

'Be Well, Be Healthy, Be Fit Festival'

Sid Valley Patient Participation Group

A 'Be Well, Be Healthy, Be Fit Festival', was held in Sidmouth on Saturday April 23, 2016. It was the first event of its kind in the Sid Valley and was a great success.

Nearly 200 people attended and took part in a range of activities or just talked with people to gain information. People milled around taking their time to find out information, make a smoothie while pedalling a bicycle or find out how to make their own hummus. Some people took part in one of the six exercise tasters with a choice of: 'Fit Steps' dance; chair based exercise; Yoga; exercise for Parkinsons ; Pilates or gentle stretching. Some people took advantage of trying out a massage or getting their blood pressure checked, others watched all that was going on. It was a lively, yet relaxing event.

An idea that began with no financial backing at all developed into an exciting day of activities with something for everyone on offer – from children's cooking classes, to in-depth health advice, taster sessions and plenty of snacks and free goods.

The Sid Valley Patient Participation Group, organised the festival, with the help of numerous partners, including East Devon District Council (EDDC). There were a lot of opportunities for people to trial things in a safe way and have a go for free. It was a real community partnership and the community responded well to support it. Sid Valley PPG is not a fundraising organisation, so the event was funded by, operated by, and staffed by the Sid Valley community.

The event aims were to promote healthy lifestyles and raise awareness about different issues and the support available locally. There was no charge for the festival and a range of light refreshments were provided for visitors on the day, along with balloons and plenty of fun and free information packs. A shuttle bus was provided by Sidmouth Voluntary Services for anyone who needed transport from the town centre.

There were over 30 contributing organisations that made this a real community event and a great opportunity for networking. Organisers were very happy with how the day went. Evaluation feedback and the graffiti wall was full of positive comments, although several people suggested that we needed more publicity and others that it should have been in town. Who knows, maybe next year ...





