

Attendees: Olivia Lyons – Dementia Friendly
Michelle Cliff – Support Staffordshire
Sam Bird – Development Manager Town Council
Cllr Pat Ansell – Chair Town Council
Chris Fielding – Rugeley Community Church
Cllr Cooney – Rugeley Town Councillor
Hilary Goodreid – Town Clerk

Olivia Lyons – helped to set up Dementia Friendly Rugeley which was set up just under 2 years ago. Personal reasons for joining – lack of awareness with Dementia in the town. Surveys have been done that show people fear developing dementia more than any other disease. 39% of over 55's fear getting dementia whilst 25% fear getting cancer – there is a stigma around this disease.

Started as a very small group and have lots of community organisations and businesses on board.

What is a Dementia Friendly Community? A town / city / village where people can contribute to, and participate in, community life – people can still feel involved.

The group spoke with dementia sufferers and carers. Went into different environments / schools / residential homes / individuals to increase understanding of the challenges that are being faced.

Local Rugeley survey showed that 45% of people with dementia go out once per week and 15% of these only go out once per month or less.

Alzheimer's did national survey – asked people who had a diagnosis of dementia what they were looking for from their communities:

- 1) Find their way around and feel secure.
- 2) Access local facilities that they are used to e.g. continue to go to post office / bank / library
- 3) Able to maintain their social network – maintain social interaction.

Aim of the Dementia Friendly Rugeley group is to ensure that these can be done for local people. The group looked at different areas of Rugeley –

Statutory organisations

Local businesses

Community

Local Businesses: engaged with traders and then COVID hit! Visited a place in Hampshire which has a Dementia Friendly high street scheme. Awareness / Customer Support / Physical Support. Do the staff know how to deal with people experiencing dementia – the impact it may have, how someone's needs may change etc Arrange Dementia Friends Groups so businesses can come along and have that understanding / awareness. Customer Support – as a service provider would you recognise a lasting power of attorney / deputyship order in place. The protections that dementia sufferers can access. Other support that shops can offer is avoiding long words in written material / reduce crowded layout / turn radio off to avoid background noise. What would help is well lit areas, limited reflections, black mats can be perceived as a hole in the ground – toilet sign could be

picture rather than words as pictures easier to understand. Labelling hot and cold taps etc. Putting together guides for the local businesses and looking for something similar for Rugeley Dementia Friendly High Street. Dementia friendly stickers to go into business shop windows.

Community – very similar to the business side – recognising the situations and how they can support people with dementia and their carers. Recognising what to do in these situations.

Statutory Agencies – started to look at local GPS, patient participation boards, CDDC – look at this from planning point of view – support in housing e.g. sensors to recognise if taps are left on etc. Transport – under equalities act – reasonable adjustments need to be done. More accessible bus stops – digital signs are easy to read. Planning more widely – creating a sense of place in the local development areas e.g. the Power Station site – access to green space, well lit, access to seating areas.

Training sessions will be offered in an ongoing rota of sessions, launch the Rugeley Friendly high Street Schemes. Continue to engage with the public and those already diagnosed with dementia so continually working and developing the support. MACE is great local support group.

MACE holds regular coffee events and a tea dance – good for people with dementia and carers. Chance to speak to others in similar situation. Rugeley in Bloom looking at sensory areas. Forget me Not display on Elmore Park. Helps to raise awareness to the wider community.

Chris Fielding – attended a session run by the Diocese of Lichfield on dementia friendly churches. Putting on coffee morning – ethos is that centre is welcoming for all. Various groups like Art Group, bereavement group where get increased number of people with dementia.

Cllr Ansell – difficulties during Covid getting out and about – change of scene is better than looking at four walls. Bringing back memories.

Cllr Cooney – runs C Residential and is aware of issues of those with dementia when selling houses etc. Looking to put signs on the door so that people recognise this and can come in if feeling confused / needing a break.

Olivia – dementia friendly Facebook group and information booklet / poster. We can distribute leaflets

Sam – figures are terrifying. Are they not leaving houses through fear or something else? In the high street – great to have shops but what happens if individuals get themselves lost in the high street?

The greater the awareness, the greater the understanding and recognising the situation.

Michelle – Support Staffordshire. Rugeley group is a great example of community groups taking own local action. Fits in with work with Cannock Chase Dementia Action Alliance – range of voluntary organizations that have involvement in how network in dementia can make a difference. Throughout lockdown, MACE have been delivering meals, chatting of peoples doorsteps etc – still supporting where possible. Sharing information through the

communities. Dementia Action Week – 17th May – 21st May 2021. More we can do to raise awareness in that week would be great.

Network of people that were known to be isolated or couples were known to be alone -in Rugeley – meals were cooked and checked in and dropped off cakes etc. Christmas eve – delivered over 100 bags to support those with dementia. With everyone, there will be anxiety and fear but those with dementia, the anxiety hurdle is much higher, and it will take a while to get back to baseline normality. Now that we are starting to open, we need to increase the awareness.

Judith – former GP – how easy is it for people to access the town? Mobility in town – use of mobility scooters, parking on pavements an issue as impedes mobility scooters. Accessing the town centre – difficult to get 'into' the town – cant access the dropped kerbs, Long walk from anywhere into the town if you are disabled.

Possible look at parking

Cllr Mahon – greening of Rugeley – having sensory beds around town. Having places around town that there could be a Dementia Friendly Benches etc.

Bus times – is there a dementia friendly bus?

Where so you access help for online support – the Library has volunteers there to support people accessing services on line.

Getting people to someone – use the local knowledge to get volunteers to help. Through a group you will have safeguarding measures in place. Community Help points

Social media / Facebook not appropriate for older people / signs in shops, posters are better. Too reliant to post things on line – need to look at every opportunity.

Olivia set up Rugeley Supportive Neighbours – to respond to the pandemic with prescriptions etc. Now they are just supportive neighbours – blue badge applications, housing applications, flyers and cards have been distributed to GPs and libraries.

Phone numbers are good for older people – promote numbers rather than emails..