Ripple Effect Map: Perspectives from Chatter & Natter Table Beneficiaries and Volunteers.

What happens at a Chatter & Natter Table?
They create communities and change lives! Here are some stories from those involved.

3 more attendees are happy to take over as hosts so we are all going to rotate and host the table together.

Our table is pretty well established and can run without a host, but it feels better to have someone there to facilitate it all and welcome new people.

I've enjoyed seeing the group grow over the time and I became 'deputy' host when the official volunteer went on holiday. I have decided to train to be an official volunteer so I can't provide more support.

1 lady in a wheelchair would love to come every week but was struggling to get here, so another attendee kindly provides lifts to and from the C&N table.

Caterers at the venue offered to sponsor the C&N table which means we now offer free drinks and cake.

We promote our C&N table on local Facebook groups and mention free cake and coffee is available, this removes any financial barriers to people attending.

Getting involved in Chatty Cafe helped me realise that I could help others.

I sponsored a Ukrainian Family who stayed with us for 9 months.

They are now living locally and we meet up.

It's when people who attend the C&N table rally around when something bad happens and want to help and show support, that makes me realise how the C&N table has created a community.

Jane comes along who was caring for her partner who had dementia. Sadly her partner passed away but what has been amazing is how the C&N group have supported her. She's received help with funeral arrangements (as another attendees works at the local Funeral Parlour and offered to help). People have taken food around, phoned her, etc. Its been wonderful to see.

It started off with just 1 person and over the weeks more have joined, we've formed friendships and genuinely created a community. Its now been running for over 1 year.

We now meet in the village and all walk to the café together and chat and then do the same after the session - we are all doing more exercise and chatting!

Within just a couple of weeks, attendance at the table has grown so much we now use 2 tables.

Our table is at a café that is quite secluded, and I worried that would put people off coming.

Last week one resident at the Care Home went from being distant to joining in and smiling. At first her speech seemed a bit slurry and after a while, her conversations started to make more sense. It was great to see the positive impact of chatting, in such a short space of time.

The Care Home asked if they could bring residents to my C&N sessions to encourage people to get out and about a bit more.

Its now a two way thing - those who come along to my C&N table visit the Care Home residents, and sometimes the Care Home residents come to my C&N sessions.

Another Care Home has been in touch to ask if they can link up with us and do something similar.

Some of the elderly Care Home residents don't get many visitors. We are new people they can chat to, to help them socially interact and chat about new things.

As a volunteer, my social circle has widened due to people I've met at the C&N table

I organised a Christmas lunch for everyone last Christmas

Asking people to come and chat, and explaining how them being their can help others, can be a good thing to do. It gives people more of a sense of purpose.

I try and make sure the tables are welcoming and as welcoming as possible.

Biggest challenge to overcome is people's fear of walking into a venue on their own, and joining a C&N table for the first time.

In this situation it can be helpful to have 2 hosts to help give people the appropriate amount of attention. Multitasking by hosts is definitely needed.

A couple of people around age 38 who have SEN needs, as a host I am aware that they need a bit more support/attention.

We've joined forces and the charity uses their minibuses to help bring people to and from our C&N table.

I help host a table at our local church. I also volunteer as a driver for a charity that helps take people out and about.

This has led to an even bigger group and more social connections being made.

We've linked up with another C&N table locally - connecting lots more people

Where our C&N group goes into a local care home and we sit and chat to their elderly residents.

Our table has gone from being individual people each struggling in different ways to a strong community of people who look out for each other

Some C&N attendees meet up separately in smaller groups depending on their interests.

At our last C&N session there was talk of setting up a carol singing night

14 C&N attendees are going on a Christmas lunch together. Its wonderful how people have supported each other and how they can meet up, especially when you think in previous years, some have spent Christmas on their own.

Mark is currently undertaking cancer treatment. She said the C&N table has changed her life. She is grateful for the company and being able to chat about anything and finds this so helpful.

I got a Facebook message from a lady whose mum comes to my table. She said her mum's confidence has grown lots since joining, and that she has started other groups like the Women's Institute and U3A. Her daughter emailed me to say thanks - so lovely to read.

This year I'm encouraging attendees to organise a Christmas lunch amongst themselves, as they are certainly keen to do it.

In my village I'm recognised as the lady who does 'chatty café' - it's such a a nice thing and means people are talking about our table, helping to spread the word and leading to more people joining.

Howard and I are planning a trip out for the group and he is really enthusiastic, he told me he feels for the first time in years like he is needed

After a few weeks Howard asked if there was anything he could do to help me and he now stands at the door welcoming people and telling them where we are sitting

Howard told me the first time he came, he found sitting at a table with strangers really hard, but he stayed because everyone was so friendly

Jack takes off his coat as soon as he arrives, grabs a coffee and heads straight into a chat with me, I love that. As a volunteer, its satisfying knowing you have created a comfortable space for people to natter away.

I love seeing someone who comes back a second, third, fourth time and more, and seeing them looking increasingly relaxed each week. Some people start off looking so nervous when they join, but you can see their confidence grow after just a few weeks.

We do 'Chatty Cafe on Tour!'

We are all good mates and look out for each other.

There are lots of similarities amongst those who attend, they are mainly women and wanted to have more social things in their lives.

Sub group have formed where some of the ladies meet in smaller groups and do things like shopping or go to other coffee shops.

This has meant they have more social things to do in addition to our Chatter & Natter table

Jo often speaks about knowing a lot more people in the town due to the C&N table

Our C&N group attracts lots of women but some men have been in touch but said they'd prefer an evening session in the pub, so we've just started an evening session, we had 6 last week and we're hoping it'll grow.

A load of us are off to Alloa Voyage Concert and we can't wait! 22 C&N attendees have booked to come and I've arranged for a local coach company to take us - so excited!!

We've planned a Christmas lunch, it was originally for C&N attendees but we've decided to open it up to the wider community and we've put it on the Burningtree! facebook group and poster. Other people might be on their own and want to come along.

Claire, Evelyn, Amy and I met at the C&N table and now go on shopping/coffee trips and we have a group own What's app group.

The group I go to had 15 people last week, but often about 6-8 are attended consistently every week, others drop in and out.

The table is pretty busy (much more than expected). I've had to speak to the café owner and move the C&N table to a Monday (when the café is quietest) so we can all fit in!

Marie came to the first session alone, shy, didn't really speak much at first, but as the session went on she started talking a bit more.

I was so pleased this week when Marie said she'd felt more confident to go out since our meeting last week.

This week Marie told me (the volunteer) that a new wine bar has just opened in the village and even though she had no one to go with, she called in to show support for the new business. A lady from last weeks C&N was in there and called her over. They shared a bottle of wine together - I was over the moon to hear this!!

I had a situation where I don't think someone could afford to buy a drink

So I now put a jug of iced water on the table, so if someone cant afford a coffee - they can at least grab a water to drink so they have something to hold.

The group took a while to build, it was hard at first but after about 3 months it really picked up in numbers.

Doing this and making a success of it has given me the confidence to join other groups. I am now part of a choir and something group. I don't know if the people who sit at my C&N table know, but those in my group have really helped me and widened my social network, possibly without realising it.

I set up a C&N table because I was new to the area and wanted to meet people. I'd moved house and had health issues. I hold the table on a Wednesday which is when I don't work. I needed something to get me out of bed and to have purpose on my day off.

I recently moved here from the Isle of Wight. I live on my own and I was looking for something to do and to feel part of. I love the C&N table and feel that my confidence has grown so much since attending. I used to look after my grandchildren quite a lot and I'd been feeling a bit lost since they've grown up and don't need me as much.

I am 96 years old and go to a C&N table every Wednesday and Thursday without fail. I look forward to it every week, I enjoy the general chit chat and like having somewhere to go.

I don't have family nearby, my children live abroad and I spend a lot of time alone, so the C&N table has really helped.

Joyce, in her late 70s comes to the C&N table because she lives with a large family (daughter, son-in-law, kids) and she to get out of the house for some peace!

I've been surprised at the mix of ages at the table and how loneliness affects so many people (not just older).

Hosting a C&N table has confirmed to me that loneliness is a massive problem and that there are so many people struggling with mental health challenges.

Based on my experience hosting a table, I definitely think C&N tables can help tackle loneliness.

I used to put conversation ideas on wooden lolly pop sticks and place them on the table, in case conversation dried up - but we don't need them anymore.

I've been hosting a table for about 4-5 weeks now. No-one knew each other before joining the table.

I think one of the most important things to get the word out and encourage people to go to C&N tables is making connections and relationship building with organisations and people who are in a position to refer people to local services. They are often speaking to those who could benefit the most and can signpost people to your C&N table.

In promoting my table, I've got to know people running the local foodbank, social prescribers at doctors surgeries, those running warm spaces, and more. Building these relationships has made me an integral part of the community and the C&N table an important service for people in the area.

After meeting so many people at the table I feel far more connected and rooted in the place I live than ever before.

Emily says the C&N table gives her the opportunity to offload and she is so grateful to have the space to do that

Emily also attends, she's a young mum who has two children with SEN needs

4 of us help host our C&N table

I host previously ran for Councillor and has quite a high profile in Uttoxeter and lots of people know her. I've been surprised how many people come to the table because they know the host.

Participants and hosts share information about local activities with each other.

They are effectively doing their own signposting. For example, last week, a lady was telling someone about a local school that has good SEN support, that could be good for her children who have support needs.

Lots of attendees have accessed other services after finding out about them at a C&N table.

Hosting a C&N table has been good professional development for me and is very satisfying.

My first table has gone well and I've got some free time so I'm thinking of setting one up in another café.

I have a background in social care which means I'm quite good at spotting if someone seems distant and I can pick up on little questions or comments that might need more support than others.

After 4 weeks I've now got 8 people coming to my C&N table, we all get on so well.

The C&N table has helped me so much. I've joined other local activities which I'd never have thought of before, I now sing in a men's walking football club. The C&N table has helped bring me 'out of my shell'.

I (Brian) was very down when I first joined. I'm a carer for my wife and it makes socialising quite difficult.

Claire, a social prescriber that works with our local doctors, was desperate for loneliness tackling activities to refer people to, so loved the idea of a C&N table. She often refers people to my table.

If I see someone is sat on their own, I ask if they'd like to join my C&N table.

Backgrounds of people attending is so varied and conversations can be fascinating. We have cyclists, walkers, tourist and all sorts.

I give out lots of leaflets advising people 'what's on' in the local area.

Lots of people are interested in the C&N concept and if they are tourists, often say they will look out for a C&N table in their home town. I like to think they become 'Chatty Café Ambassadors' after visiting.

I've thought about applying for local funds, like Parish Councils, to see if they would be interested in funding future sessions.

We are trialling C&N table at a pub and they have agreed to give discount on drinks for people sitting at the C&N table.

Other volunteers could approach local businesses to see if they would sponsor drinks - some are really keen to get involved and might mean putting their logo on flyers, etc.

Especially useful considering concerns about the cost of living crisis and people can get more fed up/isolated if they can't afford to get out and about.

It was good to put on my local Facebook page that drinks were free for anyone struggling. It helped remove any financial barriers if the cost of getting drinks would put people off coming.

A local Estate Agent 'sponsors' our table and gives money to the café every month, to help pay for drinks. Its not a lot (about £30 a month) but it helps for anyone who is struggling financially.

The Mayor comes along to our C&N table and fully supports it and Town council staff help put up posters to let as many people as possible know about it.

There are lots of other groups in the Town, but they seem really well established and have been running for years. Everyone seems to know everyone and it kind of put me off from going.

Good thing about the C&N table is that its a relatively new concept and group. So there aren't existing 'clicks' and people can come and go, making it easier to attend and join in, as everyone is 'in the same boat'

One of the things I do as a volunteer, is to listen if people have similar life experiences and I sometimes share my experiences of being a carer for someone. If two people have gone through a recent disease or bereavement, it can be a big support. If they can share these challenges with someone who has experienced something similar.

Staff in the Town Council office put up Chatty Cafe posters and share information on the table, ie. days/times and help spread the word. The Local Town Council also provided a grant to help cover the cost of drinks.

Some attendees have similar interests and meet out outside the C&N table.

Some attendees have built up the confidence to join other local groups, such as 'Just Friends' where they go on trips and meet up in pubs.

Some attendees meet up and go to Church Events

I do another volunteering group (Good Neighbours) and some of the people from that group have started coming to my C&N table.

Our C&N table featured on ITV! Getting so much media attention was unexpected.

After hearing about us, Will came to our table. He does a lot for men's mental health, including a monthly walk for men only. He invited men at the C&N table to go along.

Will is also a keen runner and encouraged a few of us to do the 'Coach to 5k' challenge.

Anna joined Will's 'Coach to 5k' training group and now runs 3 times a week.

Will let runners in his group know about the C&N table, and some came along.

She has recently signed up to do the London half marathon.

I suspect we have some of the oldest participants attending a Chatty cafe table with Eileen and Annie both at 99yrs and Daphne at a mere 96yrs young!

I fully believe the concept works, its such a good/simple idea and has helped reduce loneliness in a tremendous way. My love for it has inspired me to volunteer. I want to help to keep in going.

It's been nice to meet others in similar situations to me.

There are 3 disabled people in our C&N group and we are all in our 50s.

Last week, Emma exchanged numbers with Ian about going to an art exhibition. They are very different ages but found a common interest (art) which is fabulous.

The C&N table helps form friendships.

People exchange numbers at the table which is lovely to see!

Andy is in a wheelchair and has carers Monday to Friday, but not at the weekends - we couldn't believe he doesn't have weekend support.

Emily says the best thing about the C&N group is that it's somewhere you can go for a 'normal' chat, ie. conversations are not geared around certain topics. And it's for whoever wants to chat and start a conversation about anything.

C&N tables give people a place to go to have social interaction and meet new people

C&N tables give the venue the opportunity to 'give back' to the local area

I am aged 74, disabled, with COPD, and was struggling to leave the house.

My wife found out about the C&N table and forced me to go!

I have now been attending for over 1 year and have become a volunteer.

I started hosting the table last month, as the original host is running an evening session, so we can offer day and evening C&N times.

The C&N table has helped tackle loneliness and connect people in an enormous way.

A few of us have come together and used our personal experience/knowledge of disability allowances to support Andy to arrange carers at the weekend and argue his case for this to happen.