



WCS CARE NEWS

Life in full bloom

See some of the highlights of this year's Summer in Bloom competition.

Pages 10 to 13



Making more memories

Read about the activities, music and trips that residents enjoy.

Page 14



Amazing life stories

Cynthia talks about family life and her varied career.

Page 19



You don't need one until you need one



By Ed Russell

Chief Executive

Over the years, many residents have said roughly the same thing to me. "Ed, I never planned to come into a care home. But given the circumstances I found myself in, it has been one of the best decisions I have ever made."

Nobody really plans to live in a care home. Most of us expect to stay where we are, surrounded by familiar belongings, memories and neighbours, for the rest of our lives.

That home may be where we raised our family, shared our life with a partner and put down roots in a community we have known for decades. Leaving it can take enormous courage.

But circumstances have a habit of rewriting even the best laid plans.

Sometimes it's a fall or a stay in hospital. Sometimes it is loneliness,

or the worry of managing meals, medication, bills or a home that has simply become too much.

And often families have been quietly adapting too. A son or daughter has become the person checking the tablets and worrying whenever the telephone rings. A husband or wife is trying to do more and more on their own.

Moving into a care home changes things again.

There are people around and someone there when you need help. There are meals you haven't had to cook, things going on if you want to

join in, and your own front door to close when you don't.

And sometimes one of the biggest changes is for the people around you. A child can be a child again – even a grown up one. A husband or wife can be a partner, rather than the person trying to manage everything.

For us, that is what care is about. Being there when someone needs us and helping them carry on with their life.

And we believe everyone should be able to expect good care, regardless of how much money they have.

Continued on page 3



Above: John and his wife Mary at Westlands

From the Editor...

About NEWS

WCS News is one way newcomers to WCS Care get to know us, and also a way for people to share their events, thoughts, and ideas.

We try to capture everyday life and show how people carry on enjoying the things they've always done, as

well as having opportunities to try new experiences.

WCS News is only possible thanks to the thoughts and ideas of everyone who lives or works with WCS Care – so if there's something you'd like to see here, please get in touch.

Find out more about daily life in our homes on Facebook [wscare](#) and Instagram [wcs_care](#).



By Jennie Evans
Head of Communications
and Marketing

About

WCS Care is a care home provider and a registered charity. We are proud of the positive social impact we make across Warwickshire, with around 250 people who are socially funded benefitting from our charitable support every year. This creates a significant annual contribution, helping people access high quality, compassionate care.

People are at the heart of everything we do, and our ambition is to help make every day well lived for residents. This belief continues to shape us and sets the benchmark for the care we provide. We understand that everyone is different, and what matters to residents matters to us.

We live by a few simple values. Play. Be there. Make someone's day. Choose your attitude. And because we believe that the standard we walk past is the standard we accept, if something does not feel right, or your experience falls short, please tell us. Your feedback helps us learn, improve and do things differently when we need to.



Got a story?

Email: news@wcs-care.co.uk
Or call: 01926 864 242

Follow us:

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wcs-care.co.uk

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 or the relevant home using the email addresses on the back page



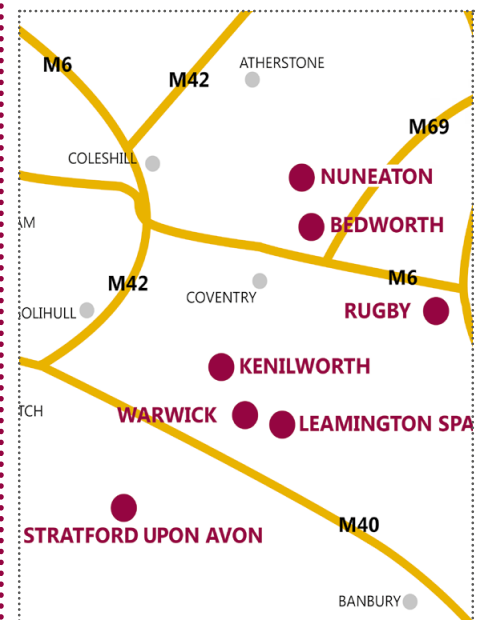
Speak at a Residents' Forum – ask your Home Manager about the next one



Write to our head office team using the address on the back page

If you're really happy, why not leave a review on carehome.co.uk or [Google Review](#). 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.

Find us in Warwickshire:



Continued from page 1

Good care should be there when you need it

As a charity, making good care available regardless of someone's financial circumstances has always mattered to WCS Care.

We are the largest provider of socially funded care home places in Warwickshire and have worked in partnership with Warwickshire County Council since WCS Care began in 1992.

That partnership will continue through a new ten-year contract, helping local people who need care to continue to access a WCS Care home through social funding.

Once someone comes through our doors, how their care is funded doesn't define their experience. People live alongside each other in the same homes, supported by the same teams, with the same opportunities and expectations about their care.

But care homes can do much more than provide somewhere permanent to live.

Two services, one patient

One example is our new Discharge to Assess service which provides dedicated places at Fairfield in Bedworth, Drovers House in Rugby and Castle Brook in Kenilworth for people who are medically fit but not quite ready to return home after a hospital stay. Instead of remaining in hospital people can move into a care home and be assessed in an environment much closer to everyday life, because making decisions about what ongoing support someone needs while they're still in a hospital bed doesn't necessarily show what they can manage in everyday life.

We know the difference this can make because we've done it before. Through our previous Discharge to Assess work with the NHS, we supported people to leave hospital, regain confidence and, wherever possible, return home. We also saw people and their families get the breathing space to think about what came next, rather than having to make big decisions from a hospital bed.

Having a bedroom of your own with access to the outdoors, getting dressed in the morning, walking to the dining room, making a cup of tea, choosing what to eat and how to spend the day are all ordinary things. But after time in hospital, doing ordinary things again can help rebuild confidence and give a much



Above: Marj and Jean having fun at Drovers House

better picture of what someone can manage.

For many people, the next step will be going home. Others may need more support. Either way, there is time to consider the options and make those decisions based on how someone is managing in a homely environment.

But a short stay can do something else too.

For someone who has never experienced life in a care home, spending some time with us can change what they imagine it to be. They have their own room, meet the people who live and work with us, join in when they want to and see what everyday life looks like.

“Doing ordinary things again can help rebuild confidence and give a much better picture of what someone can manage.”

They may go home and not need a care home again for many years, perhaps ever. But if things change, for them or for someone they love, they know a little more about what to expect.



Above: Anne dancing with friends at Westlands



Above: Rose hands the dominoes tournament trophy to Sycamores

Because you don't need a care home until you need one. And when that time comes, knowing what life in one can actually be like can make that next step feel very different.

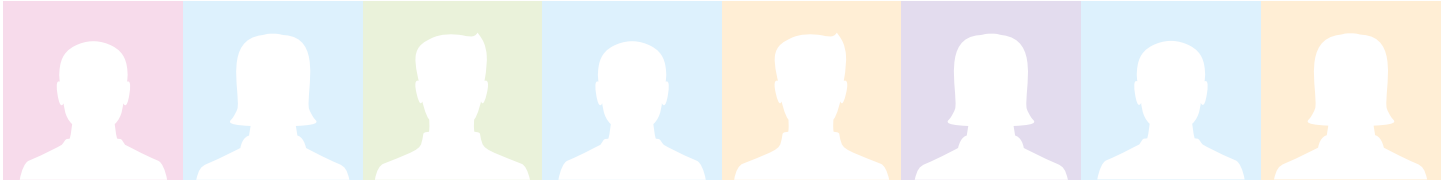
In the last issue, Jenny and her son Deane talked about their experience of Jenny moving into Castle Brook care home.

Scan the QR to watch their video in full.



Read the article on page 6 of the last newsletter.





New faces in familiar places and familiar faces in new places

It's been a busy few months, with new people joining WCS Care and existing colleagues moving into new roles. Take a look at the latest changes across our teams...

Executive team

Jo Cheshire has been appointed Deputy Chief Executive alongside her role as Director of Marketing and Communications, helping to support delivery of our strategy.

Jo Rose has been promoted to the new role of Director of People, reflecting the importance we place on our people, culture and leadership.

Samantha Stuart has also joined the Executive Team as Head of Projects and Commissioning, leading major developments across our homes as well as projects including care planning, acoustic monitoring and circadian lighting.

Jo Rose

21
years'
service

Samantha Stuart

9
years'
service

Jo Cheshire

Care, quality and learning

Anna Read has become Head of Quality, Safety and Risk. After more than 25 years with WCS Care, Anna brings a wealth of experience to the role, helping to strengthen quality, safety and standards across all of our homes.

Natalie Sims has been appointed Senior Service Manager, providing additional operational support to our Home Managers. Having grown her own career with WCS Care, Natalie is passionate about helping both colleagues and residents thrive.

Sarah Bedding's role has expanded to become Head of Learning, Practice and Safeguarding, leading our work around learning, professional practice and safeguarding. She is joined by **Hannah Palmer**, our new Learning and Development Partner. Hannah has been at WCS Care for 15 years working in a variety of roles before moving into learning and development to help colleagues build their skills and confidence.

Hannah Palmer

15
years'
service

26
years'
service

Anna Read

Natalie Sims

21
years'
service

7
years'
service

Sarah Bedding

Property and maintenance

Stef Cree is our new Head of Property and Maintenance, leading the team that keeps our homes safe, comfortable and running smoothly.

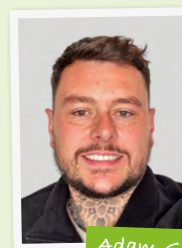
We welcome **Ethan Phillips** as Property and Maintenance Manager. His carpentry and maintenance skills help him carry out repairs promptly with minimal disruption for residents.

Adam Goodwin, our Regional Maintenance Manager, brings a unique blend of NHS management experience and practical trade skills. He enjoys finding solutions and seeing the difference they make for residents and colleagues.

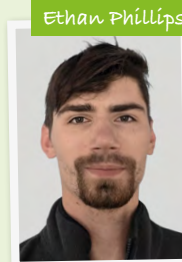
We're also building a team of specialists with the skills to manage the maintenance issues that arise in our homes more efficiently, including several apprentices to invest in future talent.



Stef Cree



Adam Goodwin



Ethan Phillips

Finance team

The Finance Team has seen a few changes, with **Yasmin Kinderman** and **Laura Worsley** taking on Payroll and Finance Co-ordinator roles.

Bailey Phelan has joined Support Services to cover Yasmin's maternity leave. Having worked across several of our homes as a Carer, Mobile Carer, Lifestyle Coach and most recently Concierge at Fairfield, Bailey brings plenty of experience and a good understanding of the people behind the numbers.

We've also welcomed **Sarah Gurney** as Accounts Payable Administrator. With more than 25 years' experience in finance, Sarah plays an important role behind the scenes, ensuring suppliers are paid accurately and on time.

Joining them is another familiar face, **Rupinder Kaur Sanghera**, who will be supporting the team as Finance and Income Administrator

with income administration, including resident invoicing, payments and maintaining accurate financial records. Rupinder has been part of WCS Care since 2014, starting her career as a Carer at Sycamores before progressing to her most recent role as Administrator there.

Bailey Phelan

6 years' service



Yasmin Kinderman



4 years' service

Laura Worsley



26 years' service

Sarah Gurney



Rupinder Kaur Sanghera



12 years' service

Home teams

There have also been some changes in our homes. **Jane Moss** has taken up the role of Care Manager at Attleborough Grange, while **Sophie Klec** has moved to Woodside Care Village as Care Manager.

Nicola Frisby is now Care Manager at Drovers House, and **Alice McGregor** has returned to Westlands, where she is working as a Senior Care Co-ordinator.

Kaci Sims has also taken on a new role at Sycamores, where she was Lead Carer, to become Administrator, taking over from Rupinder.

Erin Jee is the new Concierge at Fairfield having previously worked as Housekeeping Assistant there.

Erin Jee



2 years' service

Sophie Klec



14 years' service

Jane Moss



7 years' service

Nicola Frisby



13 years' service



Alice McGregor

11 years' service



2 years' service

Kaci Sims

We wish them all every success in their new roles.

It runs in the family



By Ed Russell
Chief Executive

Families come in many different forms

Across WCS Care, mums, daughters, fathers, sons, partners and siblings work alongside one another. Some colleagues first discovered us when we cared for someone they loved. Others came to visit a friend and somehow never quite left.

Natalie joined WCS Care as a 17-year-old housekeeper. She took every opportunity that came her way, progressing through different roles and today supports all our homes as Senior Service Manager. Her mum and daughter work for WCS Care too, three generations of the same family contributing to the lives of our residents.

Samantha began her career in domiciliary care before joining us as a Home Manager. She is now our Head of Projects and Commissioning, helping to shape new homes and services for future residents. Her son has joined WCS Care as an apprentice, beginning his own career while Samantha continues hers.



Above: Natalie Sims



Above: Brenda at Castle Brook

“Some people come to visit someone they love and somehow never quite leave.”

They are far from alone. Some families have several members working across our homes, often recommended by someone who knows us well enough to put their own family name behind us.

But the WCS Care family extends well beyond the people on the payroll.

Brenda became part of the Castle Brook family six years ago when she visited a friend who lived there. She is now in her eighties and has volunteered in the gardens ever since.

Living alone, Brenda says Castle Brook gives her a reason to get out of bed in the morning. She meets interesting people, shares

her knowledge with a new generation and helps create beautiful gardens for residents to enjoy.

She says she meets people who have lived amazing lives and now happen to live in a care home. She would not change it for anything.

Scan the QR code to meet Brenda and see Castle Brook's gardens through her eyes.



Hazel also volunteers in the garden and supports relatives who want to become involved. Having made the same journey herself, she understands the emotions that can accompany someone moving into a care home.

Sometimes the best reassurance comes from someone who has already stood where you are standing.

Also at Four Ways is **Ingrid**, whose mum **Barbara** has lived there for about a year. Ingrid combines visiting her mum with volunteering in arts, crafts and activities with other residents.

She brings her own skills and ideas into the home, creating enjoyable experiences while being part of the wider Four Ways community.

Scan the QR code to meet Hazel and Ingrid and see their stories for yourself.



From relatives to colleagues

At Four Ways, **Hazel** is the familiar face greeting residents, relatives, visitors and colleagues from the front desk.

She has been part of Four Ways for ten years, but her journey began as the relative of a resident. She later joined our team and is now the home's Concierge, although her job title only tells half the story.



Above: Samantha Stuart

At Dewar Close,
Paula's
mum

Doreen has been a resident for around seven months. Paula now joins residents and colleagues in the gardening club, although Doreen retains the important role of identifying what is a plant, what is a weed and precisely what everyone should be doing about it. Every successful gardening club needs strong leadership!

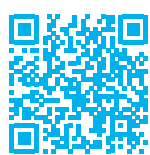


Above:
Hazel Cronin



"Sometimes the best reassurance comes from someone who has already stood where you are standing."

Scan the QR code to meet Paula and see her story for yourself.



Growing something together

Our gardening competition has captured these stories on film. Behind the flower beds, hanging baskets and occasionally disputed weeds are people growing something even more important; friendship, purpose and belonging.

Gardens bring daylight, fresh air, movement, conversation and contact with the changing seasons. There are opportunities for everyone to contribute, whether planting, watering, sharing knowledge or providing expert supervision from a comfortable chair.

Across WCS Care, we record the time residents spend outdoors and aim for everyone to enjoy at least 90 minutes each week. It helps us notice when somebody may not be getting the fresh air and daylight that could make a difference to how they feel.

For people who struggle to get outside, there is no complete



Above: Ingrid and Barbara in the garden at Four Ways

substitute for the real thing. However, the circadian rhythm lighting we are installing across our homes supports the body's natural rhythm by changing throughout the day. We've already seen the effect it can have on sleep, mood, social interaction and wellbeing.

The gardens, views, lighting and daily rhythm all contribute to homes where people can live well.

A family people choose

There are many ways to become part of WCS Care.

Some people begin as a housekeeper and build a career lasting decades. Some follow a parent into the organisation. Some discover a parent when a loved one needs care and later decide to work or volunteer with us. Others arrive to visit a friend and are still tending the garden six years later.

Our former Chief Executive's mum lives at Castle Brook. My own dad enjoys respite stays with WCS Care. Having joined as a carer in 1992, I have now experienced our homes as a colleague, a leader and a son.

You can say many nice things about an organisation. We occasionally do. But recommending it to your own family, or returning to give your own time, says rather more.

It tells future colleagues that care can become a rewarding career. It tells families that their experience and contribution matter. Most importantly, it surrounds

residents with people bringing their knowledge, personalities, kindness and humour into the home.

I am enormously proud of the colleagues, families and volunteers featured in this article. These are not polished stories invented for a brochure. They are real people, contributing to something they value and helping others live each day well.

Families may bring people to WCS Care.

Sometimes they discover a new one waiting for them when they arrive.

"Recommending WCS Care to your own family, or returning to give your own time, says rather more."



Above: Paula and Doreen enjoying some sunshine at Dewar Close

How does your garden grow?

For June Milne, a walk around the garden at Four Ways is part of everyday life. A keen walker for many years, June enjoyed regular afternoon strolls before moving into the home and has been able to continue doing something she loves.

Since moving to a ground floor room overlooking the garden, her daily walks have gone from strength to strength. What started as one lap has grown to as many as 40 a day, helping June maintain her mobility and independence.

June, who celebrated her 100th birthday this year, says her determination comes from her mother, Mary Baskett, who volunteered at Four Ways around 45 years ago. Her hardworking, independent outlook is something June has carried with her throughout her life.

Time outdoors can support physical and emotional wellbeing, whether its planting and tending to flowers, taking a stroll or catching up over a cuppa in the fresh air watching the wildlife.

June and Four Ways' other residents and staff now have a new reason to get outside and enjoy the fresh air; a fountain which provides an additional focal point as well as the gentle sound of water in their garden.



Above: The new fountain at Four Ways

Below: June's 100th birthday celebrations



News in brief

Reviews put us in the Top 20

We've once again been recognised as one of the UK's Top 20 Mid-size Care Home Groups in the [carehome.co.uk](https://www.carehome.co.uk) awards.

The awards are based entirely on independent reviews from residents, relatives and friends.

As well as recognising the care we provide, these reviews help other families who are choosing a care home by sharing the experiences of people who have already been through that journey.

Thank you to everyone who has taken the time to leave a review.

This latest award marks our second consecutive year in the Top 20 and the fourth time in the last five years that we've received this recognition.



We're growing on Instagram!

Alongside Facebook and YouTube, Instagram gives us another way to share the everyday moments that make our homes special and celebrate the work of our amazing teams.

We've now reached over 250 followers and we'd love to welcome more.

If you're on Instagram, please give us a follow, like and comment on our posts, and share your favourites with family and friends. Every interaction helps more people discover WCS Care and see life in a care home.

Follow us at [instagram.com/wcs_care](https://www.instagram.com/wcs_care)



Time for a coffee break!

Grab a pen and a cuppa for some well-earned downtime with our Word Winks and "What am I?" challenges. You'll find the answers to both games on page 15.



Word Winks Say what you see!

	time, time	CUFF 
	DUTY DUTY	
somewhere 	Blood Water	MILL10N

"What am I?"

1. I am a form of ID. I'm made of paper. I get stamped at the airport, but I'm not a letter. I am full of pages but not a book. I love to travel around the world, and I'm very important when travelling — I shouldn't be lost.
2. I can be found all over the world. People collect my dust. I show up first at every Olympics. Some people like to wear me. I've been found in the hills, and I'm heavy and shiny.
3. I can be found underground. I have eyes but can't see. If I'm French, I must be fried. I make a popular salad and can be fried, mashed, or steamed.



Life in FULL bloom

Residents, staff, relatives and volunteers have been working together to bring their gardens to life for this year's Summer in Bloom competition.

They've planted flowers, created new features, grown vegetables and made outdoor spaces that people want to spend time in.

For some residents, gardening has been a lifelong hobby they

can continue to enjoy. For others, it's simply about having somewhere pleasant to sit, chat, watch the wildlife, feel the sunshine or even enjoy the fresh air after a summer shower.

Find out which homes won trophies and see the results of all of the hard work.

Scan the QR code to watch the full Summer in Bloom video.



Attleborough Grange



Above: Best Bloomin' Entrance winner

Right: Betty tries one of the homegrown strawberries



Castle Brook



Above: Second place in the overall Summer in Bloom competition



Dewar Close



Above: Home Manager Tara and Care Co-ordinator Gillian have a laugh with Jean



Drayton Court



Below: Celebrating second place in the Best Bloomin' Entrance category



Right: Ann making a wish at the wishing well



Drovers House



Fairfield



Left:
Home Manager
Maryann and
Beryl smell the
herbs



Above: Winners of
the Best Painted
Pots category



Right:
The award-winning
plant pots



Above and right:
The plaza and
raised beds
outside the
high-street style
laundrette



Four ways



Above: A double celebration for the team at Four Ways who finished third place in both Best Bloomin' Entrance and the Summer in Bloom competition

The Limes



Right: Care Co-ordinator Zofia and Home Manager Carole share a joke with Irene in the garden



Mill Green



Above: Welcome to Mill Green's gardens



Newlands



Left and below: Celebrating third place in the Best Painted Pots category



Sycamores



Below: Val and Housekeeper Raj chat about the garden



Westlands



Right: Friends Sue and Jennifer joke around with Home Manager Emma and Senior Care Co-ordinator Alice



Woodside care village



Right: General Manager Lorraine and Gill pick the home grown potatoes



Above: Overall winners of the Summer in Bloom 2026 competition



Making more memories



By Jennie Evans
Head of Communications
and Marketing

Across our homes, a team of Lifestyle Coaches, Community Musicians and Memory Maker drivers help residents continue doing the things they enjoy. Whether it's a day trip, a favourite song or an afternoon with friends, they help make every day different.

When you visit one of our homes, the fun is easy to spot. You might see residents heading off on a Memory Maker minibus, singing with a Community Musician or enjoying an activity. What you do not always see is the planning, teamwork and passion behind those moments.

I recently spent time with our Social Activities Manager, Sherie Tyler, who manages these team members, to find out what goes on behind the scenes. It did not take long to realise she is exactly where she is meant to be.

Sherie joined WCS Care in 2011 as a cook before becoming a Lifestyle Coach.

Three years ago she stepped into her current role and having done the job herself, she understands what her team needs.

Her support goes beyond organising activities. Sherie helps Lifestyle Coaches develop ideas, build community connections and plan fundraising events, parties, trips and celebrations. Residents are at the heart of every decision, helping shape activity planners and choosing Memory Maker destinations.

Often, the simplest things make a difference. Dancing supports mobility and balance, while arts and crafts encourage strength and movement in hands and fingers. Music can bring back memories, create connections and open opportunities to reminisce. As well as being enjoyable, these moments support quality of life, health and wellbeing.

Memory Maker trips are about more than getting out and about. Whether residents choose a garden centre, wildlife park, the seaside or somewhere holding special memories, they share new experiences. Relatives and friends can come too, making memories together.

The same person-centred approach runs through our



Above: Stacey flower arranging at Drayton Court

Community Musician team. Rather than performing the same set each time, they choose songs that mean something to residents and follow wherever inspiration leads. That might involve singing French songs with a former teacher, holding a group singalong or using music to support residents and their families during end of life care.

Twice a year, they get together as a band and visit all of the homes. This summer's reggae tour had residents and staff up dancing together, and it's already inspired plans for more themed tours in the future.



Above: Sarah from Drovers House on a trip to the air museum

15 years' service



Game on!

Left: Sherie supporting the team every step of the way

Sherie and some of the Lifestyle Coaches arranged for residents from Fairfield (Bedworth), Drayton Court (Nuneaton), Woodside Care Village (Warwick), Four Ways and Sycamores (Leamington Spa) to take part in a Walking Football Tournament at Leamington RFC organised by the Royal British Legion.

Once there they split into two teams: **Friends of the North** (Bedworth and Nuneaton)

and **Friends of the South** (Leamington Spa and Warwick).

Friends of the North battled their way to the final, where they faced residents from Royal British Legion's Galanos House. The final finished 1-1, with the winner decided by a penalty shootout. Friends of the North proudly finished in second place.

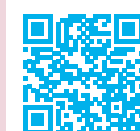
Sherie, who helped co-ordinate WCS Care's teams, said:

"Everyone had the best time out in the fresh air, meeting new people. We had residents laughing and chatting about the tournament all the way home – a couple of them even asked when the next one's going to be!"



Above: Bob taking a shot at goal

Watch the video on Facebook



Watch the video on Instagram



Understanding dementia together



By Sarah Bedding

Head of Learning, Practice and Safeguarding

When someone you love is living with dementia, understanding the changes they are going through can make a real difference. But I know from personal experience that it isn't always easy.

I've worked in health and social care for more than 30 years, but I also supported a dear friend who had early onset Alzheimer's Disease. So, I understand how emotionally challenging it can be when someone you care about is living with dementia.

"There can be lots of questions and emotions along the way. You want to do the right thing for the person you love, but sometimes you're simply not sure what that is."

It was this combination of professional and personal experience that led me to introduce our Dementia Awareness for Family and Friends sessions, which began at Sycamores in Leamington Spa and have since been held across several of our homes.

The sessions help families understand different types of dementia and some of the changes they may see in memory, behaviour and communication. They also

explore practical ways to support and communicate with a loved one, alongside subjects such as truth telling and the emotions families themselves may experience.

"The aim is not to have all the answers. We want to give relatives a safe space where they can ask questions openly, share their experiences and hopefully leave feeling more confident and supported."

At Sycamores, we also talked about the home's circadian lighting, which follows the natural rhythm of daylight to support residents' sleep and wellbeing, and the role memory albums can play in helping people reconnect with meaningful moments. I often describe



Above: Families attend our first session

them as an aid for the mind, just as a walking stick is an aid for mobility.

The opportunity to talk to other families has proved just as valuable as the training itself. One relative appreciated having "the chance to share thoughts and experiences with others who have loved ones living with the same condition".

For me, that's a really important part of these sessions. Dementia can be a difficult journey for families. If we can help people understand a little more, feel reassured that they're not alone and support themselves as well as their loved one, that's what we want to achieve.

If you'd like to find out more please speak to your Home Manager.



Above: Dementia Awareness session at Sycamores

Just for Fun Answers

Word winks

- (1) Spring to mind
- (2) Time after time
- (3) Off the cuff
- (4) Beat around the bush
- (5) Double duty
- (6) Hit the brakes
- (7) Somewhere over the rainbow
- (8) Blood is thicker than water
- (9) One in a million

"What am I?"

- (1) Passport
- (2) Gold
- (3) Potato

Deafinitely Independent

We caught up with Mathew, who manages our Deafinitely Independent service at Woodside Care Village, to find out a little more about where the service came from, how he became part of it and what independence means for residents today.

How did Deafinitely Independent begin?

It was started by a small group of families in Leamington whose children were deaf and had additional needs. As they were reaching adulthood, their families wanted somewhere they could live where communication would not be a barrier and where staff would really understand their needs.

Sandra Cox was one of the people behind it, and her son Neil still lives with us today. The service grew from there and people came from across the country. The idea was simple really: people should be able to live somewhere they can communicate, make friends and be understood.

Right: Mathew Mapanzure

And how did you become involved?

I came into support work almost by chance. A friend was doing agency work and suggested I try it at weekends. One of the places I was sent was Deafinitely Independent and I enjoyed being with the residents and taking them out.

I carried on working there while I was studying and, over time, became more involved. Eventually I was asked to take on a project role and later became manager. I have been part of the service ever since.

What does Deafinitely Independent look like today?

Residents live here in small households of up to six. Some of them are local and others have moved here from further afield because we provide such a specialist service.

For me, the most important word is independent. Our role is to support residents with the things they cannot do, but if they can do something themselves, we want them to keep doing it. Some residents go out independently. Others might want to go shopping but ask somebody to come with them. It is different for everybody.



Above: Neil out shopping

Residents help cook their own meals, do their laundry and decide how they want to spend their day.

There are some small things that help with residents feeling at home too, aren't there?

Yes. Staff do not wear uniforms because we do not want there to be a barrier between us and residents.

At mealtimes, staff sit down and eat with residents too. We do not want people sitting there doing paperwork while residents eat. We want it to feel like a family sharing a meal together.

It might sound like a small thing, but it changes the relationship.

And residents still get out and about?

Absolutely. Residents enjoy holidays, days out and spending time in the community.

A group recently stayed at Stratford Manor and enjoyed it so much that we are looking at going again. We are also planning another Blackpool holiday. Day-to-day, residents go out for activities, arts and crafts and opportunities to socialise with other people locally.



Above: Visit to Oxford University Museum of Natural History

What do you think is the biggest strength of the service?

Knowing people. Some members of the team have known residents for many years. We know how they communicate, what they like, what is normal for them and when something does not seem right.

That can be very important, particularly when somebody cannot easily explain that they are unwell or uncomfortable.

We are not here just to look after people. We are here to understand them, communicate with them and support them to live their lives. For me, that is what Deafinitely Independent is about.

Thanks to Shân Dobinson

We wanted to send our thanks to Shân Dobinson who recently stepped down from her role as Trustee of WCS Care after almost 6 years.

Shân played a big part in supporting the transition of Deafinitely Independent to Woodside Care Village. We send her our best wishes for the future.



Lyn Peisley retirement

Lyn has featured in our newsletter a few times over the years, but we couldn't let this milestone pass without putting her in the spotlight once again.

After an incredible 50 years at Newlands in Kenilworth, Lyn has retired from a career spent providing essential housekeeping and laundry services to residents and being a familiar face to generations of people who have lived and worked at the home.

Lyn joined Newlands in 1976, when the council still ran the home. Looking for work that fitted around her young family, she began helping with cleaning, washing dishes and laundry. She certainly didn't imagine she would still be there 50 years later!

When we asked what has kept her at Newlands for all these years, her answer was simple: *"It's been the people."*

50
years'
service



Above and left:
Lyn's retirement
celebration

Wendy Culver retirement

After 31 years at The Limes in Stratford, Wendy has retired, bringing to a close a varied career that has seen her make a difference in many different ways.



Wendy first joined as a trained chef, managing the kitchen. Over the years, she has used her experience to train colleagues, help enhance standards, oversee refurbishments and plan menus for several WCS homes.

Most recently, as Administrator, Wendy was often the friendly face welcoming visitors to The Limes and helping at the end of the phone.

One of the parts of her role she particularly valued was supporting families, drawing on her own experience of having a loved one in care to offer reassurance, guidance and a listening ear.

31
years'
service



Above: Home
Manager Carole
presents a leaving gift
to Wendy

Left: Wendy enjoying
the home's Halloween
celebrations

We wish you both a happy retirement.

The next chapter for Fairfield



By Samantha Stuart

Head of Projects and Commissioning

Fairfield has been part of the Bedworth community for many years and, like any older building, it's needed to change and adapt.

For me, this project has always been about making the most of what we already have while thinking about the generations of residents who will call Fairfield home in the years ahead.

When we plan any changes, I always come back to a simple question: *would this be somewhere I'd want my own mum or dad to live?*

It takes you beyond what a building looks like to what everyday life would actually be like. Will people have their own space? Sleep well? Be able to keep doing things for themselves? Get outside, and spend time with family?

Our biggest addition is Fair Cottage, a new ten-bedroom care cottage which has welcomed its first residents, including Ann and married couple Ray and Pat.

Its open-plan living area and domestic kitchen mean making a drink, helping to prepare food or sitting around the kitchen table can remain part of daily life. Each bedroom has an ensuite wetroom and a door onto a small patio.

"I love living here, I always have since moving in. Me and my husband moved in together, and since his passing, I just feel the same living here even without him. Ray would want me to be happy. I love being able to get up, have a shower and sit out on my patio." – Pat

We've been asking the same questions of the existing home too, and have taken this opportunity to retrofit the technology built into the new cottage into the original building, and redesign our outdoor spaces.

Our new circadian lighting mimics the natural changes in daylight, supporting residents' health and wellbeing and their natural sleep and wake patterns, and at night, acoustic monitoring means colleagues can respond if someone needs them, without routine hourly checks disturbing people who are sleeping.

Outside, there are plenty of reasons to keep moving and spend time with others. Residents can walk in the garden, take a spin on the side-by-side bike or spend time in the covered plaza, with its café seating, fountain and giant chess board.

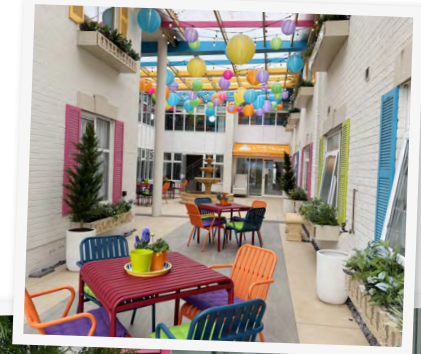
There's also the new high-street style launderette and the pottering shed where residents can get involved in everyday activities. And, of course, we have the Memory Maker minibus for when residents want a day out.

"I like spending fantastic afternoons with my husband and the residents at Fairfield. I'm always made to feel welcome whatever time I visit."

– Brenda

When I think about my own mum or dad, these are the things I'd be looking for. Somewhere they can have choice and independence, spend time with other people and still have the ordinary things that make life their own.

That's the test I've kept coming back to. And it's the one I'll keep asking as Fairfield begins its next chapter.



Above: Leslie with wife Brenda in the plaza



Above: Ann enjoying life at Fair Cottage



Above: Ray and Pat having a cuppa in Fair Cottage

Amazing life stories

A front row seat to a recipe for success

Cynthia Stanton

Food has been at the heart of much of Cynthia's career, taking her into television and radio studios, cookery demonstrations and eventually into business.

But there have been plenty of other ingredients along the way, including a lifelong love of animals, travelling and, most importantly, her family.

We visited Woodside Care Village in Warwick, where Cynthia now lives, to find out more.

Where did your story begin?

I was born in Huddersfield in 1942. We moved around when I was young, living in Preston and Nottingham before eventually settling in Coventry.

My father, Granville Berry, was very important to me. We lived on Kenilworth Road, opposite a horse trainer called Audrey Smith. I used to do a lot of riding and loved it.

How did your career in food begin?

After leaving school, I trained in Birmingham as a home economist and worked for the Electricity Board. I demonstrated products such as knitting machines and electric cookers, showing people how to use them.



Above: Cynthia reading one of her books to Wesley and Philippa

Food and nutrition have always been important to me. It's not simply about cooking something, but making sure meals are balanced and healthy too.

After having my children, Wesley and Philippa, I wrote four children's cookery books in 1973 called The Nursery Rhyme Cookery Books, illustrated by my friend Jill Hall.

From there, I became a food journalist and started working in radio and television. I made programmes for the BBC, appeared on local radio stations BRMB and Mercia, and worked as a home economist at Pebble Mill.

What was it like working in television?

I loved the environment. I appeared on several programmes, including Super Savers with actor and comedian Don Maclean, talking about healthy eating and making your money go further.

I also gave cookery demonstrations, including for the Milk Marketing Board. At one Royal Show, I had to introduce the Duchess of Kent to people, so it was quite an occasion!

You also ran a hotel. How did that come about?

In 1988, Clive and I bought Chesford House Hotel in Leamington and ran it for three years.

They were busy days. We had some very good people helping us, but I am fundamentally a cook, so I was always involved.

And then came Royal Leamington Spa Toffee?

Yes! The daughter of the original maker



Above left: Cynthia working with Don Maclean on TV



Above right: Cynthia with her husband Clive

gave me the recipe and I still remember exactly how I made it.

It used spa water from the Pump Rooms and was sold through shops including Liberty and Harrods. It was fun and people enjoyed it.

I also started a confectionery business called Sugar and Spice, which I ran until the mid 2000s. Later, I led meditation groups and focused on other holistic therapies.

What did you enjoy away from work?

I have always enjoyed travelling. We visited China, Japan, Ireland, France and Germany. I particularly loved the south of France.

Animals have also been a big part of my life. We had dogs and cats and, of course, there were the horses.

What has been most important to you?

My family. Clive and I have two children, Wesley and Philippa, and I now have three grandchildren, Jules, Alex and Amelia. Clive and I were married for 41 years before he died in 2009, and we shared so many happy experiences together.

Thank you, Cynthia, for sharing some of the highlights of your family life and career.

Making every ray count



Above: Drovers House with solar panels

WCS Care is continuing to invest in renewable energy, with solar panels now installed at three more of our care homes, Drovers House, Castle Brook and Fairfield.

The latest installations build on the success of our first solar project at Woodside Care Village, where the panels generate around 40% of the home's electricity.

That has reduced carbon emissions by around 25 tonnes each year while saving approximately £18,000 in annual energy costs. Those savings have been reinvested into what matters most, supporting residents and maintaining our homes.

Solar power is just one part of our wider environmental strategy, which commits WCS Care to reducing our carbon footprint by 40% by 2031 as we work towards achieving net zero by 2050. As a charity, we believe caring for people also means

caring for the environment that supports us all. By reducing energy use, investing in renewable technologies and making thoughtful decisions about how we operate, we're helping to protect the future for the communities we serve.

This work is about much more than installing solar panels. Over the coming years, we'll continue to look at ways to reduce waste, improve recycling, use energy and water more efficiently and make future refurbishments and developments as environmentally responsible as possible.



WCS Care is committed to reducing our carbon footprint by 40% by 2031 as we work towards achieving net zero by 2050.



Above: Aerial view of Castle Brook's solar panels

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