**Minutes of the CVS Peer Network Meeting**

**Thursday 27th March 2025**

Donna Talbot – CVS donna.talbot@communitycvs.org.uk

Paul Walker – BwD Diabetes Peer Support Group – BwDdiabetesgroup@outlook.com

Brenton Mitchell – Fedcap – Brenton.mitchell@fedcap.org.uk

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Margaret Jepson – Samaritans - Blackburn.director@samaritans.org

Jessica Farrow- DWP – DAE.BLACKBURN@DWP.GOV.UK

Sam Barrett – Dad’s Matter – Sam.Barrett@home-start-bnd.org.uk

Joanne Barker-Gosling – Rummage Rescuers - volunteerin@rummagerescuers.org.uk

Beverly Walker – Neuro-Dynamix

Faxi Assi – Lancashire Fire & Rescue - fakharassi@lancsfirerescue.org.uk

Yasmeen Ali – UCLAN - YAli4@uclan.ac.uk

Christine Napier – Foster with us – Christine.napier@blackburn.gov.uk

Alison Clews – Newground – alison.clews@newground.co.uk

Paula Middlemas – Blackburn College – Paula.middlemas@blackburn.ac.uk

Lisa Clarke – Re: source Blackburn – lisa@exchangeblackburn.org.uk

Beverly Ormerod – Neuro Dynamix - beverleykormerod1511@gmail.com

John Keaveney – Blackpool IPS – john.keaveney@blackpool.gov.uk

Martin Nuttall – Blackpool IPS – martin.nuttall@blackpool.gov.uk

Jal Iqbal – BwD Library Service – jal.iqbal@blackburn.gov.uk

Omar – BwD Library Service

Andy Mathers – Lancashire Wildlife Trust – Witton Park Project – amather@lancswt.org.uk

Lucy – Alzheimer’s society - Lucy.Willder@alzheimers.org.uk

Anthony Carr – BwD Health & Wellbeing - Anthony.Carr@blackburn.gov.uk

**Apologies:**

Janine Smith – Blackburn College, Amanda Hayes BwD BC, Anne Whelan – Men in Sheds, Carragh Garity – Baby Zone, Grace Banham – Lancashire Mind, Parisa Quaynor – Just Run for Today, Patsy Davis – Resolve Poverty, Samantha Blackburn – Lancashire Mind,

**Andy from Lancashire Wildlife Trust – Witton Park Project**

* I work for the East Lancashire Trust, The East Lancashire Wildlife Trust is an environmental Charity that is primarily all about conservation, Campaigning and managing nature.
* I run the greenhouse project at Witton Park
* The greenhouses are on the site of a former kitchen garden which produced food for Witton Hall – the home of mill owners the Fielden family for whom Witton Park was a private estate. The land was bought by the council in the 1950’s and turned into a public country park for all to enjoy.
* The greenhouses were constructed by Blackburn with Darwen council in the 1970’s and were used until 2009 to grow bedding plants for the borough’s parks, gardens and public spaces. They were empty since then until March 2021.
* The Greenhouse Project sought to clean them up and bring them back to life for the benefit of local people and wildlife.
* Everyone knows that being outside is good for your mental health and wellbeing, connecting to nature and others makes you more resilient so we offer lots of opportunities to get stuck in and learn how to grow plants, vegetables and make friends at the same time
* We offer lots of other different activities too– walking, cycling, woodwork, making compost, fires, empowering people and helping them gain skills and knowledge
* We distribute the green compost to other projects along with timber, plants etc
* We have good links with Night safe, BwD Carers, Age UK and social prescribers
* We off a 12-week course, then encourage participants to attend volunteering sessions – we have 2 five-hour sessions and also offer late opening on Thursday for those who want to access the service but are working during the day
* We are currently struggling for funds so for some of our activities we need to charge

Q: have you heard about the Newground Community Fund?

[Community - Newground Together](https://www.newgroundtogether.co.uk/about-us-2/our-structure/service-areas/community/)

* We had an event last night – Iftar breaking the fast where we went for a walk through the woods then sat down to eat, we lots of lanterns and fairy lights
* Last Friday we had an event to celebrate the equinox
* The green houses are a great space to rent out – we have a wonderful apricot tree where you could hold meetings, staff well being days etc
* We have artists in the greenhouse painting the glass – its one huge blank canvas
* We support Whitehall volunteers, Corporation Park volunteers and the BwD Food Alliance
* We are supporting farmers restoring the peat on Darwen Moss, we also grow Sphagnum moss to help the peat
* We have delivered talks on heritage apples and how to grow them
* In May we have a seed swap event
* We are building an outdoor kitchen so we can show our volunteers how to cook the vegetables etc We have refugee and asylum groups who are naturally more confident @ foraging.
* We are hoping to create a warm space – in winter it can get too cold for some people, so we are trying to source a shipping container or a cabin
* We sell logs – all the Ash trees that have died have been cut down and dried out
* We also have bikes to give away if anyone needs one BwD Health & Wellbeing are kind and donate them to us – so if you have any old bikes, please think of us

Q: How do we refer into the wellbeing programme?

A: on our webpage there is a referral link

[Wellbeing and The Bay self-referral | The Wildlife Trust for Lancashire Manchester and North Merseyside](https://www.lancswt.org.uk/wellbeing-self-referral)

 Q: Would it be ok for staff to come and visit?

 A: Yes

Q: What about access and parking?

Great access and ramps and rails in the greenhouses, the community Garden is all on the same level. With regards to parking there is the main car park near the leisure centre where you can pay n display then walk along the road to the greenhouse. There is a small carpark for blue badge holders closer to the greenhouse and during the school holidays you can park near the school

Q: What do you do with all the stuff you grow and make?

A: We give it to the volunteers

[The Greenhouse Project | The Wildlife Trust for Lancashire Manchester and North Merseyside](https://www.lancswt.org.uk/greenhouse-project)

**Martin from Blackpool IPS**

* IPS Individual Placement and Support is commissioned by Lancashire and South Cumbria NHS Foundation Trust
* We specialise in helping individuals secure employment or maintain their current job whilst living with a severe mental health condition.
* Upon referral, Clients will be paired with a one-to-one Employment Specialist who will work with them to find the right job. We collaborate with mental health teams across Lancashire and South Cumbria (including Blackpool and Blackburn) to ensure the individuals mental health needs are addressed as they transition into the workforce.
* We also continue to support the individual once they are in employment – there is no time frame, we can work with someone indefinitely if needed. We do tend to work with individuals for about 12 months and review where the individual is.
* We work with Primary and secondary health care – mental health, social workers, occupational health, GP’s
* We have seen the service expanding – it works really well – people think that they cannot work, we work with the individual to show them that work is beneficial, it reduces social isolation, the routine helps their mental health, it builds their confidence, and they are better off financially
* Improved Mental Health is our target outcome not just work –we support individuals into volunteering, training and then hopefully into paid work
* We support individuals with CBT, talking therapies – many people post covid are too scared to leave their homes
* We also work with the employers showing them the benefits of supporting your staff’s mental health – we work with large employers – DWP, NHS etc We have the sensitive conversations many employers don’t see the bigger picture and how important it is to look after your staff – poor mental health leads to problems with staff being off long term, poor retention of staff – employees are valuable they need to be looked after
* We also need more employers to offer work trials, work experience – it doesn’t have to be full time – 4-hour slots are enough to build someone’s confidence.
* We are looking for small tasks that are relatively easy to do but they can free up a lot of people’s time so they can focus on what they are qualified to do
* Individuals who have been supported by us feel part of society – the evidence shows that those supported by the IPS model get back to work and stay in work and feel happier.
* We have a number or principles – zero exclusion – you do not need to be diagnosed with a health condition. All services work together for the benefit of the individual – it’s a wrap around service – this could be referrals to other services -Drug and alcohol, financial support etc
* Referrals – anyone can refer individuals to the service DT to send out referral form or you can call the number 01253 477300 or email ipsservice@blackpool.gov.uk

Q: Do you find that when you have someone ready for work – the lack of experience is a barrier?

A: Yes – the gap in the individual’s employment history can pause a problem – however we engage with the employers to focus not on the period of unemployment – the individual has been poorly, and we explain this – the employers need to look at what the individual can do – some are very highly skilled individuals

[IPS Individual Placement and Support - FYi Directory](https://www.fyidirectory.co.uk/directory/ips-individual-placement-and-support?categories=adults-care-and-support,training-skills)

**Jal from BwD Library Services**

* My job is to make sure that the library is accessible to everyone – we continually consult with our different communities, other departments etc Anyone can join – its completely free
* **Community and meeting rooms for hire**
	+ Blackburn Central Library has several rooms and an ICT training suite that can be hired for meetings, talks and events. They are available to book throughout the week (Monday to Friday from 9am to 9:30pm, Saturday 9am to 3:45pm). All rooms include a projector, screen, flip chart, water machines and flexible seating options (except for the Hornby Theatre).
	+ Light refreshments are available to purchase, advance booking required. Rates are per session, for example in a morning, afternoon or an evening. A 10% discount is given when 6 or more bookings are taken.
* **Computer access**
	+ All our libraries have Google Chromebase computers which are available for customers to use free of charge, no need to book.
	+ You will need a Gmail account and your password to log into the PC.
	+ The computers are linked to a printer which will also photocopy and scan (either to a USB stick or email account).
	+ Remote printing from your home computer or mobile device is also available by using the Printer On app or by using the Click-Print-Go website.
	+ If you need help to use a computer, you can access one of our free basic IT courses or come to a drop-in session.
* **E-books and audio books**
	+ Read eBooks and listen to eAudio free of charge from your computer, smartphone or tablet.
	+ Download the BorrowBox and uLIBRARY apps to your tablet or smartphone and start exploring the titles we have for all ages and tastes straightaway.
	+ To use BorrowBox, create a free user account with your library card number, 4-digit PIN (usually your year of birth) and email address, to gain access to a range of over 20,000 eBook and 6000 eAudio book titles. With both fiction and non-fiction adult, teenage and children’s books there is something for everyone.
	+ Library customers can select up to 12 titles (6 eBooks and 6 e-Audio books), with each item loaned for a period of 21 days
	+ To use uLIBRARY, you just need your library card number and 4-digit PIN (usually your year of birth) to access a growing range of eAudio titles exclusive to Blackburn with Darwen library members. You can select up to 6 titles with a loan period of 21 days.
	+ With both platforms, once the loan period has expired the items return themselves and will be no longer available on your device. Items can be renewed once or downloaded again if another customer has not reserved them.

[Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council - BorrowBox](https://blackburn.borrowbox.com/) [uLIBRARY - Blackburn with Darwen Libraries](https://blackburn.ulverscroftulibrary.com/)

* **Home library service**
	+ If you are ill, have a disability or at an age that you are unable to visit your local library, we can bring the service to you. Our staff will discuss with you the type of books you like to read.
	+ You will then receive up to ten items to borrow every 2 weeks, delivered by our library’s driver or a volunteer.
	+ If you have visual difficulties, you will be offered large print or talking books as an alternative.
	+ This is a free service, and we also offer the following services:
	+ Talking magazines for people registered blind or partially sighted
	+ eAudio book players.
	+ For more information, please contact us on 01254 661221 or e-mail us at library@blackburn.gov.uk.
	+ If you are interested in volunteering and you have your own car, please contact us using the details above.
* **IT support at Blackburn and Darwen Libraries**
	+ IT drop-in sessions - help with your computer, phone or digital device
	+ Blackburn: Monday 2pm to 4pmWednesday 10am to 12pm
	+ Darwen: Thursday 2pm to 4pm
	+ You don't need to book. Just turn up and we can help you with your IT, computer, mobile phone or other digital device.
	+ Computer group sessions
	+ Friendly, accessible digital skills sessions covering: Basic computer skills, Shopping online, Scam awareness and much more.
	+ They will help you to feel comfortable and confident with computers.
	+ Details of upcoming courses are in our newsletter.
* **Local history**
	+ Cottontown local history website - The Cottontown website is Blackburn with Darwen's local history and photography resource. It contains a wealth of information and images about the history of both towns and their industrial heritage.
* **Community history at Blackburn Central Library**
	+ The library offers a specialist service to assist with local and family history research, for example sourcing images for a book, assisting with research for a thesis or providing access to special collections.
	+ Please contact us in advance to make sure that support is available.
	+ When a member of the specialist team is unavailable, other staff will help you as much as possible but may need to refer your enquiry to a specialist for further support.
	+ If you wish to leave your enquiry with us, please email us, providing as much information as possible and we will look into your query and try to respond within 5 working days.
	+ If you would prefer to make an appointment with a member of staff, please contact us and leave your details.
* **Family history**
	+ If you are researching your family tree or are interested in local history and heritage, Blackburn Central Library holds the borough's main local studies collections.
	+ Staff will be happy to help you access these resources that include:
	+ books and trade directories
	+ birth, marriage and death indexes
	+ cemetery records
	+ census returns
	+ ephemera and broadsheets
	+ maps
	+ newspapers dating back over 200 years
	+ photographs
	+ special collections.
* **Reveille**
	+ A First World War remembrance project funded by Heritage Lottery
	+ The Heritage Lottery funded Reveille project, has created a virtual memorial for local men who were lost in battle. Its purpose is to conserve the records of those who perished on the Somme in the First World War.
	+ Over three hundred local soldiers have no gravestones, but have their name etched on the Thiepval memorial, you can view the records of local men who are commemorated at Thiepval on the CottonTown website.
	+ Thanks are due to the volunteers who helped to create these records by generously contributing their time and expertise. Volunteer recruitment is on-going.
	+ You may also be able to help by providing information. If a Thiepval soldier is a family member, you may have anecdotal data and/or photographs which we could add to their record.
* **Online newspapers, comics and magazines**
	+ Read your favourite magazines and daily newspapers on your computer, smartphone or tablet, all complimentary for Library members – there are tens of thousands of titles to choose from.
	+ Use your library card to access these resources in the library or at home, via your browser or each resource’s unique app (available on the Apple Store or Google Play)
	+ All of your favourite newspaper and magazine titles are available through your existing Borrowbox account.
	+ Comics Plus - Choose from over 20,000 graphic novels, manga and comics.
* **Reading groups**
	+ The library and information service encourages reading for adults and children across the borough, with lots of events and activities throughout the year. The emphasis is on reading for pleasure.
	+ If you have got out of the habit of reading, or need to boost your confidence, try the Quick Reads collection. If you would like to start your own reading group, we can loan sets of novels for a small charge. Please contact us to find out more.
	+ If you are a keen reader we run the following reading groups: Darwen Library Reading Group: Meets on the second Monday of each month from 5:45pm to 6:45pmBooks @ the pub: Meets on the first Wednesday of each month from 6pm to 7:30pm at the Postal Order, Darwen Street, Blackburn Tuesday Reading Group: Meets every Tuesday morning from 10:15am to 11.45am at Blackburn Library.
* **Reading well**
* Reading Well helps you to understand and manage your health and wellbeing using helpful reading.
* The books are all endorsed by health experts, as well as people living with the conditions covered and their relatives and carers. You can be recommended a title by a health professional, or you can visit your local library and take a book out yourself.
* There is a huge evidence base around the value of reading to support health and wellbeing, as well as the value of libraries as non-stigmatised spaces that are both welcoming and empowering for people with mental health problems.
* There are currently five book lists available:
	+ - Reading well for mental health
		- Reading well for dementia
		- Reading well for young people
		- Reading well for children
* Reading Well is delivered by The Reading Agency in partnership with Libraries Connected as part of their Universal Health Offer. It is funded by Arts Council England and The Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport and Welsh Government.
* The programme is supported by a wide range of professional health bodies including Public Health England, NHS England and The Royal College of GPs. Visit the Reading Well website to see all of the supporting health partners.

[Libraries | Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council](https://www.blackburn.gov.uk/bwdlibraries)

**Yasmeen from UCLAN**

* I have worked at UCLAN for the last 20 years – I studied here and never left
* We are wanting to create partnerships with the health and social care organisations and also promote our new International Social Work & Community Development master’s degree
* Many people working in this sector are not qualified and post Covid the world has changed; the old course was outdated so we wanted to create a degree that would support great community work in the current climate
* The new course covers the following topics: -
* Key global challenges faced by social and community professionals today on our MA in International Social Work and Community Development.

International Social Work & Community Development course covers major challenges facing our world. This includes:

* + - * Global migration and refugees
			* Human trafficking
			* War and conflict
			* Threats to democracy
			* Political instability
			* Community resilience in the face of conflict and natural disasters
			* Global pandemics
			* Climate change
			* You’ll get the opportunity to do a voluntary work placement and take part in other initiatives relevant to your study.
* You’ll get to make a difference to the lives of people around you, whether working in your own community, pursuing a professional career in policy-making or public services, or doing international development work.
* There are 2 pathways the BA Hons course and the Masters – you can study full time or part time
* All studying will be on our Burnley Campus
* If you don’t have a level 3 you can study the foundation course first
* With regards to our partnership working we are offering valuations, Webinars (next month is community resilience)
* We offer short bitesize courses for CPD (continual professional development)
* The university is really struggling financially – we have a new plan and new business model
* Part of this new plan we are looking to offer lifelong learning – modules that can be studied over 7/10 years and eventually equate to a degree
* We are piloting lots of different things at the moment there are lots of options

[International Social Work & Community Development](https://www.lancashire.ac.uk/undergraduate/courses/international-social-work-ba-hons)

**Christine from BwD Foster with us**

* We have a 10,000 shortage of foster carers we need to spread the word that you can foster and work
* Foster with us is a collaboration, uniting five local authorities in the north west. Blackburn with Darwen, Blackpool, Cumberland, Lancashire County and Westmorland and Furness are joining forces to provide the best start for anyone interested in exploring the opportunity of foster care.
* We are combining our knowledge, skills and expertise to provide the best service for you, so that in turn we can shape the best future for our children.

[Share your home Shape their future | Foster with us](https://www.fosterwithus.org.uk/)

**Filomena – Mind 2 Muscle – Moves and Grooves**

We offer movement to music for those with Parkinsons, neurological conditions and their family, friends and carers

We have 2 new classes – offering dance, movement that can ease limitations, lifts spirits and emotional health

Every Thursday: women only 11:30am – 12:30pm and everyone 1:30pm – 2:30pm

Euro House, School Lane, Blackburn BB1 2LW – near the hospital

[About Us – Mind2Muscle](https://www.mind2muscle.co.uk/about-us/)

**Ant from BwD Health and Well being**

* The new outdoor activities programme is out – lots of cycling sessions, walks – countryside, Blackburn Rovers, Parks and themed walks
* We also have Xplorer Trails
* Info on all our other services

[Refresh Blackburn with Darwen](https://refreshbwd.com/lets-get-active/active-outdoors/)



**Please note that the May Meeting will now take place on Thursday 22nd NOT Thursday 29th due to the BwD Annual Conference**

 **Next Meeting**

**Thursday 24th April 2025**

**9:30am – 11:30am**

**The Boulevard Centre**

**45 Railway Road, Blackburn BB1 1EZ**

**For more info, please contact Donna Talbot 01254 583957**

**Donna.talbot@communitycvs.org.uk**

**Parking is free for 3 hours on Morrisons Carpark**