**Humble crafters group of Earby could be the answer to end loneliness!**

Written on 19 April 2018.

The Humble crafters group started back in February 2017 and runs every Tuesday morning from 9.15am until 11.30am at Humble Pie cafe on Colne Road in Earby. There are now 12-15 regular members who meet every week. Some people attend as and when they want to. Sarah Clay who runs the group said:

“I hope that we can link crafting and social prescribing together. Social groups like these are very important. You can meet new people, learn a new skill at the same time and it gets people out and about.”

Another member of the group, who suffers from anxiety likes to attend these groups and says its something to look forward every week and said:

“This craft group has really helped with my anxiety and depression. Crafting helps me move my mind towards crafting and it takes my thoughts away from depression and worries. You also meet like minded people. All in the group are very welcoming and very friendly and we all get on with one another.”

Dr Phil Huxley, Chair, NHS East Lancashire CCG and a GP at Earby Surgery said:

“NHS East Lancashire invests heavily in social prescribing because we see the important role that community groups and activities have in helping people keep fit and stay well. The Craft and Chat Group is a lovely way of bringing people together for a common purpose to benefit others. Groups such as this can really help reduce social isolation and loneliness which we know can negatively affect physical and mental health.”

Crafting has been known to help with Dementia and Alzheimer’s. People always remember how to knit and crochet.

A lot of people who book appointments are lonely and need someone to speak to. Social groups like this not only help the individuals themselves with meeting like-minded people but it also helps ease pressure off the GP surgery.

Christine Barwell is a regular at the group and is making dog coats for ‘Saving our Podenco dogs charity.’ Christine said:

“I am not only helping with my own health and wellbeing but it’s helping a good cause at the same time. This craft group is like a lifeline and is something I look forward to. I make sure I don’t book anything on a Tuesday morning so that I can attend this crafting group. “

Another lady in the group suffers from MS and looks forward to coming. It gives her something to focus on. Everyone who attends this group has their own reason for attending. Some people come because they are a carer and it gives them a break from caring. Others come to meet people.

Knitting and crochet is very therapeutic and helps people get lost in the pattern and they forget about other things. Sarah would like to see more groups like this in other GP surgeries.

There is scientific evidence to support crafting:

"Is knitting therapeutic? Heck yes. It’s a proven scientific fact, just like we know chocolate and red wine are good for us. Since turning my life over to yarn, I’ve talked to thousands of knitters who claim it’s cured everything from gout to their weight problems. I can’t speak to all cures, but it can certainly improve one’s mental health. I know it helps mine.”

So says Clara Parkes, author of the just-released book *The Yarn Whisperer: Reflections of a Life in Knitting* (STC Craft/A Melanie Falick Book) and the founder and publisher of KnittersReview.com.  Personal testimonies, anecdotal evidence, and medical studies all back up Clara Parkes’ claims.

In 2007, Renee Magee was diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis. The disease affects the central nervous system and she describes the experience of her illness as being “like having pregnancy brain—only it doesn’t go away.”

Magee, though, has a secret weapon in her health arsenal: Knitting needles.

“I’ve found that it’s really good for the brain to work on something where you have to focus,” says the 36-year-old knitter. “You’re following through on something and you’re following a pattern, it’s mental exercise.”

If anyone would like to have a go at knitting these please contact the craft and chat group on the details below to discuss further.

**How to access the group?**

The group is a drop in and you don’t have to knit or crochet; sometimes people just come and have a chat. It is absolutely **free** to attend.

Humble Pie
3-5 Colne Rd
Earby
Barnoldswick
BB18 6XB

Facebook: [@Earbycraftandchat](https://eastlancsccg.nhs.uk/%40Earbycraftandchat)

Twitter: [@Earbycrafts](https://eastlancsccg.nhs.uk/%40Earbycrafts)