

Talking About Cancer Together



It's nearly 8 months into the project, the journey continues and we are still Talking About Cancer Together, if anything, the conversation is getting louder as the project reaches out to more organisations along the way.

From attending INT Connect meetings in Leiston and Stowmarket, to setting up stalls in Felixstowe and Great Yarmouth and talking to a hairdresser in Ipswich, it has been exciting to make new connections and to convey news about the project to a wider audience. The humming of the voices have been heard from members of different community organisations at a prostate cancer event enquiring about tests, and available resources. There has also been a lot of buzz generated by people from different Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise organisations milling around and making connections and exchanging information and even online with members of a steering group sharing best practice. All these are steps in the right direction. The more people that engage in Talking About Cancer Together, the less fear the topic generates. The more our voices get amplified, the easier it becomes for people to access the support that is needed.



1 - SNEE Cancer Awareness Event



2 - Broadway House, Felixstowe

Out and About

I have seized the opportunity to meet people in person, to explore, to ask questions, to make more connections and further cement working relationships with those I have met online. At times, it's felt like a jog and a run, and at other times, on days of rain and hailstorm, it's felt more like traipsing, but regardless of the weather and the resulting energy, I am constantly moving and being moved by you and your work as the project gathers momentum.

It has been encouraging to meet inspirational people, to see firsthand that indeed 'little drops of water make a mighty ocean.' People like Seva Newrick from the Peartree Centre, Rob Brookes from Eden-Rose Coppice Trust (Ipswich Men's Shed) and Richard Holland from Broadway House, among others make it look easy, but it is their tireless and selfless work done behind the scenes that turns the wheels and makes a difference in people's lives.

St Elizabeth Hospice

Last month I was privileged to take a tour around St Elizabeth Hospice with a team from Ipswich Community Media who are working on the translation of their Virtual Tour into different languages including Arabic, Farsi and Polish. It was a very enlightening tour and the important message that the St Elizabeth Hospice's Team was keen to convey, is that, the hospice provides a lot more than end of life care, providing support for people living with progressive and life-limiting illnesses, including young people aged 14 and upwards and providing specialist palliative care for the relief of pain and other distressing symptoms in their Inpatient Unit.

The Beauty of Support

Meeting Anita and Kay hairdressers from Ipswich, working predominantly with black women, was a breakthrough for the project as working at the heart of the community, they have a unique role supporting their clients through their cancer journeys. It is a great example of how the voluntary sector

can work in partnership with the private sector to connect in to services and ensure our message is heard by those that need support the most.

The Beauty of Support material, the brainchild of Janet Clarke, a Macmillan Engagement Lead, has been developed to help hairdressers to create more awareness of cancer and to help improve up-take of cancer screening. I introduced the material to Anita and Kay, to encourage the conversation around cancer with clients and to signpost them to the help and support services available.

The link below is an ITV News feature of the Beauty of Support project.

https://link.edgepilot.com/s/26ba91b6/U45YH1gCEky6cbpcZJ_bfg?u=https://www.itv.com/watch/news/how-black-hair-salons-in-south-east-london-are-joining-the-fight-against-cancer/x2qjmlk

Ipswich Cancer Aid Network (ICAN)

Ipswich Cancer Aid Network (ICAN) has been around since 2001 and has supported friends and family and their loved ones through their cancer journey. Members socialise regularly by going on outings and by holidaying together as a group. I paid them a visit to take part in their support group meeting.

I was privileged to attend a memorial service in St Andrew's Church, something ICAN do yearly, to remember members who have passed away. It highlighted how important it is for loved ones to be remembered. It was a sombre occasion where people were reflective and in a contemplative mood. Some songs were sung, poems read and candles lit in memory of the loved ones, it was a shared experience and an acknowledgement of the fact that they were 'gone but not forgotten'.

There was a list of names of loved ones, which added to the poignancy of the occasion. One thing I thought was significant and encouraging is that, the names being added to the list were fewer in recent time (not taking away from the pain of losing a loved one through cancer), showing that research and advancement in medicine means more people are living with cancer and for longer.



3 - Lighting a candle for loved ones



4 - Waiting for the service to begin

The Caribbean & African Community Health Support Forum (CACHSF)

The prostate cancer event at The Hold featuring Errol McKellar from the Errol McKellar Foundation and the creator of the MOT Yourself project, was a great success. The Caribbean and African Community Health Support Forum has been running health and wellbeing events in Ipswich for over a decade and has been at the heart of changing health outcomes for the community in Ipswich.

Errol talked about the need to keep talking, to remove the taboo from the subject of cancer. To emphasise his point about engaging in the conversation about cancer, Errol talked about not knowing that his father had had treatment for prostate cancer until he himself had been diagnosed. This was something that he thought was an error and misjudgement on his father's path as Afro-Caribbean men have a 1 in 4 chance (*Source- Prostate Cancer UK*) of being diagnosed with prostate cancer.

He encouraged men to keep talking to friends and family, especially those who have had a diagnoses, to improve the chances for others. He also stressed the importance of having the PSA tests as these tests are by way of a blood tests rather than a physical examination, which can be the reason why people avoid going for tests- the emphasis being on, early detection, resulting in better outcomes for people who have been diagnosed. The PSA (prostate specific antigen) test is a blood test that measures levels of PSA protein in the blood. Used with other tests it can help doctors diagnose prostate cancer (*source - Macmillan Cancer Support*).

See article by Prostate Cancer UK- [Why does our latest TV advert say Black men's risk is "double"? | Prostate Cancer UK](#)



5 - Listening to Errol McKellar



6 - The team from CACHSF, organisers of the event

WHAT'S IN THE PIPELINE?!

Let's Talk Workshop

Recently, I trialled the Let's Talk workshop which I developed, to get much-needed feedback from my Community Action Suffolk colleagues. The workshop with support from the Project Steering Group will be delivered to community and voluntary sector leaders to help engage community groups in the conversation about cancer support services.

As a talking point, the workshop will be in the form of a card game which will engage 'players' in the conversation about different cancers and what sort of help is out there for people living with a cancer diagnosis and their families. The support ranges from specific cancer support groups, to, where to access financial support and even where to get help with transportation to and from treatment.

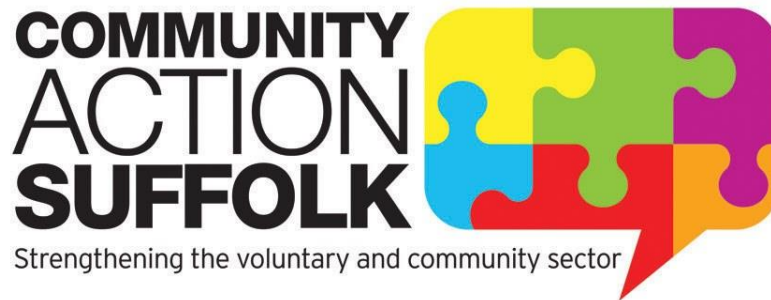
Networking Event

Work is also underway for a joint networking event in September with the Integrated Care Board (ICB) to bring the VCFSE sector and Statutory organisations together to provide a platform to share knowledge, best practice, to connect with each other and together strengthen the Suffolk system to ensure more people have access to cancer support services.

For more information about this and other events as well as the Let's Talk workshop, please feel free to get in touch.

Let's keep Talking About Cancer Together.

**MACMILLAN
CANCER SUPPORT**



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