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June Village Agent News

June is a special month for us as the 7-13th is Carers Week. Carers Week is an annual campaign to raise awareness of caring, highlight the challenges unpaid carers face and recognise the contribution they make to families and communities throughout the UK. It also helps people who don't think of themselves as having caring responsibilities to identify as carers and access much-needed support.

This year we are coming together to **Make Caring Visible and Valued.**

The week is dedicated to celebrating those unpaid Carers in our midst, those who look after others, whether that's a partner, parent or child with disabilities. It is very rewarding, but can be quite lonely at times, and the past year of lockdowns has only amplified that.

In Somerset it is estimated there are 66,000 unpaid Carers – but often people do not see themselves (or want to see themselves) as a Carer, and as a result may be missing out on crucial support both financially and emotionally that they are entitled to.

The Village Agents provide support for unpaid Carers. Whatever the need – from needing to know where to get equipment to help you day to day or arranging for a micro-provider to pop in a couple of times a week as a sitting service, to checking you are getting the correct Carers Allowance – we are ready to help make your day-to-day life a little easier. In December we delivered over 100 respite meal packs to carers in Somerset – 7 days' worth of meals for the carer and the cared for to give people a little break from cooking. Please get in touch if that would help you!

Many people feel they do not need any support, and actually are coping fine without any services 'coming in' to help, however we would say raise your hand! Be seen and heard! That way we can help and support you BEFORE you get to a point where you may be in crisis and you don't know where to turn – you may not feel you need any help and support right now, but we can just check in with you, so you know what's available if and when you feel you would benefit from further advice. We have a freephone Carers Advice line you can call 0800 31 68 600 or text 'CARER' to 78070 and the Carers Advice line will call you back.

Our website www.somersetcarers.org has a Carers Hub – where you can find training available relevant to the condition of the person you are caring for, or support groups, advice and much more – a real one-stop shop for advice for carers in Somerset – please check it out and let us know what you think!

During Carers Week our Talking Cafes will be hosting special Carers themed days - **tune in Tuesday – Thursday at 1pm on www.facebook.com/talkingcafesomerset! Keep an eye on**

**our social media for other exciting plans we have for Carers that week – Facebook or
Twitter @SomersetCarers**