

Jill's story

*Souper Natter is a newly formed community group in Thornbury who facilitate space by organising a food event. The group welcomes any residents in Thornbury who are lonely or isolated at home on their own for those to make connections, build friendships and gain confidence in the community. Jill has started being involved with Souper Natter by giving a talk at Memory Cafe group to promote an event and organised the Breakfast event at the local pub, The Swan. For more information follow Facebook @SouperNatter or contact soupernatter@gmail.com

Q. What makes you carry on being involved in your community?

I lived in Thornbury area for past 13 years, having decided to return to the UK after living in the USA for 14 years. Main reason for moving to this region was the further south and west we could live the more idyllic but needed to work so Bristol area was perfect and local schools had a good reputation. Kids have made many friends but recognise it's harder to make friends as you get older. Over the past 3 years family circumstances have changed dramatically with the loss of both parents to Alzheimer's within weeks of each other, and then last year during the 1st lockdown the loss of my husband to a rare and aggressive cancer. With no family remaining, and friends unable to provide physical support because of covid, it really served to highlight how on my own I was for the 1st time in my adult life, and how difficult it must be for everyone (whatever their own circumstances) to deal with the ongoing isolation that it has brought for so many.



*Souper Natter is a residents led community group in Thornbury which facilitates space by organising a food event for any people over 50, who are lonely or isolated at home for those to make connections, build friendships and gain confidence in the community. For more information follow the facebook @SouperNatter or contact soupernatter@gmail.com

Q How can we build welcoming communities for older people?

"Doorway into positivity"

Older people find it harder to make friends, though they often do want to get out and just be able to socialise without commitment or an agenda. A lot of activities available are associated with a church or are centred around finding a prospective partner, which is not necessarily what people are looking for. Some just want somewhere to go or something to do that will get them out of the house and into the community, and talking to people again. Many like myself might prefer to discover for themselves what else is out there and have a chat without it being about any particular subject e.g. bereavement, children etc. They are just looking for that entry point, that doorway into positivity, and a safe contact point for networking and information.

