

THE ABBEYFIELD ANGEL



LIFE AT THE ABBEYFIELD WEY VALLEY SOCIETY



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Welcome from Sally Tidy, the Chief Executive Officer of the Society.



It's amazing to think that we are already a quarter of the way through the year, with daffodils coming into bloom and the nights becoming lighter, you can definitely tell that spring is on its way, even though it seems we've only just finished wishing people a Happy New Year!

With Spring, the development of Wey Valley House will hopefully come to fruition. After many years in the planning we are hoping that the final stages of the project will be approved and works will commence in May. This will see a new extension to Wey Valley House and the conversion of the second floor to create, in total, a further 15 rooms. The new rooms will vary in size but all will have a walk in en-suite shower.

This is a major and exciting development for the Society and will see the 'founding home' of the Society being brought up to date with better facilities and a more robust 'fit for the future' environment. Michelle Blower, our Registered Manager, will remain at the helm for the whole project and will be there to support residents and sponsors and to answer any questions they may have. As with all projects of this size unfortunately there will be some disruption, however with excellent management and communication, we are hoping to minimise this as much as possible.

Our other homes continue to flourish, with David Gresham House the latest addition to our family settling well into the slightly different ways we have, although we are hoping that very little has been seen to change in the transition.

PEGGY'S POETRY

Peggy Burles, a resident at David Gresham House has been writing poetry all her life. She has recently had a book published which brings together much of her work over the years.

Peggy had a childhood in Fiji and lived in many countries during her life, much of which is referenced in her poetry.

Her recent work focuses on family and being over the age of ninety. When we had an afternoon with other DGH residents reading the book, everyone could really relate to the words.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the staff who have helped this process go so smoothly.

Thank you to all who completed the recent online survey, we had a good return, although more would always be appreciated. The responses we received were extremely positive with all homes scoring Good or Outstanding, there were some niggles which seemed to flow through all homes, mainly surrounding communication, we are now trying to improve this with different strategies including; regular updates from our managers and new signage showing who is in charge of the shift, hopefully over the next months you will see a difference as we continue to implement new methods. Other comments, that were more specific to the particular survey completed, will be addressed by the managers and resolved on an individual basis.

As we move into Spring we are hoping to encourage more Volunteers to join us and I know our new Wellbeing Manager Bonnie (Who is introduced later in this Newsletter) is keen to increase their number and the activities they help with – if you have any spare time or know someone who has, please get in contact. Your help would be invaluable to further enhance the lives of our Residents and bring even more of a 'family feel' to our homes.

Sally

Peggy, who is now ninety-three, continues to write poetry at the home and we all hope to see another book published in the not too distant future showcasing her new work.



A picture of some of the many things our community have been enjoying



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FOOD DONATION ANOTHER SUCCESS

Following the success of previous campaigns, the Society again held its annual food donation collections aimed at supporting their local communities.

Donation boxes were located at all of the care homes and the team have been busy dropping off multiple donations to the local Food banks in Farnham, Reading, Dorking and Oxted.



Operations Manager, Louise Arnold (pictured above), said: "We are proud of our links to the local community. The support we get throughout the year, whether it is individuals volunteering for our charity, or local organisations supporting our various projects, is absolutely amazing. It is lovely for us to be able to help local people in need at this time of year. Our residents, staff and their families and friends are always so generous to donate and this year has been the best yet".

CELEBRATING WITH YOU DOROTHY

Dorothy Burling, a resident at our Wey Valley House home has celebrated her 105th Birthday with her family and friends.

It's quite an achievement to reach such a milestone but it is even more remarkable that she looks so youthful.

The care teams and other residents at the home had a great time celebrating Dorothy's big day and yes, the cake did taste as good as it looks !



OUR FRIENDS AT HAZELWOOD SCHOOL

Our residents' enjoy having visitors and when young friends from local schools or clubs take time out of their busy schedules, it is always a bit special.

Hazelwood School year 5's popped along to David Gresham House recently and were wonderful company. They talked about their schooling and were very interested to hear some fascinating stories from our residents about their school days.



It was great fun for everyone and the pupils from Hazelwood certainly did their school proud.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY DEBBIE

A very happy 50th Birthday to Debbie, one of the integral members of our David Gresham House care team. Debbie has been looking after residents and their guests at the home for many years.

To celebrate her special occasion the roles were reversed as Debbie was pampered by her colleagues and residents of the home.

She received presents, a card signed by all and everyone enjoyed some home baked Birthday cake courtesy of Karen, our talented chef.

Debbie continued to mark the occasion in style by jetting off to Cape Verde the day after, for a very well earned holiday of a lifetime.



The more our residents engage in stimulating activities, the better the connections between the cells of their brain, helping them retain their mental faculties for much longer.
Here are a few of our favourite pursuits.



1 – MEANINGFUL CONVERSATIONS

Having a chat may not seem to be an activity for most of us, but for an older person who may have spent many hours of the day alone, spending time chatting with someone else is an important part of feeling part of society. Spending time discussing an individual's life, and encouraging them to talk about their experiences is one of our most important roles at AWVS.

2 – UNDERTAKE CRAFT PROJECTS

Spending time creating something takes us out of ourselves and gives us the satisfaction of using our hands to manufacture something unique. Whether it's building model railway sets or making scrapbooks of their life story, engaging in hobbies helps to foster good feelings for our residents.

3 – GARDENING

Spending time outdoors is crucial for an older person to receive the health benefits of being out in the fresh air and exposed to sunlight, which is necessary to supply the body with adequate amounts of Vitamin D. Whenever the weather allows, we love to enjoy our outside spaces, whether it be a picnic, BBQ or getting green fingered with some planting.



4 – CHANGE OF SCENERY

Taking the opportunity to get out and about where possible is great stimulation. On our regular trips out, the residents are safe in the knowledge that they will have practical support so they are much more likely to focus on enjoying the trip without worrying about anything. Confidence grows and loads of fun is had by all.

5 – LOW-IMPACT EXERCISE ACTIVITIES

Keeping active is important for good health, and there are lots of exercise options for our residents' to enjoy. Gentle Tai Chi classes that promote good posture and breathing, and gentle dance lessons aimed at our residents' needs are two of the most popular, however most types of physical activities bring a smile to everyone's faces.



6 – PUZZLES AND WORD SEARCHES

Nothing stretches the mind as much as crossword puzzles, word searches and Sudoku games. All of these provide great opportunities to get the mind working and with our giant portable virtual tables, these types of activities can be enjoyed by everyone, even if they feel like staying in their room.

7 – AN OLD FASHIONED SING ALONG

Music goes down a treat with everyone. It brings generations together and there is always a buzz about the homes when we have one of our regular music afternoons. Professional artists such as singers, harpists, choirs, and bell ringers are supported by our team of volunteers who regularly come in and share their passion for all types of music with our residents.

Healthy mind, healthy body, the well-being of our community is looked after by a great team who love making a real difference to peoples lives – why not come and join them?



WELL-BEING IN THE SOCIETY

The Well-being Manager has always played an integral role within the Society, helping ensure the whole community are supported in every way possible to live their best possible life. Bonnie took over the role late last year after Tracey Pollard moved to become the Deputy Manager at Hatch Mill.

Bonnie travels around the AWVS homes, engaging with the residents and their loved ones. She puts together a programme of new and exiting excursions and activities whilst leading the drive new for volunteers.



“Resident and staff well-being go hand in hand. Energy, passion and a sense of humour are key to creating an uplifting and enjoyable day-to-day environment. We don’t take ourselves too seriously, always have a smile on our face and try to involve as many residents as possible in planning our social events. The sense of community created in each of our homes is clear to see and is great to be part of” says Bonnie.

OUR SPECIAL VOLUNTEERS

The New Year has brought us a flow of lovely people from all ages and backgrounds to join our esteemed AWVS volunteers team.

Jerome (pictured below), is a student volunteer who comes into Hatch Mill every Sunday to spend time with the residents running quizzes and activities on the home’s giant virtual table as well as keeping active with some ball games.



His first love is cricket and was a volunteer coach at Frensham Cricket Club before joining us. “I love interacting with the residents and helping bring a smile to their face on a Sunday and I am learning new things from them every week too”, says Jerome.

Brenda Ellison, pictured right with a resident, is another AWVS volunteer. Brenda is a retired teacher and she also volunteers on a weekly basis. She has a broad general knowledge of both art and gardening and can be seen sharing her passions with the AWVS community as well as accompanying the teams on some outings. We have a trip coming up to Wisley Gardens soon, which Brenda is especially looking forward to.



Welcome to all our new volunteers, including Duke of Edinburgh students, Maya and Ariel from Broadwater, and Millie and Layla from Alderwood Senior School and a huge thank you to every one of the amazing people who make up our ever growing team.

Bonnie, our Wellbeing Manager would love to hear from you so if would like to come and meet new people, share your passion with the older generation and have the opportunity to accompany us on our many trips, give her a call on 07442 839891 or email her at:

bonnie.looms@awvs.org.uk



JOHN BRYCE'S PERSONAL ART DONATION

The New Ashgate Gallery Trust in Farnham recently donated a number of beautiful artworks to display in the care homes on behalf of the estate of the late John Bryce.

John, a renowned Farnham artist passed in 2022 and since then, John's family discovered more than fifty paintings and prints from John's own personal collection which were displayed at the Farnham gallery.

Born in London in 1934, John Bryce graduated in mechanical engineering at King's College London. He worked as a research scientist at the Royal Aerospace Establishment, Farnborough, working on projects such as Concorde.

He, however, maintained a keen interest in painting and wood engraving and became an exhibiting member of both the Farnham and Guildford Art Societies in the early 1970s.

After he retired, John pursued an active artistic career as a painter and printmaker.

Thanks to the generous donation from John's family, some of his beautiful artworks will now be enjoyed by our residents and their guests as they are now proudly displayed in our newly decorated lounges at each of the three Farnham homes.



Wey Valley House - the next chapter

Brian Thomas, the Chair of the Board of Trustees, and Sally Tidy, the CEO, recently hosted an afternoon tea at the home for residents and their sponsors whilst sharing the vision for the new look Wey Valley House.

Michelle, the Registered Manager showed the detailed drawings and answered questions about day-to-day life in the home whilst the re-development takes place.

"I'm really looking forward to sharing this exciting journey with our community as we embark on creating a wonderful new chapter for Wey Valley House. Everyone has been so supportive and it is going to be such fun seeing our dream become a reality over the coming months", says Michelle.



With the project due to last around twelve months, we will be dedicating a section in our upcoming editions of the Abbeyfield Angel to follow our progress as we work on creating a flagship home fit for years to come.



Proposed North West Elevation