

## PRESS RELEASE

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Sandy Gilbert, Outreach office Fairclose centre putting the first Pledge on the tree of pledges



West Berkshire DAA event team  
Greg Walsh, Chairman far left,  
Sue Butterworth, 2<sup>nd</sup> from right

Photos courtesy of Stuart March Photography

### First West Berkshire DAA event an overwhelming success

- Seventy pledges made to improve the experiences of those living with dementia in West Berkshire
- "We can't change a person's dementia but we can change their community;"  
Ian Sheriff, Head of Rural Dementia in the UK

Both the organisers and the attendees of last week's conference aimed at exploring how West Berkshire and similar rural communities can become a better place to live for those living with dementia, have declared the event an overwhelming success. Over 90 delegates from health and social care, local businesses, the voluntary sector and local government heard from some of the country's leading experts into dementia research, community planning and residential design. Delegates also heard an enlightening and entertaining presentation from Hilary Doxford, who was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease at the age of 53 and is co-founder of the 3 Nations Dementia Working Board and a member of the Government's Dementia Programming Board.

Greg Walsh, Chairman, West Berkshire DAA. Said; "We are thrilled with the response we had from delegates to last week's event. The energy, enthusiasm and commitment to make changes was evident in everyone you spoke with. Even if only half the pledges that were made are implemented, West Berkshire is going to be an even better place to live for us all."

Prior to the event, West Berks DAA had undertaken a survey to highlight the current main areas of concern for those in the area currently living with or caring for someone with dementia. Further analysis of the survey's findings will be released in

due course but initial findings highlight the difference between rural and town communities and the obvious scope that there is for further work.

As Ian Sheriff, Head of Rural Dementia in the UK, put it so succinctly; "We can't change the person's dementia but we can change their community."

West Berkshire DAA now plan to review the pledges, analyse the survey findings and keep the momentum going by providing further opportunity for people to work together, share their expertise and bring about a tangible improvement in the day to day experiences of those living in the area with dementia. Dementia Action Week 2019 takes place May 20<sup>th</sup>-26<sup>th</sup> 2019.

### **END**

For more information about West Berkshire DAA the survey, the event or future activity please contact:

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