



the care forum

## Case Study – Greater Fishponds Community Champions:

**Begbrook Retirement club, May 2018.**

### How would you describe the project/activity/event that you have been a part of?

The Begbrook Retirement club has been running fortnightly for about 5 years and has 42 members. There is a very varied mix of activities, entertainment and celebrations planned to appeal to all tastes. Every member gets a birthday present, and there is an Easter and Christmas celebration where members also receive a gift.



Members constantly ask for the group to happen weekly, as for many, this is the only opportunity they have for getting out. So as a committee we asked them what else they would like to do at the club. The ideas which came back were singing and arm chair exercise.

With the help of the Greater Fishponds Project worker we found out about the kick start funding and applied for the equipment and an instructor for arm chair Pilates and were successful.

22 of the members now take part in the Pilates and we have had several new members join as a result of this new activity.

### How did you find out about the project and why did you get involved?



Many of the members are over 80 and are very isolated before they find the group. Initially to start the group a leaflet was produced and delivered to the local neighbourhood. Now we have a mix of members, some coming through referrals from other services such as Ways 2 Wellbeing and word of mouth (quite often via a conversation at the bus stop!).



Members pay a fee of £2 per session which covers everything, including transport, which is vital as the majority of the members would not be able to attend without it.

Due to the transport when the arm chair exercise started, we simply changed the time of pick up to be an hour earlier and said if people did not want to take part that was fine but we could not afford transport twice so

they could just watch. However, while some were anxious at the start as the weeks are going on they all join in and have a fabulous time.

### **What has changed for you as a result of this project?**

I think the club itself has a really positive impact on its members. However having the additional physical activity has seen a real change in members. They are having fun and doing things they would not have thought they were able to. The instructor is really good at making us laugh and getting us to gently push ourselves. At the start a lot of remain seated during the session, but now they are getting up and moving around.

### **What is life like for you now? How do you feel?**

One lady who has newly joined the club was referred through Ways 2 Wellbeing is Irene (87). Her husband died 7months ago, she lives in a care home in Fishponds on the top floor. Being in a wheel chair meant she did not see anyone or go anywhere and became completely isolated and cut off from people.

She has transport to collect her and drop her back so came along to the Pilates. At the start as she only has one leg she was reluctant to join in but now she is laughing and making a joke about how she can lift her leg higher than anyone else. She has also asked if she can be moved so she can sit in the middle of more people and talk to more people.

We were told she had early stages of Alzheimer's when she first joined. But during the sessions and chatting with other members there is no sign of it.



## **What do you plan to do next?**

Some of the members are now talking about going on short walks and doing walking tours, which would never have happened before. We are thinking we might do that alternate weeks so people have something to come along to every week.

## **Have you seen any changes in your community as a result of being involved in this activity?**

There was nothing in the area for older people before we started. I had recently moved to the area and did not know anyone. But now I almost struggle to find time for myself as I have so many friends I'm always doing something. I'm amazed at how many of the members also now have each other's phone numbers and will call each other during the week for a chat.

## **Do you have anything else to add?**

Having transport is essential to the success of the club and Accessible Transport are very accommodating and reasonable.

We also use fair share which works well for providing refreshments for the club and means we can offer something a bit different to members when they come.

