

Church Stretton Dementia Friends AGM 2024 - Chair's Report

National Dementia Statistics

Before we explore our year, let's remind ourselves of the latest dementia statistics. According to the Dementia Statistics Hub (dementiastatistics.org), for the UK in 2024:

- 982,000 people are estimated to be living with dementia. This could rise to 1.4 million by 2040
- 1 in 14 people (7% of the population) over the age of 65 have dementia
- Dementia is the leading cause of death, accounting for 11.3% of all deaths
- The economic impact of dementia is £42.5Bn, which could more than double to £90Bn by 2040

From a Church Stretton perspective, 44% of our population, 2000 people, are over 65 years of age. In general, the above average levels of activity, health awareness and GP and social care provision via the Mayfair Community Centre and associated voluntary groups will lower the risk factors of dementia for many. Since we have a beautiful rural location and the reputation as a supportive and caring community, we attract many people on retirement potentially increasing the clinical and social care burden.

Nationally, the prevalence of dementia is seen to increase rapidly over the age of 65 and Church Stretton's demographic, particularly the 8.3% of our population over 85 years, may predispose us to a greater than UK average occurrence of dementia. Publicly available data showed that in September 24, Church Stretton had 113 individuals formally diagnosed with dementia (4% of the >65 population) which is a consistent diagnosis rate, but statistically it is likely that the real number of those living with dementia in our community is nearer 200.

Given that from Church Stretton we have access to our GP surgery, NHS Shropshire Telford and Wrekin's Dementia Assessment and Support Services (DASS), the Mayfair Community Centre including CoCo and MAYSI, and further access to the Alzheimer's Society, Dementia UK, Age UK, Admiral Nurses, Shropshire Carers, STW Dementia Action Alliance, and more... What role does Church Stretton Dementia Friends play?

The role of Church Stretton Dementia Friends

As a non-clinical charity, the Church Stretton Dementia Friends (CSDF) constitution remains focused on:

- a) Providing information and training on dementia to the community, and signposting sources of support and advice
- b) Being an advocate for all local families living with dementia
- c) Helping to co-ordinate and enable community (non-specialist) services for those living with dementia within the community
- d) Working with partners to define and implement community infrastructure to support those living with dementia.

Much stigma still remains around dementia, which coupled with a general lack of understanding means that dementia is not talked about as openly as many other chronic conditions. Our initial survey of those living with dementia and their carers at the end of 2023 found that:

- There is a need for changes in public attitudes to, and understanding of, dementia in Church Stretton
- There is a demand for a wider range of activities targeted at people living with dementia and their families in Church Stretton
- Mayfair CC is recognised as a place of safety to take part in and find out more about relevant existing activities

Accordingly, we continue to offer regular free-of-charge, accessible activities within the community for both the individual living with dementia and their carer. We understand that situations change, and we no longer require pre-booking to any of our regular events, and we are here to provide an interesting, stimulating, fun and social environment to allow those living with dementia and their carers to engage and have fun, as well as providing signposting and advice through our professional partners.

OUR REGULAR MONTHLY OFFERINGS

Memory Café: Church Stretton Library second Wednesday of the month

Memory Cafes are our original offering, held in the calm and welcoming surroundings of Church Stretton Library. Manned by CSDF volunteers, these themed monthly sessions allow all attendees to take part and enjoy a little optional chair based physical activity, reminiscing, conversation, readings, discussion and games all based around a monthly theme such as spring, animals, travel, schooldays. Naturally, all this is washed down by tea, coffee and cake! Attendance has grown steadily to around 30 participants at any one time and we are in danger becoming victims of our own success! We now have a list of topics and timings available on fliers to hand out in advance to help our publicity. To increase our publicity further, we were visited by Genevieve Tudor from BBC Radio Shropshire which resulted in a 7 minute story being broadcast in March.

Our local South West Shropshire Dementia Link Worker, Lisa Wright, attends each session and has recently begun to offer one-to-one advice for carers during the café which is proving very popular. I'd also like to acknowledge the guidance and advice to our charity, particularly the memory café concept, made by Robert Black, who sadly passed away this year.

Memory Club: in the Pavilion, Cardingmill Valley, fourth Monday of the month

Trialled in March 24 and beginning properly in May 24, our collaboration with the National Trust has been a great success and is continuing to grow in popularity. There was much hard work behind the scenes to finalise original arrangements and scope of responsibilities, but the National Trust, its volunteers and the catering outlet in the Pavilion have been exceptional in their generosity and time. The structure of the memory club differs from the café in that there is an optional outdoor element to each session, which is weather dependent, and the topics are a little more specific. This year we have had talks on the work of the rangers, stream dipping and discovery of water creatures, wild flowers and local folklore. Each session is run by a group of NT volunteers supported by CSDF volunteers, with objects to view and discuss, maps, diagrams, and refreshments. The Memory Club continues to go from strength to strength, but do not underestimate the amount of effort it takes to get collaborative activities of this nature up and running. Thank you to all concerned.

Dementia Awareness Sessions: held at various times and locations throughout 2024, open to the general public or tailored for specific organisations.

These free, friendly and interactive sessions provide a basic introduction to dementia, how it affects a person and what we can all do to help people affected by dementia in our community. Big or small, every action counts. Each session lasts around 45 minutes and is delivered by Dementia Friends Ambassador Sarah Griffiths.

In 2024 we held seven in total. Many were in the Library during the day, and other locations during the afternoon and evening, and we also ran specific sessions for groups, such as the National Trust and its volunteers. The sessions were very well received, but the challenge for next year will be how to inform the community more.

DEMENTIA ACTION AND AWARENESS WEEK 2024

Every year there are designated days, weeks or months dedicated to various physical and mental conditions in order to raise awareness, provide information and to raise money for charities that support these causes. Dementia is no exception.

In 2024, we decided that we would promote Dementia Action and Awareness Week which ran from 13th – 19th May, by running local events and activities every day of that week. In all, we ran 14 events and our aim was to raise awareness of dementia, and awareness of us as a charity. As a bonus we also raised nearly £200. We held special editions of the memory club, memory café, a supervised guided walk specifically tailored for those living with dementia, a relaxed film screening of Top Gun in the Mayfair Community Centre, an information session in Mad Hatters Soft Play and we manned two information stalls, one in the Co-Op foyer and one in the town centre.



DEMENTIA ACTION WEEK EVENTS

in Church Stretton 13TH - 18TH May 2024

Day & Time	Event
Mon 13 th May 10:30-12:30pm	Memory Club with the National Trust in the Cardingmill Valley pavilion. Arrive 10:15am
Tue 14 th May All Morning	Dementia Information Stall at Church Stretton Co-Op
Wed 15 th May 2:00-4:00pm	Memory Cafe in the Library
Thu 16 th May 10:30am-12:00	Memory Walk starting and finishing at the Mayfair Community Centre
Thu 16 th May 1:00-2:00pm	Dementia Information Session at Mad Hatters Soft Play.
Fri 17 th May 2:00-4:15pm	Relaxed film screening of the original 'Top Gun' suitable for all at the Mayfair Community Centre
Sat 18 th May All day	Dementia Information Stall in the town centre, location to be confirmed depending on the weather



For more information, please see individual posters or contact us below.
All events are free, but please pre-book through our email, website, phone or via the Town Council Offices or the Mayfair Community Centre.



www.csdementiafriends.com


 csdementiafriends@gmail.com
 07813 127558

 Church Stretton Dementia Friends

DEMENTIA ACTION WEEK EVENTS

at the Mayfair Community Centre

All the events and services below (and many more!) are run routinely through the Mayfair Community Centre. The ones listed below are particularly relevant to anyone concerned about memory issues

Day & Time	Event
Tue 14 th May	Care and Share: A group for people with dementia and their family carer to come together to share activities and socialise, meeting twice a month
Wed 15 th May	Breathing Space: Singing for health and wellbeing, dementia friendly group. Weekly
Thu 16 th May	Monthly carer's support group: Often has a representative from the Alzheimer's society in attendance
Fri 17 th May	Relaxed film screening of the original 'Top Gun' suitable for all

Friendship Group: Held every Tuesday morning and Friday afternoon this is an informal coffee and chat group. Everyone welcome and volunteers are available to support people with Dementia

The Beacon Day Service: Providing Activities and Care for people with early stage dementia and other care and support needs

Maysi: The supporting independence team will advise and signpost people who have a variety of needs, including dementia

CoCo: This befriending scheme can support people in the early stages of their dementia journey

For more information, please contact the Mayfair Community Centre direct.

Easthope Road, Church Stretton SY6
information@mayfaircentre.org.uk
 Reception: 01694 722077

The action and awareness week promoted our existence to the general community, and helped to introduce new members. It also showed that there was still much work we can do within the community to remove barriers and enable people to talk of dementia more freely. We'd like to acknowledge the ongoing support, help and advice from the Mayfair Community Centre, we couldn't do it without you!

THE DEMENTIA COLLECTION AT CHURCH STRETTON LIBRARY

Realising there was a lack of impartial reference information about and for those living with dementia and their carers, we partnered with the Friends of Church Stretton Library to curate, procure and donate an amazing collection of books, games and puzzles to

Church Stretton Library. This collection is specifically for the Church Stretton community, so it will remain situated at Church Stretton, although any resource may be borrowed by individuals from outside of the Church Stretton area. I have avoided singling out the work of individuals, but I must recognise the effort, knowledge and resourcefulness of Sheila Davies from Friends of Church Stretton Library and our own Sarah Griffiths for pulling together such a remarkable collection. I encourage you to visit the library and view the collection and associated catalogue, which is also available online. The thought and precision put into compiling the content was just incredible. Thank you as well to the rest of the Friends of Church Stretton Library for their financial generosity.

FINANCIAL SUMMARY 2023-24

We ended the year with a balance carried forward of £1,379. Over the period, we received a total income of £665 comprising £515 from donations, and a grant of £150 from STW Dementia Action Alliance. Expenditure for the same period was £667 covering publicity and website, Memory Café and Club expenses, the dementia book collection for the library, insurance and AGM meeting room costs.

Although not required, in accordance with best practice our accounts were independently examined by a qualified accountant.

LOOKING FORWARD TO 2025

We already have several ideas in the pipeline, but in keeping with many small charities, just how many we can achieve depends largely on the number and stamina of our fantastic trustees, officers, committee members and volunteers!

Please do make contact if you would like to join us as a volunteer or enjoy some of our offerings. We're always keen to hear of new ideas and opportunities, especially involving the collaboration with other local charities and organisations.

Our contact details are Email: csdementiafriends@gmail.com or please leave a message on 07813127558.

WITH GRATEFUL THANKS

On reading back through our formal minutes and my notes of the ideas we've actioned and issues overcome, it occurred to me again just how much hard work goes into everything we do. Each offering takes meticulous planning, negotiation, research and the completion of a certain amount of bureaucracy such as risk assessments and insurance. Most of all, it takes inspiration and effort from an amazing team of people who give up a lot of their valuable time to help others. Each one of us has been touched

by dementia in some way, and this is our chance to make the lives of those going through the process just a little easier. I think it is fair to say that we get as much out of what we do as those that attend our activities. Thank you to the Trustees, Officers, committee members and volunteers who have made this year possible.

I'd also like to thank our collaborators and benefactors over the past year. We couldn't function as effectively without the support of the staff and volunteers from the Mayfair Community Centre. Likewise, by hosting and running the monthly memory club, the staff and volunteers from the National Trust have provided us with an extraordinary offering in a beautiful setting. The advice and encouragement of Lisa Wright, our Alzheimer's Society Dementia Link Worker, has made a real difference to us as a team, and particularly to the carers she supports. The ongoing ideas, enthusiasm and social media acumen of Amy Noakes, late of Mad Hatters Soft Play, was so integral to our dementia action week activities. Field House Care Home have been an ongoing supporter and fund raiser for us for the past two years, and we love working with you! As mentioned, the Friends of Church Stretton Library were instrumental in jointly creating the shared Dementia Collection. There are also many more organisations and individuals who have kindly donated funds this year to enable us to continue offering our services for free.

Finally, my wish for 2025 is that as a community we become more informed about dementia and talk about memory issues more. Society has largely overcome the stigma of HIV and cancer but the stigma, and the fear, of dementia lingers. Perhaps this is because as yet there is no cure, or perhaps because losing one's memory and sense of self is a truly frightening prospect.

"It's not called getting old, it's called getting ill." *[the Alzheimer's Society 2024]*

Vicky Munro

Chair, Church Stretton Dementia Friends