

renew169

A quiet shared space in Towcester
where it's OK not to be OK

Renewsletter - Summer 2025



The Tove Valley Centre has very kindly given Renew169 the use of their allotments to create a Community Garden in Towcester. It is a place for people to join together, make new friends, learn new skills and enjoy gentle exercise and fresh air by doing some gardening. In time, the intention is that the produce grown there will be used in the café or sold, with the proceeds going towards the ongoing work of the charity.

Initially the team behind the project prepared the overgrown space ready for use. They rotavated the ground, established beds for planting and repaired the water butt and poly tunnel. Then, on Tuesday, 6th May our new Community Garden was opened, with Madeline and Jemma welcoming visitors for the first time. Since then, we have been overwhelmed by the generosity of our local

community in donating items that we have needed and they have not failed in providing everything we have requested, including tools & equipment, pots, wheelbarrows and even a second water butt to help us cope with the demands of keeping everything watered, especially during the recent hot, dry spells of weather.

In the three months since it opened, the garden has flourished and it has become a haven for wildlife. There is now a regular group of volunteers, though more are always welcome. The benefits of fresh air and gentle exercise for our general health and well-being are well documented, so why not come along and give it a go!

The Community Garden can be found at The Tove Valley Centre, which is located between the Shires estate and the SNC car park on Northampton Road in Towcester. Sessions run every Tuesday and Thursday morning, from 10.30am - 1pm. For more information please email our charity manager, Jemma, at manager@renew169.org.



On Monday 28th April, Sue Jobbins came into the café to talk to us about Spring, a community based social prescribing service in Northamptonshire, supported by the NHS and Public Health Northamptonshire.



When you are living with a long-term health condition, many things can affect your fitness (physical health and the ability to perform everyday tasks and activities) and wellness (physical, mental, emotional, and social well-being), including your finances, housing situation and social environment. Medication alone cannot fix all of these issues and that is where Spring can add something extra: a personalised plan especially for you.

Following a referral (which can be via a GP or a self-referral for you or someone else), a link worker will contact you to have a chat and explain the programme and then over the course of the next 12 months will spend time listening to you, learning about your needs and interests and helping you make a plan. They can put you in touch with appropriate support services (financial, housing, transport and therapy related) as well as groups and activities related to your situation and interests, some of which they run themselves. Their in-house courses, run over a six-week period, have included 'Mindful Art' at the Sawpits Centre, 'Managing Chronic Pain' and 'Emotional Greed & Tapping' held at Leeson Court. A future course, still in the planning stage at present, will focus on cooking skills, possibly Air Fryer Cooking, One Pot Cooking or Understanding Nutrition, depending upon what their clients feel will be most beneficial.

Clients are asked to complete an initial self-assessment questionnaire, which is revisited after about six months and again at the end of the 12-month period. The link workers stay close at hand over the course of the year to help ensure you progress comfortably, checking in with you by telephone or in person once a month or so. They will even

accompany clients to the first session of a new group or course for support if necessary.

Spring has an annual budget, which can be used to purchase a diverse range of goods and services to make their clients' lives easier. These have included a wheelchair ramp, a comfort cushion, assisted dog walking, transport costs such as taxi fares and even a 3-month gym membership at the Leisure in certain circumstances, for example.

The focus is very much on community and they encourage peer support and help to put in place tools and techniques to sustain people once the 12-month period comes to an end. Spring Art, for example, is a peer support group held in the library, which is a follow-up to the Mindful Art group, which had come to an end.

For more information or to make a referral for yourself or someone else, please scan the QR below, visit the website at www.springnorthamptonshire.org, phone Sue on 01604 974995 or email her at hello@springnorthamptonshire.org. You can also call into The Forum in Towcester on Thursday mornings between 9.30am and 12 noon for more information or if you are concerned about making a self-referral.



Sue Jobbins, pictured below, is the link worker for Towcester and Brackley.





On Tuesday 29th April, local historian Brian Giggins came into the Café to give us a talk about Towcester's historic buildings. Brian shared old photographs and images of some of Towcester's sites and buildings for us to look at and gave us an insight into how historians go about finding clues, which help them to build up a picture in order to work out the age of buildings and how they have been used over time. It was fascinating listening to his various stories about the history of the buildings themselves, as well as some of the people who occupied them, and the talk attracted a good number of visitors



We are very fortunate at Renew169 to have many volunteers who work very hard to ensure things run smoothly and to provide our guests with the best possible service: from our board of trustees, to our frontline volunteers, to those who work behind the scenes. An average of 32 individual volunteers per month give an average of 218 total hours of their time per month in the café alone.

We were therefore delighted to be able to acknowledge their efforts at a 'Thank You Evening' at the Saracen's Head on May 15th, which was much appreciated and enjoyed by all those who were able to come along. Our thanks go to Rocco & Co. as well as to our Chair of Trustees Lynn Suter for sponsoring the event.

Laura's Sponsored Walk

In May, our former Chair of Trustees, Laura Patterson, embarked on a challenge to walk the 100 miles of the South Downs Way, in just nine days, to raise much needed funds for Renew169.



She got off to a great start on day one by completing 11.2 miles, with her dog for company. Day two brought beautiful skies, green fields and a dodgy rash, but with another 12 miles behind her she finished the day still smiling.



Day three was a little hillier and greyer with some rain, but with friends Sam and Liz for company, she managed another 11 miles. She then faced her first night of solo camping in a field with no other campers, which was a bit daunting. Day four was wet, wet, wet! Laura walked 12 miles in driving rain that day, but was pleased to finish the day on track and almost half way to Eastbourne.



By the end of day five, she was looking and feeling a little jaded (her words!) after walking just over 15 miles and tackling some very hilly hills! Happily, it was better weather than the previous day though and spurred on by the generosity of people sponsoring her, she was still in great spirits with just four days to go. Unfortunately, there was a delayed start to day six. There was some doubt as to whether Laura would be able to continue her walk due to potential cellulitis (remember that dodgy rash from a few days ago?) After taking advice from not one, but three doctors, she was given the go ahead to carry on walking and so in the afternoon the challenge continued and she managed another 7.3 miles. By the end of day seven she was exhausted, having made up the miles missed the previous day and completing an amazing 16.8 miles. A highlight of the day was meeting musician and comedian Bill Bailey, but we have to ask ourselves who was more star struck, as he has himself just completed a 100-mile sponsored walk along the South Downs Way, so we're wondering if he was in fact inspired by our lovely Laura? Day eight was a fabulous day, super hot at times and sea misty at others and ended with a fish n' chip supper on the beach, having walked 12.5 miles. This was also the last day of camping. Laura completed her challenge as planned, reaching Eastbourne on her ninth and final day of walking.



Our thanks go to Laura for undertaking this walk and overcoming all the challenges she faced along the way. Thanks to all the wonderful people who sponsored her, she managed to raise a phenomenal £ 2395.00 for Renew169. What a fantastic achievement and a fitting finale to her tenure as Chair of Trustees.

Cycle Sportive



Saturday 24th May was Towcester Mill Brewery's Cycle Sportive event. Sadly, we did not have anyone cycling for Team Renew this time, but at the brewery's invitation, Paul, Judy and Jemma went along and manned a stall selling raffle tickets and cycling trivia quizzes that Paul had compiled. Thanks to Towcester Mill Brewery's wonderful customers and the cyclists who took part in the event giving so generously, £274.50 was raised towards the work of Renew169.



Pay-it-Forward Scheme

Drinks and snacks are served at the café, along with light lunches on certain days of the week, for which donations are welcomed. Many people pay by contributing a donation, but not everyone who comes in can afford to do so. There is a wooden board inside the café, on which tokens are hung when people kindly make a donation towards the cost of a drink for someone else. £2.50 will cover the cost of lunch in the company of others for someone who might otherwise be lonely or isolated and £5 will purchase five cups of kindness for someone in need of a coffee and a chat.



If you are willing and able to make a larger donation, £12 will enable someone struggling with grief or loss to access in-house counsellor support at Renew169; £47 will help train and equip a Renew169 volunteer with the skills needed to support our visitors; and £115 will help cover our weekly overheads/utilities so we can continue to provide a safe space for people suffering with poor mental health. Donations can be made by scanning the QR code below or by visiting our JustGiving page by pressing the **Donate** button on our website.



Dates for your Diary!

Please make a note of these forthcoming events that you will not want to miss!

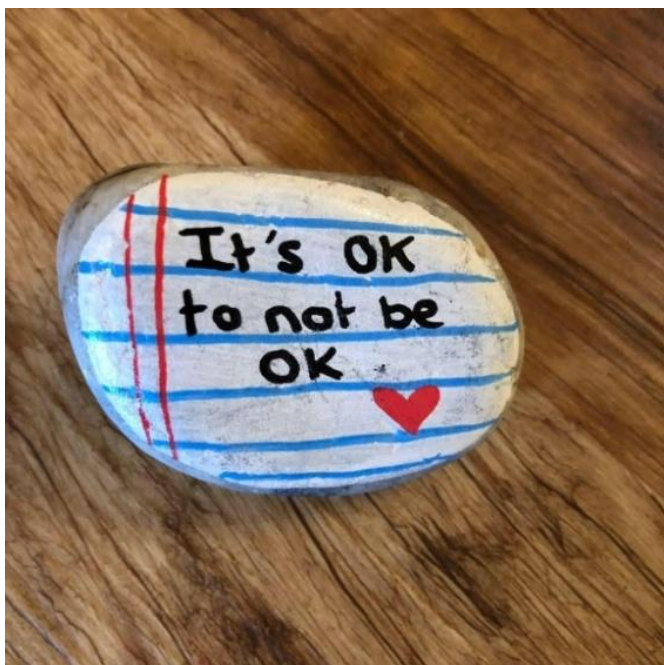
Craft & Produce Fair with Cream Teas

at The Chantry House, Towcester
6th September 2025, 11am-4pm

Quiz Night

at Towcester Mill Brewery
12th November 2025, 8pm
£5 per person entry. Teams of 6 maximum.
Raffle.

Tickets in advance from the Brewery website
<https://towcestermillbrewery.co.uk/collections/events>



Regular Weekly Activities

Our drop-in service is open Monday - Thursday, 10am-3pm.
No booking necessary, just come as you are!

In addition, we offer the following sessions each week/month:

Tuesdays

- Lunch Club (soup & toasted sandwiches), 12pm.
- Join us on a Tuesday afternoon from 1pm for our weekly craft activity.

Wednesdays

- Knit & Natter: A group meets at the back of the café each Wednesday from 10.30am – 12pm to knit and chat together.
- Soup and a stroll: Meet at the café at 12pm. Walk to the Water Meadows and complete one or two circuits, then return to the café for soup and a roll after your stroll.
- Creative Nights take place on the third Wednesday of each month from 7-9pm. Anyone can come along to meet and socialise with others, whilst participating in craft activities they have brought along with them. Complete a project you have started at home or try something new.

Thursdays

- Sandwich Club, 12pm.

Fridays

- Grief, Comfort & Coffee, 10 – 11.30am. Free well-being support for any type of grief or loss.

Saturdays

- Towcester Repair Café takes place on the fourth Saturday of each month, from 10am – 12 noon. Bring along your broken or faulty items to be fixed. The team can turn their hands to just about anything and repair small electrical / kitchen appliances, radios, CD & DVD players, vacuum cleaners, toys, clocks, clothes and furniture.

Contact us:

Email: manager@renew169.org.uk

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07761 041203 (Monday to Friday, between 9am and 3pm)

Website: www.renew169.org.uk

Registered Charity no. 1196631