



Happiness Habits Cafes

- Burnfoot Community Hub, Hawick
- Netherurd Memorial Hall
- Cornmill Court, Galashiels
- Stow lunch club
- Whim Hall Care Home



Happiness Habits Cafés Netherurd



Where: Netherurd Memorial Hall, West Linton EH46 7AJ

When: 20th January 2017, 2-4pm

Background

Happiness Habits Cafés have been developed by Outside the Box. The sessions in Borders are part of the Flourishing Borders project, which aims to increase awareness among older people about how they can look after their mental health and wellbeing.

Ian Stewart from the Community Capacity Building Team at Scottish Borders Council had been having some conversations with Margaret Anderson and Peggy Wills who are committee members for the Netherurd Memorial Hall. This hall is a locally owned venue which is run as a charity for the benefit of the community around the area. The local area of West Linton has changed over the years, and now has many residents who live there but commute daily to Glasgow or Edinburgh. This has changed the pattern of community life and people feel less connected by things like local halls and the events that go on there. Margaret and Peggy met with Ian Stewart and Lindsey Gray in December 2016, and we talked about having a Happiness Habits Café with a lunch in January and advertising it around local towns and villages. The area is very rural with many small settlements and town. Margaret and Peggy want to increase the use of the hall and increase local connections. Both are members of the Rural Institute and have lived in the area for many years so are well connected. They offer a toddlers group at the Hall once a week, so it was hoped that the café might be attended by a mix of ages.

The Café

We decided to have a café with stovies for lunch, which would be made by the Chef at the local Girl Guiding Centre at Netherurd House. Posters were produced by Scottish Borders Council and were distributed around the area. Local newsletters were used to publicise the event. We offered community transport for the event. It was suggested by Ian Stewart that he would bring the New Age Kurling set, and people could have a go at a game of Kurling after the lunch and discussions.

On the day, Margaret and Peggy from the Hall Committee set up the hall and lit the fire which made things really welcoming and warm. The stovies were

delivered, and Margaret and Peggy had also organised home baking and teas/coffees.

A steady flow of people started arriving. Although community transport had not been requested, some people offered lifts to others through a local lift scheme.

There was a good turnout to the café, with 12 people attending plus Christine and Lindsey from Outside the Box. One of the young mums from the group came along with her primary school aged son who thoroughly enjoyed the event and joined in with the kurling.

Unfortunately, due to illness, Ian Steward was not able to come on the day. He did however organise a kurling set for us to use, which was lent to us by the Newlands Centre near West Linton.

The café followed the approach of having table questions to prompt discussion about wellbeing and mental health. The following questions were used:

What are your top tips for coping with life?

We all have times when we feel down - what helps you at those times?

Keeping active is a great way to boost your wellbeing - what do you like to do to keep active? (with picture prompts)

Staying in touch with people is good for our wellbeing - what's on and what's missing in the local area?

A short introduction to the café was given by the Lindsey, and then people were served tea and coffee. Those sitting at the table were encouraged to fill in the sheet **"How I feel before the café"** (repeated at the end of the café, **"How I feel after the café"**) to try and assess the impact of having these conversations on people's mood. You will find out a little later if the café had an impact!

Lindsey and Christine sat at the tables and encouraged discussion around the questions that were on each table. **We all have times when we feel down - what helps at those times?** and **What are your top tips for coping with life?**

There was some reticence from those present at the start about talking about their mental health/wellbeing. One lady expressed with some feeling that "it is terribly difficult to talk about this, as we are not used to sharing this sort of thing"

The things that were identified at the Netherurd cafe that help when we feel down are:

Attitude/mood Gardening can be good but can be depressing – my thoughts wander. Great to watch the kids out sledging. Music – Scottish music that you don't get on the tv or radio, classic fm,

Sense of purpose I get involved in community things – Rural, Mum's & toddlers, Netherurd Hall (I get enjoyment for the sake of others) guild, because it helps the community – used to do cubs (got the silver acorn award). Being part of something, going to church.

Hobbies/activities Going for a walk, watch the birds in the garden, Exercise, grow veg so I can make soup at any point.

Connection to others Companionship through doing things in the church. Help with young families – I get the gossip. I don't phone my sister – come away demoralised. Someone coming in to see you. Using the mobile library which comes ever 3 weeks. Pick up phone/ipad and connect with big family even if they are on the other side of the world.

What are your top tips for coping with life?

- Keep active but don't do so much that you get tired
- Volunteering so you get out of the house
- Get out of the bed and get on with the day
- Keep busy and do some cleaning

Other coping strategies that might not be entirely positive, but which were named included: Gin, shouting at the telly, blaming the government, shouting at the dog, sulk, cry, stomp, just get on with it, don't talk about it.

There was a lot of discussion about the difficulty of talking about mental health and a few questions about whether it was a good thing to talk about it. A few people felt that the younger generation focusses too much on talking about feelings. The group who came to Netherurd felt that:

This generation just got on with it –
Maybe we've learned to cope due to the
hard lives we've lived

I cope by telling myself "I'm
fine" and letting things slide
over me – I let things 'slide
over my head.

How people felt before and after, here's a selection of what they said!

Anxious, sad, cross, tired
Lonely, fun, friendly, fit, confident
Bored, dull, fed up
cheerful, OK

Pressurised, OK, tired
Relaxed, listened to, encouraged

Lonely, anxious, lucky, fit,
Happy, friendly, good about
myself, Fed up
cheerful

Happy, supported, friendly
Happy, relaxed, supported,
listened to, friendly, fun, cheerful,
encouraged

Anxious
Happy, relaxed, supported,
friendly, cheerful

After the lunch and discussion, we played a game of “New Age Kurling” which was very much enjoyed by all. People enjoyed the friendly competition, and the long and narrow hall made an excellent space for the game.

What next?

Following a discussion, the people present asked if there could be a follow up evening with Kurling and home baking later in March, and that the whole community could be invited. This would be an event that could be used to promote the hall and its potential use by the community. It was felt that a Kurling kit might be something the Memorial Hall Committee might try to buy, to run community kurling evenings, and the evening in March, which is booked for the evening of the 16th, will be a trial session to see how the community enjoys the kurling and home baking event.

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The Flourishing Borders project is funded by:



Happiness Habits Cafés

Burnfoot Community Hub, Hawick



Where: Burnfoot Community Hub, Burnfoot Rd, Hawick, TD9 8EN

When: 17th October 2016 and 14th November 2016, 2-4pm

Background

Happiness Habits Cafés have been developed by Outside the Box. The sessions in Borders are part of the Flourishing Borders project, which aims to increase awareness among older people about how they can look after their mental health and wellbeing.

Andrea Darling, Local Area Co-ordinator for Older Adults in the Hawick area, read about the Happiness Habits Café project in a summer 2016 newsletter published by The Chamber TSI in August. Andrea contacted Lindsey Gray at Outside the Box and they met in late August 2016 to discuss holding a Happiness Habits café in Hawick.

Following their meeting, Andrea pulled together a planning group of local workers from The Community Capacity Building Team (Calum), Community Psychiatric Older Adults Team (Wendy and Gillian), The Burnfoot Hub (Lesley), Local Area Coordinators for adults with learning disabilities (John and Angela) and the local church outreach team (Val). Lizzie from the Healthy Living Network subsequently joined the group. The group met first on 1st September and then again on 10th October.

The planning meeting was a useful way for the local staff to talk about what was available in the locality, and to identify any gaps. Everyone agreed that the meeting had been a useful forum for finding out what each other were doing.

The Café

The group agreed to try out having a café session in the Burnfoot Hub upstairs meeting space, and decided on 2 Mondays in October and November. All partners agreed to publicise the cafes to the people they work with, and all offered to attend. Posters and invitations were circulated and the staff involved worked hard to make the event a success by offering transport support.

Lesley from the Hub organised coffees, teas and scones for the café events, and the tables were laid with white paper tablecloths to be written on.

There was an excellent turnout to the October café, with 16 people attending plus 10 staff members/support workers.

The café followed the approach of having table questions to prompt discussion about wellbeing and mental health. The following questions were used:

What are your top tips for coping with life?

We all have times when we feel down – what helps you at those times?

Keeping active is a great way to boost your wellbeing – what do you like to do to keep active? (with picture prompts)

Staying in touch with people is good for our wellbeing – what's on and what's missing in the local area?

A short introduction to the café was given by the Lindsey, and then people were served tea and coffee. Those sitting at the table were encouraged to fill in the sheet **“How I feel before the café”** (repeated at the end of the café, **“How I feel after the café”** to try and assess the impact of having these conversations on people's mood. You will find out a little later if the café had an impact!

The staff sitting at the tables then facilitated and encouraged discussion around the questions that were on each table. **We all have times when we feel down – what helps at those times?** and **What are your top tips for coping with life?** The conversation flowed easily, and there was a “buzz” and sense of energy and activity in the room. Teas, coffees and scones went down well.

The main themes that help when we feel down are:

Attitude/mood – Get out the house, healthy food, sweets, chocolate, cake, 99 ice cream cone, sunny days, the beach, pet therapy, animals, smile, good patter, sometimes I sit in a dark room, give someone a compliment once a day

Sense of purpose – Tidy up, I work as a volunteer in the soup kitchen, I go to Artbeat twice a week to help with my concentration

Hobbies/activities – Walking, swimming, crochet, knitting, skittles, carpet bowls, flower arranging, playing cards, bingo, day trips, holidays, music, live music, going to cinema, movie days, learn guitar, watching tv, shopping

Connection to others – Talking to people, meeting new people, friends& family, confide in family, socialising, social media, phone apps, tea dances, go to church, comeback to Burnfoot coffee group, I like to talk to someone to give me advice on what to do next

What are your top tips for coping with life – A good night's sleep, work, knitting, reading, puzzles, walking, grandchildren, watching TV/DVDs, eating healthy, swimming, meeting friends, listening to music, ironing/housework.

How people felt before and after, here's a selection of what they said!

Before: Friendly, Fed up, Tired, Ill **After:** Relaxed, Listened to, Friendly, OK, Cheerful

Before: Lonely, Anxious, put down, **After:** Supported, Listened to, Friendly, Sad, Scared, Tired, Ill Encouraged

Before: Anxious, Tired **After:** Happy, Relaxed, Cheerful

Before: Anxious, OK, Dull **After:** Relaxed, OK, Cheerful, Encouraged

The second café on 14th November was attended by 12 people. The format was slightly amended to include a bingo session (suggested at the first café) and the questions had a Christmas theme. We also included a question to encourage discussion about possibilities for the group going ahead in the future.

The questions were:

Staying in touch with people is good for our wellbeing – would you like this group to continue in 2017, if so, when and how often?

Make a Christmas card to send to someone. What other activities/crafts would you like to try?

What are your top tips for coping with Christmas?

What are your top tips for coping with Christmas? Dressing up, take part in the Christmas parade, nice to see family, start your shopping early, spend time with family, lower your expectations, relax and enjoy it, learn guitar, remember it's not about things, it's about people, Christmas starts early – after Guy Fawkes and Halloween, be aware of your expectations – you might get a TV special Christmas, but don't ruin your day with high expectations. Embrace it, it takes more energy to hate the season than to look forward to it, start early with the shopping so you can buy lots of sprouts, eat well, keep healthy, turn off your phone, don't take life too seriously, get your cards written, be happy, go shopping early, block Christmas out, keep independent, get presents done, go for a drink with family, prepare early.

What would you like to see happen to this group in the future? Tony likes this group and would like it to continue weekly doing creative writing, bingo, music and arty things, Keep the group going weekly, I love to do arts and crafts.

How people felt before and after, here's a selection of what they said!

Before: Lonely, Anxious, fed up, **After:** Supported, Listened to, Friendly, Cheerful Encouraged, Happy

Before: Relaxed, Friendly, Encouraged **After:** Happy, Relaxed, Supported, OK, Listened to, Cheerful, Encouraged

Before: Happy, Lonely, Relaxed, **After:** Relaxed, Friendly, Happy, Friendly, Confident, Cheerful Supported, Liked, OK, Confident

December 2016 Follow up meeting

The follow up meeting was attended by Lesley from the Burnfoot Centre, Lizzie (HL), Val (Church Community worker), Andrea (LAC), Christine and Lindsey from Outside the Box.

We talked about positive outcomes for partners and workers which had included some good communication about what is on, and cross referring clients to different groups. The meetings had been a forum for workers from different teams to solve some problems for example a discussion around the lunch club and supporting members to feel more settled. There had been a timing clash between gentle exercise and the reminiscence groups, which had been solved through a discussion at the meeting.

Lesley from the Hub was very happy that a new group of local people had come along to the Hub as they have managed to attract younger people very successfully, but it has been harder to attract older people. We agreed that the open agenda at the café inviting people to discuss their mental health and self-care and coping strategies had enabled a lot of honest discussion, with people saying how positive they found the experience, as well as really enjoying the café format – socialising with a purpose. There had been some very positive outcomes for clients who had attended the cafes.

Sonny who had not been at all connected to any groups following late retirement from being self-employed. Sonny has commented on how much he enjoyed the cafes, and talking about mental health was a very positive experience for him. He had not known about the community hub until the café and now comes regularly to the café.

She was very isolated and withdrawn and was not known to the staff from other groups, is now attending the reminiscence and a local knitting group, and it has been noticed that she is talking and joining in much more.

John came along to the cafes and was surprised by how much he enjoyed them. He confided in Lizzie that it was his wife's birthday at Christmas, and although she died many years ago, he finds coping with Christmas very difficult because of memories of her. He had not talked to his family about this as he did not want to burden them. After talking about it, Lizzie suggested John make a Christmas card for his late wife, put it on the mantelpiece, and when he sees it, remember the happy times they had as a couple, and start to process his grief in this way.

Discussion about what next:

Lizzie from the Healthy Living Network had suggested to her manager that the café would be a good thing to continue. Stephanie McKenzie the local lead for Mental Health Improvement was involved in discussions and had expressed interest.

Lizzie would like to keep the format similar – call it a Happiness Habits café, run it on the first Monday of each month and provide an afternoon tea, as this had been so popular.

Burnfoot Community Futures funding has money to allocate to local projects. We propose that Lizzie will write a funding application and submit in time for the first round – 23rd January 2017. This bid will be based upon the experience of the first 2 cafes.

Following this, we will invite those who attended the first 2 cafes back on Monday 6th February, and will make a series of video interviews and talking head interviews using the support of Ciara from Outside the Box, who is used to making film, and this will be used to present the project at the voting event which is attended by local people. This is in April 2017, and the funding allocation is based upon the local vote.

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Happiness Habits Café at Cornmill Court

Where: Trust Housing Association, Cornmill Court, St. John St, Galashiels, Selkirkshire, TD1 3JY

When: 10th November 2016, 1.30-3.00pm

Background Happiness Habits Cafes have been developed by Outside the Box. The sessions in Borders are part of the Flourishing Borders project, which aims to increase awareness among older people about how they can look after their mental health and wellbeing.

Julie Pearson from Trust Housing Extra Care accommodation in Galashiels contacted us in late September to say:

“I was quite interested in your Happiness Habits Café as I manage a housing with extra care development and have a few people who would benefit from structure and changes to their day that is meaningful, we are in the Scottish borders and not sure how that fits in at all, happy to chat about it”

Julie had read about the cafes in the summer bulletin circulated by the Chamber Third Sector Interface in St Boswells.

The Café

Christine from Outside the Box made some posters for the accommodation block and sent them to Julie who put them up around the place to let residents know. On the day, Julie was not available as she was off ill, but her colleague welcomed us and had been round the complex that day to remind people of the cafe. 12 residents attended the session. As usual, we asked people to complete a “how you are feeling before the café sheet”, and this was then re-done at the end of the café: you’ll find out what they said later!

This café was attended by people in their 80’s and 90’s, several of whom live with dementia, and this impacted on the understanding of the questions on the table, and on the conversation. The café was managed by 2 Flourishing Borders staff, which made managing the conversations over 3 tables rather challenging - this was because the staff at Cornmill Court were not able to be free to sit and take part, due to work pressure and colleagues being off sick and staff numbers being lower.

One of the key areas we talk about is: **What helps when you feel down?** Here are the key themes from Cornmill Court:

Sense of purpose – making marmalade to sell (lady aged 92), baking and cooking, keeping busy, housework.

Hobbies/activities - walking, dancing, crosswords, reading, art and craft, singing group.

There was a lot of discussion at one table about the younger generation and mental health, with the 2 gentlemen on that table suggesting that:

'The war and being in the army had made them stoic and resolved to just get on with life.'

“Young people focus in on their mental health”

“They felt this was why there was more talk of mental health issues these days”

People said that they would enjoy more visits from younger people to discuss and talk about things. At that table, one of the relatives and her dad talked about mental health, and said that the table questions had “**allowed them to discuss things that they would not normally talk about.**”

How people felt before and after, here’s a selection of what they said!

Before: Scared, Tired, Not happy **After:** Bit happy

Before: Happy, Supported, Friendly **After:** Happy, Supported, Listened to, Good about myself, OK Good about myself, OK, Tired, Confident, Cheerful

Before: Happy, Sad **After:** Anxious, listened to, Liked Friendly

Cornmill Court has many activities for the residents, and people had a sense of community and belonging which was evident from many of the conversations. People welcomed and supported the ladies with dementia, and there was no sense of segregation at all.

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Happiness Habits Café at Stow Lunch Club

Where: Stow lunch club, Stow Health Centre, Station Road Stow, TD1 2SQ

When: Thursday 6th October 2016 12.30-2.30pm

Background

Happiness Habits Cafes have been developed by Outside the Box. The sessions in Borders are part of the Flourishing Borders project, which aims to increase awareness among older people about how they can look after their mental health and wellbeing.

Lindsey from Flourishing Borders had been meeting with Ian Stewart from the Community Capacity Building Team (CCBT) who's patch includes the A7 corridor in the Borders. We had been working on offering Happiness Habits cafes to towns and villages where Ian has made links. This area has some isolated villages with predominately older populations, and Ian had made links with Jessica Troughton from the Stow lunch club.

Over a coffee and a chat about the lunch club, Jessica said that she felt many of those who attend are isolated, and may experience poor mental health at times, but that this was difficult to talk about. The Happiness Habits café concept was explained, and Jessica agreed to hold one as part of a lunch club. Jessica was enthusiastic about offering an opportunity to people to talk about mental health as she felt that many of her clients do experience loneliness or isolation, or have had difficult life experiences and that talking about "something that matters" might be helpful.

We agreed to come along to the lunch club on 6th October. Ian Stewart from the CCBT had previously attended the lunch club to have a chat with members about the services in their area and to start to map out what was missing and pull together a leaflet outlining the available services.

Jessica Troughton runs the lunch club with 2 helpers. It serves a regular clientele of people and has been running for a number of years. It meets twice weekly for 2 different groups of adults, although there is some overlap, and a few adults attend both days. It provides a 2 course hot lunch and tea/coffee plus time for social interaction.

The Café

On the day we attended there were 16 adults having lunch, many of whom are collected by the 3 volunteers and driven to the lunch club, 3 volunteers, and 2 of us.

The laminated Happiness Habits café conversation cards were placed on the table as we ate together, and people were invited to talk about the issues. A short introduction on mental health and wellbeing was given by Lindsey from Flourishing Borders.

We used a short before and after evaluation sheet, and people had to circle the words that described how they were feeling before the café session, and then complete it again afterwards.

The conversation was based on the following questions:

We all have times when we feel down - what helps at those times?

What are your top tips for coping with life?

Keeping active is a great way to boost your wellbeing - what do you like to do to keep active?

Staying in touch with people is good for our wellbeing - what's on and what's missing in the local area?

We all have times when we feel down - what helps at those times? I have learnt to recognise when I suffer low mood and how I can deal with it...the anniversary of the death of a loved one etc. I walk, I do something and plan to be with friends etc, I watch a lot of tv during the winter at night time - When it gets dark earlier and colder, I close my door and settle in for the night - It takes my mind off my worries for a bit.

I like to listen to the sound of happy children playing in the playground

What are your tips for coping with life? Being active and involved in local activities and clubs, I like the company and the chat of being in a group, chat to the neighbours - talk and smile to everyone in the village, Keep in touch with family - I look forward to family visiting me if they don't visit, I phone or text them when I need to chat - I don't like texting, but prefer chatting!

What do you like to do to keep active? I walk as much as I can, even if the weather is dull. I like to be outside, I read newspapers and books and I like learning new things, I keep as active as I can, I get out and about and use my bus pass to visit Edinburgh for the day, I do housework, I like ironing, Volunteering gets me out of the house to meet new people, Keep active but don't do too much or you get too tired

Staying in touch with people is good for our wellbeing - what's on and what's missing in the local area? The lunch club is a good place you can eat well and healthily and chat to nice people, camera club, horticulture club, lunch club, choir

Conversation was open and offered willingly. People seemed to be happy to talk about how they cope with life, and what helps them.

One gentleman talked animatedly about how much he enjoys the camera club. A lady from the other side of the table had not heard there was a camera club, and wanted to come. He agreed to go with her to the next meeting, and she was really excited about this.

Impact of change in village demographic. There were conversations between people about how the changing demographic in Stow had altered what people do. It was felt that a lot of commuters now live in the village, and although their children go to the village school, the adults are not part of the community, as they are away most of the time. It was noted that there used to be regular coffee mornings in Stow, but that these don't happen now as people have got older and the younger folk don't organise things like that.

Wind Farm money is also given to Stow for community projects and a few people felt that this had meant that people don't fundraise anymore, and this had also meant that coffee mornings were not required.

There was a sense of sadness at the lack of interaction between young and old.

Several people were glad to have the Post Office and shop, as this was seen as a hub for information and meeting.

How people felt before and after, here's a selection of what they said!

Before: OK, Tired **After:** Happy, Confident, Cheerful

Before: Lonely, Sad, Fed up, Dull **After:** Relaxed, Fun, Friendly, Cheerful

Before: Happy, Often lonely, OK, **After:** Cheerful, Listened to, OK, Happy, Tired Well fed

Before: Relaxed, Unfit, Frustrated, **After:** Fun Cheerful

We will be following up with the Stow lunch club in early 2017.

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Happiness Habits Cafés

Whim Hall Care Home



Where: Whim Hall Care Home, Whim Estate, Lamancha, West Linton EH46 7BD

When: 8th December 2016, 2.30-4.30pm

Background

Happiness Habits Cafés have been developed by Outside the Box. The sessions in Borders are part of the Flourishing Borders project, which aims to increase awareness among older people about how they can look after their mental health and wellbeing.

Ian Stewart, a member of the SBC Community Capacity Building Team, had been liaising with the Matron in charge of Whim Hall talking about doing some work with residents and getting them involved in community activities. Some preliminary scoping work had explored bringing residents by minibus to the Lamancha Hub, for a visit when they would take part in a Happiness Habits café, have lunch, and try an activity like “New Age Kurling”. Unfortunately, the Lamancha Hub was unable to go ahead with the day, and it was cancelled.

The Café

We decide to hold a Happiness Habits café at the Whim Hall and Ian Stewart liaised with Isobel Roast the Activities Coordinator as the Matron had since left her job. We set up a date for 8th December 2016, and Christine and Lindsey from Outside the Box plus Ian from the Community Capacity Building Team travelled to Whim.

Isobel who coordinates activities at the home, and her staff team supported 14 residents to attend the café session. 3 of the support staff stayed for the café and took part in table discussions which was a real help as they knew the residents well and could help with communication. Some of the residents attending the café are living with dementia and other long term conditions.

We had teas, coffees and festive treats for the café and the tables were laid with white paper tablecloths to be written on. Due to the logistics of getting residents to the café, and the staff time involved, we did not manage to complete the before and after evaluation.

The café followed the approach of having table questions to prompt discussion about wellbeing and mental health. The following questions were used:

What are your top tips for coping with life?

We all have times when we feel down – what helps you at those times?

Keeping active is a great way to boost your wellbeing – what do you like to do to keep active? (with picture prompts)

The staff sitting at the tables then facilitated and encouraged discussion around the questions that were on each table. **We all have times when we feel down – what helps at those times?** and **What are your top tips for coping with life?** Those present at the session took part in the conversations,

although

some residents needed some help with communication from care staff. There was a tendency from some people to talk about the past and life in younger years, rather than keeping focussed on the here and now.

The main things that were identified by the residents that help when they feel down are:

Attitude/mood – You've got to smile, good food makes you happy, friends help, making models takes your mind off your pain, the main thing for me is if my health is all right, go out for a walk – you feel relaxed, I put on a scarf and feel nice!

Sense of purpose – help people, go for a walk and talk to people, when people have died, it is difficult: I try to keep busy.

Hobbies/activities – read novels and crime books, read technical books, SBD travelling library is great, walking around the lovely grounds here, grow plants, visits – to Ratho Canal Centre, watch Weir's Way on TV, ballroom dancing would be lovely! Music – to get up and dance to. I like to imagine something and then paint it – like the hills,

Connection to others – grandchildren visiting, my family and other visitors, outings, play online and get connected to people, listen to the news of the outside world, get away to visit family sometimes.

What are your top tips for coping with life? It is important to still see lots of people, but have some time on your own. Sit and discuss things with people, argue a bit but have fun too. Get out and walk in the grounds outside. Spend time being thankful. Know yourself – what you like.

December 2016 Follow up:

Isobel the Activities Coordinator was pleased with the café discussions and she felt that people had joined in and enjoyed the conversations. She is new to her post, and wanted to build on the things that the people had commented on. We were all struck by how much people talked about dancing – old time ballroom dancing, and how it had been something that they really enjoyed. We spoke about trying to organise a taster dancing session, and contacted a local ballroom instructor. We have not to date heard back from this instructor, and have struggled to find other people to help.

Outside the Box has run a previous project organising Belly Dancing in Care Homes as part of their “we’re Here Too!” project which values those who have lived longer than the rest of us – tackling ageism and allowing older people to flourish. <http://otbds.org/?s=belly+dancing>

Isobel was not sure whether the residents would want to try belly dancing but is currently planning her activities programme so this may be a follow-on activity that we offer.

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