

WCS CARE NEWS

Celebrating 25 years of WCS

Residents lead celebrations across WCS Care homes... **Pages 3 to 6**



Photo competition winners

Find out which entries are set to become greetings cards...

Pages 10 and 11



Get matched to your buddy

New app matches residents' and carers' interests...

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Celebrating 25 years of WCS Care



Celebrations in full swing as residents at Dewar Close celebrated WCS Care's 25th birthday...



By Christine Asbury

Chief Executive

We can't believe it's the end of another year – and what's most extraordinary, is that it's been 25 years since we first took over the running of the homes as WCS Care!

Over the years, there have been lots of changes – and no one is more qualified to talk about those than our residents and staff (read more in our four-page special on **pages 3 to 6** with an added extra on **page 16**).

Highlights include swapping paper

notes for an electronic system (see **page 7**), introducing new ideas like the side-by-side bike-for-two (see **page 8**), and coming up with new ways to help form friendships (see **page 12**).

At 25, we've still got lots to learn but we're already looking forward to many

more milestones – just like Jack and Joan, who are celebrating a fantastic 72 years of marriage. You can learn their secret on **page 15**!

So, sit back, relax, and grab a cuppa (and a celebratory piece of cake, obviously), and enjoy the latest news from WCS Care.

About **WCS CARE** NEWS

WCS News is one way newcomers to WCS Care get to know us, and also a way for everyone else at WCS Care to share their events, thoughts, and ideas.

We try to capture the everyday things that make every day well lived for residents, and show how people carry on doing the things they've always done – and enjoy trying new experiences.

WCS News is only possible thanks to the thoughts and ideas of everyone who lives or works with WCS Care – so if there's something you'd like to see here, please get in touch.

About **WCS CARE**

WCS Care is an independent, not-for-profit care provider, and every day we invite people to choose the things they want to do and to try new opportunities, so that every day is a day well lived.

We started operating in 1992 with a philosophy that put people at the heart of everything we do – it has shaped us into what we are today and continues to be the benchmark of the care we provide. We understand that everyone is different and what matters to our residents, matters to us.

Our staff are skilled and enthusiastic people who find their roles rewarding and enjoyable, which enables us to offer care with a truly friendly and personal touch.

Your everyday experience of WCS Care should reflect our values – play, be there, make someone's day, and choose your attitude. If it doesn't, please don't hesitate to let us know – we value your feedback.



Get in touch

You can get in touch with WCS Care in the following ways:

- Talk to any member of the team or to a home's Duty Manager (their name is displayed in reception)
- Call WCS Care's Head Office on **01926 864 242**
- Leave a voicemail on our Chief Executive's hotline on **01926 856 130** or email chief.executive@wcs-care.co.uk
- Call the relevant home – numbers are on the back of this newsletter
- Email info@wcs-care.co.uk or

- the relevant home using the email addresses on the back page
- Complete a WCS Care Comment Card found in each of the homes' receptions (you can fill these in anonymously if you wish – all cards go directly back to Head Office)
- Speak at a Residents' Forum – ask your Home Manager about the next one
- Write to our Customer Service Support team using the address on the back page



Contact WCS News:

Email: news@wcs-care.co.uk

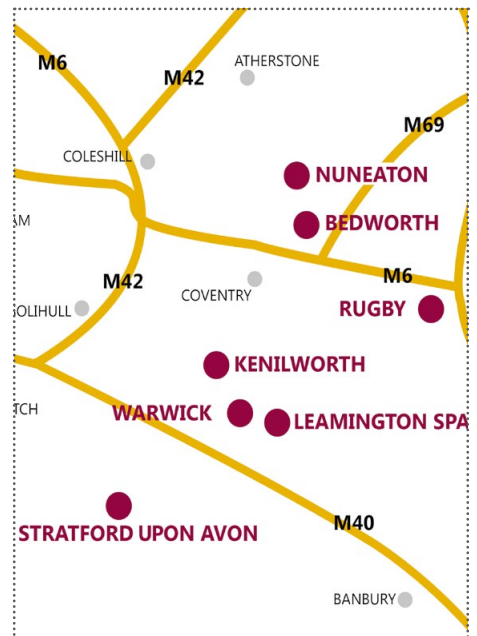
Or call: 01926 864 242

See also:

wcs-care.co.uk
Twitter: @WCS_Care
Facebook: /wscscare



Our locations:



Celebrate good times, come on!

Party like it's 1992 (or 2017)

Can you believe it's been over 9,131 days (or so) since WCS Care began? We can't either! So much has changed over the last 25 years, but one thing remains the same – we're as committed to helping make every day well lived for residents as we were when we first picked up the keys!

Over the next four pages, we'll share photos from our silver anniversary celebrations (below) and explore our past, present, and future...



Two birthdays in one as residents at Drovers House also marked four years since their home first opened



A double celebration at Attleborough Grange as Mary and Pete marked their 59th wedding anniversary during WCS's 25th birthday celebrations



Residents showed staff how to move on the dance floor at Castle Brook



The wet weather didn't dampen spirits for residents and staff at Mill Green's Country and Western-themed party



People living at Drayton Court reminisced about what they were doing when they were 25



Residents enjoyed a spot of line dancing and merriment at Fairfield



Harry's plant sale went down a treat as The Limes celebrated WCS Care's 25th birthday



Fun, laughter, and celebrations at the Sycamores Mad Hatters Tea Party



An afternoon tea party formed part of the celebrations at Four Ways



Marking WCS Care's 25th year with a Disney theme at Westlands



Residents at Newlands enjoyed a vintage tea party and Alice in Wonderland theme

Celebrating 25 years of every day well lived



For over 25 years, Ed Russell has built an extraordinary career in care. His first day in the job set things in motion for him as he went from delivering care to helping shape it.

Hello Ed, thanks for speaking to us. Could you tell us a bit about you?

I was born and raised in Warwickshire and live on my dad's farm with my wife Jo and two children, Megan and Dan.

Before going into care, I studied at agricultural college as I'd planned to go into farming. For a time, I sold advertising space for the inside of rented video boxes but decided that wasn't for me. I even spent a bit of time working in a watch shop on Oxford Street in London.

Then in 1992, I took a temporary carer job as a stop gap... and 25 years on, I'm still here!

What do you remember about your first day in care 25 years ago?

My first shift was on New Year's Day in 1992 – a few months before WCS Care took over. While it was only meant to be temporary, it introduced me to a career that's about people – and one where I knew I could help make someone's day.

It was a chilly Wednesday morning. I was literally thrown in at the deep end, helping residents from the off – no experience, no training. So, I did what I always do – just got stuck in.

The first resident I met brought things home for me – he needed my help with

'Care is very different now to what it was 25 years ago though. It's more than just the basics. Our carers work hard to really understand each person's individual needs; learning what they like and what they don't like.'

Ed Russell, Director of Innovation and Delivery



Newlands resident Paul reminisces with Ed about the 1997 wheelchair marathon, while having a look around WCS Care's newest home, Castle Brook.

Right: WCS Care first launched in 1992...



his personal care. We got chatting about his life and experiences. We had things in common and, before long, he was cleaned up, dressed, happy, and ready for the day.

It was that moment that I realised the impact carers have on the lives of people living here, and the moment I knew this is where I wanted to be.

Has much changed in care over the last quarter of a century?

Absolutely. Back in the 1990s, a carer's role was often seen as getting people up, washed, dressed, fed, and toileted, and residents would often have to entertain themselves – fueling the cliched photos of people gathered in a circle in the communal lounge, watching TV.

Care is very different now to what it was 25 years ago though. It's more than just the basics. Our carers work hard to really understand each person's individual needs; learning what they like and what they don't like.

Listening and responding to residents' own ambitions has helped us shape the care we deliver, and provide opportunities for people to continue doing the things they've always done and try new things.

You'll no longer find people sat gathered around the TV (unless they want to) – they might be joining in with an Oomph! exercise session, enjoying one of the many Club Buddies activities like baking or sewing, out on the side-by-side bike-for-two with a loved one, or enjoying a coffee in the café.

Our carers take an enabling role, helping people do as much or as little as they like.

Technology has a greater role in care now too, compared to 25 years ago.

Electronic care planning means carers spend more time caring, instead of having to write up paper notes; saving an hour per carer per shift that they can spend with a resident on a household.

It's also helped staff change behaviour – since installing acoustic monitoring (a non-intrusive system used at night to listen out for unusual sounds in residents' rooms) in two of our homes, we've been able to end disruptive door-knocking as part of night-time checks, meaning carers are only called into rooms when they're needed (meaning people have a better night's sleep).

During initial trials, the system picked up the noise of staff walking and talking in corridors; something we wouldn't necessarily have picked up on previously. However, as it could have been disturbing sleeping residents, we made sure all night staff wore soft-soled shoes and that any conversations were held away from corridors.

What are your favourite memories over the years?

There are far too many to mention here but if I had to choose a few...

I first cut my teeth as a Home Manager at Newlands in 1995 and during my time there, residents wanted to install a gym – so we organised a wheelchair relay marathon to raise money for the equipment. It was a fantastic success!

In 2000, while managing Attleborough Grange, residents were keen to create a destination to socialise, laugh, and have fun – so we created a 1950s saloon bar in the home; something that might seem the norm nowadays but was unheard of back then.

Over the years, I've met so many people who've lived extraordinary lives. One gentleman was in the Merchant Navy and had survived a torpedo attack and showed me the scars to prove it.

Another lady shared her memories of the moment the First World War broke out – I remember my daughter meeting her and she was overwhelmed with the stories she told.

Where do you see care in the next 25 years?

Care will always involve people – a team of committed and dedicated staff who work hard to ensure that residents continue to live their life how they want to; that will never change.

I think the use of assistive technology will gather pace. We will never build another home without systems such as electronic care planning or acoustic monitoring; staff wouldn't allow it for one because they realise the benefits these have for people living here.

Wearable tech that can monitor every aspect of a resident's health and wellbeing, with the ability to predict potential problems like falls or illness, will become the norm.

However, the future is unset and it's ours to change, so we will help make it as good as it can be. We're already looking forward to the next 25 years!

"...the future is unset and it's ours to change, so we will help make it as good as it can be."

Innovation hub

paves the way for
the next 25 years!



We're always trying new ways to help make every day well lived for people living in a WCS Care home – whether it involves a different way of doing things or using the latest technology, we're not afraid to think 'why not?'

With that in mind, we've launched an Innovation Hub at our newest and most technologically advanced home, Castle Brook in Kenilworth.

The hub is a unique space full of working mock-ups of the latest kit and concepts that we already use in our homes or are set to use in future developments, and are provided by a number of partners of products and services.

It features a recreated bedroom with a night-time acoustic monitoring system that automatically alerts staff to unusual sounds, so they can respond quickly when needed (read more about acoustic monitoring on **page 6** of our Summer 2017 newsletter).

We've installed circadian rhythm lighting at the hub that mimics daylight in the day and creates biological darkness at night, keeping the body in a solid circadian cycle, helping to improve sleep and daytime alertness, which has positive impacts on people with dementia. It has also been installed as part of a trial at Drovers House – more on this in our Spring 2018 newsletter.

Electronic care planning, that means carers spend more time with residents instead of extensive paper recording (see **page 7**), and an advanced nurse call system that alerts staff through handheld devices rather than disruptive call bells, are some of the other technologies that feature.



Over 200 visitors from across the care sector have experienced the hub since it opened earlier this year...



Above: Christine Asbury, CEO, and Ed Russell, Director of Innovation and Delivery, officially launched the WCS Care Innovation Hub...

Most importantly, the hub highlights a different way of doing things, helping hundreds of other care providers and decision-makers think outside of the box and explore ways to be creative and innovative, so that more people have access to high quality care, wherever they are.



Above: Some of the team celebrating 25 years with WCS Care...



Above: Enjoying a meal at Woodside Hotel in Kenilworth to say thank you for 25 years with WCS Care...

Celebrating 300 years with WCS Care!

It's not just WCS Care that's celebrating a special anniversary – twelve of our staff are also marking a quarter of a century with WCS Care... or a fantastic 300 years between them!

Carol Turrell, Lynda Peisley, Shirley Randle, Karen Hughes, Maureen Skinner, Elizabeth Gibson, Tracey Keeling, Tracy Jarvis, Carole Newell, Julian Avery, Ed Russell, and Sharon Wooding have all been with us since 1992 – with many working in the same homes before we ran them.

As a thank you for their contribution to making every day well lived for residents, the team were invited along with a guest

to enjoy a meal and some entertainment at the Woodside Hotel in Kenilworth in November, before being presented with a token of our appreciation.

We're sure you'll join us in sharing our thanks next time you see them.

You can read about the experiences of Maureen Skinner and Lynda Peisley, Housekeeping Assistants at Newlands, in our 'five minutes with...' feature on **page 16**.

Care at the touch of a button as roll-out completes

The way care is recorded has changed a lot in the last 25 years. Back in 1992, carers would spend the last hour or so of their shift writing up notes detailing the care they'd given to residents that day – and that has been the norm for homes across the country for decades, and still is for many. But as Jo Rose, Head of People (right), explains, we're doing things a little differently...



Recording the care that has been given to each resident every day is an important part of a carer's role. It means incoming shifts know what has happened that day and what needs to happen – from what time someone's got up to what they've had for lunch and when they last took their medication.

However, we felt that the time filling in paperwork could be better spent on the households caring, so 18 months ago, we began looking for another way of doing things – as we often do – and searched for a solution that was clear and easy for people to use. That's where Person Centred Software (PCS) came in.

It's a clever piece of software that helps us capture every aspect of a resident's care instantly at the touch of a button, which is now possible at every WCS home, thanks to the successful roll-out of this wireless care plan technology.

Below: Every aspect of a resident's care is captured instantly at the touch of a button...

Monitoring care in real-time

We use small handheld devices, which look like smart phones, to capture all elements of a resident's care quickly and efficiently.

Care is recorded by touching appropriate icons and an algorithm automatically generates the notes (with space to add more specific text if needed) immediately, saving carers valuable time that they can spend with residents. The process is so intuitive, it only takes seconds to complete in real-time.

The information is then fed-back to managers instantly who can monitor care and immediately take action if required. The notes are then instantly available for the next shift at the touch of a button.

Nine of our homes were using electronic care recording by the Summer and we've just finished installing it at Newlands, Mill Green, and Westlands, which means every WCS Care home is seeing the benefits.

Bonnie Burbury, Acting Home Manager at Newlands in Kenilworth, has already started seeing a difference: *'It took a little getting used to at first but staff at Newlands quickly got to grips with the new way of doing things, and wouldn't ever want to switch back to a paper-based system.'*

'Touching icons on the handheld device takes a matter of seconds to accurately record interactions, so carers can spend more time focusing on the care they're providing to residents, rather than writing up notes.'

Relatives' Gateway

It's not just the home's manager that can see the information – we understand the trust that residents and their families put in us, so we've introduced a feature called the 'Relatives' Gateway'.

It's an online system where relatives can keep up-to-date with their loved one's care (with the appropriate permissions in place) in real-time, anywhere in the world with an internet connection, and share photos and messages of their daily life at the same time.

Speak to your Home Manager to find out more about the 'Relatives' Gateway', read about a relative's experience of the system in our Spring 2017 newsletter, or visit our website.



Above: Jo Rose, Head of People, leads on the implementation of PCS with staff...

The green, green grass of home: residents celebrate Mill Green's new garden

It's been fantastic being involved with the development of our new garden at Mill Green and we're delighted that everyone's hard work has created such a beautiful space', said Mick, who officially launched the new outdoor space at his Rugby home during our 25th birthday celebrations in September.

'I'm a keen gardener, so I'm really looking forward to spending more time outside, particularly tending to the flowers and vegetables I've planted – whatever the weather.'

The transformation has been made possible thanks to a £10,000 grant from Tesco's Bags of Help initiative – together with Groundwork, grants raised from the 5p bag levy are awarded to local outdoor community projects – and volunteers from Network Rail

and donations from other local businesses.

Complete with a sensory area, improved wheelchair access, and water features, it's a welcoming space that can cater for residents' changing needs.

The new garden is just one of the ways we encourage people to spend at least 90 minutes outside every week, which can have a number of benefits linked to health and wellbeing.



Above: Mick gets stuck in with the planting as the garden transformation takes place...

Below: The finished result...



In the saddle: bike-for-two and café on the way to Dewar Close!

Excitement is building at Dewar Close as work gets underway to bring some new indoor and outdoor features to the Rugby home.

From early 2018, we're making it easier for residents to access the garden as we finish installing a cycle track for the new side-by-side bike-for-two, the fourth companion cycle at WCS Care (people living at Castle Brook, Drovers House, and Sycamores are already enjoying theirs).

That's not all – the Dewar Close bungalow, located in the car park, is being adopted as a new café for residents, visitors, and staff to use.

They'll also be able to play a game or two on our specially designed therapy table tennis table, giving people of any ability the opportunity to have a go. Residents at Castle Brook and Drovers House also have access to a specially designed table tennis table, so maybe it'll spark a little friendly competition!

Elsewhere, Fairfield in Bedworth is set to be the next home to have a bike and cycle track, which is due to be available in early 2018, along with raised vegetable beds, animals, and a greenhouse.

Keep an eye on our Facebook page for more updates.

Below: Residents will soon enjoy the companion cycle at Dewar Close, joining Drovers House (pictured), Castle Brook and Sycamores...



Above: A Cup Above café is coming to the Dewar Close bungalow in 2018...

New faces in familiar places: introducing Sam Stuart at Fairfield

People living at Fairfield have given their home's new manager a warm welcome.

Sam Stuart has joined the team in Bedworth bringing almost 14 years in care roles with her – as a volunteer, carer, care co-ordinator, and more recently, a domiciliary care branch manager.

'From the moment I walked through the door at Fairfield, I knew I would love it here. Working at WCS Care is so different to anywhere I've been before – just seeing how the values fit into life at Fairfield and how they help make every day well lived for residents is fantastic', Sam said.

'I've settled in really well and everyone has made me feel so welcome in the short time I've been here. It's great seeing residents enjoying themselves and doing what they want to do with their time.

'The support I've received from staff has been fantastic and I'm delighted to be guided by Shirley, one of the service managers who has 25 years'

experience with WCS Care – I'm really looking forward to getting stuck in.'

Outside of work, Sam's busy being a mum to her two children – a nine-year-old boy and a two-year-old girl – and enjoys supporting her son's football team on a Sunday morning, as well as the odd session in the gym or a swimming pool! Welcome to Fairfield and WCS Care, Sam.

Below: Residents welcome new Home Manager Sam Stuart to their Fairfield home...



Quick facts

Name: Sam Stuart

Job title: Home Manager

Lives: Coventry

Favourite school subject: Maths

Hobbies and interests:

Gym, swimming, supporting my son's football team, and being a mum!

Film star that would play you:

Sandra Bullock '...because she's funny!'

'The support I've received from staff has been fantastic and I'm delighted to be guided by Shirley, one of the service managers who has 25 years' experience with WCS Care – I'm really looking forward to getting stuck in.'

Latest CQC reports

The latest CQC reports have been released for Westlands, Sycamores, and Castle Brook following planned, but unannounced, inspections by the care home regulator over the Summer.

They're available on each home's page on our website or on the CQC's website at www.cqc.org.uk

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to speak to your Home Manager.



Below: Judith is delighted that her Westlands home is recognised as 'Good' by the CQC and celebrates with Home Manager Clive Mackreth...



Stop press!

Photo competition winners announced

The results are in and the wait is over! We were inundated with fantastic entries to our summer photo competition, which made picking just twenty images to turn into greetings cards very tough – and even harder to choose the top three!

However, we assembled a trio of keen-eyed judges who poured over almost 100 anonymised images to whittle them down to the final twenty.

The top three winning entries

After much deliberation, the judges have chosen their top three winning entries. Congratulations to our top three!

Winner (digital camera): Sophie Cheshire

Harry's verdict:

'The detail of the petals is excellent. The two tones of the purple and the shading is fantastic. You can see how delicate the flower is and it feels like you could just touch it.'



2nd prize (a photo album): Helen Cooke

Harry's verdict:

'The butterfly lights up the photo and the colours are very vibrant. It's very clear and stands out.'



3rd prize (a photo frame): Elaine Turner

Harry's verdict:

'You're really drawn into this photo – it feels like you're walking down here. It has a fantastic graduation of colour and it's very clear.'



Our judges



Harry, who lives at The Limes, led the judging panel with a helping hand from his family.



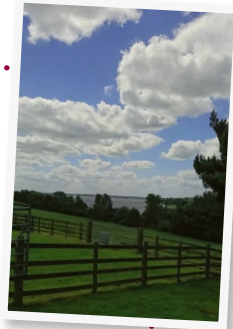
WCS Care's CEO **Christine Asbury** and Trustee **Adrian Levett** completed the judging line up.

Our runners up

Judges also chose 17 runners-up, whose photos will be turned into greetings cards too – you can see them below. Well done to all our runners up!



Sophie Cheshire



Sam, Drovers House



Gemma Slinn



Gray



Susan Jones



Helen Cooke



Jo Cheshire

Our new range of greetings cards will be available in homes from 2018!

All money raised will be re-invested back into the homes.

If your entry didn't make it through, don't worry – there will be more chances to win soon. Thanks for taking part!

New matching app

helps to make a difference

Below: Financial Controller Margaret Costigan and Joan, who lives at Dewar Close, were pleased to be matched on Make a Difference Day...

Making friends when you move into your new home can sometimes be a little daunting, which is why WCS Care has come up with a great app that matches residents to carers who have the same interests as them.



So, when someone first moves in or if a new member of staff joins us, we ask them about what they like doing – everything from their favourite hobbies and pastimes to their sport of choice; it all helps ensure there's a connection from the off.

In October, WCS Care recognised Make a Difference Day – an international campaign encouraging volunteers and communities to come together and improve the lives of others.

To mark the day, our head office team tried out the matching app and spent

a couple of hours getting to know a resident they'd been matched with.

Our Financial Controller, Margaret Costigan, was one of the staff taking part and was matched with Joan, who lives at Dewar Close.

'Joan's a very pleasant lady and she made me feel most welcome at her Rugby home. It was the first time that we'd met but the matching app flagged some of the things we had in common, so it was easy to strike up a conversation and gave a good starting point to learn more about Joan's life.'

'We spent a couple of hours chatting and laughing – it turns out we both have daughters called Alison and we both have links to Coventry! We sang 'Daisy, Daisy' and had a nice cup of tea together – simple things that really made Joan smile. A very humbling experience for me and one I'd happily do again.'

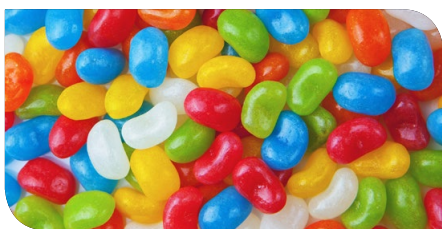
'Having used the app for myself, I can really see the benefits of matching residents with carers who share the same interests and how this can create fantastic friendships, which I had the pleasure of seeing while I was at Dewar Close.'

Introducing our new staff benefits platform



'Your day well lived' is an extra benefit that gives staff offers and discounts in thousands of stores...

Earlier this year, we surveyed staff to ask them if they felt a benefits platform would be useful, offered in addition to their usual pay, terms, and conditions – and not surprisingly, it was a big thumbs up!



It's the little things that can make a big difference – WCS launches a new staff benefits platform...

So, just in time for Christmas, we introduced 'Your day well lived' from Fair Care – an online tool that provides offers and discounts at over 1,600 high street and online retailers, restaurants, gyms, and days out, as well as other useful niceties that help make a difference.

Sue Fox, Lifestyle Coach at Four Ways, has already tried it out and said: *'It's fantastic – I found lots of ideas for Christmas presents I wouldn't have found otherwise, saving money along the way. And I'm certain I'll be using it more regularly in the New Year!'*

We're rolling this out to all our staff and we'll let you know how it's going soon.

Want a new career where you can help make every day well lived while having fun?
Check out the latest WCS Care job vacancies at www.wcs-care.co.uk/opportunities

News in brief

Right: Pat with her daughter Kate, granddaughter Daisy, and Home Manager Jacqui Sheffield...



Residents delighted with a 'marathon' donation

Pat, who lives at Drayton Court, was keen to share the news that her daughter Kate had recently completed the Birmingham Marathon – raising a fantastic £1,143.68 for residents at her Nuneaton home.

So, she invited her family round for a cuppa and a mince pie while they reminisced about Kate's 26.2-mile run – her 7th marathon – which involved eight months of training!

Residents have already decided what they'd like to spend the money on including a sweet cart, mobile toiletries stall, and new activities equipment.



Above: WCS Care lands two accolades at the Caring UK awards...

More national recognition for our approach to care and innovation!

We're pleased to announce that we've picked up two accolades at the prestigious Caring UK Awards, which recognises excellence, innovation, and achievement in all corners of the sector.

WCS Care was presented with the Care Group of the Year and Best Innovation in Care awards during a ceremony in York in December.

Inspirational Warwick home a step closer as work begins

Work is now underway to build our newest, inspirational dementia specialist care home on the former Woodside site on Spinney Hill in Warwick.

Demolition of the old home has almost finished and we're about to start construction of the deluxe village experience for 72 older people and people with dementia, which is set to open in Summer 2019.

We'll keep you up-to-date with progress over the coming months, so watch this space!



Right: Demolition of the former Woodside home is almost complete...

Looking for photos of the festive fun?

Residents had a busy festive season at WCS Care and there are plenty of photos to share. We have a number of ways for you to stay up-to-date with the fun and laughter as it happens:

Our Facebook page is packed full of everyday photos and stories. From residents preparing delicious festive treats to giving their homes a traditional Christmas makeover, it's all there.

And we make sure we only use photos of people who have given written consent, while also assessing each photo to ensure residents' dignity and privacy are maintained at all times.

Simply visit www.facebook.com/wcscare to like, comment, and share with your friends and family.



Our Twitter page shows you what the wider WCS Care team is doing and highlights our work with partners.

To see our tweets, visit www.twitter.com/wcs_care where we share our latest stories.



Facebook in numbers



Over 1,153 page likes
*up to 14 November 2017



Reaching 637,784 people
*2017 so far, up to 14 November

Twitter in numbers



Over 647 followers
*as at 14 November 2017



Over 440 tweets
*as at 14 November 2017

2017 birthday milestones



Residents don't need much of an excuse for a celebration and there are too many to mention here, but we've made sure there's room for some landmark birthdays!

Right: Norah celebrates her centenary at Westlands

A telegram from the Queen, a giant 100th birthday cake, and lunch with family and friends were just some of the surprises for Norah, as she celebrated her centenary at her Westlands home in Rugby on 6 September.

Norah spent time in India when she was a child and enjoyed reminiscing about her experiences as she chatted to the team who brought in an extra birthday treat.



100 YEARS OLD!

Rugby fan Marie welcomed close family to her home at Attleborough Grange to celebrate her 100th birthday on 17th November.

Before they settled in to a delicious lunch, Marie opened her presents and cards (including one from the Queen), and reminisced about days gone by.

100 YEARS OLD!

The fun didn't stop there as Marie hosted another party the next day with visitors from as far afield as China!



Left: Friends and family help Marie mark her 100th birthday at Attleborough Grange

Residents help dance students bring stories to life

Residents at The Limes welcomed a group of dance students from Stratford-upon-Avon College to their home for a chat about an exciting idea to bring memories to life.

They've been sharing stories with the group of fourteen young people, who are turning these past experiences into a dance performance in early 2018.



Above: Students from Stratford-upon-Avon College are preparing a dance performance of residents' lives...

Harry, who lives at The Limes, has a great connection with his new friend Olivia and they regularly enjoy a good afternoon natter.

He said: 'We've been chatting about my life – what I've done and where I've been. We were talking about the vintage dance festival I was at recently and really enjoyed. We're getting on like a house on fire! I can't wait to see how my life experiences look on stage!'

Olivia added: 'I've learnt a lot about Harry already – he's very creative and

Right: When Harry met Olivia – residents welcomed students to their home at The Limes...



loves making things. He's read one of the stories to me that he's written and we've listened to his jazz music.

'It's really nice to work with people like Harry who are living in the community and it's so different to what we've done before. It's a really creative project that will bring stories to life in a unique way.'

We'll share photos of the dance performance on our Facebook page in the New Year.

5 minutes with...

Jack and Joan Elson

With more than 72 years of married life together, Jack and Joan Elson have lots of fun memories to share, so we sent our PR Manager Stuart Goodwin to their home at Drovers House in Rugby to find out more...



Above: Joan and Jack enjoy a special day reminiscing about where it all began for the couple...

Hello Jack and Joan, thanks for talking to us. Could you tell us a little about yourselves?

Joan: I was born in Leighton Buzzard. Sadly, my father passed away when I was five. A few years later, my mother got married again and we moved up to Rugby, where I first saw Jack at the Guard Parade practice. It wasn't long before I got a job at the Telegraph office.

My family moved again and I got a job in a signal box in Long Eaton – it had 71 levers and I knew what each one did. Drivers would often come up and say 'I'll pull this one for you' but they never could!

I've done a lot of knitting over the years but love playing bowls and played for the British Rail Bowls Club. We've even got our grandchildren into it!

Jack: I was born in Hillmorton 95 years ago and I've lived in Rugby all my life. The furthest I ever went on holiday was Loughborough to a relative's farm. I started working on the railways as a 'box boy' in 1939 but it wasn't long before the Second World War, when I was called up for the Marines – until this point, I'd never even seen the sea! I also spent time with the Commandos.

During the war, I travelled the world – including South Africa, India, Yugoslavia, and Italy – for training and to join the fighting. When the war ended, I returned home to Rugby and back to the railway.

Bowls is my sport and I was President of the British Rail Bowls team in Rugby for many years.

You've been together for 77 years – how did you both meet?

Joan: We met in Rugby. One night, Jack came in to the Telegraph office and it clicked from there really. We used to speak on the phone a lot and that's how it materialised. We've been together for 77 years and married for 72 of those.

Jack: While working as a 'box boy' in Hillmorton I was in the Home Guard before being called up, and one morning, I happened to see Joan outside with her step-father as he was the station manager at Clifton Mill. We got in touch and the rest, they say, is history.

And you've recently been back to where it all began for you both?

Joan: We celebrated our 72nd wedding anniversary recently with a trip to Rugby station. It's very different there now to how it was. We had a tour around the station, chatted to staff, and were given some free train tickets to Coventry – it brought back some great memories for us.

Jack: It was a revelation to see the station as it is now, I never imagined it would be like this. It was a lovely surprise to get a complimentary train journey to Coventry too – we were looked after like royalty!

Finally, what is the secret to a successful marriage?

Joan: Give and take! Like any marriage, you have your ups and downs, but you just get over it.

Jack: I agree! We've known each other 77 years and you've just got to give and take.



Above: A photo of one of the signal boxes Jack was responsible for...

5 minutes with...

Maureen Skinner and Lynda Peisley, Housekeeping Assistants at Newlands

Hello Lynda and Maureen, could you tell me a little about yourselves?

Maureen: I was born and bred in Kenilworth – and still live around here. I've got seven children and 21 grandchildren – and 16 great grandchildren, which makes Christmas pretty hectic!

I was a childminder and foster parent for a while, which I still did when I first started working at Newlands. I've worked in the kitchen, the laundry, and on the households.

Lynda: I was born in Kenilworth too and still live here. When I left school, I worked in Boots and was a Filing Clerk at GEC.

After I had my two children, I started at Newlands in 1976 where I worked evenings, doing the offices and corridors, then came into the laundry just before WCS Care took over in 1992.

What do you enjoy most about your role?

Maureen: You meet lots of different people here all the time. It's a good

company to work for, it's close to home and most importantly you get to help the residents live their life how they want to.

Lynda: I really enjoy meeting new people and being part of residents' daily lives. I've always enjoyed working here.

You've worked with WCS Care for 25 years - have things changed much in that time?

Maureen: There have been a lot of changes really – it's very different; residents have more opportunities to do what they want to do. We have two new-build homes (Drovers House and Castle Brook) with a third on the way (Warwick), which is really exciting.

Lynda: We've seen many changes over the years. At Newlands, the building has changed completely on the inside to what it was when I first started; but still with the same homely feel.



Above: Housekeeping assistants Maureen and Lynda celebrate 25 years with WCS Care...

Who would play you if there was a movie about your life?

Maureen: That's a difficult question! I do like Audrey Hepburn. I've always liked her and her films, and think she'd best play me.

Lynda: It has to be Dawn French! She's a bit of a laugh and we've had so many of those over the years.

Have you got a party trick or secret talent?

Maureen: Not really, apart from karaoke. I do enjoy singing, mainly 'I did it my way' and 'Never walk alone' – my kids are Liverpool supporters. Lynda and I are Manchester United supporters, so you can imagine the friendly rivalry!

Lynda: Does starting a conga line at some of the Newlands parties count?

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