



# Annual Update

2023



**EMBRACING AGE**

Later life in all its fullness

# Table of Contents

1

Our Story So Far

2

What We Do

3

Care Home Residents

4

Supporting Carers

5

Equipping Churches

6

Speaking Out

7

Looking Ahead

8

Acknowledgements





# 1 Our Story So Far

## Message from our Founding Director, Tina:

What a joy it has been to get back into care homes following all the lockdowns of the pandemic.

It was only in Spring 2022 that care homes gradually started opening their doors to the wider world, with Covid outbreaks still continuing to temporarily close care homes, making it difficult to get a regular flow of volunteers.

It's become so much easier in recent months and we have been delighted to see a steady growth in volunteers bringing joy to care home residents through regular visits.

Other projects we developed during the pandemic, like Cards of Kindness, have continued to grow to let more care home residents know that they are valued and to bring them joy and connection with their local community.

We have launched a new area project in Hampshire, and an additional weekly Carers Connected Zoom gathering, so we can support more informal carers and there is lots more in the pipeline too.

Thank you for all your support.

## OUR MISSION

Embracing Age is a Christian charity working towards a world where older people are valued, connected and full of hope.

We do this by:

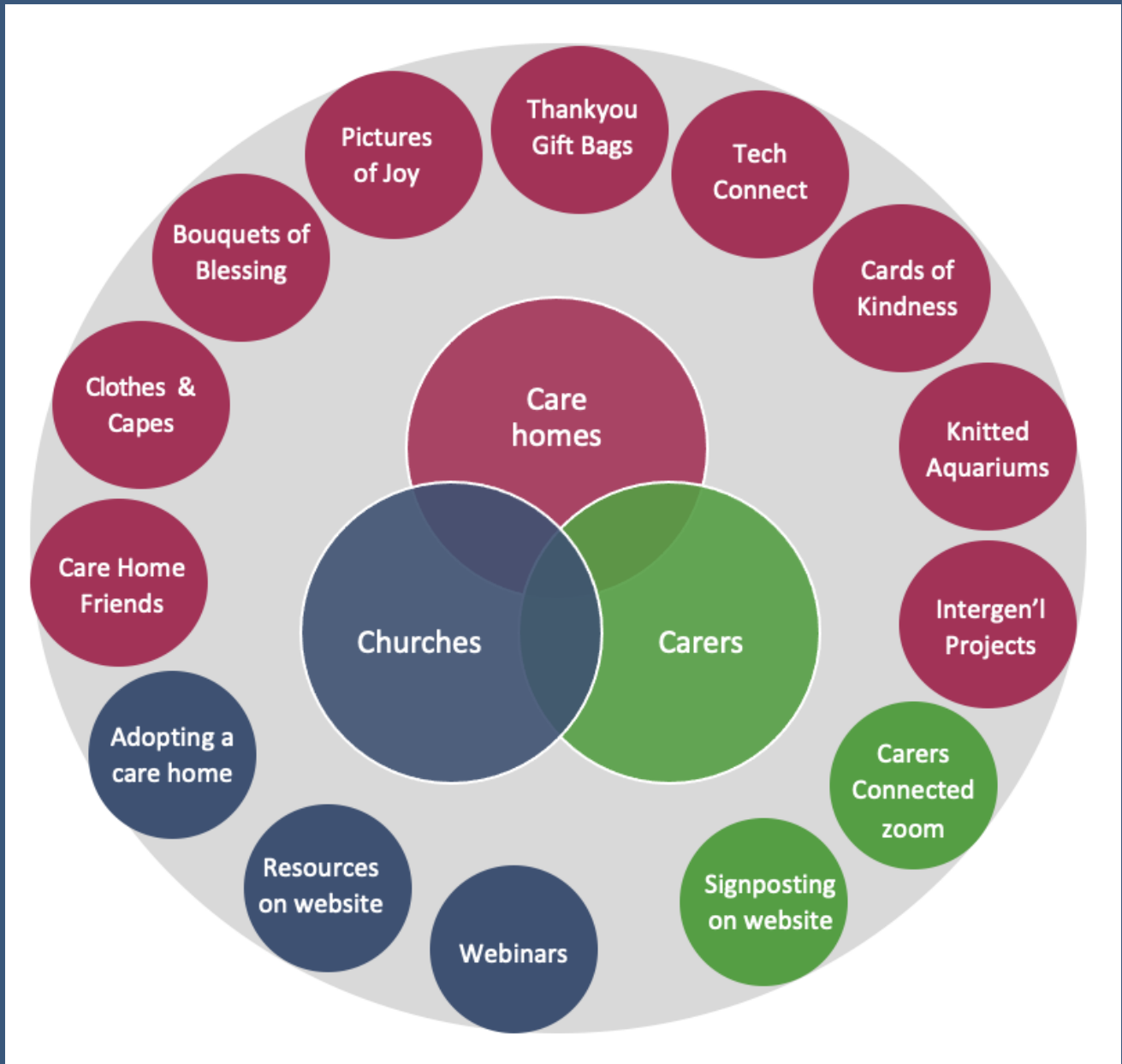
- Combatting loneliness
- Mobilising volunteers
- Equipping churches
- Speaking out

There's a section on each of these in this report. Names may have been changed for anonymity.

**"I haven't had a visitor for 2 years."**

A care home resident who was recently befriended

## 2 What we do



There are three main strands to our work:

- Coming alongside care home residents, bringing joy, hope and companionship
- Supporting informal carers through weekly Zoom gatherings, giving them the opportunity to chat and pray together
- Equipping churches in their ministry amongst older people, through webinars and workshops, and encouraging them to adopt their local care home

# 3 Care Home Residents

## 275

care home residents and  
informal carers benefitted  
from our projects

"I really look forward to her visits, it's  
so nice hearing about her and her  
family, it cheers me up no end."  
Resident





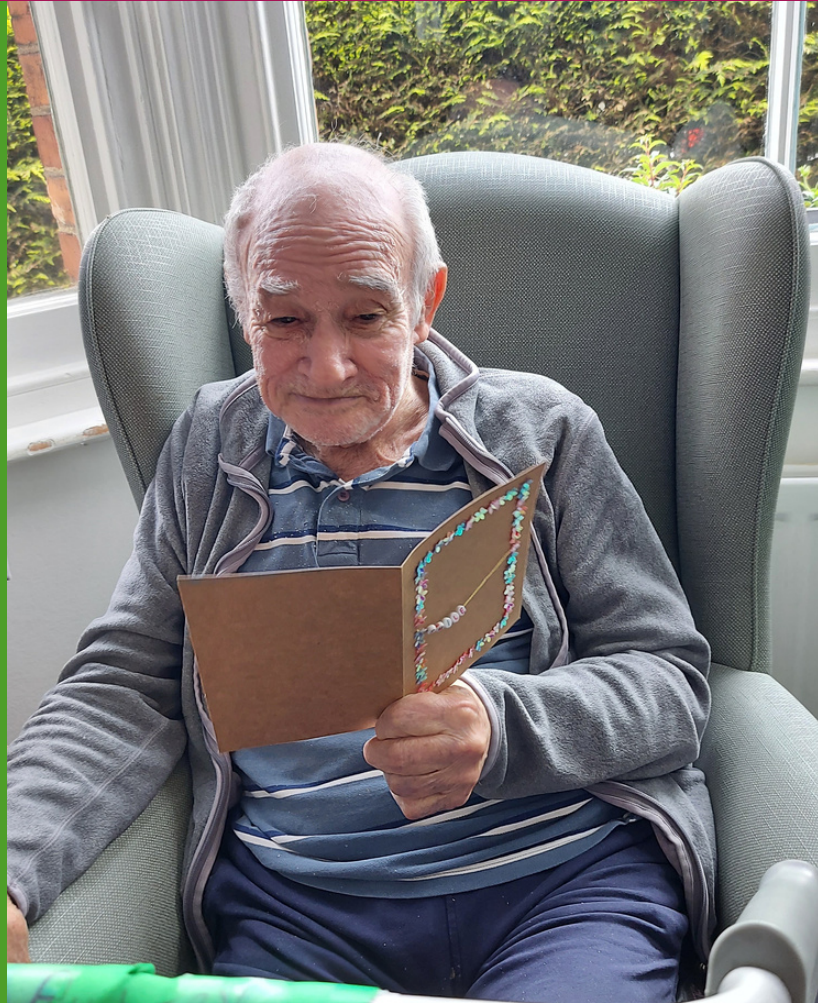
# Cards and Gifts

## 150

care home residents receive  
handmade cards every month.

Our cards are chosen specifically for that individual as we know their interests and, if they are on the dementia pathway or partially-sighted, they will be sent a more tactile card for them to enjoy. Our volunteers have made over 2000 cards this year.

"I really enjoy being part of the crafting sessions ... It's lovely to have a meaningful purpose and to spend happy times with other volunteers who have become friends. I look forward to our meetings so that we can craft and chat together." A volunteer



## 151

care home residents on the  
Isle of Wight without friends  
or family received Christmas  
gifts, many handmade by our  
3 groups of craft volunteers

"thank you so much for the Christmas gifts you so kindly sent me. It was so thoughtful. Please thank all those concerned, for their kindness and generosity, it really moved me and is one I shall never forget." Resident

"It makes me feel  
such a very special  
person to receive the  
most lovely cards.  
They brighten my  
day... When I feel  
alone, I think of you  
all and I know I'm not  
alone."

# Flowers & Clothes

## 31

flower bouquets of blessing  
gifted to care home residents

"You may not know the difference a bouquet makes to those living with dementia. The presence of plants and flowers can have a healing effect, stimulate reminiscing, provide peace and quiet to help ease stress, anxiety, agitation and pain. A flower can make a lot of difference."

Care Home Manager



"I was able to  
witness the joy,  
delight and emotion  
shown by those that  
received flowers. It  
was very moving."

Visiting Chaplain

## 1551

items of clothing given to residents  
in emergency clothing packs

"We are so grateful for the clothes you're providing for our residents. Most of our residents come from hospital without clothes and these clothes are helping a lot. Our residents are looking nice and well-kept and we are very thankful."

Care Home Manager



# Connecting the Generations

# 11

schools linked with a local care home; 269 children participated; 212 beautiful handmade cards; 80 residents enjoyed performances by school choirs

"It brought back memories of very happy family times"

"It was such a joy to be with the children"  
Care Home Residents



# 2

intergenerational gardening projects in partnership with Let's Go Outdoors and Learn.

The gardening project "is such a fantastic opportunity for us. We are enjoying it so much and are really grateful to you all at Embracing Age for making it happen."

Care Home Activities Coordinator



# Rosie and James

A care home manager shares their story of weekly visits from Rosie and her young son James:

**"I believe he really boosts their self esteem too when he waves at them, or smiles at them.."**

Every week, our residents look forward to a visit from James and Rosie. Our residents enjoy dancing with him, playing peek-a-boo and reminiscing of their past as parents.

He always provokes smiles all round and joyful games, they often enjoy watching him run around and refer to him as a "little pickle" or comment on his "Cheeky Grin". It is so lovely to see our dementia residents especially come out of their shell with each visit.

The other day one lady was telling stories about how he reminded her of her little boy she lost, and that it is so beautiful to see a happy, sweet innocent child; she said it reminded her of why she loves children and she said he brought back lots of happy memories of her boy.

I believe he really boosts their self esteem too when he waves at them, or smiles at them. One lady the other day was over the moon that he smiled at her and proceeded to walk around telling the staff in the dining room how she made the little boy smile and that he likes her a lot.

Overall, Rosie and James's visits are always greatly appreciated and well loved.

# Tech Connect

## 23

residents enabled to connect  
with their relatives via Alexa

We're piloting a project on the Isle of Wight in partnership with Auris and Oakray Homes enabling residents to use voice assisted technology.

Using an Alexa Echo Show, residents can have video calls and enjoy other features without the complications experienced with other communication methods

**"I would just like to say a big THANK YOU for organising mum's Alexa. I think it's a wonderful thing you have done to make some residents' lives heaps more interesting."**

Resident's daughter

**"It's lovely to "drop in" and when she sees my big grin she looks very happy to see me. When I visit her I ask Alexa to play music and we sing and dance (in our chairs) - it's great fun for mum"**

Resident's daughter





# Keith's Story

Keith was a resident visited by our volunteer Kate, who shares their befriending story:

**"Don't bother speaking with him, he doesn't speak..."**

When I first visited Keith, one of the other residents said, "Don't bother speaking with him, he doesn't speak."

How wrong they were! I found that by encouraging, listening and spending time asking Keith questions, he had a remarkable memory and a great sense of humour. He had suffered a stroke which meant that at times he struggled to articulate the words clearly, but with time it became a lot easier to communicate. He had a twinkle in his eye when he was talking about his life, which was heartwarming.

One of the striking characteristics of Keith was that he never spoke with bitterness or regret, which I found amazing given the hardships he had encountered. He also talked animatedly about some of his travels and we were able to share many experiences given I had also been lucky enough to travel a fair bit.

When I heard that Keith had passed away, I felt terribly sad, but also fortunate that I had been given the opportunity to get to know him. It was a privilege to be able to engage with Keith and the wonderful staff at the home who are so overworked. It would be impossible for staff to spend such intensive time with each resident.

I am sure that Keith also looked forward to my visits and it always seemed that his speech was a bit clearer at the end of each visit, which was a bonus.

# 4 Supporting Carers

## 30

informal carers supported through Carers Connected, with opportunities for weekly Zoom gatherings, now twice a week.

"helping me to cope and find me again".

"something just for me."

"a lifesaver"

"the highlight of my week"

"a gently welcoming oasis."

Quotes from carers

"The picture shared last week has been a real blessing - it stayed with me all week."

Carer





# 5 Equipping Churches

5

churches received a certificate to celebrate adopting their local care home

Adopting a care home can be coming alongside them in any way beyond services; from sending cards, delivering flowers, gardening together, or even knitting sensory aquariums or other items to bring smiles.

**"An excellent presentation, really thought provoking. Well delivered and interesting."**  
webinar participant

34

churches downloaded our free booklets on how to adopt a care home or how to mobilise volunteers to befriend care home residents

18

webinars and workshops delivered to church groups

on developing a strategy for ministry amongst older people, reimagining care home ministry, coming alongside people living with dementia, supporting informal carers and having supportive conversations.

# 6 Speaking Out

## 200+

entries to our Hope in Ageing poetry competition

Winners will be announced this summer and shortlisted poems will be published in an anthology this autumn.

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Later life in all its fullness



## POETRY

To read aloud to people living with dementia

**EMBRACING AGE**  
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## MAKING MOMENTS

Enjoying quality time with a loved one with dementia

by Tina English

## 122

downloads of our Making Moments booklets

Resources to help people in coming alongside people living with dementia and enjoy special moments together.



# 7 Looking ahead

Over the next three years we would like

1

**new large area project each year, in areas with high concentrations of care homes**

Each large area has a paid project co-ordinator to mobilise volunteers and start other projects to connect care homes with their local community.

20

**new churches each year adopting their local care home**

so that care home residents, including those with dementia, will feel valued and connected, and experience improved wellbeing, and care home staff will feel supported.

1

**new Carers Connected zoom gathering each year on different days and times**

so that informal carers will feel supported, spiritually nourished and connected with other carers.

12

**churches equipped through webinars and workshops each year**

inspiring and equipping churches to come alongside older people, including care home residents, those with dementia and carers.

# Acknowledgements

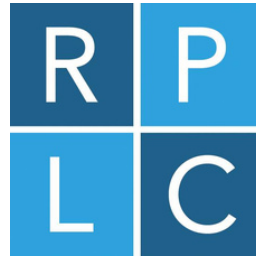
None of this would be possible without:

1. Our amazing army of volunteers who contribute in so many ways:

Befriending care home residents  
Making cards & crafty gifts  
Creating Pictures of Joy photographs  
Distributing clothes  
Creating flower bouquets  
Creating & distributing Christmas gifts  
Helping set up Alexa devices  
Liaising with schools  
Facilitating Carers Connected zooms  
Selling secondhand books  
Organising fundraising events  
Doing book keeping  
Helping with admin, design & other roles  
Enabling us to set up a new IT system  
Trustees  
Ambassadors

2. The individuals, funders and organisations who have generously contributed to our work. Some are shown opposite.

3. Our staff team who give above and beyond.



The  
**Steel**  
Charitable Trust



**Hampton  
Fund**



**Garfield Weston**  
FOUNDATION



THE  
**LAKE HOUSE**  
Charitable Foundation



Thank you all for your  
time, dedication and  
incredible support.

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