

## New Dementia Sensory Garden Opened by Tangmere Charity

Sage House in Tangmere has created a brand-new sensory garden to give people living with dementia the opportunity to benefit from being outdoors, participating in gardening, and sensory stimulation. Sage House is a unique dementia hub - the first of its kind in the UK, providing a full range of dementia services under one roof.

Taking pride of place at the front of the hub, the charity has transformed an unused area - full of scruffy shrubs affected by blight, into an accessible and colourful sensory garden. The endeavour was led by Sage House Services Manager, Simon James, Wayfinder Natasha Davies and a volunteer garden committee. The garden has been designed as an accessible space for everyone to appreciate and enjoy. The paths have been created to be wheelchair accessible, enabling access to every area, and the raised beds enable people to garden without bending down.

The garden will be maintained by attendees at the charity's Day Breaks and activity sessions - helping to keep them active. Carers can also benefit from the garden as a quiet and safe space for reflection outdoors, as well as somewhere to remember loved ones who they have lost to dementia.

The new sensory garden was unveiled in an event held on Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> August, and declared open by the Chichester Town Crier and former Mayor of Chichester, Richard Plowman. Thirty people attended the event and enjoyed a tour of the garden's many donated plants. Guests included parish, district and county councillors, businesses that donated services or products for the garden, volunteers who have supported the effort, and charity Trustees and Vice-Presidents.

The honour of the ribbon-cutting was granted to Sage House customer Jim, who lives with dementia and has a passion for gardening. Jim is one of the first customers to feel the huge wellbeing benefits that the therapeutic sensory garden will undoubtedly bring to local people living with dementia.

The project was funded by the Worshipful Company of Gardeners and Chichester District Council, with materials and/or services kindly provided by Knights Fencing, SCS Waste, Brick Kiln, Geoff's Garden Ornaments and the Woodhorn Group. This beautiful new garden wouldn't have been possible without the all the volunteers and donors who have generously supported the project and helped bring it to life.

Emma Radley, Chief Operations Officer said: "This garden will provide an exciting new opportunity for us to engage our customers in meaningful activities. We recognise the many benefits that gardening brings and want to support our customers to enjoy gardening in a safe way. Alongside our full range of services, this is another way for us to provide excellent care for people with dementia and for them to connect with the natural world."

Ends

Notes to Editor

1. Dementia is now the leading cause of death in the UK. 1 in 3 people born since 2015 will develop dementia in their lifetime and the number of people living with dementia in the UK is predicted to rise to 2 million by 2050.
2. Established in 2014, Dementia Support is an independent local charity that has been operational since opening the doors of Sage House in West Sussex in 2018.
3. Our vision is "a society where dementia is wholly understood and accepted, enabling people living with dementia to be fully supported throughout the whole of their journey."
4. Our unique dementia hub brings a full range of services under one roof, including advice, guidance, activities, day care, and personal care. We support over 2,500 people affected by dementia in West Sussex.
5. We receive less than 4% of our annual income from statutory sources and actively fundraise to provide support.

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