

Paul Howard
Partnerships Officer: Older People
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Anna Chaplaincy Event : Wednesday 14 June from 9.45am – 2pm at Jubilee House, Southwell

Anna Chaplains: Who are they and what do they do? Paul Howard, our Partnerships Officer for Older People writes ...

Rarely a day goes by without reference to demographics that confirm the rising proportion of older people in our society and its implications on the future. Much of the debate will concentrate on how the NHS and social services will cope. But it seems to me that the spiritual care of the elderly has been forgotten or perhaps undervalued rather than neglected.

In our Parishes and our congregations the work of caring for the elderly **is** being done, some Carers are young but the majority are elderly. Many young people have no expectation of looking after their parents or grandparents in later life and yet we know that the oldest of the Baby Boomers are now experiencing frailty and greater dependency. The Church Times newspaper (27 January 2017) highlighted some of the issues in an article entitled *'The time of our lives'*, and brought attention to the ministry of Anna Chaplains of whom Debbie Thrower, a former journalist and broadcaster, was the first. She was sent out to work with older people, listening to their stories and helping them to make sense of their identity, whilst exploring with them the big questions of life. The Anna Chaplains found that many had a need to unburden themselves, and they discovered people "consciously asking themselves in their closing years: 'Have I led a good life? What difference did I make? What have I contributed?'" And amidst all of these questions the Anna Chaplains work to help people to unpack thoughts and reflect on their lives and times.

The Diocese of Southwell and Nottingham is one of the few Dioceses to employ an Older Persons Advisor and we have been very aware for some time of the opportunity and gifting that older people bring to a Parish and Diocese. We know of so many initiatives across our communities, led by our lay ministers, clergy and church members. We would love to celebrate your heart for the older people of your Parishes by inviting you to come along to a gathering to share stories of what is happening, hear about the work of Anna Chaplains, and discuss how this work could be expanded throughout our diocese. If you're interested in the work of the Anna Chaplains and feel you might be drawn to such a ministry why not come along to *Jubilee House in Southwell on Wednesday 14 June between 9.45am – 2pm (lunch included)*. Please book your place (and lunch – giving dietary requirements) by contacting Catriona Gundlach on 01636 817232 or email her at catriona@southwell.anglican.org



Jubilee House, Westgate, Southwell,
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www.southwell.anglican.org

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For more information on Anna Chaplains you could visit the Gift of Years website (www.thegiftofyears.org.uk) which seeks to resource the spiritual journeying of older people.

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