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Coming together for Tai Chi in Radlett



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An exercise class in Radlett has proved so popular with its participants for its restorative health benefits that they have decided to keep it going even after the original funding finished.

More than 20 people regularly attend a Tai Chi class at the Phillimore Community Centre, which started just in January as part of a Hertsmere Borough Council-backed initiative to help older people get more active. When funding for the sessions ended after 15 weeks, the group decided to keep it going by funding it themselves and one volunteer, Gwen Dancy, now acts as treasurer for the group, keeping a register and collecting the money.

The classes not only help to address mobility and breathing problems, but also help combat isolation by bringing people together. Participants pay £3 a session to attend.



Mrs Dancy said: "A lot of them say they feel a lot better because of the breathing. The exercises are involved in breathing.

"First term we had from the council and we paid for this term. The exercise is so gentle and [the participants] wouldn't do exercise without this."

Eighty-eight year old participant Corinne Mallach, who was treated for breast cancer five years ago, said: "It's helped me to make different friends and to get out and about.

"I have to keep doing exercises otherwise I would slow down completely. I live in a duplex, so use the stairs continually, which helps my body keep active."

Seventy-three old Di Marsh said: "It was just after Christmas we were told there were free classes of Tai Chi, no charge. It's a jolly good way for us to exercise.

“I have a respiratory disease and there are no respiratory classes. Tai Chi gives us breathing exercises and for people with arthritis, it exercises the hands and the joints. It’s a brilliant class.

“We’ve all benefited hugely from it. We do take it seriously. The gift that you gave us, as in Hertsmere, was giving it free. It was such a success, we carried it on.”

As part of its Active Together programme, our Partnerships and Community Engagement team, in partnership with [Clarion Housing](#), launched sessions of Tai Chi and chair-based exercise Otago in residential homes and community centres in Radlett, Borehamwood and Potters Bar at the end of last year.

Councillor Caroline Clapper, Portfolio Holder for Leisure, Culture and Health, said: “We were able to secure a limited amount of funding to launch our Active Together programme, which is aimed at older adults, who would otherwise struggle to stay mobile and healthy.

“All the classes have had amazing take-up, but the initiative and enthusiasm shown by the ladies in Radlett is particularly impressive.

“I hope the classes can continue for as long as its members are finding it beneficial for their health and wellbeing.”

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