

Community Centre Week 2017

Success Story

The Newtown Centre, Nuneaton

The Newtown Centre was built in the 1960s by Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council, and the over 40 years the Centre provided some vital community services, especially around older people services, it was the WRVS 'meals on wheels' hub, and local Hindu community day services began here.

Usage of the Centre decreased, with the most regular user groups a private dance school and the Nuneaton Nepalese community, but it also became the base for a couple of office users, the Dare 2 Dream Foundation and Nuneaton Women's Resource Centre.

After years in a decrepit office premises on the outskirts of Nuneaton town centre, Warwickshire CAVA suggested taking over the Newtown as a community asset, to bring it up to more modern standards, increase the range of diversity of usage and to bring services to priority community groups into an accessible town centre facility. We took over in November 2016, and after some modifications the local team moved in in January 2017.

In the seven months Warwickshire CAVA have been in the building we have addressed health and safety procedures, streamlined booking and invoicing processes, addressed concerns and issues from the user groups and undertaken second phase of building to create a new reception office and an already well used new meeting room.

Change has been difficult for some groups, but most have embraced the changes and understand the positive impact we are trying to make for users and the wider community in the Borough. We have increased the number of regular user groups to 23, with up to 450 people, aged from 2-92 years using the Centre every week. Income has increased, but inevitably so have the costs; however we are really positive about the future, and we have plans to continue with the Centre's facelift – with the backing of our users.

We get to hear some great stories from our user groups about their successes. For example the Chater Dance Academy, who use the Centre 5 days a week, this year became gold medal winning Champions at the Dance World Cup in Germany. They also had their 40th Anniversary show last month, so all at the Newtown are very proud to support this great community troop.





We were also so pleased to hear about the fantastic fund raising achievements of volunteers at the Stroke Club. They recently raised £900 by walking a marathon to support the costs of transport for their members.

We are happily supporting the Nuneaton Women's Resource Centre this year to re-start their successful Computer lessons; especially aimed at beginners, these basic sessions will be offered free of charge for residents to gain confidence and experience. The lessons will be run in partnership and promoted along with the Health Living Network's People's Pantry sessions that happen every Wednesday. People coming along can get a freshly cooked meal at low cost, and access the honesty shop.

