

## **Minutes**

# **Cross Party Group on Dementia**

**Tuesday 15 July 2014**

**Dining Room 1, Tŷ Hywel**

## **Topic: Building Dementia Friendly Communities and AGM**

### **Welcome**

Eluned Parrott AM welcomed everyone to the meeting and introductions were made around the table.

In attendance: Eluned Parrott AM, Paul Harding (AMSS Eluned Parrott)

Amy Kitcher (Alzheimer's Society) Rhiannon Davies (Brecon Dementia Friendly Community)

Apologies from: Rebecca Evans AM, Llyr Gruffydd AM, Mark Isherwood AM, Darren Millar

AM, Julie Morgan AM, Lindsay Whittle AM and Lynne Neagle AM.

### **Business of AGM**

Eluned Parrott AM was elected as Chair and Alzheimer's Society was elected as Secretary.

### **Minutes of last meeting**

Minutes of the last meeting were presented and agreed.

### **Presentation by Rhiannon Davies, Chair Brecon Dementia Friendly Community group**

I'm a community volunteer, I chair the umbrella group, Brecon and Hay Dementia Supportive community initiative, and I'm one of a growing number of committed and

enthusiastic people who are working towards making dementia friendly communities here in Wales.

The aim of this initiative is to inform, inspire and engage those living in the local area and then share the learning with other communities in Powys and beyond.

I'm going to start by giving some facts and figures. Then I'll define what we as a group consider to be a Dementia Friendly Community, and give you a bit of history about the project and what we hope to achieve and how.

And finally I'll speak about, what we consider to be the strengths and weaknesses of the project and then I will offer you a challenge:

### **Are communities geared up to deal with dementia? Why do we need DFCs?**

Alzheimer's Society 2013 report:

- **1 in 3 get out once a week**
- **1 in 10 only manage once a month or less**
- **44% feel like a burden to the community**
- **61% feel lonely some or all of the time**
- **69% lack confidence**
- **61% think their community has little or no understanding of how to help them live well**

Dementia currently affects around 800,000 people in the UK with approx 45000 living in Wales.

Within Powys it is estimated that there are currently 2500 people living with dementia, and, because of our ageing population, this figure is set to rise 44% within the next 8 years.

Whilst some of these people might be in a hospital, nursing home or residential care, most will be living at home; alone or supported by family and carers.

And what are the issues they're facing?

For many people with dementia the battle is not just about getting a diagnosis and support from the health and social care system, but about the everyday things that you and I take for granted – having control over our daily lives, spending time with family and friends, enjoying hobbies. These are made more difficult by the lack of understanding about dementia in our communities. Many of these families are reluctant to share what they and their loved ones are facing, because of the stigma and fear

attached. Everyday living (going to the shops, bank, using public transport) can be a battle, leading to isolation and loneliness.

Communities that are dementia friendly have more opportunity to support people, particularly in the early stages of dementia, maintaining and boosting their confidence and their ability to manage their everyday lives. They can also provide invaluable support and respite for carers.

Evidence has also shown that appropriate support in the community can reduce numbers being admitted to hospital and delay entry into care. So there are economical as well as social arguments in promoting this initiative

### **What is a Dementia Friendly Community?**

- Where people with dementia and their carers feel safe and respected and have a feeling of belonging in the community. They are part of it, not apart from it.
- Supportive and inclusive in all areas of family and community life. Whether that's going out for a meal, seeing a show at the theatre, visiting the library, going to the shops, going to the WI or U3A, using the leisure centre or going to church.
- Improves ability of individuals with dementia to have a quality of life, remain independent and have choice and control over their lives. The things that you and I take for granted
- Encourages people with dementia and their carers to seek early diagnosis, help and support, and gives them a voice to express their concerns and needs. So they can talk about the everyday challenges they face in living well with dementia. Talk and be heard.

### **What is required to create a Dementia Friendly Community?**

A change in attitudes and behaviours towards people who are seen as being 'different'. As a society we are very quick to exclude those we don't understand. Sometimes deliberately, sometimes unintentionally. That can be changed by a better awareness and understanding of dementia and the problems all those touched by it face

Good communication, care, empathy, patience and kindness. Which I have experienced in abundance to-date through this work. This is about expressing our humanity and the aspects of ourselves that sometimes get lost in our busy, task-focused lives. A reminder to slow-down and of the need for greater tolerance and understanding.

### **A social movement for change from the grass roots**

It's not rocket science, it just needs us all to work collectively pooling our thoughts and ideas and working towards a shared vision becoming a dementia friendly community.

### **How did it come about?**

- AS conference October 2012. Contacted Brecon Town Council. Role of Mayor
- Public presentation in June 2013. Recognised need; lot of enthusiasm
- Developed a community-led steering group with representation from carers, health and social care, community and voluntary organisations
- Developed a mission statement, strategic goals, an action plan and objectives
- Constituted in April as a not-for-profit group so we can enrol members and raise funds
- We lobbied for and adopted the Alzheimer's society led Dementia Friends and Dementia Friends Champion programme. We see this the back bone for creating dementia friendly communities

To-date we've run two Champion training days in Brecon (April and July), 18 local champions, run 32 sessions (Girl Guides, WI etc) and created over 350 Friends.

- Liaised with a wide range of organizations and created a Dementia Action Alliance

For example GP practice, HB, CC, library service, banks, Dyfed- Powys Police and Mid and West Wales Fire services, BBNPA.

Continuing to engage others. 20<sup>th</sup> June - Launch of Making Brecon a Dementia Friendly Community.

### **Set up new initiatives**

- Music and memories sessions
- Training day for artists with a locally based arts organization
- Discussing with the AS the possibility of establishing a Memory café and Singing for the Brain later in the year.
- Supported Hayday café in Hay on Wye

### **What we hope to achieve and how:**

#### **Be a catalyst for social change**

Making links, developing partnerships, creating networks and sharing good practice

#### **Increase awareness and understanding and change attitudes towards dementia .**

- Producing better information that can be used by a range of people including local shopkeepers, businesses, groups, teacher, GPs and carers.
- By talking about it more.
- Developing a network of Dementia champions and Dementia Friends at neighbourhood level,
- By encouraging people who are worried or have concerns about their memory to visit their GP

- Challenging stereotypes and prejudices directly, and by showing positive images of older people and people with dementia.
- Focusing on what people with dementia can do rather than what they can't.
- Assuming that people with dementia will be included rather than excluded.

Support groups, organisations, shops and businesses to become more dementia friendly and encourage people with dementia and their carers to use Brecon's wealth of leisure, cultural and spiritual resources

Promoting them as dementia friendly, and exploring how they could be rated as such by people with dementia and their carers

Finally and most importantly to give people with dementia and their carers a voice to express their needs and help and support them to make sure they are met through one to one meetings, group gatherings, a carers forum, social events and other community-led initiatives.

### **Strengths and Weaknesses**

**Strengths:** Community led, grass roots approach, strong voice, motivated and enthusiastic, model fits in with CC planning, credibility with statutory providers. Provides some much needed leadership

**Weaknesses:** Sustainability, Voluntary, time constraints, skill representation on steering group, lack of support (funding) and advice from national providers – frustration.

### **Comments and questions from group members**

Eluned Parrott AM thanked Rhiannon Davies for her presentation.

### **Close**

Eluned Parrott AM thank everyone for their attendance and drew the meeting to a close.