

Deddington Day Centre – (The Windmill Thursday Club)

Many of you may have read the letter in the April DN from a very concerned daughter, who feared the Day Centre may face closure. Sadly, she is not wrong. Because of the government's austerity measures, funding from Oxfordshire County Council will cease next year. We have until then to find an alternative way of supporting this organisation which is of such value to the elderly and their families in Deddington and the wider community. As you may also know, we have recently lost our Chairman in Jim Flux, who was himself involved from the beginning and was instrumental in organising the practical details of its setting-up and running. He was very proud of the club and would be doing all he could, were he still here, to secure its future.

The club was set up just over 20 years ago on the initiative of Social Services and OCC, who identified a need for services for the frail and elderly in the rural community. It was funded from the start by OCC and was one of several such centres, some of which have survived while others have not. Deddington has the reputation in Social Services circles of being 'a shining example of care in the community' (Jenny Fernbank, co-founder and former Social Services worker). It offers 15 clients a stimulating day out in congenial company, a hot meal, entertainment, activities, conversation and fun. A recent survey confirms that for many it is their only outing in the week, the only time they share a meal (so important for those who live alone) and something to look forward to in the daily routine. It is also a chance to meet and make friends, share worries and receive information and support. For nearly half our clients, the club also provides a day of respite for carers, with the knowledge that their relatives are in safe and friendly hands. We were lucky enough to receive the gift from Social Services of an 'extra-to-requirements' minibus with a tail-lift, which means we can offer transport to and from the club, even for those with mobility problems. Again, this is very important at a time when rural bus services are being withdrawn. The cost of transport is included in the attendance fee, but of course, the bus itself is elderly and in need of constant maintenance.

The Club, which is a registered charity, is run by two trained and salaried co-ordinators (so we also offer local employment!) and a team of dedicated volunteers who give generously of their time and expertise in various areas. It is not a recreational club, but an essential example of care in the community which the government is so keen to encourage, but not to fund. It is also an opportunity to show our appreciation of that generation who lived through the privations of the war and post-war periods without the aid of the welfare state. Indeed, we have numbered many ex-servicemen and women amongst our clients. So we are appealing to the community to help preserve an amenity which, who knows, in the future any one of us may be glad to use. We are very generously supported by local organisations in Deddington (DN, Farmers' Market, Parish Show, Deddington Players) and individuals, but need to secure a regular income to ensure that we can continue to offer this valuable service. If it does close, it will be lost forever.

If every household in Deddington contributed just £2 per month, we could easily cover our running costs. Should you feel able to commit to a small monthly or annual donation, standing orders can be made to:

Yorkshire Bank, 66 High St, Banbury OX16 8JN, sort code 05-02-16, a/c 46046605

Alternatively cheques made payable to 'Deddington Day Centre' may be sent to our Treasurer at 14, Gaveston Gardens, Deddington, OX15 ONX

We meet every Thursday 10.00am–3.00pm, and visitors or prospective clients are always welcome to drop in. Thank you for your anticipated support.

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