



MeetUpMondays™ - Restricted To Commercial Venues

10 REASONS WHY

CONSISTENCY: research confirms that successful interventions to alleviate loneliness must be consistent. Using a commercial venue that is open for business ensures certainty for people and ensures the consistency that is vital.

INDEPENDENCE: commercial premises provide an easy to opt-in, easy to opt-out opportunity for people to choose a level of involvement that suits them. This individual variation is of no significance to a commercial organisation that is open anyway, and can be attractive to folk considering “giving it a try”.

WELCOMING: hosts of commercial venues are skilled at welcoming people, ensuring they are comfortable, looking-out for, and meeting, individual’s needs. This is done in “real life” environment that extends the social circle of attendees.

CERTAINTY: a commercial venue is a consistent feature of a location. No volunteers are required to open it up, clean and maintain it, book-in various activities, resolve clashes of requirements....the commercial venue is “just there”. During a visit the attendee can stay for as little, or as long, as they wish.

AN OPPORTUNITY FOR MORE: pubs are open most of the week and other commercial premises are also open throughout the week. This provides the opportunity for “Meet up Mondays” folk to go back into the venue at other times with confidence, assured of a warm welcome.

NO HIDDEN AGENDA: commercial premises opening their doors to “Meet up Mondays” folk are welcoming, transparent and non-threatening. They are established pubs, cafes and hotels providing something extra for local people.

FREE: an “open anyway” venue requires no booking fee, no entrance fee and no financial contribution during a person’s stay. Hosts provide refreshments and use of the venue free of charge.

MANAGEABILITY OF THE NETWORK: a defined and confined network will be more easily managed and provides commercial venues with their own “community” of like-minded providers. Restricting it to commercial venues ensures a degree of separation from the equally valuable but quite distinct coffee mornings that provide such a fantastic service to communities throughout Suffolk. This restriction makes management and growth of the network easier.

THE HUB: it is recognised that pubs, cafes and hotels are a valuable asset to communities providing a hub for people to meet socially. “Meet up Mondays” provide owners and hosts with an opportunity to show they care about their local community and about ending loneliness. However, they have to be commercially viable, so initiatives like “Meet up Mondays” that increase utilisation should be encouraged and if commercial benefits and increased sustainability are “spin-offs” that’s great!

LOOK AT IT DIFFERENTLY: it is imperative to address loneliness in every way possible. Engagement with, and inclusion of, local businesses provides a new opportunity to open-up the issue and increase inclusivity in its solution. It’s not just the venue getting involved....owners, managers, employees are all engaged, other companies get involved in signage, publicity, supplies. Owned pubs will create interest from their larger (often national) breweries. Customers of venues are exposed to what is going on and the issue of loneliness, volunteering could also be increased. Local communities will see commercial enterprises delivering a social need in addition to “normal” commercial activities which will heighten awareness and potential increase personal involvement. The direct involvement of business in a practical, grass-roots intervention is novel and has the potential to make a real, benefit of great significance.