



April 2024  
Chat Central News

Chat Central is a National Lottery Funded project where we help people to find others with similar interests, to have fun, get out of the house, join in with a hobby, get involved with their community and to find new friends, tackling loneliness and isolation in all its forms in Coventry.

We help people to explore their interests and start doing the things they want to do. Our support is tailored to the person's needs and can be anything from a one-off visit to us for information to longer term support. We have a range of activities including welcome sessions, walks, arts and crafts, yoga, pool, bingo, group volunteering and health talks. Our aim is to reach-out and help anyone in Coventry who is 18 and over, especially if they are bereaved, retired, a new parent, just out of hospital, dealing with an illness or condition that limits their ability to get out, recently arrived in the city or just out of practice with socialising. We help people to:

**meet new friends**

**rediscover interests**

**Or find new ones**

**build confidence**

**volunteer**

We're really looking forward to the brighter days ahead as we move into spring, but the wet weather hasn't stopped us getting out and about, trying new things and meeting new people! We've had a great few months, full of chatty (and slightly soggy!) litter picks, crafts, yoga, song-writing, pool and darts. We've also been out visiting lots of wonderful community groups to enjoy a film night, a theatre visit, a bushcraft course and volunteering in wildlife! Read on to hear all about it...



## Pool Meet Ups and Darts Nights

We continue to meet regularly for pool sessions at Rileys Sports Bar. This is a super relaxed and friendly group, providing an ideal environment for both beginners and pool-pros to enjoy a game together. If you fancy joining us for a few games of pool and a free tea, coffee or lime soda, come along to our **next pool meet up at Rileys on Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> April 2-4pm**. Thank you to Hayley for creating such a warm, fun group for our pool meets.

We've also had a lot of fun playing Digi Darts at Rileys. It was great to get together with a bunch of friendly people for a fun evening out.



## Give it a Go Thursdays!

**Every other Thursday we meet at the United Reformed Church** for our Give it a Go Thursdays – a chance to try something new and have some fun. A beginner-friendly environment to challenge yourself, learn new skills and just 'give it a go'! We love trying new things and keeping it varied. Over the last couple of months we've enjoyed a fabulous song-writing session with our wonderful volunteer John, a beginners yoga session, making some crafty bookmarkers with Linda (another brilliant volunteer – aren't we lucky?!) and a board games afternoon. Lots of fun and new friendships made. Come and **join us in April for our 'Give it a Go' Dance Energise session and Seed Bomb Making**. More info at the end of the newsletter!

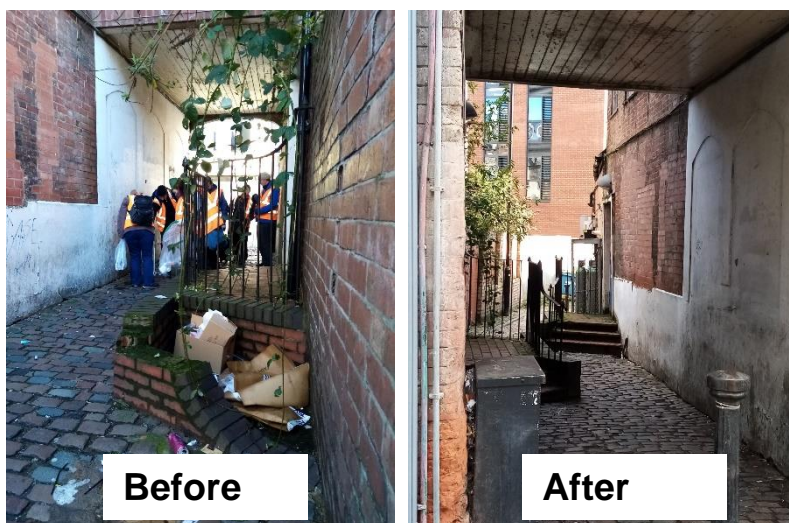




## Mission Possible: Pick n Mix Fri-Yays!

A huge shout out must go to our incredibly dedicated litter picking group, supported by Janette – another long-standing Chat Central volunteer. In February, we did a major clean up of Palmer Lane, one of the few places within the city centre where the River Sherbourne is visible. Found just behind The Burges, the area is sadly often heavily littered, but Chat Central were keen to take on the challenge and completed an amazing clear up. Well done team!

Another recent highlight has been the arrival of our much-anticipated, multi-coloured Hi-Vis jackets – we love being able to add a splash of colour to the streets as we wander around. If you see us while you're out and about, be sure to say hello – we are hard to miss!



We meet every Friday 10am at the Canal Basin Steps and spend an hour or so helping to keep Coventry clean and getting our steps in at the same time! It's a brilliant way to get out and about and meet new people, whilst doing your bit for the community. As the sunnier months approach, we'd love to see some more of you joining us. Come along and give it a go!

## Bushcraft for Wellbeing

Some of our Chat Central participants were excited to begin their bushcraft for wellbeing course on Time to Talk Day, which encourages everyone to start a conversation about mental health. The course, ran by Warwickshire Wildlife Trust, Mind and TEAM, gave our participants the opportunity to learn bushcraft skills and to talk about our wellbeing in a peaceful outdoor setting. We were taught a traditional craft from Latin America called Ojos de Dios which involved winding wool around sticks we found in the beautiful Sherbourne allotments. A wonderful day enjoyed by all!



## Film Night

Chat Central attended Stoke Screen Film Club's showing of 'Rudy', a film set in rural Warwickshire. Rudy tells the story of a young girl trying to come to terms with her loss through a newfound friendship with a boy from Coventry. After the showing, BAFTA-nominated filmmaker/ director Shona Auerbach and producer Graeme Dunn gave a Q & A session discussing how they created the story and filmed 'Rudy' all around Coventry.

One participant, Kane, who has an interest in working in media said, **'I really enjoyed the film. I thought it was a great way to represent Coventry and show the good side to the city and as a guy who wants to become a filmmaker it inspired me to start making more on my own.'**

Kane went on to explain how attending events through Chat Central has helped him. **'Chat Central has been good to me when I've needed it. I've been supported and listened to; they are good at doing that and I'd highly recommended it.'**

## Mission Possible: Guphill Brook Clearance with Warwickshire Wildlife Trust

Chat Central spent Valentine's Day working with our friends at Warwickshire Wildlife Trust cleaning up Guphill Brook, showing our love for the local environment. We were shown how to safely cut back trees, collected bags of litter and tidied up the area stretching from Buckingham Rise to Whitaker Road. Thanks to Warwickshire Wildlife Trust for leading the session and providing us with all the expertise, equipment, and hot drinks we needed! Such a rewarding session and great to make such a positive difference to the local environment.



## Lights Up!

Our friends at Underground Lights invited us to their 'Lights Up' show which was held at the Belgrade Theatre. The performance, which was created by people experiencing social disadvantage, homelessness and/or mental health issues in Coventry & Warwickshire, did not disappoint! It was funny, thought provoking, moving, uplifting and the singing, which included a mixture of covers and original songs, was truly wonderful! One Chat Central participant, Kerri, said, ***"The show was really enjoyable, and I particularly enjoyed the funny parts, especially when the wedding cake had been eaten by a lady with the contents of the cake all over her face! I also found myself singing along to the Bob Marley tracks that the choir were singing. I'd like to see a production of theirs again in the future."***





Lights Up Photographs by M S Seehra February 2024

Kerri went on to explain how being part of Chat Central has supported her. ***“Chat Central has helped me when I was isolated after an operation. When you’re alone, you can sink deeper into a rabbit hole that’s extremely hard to get out by yourself. I personally had a fear of going out but with the support of Chat Central friends and staff, I have been able to overcome that battle and now attend some sessions. Even if you’re having a bad day, just being able to have those conversations with the group can lift spirits along with trying new things that you could not otherwise have tried.”***

### Community Fairs

We’ve had great fun attending Voluntary Action Coventry’s Community Fairs recently and it has been lovely to see a few familiar faces there! These fairs are brilliant opportunities to learn about all the wonderful things going on in our local communities – lots of fun activities to try out and always free refreshments provided. So far, we’ve loved having a go at making seed bombs with Team Springboard, making well-being jars with The Violet Project and matching socks with Coventry Resource Centre for the Blind. We’ve watched incredible dance performances and eaten lots of yummy food.



Come along to one of the upcoming fairs and join in the fun! You are sure to discover something in your community that you didn’t know existed.



Chat Central will be around at all of the fairs, so if you’d like to find out more about the project, what we get up to and how you could be involved, please do come along and say “hi!” to us.

#### Upcoming fairs:

Tues 16 April, 11am -2.30pm St Philip’s Church, 25 Ringwood Highway, Coventry, CV2 2GG

Wed 8 May, 12pm – 2.30pm: Jubilee Crescent Community Centre, Jubilee Crescent, Radford, Coventry, CV6 3EX

Thurs 23 May, 11am – 2.30pm: WATCH Community Centre, 12 Victoria Street, Hillfields, Coventry, CV1 5LZ

## COMING UP IN APRIL...

Thurs 4 <sup>th</sup> April	2:00 – 4:00 pm	Dance Energise with Mandy	United Reformed Church, Warwick Road CV1 4DX	FREE
Tues 9 <sup>th</sup> April	2:00 – 4:00 pm	Pool meetup with Hayley	Rileys Sports Bar, Butts Rd CV1 3JZ	FREE
Thurs 11 <sup>th</sup> April	10:00 – 11:30	Walk and Talk Charterhouse and Sherbourne River	Meet at the steps to the new Coventry Cathedral, CV1 5AB	FREE
Fri 12 <sup>th</sup> April	10:00 – 11:30 am	Mission Possible: Pick 'n' Mix. City walk + <b>Litter-picking</b>	Meet @ Canal Basin Steps CV1 4LW	FREE
Tues 16 <sup>th</sup> April	11:00 – 2:30 pm	Potters Green Community Fair <b>Welcome to Chat Central</b> and other community organisations.	St. Philips Church Potters Green CV2 2GG	FREE
Thurs 18 <sup>th</sup> April	2:00 – 4:00 pm	Warwickshire Wildlife Trust – Seed-Bomb Making and Info	United Reformed Church, Warwick Road CV1 4DX	FREE
Fri 19 <sup>th</sup> April	10:00 – 11:30 am	Mission Possible: Pick 'n' Mix. City walk + <b>Litter-picking</b>	Meet @ Canal Basin Steps CV1 4LW	FREE
Tues 23 <sup>rd</sup> April	2:00 – 4:00 pm	Pool meetup with Hayley	Rileys Sports Bar, Butts Rd CV1 3JZ	FREE
Weds 24 <sup>th</sup> April	10:00 – 11:30	Walk and Talk War Memorial Park	Meet at the monument, War Memorial Park, CV3 6HR	FREE
Fri 26 <sup>th</sup> April	10:00 – 11:30 am	Mission Possible: Pick 'n' Mix. City walk + <b>Litter-picking</b>	Meet @ Canal Basin Steps CV1 4LW	FREE



Facebook is a great way to stay up to date with Chat Central activities. Check out videos to find out more about our [Friday walks](#) and [how the whole project works](#).

Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/ChatCentralVAC>



Come along to **FREE** welcoming & fun events in Coventry. Build **confidence**, get into socialising, feel more **connected** & start **making a difference!**



[CHATCENTRAL@VACOVENTRY.ORG.UK](mailto:CHATCENTRAL@VACOVENTRY.ORG.UK)  
**CALL 07541 343 491**



# Dance Energise with Mandy

Thursday 4th April, 2-4pm  
United Reformed Church, Warwick Row (CV1 1EX), Large Room

A gentle, dance-based exercise session.

Give your mind and body a boost by moving to some tunes!  
Completely beginner friendly and seated options available.  
Wear comfy clothes, drinks and fruit provided.

GIVE IT A GO THURSDAYS

FREE  
Just turn up!



For more info call: 07541 343 491  
email: chatcentral@vacoventry.org.uk

# Seed bomb making

with The Sherbourne Valley Project  
Led by Warwickshire Wildlife Trust

GIVE IT A GO THURSDAYS

Thursday 18th April  
2-4pm  
United Reformed Church  
Warwick Road CV1 1EX

FREE - just turn up!

Have a go at making a seed bomb!  
Learn about what Warwickshire Wildlife Trust get up to in Coventry and how you could get involved.

For more info call: 07541 343 491  
email: chatcentral@vacoventry.org.uk

## APRIL 2024 EVENTS

At Chat Central, you will find a friendly place to:

- Make connections
- Try something new
- Get Active
- Chill and watch
- Chat, share and support
- Meet up and socialise
- Get into volunteering
- Skills and visits
- Walk and explore Coventry
- Arts, crafts, singing

Up to 20 sessions to support you find groups and volunteering in your community.



WELCOME TO CHAT CENTRAL  
TUES 16TH APRIL  
COMMUNITY FAIR  
ST. PHILIPS CHURCH, POTTERS GREEN, RINGWOOD HIGHWAY CV2 2GG  
10:30 AM - 3:00 PM  
JOIN US FOR A TASTER SESSION AND EXPLORE OTHER OPPORTUNITIES IN THE COMMUNITY

CHATCENTRAL@VACOVENTRY.ORG.UK  
CALL: 07541 343491

### Tuesdays

9th & 23rd Pool meetup with Hayley  
2-4pm, Rileys, The Butts, CV1 3JZ **FREE**

### Wednesdays

24th - Walk and Talk War Memorial Park  
10:00 - 11:30 Meet at the monument, War Memorial Park, CV3 6HR **FREE**

### Thursdays

4th - Dance Energise with Mandy  
2-4pm The United Reformed Church large room Warwick Road. CV1 1EX **FREE**

11th - Walk and Talk - Charterhouse and River Sherbourne. 10:00 - 11:30 Meet @ steps to Coventry Cathedral CV1 5AB **FREE**

18th - Seed-Bomb Making and Talk from Warwickshire Wildlife Trust

2-4pm The United Reformed Church large room Warwick Road. CV1 1EX **FREE**

### Fridays

City Walk . Pick n'Mix.  
10-11.30am weekly. Meet @ Canal Basin steps CV1 4LW. We walk, we connect & we clean up Cov! **FREE (no walk on 5th)**

5th April - Wellbeing Walk and Talk with EnV 12:00 - 2:00pm Meet at the War Memorial Park Visitor Centre, CV3 6GJ  
Please book your **FREE** place through Chat Central by 21st March

Pick n'mix  
Fri-yays!

MISSION POSSIBLE



Group Volunteering Experiences

We walk, talk, & clean up Cov!

Meet us at the Canal Basin steps CV1 4LW  
Fridays  
10-11.30am

We'll take a gentle walk around the city, litter-picking as we go!

All equipment provided

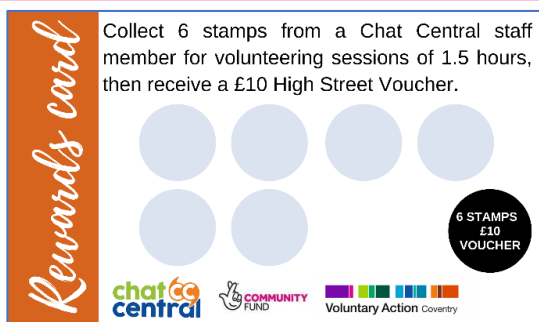


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CALL 07541 343 491

Chat Central is a project of VAC and funded by TNL



Voluntary Action Coventry



## Chat Central are looking for volunteers...

- Are you able to help people to feel better about themselves?
- Do you like talking to people and getting involved?
- Do you accept people as they are?
- Can you put yourself in their shoes and think about their experience of life?
- Do you understand, or have you experienced loneliness, and can you relate to how it affects people?
- Can you listen well to others?
- Are you happy to work with and accept differences?
- Are you happy to work under the guidance of the Engagement Officer and buddy volunteer, following suggestions about the needs of the people we work with and health and safety issues?
- Do you value the benefits of group work, community, and how activities like crafts and hobbies bring people together and build confidence?

We are looking for people to help with serving refreshments or leading activities such as arts and crafts, yoga, bingo.... and chatters to help people feel welcome.

## Volunteering with Chat Central

We are always grateful to our wonderful volunteers who help add extra quality to our sessions by sharing their skills and helping with the running of events.

If you have a skill you'd like to share at our meet ups, or if you'd like to come along to help serve refreshments and chat to people, we'd love to hear from you. If interested, please contact Celia on 07541 343 491.

Chat Central also welcomes volunteers and participants who are new to the UK and can help support and direct people to improving language skills, self-confidence and build people up to start volunteering in the community.

We pay for expenses and travel and also offer a special reward card where 6 volunteering stamps earns a High Street Voucher.

## Find out more:



Call Celia (Engagement Officer) or WhatsApp

07541 343491

Email:

[chatcentral@vacoventry.org.uk](mailto:chatcentral@vacoventry.org.uk)

[www.facebook.com/ChatCentralVAC](http://www.facebook.com/ChatCentralVAC)



Call or WhatsApp Sarah (Project Assistant): 07729 290317