

FENLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL

PRESS RELEASE

November 15, 2023

Free supportive age and dementia friendly exercise classes come to Fenland

Specialist age and dementia friendly chair-based exercise classes are being offered free in Fenland as the latest in a package of sessions to help people overcome barriers to physical activity.

Fenland District Council's Active Fenland has supported the specialist training of several instructors to deliver the British Gymnastics Foundation Love to Move programme.

The classes are one of a range of sessions for people who might face additional barriers to accessing exercise, funded by Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Integrated Care Systems (ICS).

Cllr Alex Miscandlon, Fenland's portfolio holder for sports development and leisure, said: "Active Fenland's work is built around offering introductory sessions to encourage ongoing activity and behaviour change.

"Building the habit of regular exercise into your life can be tough for anyone and many of the classes offered by Active Fenland have a specific focus on helping to make that as easy as possible.

"Our partnership project with ICS has already allowed Active Fenland to offer classes that help people build the courage to take the first steps to joining a gym and allow those with limited fitness access to friendly wellbeing walks and classes close to home.

"We will continue to build on the variety of classes, venues and times available to reach as many people as possible."

Kit Connick, Chief Officer of Partnerships & Strategy at NHS Cambridgeshire & Peterborough, part of Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Integrated Care System, said: "We know that regular exercise can help us all stay well for longer as we age. It can also reduce the risk of developing serious illnesses that may need hospital treatment.

"This is why we are pleased to have provided funding to Fenland District Council for these new classes to give people the opportunity to improve their own physical and mental wellbeing in a relaxed and friendly environment."

The new dementia-friendly Love to Move sessions incorporate expertly designed chair-based activities set to music.

Public Health England figures* show that Fenland has significantly higher rates of dementia than average across the country, possibly due to the higher-than-average age of the population**.

A British Gymnastics Foundation spokesman said: "The benefits that Love to Move can bring to participants have a transforming effect on their lives. It helps to build strength, flexibility and co-ordination as well as improving memory and increasing engagement through socialisation.

“We are really excited to see sessions developing in Chatteris and March giving access to Love to Move for the residents of Fenland”

Love to Move classes encourage independent movement of the left and right sides of the body to improve cognitive function, health and wellbeing, while allowing participants to move and have fun in a social environment.

Carers are asked to remain at the sessions and can either take part or take the chance to step back and have a cuppa. It's hoped the sessions may also create an opportunity for carers, who wish to, to chat and get to know each other too.

People don't need to have dementia or be with someone who has dementia to attend the sessions. The class benefits from the integration of those with and without dementia.

Initial classes launch in November in March and Chatteris. A first set of dates have been set running to December and it is intended more dates will be added in the New Year.

There's no need to book Love to Move classes, just turn up.

Love to Move class will be held:

- 11am to 12.30pm Tuesdays, from November 21 to December 19, at March Braza Club, Elm Road, PE15 8NZ.
- 11am to 12.30pm Thursdays, from November 23 to December 21, at King Edward Community Centre, King Edward Road, Chatteris PE16 6NG.

Active Fenland coordinates a wide range of free and low cost classes including [Ramblers Wellbeing Walks](#), walking football, yoga, balance and fitness for older people, badminton and mixed discipline sessions incorporating lots of different sports.

New Active Fenland sessions are regularly added to the timetable at: www.fenland.gov.uk/activefenland

ENDS

*[Fenland Public Health England profile](#)

**[Census2021 figures](#)