



## **Press Release**

### **15<sup>th</sup> June 2018**

## **Borders project goes wild for Dementia Friendly funding**

People living with dementia in the Borders are benefiting from a new project that helps them connect with the outdoors through activities based in local woodlands. A funding award of £15,000 has been made by the Life Changes Trust to Instinctively Wild, an organisation which focuses on outdoor learning and health.

Following two successful pilot projects in 2016, Instinctively Wild has teamed up with NHS Borders to develop a two year programme of activities for people living with early onset dementia, based at Harestanes Countryside Visitor Centre near Jedburgh.

Many people with dementia find that, because of difficulties associated with their illness, they have fewer opportunities to participate in the outdoor interests they once enjoyed. This project addresses this by building a programme of activities based in the local countryside that involves people with dementia in weekly outdoor sessions.

Each session includes a walk, music and singing with a local musician, learning about the woodlands themselves, collecting nature objects and having a blether over a cup of tea – with additional activities each week.

The project aims to improve the physical and mental wellbeing of participants, and also provide opportunities for social interaction and the development of supportive relationships.

The project also supports the development of relationships between carers, encouraging them to come together to take part in activities for themselves.

**Anna Buchanan, Director of the Life Changes Trust dementia programme said,** “We are increasingly aware of the importance of meaningful activity for those living with dementia. In a rural area such as the Scottish Borders, many of these activities are related to the natural environment. This project will ensure that, even with a diagnosis of dementia, individuals do not lose their connection to the local environment, which can be enormously beneficial in terms of overall wellbeing. There is also the immeasurable benefit of meeting other people and being part of a community.”

The funding award is one of six made by the Life Changes Trust under the banner of ‘Get Outdoors’, with a funding total of £90,000.

The funding will help improve the physical and mental well-being of people living with dementia, by supporting projects that increase their participation in outdoor activities. The six organisations to receive funding are:

- Instinctively Wild Services, Hawick
- The Froglife Trust, Glasgow
- The Ecology Centre, Fife
- Sporting Memories Network, central Scotland
- NHS Dumfries and Galloway
- Evanton Community Wood, Dingwall

Some of the projects concentrate on connecting with nature, for instance taking part in walks or art classes in woodlands, and even learning more about farm based activities. Others concentrate on physical activities such as sport.

All of the funded projects aim to empower people with dementia to have a say in how they wish to connect with the outdoors and support them to do so in a way that is meaningful to them.

**Pete Carthy, Founding Director of Instinctively Wild, said,** “We are absolutely delighted to have received this funding award from the Life Changes Trust. During our pilot projects, we saw very clearly the benefits to those participating of getting outdoors, meeting other people through this, and taking part in some gentle activities. The funding ensures that we can bring these benefits to even more people over the next two years.”

**Anna Buchanan added** ‘By funding a diverse range of dementia friendly communities throughout Scotland, we are developing a deeper understanding of how to meet the needs of people with dementia and their families. Being able to connect with the outdoors has already proved invaluable for people with dementia and their families, and we look forward to watching this project grow.’”

The Life Changes Trust was set up with a Big Lottery Fund endowment of £50 million to improve the lives of two key groups in Scotland: people affected by dementia and care experienced young people.

## **ENDS**

### **For further information and for press enquiries contact:**

Deborah Cowan, Communications Manager: 0141 212 9606

[Deborah.cowan@lifechangestrust.org.uk](mailto:Deborah.cowan@lifechangestrust.org.uk)

## **NOTES TO EDITORS:**

Our work with people with dementia has shown that the phrase “Dementia sufferers”, or using the word suffering to describe dementia has a strongly negative view from people with the condition. We would request that you avoid using the phrase in headlines or in any article you publish to combat the negative way that people with dementia feel the condition is described.

**The Life Changes Trust** was established by the Big Lottery in April 2013 with a ten year endowment of £50 million to support transformational improvements in the quality of life, well-being, empowerment and inclusion of people affected by dementia and young people with experience of being in care.

## **In Scotland:**

- It is estimated that around 90,000 people have dementia.

- The number of people with dementia in Scotland is increasing, because the population is getting older. Based on current dementia prevalence rates, the number of people with dementia in Scotland is projected to double by 2038.
- Dementia costs the country more than cancer, heart disease and stroke put together.

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