



December 2020

## Dear Friends,

We have so missed meeting up this year; but it has been a pleasure to resume contact by phoning you on the first Saturday or Sunday of the month. (For January it will be the 9<sup>th</sup> / 10<sup>th</sup>, not Sat 2<sup>nd</sup>.)



Several people thought it would be helpful to be able to speak to others in the group so we came up with the idea of setting up some WhatsApp calls, and some people tried them out.

Please let us know if you would like to join a group call and we will send you a consent form.



## New and old members

Who are we? Just ping us a photo and we will make a photo montage New Year's greeting card for all those who take part. (see back page.) This could be a real encouragement both to people who have joined during lockdown, and to people who have really missed meeting up. To receive the card, ping us a photo now!



## AGM and disco

Two requests came in for another party as we had for the January 2020 AGM. Our 2021 AGM will be in March/April on zoom, leaving us free to host a party whenever meeting up is possible.

# Living positively with dementia: The Dawn Method

## Sue shares how the Dawn Method has helped her.

When my husband was diagnosed last year with Young Onset Alzheimer's, aged 63, I thought, "I know about Alzheimer's" (my mother had it from age 80) and began to apply the lessons I had learned. I knew to not ask questions, and to go with the flow, to make sure practicalities were dealt with, etc. Mum was completely unaware of her situation.

My husband's experience of Alzheimer's is very different of course. He is still a young person at heart and is very aware that his cognition is letting him down. He has become a more emotional person which surprised me, and I soon realised I knew nothing about living 24/7 with a person who has dementia.

I learned so much when I read a link on the Young Dementia UK website about The Dawn Method by Judy Cornish. It is a book, has a blog, a website and a Facebook page too. The Dawn Method's goal is:

## **“Recognising the abilities, not just the disabilities of dementia”**

and it gives a set of 'tools' for caring for people with dementia (of any age).

The main theme is the importance of the skills that are not lost to dementia - intuition (feelings and emotion) and all the sensory skills. Positive experiences also continue to make life enjoyable as memories become less important.

Judy's blogs and her book have helped us to live more positively with dementia. Our roles as a couple are now very different and my 24/7 caring role does require more patience and time. But the resulting calm in the house and the freedom from worry are worth every minute. I don't know how I would have managed the last 12 months without it.

**<https://thedawnmethod.com/>**

## Christmas Puzzle

This is a game of 'Boggle'! How many words can you make from letters that touch? You can go in any direction and change direction as often as you like, but you cannot use the same letter more than once per word.

For example, here you could list 'BOX' and 'BOXED', —————→ but you could not list 'HEAD'



**Send us your family's list** by the end of the year (no other time limit in this version). Extra points will be allocated to words no one else has found, and there is a prize for the winning family.

## Greet the group by photo

We thought it would be fun to create a New Year's photo and greetings card to send to everyone who takes part. To exchange New Year's greetings just send us a snapshot before the end of Boxing Day. We will combine all the photos into one card and send it at New Year to everyone who took part. If you send a short message we will include that too. Send by any method you like.



**Musical Tip** Lots of literature notes the value of music to people living with dementia. When verbal communication is more difficult, the part of the brain that appreciates music becomes more important. We all have favourite or familiar music and playing it can remind us who we are, enabling us to have fun or feel safer.

**Financial Tip** from Leila and Mo: 'We discovered if there is someone with dementia in your household you can apply for a council tax reduction...we wanted to share this information as we didn't know before.'



### Eye for detail?

Here is a plea for 2021 photos too: we need new photos for this newsletter. Due to the pandemic we can't meet up or go out much, but there is always something to be seen at home. A different view of a leaf, cushion, plant, car, pet ... please surprise us with photos to share ... send by text, WhatsApp, email or any other way.

