

# Sheltered Housing Herald

For the tenants of Cambridge City Council's Independent Living Schemes

December 2024



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**Editorial From Laura Adcock, your Housing Services Manager**

Welcome to the Winter issue of your Sheltered Housing Herald. I hope everyone is staying warm, cosy and well as temperatures drop.

This issue brings an article helping you to stay warm affordably this Winter. See too our article on Pension Credit, ensuring you receive benefits you are entitled to.

We bring news of our new sheltered scheme opening soon, called Long Drift Place, at Wulfstan Way. And we introduce you to our new people, Angela and Sandra.

Our Activities Co-Ordinator, Olivia, has some really exciting updates for you. There are photos of the lively activities you've been doing around your schemes, from gardening and growing vegetables to cuddling visiting miniature donkeys! You'll see some of our Christmas activities, from Santa's Grotto to the Mayor's festive visits at your schemes. There is even a Winter's Poem by one of our residents!

Please make it a New Year resolution to attend at least one activity regularly, either at your own scheme or at another scheme.

A big theme for us with residents in 2025 is staying healthy and well. So in this edition our nutritionist gives tips for boosting your winter health with foods that are tasty and affordable.

There are tips for your shopping list, and for planning meals that will be comforting and enticing, as well as doing you good.

Have a lovely festive season and New Year. And do send us your suggestions for the Herald. Tell them to your ILF or email them to [opendoor@cambridge.gov.uk](mailto:opendoor@cambridge.gov.uk)

With kind regards, Laura

## People and News

The City Council has adopted the following four core values. All staff are expected to perform their job in ways that are: Collaborative, Courageous, Compassionate and Accountable. Please let us know if we ever fail to do so.

### New faces

Here at your Independent Living Service, we have some great new recruits to introduce to you. So look who's new - you may have already seen them around your schemes.

This is new Independent Living Facilitator Angela Bennett saying hello:

"Hello, I'm Angela or 'Ange' for short. I'm an ILF for Whitefriars and working to support clients for our 65+ wider community. I am really enjoying getting stuck into my role. Everyone has been very kind and welcoming, and I look forward to meeting those of you I haven't yet met! My background is in Maternity, so this is an exciting change for me. I'm most looking forward to getting to know everyone better, and helping residents and the wider community to continue leading a happy and fulfilling life."



And here is Sandra:

"Hi everyone! My name is Sandra. I'm 25 years old and I'm from sunny Spain! I'm doing the last

year of a degree in Social Work at Anglia Ruskin University, and I'm delighted to be doing my work placement here at Ditchburn Place! I look forward to seeing you around there, if we haven't met already."

## **Pension Credit**

Did you know that if you are over State Pension age and on a low income, Pension Credit can help with living costs, even if you have other income or savings?

It can top up:

- your weekly income to £218.15 if you're single
- joint weekly income to £332.95 if you have a partner

If your income is higher, you may still be eligible, e.g. if you have a disability, care for someone, or have housing costs. Up to £10,000 in savings will not affect your Pension Credit; higher savings would gradually reduce it. You could ask your ILF for help to apply. If you receive Pension Credit, you might also receive help with Housing Benefit, service charges, Winter Fuel Payment, Warm Home Discount Scheme, Council Tax discount, free TV license for over 75's, or help with NHS dental treatment, glasses and hospital appointment transport.

Try the online calculator at [www.gov.uk/pension-credit-calculator](http://www.gov.uk/pension-credit-calculator) for an estimate of how much you might get.

You can apply for Pension Credit online at [www.gov.uk/pension-credit/how-to-claim](http://www.gov.uk/pension-credit/how-to-claim) Or phone 0800-99-1234 to make your application.

## **To be warm and well this winter**

Always wrap up well at home in light layers of jumpers and scarves - even a cosy hat! Wear extra thick socks or two pairs, in furry slippers or boots. Keep a light throw or blanket over your lap when sitting. But ensure you move about at least every hour.

Make a hot drink, do a household task, tidy a room, go to the shop, or step out for a breath of fresh air. Regular hot drinks will warm you twice: while making them and drinking them!

Ensure you have at least one hot meal a day. See our nutritionist's feature on page 9 for warming, affordable meals, and winter foods to stock up on.

Heat the rooms you're in to at least 18°C (64°F). Turn off radiators in unused rooms, closing their doors. But if struggling with heating costs, please tell your ILF. Financial help may be available.

Keep curtains open by day but close them at dusk. Block draughts and put down non-slip rugs on hard floors. When going out, even just in the garden, wear hats, gloves, scarves and warm boots. Take extra care on slippery ground, wearing non-slip soles.

Wear really warm nightwear: thick nighties or pyjamas, bedsocks and slippers, with plenty blankets or duvets on your bed. Use a hot water bottle, though never with an electric blanket.

Stock up on basic cold and flu medicines: you won't want to go out in the cold for them if ill! Get vaccinated, and consider wearing a mask in busy places. Avoid sick people, wash hands

whenever you've been out, and use hand sanitiser from your pocket.

And remember - don't stay alone. Drop in to your neighbours for a quick chat. Ask if they need anything, and why not invite them to yours for a hot cuppa?

### **Oue new sheltered scheme**

Good news! We are shortly going to be opening a new sheltered housing scheme. Called Long Drift Place, it's in Wulfstan Way. So it's close to a GP surgery, local shops, takeaways and a pharmacy, and it's on a good bus route to Addenbrookes hospital and the city centre.

Long Drift was the old name for Cherry Hinton Road, so the name roots the new scheme nicely into the history of the local area.

Watch this space - there will soon be an Open Morning. This will be for the local community, City Councillors, staff and prospective tenants to drop in and have a look around the new scheme.

It includes eight one-bedroom flats arranged on three floors. Each flat includes a double bedroom, level-access bathroom and a kitchen / living area. There is also a communal lounge and kitchen area for tenants to use for socialising and running activities.

All the 'behind the scenes' facilities are also to a high standard, including the heating system, fire safety and fire alarm system. And there is a new Warden Call system to ensure residents can access help at any time of the day or night in an emergency.

### **Know your sheltered schemes**

Last edition's Mystery Scheme was Greystoke, which we now feature here.



Greystoke Court is an Independent Living Service sheltered scheme that is situated opposite Cherry Hinton Hall. The Hall has enchanting grounds for walks, picnics and summer events.

Greystoke Court is within easy walking distance of local shops and amenities. There are convenient bus-stops for routes to Addenbrookes hospital, the train station and the town centre.

Greystoke is an 'outdoor' scheme, with 24 flats laid out in three blocks, called Greystoke, Annesley and Westgate. Each flat enjoys a bedroom, bathroom, kitchen and lounge / dining area. There is a well-tended garden, and there are parking spots for tenants and visitors.

Typical activities at Greystoke Court have included:

- Mondays & Tuesdays, 2-4pm: Bingo, £1 per person
- Wednesdays, 2pm: Afternoon Tea, 50p per person
- Wednesdays, 11am-midday: Chair-based Exercise
- Thursdays, 11.30am-12.30pm: Tai-Chi

Why not get together with a friend or two and go over there to join in with some of their activities? Greystoke residents would love to see you there. Phone 01223-457199 to confirm times and dates. And see inside this edition for activities at many other schemes too.

For an ongoing view of the latest activities at schemes, have a look at the Cambridge Older People's Housing page on Facebook: just type that term in the search box of the Facebook website.

## **Activities for you across your schemes**

Hello again from me, Olivia James-Watts, your Activities Co-Ordinator at your Independent Living Service. As you may know, my post was initially funded by the County Council for just a year. We are very pleased that we now have funding for a further year! This time we have been awarded the Health Discovery Grant. As it says in the title, this grant is focused on improving the health of you, our residents. So as well as the following projects, see too our ways to boost your health with tasty, affordable foods this Winter.



### **New Intergenerational Health Project**

We are working in partnership with charities and council teams to start up an exciting new Intergenerational Health Project. This will initially involve tenants at Mansel Court and School Court working with schools and youth groups to look at their local areas and improve health by going out for short walks. If the project goes well, we will look to extend it to other schemes.

### **Community Gardening with Cambridge University Botanic Garden**

In the summer, eight of our tenants took part in a pilot project with Cambridge University Botanic Garden. We visited the garden once a fortnight and helped to update and maintain their Schools' Garden, a space which is used to show children how fruit and vegetables are grown. Our hard work drew lots of attention. We were even featured in Cambridge Independent newspaper! Some of our participants are going on to volunteer at CoFarm, a community produce farm.

### **Community Gardening in 2025**

We are delighted to continue working with the gardens to run the community gardening

programme again in the Spring. The benefits of spending time growing produce and contributing to a lovely garden space for others to enjoy are endless. For instance, a resident who took part this year said: "I've got a lot of enjoyment out of the sessions. Having a chat and a laugh outside is better than staring at four walls!" So if you are looking to learn new skills, spend some time outdoors and increase your confidence, why not get in touch to be part of next year's programme? Any gardening you do with us can be adapted to suit your needs - there's something for everyone! We can also support you with transport costs to the gardens if that is a concern.

### **Visit from Miniature Donkeys!**

In November, we had some very special four-legged visitors to Ditchburn Place. The miniature donkeys were brought to us all the way from Norfolk. The donkeys visit schools and community settings to bring joy and a smile to people's faces, and to raise our awareness of the importance of animals and their welfare.



### **Christmas festivities**

It's become a lovely tradition now that every year, we open up Ditchburn Place to the revellers of Mill Road Winter Fair. Unfortunately, this year's Mill Road event had to be cancelled, due to dangers from Storm Darragh. But we still opened up Ditchburn Place as it is a safe indoor venue. And though we didn't manage to raise funds this year, we did make back the costs spent on preparations. So a huge thank you to everyone who came to support. We will be back next year bigger and better than ever!

We had Tombola, raffles, a cakes and refreshments stall, delicious mulled wine, and a game to guess how many sweets were in a jar. We had Santa's Grotto for the first time this year and it was a great success! We had no fewer than 3 Santas who offered to help out on the day. A special thank you to Lichfield Road tenant Frank Norman: he was a brilliant Santa in Santa's Grotto, and also made lots of tasty bakes for the cake stand!

Festive visits from the Mayor

There are many heartwarming festive moments at our different sheltered schemes. But a highlight is certainly the Mayor's festive visit! The Mayor has kindly been visiting our sheltered schemes. For instance, he visited Brandon Court for a Christmas Coffee Morning with the tenants, where all enjoyed some good conversation over chocolate and mince pies.



### **Rawlyn Court is a winner**

Congratulations to Sue and Brian of Rawlyn Court. Their gardening won a 1st Prize in the Council's annual Residents' Garden Competition!

Meanwhile, Rawlyn Court Residents' Association were busy too, organising their fundraising Table-Top Sale in September. They had a lot of fun as well as raising £166!

### **A Winter's Poem by resident poet Tony Buddle at Talbot House**

Winter is now with us again  
Bringing the snow, frost and rain.  
Summer passed when days were nice  
And now with cold comes the ice.  
Days get short and lights come on  
Now the longer days have gone.  
The weather we will surely beat  
As indoors we turn up the heat.  
As the rain turns ground to mire  
We spend more time by the fire.  
No more picnics in the park  
As we travel about in the dark.  
The warmer days we still remember  
As the year moves into December.  
And Winter has its lighter side  
As we celebrate our Christmas tide.

### **Boost your winter health with tasty foods**

Tips from nutritionist Dr. Richard Hoffman... The first tip is to always plan your shopping list! The way you buy your food affects your health. The more you plan your meals and shopping list for the week, the more affordable and healthy they can be.

The ideal is to list a week of daily meals, write a shopping list of their ingredients, and do one main weekly shop - great in the cold wintery months. If you want, you can still pop out to the shop every day or two, e.g. to pick up bread, milk or some fresh fruit. But keeping your basic larder and freezer-cabinet stocked is the easiest way to eat healthily and keep your food costs down.

Home cooking from your own larder is the best way to eat cheaply and healthily. What could be better than sitting down to a lovely hot winter meal at home? But how many times have you fancied something, only to find you don't have the ingredients! The trick is to keep your kitchen shelves, fridge and freezer cabinet well stocked with healthy ingredients that get eaten and not wasted. This means planning for buying only what you will use, and knowing how best to store foods.

The basis of healthy eating is a mix of fresh and minimally processed foods. And you can keep many of these stocked in your cupboards and freezer cabinet. Meat, fish and even bread store well in the freezer, with minimum loss of flavour. And they can be thawed quickly in the microwave. Tins, jars and dry ingredients like herbs and spices last a long time in your cupboard. Dairy is fine in the fridge. And winter root veg store well in a fridge or cool place.

Take your shopping-list when you shop! This will help you avoid, as much as possible, ultra-processed foods (called UPFs) like ready-prepared sauces, ready-meals and frozen pizzas. UPFs might seem to save time, but they will never be as cheap or as healthy as a meal you make at home from natural ingredients. Without our list, we can go on auto-pilot in the supermarket, on a well-trodden path that may draw us into the aisles of junk food and unhealthy options. It can feel hard to avoid supermarket strategies pushing them at us, such as 'end of aisle' promotions and two-for-the-price-of-one. But this is where we stick to our list - and refuse to be manipulated by commercial forces! You will save both on money, and on your health.

Have a hot winter breakfast. Good old porridge is your best friend here. Our ancestors had the right idea! It is extremely healthy for your brain and gut. It's very cheap. It takes just minutes to cook as part of your morning ritual. It's a warming food that will help keep you feeling warm and full through till lunchtime. And it's a classic store-cupboard food that keeps well. Top it off with super-food toppings like nuts, seeds, mixed berries, fresh chopped fruit, live yoghurt, honey, even cocoa - or all the above! Keep a bowl of chopped fruit salad in the fridge to top your porridge with, and it can help you get in the fresh fruit you need every day.



### **Store cupboard tips for a healthy Winter**

Eat winter fruits. Seasonal winter fruit like apples, pears, kiwis and citrus are quite cheap, and can all last a long time stored in the fridge. Just take out a few every few days for your fruit bowl: it's decorative, and will remind you to eat them. Mixed berries are another true super food that's especially good for your brain. Buy them frozen and defrost a big handful to eat every few days. Sweeten them with a little sugar or honey, to eat as dessert or with yoghurt, or on top of your porridge.

Eating our winter greens several times a week is especially important as we get older. They bring invaluable benefits for your brain. Try green leafy veg like spinach, kale, cabbage or salad



leaves. Alternate with other greens, like green beans, broccoli or brussels sprouts. Since fresh ones don't last long, plan to eat them within a day or two of buying them. But to keep them longer, just buy frozen! Frozen green veg retain all their goodness, and are super easy to cook. No washing or chopping needed - just take a handful from the freezer and heat them through, or microwave them, or drop them into any dish you're cooking or heating up.

Enjoy a store-cupboard Mediterranean diet. We sometimes think of winter food as being stodgy and dull. Add a bit of sparkle to your normal winter foods with a few Mediterranean touches. Mediterranean food is one of the healthiest in the world. And winter Mediterranean foods include many of our local British fruit and veg. Another big plus of the Mediterranean diet is that a lot of it is store cupboard foods that you can stock up on and keep. Combine them with just a few fresh foods to create a great variety of scrumptious meals. Adding in the following super-healthy store cupboard staples can give you a simple, tasty diet that will add years to your life.

Stock your cupboard with:

- extra-virgin olive oil - this has many health benefits for the heart and brain not found in other cooking oils. Or use rapeseed oil if olive oil is too expensive.
- tins of oily fish like sardines, mackerel and anchovies (ideally in olive oil). These fish are very rich in omega-3 fats that are excellent for your brain.
- pulses in jars, tins or dried: e.g. butter beans, chick peas, lentils, kidney beans. They are a source of protein and rich in fibre, vitamins and minerals.
- super-healthy flavourings that are rich in antioxidants: tinned tomatoes or tomato puree; spices like paprika, cinnamon and turmeric; dried herbs like sage, parsley, thyme, rosemary and basil. A row of live herbs in pots along your windowsill can lift your spirits too.

Have some healthy festive treats. For instance, all sorts of nuts are very nutritious, if you buy them instead of crisps. And dark chocolate (with at least 70% cocoa) has important health benefits, if you choose it instead of milk chocolate. Chocolate-covered nuts are delicious, and much healthier than sugar-filled sweets. And instead of reaching for unhealthy snacks in the supermarket, why not treat yourself instead to an unusual cheese or a fancy, brightly-coloured fruit?

For easy home-cooked recipes for older people, try one of these:

7 Quick and Easy Meals for Older People on the Age UK website at

[www.ageukmobility.co.uk/mobility-news/article/7-quick-and-easy-meals-for-older-people](http://www.ageukmobility.co.uk/mobility-news/article/7-quick-and-easy-meals-for-older-people)