



# JOTTING AND JETTING

We spoke with David Kennett, a resident at Abbeyfield House in Bishops Castle, who told us about his talents as a wordsmith, and another more unexpected passion.



David enjoying his hobby flight simulation

David was discharged from the army in the 1950s after suffering a wound. What followed was an accomplished career as a veterinarian, during which he spent over 30 years living in Sicily.

“When I arrived in Italy, all I could say was good morning!

“I did some lecturing at the university there, and the students loved it because my Italian was so poor. I’m pleased to say it’s a lot

better now, but my wife, Bobi, was always better than me. She had time to study, whereas I spent my time trying to keep Italian animals alive.”

David has a real passion for writing, and he found his niche in penning children’s stories.

“I was always interested in writing, ever since I could hold a pencil. I would jot down whatever came into my head and the stories

would flow from there. I first wrote for my school newspaper, and I would be writing in Korea where I was stationed, throughout my career and into my retirement, and now at Abbeyfield.

“I have quite a vivid imagination, which helps when you’re writing fiction, especially stories set in a fantasy world.

**Read more about David’s passion on page 4** ➡

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## A MESSAGE FROM OUR CHIEF EXECUTIVE

I hope you are well and that you are keeping warm as the weather turns colder.

I am always pleased to read about the considerable efforts our staff and volunteers go to when organising activities for our residents to engage in, and it is fascinating to see how residents are inspired to rekindle old memories, interact with each other and achieve something remarkable.

Not only that, but it is also fantastic to see the extent to which these activities and events involve others from around the community. Whether it is a team of volunteers, a local organisation, the general public or local pre-schoolchildren, Abbeyfield houses and homes continue to be welcoming hubs for community engagement and activity.

As always, the cover story for this issue focuses on one of our residents. I am delighted that David, a resident in Bishops Castle, has kindly agreed to share with us his children's stories, his artwork, and even his love of flight simulators! We also have news of a significant anniversary for one of our Member Societies and recognition of some of our amazing staff and volunteers. We include an update on our contribution to the work of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Older People's Housing and their recent Abbeyfield-sponsored inquiry, as part of our work to promote issues that matter to residents or impact upon them; and the progress of our efforts around resident engagement and the creation of our Resident Commitment.

I hope you enjoy this issue of the Voice, and the upcoming festive season, with all the celebrations that will take place at our houses and homes. May the New Year bring you good health and happiness.

With best wishes,

**Paul Tennant** CEO, Abbeyfield Living Society  
Follow Paul on X @CEO\_Abbeyfield

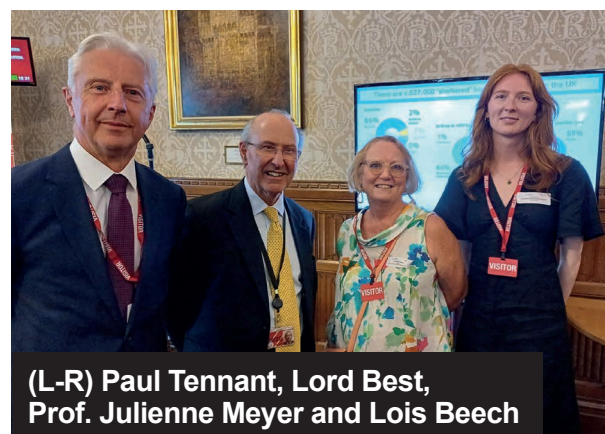
## ABBNEYFIELD-SPONSORED GOVERNMENT INQUIRY PUBLISHES FINDINGS

An inquiry by the All-Party Parliament Group (APPG) on Housing and Care for Older People into *The Regeneration of Outdated Sheltered Housing*, sponsored by Abbeyfield, has called for urgent action to regenerate sheltered housing properties in the UK in order to provide good quality, accessible homes for people in later life that meet contemporary standards and expectations.

The inquiry, which took place between June 2023 and July 2024, gathered evidence from a wide range of contributions from social housing and care providers, private sector operators of retirement housing, architects and surveyors specialising in regeneration projects and residents of sheltered housing schemes.

Its report recognises the value of investing in the refurbishment of sheltered housing and ensuring a decent home for older residents. It also identifies the broader social benefits of upgrading housing for older people to sustain accommodation that improves mental and physical health and wellbeing.

Key recommendations from the report, aimed at policymakers, governmental agencies and sheltered housing providers involved in housing development, include



(L-R) Paul Tennant, Lord Best, Prof. Julianne Meyer and Lois Beech

a flexible approach for future capital investment to replace, update and refurbish existing sheltered housing; Local Authorities to determine local need and demand for housing for older people; and the avoidance of disposals and sales where possible.

Abbeyfield Living Society CEO, Paul Tennant, said, "There is an urgent need for a clear plan for the future which includes access to funding and investment opportunities geared towards the refurbishment, upgrading and maintenance of existing housing stock as a viable alternative to simply building new developments.

"The recommendations set out clear and effective ways in which the government and providers can address these challenges and protect this precious asset for future generations."

## GREAT MISSENDEN HOUSE CELEBRATES MILESTONE ANNIVERSARY



Abbeyfield Great Missenden and District Society (AGMDS) celebrated its ruby anniversary in August, with a party for residents and their families, staff, trustees and others involved in bringing about its success over the past 40 years.

Guests were treated to a singer and a celebratory cake to mark the occasion.

Resident Sheila described it as "a day to remember," while the daughter of resident Christine said, "It was a great afternoon with wonderful entertainment, lovely food, and drinks. My mum really enjoyed herself and I'm sure all the other residents did too. It was lovely to see them all joining in with the singing."

AGMDS trustee, Pam Fensome, added, "The residents had a fabulous day, and it was great to celebrate our anniversary in such style in our beautiful garden."

Abbeyfield House, the Society's sheltered housing scheme for 15 residents, hosted the event, which was also attended by local MP for Mid Buckinghamshire, Greg Smith.



# 'RAINBOW WESTIVAL' ADDS SPLASH OF COLOUR TO HORSTED KEYNES



Westall House welcomed people of all ages to their 'Rainbow Westival', a Pride-themed festival filled with colour, music and entertainment

The headline act was drag queen Tuppence A Bag, who enchanted the audience with her unique look and catchy numbers.

Guests were also treated to performances from women's vocal group Vox, who sang a selection of old and new favourites, and Marco, the singing magician.

Musician John McDevitt, Weald Ukelele Players and Singers, and a host of other Westall House favourites added to the musical acts that visitors enjoyed over the course of the day, which was capped with a

colour run, giving everyone the chance to truly embrace the rainbow.

The house and grounds were also splendidly decorated by the Westall House residents, who worked hard to make the event as colourful as possible and incorporated plenty of glitter into their creations!

Resident Deirdre Clark said, "It was a wonderful day and I loved the variety of entertainment, especially the drag queen. His voice was amazing and I loved his dress!"

Another resident, Marjorie Gurney, remarked, "It was the best day ever! I danced in the garden, and I was so happy."

104-year old Edna Hathaway added, "I've never been to a festival, so it was lovely having one in my own garden!"

Other attractions included a bouncy castle and a variety of stalls including a tombola, raffle, hook-a-duck, face painting, floral hairbands, make your own bracelet and guess the name of the sloth.

Guest, Liz Bell said, "What a unique care home Westall House is, and how lovely for the



residents to have an event like this organised for them. They all looked so happy, obviously enjoying the day."

## THE DOUBLE LIFE OF AN ABBEYFIELD COOK



We are always excited to hear about the interesting lives of our residents, and have published many stories about their exploits, hobbies and talents over

the years. However, the lives of our staff are often equally as interesting.

Dr Paul Severn has been working as a part-time assistant cook at Poplar Lodge sheltered housing scheme in Bembridge for around two years. His favourite thing to cook is pavlova.

"It's very easy to do," he says, "but the result looks very good and is usually met with 'oohs' and 'aahs' from the residents." Paul also loves to bake scones, and his gluten-free flapjacks are particularly popular at the house.

"On the savoury side," he adds, "my signature dish is paella, which the residents enjoy one Saturday in four, and a sausage

casserole. It's loosely based on a Hairy Bikers recipe, so we know it at Poplar Lodge as the Dave Myers memorial casserole!"

However, Paul leads something of a double life. Having started his career as a maths teacher, he has a passion for ecclesiastical history and now writes books about Catholic bishops. His *Roman Catholic Bishops of Portsmouth* is due to be published later this year and will be the third in a developing series, following two previous installments, the first of which was entitled *Roman Catholic Bishops of Hexham and Newcastle*.

Before coming to Poplar Lodge, Paul worked for a time at Boarbank Hall in Lancashire, which is home to a community of Augustinian nuns who also run a nursing home. Living in the convent guest house, he helped with the cleaning and in the kitchens while researching and writing *The Roman Catholic Bishops of Lancaster*. It was there that he also honed his skills in making sticky toffee pudding, which originated in the nearby village of Cartmel.

In 2026, Paul is hoping to go to an

Abbeyfield in East Anglia, whose Catholic Diocese will celebrate its 50th anniversary, for a sixth month spell to conclude his research on the local bishops, which is already underway. He also hopes to write on the Catholic Bishops of Copenhagen (in Denmark) and perhaps even a diocese in New Zealand, where there are 14 Abbeyfield houses.

"But a balance must be struck," Paul says, "because there are potatoes to be peeled, teas and coffees to be made and sandwiches to be prepared!"

Since cutting short his teaching career to care for his elderly mother, Paul has always wanted to be involved in the care of older people, and he has found considerable job satisfaction at Poplar Lodge.

"The balance I have is a healthy and life-affirming one, working and caring, but studying and writing too."

Paul's books can be ordered online, either directly from Sacristy Press ([www.sacristy.com](http://www.sacristy.com)) or via Amazon Books.





## ➔ JOTTING AND JETTING (CONTINUED FROM COVER)

"I prefer writing children's stories because I can incorporate dragons and all sorts of weird and wonderful creatures, magic, and so on – but I think they can be enjoyed by anyone, whether they're ten or a hundred years old. It worked for Harry Potter, so why wouldn't it work for me!

"Without exaggeration, I've probably written over a thousand stories to date, and I'm still always looking for my next flash of inspiration."

### Moving to Abbeyfield

Now 92, David has been living at Abbeyfield House for seven years and is its longest-serving resident.

"I was in another older people's retirement home beforehand, but it was quite a considerable journey for my family to come and visit me, so I wanted to move to Bishops Castle or thereabouts to be closer to them.

"My son happened to be taking his dog for a walk one day and came across Abbeyfield House, which had a sign on the door promoting an open day. The manager came rushing out the door and said, 'You look like you have an older parent', which he confirmed he did. She offered him a tour, and immediately afterwards he called me and said, 'I think I've found the answer to our problem'.

**"If I'd have known about Abbeyfield, I would have been happy to move in years earlier"**



David has a unique style when it comes to his colourful shirts



David's beautiful illustration of a mountain

"I love it here, it's like our own little community. I have a good catch up with the other residents when we eat together at mealtimes, and I can't praise the staff highly enough. I moved in quite late by most people's standards, at the age of 87, but if only I'd known about Abbeyfield, I would have been happy to move in years earlier.

"We have regular garden parties when the weather's good, coffee mornings and raffles. We get a good number of visitors, but they tend to be mostly the same people – I'd like to see a few more strangers through our doors.

"My dream is to meet someone who speaks Italian, or who plays chess, which is something else I greatly enjoy – or preferably both!

"I think it's great that there are so many Abbeyfield houses, homes and Societies dotted around. I enjoy finding out about what's going on elsewhere through the Voice, and we also have a great house here in Bishops Castle, so it's high time we got a mention!"

### Flying first class

David was also eager to tell us about his other more unusual hobby.

"When I'm not writing or painting (another one of my hobbies), you can mostly find me indulging in my other passion: flight simulation.

"I bought my first Amstrad computer decades ago for its word processing software. My son was also interested in computers, so I got him a different one that let you play games on it. In 1982 they brought out the very first flight simulation software – although the graphics in those days were terrible and the terrain just

**"We have a great house, and it's about time we got a mention in the Voice"**

resembled a bunch of pixelated matchsticks. Thankfully it's a lot better today.

"I'm not a technical person, but I have a very expensive piece of kit and it lets me simulate flying real aircraft to real places all over the world, which are now accurate down to the finest detail. I can hover over some steps outside Abbeyfield House in a helicopter and see my windows from the cockpit!

"The other residents probably think I'm mad when I tell them I'm off to China, but in reality, I'm just going see it from my room."

**David has kindly shared an excerpt from one of his stories, and you can find more on our website at [abbeyfield.com/blog](http://abbeyfield.com/blog).**

We were delighted to hear from David, who got in touch with us directly to tell us about his life. If you have an interesting story to tell, please let us know by emailing [voice@abbeyfield.com](mailto:voice@abbeyfield.com).



## Excerpt from The Tale of How Captain Sam Reached His Rank

*David has kindly permitted us to print an excerpt from his story, The Tale of How Captain Sam Reached His Rank. The story follows a cat, Sam, his Mistress, Eevee, and two kittens called Bonus and Rope. Before the excerpt beings, Eevee has been called with Sam, Bonus and Rope, to save Eevee's uncle, who had fallen down a well. They descend into the well along with the Tommy, one of Uncle's house staff. At the bottom of the well they find a mysterious door, behind which is a long tunnel, which they decide to explore. Sam and Bonus go ahead to investigate, with the others following behind...*

The column marched into the tunnel and proceeded to descend the steps. Almost immediately their torches had to be switched on to combat the darkness.

To begin with, no one spoke, as it somehow seemed that they might disturb something waiting in the dark. However, they soon became adjusted to the fact that there was no reaction to their bouncing beams, and gradually they began to make comments to each other about their situation; for instance it was Rope who said, "Have you noticed that the steps are becoming longer and not so deep and if it continues like that the steps will disappear to become level floor?"

"No I hadn't my sweet kitten!" said Eevee, "How clever of you to notice!"

It was exactly as Rope had suggested, and as time went by the floor of the tunnel became quite flat, and the Uncle spoke to say, "We have reached the full depth of the tunnel and eventually the floor will become steps again as we head for the surface."

This supposition almost became a correct one but not quite. First, Bonus arrived with a message from Sam, written on a page from his notebook. The Uncle smoothed out the paper and read out loud, "I could see light at the top of the stairs, and when I got up there, I found it came from a room. I will wait your arrival before entering."

"Ah ha!" exclaimed the Uncle, "a room before we reach the surface. Most decidedly interesting!"

"Really, why is that?" asked Eevee.

"I won't know that either until we get there, so we'd best get on!"

It was several minutes before the column reached Sam on the landing at the top of the stairs. Once there, true enough, through a partially open door could be seen a room, although from where they stood they were unable to determine if it was occupied by object or person.

The Uncle wasted not a moment to say, "Right, make way, I shall be the first to enter."

"Wait a moment, you have no weapon!" uttered Sam.

"Yes," replied the Uncle, "and if there's anyone in there they will see that I'm unarmed and with my force of personality I will convince them I come in peace."

"That could be true," said Tommy, "but I'm not taking the chance!" With that, he pushed the door wide open, and strode bravely in. Eevee and the twins rapidly followed, and the Uncle had no choice but to enter last.

To their joint surprise, and disappointment, the room proved to be devoid of either object or person. However, facing them on the opposite wall, were two doors...

*You can find out what awaited them being the doors on our blog, [www.abbefeld.com/blog](http://www.abbefeld.com/blog), where the full story will soon be published. We also hope to feature a series of David's stories in the near future.*





# REMEMBERING FRANK MUSKER

We were saddened to learn about the death of Frank Musker, one of Abbeyfield's longest-serving and most influential volunteers.

Over 28 years, Frank made an untold difference to the lives of countless residents, particularly at Abbeyfield House in Ulverston and others in the North-West. Always understating his important role, he described his work in Ulverston to us before he passed:

"In my view, what I do is keep the building up to scratch from a maintenance point of view by correcting or repairing small defects as they appear, before they become major expensive issues. In addition, I try to help all residents with minor problems, and to treat them as equal when listening to their problems or perceived problems. My wife, Jean, is the one who prepares the monthly activities, mostly for Friday afternoons, in which my input or participation is sometimes required. I prepare the monthly programme and distribute it to the residents. Very

occasionally we do teas for the residents, but this only means putting out the individual tea plates prepared by the staff and making the tea and pouring it out."

As well as helping at Abbeyfield House, Frank was a well-respected member of the local community in Ulverston and helped to raise Abbeyfield House's profile in the area. Not wanting to miss an opportunity to welcome others into the Abbeyfield Family, he would regularly invite older people from the community to experience a coffee morning or activity, who would typically then enquire about becoming a resident themselves.

Described by those who knew him as "the most courteous, personable and professional man anyone could ever wish to meet," Frank was the recipient of Abbeyfield's Royal Patron's Award – the highest honour we can bestow upon a volunteer – in 2021.

Forever humble, Frank said it was a shock to receive the award. "Although I can think of



Frank received his Abbeyfield Royal Patron's Award from Lady Cavendish in 2021

other people who are just as, or possibly more, deserving than me," he said, "it is of course a great accolade that I am honoured to accept."

Frank has legendary status at Abbeyfield for his dedication to our organisation and devotion to our residents, whose lives he undoubtedly changed for the better. He was a remarkable man, and he will be sorely missed by many.

# GREEN-FINGERED SALLY BRINGS SENSORY EXPERIENCE TO RESIDENTS

Volunteer Sally Haylock has transformed the garden of the dementia care wing at Westall House, Horsted Keynes, into a truly all-round experience for the senses. We spoke to her about why she volunteers and how she feels part of the Abbeyfield Family.



Sally tending to her rose bushes

"My husband was living with dementia and was admitted to Westall House in April 2023, when I found it too difficult to care for him myself. From my regular visits I got to know the other residents and the activities coordinator, Lynn Mayfield, fairly well.

"On one of my visits, I noticed that the garden of the Rosemary Wing (for residents with dementia) was not suited to the needs of the residents. Gardening is one of my big

loves, so I suggested I might be able to make a difference. They gave me permission to renovate the two main beds.

"These beds were quite colourless and, so I got to work on transforming them. Not wanting to waste the ferns that were planted there, I stripped them out and gave them to the Maintenance Manager, Pete Baldwin, to use in another part of the garden.

"I then dug down and put in all the new soil and compost, and planted a mixed bed to ensure that there would be something for the residents to see, smell and touch all year round. This has worked well so far, with Christmas roses in the winter; daffodils, forget-me-nots and tulips in the spring; and plenty of other colourful plants in the summer. I also planted other flowers in pots, which are placed so that residents can see them even if they are indoors.

"For the second bed, I have planted only roses – a variety of pinks mostly, as this seems to be the residents' favourite colour, and some which have good smells and unusual looking flowers.

"My husband has recently moved on to a nursing home as his needs have increased, but I didn't want to leave the garden unfinished, so I decided to see it through. I enjoy going to Westall House still, it feels like a large family. I often bring my 10-year-old grandson with me – he enjoys spending time with the residents, and they love spending time with him too.

"It's nice to feel like my contribution is valued and appreciated by the staff; Lynn in particular, and I feel part of the team. The cream tea they threw for me in May was a complete surprise! They had put a plaque on the wall that read 'Sally's garden', which was a really lovely honour.

"The residents might not remember the names of the plants, but when they see them, the experience of connecting with nature makes them happy. Even those who cannot get outside can enjoy it by looking out of the window. As I said at the cream tea, as long as the residents enjoy it then I'm happy."



# JORDAN MAKES A HOME FOR WILDLIFE AT THE FIRS

Gardener Jordan Marriott has been hard at work for several years in the garden at The Firs independent living complex in Nottingham.

Having had a love of plants since he was nine years old, Jordan has embarked on what he calls “not a formal renovation project, but a series of small improvements” to the house’s gardens, which have made a big impact on both residents and visitors, who can enjoy them to the fullest extent, especially in good weather.

The Firs has been lucky enough to receive donations of plants from residents, their families and an anonymous benefactor, allowing him to create a dazzling display of life and colour. Jordan describes the theme as like an old cottage, with lilies, dahlias, salvia, rudbeckia and begonias being some of the residents’ favourite flowers.

He also loves to get the residents involved in a limited amount of work, to enable them to take ownership of the space.

Resident Mairi Barnard calls the garden “splendid.”

She added, “I walk out of my bungalow to join my friends in the lounge for many of the lovely activities the staff put on and I see the beautiful flowers and plants – the perfect start to a day.”

Jordan also has an environmentally conscious way of doing things. He explains, “We don’t use petrol-powered machinery anymore, and I grow plants that don’t need pesticide control. There is also a wildlife area which has badgers living there. Residents help to feed the birds, so we have lots of them around.”

Jane Richmond, Leasehold Manager at



Gardener Jordan Marriott

The Firs, says, “We are really lucky at The Firs to have a dedicated gardener. His kindness, gentleness and hard work made him an instant hit with the residents, and he has totally transformed our garden, allowing us to put on a range of activities and events out there.

Jordan has been studying to complete a Level 3 in Horticulture, which he is due to finish in early 2025.

Jane added, “We are part of a small team and Jordan is an invaluable member – always willing to help other staff out, with an enthusiasm to learn, expand his role and bring his expertise to the garden.”

# VISIT FROM THE HIVE GENERATES A BUZZ AT BRADBURY HOUSE



Meeting the bees

A sweet taste was left in the mouth of all those at Bradbury House care home in Gosforth, with residents offered the chance to get up close and personal with a hive of bees.

Libby, from organisation Bees in the Trees, which runs forest school-style sessions for schools, youth groups and care homes, originally visited Bradbury House in the spring, where she delivered a presentation about birds, challenged the residents to identify different birdsongs and helped them to make their own feeders for the garden.

Activities coordinator, Jackie Kenyon, recounts, “The residents loved the session so much that we couldn’t wait to invite Libby to visit again.

“At the next opportunity in the summer she

brought in some of her bees which she keeps. This was a fascinating session, and residents were able to see the bees up close in their glass ‘travel hive’. They could place their hands on the glass and feel the heat and vibrations. Libby talked about the activities of the bees within the hive and explained how they make honey.

“In a follow-up session, she brought in all the equipment and showed us how she extracts honey from the hives and helped the residents to make their own beeswax candle each. Of course, we enjoyed tasting the honey as well!”

The encounters with the bees and honey-making demonstration clearly delighted the residents, who found it an exciting and educational experience. One resident said there were “lots of things I didn’t know about bees,” and another remarked, “I didn’t know how much work went into making honey – and it tasted delicious!”

Libby said, “My sessions give the residents the opportunity to engage with nature and recall things that they have previously enjoyed. I particularly love it when something I bring, say, or do, resonates with their past. One lady told me that her son is a beekeeper and remembered how she used to watch him catch

swarms of bees, and another gentleman told me about how he used to make bee frames for his father’s hives. I think in both these cases, my sessions allowed the residents to relive happy memories.”

Libby’s latest visit in September was to run a leaf workshop, enabling residents to identify different types of leaves, have a go at leaf printing and make some bunting and posters.

Jackie added, “Libby’s visits are always very interesting and informative, and the residents love seeing her – especially now that she’s a regular visitor. Her workshops are a ‘starting block’ for the residents to start engaging with others and talking about their memories. It’s always lovely to see them connect and participate in activities.”



Candle making





# UPDATE FROM THE ALS NATIONAL RESIDENTS' PANEL



The Abbeyfield Living Society (ALS) National Residents' Panel was set up in February as a link between residents and the ALS Board. Working collaboratively with ALS, the Panel helps us to improve how we listen to and respond to our residents and ensure they have the opportunity to help us improve our services and the resident experience. Meeting regularly on Zoom, the Panel have so far discussed ALS communication with residents, how we deal with complaints and digital inclusion.

Some of the projects the Panel have been working on include our new Resident Commitment and the Abbeyfield Residents' Network, which will bring residents together on WhatsApp communities.

The Panel meets on the first Tuesday of the month at 2pm on Zoom.

**If you are interested in joining the Panel or finding out more, we would love to hear from you!** We hope it can be representative of all ALS residents and that it will play a role in making sure you have a voice and that we are listening to you. To find out more, please contact Justin at [resident.engagement@abbeyfield.com](mailto:resident.engagement@abbeyfield.com) or call 07553 424367.

## Abbeyfield Resident Commitment

One of the key objectives of our National Residents' Panel is to look at ways to help ALS improve the resident experience.

The Panel looked at what other

organisations were doing to improve customer service and ensure that residents were aware of what services they could expect from their landlord. The Panel also identified how this links to the new Regulatory Standards from the Regulator of Social Housing, in particular the Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard. This includes treating residents fairly and with respect, giving them the opportunity to influence services and ensuring that they understand the service they can expect from their landlord.

The Panel also identified that ALS did not have a written Customer Charter, so decided to develop one. The Charter outlines the level of service residents can expect, enabling them to hold ALS to account if we do not deliver on our promise.

The group identified six areas to be included in the Charter:

- **Respect:** *We will foster a mutual respect between all residents and staff. We respect the diverse needs and values of all the Abbeyfield Family.*
- **Communication:** *We will listen to what you say and encourage an open dialogue. We will be clear and transparent when communicating with you.*
- **Safety:** *We will provide a safe home and environment for you to live in. You will have access to a 24-hour emergency call system and your home will be secure.*

- **Responsiveness:** *We will reply to you in a reasonable time, and we will agree timescales for responses with you. We will ensure we understand your issues and respond appropriately.*
- **Performance:** *We will share truthfully with you how we are performing and share what we are doing to improve.*
- **Learning:** *We will acknowledge when we make a mistake, and we will learn from these to help drive improvements in services.*

The Panel decided to call it a Resident Commitment rather than a Customer Charter, as it sets out the clear commitment that ALS is making to its residents.

Please do let us know what you think of our Resident Commitment by emailing [resident.engagement@abbeyfield.com](mailto:resident.engagement@abbeyfield.com)

## Abbeyfield Residents' Network

When we set up our National Residents' Panel, one of the things identified was that, while Abbeyfield has lots of different types of accommodation across the country, many of our residents faced similar issues. The Panel thought it would be good to try to bring residents together so they can share experiences and offer support to each other.

The Panel decided to use WhatsApp to set up an Abbeyfield Residents' Network.

The Resident Engagement Manager will work with residents to moderate the network, which will facilitate communication between ALS residents.



# RESIDENT COMMITMENT



You can access the Abbeyfield Residents' Network by completing an online application form, which you can acquire either



by scanning the QR code, or you can email [resident.engagement@abbeyfield.com](mailto:resident.engagement@abbeyfield.com) to request an application form is emailed to you. Once we receive a completed application form, it will be checked and access to the

network will be provided via a message sent on WhatsApp. Then just say hello, meet other ALS residents and maybe make some new friends!





# ABBNEYFIELD CARE HOME MAKES WAVES WITH BEACH PARTY



Pratt House care home for older people in Amersham was visited by the Mayor of Amersham, Cllr Dominic Pinkey, and Cllr Mimi Harker OBE, Chair of Buckinghamshire Council, for a beach party, alongside residents and staff.

The home's garden had been transformed into a makeshift beach, complete with buckets and spades, head-through-the-hole cutouts, deck chairs, giant games and inflatables, making for a wonderful party atmosphere.

Alice Dunning, Care Home Manager at Pratt House, said, "Our residents are always saying how they wish they could visit the

seaside again.

"With the logistical challenges of arranging a trip to the coast, we thought we would instead bring the beach to them, throw a big party, and help them get to as close to the holiday experience as possible in their back yard.

Tricia, a Pratt House resident, was clearly very impressed with her staycation. She said, "It's just wonderful, so much hard work has gone into this, and we have had a lovely day. I took my shoes off and got down in the sand. Everything is just brilliant."

The party was an opportunity to thank the incredible staff team at Pratt House, who have worked especially hard over recent years throughout the pandemic and staffing shortages, as well as several volunteers who help to enhance the residents' quality of life at the home.

Alice also said, "Special thanks goes to our amazing residents, who spent hours making countless decorations so that we had a real party vibe going, and their families and our friends in the community, who donated various items for this event.

"Particular gratitude is also due to Haven Holidays, whose employees held fundraising events and generously donated the costs for us to cover the sand with which we built our beach."



# SANDWOOD 'STAY AND PLAY' SESSION A HIT WITH KIDS AND RESIDENTS



Resident Kath Tremayne watching the children playing

Sandwood care home in Nottingham has been running a weekly 'stay and play' session, to which parents and grandparents can bring their children or grandchildren to talk, play and interact with the residents.

Activities coordinator, Emma Cass, explains, "Our residents love welcoming children to the home, and you can see their faces light up.

"The session is open to anyone in the

community with children or grandchildren of preschool age. We advertise primarily on Facebook, and it has proved quite popular so far. We have only been running the group since May, but the feedback we have had from both parents and residents has been overwhelmingly positive."

Sarah Sansom, who regularly attends the Sandwood sessions with her two-year-old daughter, Willow, says, "I take Willow to a few playgroups, but this one is different. Not only do the children enjoy playing together and with the residents, but the residents also get so much from it too. You can see the smiles on their faces, and it is so heartwarming.

"Willow remembers the name of one of the residents that held the bubble machine for her to play with and looks forward to coming to the group every week."

Resident Kath Tremayne (pictured), 93, added, "It's wonderful to watch the children playing, they have so much energy!"

Emma continues, "We predominantly have toddlers, who are usually more than happy to play with the residents. Sometimes we'll have a few babies, who can't interact so much, but seeing them helps the residents to remember and talk about their own children when they were that age.

"The sessions are fairly flexible, and we'll have toys, books and a couple of arts and crafts activities dotted around. We'll normally sing a few songs at the end, which the residents all join in with, and we'll have a story to finish off. Our chef will also prepare a packed lunch for each child to take away when they leave.

"Each week will also have a theme, and I like to create a fruit display to match it. For example, we have had a melon T-Rex for the dinosaur theme, and a pineapple crocodile for the jungle theme. It puts a smile on everyone's face, and might even get the children and the residents eating some fruit!"



# PUZZLE PAGE

## CROSSWORD

Across

- 1 Open country in southern Africa (4)
- 3 Country in the Horn of Africa, bordering on the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden (8)
- 9 Elastic synthetic fabric - expands (anag) (7)
- 10 Lhasa's region/country (5)
- 11 Verdant (5)
- 12 On foreign shores (6)
- 14 Phew! (5,8)
- 17 Mahatma, Indira or Rajiv? (6)
- 19 Charming and elegant (man) (5)
- 22 Tear-jerking bulb (5)
- 23 Native of Jerusalem? (7)
- 24 Statuette (8)
- 25 Escapade (for a bird?) (4)

Down

- 1 Member of the Germanic people who sacked Rome in 410 (8)
- 2 Time off (5)
- 4 Placing two things side by side (13)
- 5 One using teeth (5)
- 6 Offence (7)
- 7 Jot (4)
- 8 Polish city on the Baltic (6)
- 13 \* (8)
- 15 Sensational (7)
- 16 Abscond - wasteland (6)
- 18 Giver (5)
- 20 Large structure for open-air events (5)
- 21 Bark (4)

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## SUDOKU: MEDIUM

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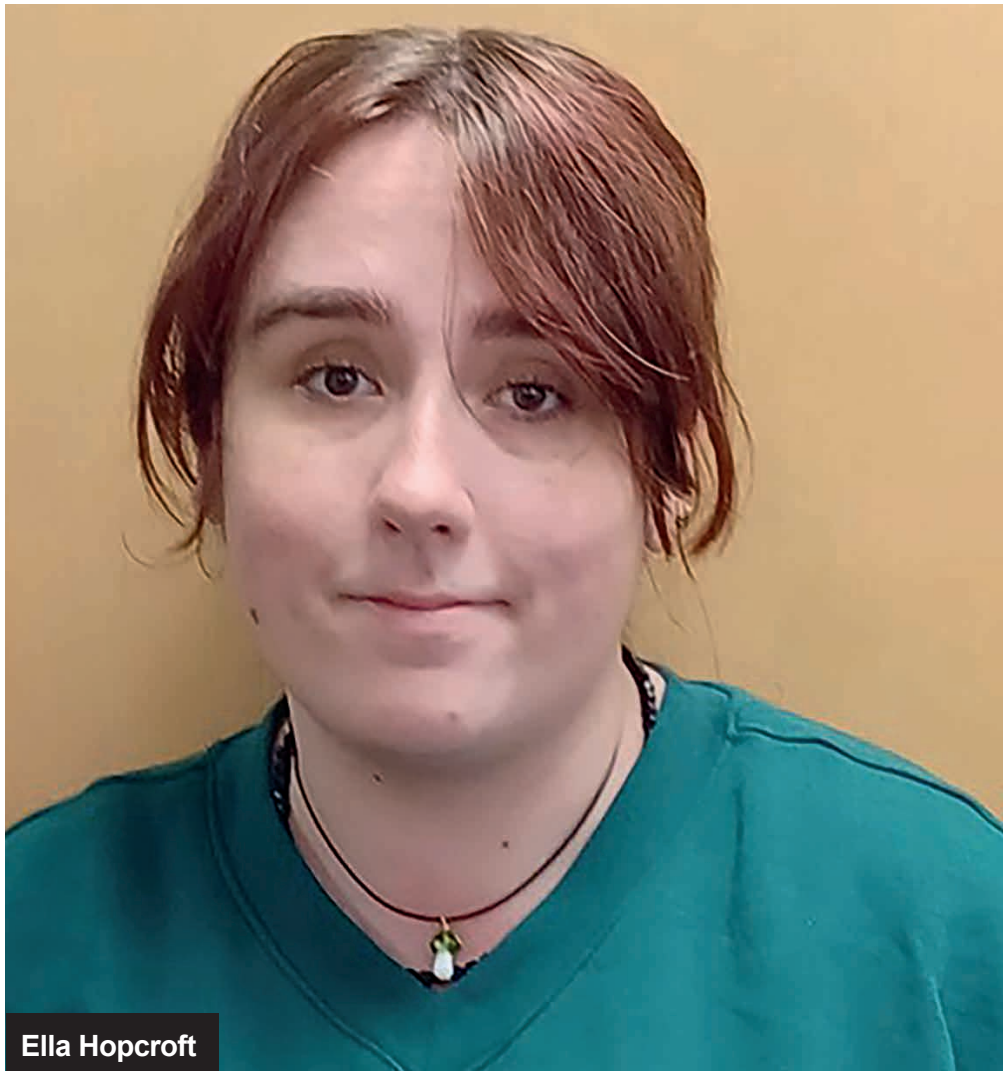
## HARD

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# 60 SECONDS WITH ELLA HOPCROFT

Wellbeing Assistant at The Firs



better idea of what may improve their wellbeing.

**What is the best part of your job?**

Definitely spending time with the residents! I love hearing all the stories from their interesting lives. I enjoy crocheting while I listen, and quite often I will be making something for them.

**What are the biggest challenges that you face?**

I am a lone worker so it can be overwhelming sometimes, especially when emergencies occur. However, I am supported well by Abbeyfield and I know there are people I can talk to if I need help or advice.

**What are you most looking forward to at The Firs over the coming months?**

Christmas is always a lot of fun. We have lots of plans for the residents this year which I'm sure we will all enjoy.

**How long have you been working for Abbeyfield?**

I have been working at Abbeyfield as the wellbeing assistant since April 2021, but I started as a volunteer in 2014.

**What was it that first attracted you to Abbeyfield?**

I originally got my volunteering role through my mum, who also works for Abbeyfield. It opened my eyes to a career caring for older people, and I enjoyed the atmosphere and ethos of The Firs and Abbeyfield as a whole.

**What is a typical day for you?**

A typical day involves me checking up on all the residents. I will also plan and hold regular activities for them to help them engage with each other and their

local community. For example, I run a regular coffee morning on Sundays.

**What, in your opinion, are the most important qualities in a wellbeing officer?**

I think it is vital to be a sociable person. Getting to know the residents in your care is extremely important, as you will know what they like and dislike and will have a



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Company No 574816  
Homes England No H1046

## PUZZLE SOLUTIONS

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