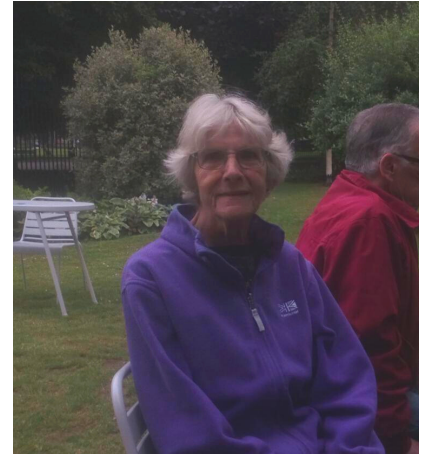


# Helena and Christine's Stories

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A small group of people within the Walking programme, One You Walking <https://bit.ly/3xAO1OI> has started organising themselves to meet every week at a café in Page Park, Staple Hill <https://bit.ly/3wgB48M> during the pandemic. Helena has been leading 10 people (members) of the group and coordinates a regular coffee morning at Bean Tree Café in Page Park, Staple Hill (currently every Tuesday 10am). This 'Friendship Circle' has offered a space for people to enjoy companionship and grow friendships during the pandemic.



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## Q. What makes you carry on being involved ?

'It's good for everyone and we are really good friends now. We know Chris living with his son but we sort of look out for him to make sure he is all right when he is out of hospital by phoning him up'. Helena

'I have a bit of an issue with new people at Walking Group When we socialise after the walk I tended to sit with the same people. I wanted to know other new people but I couldn't. Now I feel better and more confident mixing with people after I have got to know more people through the group. It has me done good and certainly done good for my grandson, James'.

'To be fair people in the group is the only people I see other than my family. I don't see anybody else. Aside from the fact that they are a marvellous group of people. Everybody is so welcoming and friendly. It is all I do. In some way it is not as good as I would like because I have to bring my grandson, James and I don't get involved in the conversations as much as I would like to, but it is all or nothing. If I couldn't bring him then I wouldn't come then I would lose in touch with friends'. Christine



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## Q. How do we build back communities for older people?

I think we can create hospitable place for older people like this. It could be a friendship circle, even you can start with two people welcoming everybody, if it provides companionship for them. It has started off small by inviting people and soon friendships grew'. Christine