**IMMEDIATE RELEASE – Thursday, 7th May 2020**

***\* Pictures attached***

**Diarmuid Gavin hosting online Tea Party to stand with people with dementia and their family carers to celebrate first ever Virtual Alzheimer’s Tea Day today**

Garden/product designer, writer, lecturer ***Diarmuid Gavin*** is hosting an online Mad Hatters-style Alzheimer’s Tea Party in his garden which will be live streamed via Instagram to his friends, family and followers to help The Alzheimer Society of Ireland celebrate their first ever ***Virtual Alzheimer’s Tea Day*** which takes place across Ireland today (Thursday, 7th May).

Diarmuid is hosting the special evening, from his home in Co Wicklow, to raise awareness and vital funds for The ASI which was due to host its 26th consecutive Alzheimer’s Tea Day, the charity’s biggest and most important fundraiser, across every town today. However, the traditional event has been cancelled because of Covid-19 and the need to keep people safe and apart – losing around ***€500,000*** in public generosity.

Diarmuid is encouraging his friends and followers to join from 7.00pm via ***Instagram @diarmuidgavin*** and to wear a hat, take a selfie and take part in a virtual Alzheimer’s Tea Party to remember and show solidarity with people with dementia, their carers and the **500,000** people who are impacted by dementia in Ireland.

Although people can’t gather in groups for Tea Day today, people can still ***connect and reach out*** to friends and loved ones across their communities, around Ireland and abroad – on the phone, on screen, Skype, Zoom and any other socially-distanced way people may choose.

This year, it’s ***more important than ever*** before that people put the kettle on, pick up the phone and reach out to a loved one or someone in your community to say hello and share a virtual cup of tea and to show people with dementia and carers who are at home, often confused, isolated and struggling without access to usual daily supports that we haven't forgotten them.

***It’s easier than ever to participate in Tea Day today:***

Text ***TEA*** to ***50300*** to donate €4, or visit ***alzheimer.ie*** if you would like to make a more substantial donation \*

Please follow The ASI on **Facebook** <https://www.facebook.com/TheAlzheimerSocietyofIreland>

**Twitter** @alzheimerSocIre **Instagram:** @alzheimersocirl

\* Text cost €4. The Alzheimer Society of Ireland will receive a minimum of €3.60. SP: LikeCharity. Helpline: 0766805278

***Garden/product designer, writer, lecturer Diarmuid Gavin said:*** *“I’m delighted to support the Virtual Alzheimer’s Tea Day today. The Alzheimer Society of Ireland’s biggest and most important annual fundraiser, Tea Day, should have been holding its 26th national event with tea in every town today. However, because of Covid-19, this can’t take place but the nation is still coming together while staying apart today with Virtual Alzheimer’s Tea Day and tea in every home in celebration of community spirit and togetherness. I’ll be hosting my own Virtual Alzheimer’s Tea Party from my home on my Instagram account @diarmuidgavin**this evening from 7.00pm and connecting with people and communities all across the country to mark the day. It’s a Mad Hatters-style event and I’m encouraging people to take a selfie, send in their pictures and help to raise a few euro for the Virtual Alzheimer’s Tea Day campaign. Please join me this evening! This year it’s more important than ever to come together virtually to celebrate, remember and show solidarity with people with dementia and their carers in Ireland. There are so many ways to get involved today – go to teaday.ie for more information.”*

Since the Covid-19 public health crisis took hold in Ireland, The ASI has ***continued to support people with dementia and their families*** as our Home Care, Dementia Advisers, National Helpline and Online Family Carer Training are all still running. In addition, our National Helpline has expanded to include a new 1:1 Dementia Nurse and Dementia Adviser call-back service and we are implementing new ways of providing ASI supports remotely to our clients and their families such as regular telephone calls and activity packages for people to use in their own homes.

**-Ends-**

**For more information, please contact The Alzheimer Society of Ireland Communications Manager Cormac Cahill** **Cormac.cahill@alzheimer.ie** **or 086 044 1214**

**Notes to the Editor:**

***About The Alzheimer Society of Ireland (ASI):***The ASI is the national leader in understanding and providing dementia-specific supports and services. With a national network of over 120 specialist services, 900 staff and 300 volunteers, each year they provide almost 900,000 hours of community-based, dementia-specific care throughout Ireland. For more information see www.alzheimer.ie.

***Helpline:***
The Alzheimer Society of Ireland National Helpline is open six days a week Monday to Friday 10am–5pm and Saturday 10am–4pm on 1800 341 341.
**Website:** [www.alzheimer.ie](http://www.alzheimer.ie/)

***About Dementia:***
• The number of people with dementia in Ireland is expected to more than double from 55,000 today to 141,200 in 2050.\*
• Dementia is an umbrella term used to describe a range of conditions which cause changes and damage to the brain.
• Dementia is progressive. There is currently no cure. Dementia is not simply a health issue but a social issue that requires a community response.
• The majority of people with dementia (63%) live at home in the community. Over 180,000 people in Ireland are currently or have been carers for a family member or partner with dementia with many more providing support and care in other ways.
• There are 11,000 new cases of dementia in Ireland each year. That’s at least 30 people every day and anyone can get dementia - even people in their 30s/40s/50s.\*\*
• 1 in 10 people diagnosed with dementia in Ireland are under 65.
• The overall cost of dementia care in Ireland is just over €1.69 billion per annum; 48% of this is attributable to family care; 43% is accounted for by residential care; formal health and social care services contribute only 9% to the total cost

*Figures referenced to Cahill, S. & Pierce, M. (2013) The Prevalence of Dementia in Ireland*

*\*Figure referenced from Alzheimer Europe (2020)* *Dementia in Europe Yearbook 2019 ‘Estimating the prevalence of dementia in Europe’*

*\*\*Figure referenced from Pierse, T., O’Shea, E. and Carney P. (2018) Estimates of the prevalence, incidence and severity of dementia in Ireland*