What works well?

A 30-minute service is long enough and tea and cake afterwards is always popular.

Services that celebrate Christmas, Easter and Harvest.

Make it clear that people are free to stand and sit, or move around as they wish and reassure carer’s that it is ok if people wander or make a noise. The key is to make the whole thing as relaxed and welcoming as possible.

A brief sermon or a “thought for the day” about 5 minutes is plenty. Stories work well, as does recalling memories as a way in to the sermon.

Use well-known passages and stories. Many older people will be more familiar with the New King James Version.

Use traditional prayers which are short, simple and well-known.

Include the Lord’s Prayer in traditional form. A good introduction is to say, “Now we say together the prayer which begins, ‘Our Father’.”

Traditional and well-known hymns work well, people often comment on how much they enjoy singing hymns they remember.

Invite a local primary school to sing; older people often enjoy this aspect of a service and the involvement of young people.

If there are responses as part of the service ensure two people lead the service, one of whom is the ‘cue’ for the congregation. Advise at the beginning of the service that this is the person to watch so the congregation knows when to join in.

Multisensory - is a good way to interact with the congregation, an item to hold during prayers, candles and symbols, something to taste or smell, and visual aids for sermons.

Tips on making a church service accessible to people with dementia

Age UK Isle of Wight, St. John the Baptist Church in Ryde, Newport Congregational Church and St Mary the Virgin in Brading have worked together to look at the best way to make church services more accessible to people with dementia and to support the needs of older people generally.

# **Dementia Friendly Church Services**

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Niton and Whitwell are surrounded by countryside designated as an rea of outstanding natural beauty. A safe, wheelchair and mobility scooter-friendly footpath / cycle path has been established between the two villages away from the main road to improve local connections, with a public bench on the pathway to enable people to rest enroute.

The Parish Council working in partnership with the Isle of Wight Ramblers Associations have replaced old broken stiles with new gates under the ‘Donate a gate’ scheme. This has improved access to open spaces and footpaths for older people in the centre of Whitwell.

The Parish Council and local residents have worked hard to ensure communal outdoor spaces are clean, tidy, well-presented and

life.

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Additional Resources

Livability is a national Christian disability and community engagement charity. It provides information and tips about Dementia Friendly communities, communication, prayer, buildings and worship. Services can be found under ‘blog and resources’ at: livability.org.uk

Dementia Action Alliance has a checklist for DF Physical Environments at: <http://www.dementiaaction.org.uk/assets/0002/6448/dementia_friendly_environments_checklist.pdf>

   

# Order of Service Top tips

Use large print, a minimum of point 16 in size, but ideally 18, the font should be left aligned and in Arial with no italics, underlining or blocks of capital letters.

Visuals - any pictures should be literal, not stylised or abstract, e.g. picture plates from Bible stories.

Instructions – need to be concise, clear and in a different colour, think about using pictures such as praying hands, a Bible or music to denote hymns.

Page Numbers – can be placed at the bottom left-hand corner of the page and in the same size as the text. Refer to page numbers whenever focus returns to the order of service and allow people time to find their place.

# **Dementia Friendly Church Services**