

What happened when DRAGONS' DEN came to Drovers House...



Above: the team of WCS Dragons, and below: some of the ideas they heard about.



By Christine Asbury
Chief Executive

Five entrepreneurs from across the UK took part in Dragons' Den at Drovers House to showcase their innovation and ideas to improve people's independence, choice, wellbeing and communication.

The day was set up by ourselves and gave those behind the latest innovations a chance to pitch their ideas directly to a team of **WCS Dragons** – made up of front-line carers and a resident – under the glare of television studio lights, a mock camera crew and a live studio audience.

After grilling the pitchers, our investors could then decide whether they wanted to declare themselves 'in' or 'out' with bundles

of cash with each note bearing an image of the charity's Director of Finance, Nick Wood.

Although the staging allowed for a lot of fun and tongue-in-cheek drama, the motivation behind the event was more serious - to help uncover the latest ways technology could increase people's choice, quality of life and independence.

The new ideas could potentially be built into existing WCS Care homes or built into the charity's new home opening in Kenilworth in 2016, Castle Brook.

Most of the innovations took advantage of wireless, touch and mobile app technologies to provide opportunities for fun social interaction, greater access to instant video-communication and tools to aid organisation and memory.



Above: The Felisia Interactive interface. Below is the Memrica memory and organisation app and the Speakset video messaging service.



Dragon Harry Sowden, who lives at The Limes in Stratford upon Avon, said: "A lot of thought, time and money had gone into these ideas, however one thing that I learnt was that the real experts on the day were the Dragons. Their comments revealed exactly how complicated a field this is when it comes to introducing new technologies.

"Our knowledge, along with a healthy degree of cynicism, really put those pitching through their paces, so I'm sure they learnt just as much from us as we did from them."



Home from home

"At WCS we believe a care home is your home; we try to develop activities that reflect people's hobbies and interests."

Christine Asbury, WCS Care Chief Executive

If you'd like to contribute to our newsletter with an article, idea or picture, please get in touch via post, email p.horton@wcs-care.co.uk or use Facebook or Twitter.

People at Westlands host craft sale for Nepal earthquake appeal



Picture: BBC/Reuters

People living at Westlands have responded to the plight of Nepalese earthquake victims by raising money from a craft sale.

April's earthquake claimed over 9,000 victims and inflicted an estimated \$5bn USD worth of damage – about 25 per cent of the country's GDP. The events inspired people at Westlands to contribute to the UK's response effort, which so far exceeds £50m in public donations.

For sale are hand-made greeting cards and framed pictures made from recycled and salvaged materials. People can see what's for sale in Westlands' new c a f é in the reception.



Fund-raising idea is a cut above...

By Alan Ince

"As a member of Rugby Rokeby Lions I've seen my fair share of fundraising stunts, but I think even by those standards my mohawk idea ranks among the most eye-catching!"

"I had my hair dyed pink before it was shaved in public at Rugby's Clock Towers Shopping Center at the beginning of August. The money raised will go towards a resident-run garden project at Dewar – which will make where I live more accessible and therefore help people do the outdoor things they always have done, whether it's cultivating flowers, growing herbs, having a game of badminton or simply going for a stroll."

"People can sponsor me by using the sponsor forms at the entrance of Dewar Close."



Above: Money raised from Alan's head shave will be spent in Dewar Close's garden.

Dancing in the aisles: Oomph! comes to Tesco

People from Sycamores and Woodside care homes have visited Tesco to raise awareness to local shoppers about Dementia Awareness Week through an Oomph! exercise session.

The spectacle brought a party atmosphere to the entrance of Tesco in Warwick as shoppers stopped to see the loud and colourful classes for themselves. The visit aimed to demonstrate the vibrant, fun and social side of life for older people.



Phyll Humphries, who lives at Woodside care home in Warwick, explained:

"Much is said these days about childhood obesity, but I've seen how older people's physical and emotional wellbeing can also be transformed through exercise, too."

"Before the classes arrived here, some people hadn't wanted to do any exercise for a long time, and their mobility and independence had declined over time as a result."

"Now that Oomph! classes have arrived they've had a huge impact on how a lot of people feel and what they can do – and the atmosphere they create has everyone clapping and singing along."



Former race horse trainer puts pony in his place!

90-year-old May from Drayton Court enjoyed a surprise visit from Magic the Pony on her 90th Birthday – and ended up reminding the hungry horse who was boss when it came to feeding time!

May, a former racehorse trainer, wasn't impressed by the foal's feeding habits and reminded him to behave by having a chomp on his carrot.

Fortunately the pair soon made friends before Magic went on a tour of the home, much to the surprise of many living there who'd never seen a horse in their home before! It's fair to say Magic will be welcomed back to Drayton Court any time.



Changing

during Dementia Awareness Week



Homes across WCS were out to prove that life is bright, colourful and loud on National Care Home Open Day this year (June 19th) and throughout Dementia Awareness Week.

Families, members of the public and entertainers flooded into residential homes throughout the county on National Care Home Open Day to celebrate all that is good about residential care. Meanwhile this year's theme for Dementia Awareness Week in May was 'do something different', leading to a range of fun and colourful spectacles organised both with and outside people's homes.

Drayton Court's open day was typical of many, with people there



hearts and minds

areness Week and on Care Home Open Day

welcoming guests with a rock 'n' roll themed day with an Elvis impersonator, stalls, games and an American Diner.

Connie Cooper, who has lived at Drayton Court since December, said: "Everyone has been up dancing to Elvis and really enjoyed taking part in the other activities; I'm worn out!

"People's families and members of the public joined in, too. We wanted to create a day that was special and I think it worked. We always love welcoming visitors and find that when people see our home, they question any preconceptions they may have had about care homes."

Attleborough Grange in Nuneaton celebrated the open day with a VE Day inspired history event with a

traditional outdoor street party put together with the help of residents' memories and expertise.

Meanwhile, Fairfield care home in Bedworth celebrated with a Hawaiian themed day with live entertainment and Hawaiian inspired cocktails, games, fancy dress and music.

Ash Wall, Activity and Exercise Co-ordinator at Attleborough Grange, added: "The aim of the open day is to welcome the community into care homes, build links and show people first hand some of the great things that happen in them.

"The people that live in residential care, and those of us who work here, want to make people aware that the media's negative portrayal of care doesn't apply to the majority of care homes."



Drovers House flash mob descends on Rugby Library

A flash-mob style sing-along took place at Rugby Library during Dementia Awareness Week to highlight the profound benefits music can have for people living with dementia.

Singing for the Brain, organised by the Alzheimer's Society along with the county council, aimed to inform people about how music can be used to dramatically improve quality of life for people, even those who struggle with communication and memory. Music was provided by

Hillmorton Community Choir, which was helped by singers from Drovers House care home.

Roy Watkins, of Drovers House, attended the sing-along with several other people who live at the home. He said: "Music can work wonders for people's minds, even long after they've forgotten many other details of their life. I've seen people at Drovers House who often struggle with memory, but upon hearing a familiar piece of music they can remember every word and can sing

them in perfect key – it's really quite incredible to watch."

"It was a great event on Saturday and we were very impressed by Hillmorton's choir – they even had some of us dancing to The Beatles on the library's forecourt!"

Attleborough Grange in Nuneaton and Woodside in Warwick also took part in similar Singing for the Brain events. If you'd like to see pictures (and a video!) of these events, check out WCS Care's Facebook page.

Ann tells us the history of Common Lane



A Kenilworth mother of three and former factory worker has come full circle after visiting the site of her first job - where WCS's latest home Castle Brook is now being built.

Ann Rodgers' first job at the age of 15 was in a busy engineering factory in Common Lane, and now – almost three decades later – she works at Newlands care home.

Many other locals may also recall Hurst Engineering who occupied the site throughout the 1970s and 80s and made components for air conditioning and hydraulics systems.

Ann, who now does housekeeping and laundry in WCS's Newlands home in Kenilworth, took Chief Executive Christine Asbury down to the site to show her what it was like in 1978. Ann said: "When I worked at Common Lane it was a noisy, smelly factory. I used to work with two meter long lathes to drill and cut bits of metal that were made into engineering components. I remember the factory smelt of damp – and it was freezing cold in the winter and boiling hot in the summer because it wasn't insulated, which made the physical work really difficult."

She added: "As well as the grating sounds of drilling and cutting metal – and the physical nature of the work – the workforce also had to contend with the fluid that would squirt out of the machinery to cool down drill bits to stop them over-heating – if you got caught by spray in the winter then you would be freezing cold! During the rest of the year it could often be too hot to work as the heat from the drills heated the

Ann Rodgers (left) talks to WCS CEO, Christine Asbury.

atmosphere."

"Despite it being challenging work, I've got fond memories from my time working in Common Lane – it wasn't a bad place to work at all. I made some great friends, and I'm still in touch with some of them today."

Ann started working in Newlands in May 2014, and speculates that maybe she will one day return to work at state-of-the-art Castle Brook, which is set to open in November 2016. She added: "I love it here at Newlands– I wish I had arrived sooner. I love working with the people who live here and my colleagues. Who knows – maybe one day I'll return to work in Common Lane once Castle Brook is finished."

If you've got a story to tell about the Common Lane site, then you can email it to info@wcs-care.co.uk – the charity may use it as part of a permanent display at Castle Brook that recounts the history of the home's site and surrounding area.

New carers'

Ed Russell, Director

By Pete Horton
WCS PR/Comms Officer

You may have noticed some WCS carers wearing new uniforms recently after a recent decision to update them.

The change was made after feedback from staff who felt their older uniforms were too hot in the summer months. The new uniforms are simple, block-coloured polo-tops that should keep carers cooler.

One debate that's been present throughout this process has been about whether uniforms are suitable in a care setting at all.

This has prompted discussions with various people trying to understand if it is beneficial for staff who are caring for those with dementia in a care home setting to wear a



uniforms to be introduced in the autumn

of Operations, chats to **WCS News** about whether carers' uniforms are helpful, practical and necessary, or inappropriate and institutional in a modern care home



Above: You can easily spot Oomph! exercise uniforms in blue.

uniform. Or if it might be more beneficial for staff to wear their own 'casual' clothing whilst providing care.

Colour therapy

Colour psychology research has shown that bright colours can have a positive effect on residents and staff. Whilst current WCS uniforms are generally pale blue, or black, other colours can be worn to better effect.

Ease of identification

For example when residents suffer from a visual impairment or dementia, uniforms can help them identify who their carers are - particularly if the carer wears a different uniform to other members of staff. This can help reduce anxiety for residents as they know who is there for them.

Professional image

It's a common belief that uniforms give a professional image and

The new designs (left) are designed to keep carers cooler and strike a balance between formal and casual.

represent a quality organisation. Therefore, relatives of residents often expect staff to be dressed in this way when caring for their loved ones.

Below: Activity Co-ordinators' uniforms are green. Staff will still wear magnetic badges for identification.



Since their introduction WCS has found uniforms positively change staff behaviour as it makes the people wearing them feel more professional and accountable.

Good infection control practice

Many care homes ensure that their staff wear uniforms because it promotes good infection control practice. At WCS staff should arrive in their own clothes, change into clean uniforms for work, then change back into their own clothes before they leave, then it reduces the risk of passing on infections.

Right: Steph Steele from Newlands models a Lead Carer uniform.



Designs are being finalised to ensure a comfortable fit for all shapes and sizes, along with the addition of a utility bag as the new style doesn't have pockets.



Above: House Keepers' uniforms are black, while carers' are a vibrant turquoise.

Institutional feel

There are some alternative views that say that uniforms can give care homes an institutional feel and a non-uniform policy can make residents feel more at home and more relaxed which is why WCS has adopted more relaxed work wear, so that residents can still recognise care staff but can also feel comfortable in their surroundings.

Not just care homes - they are residents' homes

Care homes are communities and they are residents' homes. So at WCS we strive to minimise clinical influence wherever possible. Nowadays, there are many variations of uniforms, which do not necessarily reflect 'institutional' wear that was once the norm.

Our people

5 minutes with... Sue-Ellen West



Sue-Ellen is an integral part of the WCS administration support team at Head Office. A five minute chat with WCS News revealed...

What do you do at WCS and what's the highlight of your day?

Well, what don't I do! My main focus is to support all of the homes with their stationery and printing. When I'm not doing that you'll find me updating the training database for WCS staff and in my spare time I'll answer the phone whilst rewriting our Policies and Procedures, which will be relaunched later this year.

What makes you stay working for WCS?

I genuinely seem to get on with everyone here! I think it's the first job I've had where I wouldn't change anything – I enjoy the work, I get on really well with the people that I work with and love the variety; so I feel really lucky. Having previously worked in sales, I also like the idea of working somewhere where the bottom line isn't just about profit.

What do you enjoy doing in your spare time?

There's not going to be much chance of that at work as for my next project, I've already been lined up to work on a new property database for our care homes! However, outside of work, if you're still interested, I enjoy spending time with my husband Stu and our three-year-old, Holly-Mae (pictured right).

I work part time and usually spend mornings out of the office while I take Holly-Mae to feed the ducks near to

where we live in Warwick. We also enjoy meeting our friends for play dates, reading stories together at the library, usually followed by a drink and a snack at a coffee shop before I go to work.

What music do you like?

I love my cheesy pop! In my car I enjoy listening to Ed Sheeran, Sam Smith, Adele, Oasis and The Script. I'm too embarrassed to tell you what other CDs are in there, but I'm afraid I do dig several cheesy girl bands...

What's the most surprising thing that's ever happened to you?

Getting engaged to a man I'd only known for six weeks must be up there! Can you imagine my dad's reaction? Not only had I only just met Stu, but he also lived miles away from where I lived at the time in Staines. People must have thought I was mad!

However, 14 years later it turned out to be the best thing I ever did... but we mustn't let Stu know I said that!



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