

Who's Arthur?

Arthur lives locally and has done so ever since he relocated here with work over 35 years ago. He has worked hard all his life, not only in his career, but also looking after his wife, raising three children and supporting his community.

Arthur's 20s and 30s whizzed by in a whirl of wedding plans, house buying, babies, toddlers and teenagers. Through it all, he shouldered the responsibility of meeting the needs of those around him. In his 40s, with his family doing well, Arthur threw himself into his work and not only made a difference but also helped those around him to be the best that they could be. His work-life was punctuated with joyous occasions like his children's graduations, weddings and births of much loved grandchildren.

At 65, still able and willing to carry on working, Arthur was told he was no longer needed due to company policy. He and his wife adapted to having 50% less income and 100% more time with each other. They kept themselves busy with gardening, an enjoyable social life and the travel involved in maintaining links with their children and grandchildren who, by then, all lived far away.

Arthur's life was certainly less full than he had ever known it. Things changed dramatically when his wife was diagnosed with a terminal illness and, after nursing her for two years, she passed away.

His children did what they could to see him after the death of their mother but, now in their 30s and 40s themselves, their lives were getting in the way of any real help.

Fiercely independent, Arthur did not want to burden the children with his woes so they are totally unaware of how empty his life was.

His confidence was knocked by his wife's passing and so he is less able to join in activities as readily as he once might. His social circle was virtually non-existent. Days were empty and weeks had no structure. It reached the point where even doing small things required a huge effort on his part. Some days he felt in a very dark place and the loneliness was driving him to despair.

Every time he dropped a cup or couldn't iron his shirts the way his wife would have done, he worried even more about what might become of him.

Arthur used to listen to the news about how we're all living longer and his despair would deepen. You see, Arthur was not living longer ... he was merely existing for longer.

He's not the type to go seeking charitable aid, why would he, he planned his retirement well, has enough money in the bank to take care of things. But a frustrated 'why can't you just get a web cam Dad?' rant from his eldest son in Australia led him to the doors of Age Concern Cheshire East.

We showed him how to access the internet, and advised and set up his home PC and web connection. He now reads his Auzzie grandchildren their bedtime story via webcam at least twice a week; they call it Grandpa TV. And he is mapping out his family history for their benefit with great success. We gave him the time and space to discuss the loss of his wife. Now we are able to send a home help in once a week to check he's doing ok, have a tidy round and iron his shirts the way he likes them. On Wednesdays, he comes to tai chi and has joined the Macclesfield walking group who get together for a gentle walk and a pub lunch twice a month.

Arthur's later life has been transformed by the simple phrase 'Dad get a webcam' and by the care and dedication of those involved with Age Concern Cheshire East.

Arthur is why we do what we do ... we are proud to work for him and for each and every older person in Cheshire East to make sure their later life is enjoyed not endured.

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