

# JANUARY 2019 NEWSLETTER



## ***FAITH IN OLDER PEOPLE***

is a small voluntary organisation which aims to enhance the quality of life and well-being of older people by working with those providing practical, pastoral or spiritual care.

# BEST WISHES FOR 2019

## **WHAT HAVE WE BEEN DOING?**

### **LONELINESS AND ISOLATION**

These critical issues have been a major part of FiOP's work in the past year. We have worked collaboratively with the Church of Scotland Guild and Interfaith Scotland to highlight the issue to faith communities and importantly to find out more about the responses from the different congregations. The following is the blog written by Maureen O'Neill

Just before Christmas the Scottish Government launched its strategy A CONNECTED SCOTLAND – Our strategy for tackling social isolation and loneliness and building stronger social connections. It emphasises that:

*Social isolation and loneliness can affect anyone – at all ages and stages of life. As our society changes, there is increasing recognition of social isolation and loneliness as major public health issues that can have a significant impact on a person's physical and mental well-being.*

The strategy emerged following a period of intense consultation to ascertain root causes but also to highlight significant work being undertaken to support people in this position. Faith in Older People together with an ecumenical group which we brought together with the Church of Scotland Guild and also in collaboration with Interfaith Scotland debated the questions posed in the consultation and fed our responses back to the Scottish Government.

This is not a problem that will easily be solved as it has existed for many years but the context changes. To make changes and to alleviate the physical and mental impact will take all of us. We as individuals becoming more aware of the needs of our neighbours and friends; our work places to

engender a sense of belonging; our institutions and in particular our faith communities which can bring people together and offer a welcoming place.

What is clear both from our discussions and from the strategy document is that we need to collaborate. We need to form partnerships which draw on the expertise and knowledge of others so that we maximise these and other resources available. We don't need to reinvent services but to see what is available locally and to expand or complement. We need to build more compassionate communities for those who are lonely and isolated; those who are bereaved or experiencing ill health and those who have lost confidence in crossing their doorstep to participate. It is a big challenge. View the Scottish Governments Strategy '[Connected Scotland](#)' on tackling social isolation and loneliness.

Voluntary Health Scotland (VHS) has been one of the key players in relation to this strategy and has produced the Zubairi Report 'Loneliness and Isolation – An inequalities issue' <https://vhscotland.org.uk/loneliness-and-social-isolation-an-inequalities-issue/>

The Alliance has also written on the topic <https://www.alliance-scotland.org.uk/blog/opinion/bereavement-social-isolation-and-loneliness/>

Many voluntary organisations, as we illustrated in a previous newsletter, provide a range of services and campaign on a national and local level. There is great potential for collaboration so that we can make a difference. FiOP and the Church of Scotland Guild will be bringing our ecumenical group together on 20<sup>th</sup> March in Edinburgh to discuss the strategy and to share ideas. These meetings have always had a broad representation from different denominations. If you would like to participate, please contact Maureen O'Neill – [director@fiop.org.uk](mailto:director@fiop.org.uk)

## **FIOP – DEMENTIA AND FAITH COMMUNITIES**

FiOP has been developing a 'guide' for faith communities to assist them in considering issues affecting people experiencing dementia and their carers. Our Learning Resource is about to be published and it builds on the work that has been done by others as well as FiOP. We have been very fortunate in developing this resource to have had the skills and knowledge of Professor Mary Marshall, Jenny Henderson, Faith Gibson, Sue Kirkbride and Lesley Greenaway. Our aim is to disseminate the resource in early February. **If you would like to have a copy**, please contact Maureen O'Neill by email [director@fiop.org.uk](mailto:director@fiop.org.uk). FiOP is also grateful to the Edinburgh Interfaith Association and its Director, Iain Stewart, for undertaking consultation with a range of faiths and we have been very appreciative of the time we have spent with different communities.

Sue Kirkbride was a URC Minister in Edinburgh and moved to Orkney and wrote to say "When I arrived I encountered an active, inspirational group of people working hard for people with dementia and their carers. They have achieved so much. An Island location presents its own challenges but these resilient islanders are a force and are simply quite brilliant." The following is their piece about their work on supporting people with dementia.

### **Dementia Friendly Orkney**

In 2015 a group of people interested in dementia got together and formed a group whose main aim was to help people in Orkney with dementia. The first meeting was held in November 2015 and it was decided to call our voluntary group Dementia Friendly Orkney. The first meeting saw 15 people attend. Throughout these last few years we have done various fund raisers and all money raised has went directly towards helping people in Orkney who have dementia. At the present time there are about 500 diagnosed in

Orkney. We started a singing group which is held weekly on a Monday afternoon. To begin we had few in number attending but now some 5 years later we have up to 50 people attending each Monday. We have printed 2 songbooks for our own, using songs requested by people attending the singing. We have purchased instruments and employed a musician who plays the piano for us each week. We also have volunteers playing instruments as well now. DFO also goes along to the Day Centre once a month and holds a singalong. We have held pamper sessions for carers, enjoyed bus trips and lunches out with attendees of our singing group. We have held tea dances which are greatly enjoyed, done concerts and quizzes, bingo nights to name but a few of our activities.

Dementia Awareness Week is now a big week in Orkney with events on each day of the week and ending with a march up the main street led by the Pipe Band ending at the Peedie Kirk for a cuppa, music and a chat. This week is greatly enjoyed by all.

Last year, 2017 saw a major boost forward as DFO along with Age Scotland Orkney applied to the Life Changes Trust and was awarded £125000. With this money a Dementia Hub was set up and 2 part time Dementia Co-ordinators employed. We have also obtained in Orkney a Dementia Specialist Nurse who is employed by NHS and Alzheimer's Scotland. DFO purchased a Tofer Table (magic table) which is used in the Dementia Hub along with various other equipment for games and quizzes. We have also purchased a stimulation suit which is being used widely in Orkney to let people see what like it is to have age related illnesses (Parkinson's, bad back etc) This has had a great effect on the people who have used it.

Future events planned for next year are a three-day Conference on Dementia which Life Changes Trust are going to fund. Future plans also hopefully will see Alzheimer's Scotland in Orkney with a Dementia Advisor in post.

**SPIRITUAL CARE MATTERS** is a series of e-learning courses for front-line staff working in care homes, health and other care settings.

**What matters most – for older people?**

[Supporting the spiritual needs of older people](#)

This course will help you build confidence, skills and resilience to support the spiritual well-being of older people. The course explores how spiritual care is defined, what it means in practice and why it matters to support the spiritual needs of older people.

**What matters most – for care staff?**

[Looking after your own spiritual well-being](#)

This course speaks directly to care workers and their need to develop tools for coping in emotionally demanding situations. The course explores why it is important to look after yourself, builds your skills and confidence and will help you find support when you need it.

## FORTHCOMING EVENTS

### **Faith in Older People and the Church of Scotland Guild (in collaboration with Action on Churches Together in Scotland) - End of Life and the role of the churches**

Very informative and engaging sessions were held in October last year. It was clear from the discussion that it would be helpful to hold a conference to further consider the issues from different perspectives. This will be held on 11<sup>th</sup> June 2019 in Edinburgh (venue tbc). FiOP and the Guild will be working in partnership with Scottish Partnership on Palliative Care. [Keep the date and more information will follow.](#)

### **Dementia and Faith Communities**

The session above was shared with a discussion on what would be helpful to churches to ensure they were confident that they were supportive of people in the congregation who were experiencing dementia and those who cared for them. The session was questioning and practical and again it was felt that there was more that could be shared. A conference will be organised in September 2019 in Edinburgh – we will keep you informed of the programme and dates.

### **Our training this year will include:**

DEATH AND DYING FOR CLERGY

POWER OF MUSIC: development of singing groups for people with dementia

Further information coming soon

## OTHER INFORMATION

**EDINBURGH INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR SPIRITUALITY AND PEACE (EICSP)** – for full details of forthcoming events for 2019 contact – [www.eicsp.org](http://www.eicsp.org)

### **PLAYLIST FOR LIFE**

#### **Would you like to host a Playlist for Life Help Point?**

Almost 100 community organisations around the UK are supporting the people they work with to use the power of music to help dementia through the free Playlist for Life Help Point programme. Many are discovering that Playlist for Life is a positive, useful and fun approach for their organisation that enhances and supports the great things they are already doing. To find out more and to apply to be a Help Point go to <https://www.playlistforlife.org.uk/set-up-a-help-point> If you have any questions feel free to contact the team at [info@playlistforlife.org.uk](mailto:info@playlistforlife.org.uk) or by calling 0141 404 0683.

#### **What is a Playlist for Life?**

A playlist for life is all the tunes that make up the soundtrack to your life – the tunes that take you back to another time, person or place whenever you hear them. A person's playlist is as unique as they are. More than two decades of research shows that listening to this music can help manage dementia symptoms, manage mood and reunite families, by helping them connect and enjoy the moment together.

PLEASE CONTACT ME (Maureen O'Neill) at [director@fiop.org.uk](mailto:director@fiop.org.uk) or telephone 0131 346 7981 to discuss the possibility of tailor-made courses.



Faith in Older People

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