



Mindful Movement Community Day at the Downsman Wellbeing Space

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Report March 2024

Community Mindful Movement Day at the Downsman Wellbeing Space

Healthy Communities, Healthy City, Healthy Planet

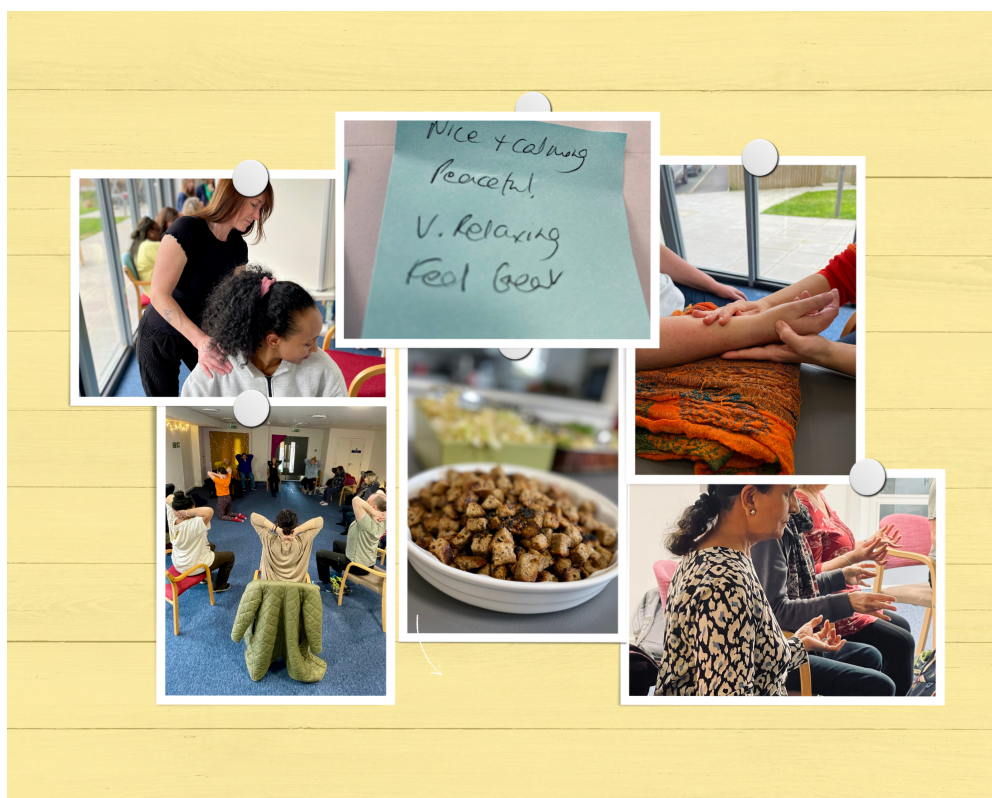
Introduction

The event was held on March 16th 2024 to launch the Downsman Wellbeing Space in Hangleton. The day was jointly organised by the Hangleton and Knoll Project and the Brighton Natural Health Foundation (see Appendix one for more about these organisations.) It was funded by National Lottery Awards for All.

The aim of the day was to provide a range of mindful movement classes in a community setting. This would be followed up by a 12-week course in one of the practices. This was part of the broader aims of BNHF which is to help connect people to the benefits of mindful movement, offering accessible classes, for those who may not have easy access to them.

The day also met one of the strategic aims of the Hangleton and Knoll Partnership: to increase skills, confidence and opportunities for people to improve their health and that of their families. Statistics show that residents in the area experience significant health inequalities with higher than expected levels of adult and child obesity, limiting long term illness, depression, cardio-vascular disease and high blood pressure.

The content of the day was based on a consultation with residents carried out by the Hangleton and Knoll Community team which identified yoga, meditation and tai chi as something the residents would like to see offered at the new wellbeing centre.



Why Mindful Movement?

Mindful movement practices such as qigong, yoga and Pilates have been proven to lower blood pressure, reduce the risk of heart disease and help with depression (all identified as issues facing the community - see above). They are also effective ways to lower stress - a known contributor to inflammatory diseases and to reduce chronic pain..

However, the practices can be expensive and inaccessible for many people. Most of the studios are in the city centre and classes can cost as much as £14 per hour. Added to that, anecdotal evidence suggests that people often feel that such classes are not for them as they are not 'bendy' or fit enough.

THE DAY

What was on offer?

Mindful Movement Classes

Experienced teachers from the Brighton Health Foundation provided five mindful movement classes of 45 minutes each throughout the day:

- Yoga
- Pilates
- Qigong
- Dance
- Sound Bath

Head and hand massages were provided by newly qualified teachers from Jing Institute of Massage and Complementary Medicine and Sussex School of Natural Therapies.

A healthy lunch from *Sussex Surplus* - a social enterprise which takes fresh and surplus food in danger of being wasted and transforms it into tasty meals.

A health raffle with prizes including a massage course, yoga classes, a yoga mat and a float spa

How many people came?

Around **60** people booked into classes throughout the day

There was a waiting list for most classes

17 people had massages

What did they think?

'A real wellbeing boost for the whole community'

'Qigong made me feel relaxed, feel light, quite mindful, calming, helped shoulder pain'

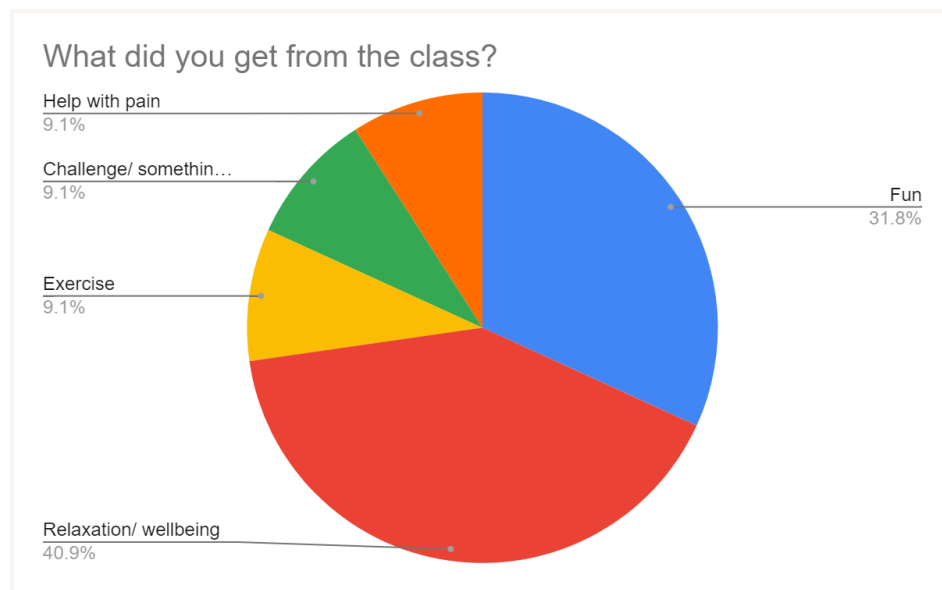
'So relaxing - would love more time.'

'Nice and calming - I feel great.'

'Such a lovely class to exercise and have fun to music without actually feeling like it's a chore.'

'Could I do this twice a week?'

'Thank you so much - please carry on the good work.'



What could we have done better?

'Blankets would have been nice.'

'It was a little cold. I enjoyed the sound bath only I was a little cold and could not deeply relax but I enjoyed the singing and the sound.'

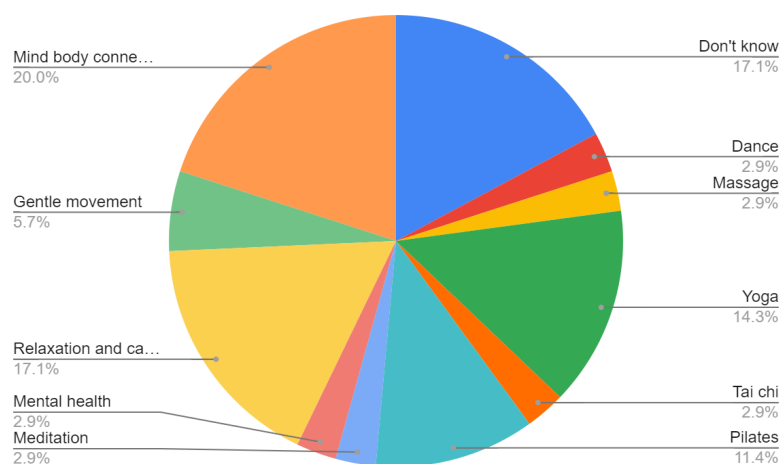
'I would have liked more challenging moves.'

What else did we find out?

The day also gave us an opportunity to ask people some more questions about their understanding of wellbeing and their barriers to wellness. The graphs below show visual representations of the answers. [You can read them in full here.](#)

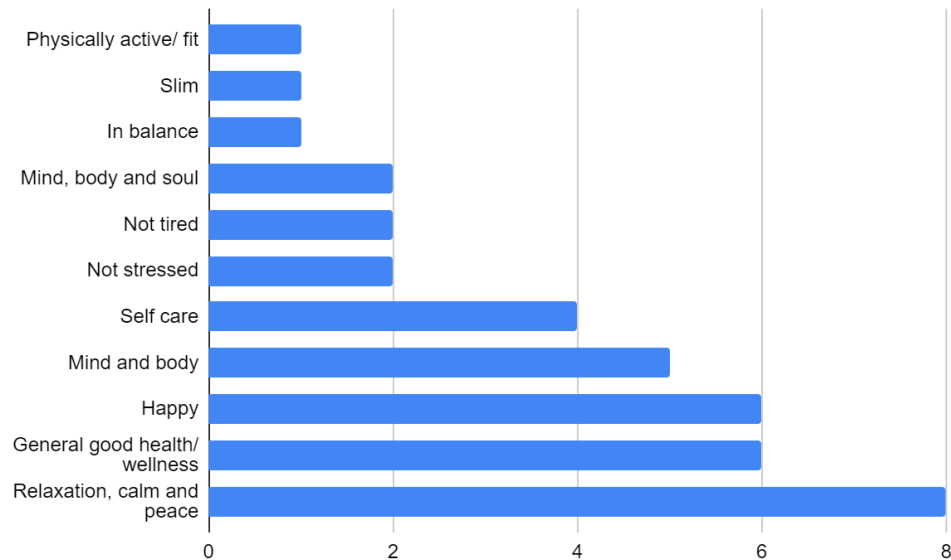
1. What is your understanding of mindful movement?

A sizeable minority had not heard the term before and a similar number said that it was to do with a connection between body, mind and movement.



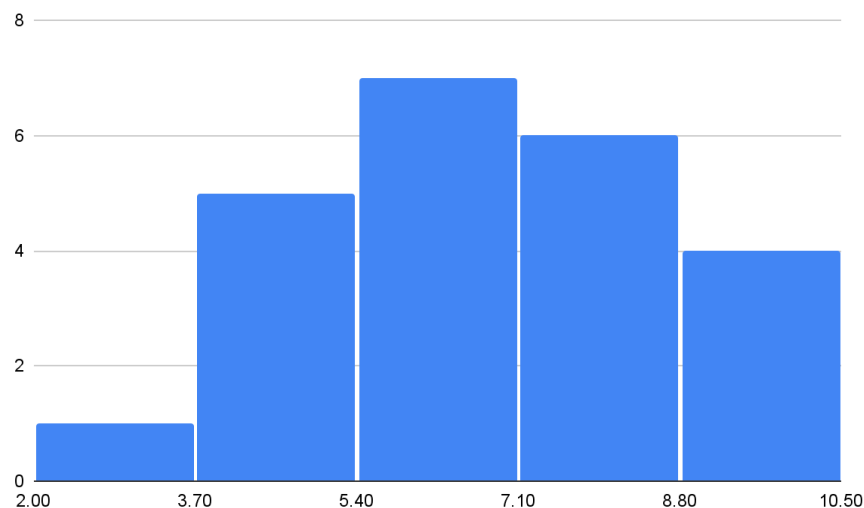
2. What does well being or being well mean for you?

Very few people associated wellbeing with just physical fitness. The top answer associated wellbeing with relaxation, calm and peace.



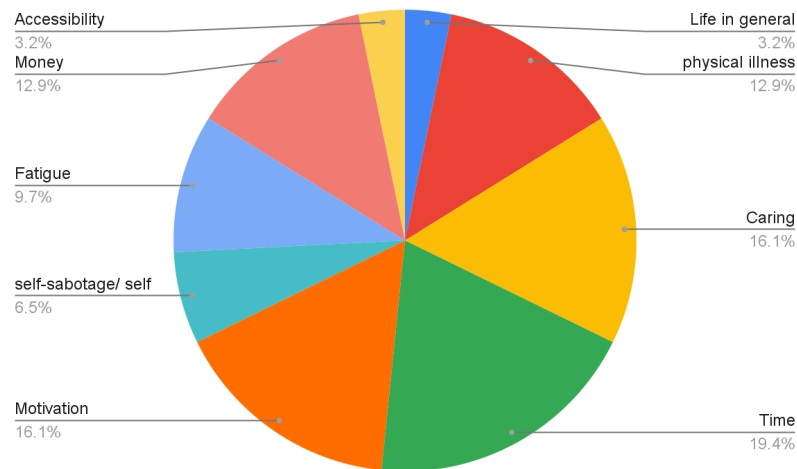
3. How well do you feel today on a scale of 1-10?

We asked people to rate how well they felt on a scale of 1-10. The chart below shows a distribution of the feelings. One person rated themselves high '10' and another rated themselves at '2' but the majority were mid-range.



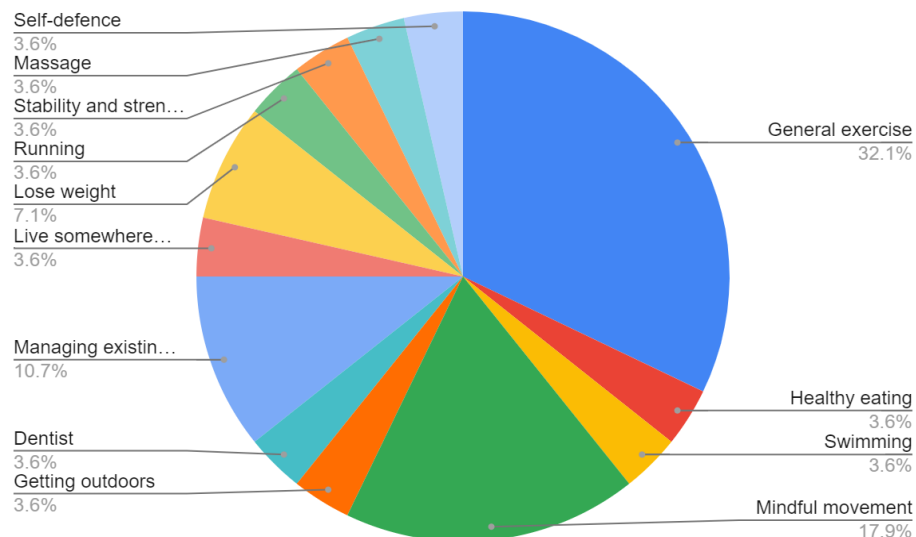
4. What is stopping you from improving your wellbeing?

Time, caring responsibilities, lack of motivation, money and physical illness were all cited as major reasons for people not doing more to improve their wellbeing.



5. If you could do something to improve your well-being, what could it be?

The majority of people cited exercise as the most important element. A significant proportion specifically mentioning mindful movement as something they would like to take up.



What's next?

The Hangleton and Knoll Project is keen to offer a range of activities in the new centre including mindful movement. A free 12-week yoga class funded by the National Lottery started in April 2024. This will be thoroughly evaluated and sustainable funding models will be investigated. There are also discussions with residents about providing Pilates and qigong classes in the same space.

**Appendix One
More about the organisations****Brighton Natural Health Foundation**

A charity that is passionate about empowering people and communities to embrace mindful movement for a happier, healthier lifestyle. Our focus is on offering accessible classes, events, and training, especially for those who may not have easy access to these resources, working in partnership with communities, movement and health practitioners, and other relevant experts.

Hangleton and Knoll Project

A Community Development charity based in the Hangleton and Knoll ward of Brighton and Hove in South East England. A part of the community since 1983 we are a project working for the community with the community and managed by the community.