

## ***Embracing Memory Loss***

It has just been announced that Cornwall has been chosen as one of eight case-study sites for the National Dementia Strategy research team. This brings a fantastic opportunity to evidence the impact Memory Cafés are having across Cornwall on the well-being of people with memory loss and their carers.

There are now eighteen Memory Cafés established across the County, (and the nineteenth, in Bude opens on 5<sup>th</sup> November) providing a place where people with memory impairment and their family or carers can enjoy refreshments and socialise - taking part in a range of activities such as conversation, games, quizzes, arts and crafts and reminiscence work.

Sue McDermott, Memory Café Network Manager, Cornwall Rural Community Council (CRCC) said:

*'Memory Cafés provide unique opportunities for refreshing and re-weaving the relationships between people with memory loss and their carers. They are quickly becoming vital and treasured community resources. As a Network, our role is to help the Memory Cafés become sustainable by giving advice and practical help on setting up committees, applying for funding and offering training and support to up-skill volunteers and to help share good practice.'*

Memory Cafés also give carers the opportunity for mutual support and knowing that others understand makes a huge difference. Sometimes this grows into a support network that exists outside the Café, as some carers said:

*'This time here when I come to the Memory Café, is the only time I feel like I am me again.'*

*'I come in with a stranger and go home with my husband.'*

*'These Memory Cafés are a life saver; they should be all over Cornwall.'*

*'He starts looking forward to coming a couple of days before and is still talking about it for days afterwards.'*

Memory Café volunteers agree that mutuality is the key, one volunteer said:

*'There is no them and us, we are all the same and to show that, we all wear the same name stickers. You do not necessarily know who has memory loss and that is how it should be.'*

For more information on Memory Cafés please contact Sue McDermott, CRCC on 07969 902 434 or Margaret Ford, Cornwall Council on 07974 728435 or see the Cornwall Council website which gives more details including a list of Cafés: [www.cornwall.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=20305](http://www.cornwall.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=20305)

For an opportunity to learn more about dementia and services offered to people affected by it, please book a place at the **'Learning to Live with Dementia' event being held on Tuesday 16 November at the Eden Project**. For information or to book a place at this event please contact LINK in Cornwall (CRCC) on 01872 243533.



