

? A DAY CENTRE FOR THE ELDERLY IN THE WYCHWOODS AREA?

About 40 people attended an open meeting in Shipton Village Hall on 17th October 1996, to hear a presentation by Rodney Kane of Oxfordshire C. C. Social Services Department. He spoke about the kinds of provision made by the Department for the care of elderly people. He said that in general terms, most people between the ages of 65 and 78 could cope reasonably well without extra help, but increasing frailty of people of 80 and above often leads to isolation, as a result of increasing lack of mobility, fewer relatives and friends, and so on. Hence the need for Day Centres to counteract this isolation and to assist families and friends.

In the area of the Wychwood villages, with Fifield, Idbury and Leafield, there are a number of people needing this kind of facility - and the current proposal is to try to develop one in one of the Wychwood villages, initially to serve about 15 people, operating one day a week, largely financed by a grant from the Social Services Department, but run by volunteers from within the local community.

A Steering Committee of ten people has been formed, with the objective of exploring thoroughly all the details needed to put together a viable project. It is planned to call another public meeting when this has been done, and if the Committee can recommend proceeding further, a Day Centre Association would be formed, with a management committee to oversee the full development and running of the project, and with a salaried part-time organiser responsible for day to day administration.

For the scheme to succeed we should need, amongst other things, an adequate number of volunteer helpers, as there would be little point in starting a service which could not be sustained. 27 people have already offered to help, but we would need considerably more reliable offers of help, so that helping did not become an unreasonable burden on a limited number of willing hands, and to provide a reserve for emergencies.

Help would be needed for transport, assisting in various forms of entertainment, and with serving meals, refreshment etc, as well as offering simple companionship. Where necessary, training would be provided.

If any reader would like further information, would they kindly contact the undersigned.

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