

Wiltshire Voices – Memory Loss Event – Marsh Farm RWB – 2nd March 2012

The first public meeting for RWB & C Area Board Wiltshire Voices project took place on 2nd March 2012. The event, which was to engage with those residents in the community area whose lives are affected with memory loss either as a carer or someone with memory loss, was attended by over 60 people to include service providers, volunteer groups, fire brigade and Wiltshire council.

A short presentation of a film of another Wiltshire Voices project – Tidworth Area Board's Army Wives – set the scene of what was to be the outcome of these projects. It is not just about hearing from hard to reach groups of residents but for other members of the community to get involved, to hear the stories and aspirations and also for the council and councillors to be able to be aware of the needs of all people across the county.

This followed by a very interactive workshop to tease out key questions. Also available on the day, were a large selection of useful information for people to take away together with free home checks by the fire brigade. So there seemed something for everyone.

The films of these projects, together with the resource packs, will be available across the county and also can be used as part of training tools for Schools, Businesses, Communities and Service Providers to include Wiltshire Council.

One of the outcomes from the meeting at Marsh Farm is, that there seems to be a need for a community group run by volunteers and supported by professionals such as the Alzheimers Society. The group would be able to give a place of identity and provide useful information and shared experiences, workshops such as 'Singing for the Brain', social activities and also a place to meet people travelling the same journey through life.

There have been a number of people who have expressed an interest in doing this and this will be started off as soon as possible.

We discovered that there is an existing group in Swindon, called the 'Forget Me Nots' and there is an opportunity of some close working to model RWB & C Area Boards group in the same way. Plus there also seems to be a need from neighbouring areas to also have their own volunteer community group so the intention is to invite residents from Malmesbury and Calne and potentially Chippenham to sit alongside so that they can use the same model to set up their own groups (with hopefully inviting their neighbouring Area Boards to join them to then follow in their footsteps) there is the potential that these group will create a amoeba across the county and even further.

A big thank you for everyone who came and supported the event and who have showed interest to follow through with this project.

More is to come in future months – with the creation of the film and resource pack and hopefully a new group of volunteers helping themselves and others.

Cllr. Jacqui Lay and Steve Milton