

Words to Stakeholders at LCT 12.6.13

- I wear many hats in this dementia world, but at the end of the day my first and most important hat is carer to my husband Andrew who was diagnosed with Vascular dementia some 7 years ago.
- After a long and lonely and very painful first 4 years, I eventually said 'enough, this has to change' ...
- As a carer I had had to learn coping strategies ... but with no-one to help me understand what I was dealing with. I must admit that now I smile whenever I say 'oh Andrew seems to be better' because I've now learned what this actually means is that 'I'm coping much better ...'
- And this is what I am hoping the LCT will do for us ... help those dementia families out there struggling to cope with just trying to live a reasonably normal life.
- I guess this was brought home to me really profoundly one day when Andrew dropped the marmalade jar ...
- Realise why people with dementia react the way they do sometimes ... and why carers are under such stress.
- I'm sure people are sick of hearing me going on about the Dementia Strategy and how it's not reaching grass roots and how we desperately need it down at grass roots.
- And how **Fear** is at the bottom of it all ... that we need **Information** and knowledge, that betrayal of **respect** and dignity for dementia families is probably the single most important reason why there is fear of dementia and why the stigma is so profound; how innovative **support** is so urgently needed and how we need to **teach carers** they too have rights, too need help on the dementia journey and most importantly of all, truly are an integral part of their loved one's journey.
- Alex Neil launched Scotland's Second National Dementia Strategy at the beginning of Dementia Week last week and I think we're one of the first countries to do this ...
- But the banging on about it has led to change ... and as I always say it is an excellent strategy ... people at the top ... and with our DFC we are reaching up to it..
- And in fact LCT that gave me the knowledge to facilitate this change that has made such a dramatic impact on our lives: 18 months ago ... even before LCT was formally a trust ... I heard the magical words Dementia Friendly Communities from people talking about the Trust ..
- And it all made such sense ... I went home and starting doing something about it. And today Andrew and I are not alone in our village ... we don't have everything in place yet for a DFC, but we sure are on our way
- And I'm hoping that together with my fellow trustees we will be able to make a real difference by thinking innovatively, out of the box and even taking some risks!
Thank you ...