

# Dementia Friendly Church

## What is going on?

The Prime Minister's Dementia Challenge 2012 (currently funded until some point in 2015 but probably to be funded beyond this) has led to a number of initiatives now underway in most areas of the UK:

### ***Dementia Friends and Champions***



Dementia Friends Champions are members of the public who have undertaken a 1 day workshop, designed and run by the Alzheimer's Society, in order to learn how to deliver a short presentation that helps to raise awareness and change attitudes. Champions encourage members of their audiences to sign up to become Dementia Friends and commit to making one change that will make life better for people with dementia (even if it is as small as not tutting when the person in front of you forgets their PIN number). Contact your local Alzheimer's Society office to find out about Dementia Friends Champions in your area.

### ***Dementia Friendly Communities & Dementia Action Alliances***

In some parts of the UK Dementia Friendly Community Coordinators (DFCC; usually but not always employed by the Alzheimer's Society) are encouraging local organizations of all kinds (businesses, statutory, voluntary, faith-based) to become members of their local area Dementia Action Alliance by writing a simple plan outlining how their organization can contribute towards making their community more dementia friendly.

Logic – the more organizations in a local area that take time to think about the challenges of dementia and their potential contribution the more dementia friendly that community will be.

### ***Working Towards Being Dementia Friendly Logo***

A new nationally recognized symbol, regulated by the Alzheimer's Society, that is awarded either to an individual group/organisation or to a whole community in recognition of commitment and actions taken



***Advice for individual churches wanting to become dementia friendly***

1. UNDERSTAND what a 'dementia friendly' church is:

- A church that is welcoming and inclusive towards people with dementia and their carers;

- a church where the church leadership and other members of the congregation help people with dementia to feel safe and orientated within the church environment;
- a church where it is OK to get confused and forget things,
- a church where people with dementia and their carers feel that they are valued members of the congregation, stay involved in church activity, and do not 'fall of the radar';

2. Do a REVIEW of your church:

- What are you already doing?
- What could be done better?
- Capacity for new initiatives?

3. Write a SIMPLE AND REALISTIC ACTION PLAN listing actions that will be taken to move the church in the 'dementia friendly' direction. Actions can be small and simple and fall into 4 main categories:

- Awareness raising and being more responsive to those in our midst
- Meeting spiritual needs
- Community engagement
- Befriending and pastoral support