

DECEMBER 2023



# NEWSLETTER



**care**  
**NETWORK**  
CAMBRIDGESHIRE

*People at the heart of everything*

Hello one and all!

Mulled wine season is now well underway, Christmas trees all over the world are being decorated or are up already and mistletoe is being brandished! I must confess I tuned in to Christmas songs mid November! You just can't be unhappy when Slade or Wizzard are being played rather loud!

In my family, we agreed a long time ago that we would donate to a chosen cause instead of sending Christmas cards and buying presents. This year, some of the donkey's at a sanctuary are snug in their stalls wearing new jackets, a pair of goats arrived at an African village, four Christmas dinners were bought for the homeless and four hours of telephone support is guaranteed for someone in crisis. Not quite the twelve days of Christmas list but it's a start!

The gift of time and making memories are the greatest gift of all, so when thinking about what to get for a loved one, maybe give them a voucher for an hour of your time, or offer to do the washing up for a month or cut the grass in the spring, small gestures might make all the difference!

However you spend your Christmas, may you be safe, warm and happy!

Kind regards

Tina

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If you have any ideas for articles or would like any information featured in the newsletter, please let me know.

## HIGHLIGHTS

Spotlight  
on...Caroline, Abbie  
and Nicky

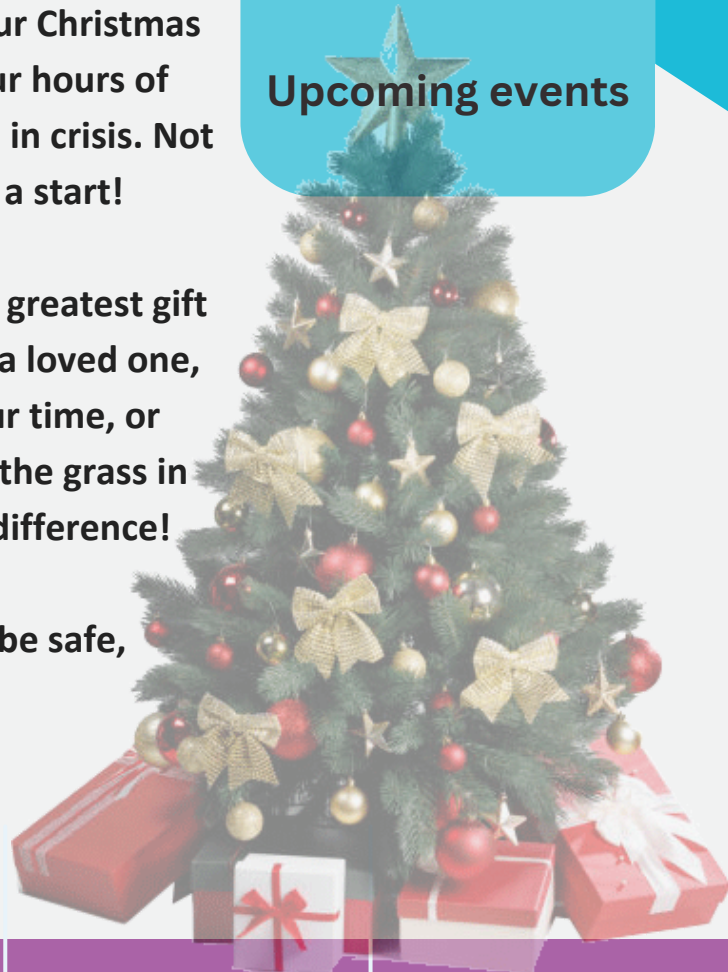
Event feedback

Exceptional you

Volunteer article

What we did in 2023

Upcoming events



Company number:  
6297277

Charity number:  
1120693

# SPOTLIGHT ON ... CAROLINE

We are excited to welcome a whole new Wellbeing Team to Care Network. Caroline Wheelan, takes on the Navigator Wellbeing Intervention Coordinator role and alongside Caroline we have two further new Wellbeing Coordinators responsible for the Trusted Friend and Check and Chat services:



Abbie McMahon (City and South) and Nicky Harris (Hunts and East) who will each take time to get to know all our wonderful Trusted Friend and Check and Chat volunteer colleagues in their respective districts and will hopefully soon be contacting you about assignments!

Hello! My name is Caroline Wheelan and I am the new Wellbeing Intervention Coordinator.

I have previously worked for Age UK and P3 Charity as a Hub Organiser in Huntingdonshire, supporting people over 65 to remain living independently.

I live in Chatteris and enjoy spending time with my family and friends. I like to run in my spare time and can often be seen pounding the roads around Fenland!

I am looking forward to meeting you all in due course and working alongside you.



# SPOTLIGHT ON ... ABBIE



Hey everyone! I am really excited to have joined Care Network as a Wellbeing Coordinator for City & South. My first job was working as a Customer Service Advisor at The Cambridge Building Society for 5 years, alongside studying music at College.

I then decided I needed to do something more rewarding, and I got my first healthcare role working as a Wellbeing Coordinator in Cherry Hinton Care Home. I worked there for 3 years, supporting the wellbeing of a range of people aged from 50 to 102 years old with nursing and/or dementia needs (as well as taking part in the 'fun stuff' of activities and outings!).

It was this job where I really discovered my passion for helping others, so this job at The Care Network seemed the perfect next step for me in my career and development.

In my spare time, I love getting stuck into anything creative - from making music, to doing arts and crafts. I am also a huge cat lover, and cat mum to a 9-year-old cat called Sage who I adopted at the start of this year, I absolutely adore him! I look forward to meeting and getting to know you all, and I'm excited for this new journey to learn and contribute to Care Network Cambridgeshire!



# SPOTLIGHT ON ... NICKY

I was very happy to be offered the post of Wellbeing Coordinator and look forward to getting into my new role.

My career for the last twenty years has been in social care. I worked as a qualified social worker for over 12 years, both in child protection and adult mental health. I have worked in children's homes, a male prison as a Substance Misuse worker, a homeless hostel and my previous role was as a mental health community connector for the NHS ( a similar role to a social prescriber only working predominantly with people with complex mental health difficulties).

I took a long "sabbatical" in 2010 and bought a cheap round the world ticket with my husband and we did volunteer work in New Zealand and taught children English on the beach in India. We then bought a big wide beam canal boat and converted it to a floating hotel boat on the Kennet and Avon Canal and River Thames.



I've now settled down again and back to working in social care, which I really enjoy. I love walking and spending time with my grandsons.

I am looking forward to working with you and meeting you soon.

Kindest regards Nicky





# EVENT FEEDBACK

So we had a cheeky Christmas catch up and Refresher session at Hardwick Head Office. We had quite a gathering but as I still had my holiday brain on David, Pauline and Margaret snuck out before I took my camera out!

I did manage to get a photo before Stewart and Paula left!

Lovely to see you all!



# EXCEPTIONAL YOU

My volunteer was so kind,  
understanding and  
supportive...

I feel very comfortable  
with my volunteer, she  
inspires  
me to keep going...

Never stop doing little  
things for others.  
Sometimes those little  
things occupy the  
biggest part of their  
hearts.



# VOLUNTEER ARTICLE - KAY

Even when not volunteering with us, our volunteers can't stop being amazing! Here one of our volunteers Kay, tells us about a recent adventure!

## Camino Português

I walked Camino de Santiago Portuguese route from the end of September to early October for 13 days. There are several routes to reach Santiago de Compostela from all over Europe. In order to get the certificate at the end, you have to walk the last 100 km on foot or 200km on bike or horseback. I walked about 276km.

I started in Porto and followed the coastline to Vila do Conde. I don't cope well in the cold and wet weather, thought it would turn cold in October. I packed waterproofs and warm clothes. It turned out to be over 30 C° most of days. I had only 2 short sleeve T shirts, which I washed every day and wore in turn. I walked in walking sandals along the beach, took them off to walk on sandy beach now and then.

At the cathedral in Porto, I bought a copy of Credential to collect stamps each day and a scallop shell which is the symbol of Camino to hang on my rucksack so that other people could identify me as a pilgrim. Whenever I saw other people with the shell, I greeted 'Bom Caminho!'. Wherever people might come from, it was the common greeting.



I don't have to worry about which language to use. We, pilgrims had shared purpose and the goal. We are all going to the same direction on the same route except some variations. When I stepped out of an accommodation, I'd often see the constant flow of people coming. I was never alone for a long time. After greeting 'Bom caminho!', we'd start a conversation. We might walk together a while. If the pace gradually becomes different or one of us wants to stop to have a break, we part. Then I'd start conversation with somebody else. I can walk with my own pace, stop wherever I feel like. No need to worry about catching a bus or train or plan a walk route. Every day, I just followed the arrows to Santiago.



# VOLUNTEER ARTICLE - KAY



Unlike other long-distance footpaths where you need to read the map, on Camino, you keep your eyes peeled to find the arrows at every turn to follow since the local authorities often change the route. The signs are very frequent. If you don't see any signs a while, it's likely you have overlooked it and need to go back. The Camino route going through many villages with vineyards, lots of churches, chapels and shrines and crosses.

After a few days in sandals, I developed a blister and the back parts of my legs were terribly burned. Those parts of my legs have hardly seen the sun in the UK! I had to go back to walking boots and long trousers. There were cobbled streets in the most of villages with connecting roads. Going up and down on hard surface made my toes sore. In the last few days, I took both boots and sandals and switched between them when I couldn't bear the blister or the painful toes.



After 12 days from Porto, I reached Santiago de Compostela, went to the Pilgrim

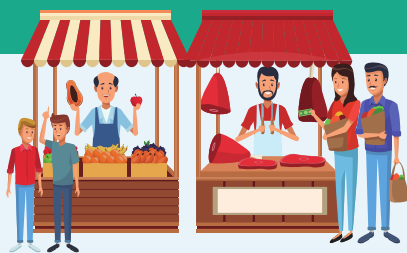
office and obtained the certificate. In the cathedral square, I bumped into the young lady whom I met a few days ago and she took a photo for me.

I had never been to Portugal. It was satisfying to have walked every inch of the way between Porto and Santiago and seen everything in slow pace. People say Camino is addictive. I might do another one with a different route!

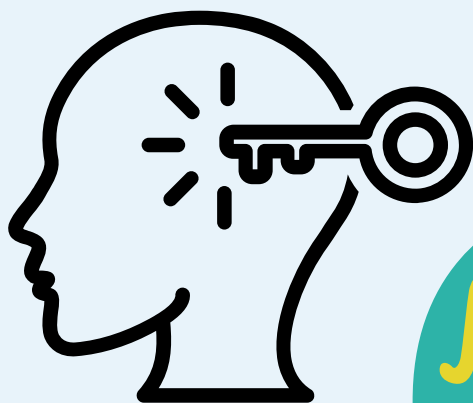




# WHAT WE DID IN 2023



# Diwali!



Dementia Awareness

## APPRECIATE you

Day at the races



First  
Aid

# QUIZ

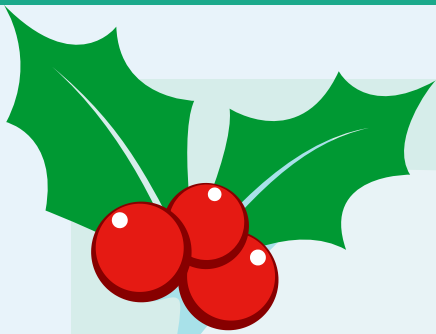


Focus group

Northstowe



# UPCOMING EVENTS



## Upcoming events

☐ We are busy organising meet up dates and training for 2024.

☐ We hope to send you a populated calendar at the start of January!



# AND FINALLY...

**Thank you for making the lives of others  
so much better, for all your support and in  
everything you did in 2023. But mostly,  
just for being you.**

**Let's do it all again  
with bells on, in 2024!**

**And now as Frank Sinatra once crooned,  
have yourself a merry little Christmas!**



**From all of us at Care Network x**