



NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

SCRUTINY PANEL 3 DEMENTIA FRIENDLY TOWN

25 JANUARY 2018

BRIEFING NOTE: SITE VISIT: LUTTERWORTH

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 At its inaugural scoping meeting, Scrutiny Panel 3 (Dementia Friendly Town) agreed that it would undertake a site visit to a town that was either already dementia friendly or was in the process of achieving dementia friendly.

2 SITE VISIT

- 2.1 On Friday, 10 November 2017, Councillor Russell (Chair); Councillor Beardsworth (Deputy Chair); Councillors Ashraf, Duffy and Meredith, together with Gwyn Roberts (Co Optee) and Tracy Tiff, Scrutiny Officer, visited Lutterworth in Leicestershire.
- 2.2 The site visit spent time with the Share and Care Group that was meeting in the Methodist Church at Lutterworth. The Share and Care Group is for people living with dementia and their carers and also for carers of someone who has lived with dementia but has passed away.
- 2.3 The session on 10 November was dedicated to coffee and a chat and hand massage. Touch is very important. All those present took part in the hand massage.
- 2.4 The Scrutiny Panel spoke with some of the attendees:

One woman confided that she attended the Group as a previous carer of her husband who had lived with dementia. He had passed away earlier this year. Her husband had not attended Care and Share as he did not know any of the attendees but had continued to enjoy going to church, which was familiar to him. The woman explained it had been difficult at times caring for her husband; he did enjoy visitors to their home and was much happier in familiar environments. The woman got comfort from the Share and Care Group herself and stressed the importance of support for carers after the person they had cared for had passed away. She

emphasised that the Share and Care Group gave attendees a sense of belonging. She advised of another similar Group that is held in Oadby, Leicestershire, that splits into two sessions – first session is dedicated to craft work and the second session games, such as balls into the net and musical bingo. Musical bingo was very popular. The organiser of the Care and Share Group at Lutterworth undertook to introduce games such as Musical bingo at Lutterworth.

Another attendee at the Group advised that a person living with dementia can live with dementia for fifteen years. It can affect the carer in a number of ways, such as isolation and loneliness. It is important that carers are listened to. The attendee gave an example of when she took her husband to see the GP, he would speak to her husband who was living with dementia, rather than speaking with his wife (as his carer.) She stressed the importance of carer's involvement.

Another attendee expressed the importance of singing for those living with dementia. The Share and Care Group at Lutterworth puts on sessions dedicated to specific decades, 1940s, 1950s, 1960s etc; the sessions look at fashion, music and singing around that decade.

Another previous carer of someone who had lived with dementia provided details of when her father had been admitted to a care home. The care provided had been excellent but there were "little things" such as ensuring he could reach the call bell that were very important.

A local Reverend provided information. The local churches had been liaising with the Alzheimer's Society who had advised what should be implemented. It was important that changes are brought in gradually. For example yellow and black signs. All churches in the town have been meeting regarding how to work together as becoming dementia friendly. It is anticipated that quarterly church services will be dementia friendly. The Reverend offered to invite the Scrutiny Panel to one of these services. It was noted that St Marys and the Methodist Church, Lutterworth, were already working closely together.

One of the attendees, a woman in her 50s, was in the early stages of living with dementia, having been diagnosed three years previously. She described how usually she feels confident to go about her daily routines and travelling around Lutterworth which she knows extremely well and where she is recognised by most people. She said there are times when she becomes confused and feels lost and this is a terrifying experience for her. On one occasion she found herself in a pub where she approached a couple and asked if they would mind calling her husband (she has a card in her wallet explaining her condition and giving her husband's contact details). They kindly offered to buy her lunch and after speaking to her husband, cared for her until such time he could meet her and take her home. Another

attendee described the traumatic moment when her 48 year old daughter was diagnosed with dementia during the same year her sister, 40 years older than her daughter was also diagnosed. Sadly her sister passed away recently and her daughter, now living in a care home, is displaying symptoms which indicate a gradual deterioration.

CONCLUSION

- 2.5 Groups such as Care and Share, help carers overcome their loss. Carers often feel lost and lonely when the person living with dementia has passed away.
- 2.6 From discussions with attendees, the value of therapy dogs was recognised.
- 2.7 Church rooms, such as the Methodist Church in Lutterworth, are ideal locations to host Share and Care Group meetings.
- 2.8 Churches often have a good network of people who are carers and have a good body of volunteers too.
- 2.9 The Methodist Church at Lutterworth sponsors a full time officer to bring carers and those living with dementia together into Church groups. The salary of this Officer is paid for by the Church.
- 2.10 A potential recommendation of the final report was suggested that Officers liaise with the local churches in Northampton to ascertain what Groups are currently available and whether Groups such as Care and Share could be introduced.
- 2.11 Details of a sample of the sessions offered by the Share and Care Group can be located: <http://www.lutterworthshareandcare.org/program.htm>
- 2.12 There are plans for Northamptonshire Carers and the Alzheimers Society to establish similar groups along side Professor Parke's model. The Co-Optee will give an update at the meeting.
- 2.13 Lutterworth has the benefit of being a small town where many people know each other and those living with dementia receive help often because they are known and helped home when needed. Morrisons, the local supermarket, plays a big part in identifying and helping people living with dementia when the occasion arises.
- 2.14 Training and signs on shop fronts, such as a sticker or badge alerting people living with dementia that help was available was thought to be essential and recommended.

3 RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 That the information provided in this briefing note informs the evidence base of this Scrutiny Review.

Author: Tracy Tiff, Scrutiny Officer, on behalf of Councillor Cathrine Russell, Chair, Scrutiny Panel 3 Dementia Friendly Town

10 November 2017