

## BRAMPTON CRAFT CLUB

Lesley Morris and I formed the not for profit craft club prior to the pandemic with the sole aim of encouraging people who felt isolated and lonely to come out of their homes and meet others through our knowledge of crafting. We had a great initial response but sadly had to disband after only 2 sessions.

We knew that we needed new premises to expand our offer and Ermine Street offered us an ex RAF office next to the thrift shop. It took many months before the property was ready and we then set about furnishing it. We were overwhelmed with the kindness and generosity of local people and not only furnished the whole house but had fabric, sewing machines, a microwave, Refrigerator, wool and many craft materials gifted to us.

We opened our doors on 17<sup>th</sup> January 2022 and developed a regular group every Wednesday afternoon and subsequently added Wednesday evenings, after it became clear that there was a demand from those who work during the day.

Over the first year we had a membership of 49 and ran 35 diverse craft events, including watercolour and acrylic painting, lino printing, origami, wreath making, clay modelling, decoupage, charcoal drawing, and all the members embarked on a group project to make bunting and a wall hanging for the Queen's Jubilee. Membership this year continues to flourish and our committee is exploring new ways to reach out to local people.

We also ran 2 workshops run by professional artists and printers, which were a great success and we plan to run more over the coming year.

We are grateful to the Parish Council for funding to cover costs for insurances and licence fees received through the Hub.

We set up a Facebook page to include local people who were interested but some unable to come and have a membership following of 91 people.

We had a grant from Huntingdon District Council Community Chest, however, the money was not forthcoming until late into the year, but we have now spent some on racking, shelving and a large worktop for our sewing room.

For the coming year we hope to spend some of our funds on replacing some furniture which has reached the end of it's life, and on fees for more workshops run by professionals. We are planning to run some long term projects to include a course on using sewing machines and dressmaking.

We rely heavily on donations and membership fees and recently increased the annual fee to £25 which includes refreshments, but seek to find further funding support for the purchase of equipment and upgrade and improve furnishings.

The 1<sup>st</sup> year has seen the club grow into a fun, safe space for members who have genuinely enjoyed the atmosphere, learning new skills and making new friends and many feel it has been a lifeline for them.