



# NEWS



## Drovers House time capsule

Ten years after it was buried as Drovers House opened in 2013, we dug up the time capsule to see how much had already changed?

Page 4



## From weeds to winners

Sycamores transformed their gardens and won a local award along the way.

Page 12



## Celebrating 47 years of service

Lyn has worked at Newlands for 47 years and is our longest-serving employee.

Page 20



# Celebrating dedication: A tapestry of long service



By Ed Russell  
Chief Executive

**In a year marked by resilience and commitment, we take immense pride in honouring 112 of our exceptional staff who have reached significant milestones in their journey with WCS Care.**

This year's Long Service Awards shine a spotlight on years of unwavering dedication, with anniversaries ranging from 5 to an incredible 47 years.

As we celebrate these milestones, we are particularly thrilled to acknowledge our longest-serving employee, who has been a vital part of our family for an extraordinary 47 years. Their unwavering dedication is a testament to the enduring spirit that defines WCS Care.

We asked our long-serving staff what keeps them going and motivated on this remarkable journey. Their responses paint a vivid picture of the values that drive our charity forward.

Our dedicated team, with service spanning four decades, has woven a tapestry of care that is unparalleled. Their commitment is not just a job; it's a calling, an embodiment of the values that define WCS Care.

Join us in celebrating the remarkable dedication of our staff throughout this newsletter. As we honour their long service, we recognise that each



passing year is a thread in the rich fabric of care and compassion that distinguishes WCS Care. Together, we look forward to continuing this journey of excellence, making every day well-lived for our residents and our community.

Hear from staff at Attleborough Grange and Castle Brook talking about their careers at WCS. More videos coming on the website soon.



# From the Editor...



**By Jennie Evans**  
Head of Communications and Marketing

## About **WCS CARE** NEWS

**WCS News is only possible thanks to the ideas, stories and support of everyone who lives or works at WCS Care.**

As Head of Marketing and Communications I'm all about raising awareness of what our amazing team do and want to ensure that our focus

on supporting people and making a real difference to their lives, shines through – so if there's something you'd like to see here, please get in touch.

## About **WCS CARE**

**WCS Care is a registered charity and care home provider with 13 homes in Warwickshire. Eleven of our homes provide a home to older people and people living with dementia. The other two homes offer rehabilitation, respite and long-term residential care for working age adults living with physical disabilities or long-term conditions.**

We're proud to work with Warwickshire County Council to provide socially funded places, and, unlike many other providers who ask residents to move out, when our privately funded residents find themselves needing social support, we help them to transfer to social funding so they can continue to live with us.

Established over 30 years ago, our ambition is that every day will be well

lived for our residents. We're known across the sector for our creativity and innovation and, having shared our experience of introducing new technology, we've seen others follow in our footsteps, most notably with the introduction of acoustic monitoring which is now being adopted by numerous providers across the UK and the world.



### Got a story?

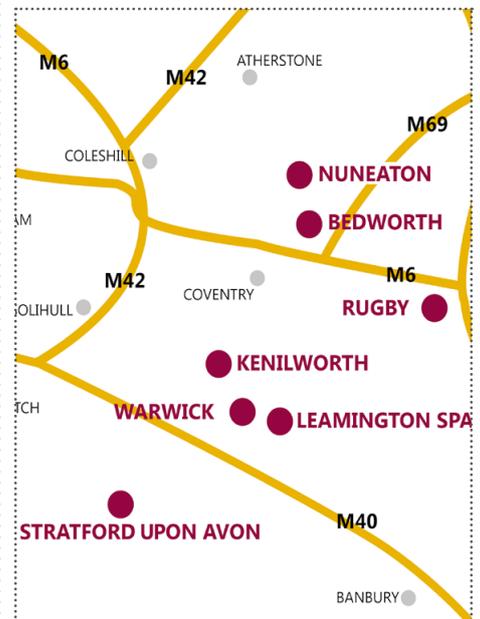
**Email:** [news@wcs-care.co.uk](mailto:news@wcs-care.co.uk)  
**Or call:** 01926 864 242

### See also:

**wcs-care.co.uk**  
**Facebook:** /wscare



### Find us in Warwickshire:



## Ways to get in touch

-  **Talk to any member of the team** or to a home's Duty Manager, which is usually displayed on reception
-  **Call WCS Care's Head Office** on **01926 864 242** or call the relevant home (numbers are on the back of this newsletter)
-  **Complete a WCS Care Comment Card** found in each home's reception (you can fill these in anonymously if you wish – all cards go directly back to Head Office)
-  **Email** [info@wcs-care.co.uk](mailto:info@wcs-care.co.uk) or the relevant home using the email addresses on the back page
-  **Send a message** through the Relatives' Gateway – speak to your Home Manager if you've not signed up yet
-  **Speak at a Residents' Forum** – ask your Home Manager about the next one
-  **Write to our head office team** using the address on the back page

If you're happy, please leave a review on [carehome.co.uk](http://carehome.co.uk) or [Google Review](https://www.google.com/reviews/). If things haven't gone to plan, we have a formal complaints process in place, which is available in your home or on our website.

# Making more memories

Below: Even the number plate was kindly donated

**S**amantha Stuart, General Manager of Woodside Care Village, had the pleasure of welcoming and thanking trustees from the Charity of Thomas Oken and Nicholas Eyffler, whose generous donation purchased a new minibus for the village.



The new minibus called The Memory Maker, is for the exclusive use of residents living at Woodside Care Village in Warwick to go on regular trips of their choice up to 30 minutes away.

Samantha Stuart explains, "It's named The Memory Maker because our trips are all about making new memories for residents and their family members who can join them. We also call our driver, Neil, a memory maker because that's what he does."

Ed Russell, Chief Executive of WCS Care said, "We want to thank The

Charity of Thomas Oken & Nicholas Eyffler for their generous donations. The Memory Maker gives residents the freedom to choose where they want to go on daily trips, keeping them connected with their local community, whilst enjoying the benefits of getting out and about. The bus will benefit generations of Warwick citizens over its lifetime."

Clive Mason, Chair of The Charity of Thomas Oken & Nicholas Eyffler said, "Having made a significant grant towards new technology when Woodside Care



**THE CHARITY OF  
THOMAS OKEN &  
NICHOLAS EYFFLER**

Village was built, we are proud to have awarded further grants to purchase a new minibus to enable the residents to get out and about into the community more easily."



Above: David playing guitar with Alan at Woodside Care Village

## Thank you for the music

**S**amantha also introduced the home's new Community Musician, David Smout whose role is also funded by the charity. David is already bringing a symphony of joy to residents' lives by filling the home with music.

She explained, "When people listen to music that holds personal significance or is associated with specific life events, it often triggers memories and emotions from those times. We know that there are considerable therapeutic benefits of regular music, ensuring that the emotional memory stays "topped up". Music has a profound impact on people, especially those navigating the intricate paths of dementia."

Talking to David about his role he

said, "I've really enjoyed getting to know the residents and discovering the music that they love to listen and sing along to. The most fulfilling part of the job is to see the joy on residents' faces and for their friends and family to see them enjoying themselves, and engaging with the music so well."

David joins Grahame, who has worked at Woodside Care Village for several years, to provide live music on a one-to-one or group basis.

Find out more about the Community Musician role by watching Grahame's video:



# Unearthed time capsule

## shocks carers with changes after 10 years

**W**hat a difference 10 years makes. In Rugby, we opened our first village home, Drovers House and buried a time capsule to mark the occasion. The original plan was to dig up the time capsule after 25 years, in 2038 to give the next generation a glimpse of what life was like, but because we were too impatient we dug it up on Drovers' 10-year anniversary instead! So what difference has that time made to our team?

### Swapping blackberries for apples

Carers were genuinely shocked to see a BlackBerry was the mobile phone used at the time, complete with its tiny tiny keys. Today, we've switched to touchscreen iPhones and everyone is used to the benefits of having digital care plans in their hands and access to medication information, nurse call and dementia apps at their fingertips.

Looking ahead to the next 10 years we know that Amazon are investing in building management systems to capture data and list it for you. Once here, all our carers will have to say is, "we need more towels in room 10", and it will be added to the housekeeper's list or a companion bot will deliver them behind the scenes.

### Writing off paper care plans saves carers an hour a day

Half of the time capsule was full of paper which is now redundant. Care plans have transformed from paper to the cloud, enabling carers to spend far less time completing paperwork and freeing up an hour a day per carer per shift, so they can spend more time with residents.

### From traditional tunics to punchy polos

Today staff choose the colour of their workwear polo shirt from a



Above: Opening the time capsule

range of 23 shades, including fuchsia, pumpkin orange, pistachio, red, sky blue and khaki, to suit them and their personalities. Name badges are worn to identify job roles and all staff are presented with a WCS Care 'care heroes' fleece to help keep them warm when they're out and about in the winter months. In 2013 the tunics worn as uniform felt institutional, formal and hierarchical.

### Even the décor has changed

Seeing the old photos of our care homes showed how even the decoration has changed in the last 10 years. Décor is now based on three lifestyle concepts, classic, country and town. By understanding residents' backgrounds, life history, likes and dislikes, they can then live in an environment that feels more familiar to them, reducing stress levels and



Above: Drovers House staff show off their punchy polos!

**Scan the QR codes with your mobile phone to watch the videos and find out more...**

Find out how acoustic monitoring improves sleep for residents and nighttime care



Find out about the health benefits of circadian lighting for people with dementia



Hear how the BookJane staffing app is transforming work-life balance for carers



increasing engagement. Matching people with other residents and staff who have similar interests, makes it easier to create connections and enjoy life to the full. Drovers had the lifestyles introduced to the home in July 2023.

**Carers were pleasantly surprised that...**

Two members of staff who worked at Drovers House in 2013, Steph and Louise, have progressed their management careers at WCS.

**During 2013...**

...the world said goodbye to two of its most influential leaders, Nelson Mandela and Margaret Thatcher, and welcomed a future king of the UK, Prince George.

Louise Spann was Deputy Manager of the home when it opened, and is now Home Manager at Four Ways in Leamington Spa, proudly boasting its own spa and café inspired by Louise's time at Drovers House.



trends of our time, giving them a glimpse into the past.

Carers have chosen to add into the reburied time capsule; a Care Guide and People Guide, recent newsletters, up-to-date photos of all homes, a work polo shirt, touch screen phone and memory sticks loaded with videos that feature technology that wasn't available when the home was built.

Steph McElhatton was a senior lead carer in 2013. She always talked about wanting to manage the care home, and now she's the General Manager after working hard to achieve her goal.

**What will future carers think when we dig up the time capsule again in 2033?**

In 2033, carers might be surprised when they dig up today's time capsule and find stuff that reflects the challenges and

**"I am so proud that Drovers House has built a really strong reputation for making a real difference to people and their families."**



Above: The refurbished café at Drovers House

# Drovers' residents had a magical 10th birthday party

**I**n September 2023, residents organised a party in the garden to celebrate with food, sing-alongs and entertainment.

They were pleased to welcome all of our Care Home Community Musicians, the Mayor of Rugby, Councillor Maggie O'Rourke, and a magician who kept everyone mesmerised with his sleight-of-hand tricks. With face painting, a performance from the Christine Anderson Theatre School and staff putting on their own take of High School Musical, it was a fun-packed day!

*Thank you to everyone who came and helped to make it so special.*

Below: Birthday cake baked by Jo, Lifestyle Coach at Drovers House



Below: Steph and Shannon enjoy the party with John



Above: Chimanbhai chatting to Councillor Maggie O'Rourke in the garden



Above: Staff and residents from Westlands also joined in the celebrations



Above: The Great Adamos amazed everyone with his tricks

# Time for a coffee break!

Grab a pen and a cuppa for some well-earned down-time with our 2013 quiz and Sudoku. You'll find the answers to both games on page 18.



## 2013 quiz



- What was named as The Oxford Dictionary's word of the year for 2013?**

a) Selfie   b) Twerk  
c) Blog   d) Emoji
- Which UK retailer launched a range of clothing under the "Nutmeg" brand in 2013?**

a) M&S   b) Tesco   c) Boots   d) Morrisons
- Which country in July 2013 became the 28th member state of the European Union?**

a) Croatia   b) Greece   c) Bulgaria   d) Estonia
- In July 2013 Andy Murray won the Men's Singles at Wimbledon, the first British winner in 77 years. Who was the last British winner of this event?**

.....
- Which pope announced his resignation in February of 2013?**

a) Pope Francis      b) Pope Paul VI  
c) Pope John Paul II   d) Pope Benedict XVI
- The Duchess of Cambridge gave birth to a baby that could become the next King of England in the future, what did she and Prince William name the royal baby?**

.....
- Whose skeleton, found in a Leicester UK car park, was identified via DNA testing in 2013, solving a mystery dating back to 1485?**

.....
- What digital currency made headlines throughout 2013?**

a) Peercoin   b) Bitcoin   c) Digitalcoin   d) Netcoin
- Used ten times more than Amazon Instant Video and Hulu combined, what video streaming service was the second best-performing company of 2013?**

a) Ustream   b) Vidler   c) Netflix   d) Vdio
- Which annual contest did 'Soletrader Peek A Boo' win in 2013?**

.....

## Sudoku

### Playing Sudoku

For those of you who haven't played before, the rules are simple.

The 9x9 square must be filled in with numbers from 1-9 with no repeated numbers in each line, horizontally or vertically. To challenge you more, there are 3x3 squares marked out in the grid, and each of these squares can't have any repeat numbers either.

9	8	1	3	6	5	2	7	4
7	6	5	4	8	2	3	1	9
2	4	3	1	7	9	8	5	6
1	9	2	6	3	4	7	8	5
4	3	7	5	2	8	9	6	1
8	5	6	9	1	7	4	3	2
3	2	4	7	5	6	1	9	8
5	1	8	2	9	3	6	4	7
6	7	9	8	4	1	5	2	3

A number can only occur once in a row, column or square. To solve a Sudoku look for open spaces where its row, column and square already have enough other numbers filled in to tell you the missing number.

**The puzzle helps you get started by providing some of the correct numbers.**

8		9	3		6	7	5	2
3		2	1		5	8		4
	4	7	8	2	9		6	3
2		5			8	6	3	
1		6	7		3	2		8
4		3	9		2			7
7	3			8	4		2	6
6		4	2	9	7	3	8	
	2		6	3			7	

# Long service legends!

**C**an you believe the amazing people on these pages have a combined total of over 1,000 years of service to WCS? In this feature, we're giving a shout-out to staff who hit milestones in the past year; there are many others who will be celebrated in the future.

## Attleborough Grange

### Names of all staff awarded

**Karen Hughes** – 40 years

**Christine McDermott**  
– 20 years

**Maddie Maddison** – 10 years

**Louise Cowling** – 5 years

**Michelle Tracey** – 5 years



1. Karen Hughes with Sarah Proctor celebrating 40 years: colleagues say she has the kindest and most caring nature of anybody.

2. Maddie Maddison celebrating 10 years of brightening everyone's day.

3. Always compassionate, Michelle Tracey celebrating 5 years.



## Castle Brook

### Names of all staff awarded

**Michelle Beasley** – 5 years

**Ibrahima Sall** – 5 years

**Rue Ndabalime** – 5 years

**Pat Feeney** – 5 years

**Jenny Rees** – 5 years

**Abigail Owusu Nyamekye** – 5 years



1. Newly promoted to the role of Deputy Manager, Michelle Beasley receives her 5-year Castle Brook service from Kate Bradshaw, Manager, who was part of the team that opened Castle Brook in 2016.

2. Left to right celebrating their 5th year: Ibrahima Sall, Rue Ndabalime, Pat Feeney, Jenny Rees, and Michelle Beasley with Kate Bradshaw, reminded us of their first day in care and how they've not looked back since.



## Dewar Close

### Names of all staff awarded

**Debra Grabowski** – 20 years

**Julie Hetherington** – 20 years

**Karen Smyth** – 15 years

**Paula Gill-Wakelin** – 10 years

**Nicola Rowe** – 5 years

**Jennifer Webb** – 5 years

Left: Nicola Rowe celebrating 5 years reflects on her journey from night carer to her current role of home administrator, still caring for people every day.



## Drayton Court

### Names of all staff awarded

**Lisa Sumner** – 15 years

**Jane Lapworth** – 10 years

**Linda Power** – 10 years

**Melissa Davies** – 5 years

**Vera Okeh** – 5 years

**Hollie Wilson** – 5 years

**Sonia King** – 5 years

**Laura Johnson** – 5 years

**Primrose Clarke** – 5 years

**Kelsey Wilks** – 5 years



1. Linda Power marks 10 years keeping Drayton spotlessly clean for residents each day as well as always having a big smile and positive attitude.

2. Hollie Wilson picks up shifts using our BookJane app around her university nursing studies. Her colleagues say she is going to be a fab nurse when she qualifies.



## Drovers House

### Names of all staff awarded

**Hannah Gibson**

– 15 years

**Katrina Bance**

– 10 years

**Letitia Checkley**

– 5 years

**Joe Maskell**

– 5 years

1. Trina Bance moved from Dewar Close to Drovers House shortly after it opened, which means they both mark their 10 year anniversary in the same year. Trina says she enjoys being a role model and mentor for new staff starting out on their care journey.

2. Steph McElhatton, General Manager, said, 'Everybody should have a Joe – his loyalty and dedication is faultless.' Joe spent his first 3 years with WCS at Castle Brook before being appointed Deputy Manager at Drovers House.



1



2



1



2

## Fairfield

### Names of all staff awarded

**Kerry Harriman** – 25 years

**Claire Dinning** – 20 years

**Hannah Palmer** – 15 years

**Anne Jeacock** – 10 years

**Nicola Frisby** – 10 years

**Sophie Watson** – 5 years

**Louise Mosey** – 5 years

**Chloe Watson** – 5 years

**Lindsey Richards** – 5 years

**Sarah Bishop** – 5 years

1. Thanking 10 of Fairfield's loyal staff who celebrated 105 years of service between them.

2. Claire Dinning, 20 years (left), presented with flowers by Maryann Walker (centre) watched by Hannah Palmer, 15 years, and Kerry Harriman, 25 years – a combined total of 75 years with their dedicated manager Maryann Walker.



## Four Ways

### Names of all staff awarded

**Jas Pavial** – 20 years

**Jeanette Goode** – 15 years

**Yogeswary Sundaresan** – 15 years

**Caroline Ralph** – 15 years

**Sophie Klec** – 10 years

**Tracey Baker** – 10 years

**Suki Hunjan** – 10 years

**Amie Nyang** – 5 years



1. Jas can't believe 20 years have passed while working at Four Ways, since her children were little and at school. Colleagues say for Jas, nothing is ever too much trouble!

2. Caroline's touched so many hearts and brought so much laughter to Four Ways over the last 15 years, being the life and soul of activities in the home.

3. Suki has taken great pride in the cleanliness of Four Ways over the last 10 years and is delighted with the refurbishment. Her colleagues say she's always the first to offer a helping hand.

1



3



2

## Sycamores

### Names of all staff awarded

**Sunita Kumari** – 20 years  
**Sharon Hancox** – 15 years  
**Anita Borawska** – 15 years  
**Moreen Muia** – 15 years  
**Jon Sabin** – 15 years  
**Anthony Quirke** – 15 years  
**Gurbax Dosanjh** – 10 years  
**Malgorzata Seliga** – 5 years  
**Alice Harrington** – 5 years  
**Sharon Hanson** – 5 years

Sycamores celebrate 10 staff, who including Ed who started as a carer at the home and their manager Olu, have more than 150 years of combined service between them.

Sharon Hancox celebrated 15 years (actually 18 with a short break) of dedication to Sycamores in a variety of roles. Sharon introduced Natalie Sims, her daughter, to Sycamores 18 years ago, two weeks after she first started. Natalie's now progressed her career

from Sycamores to overseeing five homes as Service Manager, including her mum's home Sycamores!

Anthony, main picture, was also introduced to the home by his mum (Pauline) 15 years ago, who was a much loved carer for many years at Sycamores. Pauline mentored Sharon when she first started.



**Back row:** Anita Borawska, Olu Ajala (Home Manager), Moreen Muia, Gurbax Dosanjh, Ed Russell (Chief Executive), Anthony Quirke and Sharon Hancox

**Front row:** Sunita Kumari and Alice Harrington



## The Limes

### Names of all staff awarded



**Terri Bennett** – 15 years  
**Coca Popescu** – 5 years  
**Zofia Jankowska** – 5 years  
**Alexander Pinson-Smith** – 5 years  
**Tuy Gumms** – 5 years

**Left to right:** Ed Russell (Chief Executive), Zofia Jankowska, Tuy Gumms, Karen Hall (Home Manager), Natalie Sims (Service Manager), Coca Popescu, Wendy Culver (Hotel Services Manager sporting her own long-service fleece from 1995).

Karen Hall, who's worked at The Limes since 2004 proudly presented her team with flowers to mark the occasion.



## Westlands

### Names of all staff awarded

**Alice Connolly** – 25 years  
**Tash Stevens** – 15 years  
**Emma Lingard** – 10 years  
**Shona Wallis** – 10 years  
**Tracey Warde** – 5 years  
**Watsana Bush** – 5 years  
**Audra Brown** – 5 years  
**Michelle Pawliw** – 5 years



**1.** Alice was thanked by all for her 25 years of dedication, reflecting that Westlands was a better place because of her hard work and commitment.



**2.** Having been at Westlands for just six months as Home Manager, Tash Stevens has brought her unique matter-of-fact brand to the home: residents are always first, no matter what we do, coupled with her energy and determination. Tash spent the previous 15 years working for WCS with working age adults and at Drovers House in Rugby.



**3.** Five years of working nights at Westlands, Michelle was described as a superhero amongst superheroes by her team.

## Woodside Care Village

### Names of all staff awarded



- Fran Rufus** – 20 years
- Helen Colwill** – 15 years
- Safeena Khan** – 15 years
- Tilly Biddle** – 15 years
- Lorraine Herbert** – 10 years
- Sophie Blower** – 10 years
- Gemma Phillips** – 10 years
- Samantha Stuart** – 5 years
- Emma Nelson** – 5 years
- Brindusa-loneia Virlan** – 5 years
- Sandra Hardy** – 5 years

1. Fran Rufus celebrated 20 years of service, working at the original Woodside and the new care village. Fran is relied upon by colleagues to make everything run smoothly behind the scenes.

2. Celebrating 15 years, and just like Fran, Tilly started her career in the old Woodside before gaining promotion and getting experience in two other WCS homes, before returning as a Care Co-ordinator to help open the new care village in 2019.

3. Brindusa transferred from Deafinitely Independent charity to WCS Care, helping move in and settle deaf residents from their old accommodation to the new village. Brindusa and her colleagues haven't looked back since and have been helping other staff learn sign language.



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2



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## Newlands

### Names of all staff awarded



- Sara Reeve** – 15 years
- Paul Roe** – 10 years
- Fatoumata Gaye** – 10 years
- Ruth Walters** – 5 years
- Paul Ward** – 5 years
- Nita Hessey** – 5 years

Left: Bonnie, Home Manager, said, 'Over the last 10 years Paul has built up such a strong bond with residents and can always be relied upon.'



## Mill Green

### Names of all staff awarded



- Lynn Randall** -25 years
- Lucy O'Kane** – 5 years
- Kelsie Wilson** – 5 years
- Yusufu Sa'Adu** – 5 years
- Tamara Woodall-Giles** – 5 years
- Tanya Hinch** – 5 years
- Rachel Walsh** – 5 years

Home Manager, Lynn, with 25 years' service herself reflected that Lucy chose Mill Green for the last 5 years above being a paramedic because of the special connection with residents and staff, and Rachel, who's served 5 years and been at Mill Green for the last year has found her niche, after being in several job roles, as a Wellbeing Co-ordinator leading activities for residents.



Left to right: Kelsie Wilson, Yusufu Sa'Adu, Lynn Randall, Tamara Woodall-Giles, Lucy O'Kane, Rachel Walsh, joined by resident Mick.

## Support Services

### Names of all staff awarded

- Josephine Rugg** – 5 years
- Tony Brooks** – 5 years
- Keren Salt** – 5 years
- Tanya Hutchings** – 5 years
- Nai Brancher** – 5 years



1. Josephine is in one of our brand new roles as a Trusted Advisor, helping residents and families navigate their journey into a care home, which is usually at a great time of need. Josephine spent the previous 5 years working as a Service Manager supporting frontline teams to be the best they can be.



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2. Nai has led our support services to the homes for the last 5 years, where nothing is too much trouble. She's supported by Tanya, who has also been with us for 5 years and is responsible for all of the long service fleeces and colourful uniforms staff are seen wearing.

**And everyone gets a handwritten card to celebrate their first year of employment at WCS**

# Transforming weeds into winners

## A garden competition success story

**Sycamores have scooped a Leamington in Bloom silver prize after coming bottom in WCS's own Spring in Bloom competition.**

Staff, residents and volunteers pulled out all the stops in the garden after taking on board feedback from judges, and their hard work has paid dividends.

Olu Ajala, Home Manager and Nai Brancher Senior Administrator were invited to the town hall in October by the Mayor of Leamington Spa, Councillor Alan Boad, to celebrate the achievement.



Above: Olu Ajala and Nai Brancher receiving the award from the Mayor of Leamington



## WCS in Bloom

Our homes really enjoy the friendly rivalry that our seasonal WCS in Bloom competition brings, and residents and staff alike have benefitted from spending time outside, connecting with nature and some simple exercise.

Our most recent competitions Summer and Christmas In Bloom, were judged on categories such as most residents' involvement, best front door, best themed garden, best hanging baskets, best Christmas wreath and best Santa, and our homes exceeded the challenge set by the competition. They have tidied, planted, added lights so the gardens come to life at night, ensured their home entrances welcome visitors and have kerb appeal, and that they embodied the Christmas spirit.



Above: Doreen and June from Dewar Close with their tallest sunflower competition winner trophy



Above: Above: Doreen talking to Steph about her five-star hotel

For many residents, the gardens provide a tranquil space to relax and get some fresh air, and for others, they provide the opportunity to continue their love of nurturing plants and watching them grow. Our staff also appreciate the wellbeing benefits of being able to take some time out of their busy day to water the flowers, and to get involved in keeping the gardens looking their best.

The overall winner in the summer competition was Woodside Care Village, closely followed by Drovers House and Dewar Close in joint second place.

Woodside Care Village are proud that their gardens feature flowers grown from seed, strawberries and tomatoes in the summer, flower-scented walkways, hanging baskets, raised beds, a sensory garden and a wildflower garden to attract bees and butterflies. There are over 50 different plants in the garden which has been designed by Chris the handyperson to appeal to all five senses.

Maxine Kavanagh, Care Manager said *"[the garden] has been planted around the senses, smell, sight and touch. It enhances the residents' lives really well. They really love the garden, as do we."*



Scan the QR code with your mobile phone to see why Woodside are winners!

Doreen from Drovers House likes to sit out in the garden which is filled with lights in the evening and said, *"It's out of this world. I can vouch you would not get anything lovelier... It's my five-star hotel."*

Doreen and June from Dewar Close really enjoy spending time in the garden and were thrilled when they also won the tallest sunflower competition too, after they planted the seeds.

Doreen said, *"I enjoy getting outside and especially watching any seeds I've planted grow. One can imagine my delight when*



*the sunflowers grew to eleven feet, a great achievement for the whole of Dewar Close."*

June added, *"I enjoyed all aspects of gardening at home, and I really enjoy our gardening club at Dewar Close where I can continue gardening. I was delighted when the sunflowers that I helped to grow from seeds, grew to eleven feet."*

Woodside Care Village also won the Christmas in Bloom competition with their beautiful tree, outdoor lights and inflatable sleigh enjoyed by residents, staff and the local community. Castle Brook were awarded second place and Four Ways third for their hard work.



Above and right: Woodside's winning winter wonderland

We've pulled 20 of the plants into a word search for you to play...

P	A	C	G	E	R	A	N	I	U	M	D	F	H	B	I	L	O	Q	S
H	E	M	R	T	X	Z	B	J	D	F	I	K	M	E	O	Q	S	U	W
L	I	L	Y	A	C	D	L	U	C	A	R	A	E	G	K	R	X	F	H
O	G	U	H	B	J	I	K	P	M	O	I	P	Y	O	S	U	Z	A	E
X	N	B	E	F	D	L	A	G	V	H	S	J	X	N	Y	T	V	I	B
W	D	C	V	O	A	K	Q	L	T	N	M	O	L	I	Q	U	Y	A	E
B	Y	V	F	A	H	D	N	R	G	P	E	H	K	A	Z	L	N	O	P
J	H	F	E	P	L	C	T	U	L	I	P	R	F	T	M	U	W	B	Z
Q	A	S	C	F	I	V	G	J	W	M	R	N	O	C	K	P	Q	S	U
D	V	G	I	B	A	P	X	R	Y	L	I	S	B	R	D	R	E	H	F
A	I	Q	W	G	D	H	K	L	B	A	M	B	O	O	T	K	N	O	P
S	N	O	W	D	R	O	P	S	U	W	R	Y	A	C	D	F	X	G	I
J	R	V	K	M	O	A	X	K	N	Q	O	T	R	U	B	H	S	U	Z
E	B	E	M	C	A	B	J	T	E	B	S	D	F	S	H	E	C	D	F
A	I	R	L	B	G	C	I	R	O	S	E	A	D	B	J	T	L	G	E
C	M	B	N	H	A	O	E	P	N	I	Q	W	G	F	E	R	N	S	T
V	K	E	R	I	J	P	U	B	X	V	C	Y	A	B	G	I	J	Z	R
W	B	N	A	D	Z	H	E	L	E	N	I	U	M	S	F	U	H	V	C
C	S	A	G	E	C	X	U	A	B	D	P	K	L	R	T	C	E	W	F
B	T	D	A	I	E	V	C	Y	O	A	Z	R	C	A	B	O	X	U	S

- Bamboo
- Begonia
- Boxus
- Crocus
- Daffodil
- Dahlia
- Fern
- Geranium
- Hebe
- Helenium
- Iris
- Lily
- Lucara
- Phlox
- Primrose
- Rose
- Sage
- Snowdrop
- Tulip
- Verbena

# News in brief

## The power of music!

**The Purple Angel Dementia Campaign provides people living with dementia with free bespoke MP3 players and headphones.**

Each MP3 player is preloaded with a personalised selection of 15 favourite songs so they are ready to use. To date, we have been given 70 MP3s for residents across six of our homes, with more to follow.

Music has been shown to benefit everyone, as musical memories remain accessible for longer than others. We often hear about the power of music – that it touches us emotionally in a way that words alone can't, has the ability to take people out of themselves, inspire, heal and take us to different places; that it is essential to our wellbeing.

Sherie Tyler Social Activities Manager at WCS, talks about the benefits to our residents, "We are grateful for the donations received. Music fills our homes every day and we know what a difference it makes. It's amazing to see how much enjoyment all of our residents get from music."



Above: Norma loves listening to music

## WCS Care's Jo Rose wins national award for innovation in care homes

**WCS Care's Jo Rose, Head of People, has been recognised with the Leaders in Care Innovation in Care Homes award for her success in introducing both new technology and a new mobile carer role, bucking sector-wide recruitment challenges that currently account for over 150,000 vacancies.**

WCS Care have combined the use of a staffing app BookJane, with a philosophy that elevates the role of caregiving to enable staff to have more control over their work-life balance.

Staff vacancies have reduced to zero from 87 full-time vacancies, and external agency use has been eliminated



Above: Jo Rose (pictured centre) supported by Keren Salt (left) and Jo Cheshire (right)

from over 400 shifts per week across our 13 care homes in Warwickshire. By saving on expensive agency staff WCS Care now pay more than agencies do, with savings being reinvested back into the pay of permanent team members.

Jo Rose said, "By elevating the role of carers, giving staff control over their work-life balance through the BookJane app, and removing the use of external agency from our homes, we're caring for our staff so they can care for our residents."

# Annual resident and relative survey results



**Keren Salt** Director of Quality and Compliance, talks us through the results of the survey.

In our latest survey we asked for your feedback on our services in our annual resident and relative survey. This year we asked just three main questions, giving you the opportunity to explain your opinions at your own pace and in your own words:

- What should we start doing?
- What should we stop doing?
- What should we keep doing?

We received 259 completed questionnaires in total, and I wanted to thank everyone who completed the survey. Your responses have given us really rich information, and whilst the majority of feedback was positive, there are some areas where you'd like us to do better. You can find a summary of the results below.

## Results

The average rating out of ten across the group is 9.8. This was calculated from the percentage of people who responded, 'Very likely', 'Likely' or 'Neither likely nor unlikely' to the question, 'how likely are you to recommend your care home as a good place to live?'

Text responses were categorised to enable us to draw some comparisons

and to see which areas received the most responses. The following categories received the most responses:

- 1 Everyday life and activities
- 2 Staffing
- 3 Communication and leadership

From the comments made, we know that the addition of more activities and trips out are welcomed. Our Memory Maker minibus service makes 3 or 4 trips a month for each home taking residents (and relatives) out to local attractions, and where requested, homes have arranged longer day trips to the coast. Our team of Community Musicians has also expanded this year to now provide

one-to-one and group music activities across all homes.

Introducing our staff rostering app, BookJane, at the beginning of 2023, and expanding our new Mobile Carer role to cover staff absences, has helped prevent external agency usage in our homes.

The Relatives Gateway, which is an innovation that helps relatives (with consent) keep up to date about their loved ones, needs to be better explained so relatives understand how it is populated. It's a developing innovation so does have limitations. It works by picking up most resident records in real time, creating text from icons selected by staff, rather than them having to type in a full description.

**“Our team have looked at every response given to find the themes to shape our learning for the future. We are committed to a continuous cycle of improvement, always striving to elevate the quality of service we offer to our relatives and their families.”**

**Keren Salt**  
Director of Quality and Compliance



**Reports are available to read in the home**

## Just Giving to our homes got even easier!

**We are now set up to receive online fundraising donations through JustGiving. All of our homes have a campaign page set up to raise money for their residents' funds.**

Money raised is used to provide a range of entertainment (e.g. visiting singers, animals, craft specialists), things to do in the home (e.g. games & crafting materials) and other opportunities residents choose.

To find a home's residents' fund page

visit <https://www.justgiving.com> and search with the home name and the words residents' fund, e.g. *Mill Green residents' fund* or search with *WCS Care* and all our homes come up. You then have to scroll down to the campaign section and will see all of our homes featured.



# Shining a light on Newlands

**I**ntroducing Newlands vibrant Hub! It's more than just a physical space, our new Hub is a lively venue where residents converge for a multitude of activities, from engaging workshops to social gatherings.

It's a welcoming space, where neighbours become friends and shared experiences create lasting memories. Inclusive and accessible, the Hub serves our Newlands community as a collaborative space for residents, and interested local businesses, and organisations alike.

Mundip, Lauryn, Louise, and Sue enjoyed an impromptu Disney Classics marathon in the Hub, singing along to their favourite tunes and Chris had a ball, soaking in the atmosphere of the Fulham vs. Wolves match on Sky Sports on the big TV.

In addition to these lively get togethers, Newlands has also embraced a more serene side with the addition of a sensory area that captivates both residents and visitors. This immersive space provides a tranquil haven that enhances concentration and focus while reducing eye strain and headaches and enabling relaxation, with the use of sensory lighting, music and diffusers to engage all senses.

Daisy whose mum Sarah is a relief carer popped in to see the Hub. Daisy loved it and Sarah said, "the new Hub is beautiful and has made such a difference to people that live at Newlands and those that visit."



Above and right: Disney marathon underway and Daisy enjoying the sensory lights in the Hub



## Four Ways refurbishment

**F**our Ways have been enjoying the results of the work carried out there this year. With walls knocked down to open up rooms, the installation of bigger windows to improve visibility to the surrounding area, bigger doorways, new kitchens and decorated hallways, all the hard work has been worth it.

Our refurbishment programme is introducing lifestyle decoration and living across the homes with households being decorated in one of three different lifestyles – town, country or classical living.

Choosing a household lifestyle helps people to live a life which is more familiar, reducing stress levels,



Above: As Del Boy would say 'Lovely Jubbly-you know it makes sense'

increasing engagement and helping people feel at home.

**Scan the QR code to hear about the difference the improvements have made to Helen when she visits her mum and dad at Four Ways.**



## What are the lifestyles?

### Country

Reflects familiar rural life, conversations about nature and a countryside environment, agricultural work, farm life, open fields, country pursuits.

### Town

Reflects a diverse community life, conversations about living near to local amenities and social activities, local parks and open spaces.

### Classic

Reflects conventional life choices, conversations about keeping up appearances, comfortable living and doing things a certain way.

## Country lifestyle décor at Drovers House



## Classic lifestyle décor at Four Ways





# New faces in familiar places

## Sherie Tyler

In her new role as **Social Activities Manager**, Sherie Tyler enjoys supporting the team of Lifestyle Coaches and Musicians to understand residents' interests to ensure that they can continue to do what they have always enjoyed doing. Sherie enjoys putting a smile on people's faces by doing everything from activities to trips... or bringing her beloved dogs to work.



## Galina Rice

Galina joins us as **Financial Controller** with over 20 years' experience, with the last 8 years working for organisations in the care sector that support people with mental disabilities and also autism. Galina aims to make finance accessible for non-finance colleagues, by providing training and support to ensure that everyone understands what they need to do.



## John Shotton

John joins our maintenance team, as **Regional Maintenance Person**, supporting all of our homes. Having started his career in electrical and mechanical engineering, John began to support his dad's maintenance business at weekends, working for hotels and care homes. He realised that he'd found his passion - particularly in the care homes where he could see the impact of his contribution and make bonds with the residents and staff.



## There have also been a number of changes to the management of our homes



**Melissa Davies**  
Home Manager  
Drayton Court

When Drayton Court's Home Manager Aimee Lucas went on maternity leave, WCS came knocking on Attleborough Grange's manager Mel's door to fill in for Aimee. Mel is passionate about creating a home where residents can have a good social life, companionship and top quality care.



**Alicia Rollason**  
Home Manager  
Attleborough Grange

Alicia Rollason has stepped up to the role of Acting Home Manager at Attleborough Grange. Alicia has been part of the WCS Care family for 19 years, working at three of our homes. Family is incredibly important to Alicia, who is driven to help people live their best life, creating heartwarming memories that last a lifetime.



**Anne Myles**  
Home Manager  
Dewar Close

Anne Myles has been appointed to the role of Home Manager at Dewar Close while Tara Locke is on maternity leave, and has worked in the care sector for over 20 years spanning roles from carer to Home Manager. Throughout her career, Anne has had people who believed in her and she is keen to be that person for her staff, giving them belief in their own ability to succeed.



**Olu Ajala**  
Home Manager  
Sycamores

Olu, previously the Deputy Manager, is the new Home Manager at Sycamores, following Rachel Guest's recent promotion. Olu has worked in residential care for 12 years and is committed to making a real difference in improving the quality of life of residents and promoting staff development to ensure colleagues flourish.



**Kate Bradshaw**  
General Manager  
Castle Brook

Having been part of the team at Castle Book since the home opened in 2016, Kate has earned a well deserved promotion to the role of General Manager. Kate's mission is to make sure there are no barriers to what care home residents can do - just because they are living in a 'care home'. She's also determined to support carers to make Castle Brook the very best it can be.



# More about mobile carers



10 years service



Above: Alis Hancox, who manages the Mobile Carers

**W**e spoke to Alis Hancox who manages the Mobile Carers about the important role the team now play in our homes.

Alis said, "Our Mobile Care Team, are experienced carers who sign up to work across several care homes, picking up shifts that suit them and supporting the home to ensure it has the right levels of staff. Where in the past

we may have used agency workers, this additional flexible workforce now enables us to cover shifts in more homes effectively with our own staff, who know our residents, values, and systems."

WCS now employ about 70 mobile carers, who make up almost 10% of our care home based workforce, working alongside the core home team. They take part in both a company and home focused induction process, and receive the same training as other carers in all aspects of the role including manual handling. Most mobile carers are also able to administer medication.

Alis went on to say, "Our amazing team of mobile carers are an integral part of the homes and have made such a difference in the short time since the role was introduced just over a year ago.

They have a unique ability to work across several homes, getting to know the residents' personalities and how the homes work. They are an asset to the core team. I'm excited to see what the future brings and we can develop the role to support homes even more."

## Sponsorship

WCS Care offers sponsorship opportunities which help us to recruit staff from other countries who have the skills we need. Ugo is a mobile carer who was a health and safety expert in his native country Nigeria. He joined WCS Care this year and embodies everything and more that we hoped for.

Ugo said, "Being a caregiver isn't just a job, it's a calling that I have wholeheartedly embraced. Whether it's assisting with daily tasks, offering emotional support, or simply being a reassuring presence, I take pride in being a pillar of strength for those in my care."



1 year service

Above: Ugo is pictured with Steph and Joe from Drovers House



**A family affair...**  
...Alis not only trusts WCS with her career, as does her mum who works at Castle Brook, her grandparents also live at Woodside Care Village. Read her grandpa's life story on the next page.

## Just for Fun Answers

### Word search

P	A	C	G	E	R	A	N	I	U	M	D	F	H	B	I	L	O	Q	S
H	E	M	R	T	X	Z	B	J	D	F	I	K	M	E	O	Q	S	U	W
L	I	L	Y	A	C	D	L	U	C	A	R	A	E	G	K	R	X	F	H
O	G	U	H	B	J	I	K	P	M	O	I	P	Y	O	S	U	Z	A	E
X	N	B	E	F	D	L	A	G	V	H	S	J	X	N	Y	T	V	I	B
W	D	C	V	O	A	K	Q	L	T	N	M	O	L	I	Q	U	Y	A	E
B	Y	V	F	A	H	D	N	R	G	P	E	H	K	A	Z	L	N	O	P
J	H	F	E	P	L	C	T	U	L	I	P	R	F	T	M	U	W	B	Z
Q	A	S	C	F	I	V	G	J	W	M	R	N	O	C	K	P	Q	S	U
D	V	G	I	B	A	P	X	R	Y	L	I	S	B	R	D	R	E	H	F
A	I	Q	W	G	D	H	K	L	B	A	M	B	O	O	T	K	N	O	P
S	N	O	W	D	R	O	P	S	U	W	R	Y	A	C	D	F	X	G	I
J	R	V	K	M	O	A	X	K	N	Q	O	T	R	U	B	H	S	U	Z
E	B	E	M	C	A	B	J	T	E	B	S	D	F	S	H	E	C	D	F
A	I	R	L	B	G	C	I	R	O	S	E	A	D	B	J	T	L	G	E
C	M	B	N	H	A	O	E	P	N	I	Q	W	G	F	E	R	N	S	T
V	K	E	R	I	J	P	U	B	X	V	C	Y	A	B	G	I	J	Z	R
W	B	N	A	D	Z	H	E	L	E	N	I	U	M	S	F	H	V	C	R
C	S	A	G	E	C	X	U	A	B	D	P	K	L	R	T	C	E	W	F
B	T	D	A	I	E	V	C	Y	O	A	Z	R	C	A	B	O	X	U	S

### Sudoku answers

8	1	9	3	4	6	7	5	2
3	6	2	1	7	5	8	9	4
5	4	7	8	2	9	1	6	3
2	7	5	4	1	8	6	3	9
1	9	6	7	5	3	2	4	8
4	8	3	9	6	2	5	1	7
7	3	1	5	8	4	9	2	6
6	5	4	2	9	7	3	8	1
9	2	8	6	3	1	4	7	5

### Quiz answers

- 1) Selfie
- 2) Morrisons
- 3) Croatia
- 4) Fred Perry [1936]
- 5) Pope Benedict XVI
- 6) George Alexander Louis
- 7) King Richard III
- 8) Bitcoin
- 9) Netflix
- 10) Crufts

# Amazing life stories

Share our carers' front row seat to the extraordinary lives of our residents

## Robert Coover

**Bob, who lives at Woodside Care Village with his wife Pilar, is the author of over twenty books of fiction and plays.**

He was nominated for the National Book Award and awarded numerous prizes and fellowships over his career. His plays have been produced in New York, Los Angeles, Paris, London, and elsewhere. From 1981 to 2012, he taught creative writing, electronic writing and mixed media at Brown University, where he is T.B. Stowell Professor Emeritus in Literary Arts.

We talked to Bob and his granddaughter Alis Hancox, who works for WCS Care, about his life and work.

### Tell us more about your career as both an author and Professor

**Alis:** Writing has always been part of my Grandpa. When he first met my Grandmother Pilar, who he calls Pili he was in the Navy and she lived in Spain with her family. We have seen all of the letters and poems that he wrote to her then, they are beautiful.

After they got married, they eventually settled in Providence where he proudly worked as a Professor at Brown. In his later years, Grandpa would take sabbaticals from teaching, and they'd travel back to their flat in London as that's where he felt most creative to write.

Grandpa has inspired so many people over the years to write and build their career, many of who are still in touch with us today. Scott Rettberg, who he worked with at Brown, is now a digital artist and scholar of electronic literature, and he came to visit just recently from his home in Norway.

### What are you most proud of?

**Bob:** It's pioneering the earliest form of hypertext that I used in my writing. Unlike

traditional fiction, readers of hypertext are not constrained by reading from start to finish. They may follow their own path, create their own order, their own meaning out of the material. It's best read on an interactive screen.

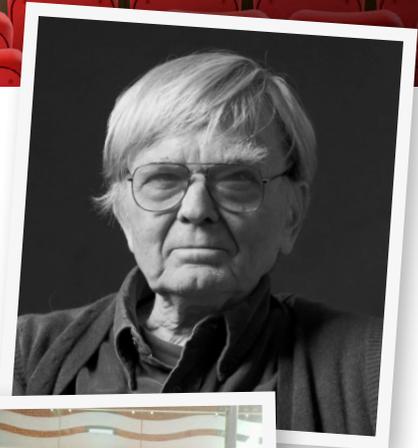
I taught for more than 30 years at Brown University and launched the world's first hypertext fiction workshop in 1990 there and together with Scott, founded the Electronic Literature Organisation in 1999.

### Tell me more about the latest novel

**Alis:** It's called Open House. Grandpa worked on this one for over 5 years and it was published in July 2023. It's based on a gathering in a luxurious penthouse of an unusual mix of people and it keeps the reader guessing as to what has brought them altogether. Is it a party? A religious congregation? Or is there something else going on?

It's been really hard to get the copies sent over to the UK as there are strict publishing rules in the US, but we now have them on display.

*Thank you so much for talking to us about your achievements Bob and giving us a small insight into your fascinating career.*



Above and left: Bob Coover



Below: Bob and his granddaughter Alis



Above: Bob and his family



# minutes with... Lyn Peisley



**L**yn's unique gold badge says, 'Longest serving employee'. Lyn provides essential housekeeping and laundry services to residents and has worked at Newlands for 47 years, so we went along to talk to her and find out more.



**47**  
years  
service

### Tell me a little more about yourself

I'm very normal. I'm married with children and 'Nan' to my grandchildren, who are all doing well in life. I was born in Kenilworth and have lived here all my life. I was 15 when I left school and worked at Boots in Leamington on the stationery counter. From there, I went to GEC in Coventry and worked as a filing clerk for 5 years. I left when I had my oldest son.

### When did you start working for WCS and what made you choose to work here?

I started when the council owned the home in 1976 and used to do some cleaning, tidied away the dishes and I also worked in the laundry, to fit around my family. It was ideal for me as it's always been flexible here, and I could work a few evenings a week as that suited me.

### Did you think you would still be here after all this time?

No I didn't! I've always liked it though. It's suited me over the years, the hours work for me and I've always got on well with the people.

### What's happened to you in life while you have been at WCS?

I've had my family and enjoyed going on

holidays down to Devon. We haven't been away for a few years now though as it gets harder with age.

### What's the most memorable thing?

There are so many! Nita who is my manager now used to work as a carer, she left and came back after 20 or 30 years to housekeeping. I've known some of the residents for a lot of years. There have been lots of celebrations and changes to the building; it's totally different now. The rules and regulations that we have now are very different. I think all the changes are for the better.

### What do you enjoy most about your role?

My son often asks when I will retire, but I say I like chatting to different people and seeing all of the things happening in the home. It gets me out of the house and keeps me going! It's been nice to see the home all being redecorated recently and the new communal Hub.

### Describe one of your favourite work memories

There have been so many memories over the years, too many to remember. The newspaper clipping brings back memories as we were celebrating being here for 20 years. I occasionally see Maureen who

**Carers' long service**  
40 members of staff at a residential home in Kenilworth have received surprise long-service awards.  
Personal carer Pat Jones from Balsall Common and Landress Lyn Peisley from Kenilworth have both been at Newlands in Whites Row for all of its 20 years. They were presented with a bouquet of flowers and pot plants from residents Jill Hoseman, originally from Hatton, and Pamela Heritage from Warwick.  
Housekeeper Josie Wilson proposed a toast to the pair. Newlands is a residential home for disabled adults from across Warwickshire. It is the only such local authority home in the county. It has been refurbished this year and has been run for the last few years by Warwickshire Care Services.  
Pat and Lyn with two of the residents Pam Heritage and Jill Hoseman. 21/9/14



Above: Lyn wearing her gold badge with pride, and on the right in the paper over 20 years ago. Lyn and Maureen in our newsletter celebrating 25 years

I was in the newsletter with years ago, when we celebrated 25 years. She retired at 79 and is doing well.

Thanks for talking to us Lyn, it's been lovely to hear about your long career at WCS.

## Get in touch:

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