

# Retirement Living

Housing 



Regional Report 2020

South



Charles Ley  
Court celebrates  
40<sup>th</sup> anniversary

Collaboration  
and partnerships

Trees for Lordship  
Court

Investing in our  
building

It takes a team

Court life  
Celebrations  
at Eric Long  
Court



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# Welcome

## A message from the Chairman and Chief Executive

'Doing the Right Thing' was the theme and message for our 2019/20 staff and resident conferences. This emphasised the importance of being true to our purpose of providing more and better Retirement Housing and Extra Care for older people of modest means. This philosophy of 'Doing the Right Thing' and our devolved operating model also enabled us to respond quickly, effectively and responsibly to protect you, our residents, and maintain vital services when faced with the Covid-19 pandemic which was beginning to take hold back in March 2020.

Our committed frontline staff stepped up to the challenge and have shown heroic dedication - going above and beyond the call of duty to maintain safe services. Thank you all for your kind gestures of thanks and appreciation which our Care Workers and Managers have shared with us. A true reflection of how valued they are by our resident community.

I am sure you will join me in thanking all of our staff in all roles for being simply brilliant in their willingness to adapt and respond positively and flexibly to the situation and for continuing to do the right thing.

The Covid-19 pandemic has certainly had an impact both in terms of human lives and on business operations, but we ended the last financial year in a strong position and have shown good progress against each of our seven Strategic Priorities. More detail can be found in our Financial Statements 2019/20 on our website but key highlights include:

- Six of our 72 registered care sites achieved the highest rating of 'Outstanding' from the Care Quality Commission (CQC)

**Stephen Hughes,**  
Chairman



**Bruce Moore,**  
Chief Executive



- Residents receiving care from us gave an overall satisfaction rating of 97% for the care they receive
- Overall satisfaction improved: 94% for Retirement Housing and 92% for Extra Care
- Staff commitment remains high with 96% sharing the organisation's values
- Our devolved housing management system has enabled more effective management, including supporting remote working during the Covid-19 lockdown
- We have installed 178 Appello digital call systems - improving connectivity

Value for Money is a key driver for us and we have consciously been investing more than many other providers to ensure our properties remain desirable and energy efficient.

After having our G1/V1 regulatory status confirmed by an In Depth Assessment in March 2019, you may have heard that Housing 21 has since been downgraded to G2 status, in part due to maintaining variable service charges for affordable rent properties and other historical funding settlements. This was deeply disappointing but we are working hard to renew our G1 status. We would like to assure you that our commitment to doing the right thing also extends to good governance and doing things right.

We remain confident and committed to pursuing our progressive and ambitious strategy, to do more and better, and would like to thank everyone who has supported us over the last year. We look forward to continuing to work with you into 2021.

# Welcome from the Head of Retirement Housing, South

I joined Housing 21 just over 12 years ago and have seen many changes during that time. Five years ago the organisation restructured to enable us to focus on Retirement Housing with the objective of making it a positive choice for older people.

In that time, we gave ourselves the objective of reaching 95% resident satisfaction by the end of 2021, and last year you may remember we achieved 94%, so there's still more work to do!

While there are many factors that are taken into account when a resident gives an overall satisfaction level, I see the main contributor being the extent to which our properties and services offer value for money.

During the 2019/20 year we have:

- Published our property standards in relation to kitchens, bathrooms, emergency call systems, energy efficiency, and makeovers to our communal areas. I am pleased to see we have made significant progress towards our objectives in this area
- Improved our performance on responsive repairs, empowering our Court Managers to utilise local contractors where appropriate
- Continued to develop our Court Manager service. This is considered one of our 'unique selling points' which we know is valued by you, our residents

- Launched the use of the new tablets enabling Court Managers to be more effective. An unintended benefit of this was that it enabled Court Managers to work from home when the Covid-19 pandemic took hold at the end of the 2019/20 financial year in March 2020
- Continued to develop and improve the way we engage, communicate and agree services at your scheme through 'choice and consensus' and the 'Court Service Agreement'

Planning permission was accepted for two schemes, one in Truro, the other in Eastleigh, and we anticipate they will be completed in 2021. We are also reviewing four other opportunities in the South region, to enable Housing 21 to expand.

Covid-19 has had a significant effect on many people, not only at Housing 21 but across the country and the world. I want to say thank you for your patience, support and understanding as we have changed some of the ways we work and provide our services. I have heard many stories of residents going 'above and beyond' to help and support their more vulnerable neighbours which makes me very proud. A big thank you!



**Paul Tewkesbury**

Head of Retirement Housing, South

# Our performance against strategic priorities

## 1. Providing more homes



At 2019/20 year-end we had 19 schemes on site, 17 Extra Care, two Retirement Housing and a total of 1,195 properties under construction

## 2. The quality of our existing properties

In 2019/20 we successfully delivered £32.5m investment into our properties and undertook over 500 capital projects.

## 3. The quality and responsiveness of our services



We are on track to hit our overall resident satisfaction target of 95% by 2021, having achieved 94% satisfaction in Retirement Housing and 92% in Extra Care.

## 4. Our people and potential



We received recognition for commitment to our staff by winning the Investors in People 'Best Third Sector Employer' Award in November 2019.

## 5. Systems and technology

We are developing systems to allow remote access for frontline staff. Over 700 members of staff are using mobile technology to deliver an efficient response to residents. New Ways of Working (NWOW) aims to deliver a revised technology landscape for staff and includes a comprehensive review of technology, software, connectivity, devices and supporting infrastructure.

## 6. Providing value for money



We work hard to ensure the services we provide are value for money. You can see how your money is spent on the opposite page.

## 7. Innovation and influence



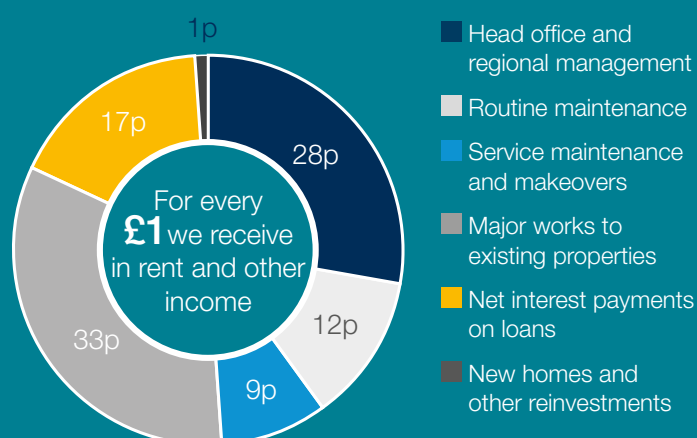
Our annual October conference brought together over 150 delegates to hear the thoughts of academics and practitioners surrounding 'Is the UK Institutionally Ageist?'

We remain committed to being a dementia-friendly organisation. All staff become Dementia Friends during their induction and we extend this to our contractors, who we expect to engage with the Dementia Friends initiative.

# Organisational performance

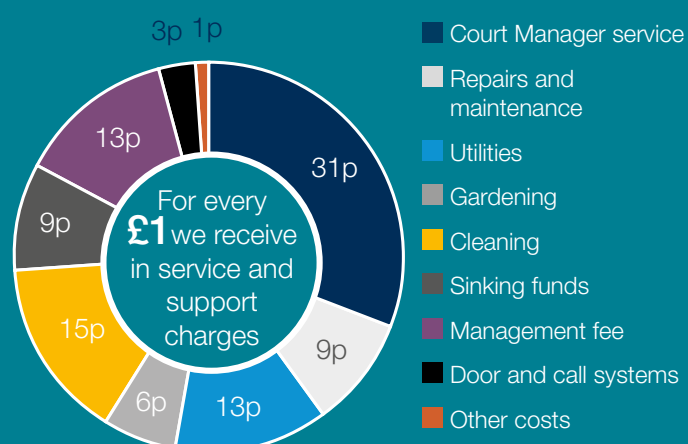
## How we spend your rent and our other income

None of the rent we receive goes into the pockets of other people. It is all spent or reinvested on our services and properties.



## How we spend your service and support charge

Your service and support charges go toward providing the valuable services which make your court your home.



**Number of properties:**  
**21,072**

**Turnover:**  
**£192.3m**

**Operating surplus:**  
**£32.1m**

## Reinvestment in our existing properties

We are reinvesting more and more into our existing properties every year.

We are proud of our properties and want you to be proud of them as well, making them a positive choice.



# Map of the region





# Meet the team



**Paul Tewkesbury**

Head of Retirement Housing  
South



**Sarah Davies**

Retirement Housing Manager  
London



**Anne (Trixi) Martin**

Assistant Retirement Housing  
Manager Kent



**Debra Byrne**

Retirement Housing Manager  
Kent and East Sussex



**Mark Weller**

Retirement Housing Manager  
West Sussex, Surrey,  
Hampshire, Berkshire and  
Buckinghamshire



**Susan Hanwell**

Retirement Housing Manager  
Dorset, North Somerset, West  
Hampshire and Isle of Wight



**Beth Jerrard**

Retirement Housing Manager  
Wiltshire and Oxfordshire



**Lois Nicks**

Retirement Housing Manager  
Gloucestershire and  
Herefordshire



**Alex Bennett**

Retirement Housing Manager  
Bristol, Somerset, Devon and  
Cornwall

## Achievements at a regional level

# Community garden at Amos Court

Although Amos Court in Banbury has plenty of outside space, its layout meant that there was no focal point. Residents had made small seating areas in various nooks and crannies across the scheme's gardens, but it was hard for all of the residents to meet up outside for any gatherings.

A plan was hatched to create an attractive centrepiece, by erecting a wooden gazebo with seating in the garden. This would be a great place for residents to meet up and socialise. In addition to this, a large raised bed would be built to give residents the opportunity to grow vegetables, and to provide a community gardening space alongside the existing greenhouse.

Court Manager, Becky Farmer-Webb, set to work to find a local contractor who could help with this project. After finding a new home for some bins and

removing some old shrubs, a space was created for the gazebo. Various plants, pots and fairy lights decorated the newly built gazebo, and added the finishing touches to this new communal garden. The result is fantastic.

Residents can now enjoy their new outside space which has really helped to promote a sense of community at the scheme.

Gladys, a resident at Amos Court said: "This has given us the sort of community feeling that you have in a village, just wonderful."

They may not be self-sufficient yet, but the vegetables are coming along nicely too!

“

This has given us the sort of community feeling that you have in a village, just wonderful

**Gladys**, resident



**Amos Court before**







## Achievements at a regional level

# Charles Ley Court celebrates 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary

Charles Ley Court is located in Fawley, Hampshire and was named after a member of the local branch of the Royal British Legion. In September 2019, the scheme held a celebration to mark its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary, which was attended by Cllr Derek Tipp, Vice-Chairman of the District Council, as well as past and present residents of the scheme. Cllr Tipp said, "It's been marvellous to hear all about the last 40 years at Charles Ley Court."

Janice Dear, who has been a Court Manager at Charles Ley Court for over six years, organised the celebration and said: "It's been lovely to celebrate and welcome visitors and former residents to the scheme. We have residents in the communal lounge every day whether it is just for a cup of tea and a chat, or even a game of darts, but it's been great to open it up for the celebrations."

Attendees enjoyed cake to celebrate the occasion, and one

of the residents at Charles Ley Court said: "We've loved seeing the changes over the years – new windows, kitchens and bathrooms – and the gardens have improved vastly. We enjoy living here, right on top of the New Forest and it is great being close to the sea."





# Makeover at Ellis Gordon Court

The extensive refurbishment and renovation works that took place at Ellis Gordon Court in Newhaven last year is now complete.

There are two new flats, a new Court Manager's office, and a bin store. The main entrance has been remodelled together with a complete refurbishment of the communal areas, including new furnishings, carpets, flooring, and modern energy-efficient LED lighting throughout. An Appello digital call system and fire alarm have been installed, and bathrooms within the flats have been replaced with modern user-friendly shower rooms.

**Maureen Smith**, Court Manager at Ellis Gordon Court



## Investing in properties

# Gas conversion and central heating installation – Canon Appleton Court

Canon Appleton Court is a small, 30 flat scheme in Canterbury, Kent. It is near to local shops and bus services, and is close to the historic town centre. The scheme was designed around a central communal garden and the flats are light and airy.

However, the one downside for residents living at Canon Appleton Court was the difficulty they had in keeping their flats warm. Last year, their flats had old-style storage heaters in them, and most had an energy performance rating of D or below.

As part of its property standards, Housing 21 is committed to improving the energy efficiency of its properties and aims to have all properties rated at least EPC C by 2021. This meant Canon Appleton Court came up on the radar as a site that would benefit from improvements to its heating systems. Different options were considered, and a conversion to gas central heating was decided upon. This would involve not only installing new heating systems in every apartment as well as in the communal areas, but also installing a new system to supply gas to the site itself from the street outside the scheme.

At the end of August last year, an initial consultation meeting was held with residents to discuss the proposal, and to see if they would support a bid to apply for grant funding for this project. Every resident at the scheme agreed that it was a good idea to improve their heating.

In September, residents met with an independent consultant who helped Housing 21 apply for funding, based on the residents' personal experiences of struggling to keep their homes warm. This kickstarted the project, with gas being laid on site and Clairglow being selected to survey the flats and install the brand new systems.

Between November and February, each flat had a new combi-boiler and radiators fitted which are controlled via a wireless thermostat. The work was carried out by a small team made up of one fitter and his apprentice, as well as a builder and an electrician. Once the team got to work, they spent an average of two days per flat installing the new heating system, completing the works to a brilliant standard.

Disruption was kept to a minimum with a couple of flats being worked on at one time. While work was being completed on their flats, some residents stayed with family or friends, or in the communal lounge, with a few staying overnight in the guest room. Most residents were able to return to their flat after day one, with new, working heating. The communal areas were completed last and the communal lounge was the only area out of bounds for one week.

Some initial concerns were overcome through the process:

- “Another bill to consider” - most apartments have dual-fuel bills from the same energy provider, saving money and also getting just one bill
- “Another meter to read” – no need to heat storage heaters for the whole night, so no need for Economy 7. Residents were therefore advised to ask for one cheaper tariff and a new smart meter-no need to read them ever again

- “A lot of upheaval and disruption to cope with”- Clairglow staff helped residents move furniture, cleared up after themselves thoroughly, and ensured residents who wanted to return each evening could do so. Nothing was too much trouble for them
- “Lots of strangers walking around the scheme”- Clairglow staff were not only very professional, but also lovely and friendly. Residents enjoyed their presence - some even cooking them dinner
- “Gas can be dangerous”- gas was only installed in a closed heating system - not for cooking
- The overall result has been happier residents, warmer homes and more controllable heating at a lower monthly cost

“

Gas central heating means the world. I am now in control of my heating which means no more cold evenings. My bills are lower and home is a nicer place to be... and the cat loves it.”

Celia

“

Gas central heating is the best thing that has happened ...it's the icing on the cake and has improved our quality of life!”

George



**Celia, resident**



## Collaboration and partnerships

# Trees for Lordship Court

Inspired by the Woodland Trust's 'Plant a tree' project, Pauline, a resident at Lordship Court emailed the local mayor with the hope of securing some funding for trees to be planted at Lordship Court - and she was successful! It seems that Pauline is no stranger to standing up for what she believes in – she is involved with the local library which, some time ago was facing closure. Along with a few other residents, she protested to keep the library open, and the local authority listened.

Kathleen Forrest, Court Manager at Lordship Court assisted Pauline by contacting Bartlett Trees to get guidelines for the planting, and sending them a picture of the area. They recommended a laurel tree as the roots will not get too big and so will not affect the drainage, and they are evergreen trees so will stay full all year round. Another benefit of laurel trees is that they will absorb air pollution which is great for the scheme as it is located on a busy road in London.



**Pauline has planned where the trees will go**





# Cinnamon Trust visits Montgomery of Alamein Court

In July 2019, Sandra Plowright, Court Manager at Montgomery of Alamein Court, in Bracknell, was contacted by the Cinnamon Trust, whose purpose is to respect and preserve the treasured relationship between owners and their pets. Knowing Housing 21 is a pet-friendly organisation, they were interested to see how animals worked on a Retirement Living scheme and wondered if they could meet the two residents who have dogs and take some pictures which would be put into their newsletter. Sandra contacted both ladies concerned and they agreed.

Molly lives with Marion at the scheme. When she first moved in, Marion was extremely worried that Molly would not be accepted by the other residents, however this was not the case. Molly is loved by everyone, and she loves the attention they give her, including treats! This made a huge difference to the way Marion settled into the scheme.

Buster lives with Sheila who adopted him after her son sadly passed away, and he has become very precious to her. Buster once slipped his lead and Sheila was distraught, but some of the residents went out to find Buster, who was luckily microchipped, and returned him to Sheila within the hour. Sheila has joined the Cinnamon Trust with reassurance that if anything happens to her, the Trust will take Buster and make sure that he is looked after until he can be found a suitable home.



**Meet Molly and Marion**



**Meet Buster**

## Court life

# Housing 21 in Bloom

## Stoneleigh Court

This year Stoneleigh Court won first prize in the Redbridge in Bloom competition for their beautiful gardens.



Here are some of the proud residents

As the Covid-19 pandemic took hold in March, many residents turned to the arts to express themselves and reflect the unusual challenges that it brought. Here is one example, written by Pauline, resident of Lordship Court.

Can't sleep, feeling rough  
Come on girl you're pretty tough  
You haven't been near people half enough!

I've washed my hands a thousand times or more  
And I've left my shoes at the front door.  
Who are these people flouting the law.

I've a new word for people, not me, the futurers  
Can't sleep it's a quarter to three

Checked my diary, it's completely blank  
Can't be bothered to do anything to be frank  
Listening to the clock ticking away  
Let's hope I live to see another blank day



# Ellis Gordon Court

The residents from Ellis Gordon Court are always looking for a challenge when entering Newhaven in Bloom and after much thought, it was decided that the scheme would follow the theme of 'Midsummer Madness'.

Instead of planting flowers in a co-ordinated design, the residents decided to 'throw' everything in, aiming for colour clashing to the extreme. The result was spectacular and was the talk of the neighbourhood. The garden won three Gold Awards, including Best Overall Garden.

All of the residents at the scheme contribute, whether it is planting, weeding, digging, watering, or most importantly,

just giving good advice. All year there is fundraising including raffles, coffee mornings and music afternoons, and it also helps to have a Court Manager who is never afraid to ask local companies for a discount, this includes B&Q and Paradise Park.

Every year Ellis Gordon Court holds their own 'Better Than Good Neighbour Award', which gives residents a chance to nominate a neighbour who they feel goes that extra mile. The Award for 2019 was presented to Vic for making the gardens a joy for everyone. He was speechless.



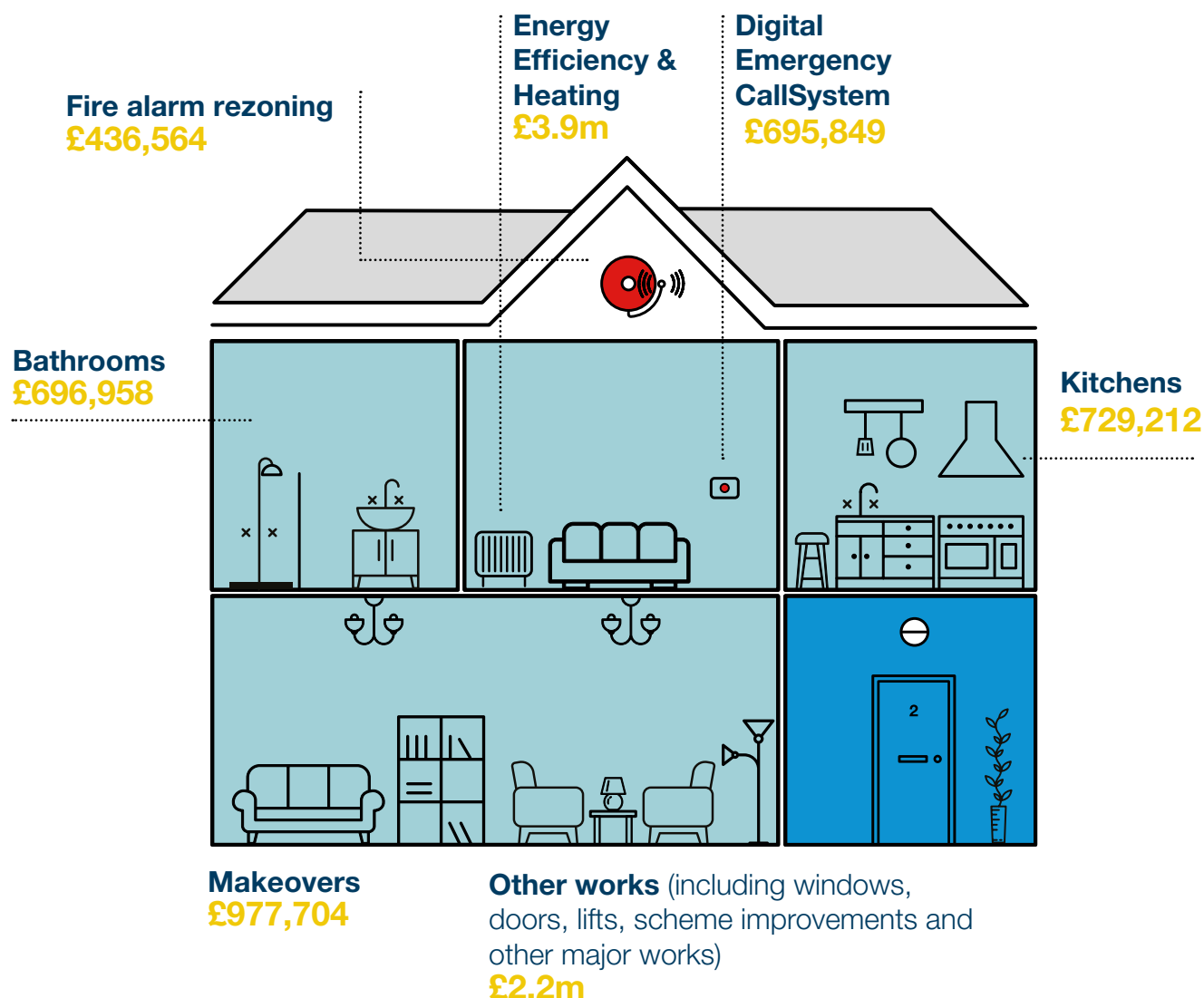
# Investing in our buildings

We are working hard to achieve our property standards which includes:

- ✓ Updating kitchens and bathrooms over 20 years old
- ✓ Ensuring our properties are energy efficient and are EPC C or above
- ✓ Reviewing schemes for a design-led makeover every seven years

Property Standards	% Complete to Standard
Bathrooms	99%
Kitchens	98%
Energy Efficiency	90%
Makeovers	98%

During the year we have made the following investments:





# Digital emergency call WiFi provision

As internet connected devices and the internet of things have become part of everyday life, the use of digital technology is not only going to be fundamental in supporting residents to manage their own health, it also provides new opportunities for them to remain connected to friends, family and the outside world.

As demographics within housing change, residents are more interested in, and accustomed to, technology. They want and expect a service which allows them to be connected, and through our digital emergency call system, Housing 21 will be able to support these expectations.

The organisation is conscious of what the housing sector will look like in the next 10 to 20 years. New innovations, ideas and joined up digital technologies can accelerate the home of tomorrow, today.

## Recent innovations

Housing 21 and Appello are continuing to actively develop the technology to aid all users. Resident engagement sessions pre and post installation have been key in targeting the digital improvements requested. As well as recent developments including remote door entry controls, two way speakers, a mirrored app that replicates

the tablet screen on a personal device, and digital compatible fall sensors, Housing 21 is now in a position to provide free internet to residents on digital emergency call installations going forward. This will be provided by utilising the apartment and communal lounge tablets as WiFi enabled hotspots.

## David Mayes

Property Improvement Manager



# Investing in our buildings

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## It takes a team



Over the last 18 months major works have been completed at Mountbatten Court, in Winchester, including:

- Refurbished garage doors with remote control access, and one garage converted to a scooter storeroom
- Emergency lighting installed outside
- Gas conversion
- Boilers installed
- New bathrooms installed in flats
- New front doors fitted in flats
- Main house refurbished
- Uneven pathways changed to tarmac which ensures we are compliant with health and safety
- Four roofs repaired

The major works ran smoothly thanks to brilliant team working between Court Manager, Ann Killip, the residents of Mountbatten Court, and various other groups and individuals:

### Contractors

Weekly meetings were held to ensure that Ann and the residents knew when work will be starting, and in which flats, as well as when the communal

work would commence. Ann needed to get the residents' colour choices to the contractors in a timely manner. The guest room was closed to residents to allow the contractors to stay on-site, enabling them to be available if there was any emergency work that needed to be completed out of hours.

### Residents

Consultation meetings were held whenever new work was going to be undertaken and Ann would constantly update the residents on when the contractors would be on-site, and when work would commence in their flats, giving them a week's notice as well as rescheduling should a resident not be available. Residents were given a choice of colours for the bathrooms and were also given a choice as to where they wanted the boilers situated in their flats.

Ann consulted with residents regarding the new garage doors and they were all in agreement to increase the charge from £5

a week to £10 a week and to convert one garage to a scooter store room.

Tara Lecomber, Interior Design Coordinator, held a consultation meeting with the residents on choice of colours and furnishings for the main house and kept Ann involved as to when the furniture would arrive.

### Surveyors

Ann had meetings with the surveyor to ensure work was carried out to specifications.

The residents are extremely happy with the work completed, both in their flats and in the main house. Thanks to good communication from Ann, they knew when the contractors were going to be on-site, so there were never any complaints about parking.



A Residents' Association is in the process of being formed and activities so far include:

**Coffee mornings**

**Friday afternoon club**

**Quiz afternoon with residents at General**

**Johnson Court**

**Food tasting**

**Keep fit classes**

**Chiropody**

**Choir practice**

So, now that the works have been successfully completed, what are the lessons learned?

- ✔ Communication is key. As long as the contractors, surveyor and Court Manager are working together, major work can be completed in a timely and efficient manner with as little disruption to the residents as possible
- ✔ Keeping residents updated throughout is crucial. There have been no complaints from Mountbatten Court residents as they were consulted and updated during the entire process
- ✔ Where possible staggering the major works is beneficial as there are not so many different contractors on-site at one time
- ✔ It would be good for surveyors to be more visible on-site when major works are been undertaken, although Ann acknowledges that the surveyors have a large workload and they are available via email and telephone





## Court life

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# The over 100 club

In last year's Regional Report we featured Irene, who has lived at Duchess of Kent Court for 22 years, and her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday celebrations. This year there were some more milestone birthdays to celebrate:

## Dorothy

In March of this year, residents and staff at Charles Busby Court hosted a party to celebrate Dorothy's 100<sup>th</sup> birthday. The party was attended by all her family and friends, along with the Dickensian Society, who attended in costumes. There was also a singer to round off the occasion.



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## Peggy

Peggy is one of our oldest residents at Housing 21, and this year celebrated her 105<sup>th</sup> birthday! She has lived at Morris Court in Cheltenham for over 20 years and loves her home, as it looks out onto the road and she can watch life passing by.

Peggy is very sociable and enjoys coffee mornings on Tuesdays, lunch in the lounge every couple of weeks, and any visiting entertainment. If there are any trips out, for

example on the river boat in Tewkesbury with a cream tea, she is always there. Until recently Peggy was very active in helping to organise social events, however unfortunately her hearing has become a problem for her which has stopped her from organising as many events at the scheme as she used to.

During the Second World War Peggy served with the Auxiliary Territorial Service (ATS), the women's branch of the British Army.



**Peggy on VE day at Montpellier Park in Cheltenham**



## Resident story

### View from my window

"In January 1999 I moved here, to Alexandra Court, on the seafront at Southsea with my husband Bob. Sadly my Bob passed in the November 2000. I have lived in Portsmouth a lifetime and with Bob's passing I realised this was the best move we had ever made - we had a third floor flat with a view over to the Isle of Wight. No worries of unexpected bills - when I have paid my rent that's it!

"I have a fantastic social life for a lady nonagenarian, and my dear

friend, A, also tells everyone that she feels like she won the lottery moving here!

"My view is fantastic. I see the shipping and certainly see life happening from my view - there's always something happening on the Parade or the common. I have made some very heartfelt friendships here at Alexandra Court. The day we came to view this place we went into a flat and the resident said 'Hello Bob, I haven't seen you in years' - Bob used to give her

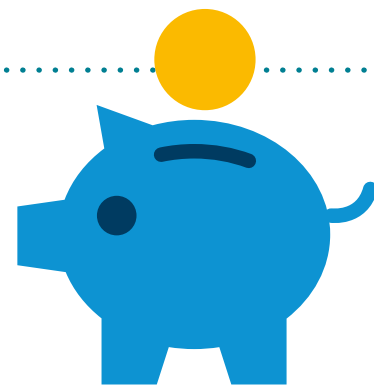
a lift on his butcher's bike! When we came here 20 years ago, it was still the British Legion, and our current Court Manager wants me to live to at least 104, as one of our neighbouring courts that his colleague Linda looks after has had a 104<sup>th</sup> birthday recently. I wouldn't mind that either as long as I'm still living here with my memories and making new ones with my friends."

**Brenda**, resident



## Fundraising

# Fundraising activities at Goode Court



Residents at Goode Court in Lydney, Gloucestershire have been keeping busy, hosting many different fundraising events and projects throughout the past year:

With wool purchased with a 'Small Sparks' grant from the Barnwood Trust, residents at the scheme knitted a collection of garments for the neo-natal unit at Gloucester Royal Hospital.

Residents also contributed a tree for the local church's Christmas Tree Festival, and took part in knitting tree decorations, where they focused on the theme of 'Our community'.

£150 was raised for the local Salvation Army by holding a special lunch after a Harvest Festival service at the scheme. Residents brought Christmas parcels for isolated older people in the Forest of Dean, which the Salvation Army distributed, and donated food to the Salvation Army foodbank.



**Harvest Festival Service and lunch raising funds for local Salvation Army and Salvation Army Food Collection**



**Ukulele band fundraising for Great Oaks Hospice**

Goode Court residents also took the good weather as another opportunity to raise money for a great cause, and hosted summer entertainment with a local ukulele band to raise funds for the local Great Oaks Hospice.

Residents also took part in other various fundraising events throughout the year, and raised £150 for Help for Heroes by hosting a pancake party, as well as raising £270 for the Great Western Air Ambulance.



**Cheque presentation to Air Ambulance**

The residents at Goode Court don't seem to be slowing down with their fundraising, and we're looking forward to seeing what they get up to next year!

## Stoneleigh Court – Fundraising

Throughout the year residents at Stoneleigh Court, in Ilford, raised £1,200 for Haven House Children's Hospice. The money was raised through holding afternoon teas, the lunch club and raffles at the scheme.

Angela Pohl, Court Manager, presented the cheque to Ginny Donnelly from Haven House at Stoneleigh Court's Christmas party. Ginny sent a letter to all of the residents as a thank you for their donation.





## Court life

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# Parakeets in London

You don't need to travel to a zoo or pay to visit an aviary to see parakeets – at several Housing 21 properties in London you just need to look out of the window.

Parakeets are native birds to Africa and the Indian sub-continent, and don't migrate, but Albuhera Court, in Enfield, Edwards Jobson Court, in Croydon, and David Coffer Court in Bexley, all have populations of parakeets providing some local colour for the residents.

Residents keep an eye out for them and also put food out. The birds usually visit feeders in the early morning and at the end of the day, and at one scheme if the feeders aren't kept topped up with sunflower hearts, they sit on the edge of the feeder and stare through the window until someone goes to get more!

It's a bit of a mystery where the parakeets came from and there are several competing theories. One is that they escaped during the filming of the Humphrey Bogart and Katherine Hepburn 50s classic, *The African Queen*. Another is that they escaped from aviaries during the Great Storm of 1987. Perhaps the coolest conspiracy is that rock star, Jimi Hendrix, allegedly set some free while walking down Carnaby Street in the swinging 60s.

Wherever they came from, they are much loved by local residents, who enjoy pointing them out to visiting friends and family.



# Celebrations at Eric Long Court

“2019 was a dual celebration year for us, as my husband and I had our 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in May, as well as my 70<sup>th</sup> birthday in December. For our anniversary we had a lovely party with family and friends, and for my birthday my husband, with the help of residents and our Court Manager Julie, put on a surprise party with family and friends here at Eric Long Court, so a good time was had by all.

“We have lived at Eric Long Court for nearly four years, and it was the best move we have ever made. The pandemic has been difficult, but we’re all safe here and we are surrounded by people, so do not feel lonely. We’re now looking forward to the future where we can all get back together for bingo and quizzes and many other functions that we were able to do before the lockdown began in March. We would like to thank our Court Manager for all of her help and assistance, especially at this difficult time. Stay safe everybody.”

**Kath and Tosh** (Brian), residents





## New developments and acquisitions

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### Cory Road

Cory Road is located at the back of Leonard Houlden Court in Taunton and consists of six bungalows and four flats. It was built in 1991 in agreement with the local authority that it would be used by the Schizophrenic Society to provide short term reablement housing for patients to settle back into community living. A couple of years later, Rethink Mental Illness took over managing the site and continued to support the residents who lived there.

Unfortunately Rethink lost the funding from the local authority and in June 2019 the site was handed back to Housing

21. Work then commenced to link Cory Road to Leonard Houlden and to modernise the properties. New kitchens and bathrooms were put into all the properties and a new warden call system and fire system were installed which linked the two sites together. The back garden at Leonard Houlden was opened up and a new pathway linked Cory Road to a new back entrance at Leonard Houlden, allowing the residents at Cory Road to use the communal areas. At the end of January this year all the properties were let and the small community began to get to know each other.

Up until this time Jo Cottrell, the Court Manager, had worked in a small office situated on the first floor at Leonard Houlden, so the decision was made to move Jo's office to Cory Road.



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### North Stoneham

We are excited to be working on a brand new development in North Stoneham, in Eastleigh. The new Retirement Living scheme will provide nearly 1,100 homes consisting of one and two bedroom apartments for rental and shared ownership. The development will bring together a mix of private homes, social housing and commercial units and is due to be completed in summer 2022.





# Redevelopment of Trennick Villas

Trennick Villas, in Truro, was originally built by the Royal British Legion in 1970. The site is located along the east side of the Truro River on Malpas Road.

The building consisted of 24 units and was considered to fall well below the current housing standards, as it was in poor condition and couldn't meet the required access needs for Retirement Housing.

A pre-planning application was submitted in March 2017 for the construction of 45 apartments, however this was considered an overdevelopment of the site,

so the plans were adjusted to 40 apartments. A public consultation took place and it was explained that the current villas were not sustainable. The building did not meet energy requirements and had small studio apartments and internal stairways, making access difficult.

A decision was made to redevelop the site and a planning application to build a new development of 14 two bedroom apartments and 26 one bedroom apartments was submitted in September 2018.

Housing 21 engaged with the existing residents at Trennick Villas and kept them fully up to date on the development plans and timescales. The organisation helped with finding alternative accommodation and financial implications were taken into consideration including the home loss payment and moving costs. The new apartments will offer self-contained private accommodation that will appeal to people downsizing from family homes, and will also have communal areas. The scheme is expected to open in late 2021.



## Resident story

# Bringing the community together

Fred has lived in the Royal British Legion Village in Aylesford, since 2008, first at Duchess of Kent Court, before moving to Charles Busby Court in 2013.

Fred had a career as a press photographer, working for Kent Newspaper Group for 20 years and prior to this, as a freelance photographer working for clients such as Thames TV and the Sunday Express. His work took him to high profile events, including some attended by Prince Phillip, Princess Anne and The Duchess of Kent, and he has very fond memories of the people he met throughout his career.

When he moved to Charles Busby Court he took a keen interest in the communal garden, in particular the hanging baskets, and along with other residents, Fred gave Charles Busby Court a friendly, welcoming, homely appearance. Unfortunately after a couple of years Fred found that the gardening was becoming too much for him and relinquished the garden to his neighbours.

What we didn't know about Fred when he first moved in was that he has a passion for cooking. Since then he has combined this passion with another – bringing the community together. Fred had made many contacts over the years through his work and decided to call in a few favours in order to hold regular guest speaker, reminiscence, and entertainment events at Charles Busby Court. These events were also open to residents of nearby Duchess of Kent Court, Dennis Cadman House and the local community. Fred cooks for days prior to each event to ensure there is a good variety of food for everyone. The only time there is a cost to attend is when there is a fee for an entertainer - Fred purchases, cooks and supplies all the food himself and is very happy to do this.

He likes to experiment when cooking and often tries different combinations of flavours and receives many compliments. Cooking for others makes Fred happy and he has passed on his passion for cooking to his three granddaughters.

Fred also enjoys sharing good fortune, and through his contacts, he was given a free lunch for 16 people courtesy of the Holiday Inn, so he ensured that the regular helpers at his events like Sue, Ray, Terry and John, to name but a few, were invited and the remaining places were chosen by picking names from a hat.

Fred also wanted to give a special thanks to Sue, resident at Duchess of Kent Court, as without her organisational skills and calming approach the events wouldn't be the success they are, and he is aware he could not do this without her. Fred would also like to thank Terry, Sue's husband, for sharing this magical lady.



**Meet Fred**

## Court life

# Activities at Goode Court

Residents at Goode Court have taken part in their fair share of activities this year, hosting numerous live entertainment afternoons including local school children, youth silver bands visiting and a well-attended Christmas party with live entertainment.



**Christmas tree festival, decorations knitted by residents on the theme of 'Community'**



**Christmas entertainment with children of the Lydney Training Band**



**Christmas entertainment with children from local school**

## Barnwood Trust

The Barnwood Trust also held two reminiscence events at Goode Court, which were very interactive and much enjoyed by the residents. The events led to general reminiscence about life and social activities in the past.



**Reminiscence session all about Lydney with the Barnwood Trust**

## Desert Island Discs

The 'Desert Island Discs' session was a great success where Court Manager, Carole Cousins, played residents a choice of songs, and each resident talked about why the song was special to them. It provoked great conversation about past times, youth, fashion and other subjects.

## Dogs for Good

They also got involved with 'Dogs for Good', which is a motivation project working with people who are living with dementia. The project visited one of the Goode Court residents over six weeks including days out to 'Doggy bingo' with other people in the community and to a local café for coffee and cake.



## Resident story

# Bringing joy to George Pinion Court

“Horsham is my hometown, which I returned to two years ago after an absence of more than fifty years. I left as a teenager to pursue a career in music and have returned as an old man. The intervening years were extraordinary. My career in music took me half way around the world and introduced me to fascinating people and stunning places. Memorable moments include appearing at the London Palladium with the legendary Ink Spots, and touring New England in cabaret during a glorious fall. In middle age I took up yoga, became a teacher, and eventually moved to France where I taught piano, singing and yoga, sometimes with hilarious outcomes thanks to my rather creaky French!

“The journey home began as age and ill health gradually overtook me. I had no desire to end my days in a French old people’s home, and decided the best course of action was to return to the UK. A chance conversation with a friend made me aware of Housing 21, so I downloaded the forms and began the application process. I returned and lived in a community of retired musicians in Dorset while I looked for

accommodation in Sussex. It was Tommy at Chapman Court, in Worthing, who made me aware of George Pinion Court in Horsham, which did not exist when I was a young man. Having checked the office hours I simply turned up without an appointment. The manager, Mandy Wykes, was clearly busy but nevertheless welcomed me warmly and gave me a tour of the property. The high point was the communal lounge, where I was happy to discover a decent piano. When I see a piano I get itchy fingers and can’t resist playing it. I still wonder if it clinched the deal, because I was eventually offered a flat.

“George Pinion Court is an attractive property near the centre of Horsham. I am delighted with my flat, and happy to have finally come home to be near my family. There were no real teething problems other than accepting the fact that I now live in a community of older people, and I am one of them! It was relatively easy to integrate as there are plenty of social activities mostly organised by a social group which arrange a variety of events such as quiz nights, race nights, murder mystery evenings,

coffee mornings, and even short holidays. The events are open to all and I felt very welcome when I turned up at them. It quickly became apparent that, apart from bingo, there were no established weekly events, which seemed odd in a community of people who mostly live alone.

“During my yoga studies I trained as a remedial and special needs teacher, which also included working with older people. I suggested a couple of classes and set them up with Mandy’s help. To my surprise and delight several people turned up and have continued to come every week. My *modus operandi* is to treat each class as a social event so that people go away feeling they have had a good time. Yoga can be very serious, if not a bit precious, however my classes don’t usually conform to the accepted norms as there is so much laughter. Beneath all the fun I have a more serious agenda. I work on the muscles and joints that older people need to maintain their independence. The feedback I get is very positive in terms of increased strength and flexibility.

“My next project was to start a choir. In spite of being a professional musician I have never forgotten the joy of amateur music. Years ago I ran a community music project for isolated elderly people, so I am well aware of the social, emotional and physiological benefits of singing together. We started with six singers and now have 15. Once again, I treat it as a social event - we have lots of fun as well as working hard. I sometimes sneakily move them out of their comfort zone by tackling fairly challenging pieces. The first response is often we can't do that, but we always seem to get there in the end. We sing everything from pop songs to classical masterpieces, and in a variety of languages including Welsh, which proved to be rather more of a challenge than I anticipated. All I can say is thank goodness we have a Welsh speaking chorister. The choir has gone from strength to strength and the sound has improved along with the confidence of the singers.

“The Covid-19 pandemic has perhaps been the most telling test of the health of our

community. A support group was set up in the days leading up to the lockdown and has functioned very effectively. People readily share or swap things, and help one another out where there are shortages. I have fond memories of a delicious bread and butter pudding which materialised after three people pooled the ingredients. I paint a rosy picture of George Pinion Court because it is a lovely place to live. It would be dishonest to suggest that we are problem free. Like any other community we have our share of challenges. Collectively we are always able to rise above those issues and I would say that the majority of the residents are happy to be here, as am I. My motives for doing the things I do? I think they are principally selfish. Just because I am old I see no reason not to continue with the things that bring me joy, after all life isn't a rehearsal. We only have one shot at it.”

**Martin**, resident

“

Horsham is my hometown, which I returned to two years ago after an absence of more than fifty years. I left as a teenager to pursue a career in music and have returned as an old man. The intervening years were extraordinary.

# Looking ahead – taking care of the environment

As an organisation we are committed to making positive changes for the environment and are focusing on areas that will make the most difference:



## Carbon impact / energy consumption

We are currently leading in the housing sector in terms of energy consumption with 84% of our properties already having an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) grade C or above, saving you money on your energy bills. Our aim is for all properties to have an EPC grade C by March 2022. We will also be installing non-fossil fuel heating systems on new homes and, where possible, on replacement systems from December 2022. Our policy is to only source electricity from certified renewable sources.



## Climate change resilience

All of our schemes are being surveyed for climate change resilience and each scheme will have an action plan by March 2022 to promote longer term environmental sustainability.



## Transport

We are aiming to reduce non-essential travel for staff across the organisation, exploring new ways of working and reducing our carbon footprint.

This is just the beginning. We will build on these strong foundations to develop our commitment to 'Doing the Right Thing'. Talk to your scheme manager if you have any thoughts or ideas on

how to make positive changes for the environment at your scheme. Your story could feature in next year's Regional Report!

## Feedback

We hope you have enjoyed reading your Regional Report 2020. We'd love to hear your feedback and any suggestions you have for next year. Please get in touch by emailing [communications@housing21.org.uk](mailto:communications@housing21.org.uk) or speak to a member of the Housing 21 team.

If you need this report in a different format, for example large print, Braille, audio file/CD or another language, please contact your local manager.

Thank you.



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