



Cancer Aid Network at South Chadderton - a short history

Oldham Cancer Aid Network was founded in 1996. It started its life in Dr. Kershaw's Hospice, by Vera Dolan, Ron Williams and Chris? Originally it was just known as Cancer Aid Network part of a then national organisation.

The premises at Dr Kershaw's were unsuitable for the few patients that attended being in an upstairs room. An approach was made in 1997 to the South Chadderton Methodist Church to see if the group could use its premises and the church readily agreed. The 3 professionals were soon joined by other volunteers and an array of professionals from the Macmillan Cancer Support, including nurses, a physiotherapist, dieticians and benefits advisers. Other volunteers came to prepare and serve food. Gradually word got out through the various cancer organisations that help for cancer patients and their carers was available. The number soon built up and at its height there could be 20-30 patients/carers attending receiving one to one counselling. In addition, the services of a beautician and a masseur were available. Over a period of time the support from Macmillan was withdrawn and the counselling was given by the existing staff, supplemented from time to time with professional nursing advice.



with Jim McMahon MP

In 2015 the group found that its meagre financial resources had reached a critical point. Patients received food and services free of charge, which the group was subsidising. There was sufficient funding for about 6 or 7 meetings. At that point we got publicity from the then

Oldham Chronicle who did a front page article on our plight. The local councillor got involved, meetings were arranged with specialist help from Action Oldham and the Council's specialist staff. From that point our finances took a more secure position. Gradually over the period from 2015 to the present time we have seen a decline in the number of patients attending the meetings. A number of factors could have hastened that. Maggie's Centre in Royal Oldham came into being offering a range of services on a daily basis. Access to information is more accessible via the internet. Organisations, like Macmillan have the processes in place for patients to have access to professional help.

It is with some reluctance that we have come to a point where it is felt that the group is no longer fulfilling its purpose and the decision has been made to disband.

It would be wrong not to offer thanks to South Chadderton Methodist Church who have kindly let us use their premises without charge for the past 21 or so years; to our local councillor for the help and support that has been given; to all the volunteers who have given of their time without recompense. Most of all we would like to give thanks for the privilege of being part of an organisation that has looked after so many wonderful people who have battled against their cancer, some having overcome it and are now in remission but sadly for those who lost the battle but bore their illness with great resilience and fortitude to the end.

Many thanks to Alan Heywood for this resume