

# Community Stories

The Voice of a Carer after the Pandemic: Isobel's Story

Carer's Support at Govenek



***“Everyone you meet is fighting a battle you know nothing about. Be kind. Always.”  
Robin Williams.***

Isobel's Story, was provided by Karolina, Age UK Cornwall's Active Living Activities Coordinator.

Isobel joined Govenek Community Hub's Carers Support Group, and provided feedback on her situation and the impact of caring for a loved one. This is her story.

## ***Isobel***

Being a carer for a loved one with a terminal illness is a challenging and emotionally draining experience under the best of circumstances. However, the COVID-19 pandemic and resulting lockdowns added a layer of complexity and isolation to an already difficult situation. Isobel, newly bereaved by the death of her father, and coming to terms with her cancer diagnosis and thus early retirement, found herself in this situation - caring for her mother, who had dementia.

One of the biggest challenges facing carers during lockdown was the limited access to support networks and resources; Many had to shut down or move online, which made sign-posting and access difficult. Additionally, with social distancing guidelines in place, carers were not able to rely on family and friends, who could provide much-needed respite and support.

*“Taking on the role as an informal carer whilst battling cancer was overwhelming, I had the challenge of caring for someone during the pandemic which came with the increased risk of exposure to COVID-19. This added to my already high levels of stress and anxiety.”*

Despite these challenges, Isobel felt it was important to prioritise her physical and mental

wellbeing by finding new ways to connect with support networks and discovering online resources and services to help. Self-care activities became a priority, making time for exercise, meditation, and hobbies to prevent burnout and maintain emotional resilience. Isobel was signposted to Age UK Cornwall Govenek Hub and the Carers Support Group.

Govenek is one of a trio of hubs which offer a warm welcome and a range of services which include: activities, home-cooked meals, entertainment, self-care & wellbeing support, excursions, and friendship.

**Clients enjoying a lovely ice cream in the sunshine.**



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## Carers Support

The Carers Support Group is a lifeline where meet-ups are centred around spending time with others who can actively listen, support, advise, and above all empathise.

*"I first stepped foot into Govenek after being signposted there. Unfortunately, it was October 2021 and Covid was dictating numbers, so there wasn't anyone to assist me. Nevertheless, I was warmly welcomed and that stayed with me. Shortly afterwards I heard about the carers Support Group meetings via social media and felt that attending those would be good for me."*

Ultimately, while caring for a loved one with a terminal illness is incredibly difficult, it is important to remember that carers are not alone. There are many resources and \*support networks available to help navigate challenging times. Through prioritising personal health and wellbeing, carers can better support loved ones through their journey.

*"To be able to take time out every two weeks and talk to people who understand the trials of being a carer makes such a difference to my mental health. I can express my thoughts in a way that I cannot with my immediate family. The groups and facilities are better than medicine."*

The flyer for the Newquay Carers Group features a central photograph of an elderly woman with white hair sitting on a sofa and talking to another person. The background is a warm, golden-yellow color with a large, stylized white circle behind the photo. Text is arranged in a clean, modern font. Logos for Age UK Cornwall & The Isles of Scilly and the Purple Angels Drop-in Session are visible in the top right corner.

**Newquay Carers Group**

**Fortnightly  
10:00am - 11:30am**

**Contact us for more details**

Govenek Community Hub  
Crantock St, Newquay  
TR7 1JR

**Friendly, informal get-togethers, where you can chat with others about your caring role.**

**Purple Angels Drop-in Session**

**Suggested donation of £2 per person**

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\*One such network is the Community Gateway. Age UK Cornwall and its partner organisations provide a dedicated telephone line, which is available for everyone and has access to a wide range of professional voluntary sector support. Open 0800 - 2000, seven days a week, 365 days a year. You can call the Community Gateway on 01872 266383.

*This story was published by Lee Davies, Age UK Cornwall - contact [lee.davies@ageukcornwall.org.uk](mailto:lee.davies@ageukcornwall.org.uk) for enquiries*