

Report to: September 2015 Shire meetings
From: Cllr Dawn Bailey – PCC Dementia Champion

Dementia Champion Activity Update

1. Royal Welsh Agricultural Show and Eisteddfod news

Since my last report, life has been hectic. Having been involved with the preparations for the Chairman of Council, Cllr Paul Ashton's Dementia Reception prior to and during the RWAS, I was really pleased with the support given to the event, not only from invited guests but by Members. As PCC Dementia Champion, I gave a short presentation to the audience on my role and the work already underway within Council on improving life for those living with dementia. Other speakers included the Chief Executive of the Care Council for Wales Rhian Huws-Williams; Lead officer for dementia services from Powys tHB Harold Proctor and Neil Evans, Fire Officer and member of Brecon Dementia Friends Communities project. I was introduced to and established many new contacts from amongst the health and social care professionals in attendance. As the RWAS Council event was held in conjunction with the Care Council for Wales, they in turn invited me to their social care events over the course of the Show week.

The Eisteddfod saw a repeat of social care and dementia related events in partnership with the Care Council for Wales. My thanks must go to our Council's Welsh Language Champion, Cllr Arwel Jones for his help in overcoming language barriers and who kindly stood in for me and delivered my dementia presentation at the joint event 'Considering the characteristics of dementia care at its best' whereupon leading experts gave talks on innovative approaches to caring for those living with dementia.

Both the RWAS and Eisteddfod gave rise to networking opportunities that would never have occurred otherwise and arising from them has seen an invitation given to myself from a Board member of the national Alzheimer's Society to become a member of the Prime Minister's Rural Dementia Taskforce as a member representative of a Welsh rural authority. In 2012, PM David Cameron pledged his support to turn the UK into a Dementia Friendly nation. This pledge has manifested into a huge wave of dementia friendly communities across England and whilst in Wales the movement is yet to see the scale as seen in England, this situation is beginning to improve. I have also been asked to become a member of Alzheimer's Wales soon to be launched Rural Dementia Network due to go live later in the autumn.

2. Council pledge

Given the size of our Council, the geography of our county and the wide range of services we are responsible for, in practical terms it will be a huge undertaking to achieve recognition status as a dementia friendly organisation. The pledge by Council last October not only saw Members express their desire for Powys County Council to become a dementia friendly organisation but also for Powys to become a dementia friendly county so a long term countywide vision must also be considered.

In order for the county of Powys to achieve recognition from the Alzheimer's Society as working to become a dementia friendly county, the establishment of a local structure (ie Forum or Alliance) is the key to the success and sustainability of creating a dementia-friendly county. A Powys Dementia Forum or Alliance would see a collection of stakeholders brought together to improve the lives of people with dementia in our area. Having spoken directly to a number of interested people both at the RWAS and Eisteddfod as well as local community groups already working within the county, the proposal to set up a countywide initiative appears to be keenly supported.

3. Powys County Council – a dementia friendly organisation

How will we achieve a dementia friendly organisation. An undertaking on such a large scale is going to take considerable time to achieve but every step we take as an authority is a positive move to fulfilling our pledge to the people of Powys.

First steps within Council is to raise awareness of dementia across the whole workforce. It is essential awareness training is not just given to those delivering traditional social care and public facing services. Training will be delivered by a variety of different methods appropriate to the individual needs. Members may recall an interactive Dementia Friends session held a couple of months ago as part of Members Development programme, there are however also some excellent e-learning packages available which offer a more convenient approach. Dementia awareness must become a mandatory training course within the workforce development plan and I am pleased to report one Head of Service has already committed to this undertaking. National Dementia Awareness Week during May which was widely promoted within Council gave rise to considerable interest from members of staff keen to learn more and participate in initiatives.

4. What is dementia awareness?

Dementia awareness training helps someone understand what it is like to live with dementia and to understand the simple actions that can be taken to help someone living with the condition. Actions which can make a positive difference, no matter how small. It is therefore essential to remember tackling dementia is not any one particular service area responsibility – it is the responsibility of each and every one. From ensuring our offices and council buildings are dementia friendly with staff who can recognise when someone needs extra help and assistance to ensuring our high streets and communities are planned and designed to give confidence to someone wishing to maintain their independence and remain living at home for as long as they are able.

5. Dementia Champion Role

My role of Dementia Champion is to ensure a Dementia Friendly action plan is in place for Powys County Council which will include two strands, one an internal organisational approach and the other an aspirational long term vision for Powys and its communities. Whilst the draft plan is approaching its final stages, I am happy to report work to accommodate proposals contained within it are already commencing with positive conversations started with relevant partners and initiatives underway.

To coincide with Dementia Awareness Week in May, the library service launched a new awareness booklist to help those living with dementia. This online resource can be found on the library service's online catalogue under Dementia Support. Members of the public can order the titles in the library or online from the comfort of their own homes and pick them up from the library a few days later. Enabling technology such as this not only raises awareness of the condition but helps build on the supportive culture found in the safe environment provided by a library with staff trained in dementia awareness.

On a more general basis in order to adhere to dementia friendly criteria, Council has a responsibility to ensure decisions taken are sensitive to the needs of those living with dementia and as Dementia Champion I will ensure such consideration is given.

6. Member's Role

As a Council we are in a strong position through the services we currently deliver to lead by example. Members are in a strong position to influence communities, the Third Sector, businesses and our partners to think about how they too can help those living with dementia.

At a time of austerity constraints we need to develop and deliver practical, tangible solutions which will make a positive difference. We should rightly have an expectation others we work with will follow our lead and become dementia friendly organisations.

Tackling the issues associated with dementia is one of the biggest challenges facing society today and as a Council we must do all we possibly can to avert a health and social care crisis by putting in measures that will not only help people living with this progressive condition today but also those who are likely to require services in future years.

Finally I attended an event at Broneirion, Llandinam during August which saw the former Chairman of Council, Cllr Roche Davies present cheques to the Alzheimer's Society and Cancer Research arising from his mammoth charitable fund raising events held throughout his term of office as Chairman. This event followed the Wreath of Respect ceremony commemorating those who died in World War One. The ironwork wreath (including a horseshoe from one of the many horses killed during battle) was commissioned in 2014 and is currently touring around the UK. When the wreath is laid at rest, it is kept at the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire.

**Councillor Dawn Bailey
PCC Dementia Champion**