



Greetings from Laura, Strategic Health & Wellbeing Lead at the City Council

Welcome to the Spring issue of your *Sheltered Housing Herald*. I hope you are all enjoying the brighter days and spring flowers.

This edition is packed with information and activities for you. On page 2 opposite, you can start getting excited about our *Summer Of Love* party coming up in July. Page 10 invites you to a gentle movement activity inspired by the museum, and pages 5 and 6 bring you our full calendar of regular activities across our schemes.

On pages 7 and 8 there is a meaningful article on your feedback to us in our recent tenant survey, and how we plan to respond. Page 9 brings a charming interview with tenant Nick at Talbot House, about life there, his fabulous train set, and his beloved companion animal, cockatiel Bill.

This edition includes an introduction to a new staff member who has joined us, and an article on the charity that we've chosen to support this year. On page 11 our nutritionist brings you tips for getting maximum health benefits from your food this Spring.

Meanwhile, do keep sending us your suggestions for the *Herald*. You can tell them to your ILF or email them to opendoor@cambridge.gov.uk

With kind regards, Laura

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COLLABORATIVE



COURAGEOUS



COMPASSIONATE



ACCOUNTABLE



ILS SUMMER PARTY - AND YOU'RE INVITED!



COME TO OUR 60s SUMMER OF LOVE PARTY

Get ready to step back in time and celebrate the *60s Summer of Love* at this year's Independent Living Service Summer Party! Held annually for sheltered tenants and members of the wider community aged 60+, this much-loved event promises an afternoon of fun, friendship and fantastic entertainment.

This year, in partnership with Turtle Dove, we're delighted to bring you an afternoon filled with music, colour and good vibes on Tuesday 7th July, from 2-4pm, at Mill Road Community Centre, 6 Hazell Street, CB1 2GN.

Thanks to our subsidised ticket prices, entry is just £6, which includes live entertainment, a delicious afternoon tea, and a raffle.

Buy your tickets

You can buy your tickets direct from your scheme's Independent Living Facilitator, or phone us at Ditchburn Place on 01223-457199.

Please get to the event independently if you can. Otherwise, transport is available for those who can't.

So dust off your dancing shoes, embrace the spirit of the unforgettable 60s, and come along for a wonderful afternoon of celebration and community. We can't wait to see you there!

60s SUMMER OF LOVE
INDEPENDENT LIVING SERVICE SUMMER PARTY 2026
IN COLLABORATION WITH TURTLE DOVE

Tuesday 7th July, 2 – 4pm
At Mill Road Community Centre, CB1 2GN
Tickets £6.00, includes entertainment & afternoon tea
Available from your ILF or Ditchburn Office 01223 457199
Attendees who can travel independently are encouraged to do so
– Transport can be provided on a needs basis –



www.facebook.com/cambridgeoph





THE SUPPORT SERVICES WE PROVIDE



'The support I've received from the Independent Living Service has been fundamental to my success here'
- a tenant at Lichfield Road

Sheltered scheme tenants can receive various degrees of support from staff, depending on their needs. You can review your own needs regularly, and we can look together at what type of support might suit you best over time. Below are some examples of the different levels of support that we can provide. There is no extra charge for this support.

Sheltered scheme residents with a *Support Plan* have...

Ongoing contact with your Independent Living Facilitator, as agreed in your individual *Support Plan*.

An annual review with you of your *Support Plan*.

Reminders to activate your alarm monthly.

But you should report by yourself any repairs needed, if you are able to.

Wellbeing Visits...

An individual *Wellbeing Agreement* is signed with the resident.

They may also receive *Wellbeing Visits* where required.

Wellbeing Visits may include general welfare checks, informal chats, or monitoring any changes in your wellbeing.

These residents are reminded to activate their alarm monthly.

But you should report by yourself any repairs needed, if you are able to.

Residents with 'No Support'

- are reminded to activate their alarm monthly
- should report their own repairs
- must complete the annual 'No Support' documentation, given to them once a year

If you don't have any support but feel your needs may have changed

Examples of support we could provide include:

- help with correspondence
- benefits advice
- regular *Wellbeing Visits*
- referrals to an Occupational Therapist, Social Care, etc.
- other support to maintain your independence

Just tell your Independent Living Facilitator that you would like more support, and we can work out together the types of support that would suit you best.

Sheltered Schemes Charity of the Year 2026: Alzheimer's Research UK

Following the recent charity survey, we are pleased to announce that Alzheimer's Research UK has been chosen as our Sheltered Housing Charity of the Year 2026. We would like to thank everyone who took the time to take part in the survey.

For many residents and staff across sheltered housing, dementia is something that touches lives directly – whether personally, through family members, friends or neighbours. By supporting Alzheimer's Research UK, we are contributing to vital research that aims to transform lives, offer hope for the future and improve outcomes for generations to come.





GROWING TOGETHER AT THE BOTANIC GARDEN

Something truly special has been growing at Cambridge University Botanic Garden - and it's not just the plants!

Through a partnership between Cambridge City Council's Independent Living Service and the Botanic Garden, a gardening group has been bringing older residents together for days filled with fresh air, friendship, and plenty of smiles. For many, it's quickly become a favourite outing - and it's easy to see why.



From the moment everyone arrives, they are greeted by Caroline, the Botanic Garden organiser, whose warm and caring nature makes everyone feel instantly welcome. Caroline goes above and beyond to make sure each visit is enjoyable, relaxed, and inclusive. Nothing is ever too much trouble, and her kindness really sets the tone for the day.

Each session is led by Pete, the Botanic Garden's wonderfully knowledgeable gardener. Pete has an amazing understanding of plants and is a real educator - sharing fascinating facts, answering questions, and passing on practical gardening tips with enthusiasm and humour. His passion for gardening is contagious, and everyone loves learning from him.

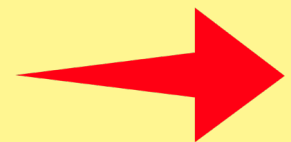


But this group is about so much more than gardening. As hands get busy planting and tending, conversations begin to flow.

People share stories from their lives, swap memories, laugh together, and enjoy each other's company. Being together in such a beautiful setting brings a real sense of wellbeing, connection, and belonging.

Members say they love getting out into the fresh air, being active at their own pace, and spending time with others — but most of all, they say it's simply a lovely day out that brightens their week.

If you enjoy nature, good company, and learning something new in a welcoming and caring environment, why not come along and join in? For details on how to join, phone Independent Living Facilitator Paula Milne at tel. 0786-4958886.




Your Activities Calendar

See overleaf for the full **Activities Calendar** that we have lined up for you across your schemes for the months ahead....



SCHEME ACTIVITIES CALENDAR

|  | Lichfield Road Community Hall 173 Lichfield Rd, CB1 3SJ | Ditchburn Place Mill Rd, CB1 2DJ | Ditton Court Ditton Lane CB5 8UD | School Court Thoday Street CB1 3BN |
|--|--|--|---|---|
| Monday | Strength & Balance Mondays 2pm Residents £3, Community £3.50 | | Bingo Mondays 2pm COST -£5.20 | Strength & Balance Mondays 10am Residents £3, Community £3.50 |
| Tuesday | Bingo Tuesdays 2pm COST - Free | Coffee Morning Tuesdays 10.30 COST 50p | | |
| Wednesday | Social Club Wednesdays 2pm | Strength & Balance Mondays 2pm Residents £3, Community £3.50 | Coffee Morning Tuesdays 10am COST 50p | |
| Thursday | | | | Coffee Afternoon Thursdays 2pm COST 50p |
| Friday | | | Strength & Balance Fridays 11am Residents £3, Community £3.50 | |



SCHEME ACTIVITIES CALENDAR



|  | Brandon Court Prospect Row, CB1 1DZ | Talbot House Fisher's Lane CB1 9JQ | Mansel Court Mansel Way, CB4 2EU | Whitefriars Chesterton High St, CB4 1NN |
|--|--|---|--|--|
| Monday | Informal Crafts Mondays 11am COST £1 | | Coffee Morning Monday /Thursday/Saturday 10am COST £1 | |
| Tuesday | | Strength & Balance Tuesdays 2pm Residents £3, Community £3.50 | | |
| Wednesday | Strength & Balance Wednesdays 11am COST £1 | | Strength & Balance Wednesdays 10am Residents £3, Community £3.50 | Coffee Morning 1st Wednesday of month 11am COST £1 |
| Thursday | Film Night 3 rd Thursday of the month 6pm COST £1 | | | |
| Friday | Coffee Morning Fridays 10am COST £1 | Coffee Afternoon Fridays 2pm COST 80p | Bingo First Friday of month 2pm COST -£5.00 | |

Please note:

Most activities are run by tenants, and there will not be a member of staff on site for every activity. For more information about activities, please phone the Independent Living Service at 01223-457199, and ask for the Activity Co-Ordinator.

LISTENING TO YOU



YOUR FEEDBACK TO US



Recently we asked you to tell us your views on your Independent Living Service. Thank you to those who took the time to share your feedback, summarised below. It gives us a good picture of what is working well, and where we can continue to improve.

High levels of satisfaction with support

Overall, responses were very positive. The majority of you 'agree' or 'strongly agree' that staff are approachable, respectful, and knowledgeable. Most say you feel safe and supported in your home, and know how to contact the Independent Living Service if you need help.

Many of you say that the support you receive makes a positive difference to your lives, and helps you to maintain your independence. Several highlighted the reassurance of knowing that help is available when needed, while still being able to live independently and make your own choices.

Staff relationships make a real difference

A strong theme was the value of your trusting relationships with our staff. You frequently describe them as friendly, reliable, and responsive. You especially appreciate regular and consistent visits, being listened to, and having someone who takes the time to check in with you. Comments included how staff help you with things like:

- form-filling and managing benefits
- arranging repairs, waste removal, and Blue Badge applications
- budgeting, bills, and direct debits
- emotional support during difficult life events

Some say that staff contact is particularly important for reducing loneliness. One person said staff may be the only person they speak to on some days.

Supporting independence and wellbeing

Many residents reported increased confidence and stability since receiving support. You describe feeling more settled, less anxious, and better able to manage daily life. Being supported to stay in your home, access services, and remain active within your community was seen as a key strength of the service. You say you value the balance between support and independence, with several highlighting the freedom to “come and go as I want” while still feeling supported.

Community and social activities

Feedback on social activities was mixed. Some residents enjoy activities such as bingo, craft sessions, animal visits, music events, barbecues, and shared celebrations. Others prefer not to take part (often due to work, health, or personal preference), while still feeling supported. Having a range of optional activities remains important. Suggestions for the future included more entertainment and social events, film clubs and historical tours, karaoke, guest speakers, and technical support sessions.



LEARNING FROM YOU



AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Although satisfaction was high, you did identify some areas to improve, such as:

- More frequent or consistent services in certain areas (e.g. gardening)
- Clear communication and continuity of support
- More regular social activities at some schemes

These suggestions will help us shape future planning and service development in the ways below.

You said: You value friendly, approachable staff who take time to listen and check in regularly.

We will: Continue to provide you with a consistent, named Independent Living Facilitator who is approachable and responsive.

You said: The service helps you feel safe, supported, and more confident living independently.

We will: Keep focusing on support that promotes independence, while offering reassurance when needed.

You said: Our support with forms, benefits, bills, and practical issues makes a big difference to your wellbeing.

We will: Continue offering practical, hands-on support with paperwork, applications, and problem-solving. And we'll ensure residents know how to request help quickly when issues arise.

You said: Social activities are appreciated, but preferences vary.

We will: Offer a wider range of optional activities, including low-key and wellbeing-focused options such as crafts, film clubs, music events, technology help, and occasional trips or guest speakers. We will also look at ways to improve attendance and engagement where activities are offered.

You said: Some services, such as gardening and communal upkeep, could be more consistent.

We will: Share this feedback with relevant maintenance teams and invite those teams to our Tenant Consultation Meetings so that you can provide your feedback to them directly.

Thank you to everyone who took the time to complete the survey. Your feedback really is invaluable. It helps us to ensure the Independent Living Service continues to support people to live independently, safely, and with dignity.

Congratulations to Mr. S. of Ditton Court who was the winner of the survey's Prize Draw, and has received a £50 Tesco voucher!



INTERVIEW WITH A RESIDENT



FASCINATING LIFE OF NICK FROM TALBOT HOUSE



Have a read about the extraordinarily rich life of Nick, one of our residents at Talbot House. And see the amazing model railway Nick built, that's housed in his home at Talbot House. For over 35 years, Nick enjoyed the company of his beloved animal companion, cockatiel Billy. Cockatiels like the one pictured here on the left are from the parrot family, and are favoured, long-lived companions to people all over the world. Sadly, Billy passed away recently, so we wanted to share this interview with Nick, to honour Billy's long life as an animal companion.

Hello, Nick! So how did you come to be living in Talbot House?

I was living in a tiny studio flat with my cockatiel, Billy, when I was offered a property at Talbot House. I had a viewing and was really impressed. I could visualise me and Billy living there.

What do you like about it?

People are a lot friendlier here compared to where I lived before. Here we really help each other out.

Where did you live in your earlier life?

I was born at Ditchburn Place (then a maternity hospital, now one of our sheltered schemes). I grew up in Shelford with my twin brother, Barry, plus my mum and dad, before moving to Cambridge.

First we lived down Benson Street, and then at Bateson Street when my younger brother, Simon, was born. I attended St Luke's Primary School before going to Chesterton Senior School.

What did you do for a living later on?

After leaving school I worked as the Head Gardener at Ridley Hall, one of the University of Cambridge Colleges. I also worked at the American Cemetery, out in Madingley.

What are your favourite pastimes or hobbies, Nick?

I am a huge fan of trains, and really enjoy attending conventions. I also build model railways (see the picture above!) . And I keep fish.

Anything you'd like to see more of in our sheltered schemes?

Maybe having more shared activities with other tenants at other schemes. Like a film afternoon, or perhaps a trip out somewhere.



'MUSEUM BOOST' MOVEMENT SESSIONS



DANCE, DISCOVER, FEEL BETTER!

Inspired by objects and stories from the University of Cambridge Museums, you are invited to our relaxed, creative sessions that help you build strength, lift your mood, and awaken your curiosity.

Who is it for?

They're suitable for people who may be feeling less steady on their feet, or less active, or simply looking to build confidence again. No dance or museum experience needed!

What is Museum Boost?

Each session explores a story from the University of Cambridge Museums or the Botanic Garden.

It's led by an experienced facilitator of dance for health for older people. So you'll be supported to move in a way that feels comfortable for your body, with options to work individually, in pairs or in small groups. It's carefully designed to support your physical and mental wellbeing, in ways that feel accessible, inclusive, and enjoyable for everyone.



Where & when?

Mill Road Community Centre, 6 Hazell Street, CB1 2GN
Fridays, 2–3.30pm on 12th June and 10th July

'It makes me feel joyous and awakens my curiosity'
Museum Boost participant

To book your place, phone Carol Skinner at the Independent Living Service, tel. 07857-664155. Or email info@museums.cam.ac.uk



MEET A NEW STAFF MEMBER

Hello, I'm Vikki Liquorish (pictured, right), the new Older People Support Team Leader. I started my role with the Independent Living team in February. I'm enjoying it. I have many years of experience working within the health and social care setting. (My last role was with the City and South Community Team at Cambridge County Council.) I am looking forward to meeting more of you around our schemes in the months ahead.



From Dr. Richard Hoffman



Medical scientist &
Registered Nutritionist,
University of Hertfordshire

HEALTHY LIVING, HEALTHY YOU

With the City Council's Preventive Health outreach service



SIMPLIFY YOUR LIFE FOR BETTER HEALTH!

As someone who gives advice on health ageing, it's reassuring to see that over the years the basics of *What to do* and *What not to do* don't change much. A diet of minimally processed foods, an active social life, good sleep, being physically active, not smoking and not drinking too much alcohol, all still hold true. But many are aware of this advice, would like to follow it - and still don't manage to. This may be due other competing pressures like lack of time or the environment they live in.

Barriers to ageing more healthily

But many of the barriers are due to distractions generated by the media. These distractions gobble up our thoughts with negative news, before then tempting us to consume something unhealthy like junk food. These distractions leave little headspace for us to change our way of life for the better. But with a little care, the volume of these distractions can be turned down, enabling us to lead more authentic and healthier lives.

Clearing our thoughts

The first step - even before taking actions - is to simplify our thoughts. A famous artist once said "To simplify is to eliminate the unnecessary so the necessary may speak". A decluttered mind allows our core values to appear more clearly in our thoughts. And this in turn helps prioritise what really matters for our well-being, whether it's finding more time to eat well, get more exercise or socialise more. A walk in nature or the garden, a visit to a religious building - quiet spaces like these can help clarify our thoughts.



Long-lived elders in the world's *Blue Zones*

I have talked in previous articles about the elders in *Blue Zone* regions around the world, like on certain Mediterranean islands. In these regions, it is common to live free from chronic illness until one's eighties, nineties or even older.

These people are not rich in monetary terms but, far more importantly, they live free from unhelpful distractions. Their core values are integrated into a meaningful daily life. These elders see clearly the value of simple daily actions like walking, gardening, socialising in cafes, and preparing and eating natural foods free of pesticides.

Prioritising these actions across the day builds a 'virtuous circle' where one action boosts the next. For example, a good diet helps promote good sleep. This leads to more energy, giving the desire to do a little gardening or other physical activity. This will in turn help you to feel more sociable.





THE CORNERSTONES OF HEALTHY AGEING



Healthy ageing with the Mediterranean Diet

The traditional diet in Mediterranean countries - the healthiest in the world - exemplifies this whole-person approach to healthy living. It prioritises a wide variety of colourful vegetables and fruit, pulses, nuts and seeds, olive oil, oily fish and just a little meat. But it's far more than just a set of foods. The word 'diet' comes from the Greek 'diaita', meaning a way of life...

Sitting down to communal meals is an example: it provides a sense of sharing, belonging and social cohesion. This reinforces our inner sense of identity and our outer social interactions, encouraging celebrations of all the good things in life. Though far from the Mediterranean, embracing these traditional values has the same effect here in our own sheltered schemes! Below are a few practical actions for your own healthy ageing.









- **Eat** a varied diet of minimally processed foods, as these are rich in vital nutrients. To avoid muscle loss we need good amounts of protein - even more than when we were younger. Ideally, get some protein with each meal, including breakfast!
- **Nourish** with brain superfoods: leafy greens like spinach or dark green lettuce; and red and purple berries like strawberries, blueberries, raspberries, blackberries... Try to eat them several times a week. Have at least one portion a week of oily fish like salmon, mackerel or sardines (tinned is fine). And avoid Ultra Processed Foods, they are no substitute for real food!
- **Sleep** well. If you don't, see if your GP can help. During sleep our brain clears out toxic substances accumulated in it during the day. Insufficient sleep reduces this process, so toxins accumulate in the brain and can damage it.
- **Move** so you're physically active. As well as lifting our spirits, moderate physical activity boosts the brain's ability to flush out toxins.
- **Interact** and be social. And combining all the above is even better, bringing extra benefits. Arranging to eat with friends or neighbours is not only more fun, it's also better for you! Sticking to a pre-arranged time and eating at the same times each day 'programmes' our digestive system to work more efficiently.

Giving care and attention to how you do these actions every day builds a lifestyle that's healthy, authentic and meaningful.

Studies draw the healthy ageing tips on the right from long-lived elders in the world's Blue Zones.

Why not start today to make our sheltered schemes a new *Blue Zone*?

BLUE ZONE TIPS FOR SENIORS

| | | |
|--|--|--|
|  Move naturally |  Have a purpose |  Reduce daily stress |
|  Stop eating at 80% fullness |  Eat a mostly plant-based diet |  Drink some wine with friends |
|  Be part of a faith-based community |  Put your loved ones first |  Have a supportive social circle |