



JAN 2025



# EDGBASTON NEIGHBOURHOOD NETWORK SCHEME



## FEATURE STORY: OUT & ABOUT: ART ACTIVITIES FOR OLDER PEOPLE BY RUTH MILLINGTON



“When we entered Ikon Gallery and saw our work on the walls, there was a whoop of joy!”, says Diane. She’s one of 25 older adults who have taken part in ‘Out & About’, a creative programme developed by Artscoop and Edgbaston NNS that challenges conversations around ageing that typically focus on what people can’t do in later life, rather than what they can do.

What older people can do was displayed proudly in a multi-media exhibition at Birmingham’s Ikon Gallery. By one window hung a large circle bursting with colour and texture, its surface covered in overlapping patches of felt in emerald green, hot pink and burnt orange. With pom poms dangling by threads below, it evoked a giant dream catcher...



## BOTANICAL GARDENS

Participants at the 'Touch of Compassion' workshop engaged in making stained glass following a reflective session around loss and grief and the opportunity to take a stroll in the serenity of the Botanical Gardens afterwards.



## HARBORNE BAPTIST CHURCH

A Taste of Compassion was aimed at supporting community groups to run activities in their settings to help normalise conversations about loss and grief. Attendees took part in 3 different activities in small groups with the workshop ending on a positive vibe.

## SODY'S COMPASSIONATE CAFE

Having attended the Loss and Grief training workshop, Soul N Space run at Sody's Cafe hosted four compassionate cafes. Three of these sessions were coupled with creative activities so participants were able to create something in memory of a loved one.





# FUNDING UPDATE

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**The following organisations have been awarded Edgbaston NNS Small Grants:**

## ➤➤➤ **AUGMENTED LIFESTYLE**

A small grant to run gentle exercise and wellbeing sessions for older adults across Edgbaston. These will include, chair-based exercises, yoga, and arts and crafts that support dexterity. Sessions will be co-produced with citizen input responding to their needs. All sessions will start in the New Year at three sites - Rush Green Sheltered Housing Scheme Common Room (open to residents as well as Bartley Green citizens); The Red Shed at Birmingham Settlement in North Edgbaston (Selwyn Road) and a third location in Quinton (TBC). Dates and times will be released in the New Year. Referrals from social prescribers, Adult Social Care team and the Integrated Neighbourhood Team are encouraged.

**For more information, please email: [lisaalipt@gmail.com](mailto:lisaalipt@gmail.com)**

## ➤➤➤ **LADIES MILAN LUNCH CLUB**

A peer support group for Asian women over 50 years run fortnightly at St. Augustine's House, Lyttelton Road, Edgbaston B16 9JN. Information sessions on health and keeping fit, mindfulness workshops, chair-based exercises, singing and dancing are all organised by the volunteer members of the Club. Each meet-up culminates with a vegetarian lunch. The Club members organise day trips as well as celebratory events as part of the activities, all of which are a collaborative effort by all the members.

**For more information, please email: [induanddharam@gmail.com](mailto:induanddharam@gmail.com)**

## ➤➤➤ **LOVE COMPASSION**

Love Compassion has been awarded an NNS Small Grant to deliver a series of workshops specifically designed to support members of the South Asian LGBTQ+ community. The project aims to enhance participants' overall well-being. A total of five courses will be offered, with each course consisting of four weekly sessions. Each session will last for two hours and will focus on themes such as mental health support and self-empowerment. These workshops provide a safe and inclusive space for participants to connect and develop tools to navigate challenges effectively.





# UNSUNG HEROES: WHY CARER WELLBEING MATTERS

➤➤➤ As I walked down the path along the tennis court at Edgbaston Archery and Lawn Tennis Society (EALTS), I hear laughter and banter echoing in the quiet surroundings. I spend a few minutes watching the women play – relaxed and fun – not the usual competitiveness I am accustomed to seeing at the Tennis Club on a Saturday morning. The women were from a carers' support group run at EALTS during term time. However, the tennis/exercise sessions and social time is having such a positive impact, that they reached out to Edgbaston NNS (ENNS) to support them with grants to continue to access the courts for sessions moving into another year.

The project started following a chance meeting and conversation around mental health support in the summer of 2022 and has now grown to become a backbone of support and window of respite for the carers. This closed group comprising of 16 carers meet weekly on a Wednesday for an hour of tennis followed by social time in the adjoining Botanical Gardens if they wished. Social isolation is a common issue among carers who often find themselves disconnected from their usual social circles due to the demands of their role. When I met the group, their invaluable peer support and the ability to relate to each other's everyday challenges with empathy was evident. The group WhatsApp provided a channel to share local opportunities for activities, arrange social get togethers away from the club or ask questions, share thoughts and seek support.

The carers I met with, who wished to remain anonymous, said the opportunity to play tennis and have the social time together with others who were carers has been a great source of support and strength. They found the combination of fresh air, sunlight and movement helped them. Additionally, being outdoors can break the monotony of caregiver routines, providing a refreshing change of scenery that fosters a sense of relaxation. "Playing tennis outdoors and the feel good factor does not compare to going to the gym. We prefer coming here to play tennis". Another said, "this gives us consistency as it's a regular event at the same time, same place, and we know we will meet others here and have social time together afterwards." For many, this was the only opportunity to get some time away from care duties.

This local project offers carers the opportunity to come together socially whilst also helping them to improve their mental and physical wellbeing. When the groups were first set up, it was hoped that the participants would feel enabled to commit to continue with some form of activity and continue with the group. Through capacity building support from ENNS, the carers are now a constituted group to access small grant funding from ENNS and other charities to continue connecting over tennis and a cup of tea (or coffee!).

This is just one example trying to describe the impact of hundreds of stories. If you've been inspired to set up and run your own group, get in touch with one of the ENNS team for an informal chat.

