



Selsey Dementia Action Alliance **Newsletter Jun 2020**

This newsletter is offered in place of our monthly meetings, still currently postponed during the Covid-19 lockdown.

Unfortunately, a lot of things have come to a grinding halt during the current lockdown: Dementia Friends sessions, the Age Fusion project, the SDAA Men's Group, indeed, all the events and activities that involved any sort of close social interaction, including Dementia Action Week. However, a lot of things have been happening: Some Dementia Champions are delivering online sessions that you can attend from the comfort of your own home! For the time being, there is no expectation of any dementia-friendly community activity, but here in Selsey we have still been able to influence things and make some progress.

Community Support

Selsey Covid-19 Mutual Aid is a partnership of many local organisations which aims to alleviate some of the problems created for people by the current lockdown. Its main feature is the Buddy System which was rushed into existence at the start of the lockdown. In 48 hours, over 120 people volunteered to help those living near them who might need support during the lockdown, including many who are living with dementia and their carer. The project has had contact with residents nearly 2,000 times each week to arrange shopping, collect prescriptions, deliver food, distribute Senior Selsey News and information leaflets, operate the lending library, make supportive phone calls and help with other matters that arise. As an example, Grumpy's Cafe, UK Harvest, Selsey Lions, Selsey Food Bank, East Beach Church and Bunn Leisure have all been making food deliveries to many vulnerable people. The very successful Buddy System has been much admired outside the town - there is little doubt that, when lockdown ends, there will be a continuing need for some development of the Buddy System; work on this is already in hand.

Thanks are due to all those who have been involved in Selsey Covid-19 Mutual Aid and also to the wonderfully willing volunteers who have been quietly working at keeping in contact with those with dementia. At the Selsey Care Shop, we have been able to provide guidance and support to individual Buddies who were dealing with those living with dementia. Prescriptions, shopping and acts of kindness and social distancing conversations have all helped to make Selsey a little more dementia-friendly. We have also been supported by our Community Warden, Neil Hill, who has visited our more vulnerable residents when we have been notified of concerns about them. The well-used Selsey Covid 19 Lending Library has supported people with books, puzzles and DVDs – really useful for people living with dementia and their carers to help keeping them occupied.

Snippets (Not in any particular order!)

The Age Fusion project, involving a team of young people visiting local Care Homes, had to stop but Kate Grant wrote on her Facebook page: 'It has been a complete honour for me to work with such a wonderful and caring group of young people and I couldn't have managed the group without the amazing help and support of Kylee and Chris and the Selsey Youth Dream. I am sure when it is safe to resume the group will restart the visits to the local care homes.'

Good Morning Selsey is now calling over fifty lonely or housebound residents, every day if they wish, to offer a friendly chat – many are those living with dementia and their carers. We are also still working closely with the similar scheme in Bracklesham & the Witterings,

Thanks are due to our volunteers who have been delivering a thousand copies of Senior Selsey News every fortnight (instead of the usual monthly); again, many of the recipients are living with dementia. You can see the more recent editions of Senior Selsey News at: www.selseycommunityforum.uk/Publicity/.

VE Day celebrations were marked with deliveries of Union Jack goody bags containing pies, cupcakes and flags to a hundred local residents, including some living with dementia who are greatly missing our social events.

East Beach Church are live-streaming church services on YouTube and offering copies on DVD to those without access to the internet. Although 'Return to Sunday School' is another of our events on hold, East Beach church has been providing spiritual support to local care homes.

We are in regular phone contact with the people who had been attending our social events and activities with their carers, to check on their wellbeing and offer friendship and signposting to partner agencies. We have been supported by many willing volunteers making calls daily (in addition to those being made by 'Good Morning Selsey!').

The Selsey Care Shop has now reopened its door to the public, albeit with entry restricted to one person, or two people living together, at a time. Although the shop's social events and activities are still postponed, it continues to provide by telephone its normal Wellbeing and Money Support services, including 'It's OK not to be OK' and support for the bereaved, those in debt and those needing counselling. The shop has helped throughout the lockdown with enquiries, support and signposting to those on the dementia journey and their carers.

Through our links with 'Wayfinders' and Sage House we have had 150 activities packs which contain mindfulness puzzles, quizzes and much more. Most have been distributed but we have a few left; if you'd like one, contact Sue Hancock on 01243 201616.

Following on from the presentation of the draft strategy to the Selsey Dementia Action Alliance at the start of the year, the launching of the new Dementia Strategy for West Sussex in 2020 has been put on hold.

Useful links

Alzheimer's Society - has been hit badly by reduced fundraising. Many staff have been furloughed but those on the front-line remain in place supporting people affected by dementia via telephone and Zoom. Referrals for support (not diagnosis) can be made to Sussex Helpline:

Telephone: 01403 213017 or Dementia Connect: Telephone: 0333 150 3456.

Alzheimer's Society's National Dementia Helpline - for support and information about all aspects of dementia: Telephone: 0300 222 1122.

National Dementia Action Alliance - has launched its campaign, 'Staying Connected - How to Remain Socially Connected During Covid-19', which showcases the wonderful work by their members to provide support for people affected by dementia and to ensure information is easily accessible by those in need: <https://www.dementiaaction.org.uk>

Alzheimer's Tool Kit for Volunteers - a useful read and clear advice on supporting those living with dementia:

<https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/sites/default/files/2020-04/Coronavirus%20-%20How%20you%20can%20support%20people%20with%20dementia%20in%20your%20community.pdf>

West Sussex Memory Assessment Service - provides early detection, diagnosis, treatment, and care for problems associated with dementia. It covers the whole of West Sussex but divided into Bognor, Chichester, Midhurst and Pulborough area (West). Telephone: 01243 791883.

Selsey Medical Practice – now requires all visitors to wear face masks.

Telephone: 01243 608201. cwsccg.selsey-selsey@nhs.net

Selsey Community Forum – for Facebook pages, search: 'Selsey Community Forum', 'Selsey Covid19 Mutual Aid' or 'Selsey Dementia Action Alliance'. For recent copies of Senior Selsey News: www.selseycommunityforum.uk/Publicity/.

Selsey Care Shop - appointments necessary at peak times, due to reduced staffing to meet social-distancing requirements. Telephone: 01243 201616.

Best Wishes to you all. Stay Safe - and we hope to be able to meet you all again soon.

Sue Hancock, Selsey Dementia Action Alliance Coordinator

June 2020