

Alice Kohler, Newquay's Community Outreach & Dementia Support Facilitator shares Carol's Story and the importance of the connection at Govenek Active Living Hub (Formerly Newquay Day Centre).

## Carol's Story

Carol is 87 years old and lives in a Cornish town just outside Newquay. She has a small family up in the North of England, who have been unable to visit due to an ongoing family health concern. Carol has a passion for long walks, reading fiction and loves music.

Several years ago, Carol was diagnosed with Dementia and her condition has worsened in recent years - Alice and Govenek Hub were called to see if they could develop a tailored package of care.

*"My inability to retain what I've just been told means I say the same things over again, it's very frustrating for me."  
'Carol'*



## Alice and Carol

**The initial signs of dementia can differ greatly, from keeping track of a purse or preparing meals to remembering those essential appointments.**

In Carol's case, she has difficulty communicating and is scared to travel outside her home. This has meant that she has become extremely isolated (especially during COVID-19), inactive and more anxious of her surroundings.

We have been supporting Carol for the last year and we continue to offer Carol's carer some respite and provide activities and practical support. We aim to focus all our sessions on Carol - making her feel special and connected.

Carol is very specific and she certainly knows what she likes and what she doesn't. By working together we have been able to communicate in a 'new language' - **Carol has begun singing happy birthday when she is excited or having fun.**

## What support have you been offering Carol during COVID-19?

Firstly, we had to make sure that Carol was healthy and able to access all the support she needed. Following my initial assessment, we provided food parcels, reminders for prescriptions, telephone support and newspaper/book drops.

We also agreed that it was essential that Carol received a scheduled visit to help reduce her heightened anxiety. In early June, we added Carol to our companionship service and I have been visiting her weekly to share a conversation or two, connect Carol to outreach services and check on her overall wellbeing.

*“Even though we have all had some recent challenges, we are determined to ensure that the most vulnerable people we support would still be cared for and have that all-important thing ‘human contact’”*

As a way of helping care for and support people with dementia, music has been shown to often have a dramatic effect. **So, I have also linked Carol to our Cognitive Stimulation Therapy and ‘Happy Voices’ singing groups. Singing and music has been shown to unlock memories and is an increasingly key feature of the care we offer at Govenek. It can reach parts of the damaged brain in ways other forms of communication cannot.** When we run these sessions, Carol is visibly calmer and more engaged - enjoying conversations with the rest of the attendees.

A few weeks ago, we also started our Care

and Garden social ‘bubbles’ - meaning that we can now safely connect people and bring them together. Carol was one of the first to join a bubble!

The future will not always be easy for Carol, but by listening to her and putting her at the centre of everything we do, we can enjoy those long walks again, connect her to the things she likes and give her the life she truly deserves.

**Carol has been singing ‘Happy Birthday’ more than ever.... here is to many more renditions.**

## Govenek Active Living Hub

Govenek is a base that supports, engages and connects people like never before. It’s aim is to offer a wide range of activities, services and resources that improve the health & wellbeing of individuals in and around Newquay.

*“Our belief is that each person must be supported to live the life they want, to the best of their abilities. Our friendly staff & volunteers are always on hand to help, assist and develop a tailored package of care” - Alice Von Kohler*

## Contact Us

Please don’t hesitate to contact the team at Govenek - we are here to help.

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