

Chorlton & Whalley Range
Dementia Action Group



10 Big Ideas



For Making Our Community
a Better Place for People
Living with Dementia

Introduction

Many of us know someone who is living with dementia, a friend, a neighbour, a brother, a mother or grandparent or you may be living with dementia yourself. It's in all of our interests to start taking the steps now that will slowly transform our communities to make them into better places for people living with dementia and their carers.

In February 2019, we held two events called "Imagine If....." which were attended by about 80 people including: people living with dementia and the people that care for them; staff from local businesses and voluntary sector organisations; and staff from local services. We asked them to imagine what would need to happen to make Chorlton and Whalley Range better places for people living with dementia.

There were lots of ideas, such as;

- Improving the signage around the community
- Putting in more benches
- Getting to know our neighbours
- Valuing the experiences and talents of those living with dementia and their families and carers
- Developing our understanding of the challenges people face living with dementia
- Sharing our time and our interests with others
- Welcoming all newcomers to our groups and events
- Knocking on our neighbours' doors to see if they are OK
- Asking neighbours for help if we need it

- Having better buses and more understanding taxi drivers
- Ensuring there are lots of opportunities for people of different generations to meet
- Curbing the traffic and the parking on pavements
- Mending the pavements
- Smiling and say 'hello'
- Having more toilets available
- Having more attractive, safe and accessible public spaces
- Getting together with our neighbours
- Helping everyone keep a sense of purpose

Drawing on all these ideas and on research carried out by Prof Andrew Clark (University of Salford) and Dr Sarah Campbell (University of Manchester), this booklet suggests 10 big ideas for making our neighbourhoods better places for all of us.

We hope you enjoy it.

Chorlton and Whalley Range Dementia Action Group

Share your Dog's Love



Anyone who owns a dog knows the comfort they bring and the meaning that they bring to life: someone has to feed them, walk them and love them. There's lots of people who love dogs (except for those people who prefer cats) and a dog is a passport to a conversation with a stranger. Why not share your dog with someone living with dementia who is no longer able to care for one themselves but would relish the opportunity to share your dog's affection?

In Chorlton and Whalley Range, a local GP takes their dog to visit residents at a care home. In Salford, there is a dementia dog walking group called 'Paws for Dementia'. It provides an opportunity for people living with dementia to walk a dog brought by a volunteer. People living with dementia who own their own dog also bring them to the group to share a walk in a social environment.

For people living with dementia, looking after or being with pets can help relaxation and combat loneliness and depression. They can help memory where people have owned pets before and be a topic of conversation and a way of interacting with others. They can bring meaning and purpose to life even when a person has severe symptoms. Your dog has love to spare so share it!

Older People's Homes for Three Year Olds



Why do we put older people in one place, a care home, and children in another, when they could be together having fun? Older people's homes could become places for pre-school children to spend time with people living with dementia, before the children get into the swing of full-time school.

In Whalley Range, at Abbotsford Care Home, PlayPals holds a group that brings together pre-schoolers and residents for each other's mutual benefit. The children play games with the toys and the older people join in, chat with the children or sometimes just watch the children having fun.

People living with dementia, especially those living in residential homes, can miss the joy of young children and the chance to play. If they cannot get out much, they may never see children unless they come to visit. Bringing old and young together benefits both.

Caring Streets



No 3

All over the country the number of neighbours people know by name has fallen. Yet, if we know our neighbours, they are more likely to be able to ask for help when they need it, and we are more likely to give it. Neighbours can play a big part in helping carers to manage, and this in turn, is one way to help people living with dementia stay in their own homes for longer and to continue to contribute to their communities.

Community Circles are one approach to providing support. The idea is that families, friends and neighbours come together, with the help of a facilitator, to discuss in person how they can all work together to improve their lives. It builds on those links that are already there to help someone to get out more, deal with their garden, sort out shopping or do all of those things that contribute towards a decent life.

Carers are absolutely critical in supporting people living with dementia and the stress of having to do it alone can be overwhelming. A good predictor of being able to continue to live at home is the quality and quantity of informal support that people have. Today you might be giving support, tomorrow you might need it.

Thank you for the Music



Music is mood-altering, memory-surfacing, dance-inducing stuff! Sharing music, through creating playlists to listen to together, singing or creating music, can improve people's wellbeing and bring people together.

'Our Dementia Choir', a TV programme with Vicky McClure, showed people living with dementia joining a choir, learning new songs and performing them. 'Playlists for Life' (www.playlistforlife.org.uk) is an app encouraging people to share their Spotify music account and to develop musical playlists for people living with dementia.

In Old Trafford, 'Concert in the Lounge' encourages people living with dementia to participate in therapeutic sessions of music making and singing. In Whalley Range, 'Together In Song', a Gospel Choir specifically for people living with dementia, meets monthly for practice and performs regularly at events.

Music brings back memories and emotions for us all. If you have dementia, specific music may help to tap into special memories you may otherwise struggle to access. It can be a great tool as part of a reminiscence session, to help relaxation, or just as a shared, fun experience. There are many local choirs that may be open to people living with dementia. If you know someone living with dementia they may need support to stay in touch with music and would be interested in simple to use equipment and a playlist.

Take a Seat



Shopping can be really tiring, especially after a long walk to get there. There aren't enough places to sit down and take a breather or to rest if you're not feeling so good or are a bit confused. Lots of shops and businesses can make our communities friendlier if they offer somewhere to sit down.

In Chorlton and Whalley Range many shops and businesses have signed up to the Age Friendly "Take a Seat" Campaign. They put a sticker in the window and get a free chair if they need one so everyone knows that there's somewhere to sit, whether or not you are intending to buy something. This can make a huge difference.

Having a seat is only one of the things that local shops and businesses have done. Some allow use of their toilets, some have cheaper deals for older people, and some staff have gone to dementia awareness workshops so they are better prepared to help someone who is confused or lost. People living with dementia are far more likely to be able to continue using local facilities if they know they are going to be met with a friendly face and a little bit of help if they need it.

Chatty Cafe



The Chatty Cafe scheme was created by Alexandra Hoskyn from Oldham as she sat in a supermarket cafe with her baby son. She was feeling lonely. As she looked around the cafe she saw that other people appeared to be just as lonely as she was, and so she began to think of ways that people could come together and connect.

This led to the idea of a 'Chatter and Natter' table where cafe customers can sit and talk to each other, whether for five minutes with a brew or longer. One such table exists at Costa Coffee in Chorlton, but as there are numerous cafes and bars in Chorlton and Whalley Range, there is the potential to have several 'Chatter and Natter' tables and lots of conversation!

People living with dementia can lose confidence, stop visiting people, and can become isolated and lonely, and so having opportunities to connect are really important. A list of 'Chatter and Natter' tables can be found on the Chatty Cafe website and they're for everyone.

Bowling Buddies



Crown Green Bowling has been a staple of northern towns for over a 100 years. It was deliberately made harder by creating a gentle rise in the centre of the green. Nothing is worth doing unless it's hard. There are far more bowling greens around than you might think once you start looking for them.

Why not combine bowling with eating? And that's just what some clubs have done. They're called 'bowl and plate' events, and they combine exercise with a light lunch. They encourage new members and provide an opportunity to chat and maybe make a new friend.

We all need to keep active and that's just as true for people living with dementia. There are lots of sports and leisure clubs in Chorlton and Whalley Range who might be able to think of ways they could help people living with dementia to keep active.

Make New Friends at the Bus Stop



In Wales, there's a man, who in his free time upholsters chairs for bus stops. He sees it as a social service and he really likes upholstering. In many other places, people have decorated bus-stops, put sofas in, posters and even green roofs. One big bus operator in the southwest of England has started a chatty bus campaign, encouraging people to talk to someone new every day and offering tea on their buses.

Bus stops and buses are about much more than just travel, they are a place to connect and talk to people. A third of people use buses partly because they value the opportunity to have some social interaction.

There is lots of loneliness about and an estimated 9 million people in the UK are lonely some or all of the time. One of the impacts of living with dementia is that people can lose their friends and social networks. Talking to people at bus stops is one opportunity to make your day, and someone else's, a better one.

Pass it on



Withington Road

How do you find out about what's going on locally? Maybe you look at Whalley Range or Chorlton Facebook, perhaps you read Open Up or Manchester Evening News, or see a notice in the library. Lots of people find out what's going on by hearing it from someone else. Most of us are more likely to go to something if someone tells you how good it's going to be.

Many people in our communities, including people living with dementia, can be isolated, and so they don't find out about all the good stuff that's going on. Many people who aren't isolated don't find out about stuff that's going on because we've lost a lot of the old ways of letting people know, e.g. South Manchester Reporter ended in 2016.

To really feel part of a community we need to get involved in some way, whether it's something at a pub, sport's club or a community group. Next time you meet a neighbour or start talking to someone at a bus stop, tell them about what's going on and see what they know.

Let's Dance!



No 10

Small children dance, young people dance, many older people don't dance enough. Lots of other things are going on and it's as if they forget just how much fun it is. Many people remember as they get older and start dancing again. Dancing is life affirming, wonderful, creative, it is a fundamental of life when you feel the music and the beat and move in time. People need to dance more.

People living with dementia need to dance too. The basic capacity to move with music stays with people even as their memories fade. If people can't stand they can still dance in wheelchairs or even just sitting in a chair. It is a moment of joy that everyone can share.

Inspired by a recent TV programme 'Our Dementia Choir', a group of people have set up a Dementia Disco, with all kinds of music, where people can have a dance and meet other people.

In Chorlton and Whalley Range there are all kinds of dancing opportunities, such as dance clubs, dance lessons and dancing events. With a little creativity, perhaps they could be opened up to everyone and include people living with dementia.

About the research supporting this work

'The Neighbourhoods: Our People, Our Places' was a 5-year multi-site research project funded by the Economic and Social Research Council and the National Institute for Health Research. The project explored how neighbourhoods might better support people living with dementia (and their carers, families and friends) to live independently in their own homes. The research was undertaken across Greater Manchester as well as in Scotland and Sweden.

The research reveals how neighbourhoods can be important resources for people living with dementia, enabling them to maintain connections beyond their immediate family, get out and about, and to play active roles in the social life of local places. The work has informed local interventions that seek to create more inclusive neighbourhoods including the Chorlton and Whalley Range Dementia Action Group.

You can find more information about our work at:

<https://sites.manchester.ac.uk/neighbourhoods-and-dementia/>

Dr Sarah Campbell, University of Manchester
Research Associate and member of Chorlton and Whalley
Range Dementia Action Group

Prof Andrew Clark, University of Salford

About Us

Chorlton and Whalley Range Dementia Action Group was started in 2016 by two local people, who have some personal experience of dementia, who wanted to see how their community could be improved by supporting members of the community better. An open invitation was made to anyone working or living in Chorlton and Whalley Range to attend monthly lunchtime meetings to discuss what the issues are and what might help.

Regular attendees have included: a local domiciliary care agency; local churches; people living with dementia; carers of people living with dementia; Councillors; community Nurses; a firm of solicitors; voluntary sector agencies and local neighbourhood organisations; interested members of the community; a housing association; and Macc.

For a small group we have achieved a great deal, including: well attended public information meetings; a fun day involving local high school pupils, to meet and learn from people living with dementia and their carers; and the 'Take a Seat Campaign' in partnership with Southway Housing Association, in which we visited traders in the area to find out what they are already doing to support people who may have dementia and to ask them to take further action.

Further Information

Together Dementia Support -

www.togetherdementiasupport.org/ (based in Chorlton and Whalley Range)

Alzheimer's Society - www.alzheimers.org.uk (National)

Become a Dementia Friend - www.dementiafriends.org.uk (National)

Chorlton and Whalley Range Dementia Action Group -
Search for us on Facebook.

Thanks to all the members of Chorlton and Whalley Range Dementia Action Group who donated their time, creativity and commitment.

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Did You Know?

There are currently approximately 850,000 people with dementia in the UK and this figure is forecast to increase to over 1 million by 2025 and over 2 million by 2051. Although dementia is most associated with old age there are also over 40,000 people with young-onset dementia (onset before the age of 65 years) in the UK.

If 1 in every 14 of the population aged 65 years and over is living with a type of dementia, the chances are that you know someone or live close to someone who has dementia. Whilst comprehensive health and social care services are required, this is not a condition for which there are many treatments. What people need most is a supportive network of people and an enabling community that helps them to get out of their homes, get involved and maintain friendships.

Dementia has a great impact on people's ability and motivation to get out and stay active – and their family carers can become isolated too. They need individuals and community groups to reach out to them and make a difference to their quality of life which will, in turn, impact on their health. This whole-community approach is what we are working towards in Chorlton & Whalley Range.