



What being part of the charity Dancing with Dementia and being awarded the KAVS means to me

Written by Lesley Fisher, Chairperson

The Power of Love

The King's Award for Voluntary Service (KAVS) champions the outstanding work of groups of volunteers in their local communities and to achieve this award was **amazing**. Anne Bellis and I were the founder members of the group, and we never envisaged the growth that the charity was to achieve.

If we just take three words and look at how they make a difference in the community. **LOVE, POWER, OF**. If we use them as love of power, we get unrest and upset, but if we use **Power of Love** what a difference that makes within the community. When a deed comes from the heart it is difficult to give up on any project. That is what we have in Dancing with Dementia. The love that comes from our hearts for our loved ones cascades down and enters every event and project that we do. Many have said that they can feel the love in the room when they attend our events. It is an amazing thing.

Dancing with Dementia has grown from one event per month to six events per month.

We also have ongoing projects that reach out into the community by working with local care homes, sheltered housing associations and care companies. We support the dementia units in three local hospitals too. By doing this we enrich the lives of the local community and the local area. DWD carry out important work by recognising a variety of different needs and addressing them in ways that are sensitive and relevant to the local area. We also attend events, working alongside health professionals to raise awareness of the dementia condition and the support that is available throughout the area. Dancing with Dementia has become an integral part of the local community.



Thank you to our volunteers

Two founder members grew to five trustees, but we still could not have achieved this prestigious award without the commitment and compassion of our many volunteers who work tirelessly and achieve so many wonderful outcomes. We also have many supporters ranging from individuals to local companies. We would like to thank each and every one of them for their commitment and compassion, for their hard work and their infectious enthusiasm, as well as their sense of duty.

A special mention to the team at CVS. They are our 'Go To' people in times of doubt and they held our hand, advised and encouraged us as well as financial help. It truly contributed to the growth of Dancing with Dementia.



We do what we do, not for the recognition, but from a sense of joy that **we create a warm and welcoming atmosphere** to our guests at a time when their world may seem bleak and cold. Dementia took our loved ones but gave us so much in return. We are all volunteers and do it for free, not because we are worthless but **PRICELESS!**

It has been said that, everything the trustees do, and many of our volunteers too, for the charity is due to the burning desire to **make a difference** and is always delivered with love. It is the memories of our loved ones driving us forward. Volunteers are the backbone of the community, supporting the community in a non-judgmental way and offering help and support to those in need.



Kings Award for Voluntary Service (KAVS)

Dancing with Dementia volunteers do not often pause to celebrate everything they have achieved, but receiving the **Kings Award for Voluntary Service** gives us the opportunity to do just that.

Started in 2016, it has been challenging at times, and we very nearly gave up, finding funding and volunteers was difficult at the start, but when there is a passion and strong desire to achieve it is difficult to give up. Through volunteering with Dancing with Dementia I have met so many inspirational people, faced difficult challenges and come out the other end a stronger person.



Life as a volunteer can be varied only this year one Tuesday, we were at a prestigious award ceremony at the Monastery in Manchester and on the Sunday, we were fundraising at a rugby match, cheering on Swinton Lions from the sidelines— they won! Bonus!

If you run a voluntary community group or charity, why not investigate achieving the Kings Award for Voluntary Service? It enriches the approach you make to your role and to the community so improving your support to your service users. It has definitely been such a special journey for Dancing with Demetia and we are proud to be part of the many volunteer groups who have achieved the accolade.