

CARTER HOUSE CHAPLAIN'S

Report for the 2013

I am just finishing my fourth year as chaplain at Carter House. This ministry continues to fulfil, challenge and energise me.

The beds in the rest home, hospital and dementia wings continue to be sought after. We have a waiting list, so that the beds are not vacant for long. Sadly, this means that anyone who thinks that they will move into Carter House "when they are ready", will probably find that there is not a room vacant when that time comes. I wrote in my report last year that the units at Carter House were not selling as quickly as we would like. Happily there has been a change in this and most of the units have new occupants.

Because people are coming in to rest homes at a later stage in their life, it means that people are less mobile when they finally arrive at Carter House and are therefore less able, or interested, in joining in activities. When I first began work at Carter House we had a large number of residents who would come from the hospital wing to join the other residents for our church service. Now only one resident is mobile enough to do join us, and I take communion to more "bed bound" residents than before. We also have a greater number of residents who are "artificially" fed through a tube. This brings up ethical questions with families and staff, who often use me as a safe place to vent frustrations.

As part of my ministry I officiate at two Eucharists each week, one in the dementia wing and one in the rest home. I am very grateful to the parishioners who gather residents for those services, and to our pianists who provide the music. The residents particularly enjoy the opportunity to sing their favourite hymns.

Our wonderful staff continue to work hard, doing a lot of work which is often heavy and unpleasant. However they do this with good humour and grace. My ministry is with staff and residents, and Carter House staff have had their share of tragedies over the last year. It is a privilege to be part of this. I was also very pleased to officiate at the baptism of the granddaughter of a staff member. Such happy moments provide balance for the sad times in my work. However I know that I speak for all the staff when I say that the main focus of our work is to cherish our residents, and to help them maintain their dignity through this last part of their journey.

Reverend Joan Minchin