

**Meeting of the East Devon Carers Forum
30 October 2006 – Ottery St Mary Hospital**

Those Present: JE - Chairperson
 GW – Vice Chairperson
 Brigid McEleney-Smith – Learning Disability Carers Support Worker
 JM – Exmouth Carers Support Group
 MT – Rolle Medical Practice – Exmouth
 JB – Sid Vale Carers Group
 Vic Bowsher – Dementia Care Training Initiative
 JW – Ottery St Mary Carers Support Group
 BS – Sid Vale Carers Group
 HB – Exmouth Carers Support Group
 PJ – Exmouth Carers Support Group
 MPJ – Carer, Axminster
 June Wilkins – Devon Learning Disability Partnership
 Nicky Ruane – Parent Carers’ Voice
 IO – Carer, Exton
 AB – Carer
 Mel Turner – Expert Patient Programme Co-ordinator
 MR – Carer, West Hill
 Liz McQuiston – Young Carers’ Development Worker
 Trish Whitfield – Manager, East Devon Carers’ Support Scheme
 PT – Carer, Sidmouth
 Meg Compton – Mind Carers’ Support Worker
 Jo Pickering – Rural Carers’ Development Worker
 Erica Moore – Carers’ Support Scheme

Apologies: ST, RA, YB, JM, Phil Dyson,
 Debbie Avery, JW, Leo Trimming, JG

No	Topic	Action
1	Welcome by JJE and introduction by all members.	
2	Minutes of last meeting: These were accepted as a true record.	
3	Matters Arising: From minute 4 JJE made mention of the fact that hospital venues can be off-putting for carers and that other forums sometimes have more practical type meetings.	
4	Flexible Carers’ Grant: Trish reported that any member of the Carers’ Link was eligible to apply for a grant and that now the £10,000 pot of money has been spent for this year. Learning Disability Worker: Welcome to Brigid now in post, working alongside June Wilkins but part of the Carers Support team at Newholme. Pam’s Resignation: Interviews for Pam’s post will take place on 3 Nov. Update: 94 new carers have joined the Link since July. Now 843 carers on the Scheme (92 - 4 years ago). Another Pamper Day will take place on 15 November.	
5	Update on Carers’ Link Manager: Advertisements are in place again as the person recently appointed resigned.	
6	Members Update: Mel Turner: Mel took over running the Expert Patient Programme last year, aimed at patients with a longer term condition or for carers who live with the patients. The “Looking After Me” course is about being a carer; looking after your own health and well-being and doing something for yourself. Mel is hoping to get many more people interested in the future. Mel explained that the course runs for 2 hour sessions over a 6 week period. It	

includes nutrition, exercises, 5 a day information and also cognitive thinking therapies and relaxation techniques. The courses are tutored by volunteers who understand what it means to live with a long term condition.

Mel understood that there might be a need for shorter courses but explained that this programme is worldwide and a manual is used for guidance. She tries to use venues away from the usual "health care" settings eg tennis centre, church halls and to make the courses available for all types of adult carers and patients, although regard should be taken that the tutors are only trained to a certain level. Mel would like to build a waiting list of interested people and then plan the sessions accordingly. She explained that the course does not focus on specific conditions but on the symptoms of those conditions eg pain, fatigue, shortness of breath.

Carers are welcome to attend both the "Looking After Me" and the Expert Patient Programme courses. Both are free and funded by NHS.

GW: Both GW and JJE recently attended a course which was very beneficial to their chairing roles. They enjoyed meeting chairpersons from other areas.

Liz McQuisiton: 12 activities were organised throughout the summer involving 80 young carers. Two young carers have been involved in a drama which is going to be taken into schools in East Devon. Liz has organised a drop-in at Axminster Community College. An Apple Day involved using an apple press and making juice.

Although 130 carers are now registered, many more are waiting to be identified. A very proactive volunteer has managed to raise lots of money for buying additional equipment and organising fun activities. The younger carers will have a Christmas party and the older children will have an Ice-rink outing and Pizza party.

The final report of the Joint Area Review has just been published. The report stated that the young carers' services were excellent and that there should be more paid staff and less reliance on volunteers.

Meg Compton: Meg now organises 4 support groups for mental health carers. A morning and an evening group in Honiton, a coffee morning in Exmouth as well as a morning support group.

Meg said that she is trying to encourage her carers to take part in training and trying to engage professional people more in understanding the caring role.

Discussion took place on the fact that GP practices lose sight of other services available "out there".

Mel said she makes a point of trying to keep in regular contact and makes use of the website which surgeries use.

Meg has arranged for Angela Browning MP to attend the Haven on 8 December – Carers' Rights Day.

As Dean Clarke House is closing in February, a new Wellbeing Centre is being developed in Longbrook Street for carers and users.

Meg recommended a film "Some Voices" which portrays someone suffering from psychosis and gives a good insight into the illness. Get in touch with Meg if you are interested. (Tel 01404 549508).

JE: said that she has been involved with the "Real Lives" training organised through Lindy Pooley from Exeter CVS. She recently accompanied Lindy to introduce the training to some employers in Tiverton who now want a day of training for themselves.

The Forum chairpersons now attend meetings with David Johnstone, Director of Adult Community Services at County Hall. JE asked him recently whether carers could access housework help when the agencies attend the cared for. David Johnstone said that this could be agreed at the Carers' Assessment juncture. JE wanted carers to know that they do have a voice and she would be happy to take any concerns forward.

JE expressed concerns about access for carers to a helpline at night. It was confirmed that NHS Direct is not a listening ear, but carers can always telephone the Samaritans which is available day and night and not necessarily for people in an emergency situation.

Nicky Ruane: Nicky has set up meetings for parent carers but explained she has difficulties in reaching parent carers. Many parents feel they have a duty to their child regardless of the problems they face and do not identify themselves as carers. In the future, Nicky hopes to be able to have direct contact with every family who has a special needs child – once an information sharing agreement becomes practicable with Social Services. Nicky said that education problems cause the greatest concern to parents and they are pleased to have the Head of Inclusion attending one of their meetings.

Parent carers have been asked to perform the drama at the Cathedral for next year's Carers' Week service.

Nicky said that the Joint Area Review of Services for Children and Young People were reported as being barely adequate and sometimes inadequate.

Responding to JE, Nicky confirmed that grandparents are very welcome to attend their meetings.

Trish Whitfield: Trish is linking up with Exeter hospice and looking at ways that we can reach the "hard to reach" groups of carers ie those caring for someone suffering with a terminal illness.

Trish is also linking up with Homeguard to discuss the emergency response cards. The New Year lunch for carers and cared for will take place on 17 Jan 07 at the Devoncourt Hotel in Exmouth. There are currently dementia workshops organised with Vic Bowsher and further stress management courses taking place in Exmouth during November.

Jo Pickering: Jo explained that £60,000 funding has been secured for her rural carers project until April 08. She is carrying out research as to how she can identify rural carers and involve them. She is sending out questionnaires; asking focus groups. Jo is looking at using services that people already use within the community eg post offices, pubs etc. Also looking at what is going on in other places around the country eg teleconferencing for carers, using the local pub. Jo divided the meeting into two groups and asked each to study one of the following questions. The responses from the groups are listed below:

How can we improve support to carers in rural areas?

Transport; making people aware of what is already there; free passes; more money for helplinks; more use of medical facilities; information on local notice boards; awareness training for professionals incorporated into training courses already taking place; awareness of carers' attitude; making more use of existing services that we have.

How can we involve more rural carers in support?

Respite; sitters; improving transport services; involving Trip; More information out through GP practices, parish newsletters, schools, libraries, flyers in pharmacy bags, council tax letters;

	<p>emphasis on The Link; public speaking at meetings; posters; mobile health caravan; holding carer support meetings and including an additional room for the cared for with an enabler. Barriers included – confidentiality in rural communities, lack of respite, time, telephone calls not being answered directly.</p>	
7	<p>Any other business:</p> <p>The County Carers’ Forum will take place at Buckfast Abbey on 23 November. JE invited carers to contribute to the meeting agenda in the future. She explained that matters are fed from this meeting to the County Carers’ Forum. A steering group creates the agenda for the CCF and that issues are acted upon. Get in touch with Trish if you wish to attend. Emergency respite is going to be the main issue.</p> <p>The meeting was made aware of the Lions Club – free green boxes. These are placed in people’s fridges and stickers placed on the inside of front doors. Emergency services are then aware of next of kin, medication, pets, allergies etc. Boxes can be obtained throughout E Devon via the Lions through various outlets eg surgeries.</p>	
8	<p>Date of Next Meeting:</p> <p>Monday, 29 January 2007 - 10.45 am – Trumps Court, Sidmouth Monday, 30 April 2007 – 10.45 am – Exmouth – venue to be confirmed Monday 30 July 2007 – 10.45 am – Seaton – venue to be confirmed Monday, 29 October 2007 – 10.45 am – Activity Room, Jerrard Wing, Honiton Hospital.</p>	