



**Elizabeth Bartlett**

2 Riverside Close  
Laverstock  
Salisbury  
Wilts SP1 1QW

Telephone: 0781 238 1463

E-mail: [elizabethbartlett@ntlworld.com](mailto:elizabethbartlett@ntlworld.com)

## **Laverstock Memory Support Group: Newsletter – Autumn 2016**

Our group continues to flourish. The meetings were so well attended this term that sometimes we wondered how we would fit everyone in – but we always just managed to do so! At the same time the conservatory was nearly always full of family carers in the parallel peer support group.

Our discussions were always lively. And there was a lot of laughter. Some of our members are very witty.

For example, when one of the group commented, *"I find I get dizzy sometimes and feel that I'm losing my balance."* another member quickly replied, *"If you were in Waitrose, are you sure it wasn't just the prices?"*

We also continued to share insights into what it means to have dementia and ways of coping with its effects on us. Here are a few of the observations made by members of the group:

*"Saying I get muddled up sometimes is easier for people to understand than saying I have dementia."*

*"I find I have to take more care, even with simple things, like washing up."*

*"We don't want to be left in a corner and labelled. We WILL be alright whilst there are places like this to come to."*

And Tim – who sadly is no longer with us, following a severe stroke in December - observed

*"Dementia doesn't stop you being your true self, but it does alter you and change your way of life."*

As usual, we had quite a few visitors during the term. These included:

Sara Young who is Wiltshire Council's Commissioner for Dementia Services to came to see our group in action,

Rachel Niblock from DEEP, came to tell us about the sharing and exchanging of information countrywide with other dementia support groups.

Sharon Cloude came to see for herself the group after she had asked Elizabeth to lead a workshop at the Wiltshire Care Partnership Conference on the advantages of running experiential memory support groups like ours.

Olivia McLennan, who is a freelance community musician, who works with people with dementia told us about sessions on 'Circle Dancing' she will be running in Harnham. She invited us to join a small demonstration of what this involves. It was great fun as we tried to move in time with the music. But as Olivia explained, there are no right or

wrong ways to move – just ‘variations’!

All of our visitors also spent some time with the family carers in the conservatory.

In addition to having visitors coming to our group, some of us also went out and joined in other meetings concerned with improving services and support for people living with dementia. We were warmly welcomed at each event as we created opportunities for the voices of people with dementia to be heard directly.

The first of these outings was to a meeting of a research group based in the University of Southampton that is exploring options for electronic devices that may be able to help people with dementia find their way when they are out walking or need to make journeys on public transport. They also believe it may be possible to find devices that will help others to find anyone who has got lost. The research is still at an early stage, but those who went to the meeting were interested to hear how the project is progressing and to have the opportunity to ask questions about it. A further meeting of this group is planned in February.

The second outing was to a large conference in Trowbridge organised by Alzheimer’s Support. There were some excellent speakers and lots of opportunities to talk to other people over coffee or in the lunch break. The travel costs of attending this meeting were helped by a generous grant from Bluebird Care and we thanked Rayna Read at one of our meetings in Laverstock. A memorable highlight of the day was meeting and having our photograph taken with the dementia friendly dogs. We thought they were great!



We wish you all a happy New Year

*Elizabeth and Josie*

Funded by

**Wiltshire Council**  
Where everybody matters