



to the coronavirus restrictions by setting up a Whatsapp network and

Parcels including cakes, a card and a specially-designed 'Forget-Me-Not' tree decoration were distributed to 30 households at Christmas by a support group helping people with dementia and their carers, run by St Paul's Church in Penketh, Warrington.

Up to 60 people were attending a weekly drop-in session at the Forget-Me-Not cafe before the pandemic. Revd Andrew Hetherington, who retired from stipendiary ministry in 2015, and whose late wife Sylvia founded the cafe, said they now run a WhatsApp support group and ring person.



Before the pandemic, the café met in the Oaks Centre, owned and run by the church, and provided activities including quizzes, singing, table tennis, snooker and dominoes. There were regular outings and in more recent times, a dementia choir was formed, giving performances in the local community. The sessions also provided vital companionship and information for carers.

The café also attracted widespread support from the surrounding area with donations from local supermarket charitable funds and a fund-raising drive at Christmas. However the drop-in session was suspended when the pandemic struck in March last year.

Comments posted on the centre website, before the café was suspended because of the pandemic, show how much it was appreciated. 'A lovely place. You can relax, chat, take part in activities, have something to eat, and not be judged on ability,' notes one. 'Excellent for sharing experiences with other carers. Support, entertainment, acceptance, and company,' notes another.

Source URL: <https://www.churchofengland.org/news-and-media/stories-and-features/church-run-group-provides-parcels-and-phone-support-people>