

Minutes of Mid Suffolk VASP (MSVASP) meeting on 10th October 2013

Held at MSDC Offices, 1pm to 3pm

Present:

SP	Sue Parker	Chair of MSVASP
BB	Barbara Bilston	Stowmarket Deanery
NM	Nigel Moyes	SUF
LR	Liz Roper	SCODP
SF	Sally Fogden	Chair of Rural Coffee Caravan
MW	Michaela Walker	NSFT
GJ	Gill Jones	Healthwatch Suffolk
DP	Dan Penock	Healthwatch Suffolk
GM	Gareth Moir	SCC, CYP
WS	Wendy Shepherd	SNAP
NB	Nigel Brett	MSDC
SB	Suzanne Britton	MSVASP

Apologies:

Gloria Garrod (Richmond Fellowship)
Sally Corker (InspireSS)
Janis Engstrom (Together)
Guenever Pachent (NSFT)
Laura Harvey (Open Road)
Linda Attwood (SUF)
Jayne Davey (SUF)
Andy Leary (NSFT)
Teresa Dodwell (NSFT)
Bev Stearn (SFC)

1. Welcome and apologies

SP mentioned the appalling front page of the Sun (1200 people killed by 'mental patients'). She handed out a copy of an article from the Guardian. Sue also mentioned the online petition which already had 58,000 signatures. She hoped forum members would sign up.

Comments were made about the Halloween costumes that had appeared at Tesco and Asda and that had been withdrawn due to public pressure.

NM said that SUF have changed their newsletter to take the issue into account. SP said it would be nice to have a response from NSFT clinicians.

2. Guest speaker

SP welcomed and introduced Sally Fogden, Chair of the Suffolk Rural Coffee Caravan.

The Rural Coffee Caravan Information Project started up in 2003 to tackle rural isolation and promote community spirit and was started by Rev Canon Sally Fogden who was Agricultural Chaplain at the time. She was manning the phone for Farm Crisis Network and found that there are small villages where people are isolated, no pub, no bus, etc.

Sally and other colleagues had the idea of a mobile community cafe and information centre. Some farmers purchased a caravan, gathered together some relevant information. They then applied for and received some funding and the Rural Coffee Caravan Information Project was created and coffee mornings were organised in rural villages.

The RCC goes to places like Benhall Green where Sally had just been. Despite the bad weather 6 people attended

There is now a second vehicle – a campervan which visits village halls and coffee mornings year-round. There is a manager and part time admin as well as project manager Gareth, who works closely with people who are isolated. Regular visitors to coffee morning are pleased that staff remember how they take their tea or coffee. Even the dogs get biscuits!

The caravan carries leaflets from Age UK, Suffolk Carers, MIND, the Foodbank, etc. There are lots of queries about benefits. People have talking about how frightened about Bedroom tax. A Lady of 80 through she would have to move out even though she lived in her own house.

Representatives from councils and PCSOs,/police officers are sometimes present. In the case of a domestic violence issue, a police officer gave a local woman a panic button so that she felt more in control in her own home. The project has also been visited by an MP in Waveney.

The Rural Coffee Caravan also has information on bus timetables, taxi firms for people with disabilities and is visited by youngsters during the school holidays. Mums come in before they pick up children from school.

One spinoff of the project is the Golden Age fairs. A number of statutory and voluntary organisations (Suffolk Carers, Alzheimer's, Age UK) gather in a big hall, together with many stands such as meccano displays, photography and model boats. Drinks and food are free but donations are accepted.

Topics covered at these events are safe slippers, deaf aids, etc. 250 people attended the last event.

A second event is Tea dances at Nayland, with scones and madeleines in good supply!

Sally is Chair and the staff are supported by lots of valued volunteers. Many visitors have mental health issues as well as people undergoing chemotherapy.

The Rural Coffee Caravan recently received the Suffolk Coastal Community Award.

SP said MSVASP should attend a Golden Age Fair.

3. September minutes and matters arising

There were none.

4. Events

- a) Report on Jimmy's farm. Those who attended said it was very successful. Babergh Councillor Dr. Bamford was there for most of the time. Gary Page visited the stand. There had been a lot of networking opportunities.

NM said it was the best event ever. A lot of planning had gone into the event. The weather had been good and it was farmers market. Terry Baxter from Radio Suffolk opened it.

SP said that MSVASP would take part in the event again in 2014.

- b) The VASP stand had been on display at Stowmarket library for one week.
- c) SP will also put it up in Babergh and MSDC foyers.
- d) The VASP stand will be at Asda Stowmarket on 31st October with the theme: 'Do you know someone who needs advice and help?'
- e) The stand will be at Hadleigh Library in November
- f) Stradbroke – further to Bev Stearns suggestion, an event will be held at Stradbroke Leisure Centre in January/February. NB has given a contact name to SP
- f) It was suggested that the stand could be displayed at the John Peel Centre? SP will talk to Tom Barker, who is a director.

SP would like to know if it is worth buying a roll up sign and what wording to have. NB said yes. GM said a good design is needed. WS will make enquiries.

NB can provide MSDC and BDC logos on it.

5. Later Life Initiatives for MSVASP

Theme for 2014 events and activities: the forum confirmed that MSVASP would look at depression in later life. SP will speak to Sue Merton at the Suffolk Dementia Helpline run by a partnership Sue Ryder with SFC and Age UK.

6. AOB

- a) November speaker. Ravi Seenan Equality and Engagement Manager.
December: representative from Sue Ryder and Gill Cook, MSDC
- b) MSDC working the SCC Health and Wellbeing Board targets.
Mental health is 4, Later life is 3
- c) NB said that organisations funded by MSDC would have to report on their outcomes. A brief discussion took place on how to measure outcome?
WS said that SNAP count the number of leaflets handed out at events.
SF said that with the Rural Coffee Caravan project, a list was kept of what leaflets were sent/given out where and a record kept of the weather to justify poor attendance.

SP said that the powers that be need to know that capacity for logging outcomes at MSVSP was limited due to the level of current funding.
WS suggested logging work carried out by VASP partners.

- d) DP represented a group of people who have lost someone close to suicide. On 24/10 an event will take place at new venue in North Ipswich (rather than BSE). The first night is for signposters and referrers and starts at 7.30.
- e) The issue of shortage of one bedroom properties is a major problem. MSDC can't allow under occupancy any more.

Re: home ownership for people with long term disability. The government underwrites the purchase but no checking that houses are bought on open market and they are not always suitable.

- f) 18/10/13 Black information day at Creting, Hate crime week – race/sexuality.
- g) Regarding stigma, MW said she was approached by a neighbour of a service user she had visited and she had been verbally abused.
- h) Guardian article of 9th October regarding mental ill health stigma
 - 1 in 5 of 1741 adults surveyed said that people with mental problems should not hold public office
 - 1 in 10 said it was frightening to think of people with mental health problems living in residential neighbourhoods
 - In 2010-11 635 homicides were recorded in England and Wales. That means that. 95% committed by individuals not diagnosed with a mental health problems.

Date of next meeting: Tuesday 5th November 1pm to 3pm, Lecture Theatre **MSDC offices.**