness for over 50 year olds in North Somerset.

We know that isolation and loneliness can be a problem for men and women, but men can also have problems talking about their health.

The ‘Man v Fat’ programme is about bringing men together to support them to lose weight, to think about the food they eat and how they can live healthier. Men can meet to talk confidentially in an informal friendly place about the barriers they might have to living healthy. However this support group also gives men access to walking football, a lower impact, fun alternative to regular football.

Did you play sport when you were younger? Do you still have a passion for football?

This is an ideal chance to meet other men with a similar interests and keep fit and active at the same time.

If you are interested ring Geoff Stevens on 07970 168 178 or email community.manager@wsmafc.co.uk

Jack Bailey, Service Manager for Community Connect said: ‘I was unsure about meeting other men and talking about my weight. It is something I just wouldn’t normally do. However Geoff has set up a really friendly group and I felt relaxed very quickly. I hadn’t played football for over 20 years but still have a real passion for the game. I really enjoy my walking football. It gets me out of breath, can be played at a pace I want, and gets me to meet some great guys.’

On Tuesday lunchtimes 3 students from Backwell School have been offering basic IT technical advice and support to older residents in their community. Alex, Thomas and David have a passion for technology and have been eager to share their knowledge with those who have not had the opportunity to engage with the digital world.

5 local residents have benefitted from this workshop that brings older and younger people together. The Backwell Grill has kindly supported the workshops by giving their space free of charge in return for customers buying refreshments while receiving their tuition. This initiative was the idea of the young people, and has been supported by local business, showing how communities can come together to help each other.

OVER 50? LOOKING FOR SOMETHING TO KEEP YOU ACTIVE?
GET IN TOUCH WITH COMMUNITY CONNECT ON 01275 888 803
So, what is a Village Agent and what do Village Agents actually do? Well there is a little clue in the name ‘Village’ in that a Village Agent will cover villages in rural areas linking people with advice and support services to enable independent living. We understand rural living and normally come from a rural background ourselves with a wealth of knowledge and expertise that has been gained from this. We understand that the needs and wishes of people living in these areas may be different to those in urban communities. Our aim is to listen and work with those who need our help to achieve these wishes, enabling them to continue with their unique way of rural life.

Out travelling the rural roads and coastal paths our days can consist of issues and problem solving from diverse topics, such as, heating, internet and farming issues to providing important opportunities for reducing isolation, such as setting up groups and coffee mornings. These activities encourage important social opportunities that may be far and few between due to rural infrastructure and the lack of transport issues often encountered. They bring people that have known one another most of their lives, back together again thus keeping these communities connected. Once trust has been established within these communities, you will often find that people come back to the Village Agent time and time again stating they feel secure in the knowledge that there is someone there to help who understands specific rural needs and issues.

There are 5 Village Agents specifically designated to North Somerset’s diverse rural areas, bringing their local knowledge and expertise to the coastal and inland villages. This ensures that all people over the age of 50 are able to receive free help and advice should the need arise, no matter where they live.

The Village Agent service is provided by the West of England Rural Network (WERN) as part of Community Connect in partnership with Curo and funded by North Somerset Council.