June Stratford Café

The day of the Stratford Café on June 17th dawned disappointingly cloudy and unseasonably cold, but this didn’t dampen the spirits of the customers. Although few braved the outside tables, there were plenty of warm bodies inside, with the usual cheerful buzz despite a clash with Father’s Day. A groaning plant and produce table, heaps of excellent books and a wonderful selection of cakes (including a particularly delicious chocolate cake – impossible to resist!) helped to bring in an impressive profit of £336.70. This included a generous donation for the Reading Room hire, and Arnold and Jo Harrison rounded up the figure to £350.

All of the proceeds were donated to Naomi House and Jacksplace, and representatives were on hand to provide information on the work of this very worthwhile local charity, whose slogan is ‘Care and support for good days, difficult days and last days.’

As suggested by their slogan, the charity provides hospice care for life challenged or life limited children and young adults from birth to the age of thirty-five. The support they provide is mainly respite care, allowing families up to 16 nights of rest while their loved ones enjoy their own ‘time out’ in an environment perfectly suited to care for them and give them independence, privacy and dignity. But they offer other services too, including post bereavement support where families can spend time with their deceased baby, away from an impersonal hospital environment, at a time which can be particularly distressing.

Naomi House caters for younger people from 0 – 18 while Jacksplace offers care for people 18-35. Both houses are equipped to care for children and young people with complex medical needs, and aim to make their experience as full and happy as possible. In fact I was told that these hospices are incredibly enjoyable places to work, full of fun and laughter despite the sometimes tragic circumstances of their clients. Watching some of the video footage that was playing at the back of the café, I can well believe it!

The money we raised will be spent on activities, equipment and additional extras for families who have huge challenges to cope with, as well as assisting with the general running of the hospices, which receive little government funding.

Next month’s café will be on July 22nd, and will be raising money for the Salisbury Samaritans.