



Diocese of *Rochester*
called together

Running Church Projects Supporting People with Dementia

Julia Burton-Jones, Anna Chaplaincy Lead

Self reported loneliness

39% of people with dementia who responded to an Alzheimer's Society survey said they felt lonely

62% who lived on their own felt lonely

33% said they lost friends after their diagnosis

*Dementia 2013: The Hidden Voice of Loneliness
(Alzheimer's Society)*

Exeter University IDEAL Project 2020

- Interviews with **1,547** people with mild to moderate dementia living in the community, and **1,283** family carers
- **30%** of people with dementia reported moderate loneliness (living alone and depression increasing likelihood)
- **44%** of carers reported moderate loneliness, and **18%** severe loneliness (linked to quality of relationship with person with dementia and social support available)

Fear as the reason for lost friendship



2015

52% of people over 60 say Alzheimer's is the disease that most concerns them. (YouGov survey for Alzheimer's Research UK)



2016

49% of people are worried that they would be seen as mad after a diagnosis of dementia (Alzheimer's Society 2016).



Background in Rochester Diocese

2014 pilot project on
'dementia friendly
church', found spiritual
care was lacking

2015 onwards Anna
Chaplaincy introduced
as means of addressing
spiritual needs

2017 work began in
Canterbury Diocese

Alongside appointment
of Anna Chaplains and
Anna Friends, churches
supported in
establishing activities

Pre pandemic 30
activities across Diocese
– cafes, inclusive
services, singing groups
etc

Peer support and carer support

- National **Dementia Strategy** 2009 prioritised peer support and carer support
- National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) **Quality Standard** for dementia advises wellbeing activities (cognitive stimulation, group reminiscence, walking groups, exercise, music therapy) plus support groups for carers
- 2019 **Alzheimer's Society** withdrew from offering place-based support to focus on individual support.

Friendship helps

Continuity – part of 'normal' life

Stimulation – keeps us engaged

Self esteem – helps us feel valued

Identity - reminds us who we are

Carer support – shared responsibility



Pre-Covid Church Activities

- At least 30 groups and activities run or hosted by churches in Rochester Diocese
- Support and social activities included dementia cafés, film screenings, carers support groups, singing groups and inclusive church services
- Weekly, fortnightly and monthly, often run in partnership
- Information collated and promoted by Anna Chaplaincy lead



Pandemic impacts

Groups and activities suspended; some support transferred to online or phone

Anecdotal reports of increased stress experienced by family carers

Acceleration in decline in people with dementia through lack of stimulation

Greater recognition of the role of community groups like churches in maintaining wellbeing

Experiences of groups late 2021



Julia hosted Zoom workshops 18 May and 30 June to enable the process of restarting



Encouragement from social prescribing teams and voluntary sector partners, recognising the need for this



Around half of the groups and activities have now resumed



Guests are highly appreciative of these opportunities for support



High levels of engagement from health and care professionals

Resources

- **Memory Café: How to Engage with Memory Loss and Build Community**, 2017 Grove Booklet by Steven Morris (vicar of St Cuthbert's Wembley)



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