



living with dementia – but they could remember the words to the

As Anne Powell started to lead the informal service in the care home, several seemed initially confused about what was going on.

But when Anne started to lead them in the words of the Lord's Prayer, something amazing happened. Long-term memories kicked in, as many of them recited the words they had learnt decades ago. Something similar happened as they started to sing 'All things bright and beautiful'.

This is the kind of ministry that Anne Powell offers regularly, as an 'Anna Chaplain'.

Like other Anna Chaplains around the UK, Anne offers spiritual support and ministry to elderly people in the community who are living in care homes, and those facing challenges living independently. Some older people are also referred to her by health professionals.

"Every time you make a connection with someone, it is special," said Anne.

"It doesn't need to be incredibly deep, and it's better not to talk for too long," she explained.

As Anna Chaplain for West Wight, she leads informal services and extended Communion services in up to nine care homes in the area and visits other elderly people at home.

When visiting people in their own homes, Anne's advice is to let them set the agenda: "They can talk about what's on their mind, which might be a bereavement, or an illness, or an anxiety – or something they want to celebrate or remember.

"One lady had lost her husband and brother within a month, and she needed someone to listen and support her.

"You just need a little message for them to take away – it's a privilege to be able to do that," Anne reflected.

More information:

- Anne was commissioned as Anna Chaplain by her vicar, the Rev Leisa Potter, last October in her home church – All Saints, Freshwater. She was the first in a [network of Anna Chaplains that have been recruited across Portsmouth diocese](#).
- Anne had previously worked in the hospitality industry as well as 12 years of volunteering with the chaplaincy team at St Mary's Hospital, Newport.
- Anna Chaplains are named after the faithful widow Anna, who appears in the Bible recognising the baby Jesus as the long-awaited Messiah.
- The 'Anna Chaplaincy' role had been pioneered by former TV presenter Debbie Thrower, in the Alton area of Hampshire from 2010, and the network was then expanded by the charity Bible Reading Fellowship (BRF).
- There are now more than 220 [Anna Chaplains](#) working across the country.

How can I become a Chaplain?

All sorts of people from all backgrounds and walks of life are called by God to be chaplains. Chaplaincy can be a full time or a part-time role. It can be paid or voluntary and can be fulfilled by lay and ordained alike.

First take time to pray and talk with people you know and trust in your local faith community. If you believe God is calling you to a chaplaincy role, or if you are considering setting up a chaplaincy in your school, workplace, organisation, or community [contact your Diocese for more information](#).

- The [Church of England's Vision and Strategy for the 2020s](#) is helping us to be a Church which proclaims and lives out the Good News of Jesus Christ afresh in every generation.

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