A more active and fulfilled life for everyone living with dementia
Welcome, from our CEO

Welcome to our 2022 Impact Report. This was my first full year as Chief Executive of Dementia Adventure and our first lockdown-free year since the appearance of COVID-19.

It was still a year with challenges but I am so proud of the team, who pulled out all the stops for our supported holidays and free training sessions for family carers, and of the new partnerships and relationships that are being formed with organisations, clients, volunteers, and our supporters. It’s humbling to look back and I am excited as we look forward.

Fiona Petit

Contents

What You’ve Made Possible ....................................................................................................................3
The Difference ........................................................................................................................................4
Supported Holidays: Giving People the Break They Need ..................................................................... 8
Training: Helping to Build a Dementia-Friendly World ........................................................................ 12
Supporting Organisations to Think Differently About Dementia ......................................................... 16
Raising Awareness and Challenging Perceptions ................................................................................. 18
Contributing to Research ....................................................................................................................... 22
Volunteers ............................................................................................................................................... 24
Where Our Money Came From ............................................................................................................ 27
Looking Forward .................................................................................................................................... 29
What You've Made Possible

After a year of post-pandemic recovery and an eye-watering cost of living crisis, we want to extend an enormous thank you to our funders and supporters. When facing a somewhat bleak social and financial landscape at the start of 2022, it was you who made it possible for us to step up to the challenge of supporting people living with dementia and those who care for them through an extraordinarily difficult time.

The fallout from the pandemic and consecutive lockdowns continued to have a massive impact on people with dementia and their carers, on top of which the rising cost of living hit them harder than most. Over half the carers that responded to our summer survey told us that they were feeling its impact. Some found themselves having to make difficult decisions about food spend and energy bills. Over 70% were finding it increasingly difficult to cope with caring and were desperate for a break from their caring role.

Our return to a full programme of supported dementia holidays facilitated much-needed breaks for 179 attendees. For those on low or no incomes, along with our subsidised prices, we responded to the cost of living crisis by providing additional financial support through our Dementia Adventure Support Fund to make breaks possible. After COVID-19 fast-tracked our switch from face-to-face to online training for family and friends, 2022 saw us confidently deliver a programme reaching nearly 700 attendees.

Seeing the positive changes in people who use our services and hearing how our work has changed their lives is what keeps the Dementia Adventure team striving to do better year on year. Though there is always more to do and further to go, we are extremely proud of the difference we have made in 2022 and incredibly grateful for all the contributions that made it possible.

“If people always supported each other like we have this week, the world would be a better place.”
One in two people in the UK knows somebody who is diagnosed with dementia. With someone diagnosed every three minutes on average, the number of people living with dementia in the UK is set to grow to 1.6 million people by 2040.

The only dementia support charity in the UK to focus solely on the importance of connection to nature and the outdoors, this year we continued to think differently about dementia. We challenged the stereotypes and perception of what it is to live with the condition, looking at what people can still do rather than what they can’t.

With the help of our phenomenal colleagues, professionals, volunteers, partners, and supporters, we have enabled people with dementia to get outdoors and experience nature’s well-being benefits, proving that with the right support, it is possible to live an active and fulfilling life.

“It was so fundamentally life-changing that our holiday could happen. I don’t know any other organisation who could do it.”

“The holiday really built me up. I had a really good rest and felt thoroughly looked after. Also, I laughed so much. This has given me a much improved positive outlook now we have returned home.”
2022 in Numbers

We directly supported 3,128 attendees affected by dementia on our supported breaks, training, and events.

We had 179 attendees across 31 supported dementia breaks.

We provided additional financial assistance for 48 people to make a break possible through our DA Support Fund.

We worked together with different families to create specially tailored relaxing breaks that suited their exact needs.

We supported 1,996 attendees to think differently about dementia in our training sessions for family carers and professionals.

We helped 669 attendees to better understand dementia on our 41 training sessions for family and friends supporting somebody with dementia.
We challenged perceptions of dementia and raised awareness of the benefits of nature with over 70,000 reached through our digital channels.

Through our 22,470 social media followers, we encouraged discussion within our digital community and beyond, raising awareness of the effects of dementia and the benefits of interacting with nature.

We had 77 inspiring volunteers supporting people living with dementia.

Our volunteers donated 6,619 hours of their time, valuing £103,587.

£695,364 was raised by our funders, supporters and fundraisers.

£5 was raised for every £1 spent on fundraising.

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Supported Holidays: Giving People the Break They Need

“I regard our ‘Dementia Adventure’ holidays as an essential factor in my mental health and ongoing ability to manage as a carer, as well as a highlight for my husband.”

Research shows that our supported breaks significantly improve physical and mental well-being for both the person with dementia and their caregiver.*

In 2022 we delivered 31 supported dementia breaks, providing 179 holiday places.
Connecting People Living with Dementia to Nature

Our research shows that there are myriad benefits to interacting with nature for people living with dementia, but we know that leaving the house can sometimes be seen as a difficult or risky endeavour.

Taking place among natural surroundings, each of our breaks is designed to maximise the well-being benefits of nature through contact with the natural environment and outdoor activities.

We also aim to help people with dementia foster enthusiasm for connecting with the natural world in their everyday life, as well as the security to do so on a regular basis, through first-hand experience of the benefits of positive risk-taking in nature.

Supporting Carers to Take a Break

Caring can be a demanding role even at the best of times, but over the past year, its emotional toll has been intensified.

The pandemic increased social isolation while decreasing access to the outdoors, and carers have been hit particularly hard by the financial stress of the cost of living crisis.

Our Carers Survey found that many carers and families simply cannot pay the price of a break, and since the pandemic, there has been a drastic reduction in respite services. Carers are now reliant on charities like Dementia Adventure for a break from caring.
Holidaymakers With Dementia:

- **78%** had more exercise than usual
- **90%** talked to people more than usual
- **68%** ate better than usual
- **94%** enjoyed getting outdoors and connecting with nature
- **60%** thought their relationship with their companion improved
- **100%** felt well supported by the staff and volunteers
- **100%** felt safe whilst on holiday
- **95%** enjoyed meeting people

Carers:

- **82%** had a break from caring that wouldn't have been possible otherwise
- **97%** felt well supported by the staff and volunteers
- **96%** enjoyed getting outdoors and connecting with nature
- **63%** got more exercise than usual
- **66%** feel better equipped to continue in a supporting role
- **60%** have an increased understanding of how to support someone with dementia
- **78%** feel more positive
- **67%** feel less stressed

“It was fun doing things together. That was the whole point of the holiday. We could do things together but I didn’t have the responsibility and I could do things at my own speed and my husband could do things at his speed. So, that kind of thing is crucial. The enjoyment of both parties.”
Making a break possible again

As a charity we fundraise to make our breaks more affordable for everyone.

In 2022, we subsidised all our breaks by at least 25%. Through our Dementia Adventure Support Fund, we were able to provide additional financial assistance to another 48 people who would not otherwise have been able to afford a break.

“The funding meant I was under less stress making the decision to go on the holiday. Having been the main breadwinner for years, I have since had to give up work to support my loved one, so my future is difficult to think about. I have many years to go before I reach retirement age, I have had to pay a lump sum to keep up my pension payments whilst not working, and I worry over my national insurance contributions. I have made a huge sacrifice for my loved one, who barely knows and certainly does not understand. To have the support of the funding feels tangible in a way that is not fathomable by someone who has not lost the support of their loved one.”
More Than a Break – a Change of Mindset

After Angela was diagnosed with Alzheimer’s, her wife Esther struggled with the way Angela’s resulting personality changes affected their life together.

With two young children, one of whom has low vision and both of whom are neurodivergent, Esther’s attention was in constant demand. People often didn’t understand the level of support Angela needed because she remained physically well, making Esther feel lonely.

Taking a family holiday had been rendered logistically and financially impossible, so when Dementia Adventure said we could tailor a holiday for them and draw from our Support Fund to help fund it, Esther was so happy that she cried.

Staying on an Isle of Wight farm, Angela shared memories of her childhood with the children, her mood lifted due to the time spent outdoors. Having the Adventure team lift the mental load meant Esther could join in on the fun instead of constantly worrying.

At home, the family’s mindset has changed. “We feel less trapped now, and our relationship with the children is better.” And Angela has rediscovered her place as a valued member of the family. “Without Dementia Adventure we could never have gone on a family holiday.”
Scott lives with Parkinson’s disease dementia. His wife Helen struggled to adapt to life as a full-time carer; she missed her freedom, and enjoying things together.

The couple hadn’t had a break in years, so despite Scott’s specialist’s claim that holidays weren’t a good idea, Helen booked their first supported holiday to Kielder.

It changed the way they thought about Scott’s capability. “Scott would smile more, talk more, and do more on holiday.” For Helen, the chance to get outside with support was a huge relief.

“By the end of the holiday I felt like a wife for the first time in a decade, rather than a carer.”

Helen later booked a second holiday. “Scott was having a bad time. I want these cherished memories I can look back on in case we don’t get a chance to do this again.”

Being a carer is still difficult, but the holidays have changed things. “The benefits are ongoing. If Scott says, ‘I can’t go for a walk,’ I’ll say, ‘You went on a boat on Lake Derwentwater. You can go for a walk.’”

“These holidays are a lifesaver — the best thing you could possibly do. They’re priceless.”
Training: Helping to Build a Dementia-Friendly World

Grounded in research, our range of training was developed according to our ethos of thinking differently about dementia. Our positive approach means we focus on the individual, not the condition, looking at what is possible with the right support.

During our supported holidays, we live alongside people who have dementia and their family members for 24 hours a day, giving us a unique opportunity to listen and learn about the challenges they face and the support they really need. These experiences shape all our training, and as a result, we offer positive solutions and real-world guidance that can apply to all kinds of circumstances.

Last year we:
• Provided training for 1,996 attendees
• Worked with 15 partner organisations

“I found the holistic and person-centred approach incredibly refreshing, positive and inspiring. The trainers were very knowledgeable and approachable and it was great to be able to share experiences with the trainers and other course participants.

“I had expected to learn new information and approaches I could take away and use. However, the focus on supporting meaning and purpose in a person’s life has helped me ‘see the wood for the trees’ again and I finished the session feeling really energised and inspired to try and support my mum differently and hopefully more effectively.”
Training for Family and Friends

With many services having been cut due to COVID over the last few years, in 2022 we saw an increase in the number of people finding it difficult to get the vital information and support they need to help them continue caring. As a result, there is a growing need for the training we provide for families supporting somebody with dementia at home.

In these free, online sessions our experienced trainers provide practical strategies, hints, and tips, and encourage shared learning and support among attendees in similar situations.

In 2022, we ran a total of 41 sessions with 669 attendees

Approaching Training as a Family

Zena’s mother has vascular dementia. Her husband Roy is her main carer, with support from Zena, her husband Paul, and her brother. When Zena’s mother received the diagnosis, Zena’s brother’s online research led him to Dementia Adventure.

After attending one of our online Understanding Dementia Better sessions, he was so enthusiastic about it that Zena decided she, Paul, and her father should also attend.

The training has completely changed the way that Zena’s family approaches caring for Zena’s mother. Not only have they made practical changes around her parents’ house, like putting up cameras, “We also think differently about what ‘battles’ we pick, and let unimportant things go."

Based on advice from the session, Zena’s mother has been seeking more connection with nature, “We’ve been talking about the birds and Dad encourages her to come out when he goes into the garden. It definitely has made a difference.”

“We feel educated to know we’re saying the right thing, rather than just guessing. It’s really empowered us to support Dad and in turn, for him to support Mum. It really has gone all the way around the family to support Mum to live the best life possible.”
Understanding Dementia Better

We ran 32 Understanding Dementia Better sessions.

Before the training:
- 76% felt they don’t have enough encouragement and support
- 60% had not tried or had found it difficult to find information and support

After the training:
- 96% have increased understanding of how to support someone living with dementia
- 60% feel less isolated
- 88% feel better equipped to continue in their supporting role
- 94% have a more positive understanding of dementia
- 73% intend to connect more with nature and the outdoors

“It can be so hard trying to care for someone living with dementia, and it feels very lonely at times. But to see and hear from others in the same situation really helped me feel less isolated and gave me the inspiration to keep going.”

*Cornish & Grey Evaluation, Understanding Dementia Better 2022*
Improving Mood & Motivation

Family carers rate their life satisfaction at an average of 4.7 out of 10, significantly lower than the UK average of 7.5.* Our Mood & Motivation training aims to improve the well-being of carers and provide strategies to improve the mental health of the person they support.

*Carers UK State of Caring Survey

We ran nine sessions in 2022. Carers told us that:**

- **97%** were satisfied with their training
- **98%** have an increased understanding of how someone living with dementia can lack the motivation to do things
- **98%** have an increased understanding of strategies to improve motivation in the person they care for
- **89%** feel better equipped to cope with the low motivation of the person they care for

**Cornish & Grey Evaluation, Mood and Motivation 2022

“**You give a platform and opportunity to let so many people who care be able to discuss little things and make them feel human again. Getting people to realise they are doing a good job when perhaps they feel they aren’t is really empowering, and offers others new perspectives on similar challenges.”**
Supporting Organisations to Think Differently About Dementia

In 2022 we returned to supporting professionals at an organisational level, having made spaces on our family carer sessions available to professionals during the pandemic.

We worked with a range of organisations in a variety of ways, training staff and volunteers, undertaking research, creating new resources, and running joint events, using the expertise of each partner organisation to benefit both of our audiences.

“I found the session extremely informative and learnt so much. It was engaging, enlightening, and powerful. It really has opened my eyes to a bigger picture of the world around dementia.”
The Caversham Golf Club’s Story

After raising £10,000 for Dementia Adventure as their charity of the year, The Caversham Golf Club wanted to leave a legacy of support for people living with dementia in the Reading area.

“I’ve never seen this type of relationship with a charity, making such a difference locally and within the club,” Club Manager Gary said. “It’s opened my eyes to understanding what living with dementia is about and how we can make a difference.”

So in partnership with The Caversham, Reading Voluntary Action, and Social Prescriber Helen Murphy, Dementia Adventure designed a package of training, support, and consultancy on dementia-inclusive health and well-being walks for social prescribers and organisations.

Now, The Caversham’s private land is open to organised health and well-being walks and an hour’s worth of tee times is offered to people with dementia each week, with club members encouraged to lead or support. Staff’s everyday approach to members with dementia has changed too.

“We now understand how the team here at The Caversham can be better at enhancing the experience for members who are living with dementia. Through Dementia Adventure and the local teams, our club can make a real difference to people’s lives in our local community.”

Organisations we support:
Raising Awareness and Challenging Perceptions

“We are a small charity, but with 944,000 people living with dementia in the UK, numbers rising and no cure, it is vital we spread our message about living well with dementia and empower others to campaign alongside us to advocate for better access to nature for people with dementia.

2022 saw us complete a brand refresh with the aim of increasing awareness of the charity and growing the number of people we’re able to support. We revised our vision and mission statements and our core values to better describe our purpose and overhauled our visual identity, logos, colours, and fonts to better reflect who we are and what we do.

The development of a content strategy ensured that beyond simply promoting the work of the charity we began to bring awareness and provide education to our audiences, challenging the perception of what is possible with the condition.

“It is so good to hear other people are going through exactly the same situations, which in turn, not sure why, has made me calmer inside. I have problems of my own and I thought this was making me fail my husband. I realise now that I am not and the way he is, is a natural progression of his illness.”

“I am in a care home as a care assistant. The difference a five-minute walk around the garden makes — noticing the flowers, butterflies, and birds — is amazing and I commit to helping at least one person each shift to access the outdoors, if not more.”

Social media audience: 22,470
Email subscribers: 3,653
Website visitors: 47,166
Total people reached: 70,000
We partnered with gardening-for-health charity Thrive on a joint project to improve gardening information for people living with dementia and their carers by producing inspirational advice for the Information Service section of the Thrive website.

We were led by evidence gathered through our joint research; nearly 80% of people living with dementia said that gardening helps improve their mental well-being, while over half claimed it keeps them physically fit. We asked carers and people living with dementia how they used their gardens and what barriers kept them from gardening.

Launched on the Thrive website in October, the final co-branded materials looked to overcome the barriers encountered by the survey respondents, and incorporated their tips on how to do so in a set of resources for understanding what people living with dementia can do to ensure that gardening remains enjoyable and accessible after diagnosis.

“Gardening allows a sociable time with other gardeners. It allows for caring for something when caring has all now become about the person with dementia.”

Sharing the Mood-boosting Benefits of Gardening

"Gardening allows a sociable time with other gardeners. It allows for caring for something when caring has all now become about the person with dementia.”
Contributing to Research

In 2022 we continued to contribute to some exciting ongoing research.

We contributed to the ENLIVEN project, which aims to make the well-being benefits of outdoor activity more accessible to older people with cognitive impairment. We were active participants in sharing our work and relevant literature during evidence-gathering Stage 1 of the project and remain ongoing contributors to ENLIVEN’s knowledge exchange forums.

We have taken steps to broaden the socio-economic, demographic, and geographic range of people we reach and benefit. Research shows that people from ethnic minorities may be more at risk of developing dementia, and less likely to access support at all points of the dementia pathway.* Thanks to funding from the Kalverboer Silsby Foundation, we completed a scoping project looking at how we can better understand how people across ethnic minorities value nature and outdoor experiences. We will use the conclusions to inform how our offering can benefit more people from different ethnic minority backgrounds.

After collaborating with three separate universities to create three different research project ideas, we are currently in the planning stages of a collaboration with the University of Southampton on improving access to farm-based care for people with dementia. We will start with evidence-based research, including focus groups and a survey, actively listening to the voices of people with dementia, their carers, and relevant service providers.

* 2022 South Asian Dementia Pathway ADAPT study.
Volunteers

Incredibly important to our work, much of what we do is reliant on our dedicated team of volunteers. And it’s a two-way relationship — people tell us that they get a huge amount of satisfaction from volunteering with Dementia Adventure! The experience of volunteering can help them develop new skills and gain knowledge that they can use in both their work and personal lives, and it can have a powerful, positive effect on their own mental health and well-being.

One volunteer dedicated 350 hours of their time to working with us, and another individual gave us 310 hours! We also had our first volunteer join us from the United States. Wherever they came from, and whether they gave us a few hours or a few hundred, every one of our volunteers made a significant difference to the services and visibility of the charity in 2022.

In 2022 we had **77 inspiring volunteers** in a range of roles from **gardening**, **holiday support** and **creating photobooks** to raising awareness of the charity by **giving talks**, representing us at events, or sitting on our **Board of Trustees**.

They donated an incredible **6,619 voluntary hours** valued at **£103,587**.

“I find the time we spend with people affected by dementia incredibly rewarding, knowing that we are part of making a really great experience for them.”

Dementia Adventure Volunteer
Our holiday volunteers’ experiences:*  

- 99% felt part of the team  
- 99% felt that their contribution mattered  
- 99% were proud of the difference made to the people who came on holiday  
- 97% felt well supported by Dementia Adventure  

They also gained a huge amount of knowledge and skills!  

- 97% went away with increased knowledge and skills to support carers and people living with dementia  
- 89% reported increased confidence to support nature connection and outdoor experience for people living with dementia  
- 90% will use what they learned in their work or personal life  

*Cornish & Grey Evaluation 2021-22
How Volunteering with Dementia Adventure Impacted My Work

Jo is an Occupational Therapist, whose passion for supporting people who live with dementia drew her to Dementia Adventure. She’s been volunteering with us since 2018!

“Volunteering on a Dementia Adventure holiday gives you a completely different perspective on the reality of living with and supporting somebody with dementia. I see patients for maybe two hours at a time, which is totally different to spending four solid days with somebody and really understanding the challenges people experience. It’s given me much greater empathy and understanding, which I can then carry over into my job.

“It’s also a good chance to reflect on how you relate to other people and how you support them. It’s made me realise the absolute value of listening and not always diving in with answers.

“I’m always looking at how to support somebody to live the best life that they can and to be as independent as possible, despite living with significant challenges. That’s what Dementia Adventure is all about, so it resonates with me a lot. It’s just joyful, amongst situations that can actually be incredibly difficult. The holidays mean people can have a normal, fun time together and provide a lot of good memories.”

Inspired by a Grandpa Who’s Happier Outside

Siblings Seth and Esme’s Grandad lives with dementia.

“I can see that he is always much happier when he is outside in the fresh air, going for walks with us or taking photographs,” Esme told us. “I like that Dementia Adventure takes people out so they can enjoy nature and feel relaxed.”

The pair wanted to raise money and awareness to help people living with dementia to access nature. Inspired by his sister Esme’s open-water swimming challenge in support of Dementia Adventure in 2020-21, 7-year-old Seth decided he wanted to take on his own fundraising challenge in 2022 by completing the Inverness 5K along with his family. The date of the event was special, as it coincided with their Grandad’s birthday.

“Before [the race] I was very excited and I saw all the other runners. There was a bagpiper who took us all to the start. During the run, I felt a bit tired, but I wanted to run fast for my Grandad.”

Between their two challenges, Esme and Seth have raised an incredible £821 in donations. As Fundraising Officer Lee put it, “It really shows — regardless of age — we can all do our bit to support people with dementia.”
Where Our Money Came From

Without our amazing supporters and grant funders, we simply couldn’t provide so much support to people living with dementia and their loved ones. In 2022, despite a challenging fundraising climate, they raised an amazing £695,364.

This exceeded our expectations and has put us in a strong financial position. As a result, we can invest confidently in our services for people living with dementia in 2023.

Income

- Donations: £107,910
- Grants: £587,454
- Training Income: £26,330
- Holiday Income: £188,909
- Interest: £5,471
- Total: £916,074

What we spent it on

- Holiday Provision: £390,818
- Training and Consultancy: £207,810
- Community Engagement: £20,072
- Resources & Awareness Raising: £175,852
- Cost of Raising Funds: £140,372
- Total: £934,924

Thank you! Thank you to all the individuals, businesses and grant funders who made this possible.

People’s Postcode Lottery
Asda Foundation
The Barratt & David Wilson Community Fund
Birketts LLP
The DWF Foundation
Edward Jackson Ltd
Freddie’s Flowers

The Golden Bottle Trust
Kalverboer Silsby Foundation
McLay Dementia Trust
The Mercers’ Company
Newby Trust
The Pennies Foundation

We couldn’t do it without you!
Looking Forward

We want to change the way the world thinks about dementia. In 2023, we will be doing that by growing our reach and using our new brand to run a digital campaign focused on spreading our positive message.

We will build on our existing partnerships and look to develop new ones; as a small charity, we know partnerships strengthen us and make our message stronger. We will support organisations to create their own accessible services for people with dementia, develop corporate partnerships with businesses, and nurture our relationships with long-term funders such as the People’s Postcode Lottery. In the same way we teach others to see each person with dementia as an individual, not their diagnosis, we will treat every partnership and organisation we work with as a unique relationship.

With a new role that will focus on research, we will contribute to the evidence base around the importance of outdoor activity and connecting with nature for people living with dementia.

We will broaden the socio-economic, demographic, and geographic range of people we reach and benefit. We are responding to the current cost of living crisis by subsidising our 2023 supported breaks by a minimum of 30% and increasing the amount of additional support we provide through our Dementia Adventure Support Fund. We are adapting the way we deliver our online training for family and friends, adding ‘watch parties’ hosted by a partner organisation to support carers who lack digital skills and access. We are also moving into Scotland, delivering our first supported breaks in Fife and launching a volunteering recruitment and training programme nearby.

With the lack of other support services and the pressure on health and social care, the need for our work is growing; it is estimated that two million people will be living with dementia by 2051.

We know that if we provide the right support for both people with dementia and their families, people can remain living independently at home for longer, reduce pressure on health and social care services, and ultimately live more active and fulfilled lives.

With the right support, anything is possible.