Mental Health First Aid course at Wilbraham's Memorial Hall.

Thanks very much to the 12 volunteers who were generous enough to give up two of their valuable Sundays to attend the course. As you'll see from the photo we had a real mix of people which was great.

The aim of the course is to remove the stigma surrounding mental health problems and provide a resource for the village-the course participants. Villagers can approach them if they want to discuss their own mental health issues or those of a relative, friend or member of the community. The participants are not therapists but can listen and recognise the signs and symptoms of mental health problems and can give information about accessing professional help and importantly self help. **Any conversation is in the strictest confidence.**

The brilliant, hard working and enthusiastic course participants and new Mental Health First Aiders are:

Julia A'Court

Dave Chapman

Helen Clarke

Patsy Deller

Sarah Fordham

Tony Goryn

Helen Grubb

Alison Hargreaves

Karen Hinkins

Rowena Pilsworth

Sally Ramus

Toby Tippen

Councillor Robert Turner has been very supportive of the course and attended the first day where he was a fun and hard working participant.

Thanks to Great Wilbraham Parish Council for funding the room hire and course materials.

Comments made by the course participants are:

"The course covers in great depth, the signs and symptoms of all mental health problems so I will be vigilant in trying to recognise these in people I meet. The course is doing a great job in helping to break down the 'taboo' of mental health illnessess…an excellent instructor…she has given me the confidence to take positive steps to help anyone who may be suffering from a mental health problem, where I would almost certainly have shied away from such situations before my training".

"One of the best courses I've been on for a long time…..The course was excellent, much better than I had anticipated. It was interesting, informative and delivered well. It has really made me think about mental health and well being and how I may be able to support this in myself and in the community."

"Facinating, informative, thought provoking."

"Excellent course, very informative. A good mix of delivery methods keeping you engaged. Provided with lots of resources to further knowledge once course completed".

"A very worthwhile. course, pleased to be on it, very well delivered in a relaxed and friendly way. Very useful and important that people attend these courses".

One of the informal comments was "I thought it would be all airy fairy but it's hard work!"

We are all going to stay in contact with each other to make sure the impetus for reducing the stigma surrounding mental health problems doesn't stop.

So please remember if you have any concerns about mental health issues you can approach any of the participants who will be able to listen to you and give relevant information.

Joy Bray MHFA instructor.