

Spring Newsletter

The First Signs of Spring

By Heidi Davies, Operations Director

Now that the clocks have sprung forward, it has been wonderful to see our residents enjoying the first signs of spring at Wren Retirement Living care homes. With new-look gardens to enjoy at some of our homes and much-loved gardening clubs restarting at others, there have been plenty of opportunities to appreciate some early spring sun.

It has been a busy start to 2022 with live entertainment and external activity providers returning in person for the first time since the start of the pandemic. This has included some very special four-legged visitors who trotted in to meet the residents of Linden House in Epsom recently!

With rising energy costs at the top of everyone's agendas, I'm pleased to tell you that we have been working on improving the energy efficiency of some of our homes. At Patcham near Brighton, work is nearing completion on upgrading the roof of the historic barn conversion. In addition, more energy-efficient windows and patio doors have been installed around the home. We are also upgrading the home's kitchen and laundry facilities to include more efficient appliances.

At Westerham Place in Kent, improved glazing

is being installed around the home. This project includes a major upgrade of the existing conservatory and the addition of a new conservatory to provide another light and comfortable space for our residents to enjoy views of the new gardens.

One of my highlights of the first quarter of 2022 must be Staff Recognition Week. As you'll read later in this newsletter, we dedicated a week to celebrating our incredible team members at Wren Retirement Living care homes. Following the challenges of the last two very difficult years in the care sector, we were thrilled to spend the week celebrating long-service and training achievements and treat staff to pampering gifts, afternoon teas and competitions to win High Street gift cards.

With that, I would like to thank our Wren Retirement Living teams again for all they have done and continue to do to ensure the care, safety, and wellbeing of our residents. Thank you also to our residents and their families for your continued patience and understanding as we move cautiously towards normality. I wish you a happy and healthy springtime and look forward to our next edition of the newsletter in the Summer.



Entertainment Returns By Popular Demand

Residents and staff at Westerham Place were excited to have Henry back in person with a musical movement session.

He is a firm favourite at the care home, based in the Sevenoaks area of Kent, with residents thoroughly enjoying his gentle exercise sessions which are set to music.

Care home manager Kerry Coates said:

"By popular demand, Henry will be here entertaining us twice a week from now on.

"His style of gentle exercise accompanied by music goes down a treat with our residents."



Oxfordshire Care Home Shows its Support for the Ukraine

Featherton House in Deddington, Oxfordshire, has rallied round to help people and pets affected by the conflict in the Ukraine.

With the help of residents' friends and relatives and other supporters of the home, donations have been gathered for several collections including one by local lad Fynn Watt.

Fynn's efforts, which included contacting Przemysł Ukrainian Refugee Camp in Poland to establish a list of urgently needed items, particularly impressed those connected with the home.

This led to him setting up a donations hub at the Church of St. Peter and St. Paul in the centre of the village, which has attracted a fantastic response from local people and businesses.

Agi Rygala, Featherton House home manager, said: "We were incredibly impressed by the enthusiasm and strength of this young person to get involved and support such a big and important project."

Fynn and a friend also plan to make the journey to deliver the donations from Deddington to a relief mission's headquarters in Austria before helping transport supplies from there to where it is needed.

Featherton House residents, relatives and staff also have been concerned about the welfare of animals suffering because of the war. They have collected pet food, bedding and toys for a local appeal in aid of a Polish animal shelter.



Seeds Being Sown

The home's gardening club has started up again with the advent of spring. Its greenhouse is full of fledgling plants including lettuce and tulips. Residents also are thrilled to see that the first signs of sunflowers are doing well.

A Big Thank You to Wren Retirement Living Staff

Recently, we held a Staff Recognition Week to celebrate our fantastic employees across all five of our homes.

There were awards to honour a range of attributes such as long service and training compliance, and competitions where staff could win High Street gift vouchers.

Each day had a theme:

Motivational Monday - Thank you cards were sent by head office to each team member and a 'thank you' board was set up in every home for staff to leave positive notes for each other

Afternoon Tea Tuesday - where staff could enjoy a cuppa, a cake and a natter

Wellbeing Wednesday - all staff were given a small pamper gift bag and a fruit bowl

Thirsty Thursday - Here smoothies, fruit juices, hot chocolate bombs and tins of fizzy pop were available.

Fabulous Friday - involving a staff draw to win £50 in High Street vouchers and a fun design a face mask competition to win a gift card

Saturday Takeaway - weekend teams were treated to their favourite takeaway food

Stilton Sunday - a cheeseboard was provided to those on shift

Staff at all our homes - Wren House, Warminster, Patcham Nursing Home, Brighton, Westerham Place, Kent, Linden House, Epsom and Featherton House, Banbury, received a letter from chief executive Tony Stein.

He said: "What I'd like to say to you all is simple. Thank you for choosing to care. Thank you for being there for those we look after and their loved ones. Thank you for being kind to our residents and your colleagues and most of all thank you for choosing to be on our team. I'm incredibly proud of what you do and of what we all accomplish together."





Eventful Times at Wren House

It's been a busy time at Wren House in Warminster.

Live entertainment has returned to Wren House following a further easing of Covid restrictions.

Tickled Pink Productions gave a wonderful performance with a high energy glitzy show full of West End musical favourites including Rogers & Hammerstein, Cole Porter & Gershwin.

One of our lovely residents Mary Montagu

celebrated her 98th birthday recently. As well as celebrating with her resident friends, Mary enjoyed a visit from her close family. A delicious cake was made specially for the occasion by the home's chef Claire Randell.



And last, but not least, the home has been busy with a wide variety of activities to support those affected by the Ukraine crisis with activities co-ordinator Justine Hicks coming up with the ideas.

This included:

- Setting up an appeal to collect much needed supplies for adults, children, babies and pets
- Selling sunflowers that were handmade by Claire Randell
- Holding a bake sale - with cakes made by Nina Collier, Pauline Lightfoot, Jenny Chivers, and Diane Alps - at the front door to residents, visitors to the home and passersby
- Organising a raffle with prizes donated by staff and the local Tesco



Therapy Ponies Visit Epsom Care Home

Epsom-based care home Linden House has welcomed some unusual visitors in the form of two Shetland ponies.

Residents spent a lovely afternoon with Blossom and Tinkerbelle, who came from Kingswood Shetlands and Friends, which provides assisted animal therapy sessions. Paula Windmill, manager of Linden House, said: "Blossom and Tinkerbelle were a huge hit with residents, who enjoyed meeting and petting them. They brought a smile to everyone's face."

She added: "The visit went down very well as interacting with animals is a great way of improving people's mental, physical, social, and emotional wellbeing.

"This sort of therapy also is a great way of opening up conversations with residents reminiscing and sharing stories about animals they have owned or met."



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