

Report on formation of the Leg Club at Woodhall Spa, Lincolnshire.

In July 2006 the Parish Council received a request from the community nurses at the Tasburgh Surgery, Woodhall Spa for support in forming a Leg Club at Woodhall Spa. The vice chair, Audrey Pestell, who was the chair of the Lincolnshire Primary Care Patient and Public Involvement Forum and had already been impressed by a presentation given by the community nurses at Mablethorpe and Sutton about the setting up and success of their Leg Club, volunteered to get involved.

The first step was to get the support of the PPIF Forum so that there were members and support to hand and this was agreed. The Parish Council helped by advertising for local volunteers in the quarterly newsletter. Eight people initially volunteered and a ninth joined when a notice was read out at the Evening Women's Institute. There was only one gentleman and unfortunately he was involved in a car accident soon after joining and had to resign.

The initial meeting was held on 6th September 2006 at the Parish Offices when a community nurse from the surgery, a nurse from Louth Hospital and the secretary from Mablethorpe and Sutton came and discussed the way forward over tea and biscuits. It was a very successful evening and joint chairs, a secretary and treasurer were provisionally appointed as a steering group. The need for an A.G.M. and a constitution were discussed and the support that was available from the Lindsay Leg Club Foundation. Venues for the Leg Club were discussed and Audrey Pestell had agreed a sessional fee for the hiring of Coronation Hall of £5. Unfortunately the hall needed a disabled toilet and a new roof and in spite of many letters to the Councillor responsible at Lincolnshire County Offices a date for the improvements was not forthcoming and it was decided to use the Methodist Church Hall which although more expensive had been fully modernised. Although smaller than the Coronation Hall it had all the facilities required by the nursing team.

The Parish Council showed their support by providing rent for the first year.

The most urgent need was fundraising ideas and a trip to Mablethorpe to actually see a successful club in action and this was arranged for November 3rd, 2006. Seven members of the club went on the visit and one member of the Patient and Public Involvement Forum. It was very inspiring and the clients met were so enthusiastic it was easy to see the value of being involved in such a project. Some of the clients had not been out of their homes for at least a year before the formation of the club.

The first fund raising was at the home of the secretary when coffee and cake were offered and second hand books were on sale. This took place on the 23rd January 2007 and raised £45.30. A table top sale on the 17th February 2007 raised a further £27.20 and the chair raised another £21 with the sale of her picture frames.

The Coffee Morning/ official presentation of the constitution, took place on March 24th 2007. It took a great deal of organising but the Primary Care Trust and the nurses gave the club tremendous back up. Letters were sent out to many village organisations asking

them to come and set up a stall. Even organisations such as Rotary that couldn't man a stall came and gave their support. Twinning Association ran a tombola stall, the Leg Club ran a cake and a book stall. PALS and the Expert Patient Programme came and gave advice. The nurse's friends provided a card and art stall and LIVES and Age Concern both came and had stands and were very pleased with the interest shown.

The whole morning was a huge success with members of the public arriving from 9.45 a.m. to 12.30p.m. The nurses provided blood pressure checks etc. and it was a morning enjoyed by everyone.

For the members however the pinnacle of the morning was the arrival and the introduction to the founder of the Lindsay Foundation, Ellie. She took such an interest in all members were doing and was so enthusiastic, providing the lift needed after a busy few months organising fundraising and events.

The next big event will be the official opening on June 6th 2007 at the Methodist Church Hall. Members are now looking forward to getting started and the Coffee Morning brought some new volunteers.

One of the most notable features of the whole exercise has been the team working of the group. The skills of the volunteers are many and varied and they have all come into use during the months of planning. Someone has always seemed to know the name of a person who could help and the support of the husbands of the nurses on the Coffee Morning to erect the heavy tables shows how valuable team working can be.

Thank you Ellie for having such a brilliant idea and it is to be hoped that Woodhall Spa will embrace this wonderful initiative in the same way the community at Mablethorpe have done.