

## **Dementia Connections, Wotton and Charfield Memory Groups, Summer 2016**

Wotton and Charfield Memory Groups were set up by Christine Sweet , Trust in You Community Interest Company and Amanda Pearson, LINK Services (South Glos) CIC. We were successful in securing time limited funding for both groups, from different sources. We depend on ongoing donations and fundraising to keep the groups going.

We aim to create a welcoming environment where each person who comes is respected for what they have to offer and people can either enjoy a beverage and a chat, or take part in activities that are introduced according to their interests. Activities to date have included board games, card games, quizzes, crafts, singing, seated tai chi, baking, discussions and reminiscing prompted by items found in a "Memory Box" and the perusal of old photos of Wotton brought by David Baird of the Heritage Centre . Activities linked to the calendar included a Christmas meal at The Royal Oak, pancakes on Shrove Tuesday with everyone creating their own toppings, hot cross buns, and the celebration of birthdays with cake.

The group created a picture of our Dementia Connections logo, and submitted it to the UTEA Flower Power exhibition. We were delighted when someone bought it.

We have had visits from various professionals who enjoy meeting with us and sharing information e.g. the Dementia Advisers from both Wotton and Charfield areas, Long Term Conditions Co-ordinator from the GP surgery, Community Safety Adviser from Glos Fire Service, PCSOs, local church representatives, local Councillors, Fairshares. We took part in a consultation about Wotton Community PARC and gave plenty of suggestions for use of the space.

Amanda's background is in care home and day care settings, whilst Christine worked in social care, both in hospital and community settings. Both have a special interest in the care of people with dementia and the support of their families. Both are trained as Community Dementia Link Workers, and both are Dementia Friends Champions.

Our belief is that everyone has something to offer their community, though we know that there are times when it is not so easy to be involved in local events. With this in mind we offer other services, such as respite, and organise activities which the people in our groups can enjoy along with other members of the community. For example, we are planning a summer 1950s themed dance, and are working with WCSF to create Gentle Walks and a Sensory Garden in the Community PARC once the main track has been laid. Look out for a Worm Charming Championship in Autumn 2016. Members of the Memory Groups are involved in the suggestions and planning of activities that we organise.

The name Dementia Connections describes the liaison between Christine and Amanda, the connections that members of the groups make with each other, and the way that members of the group link with the various professionals or organisations which provide support, as well as raising awareness of dementia and creating opportunities for group members to have a say in local issues, so that we are all connected with the communities in Wotton and Charfield.