



Hanover Inpractice

Volume 2 ■ September 2010

Putting residents first

 **hanover**

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Foreword



There are some truly amazing things being done by Hanover residents and staff across our 600-plus retirement housing and Extra Care estates. They show how individuality and independence is promoted by Hanover across the country.

With so much innovation and local initiative taking place, it can be a challenge to keep track of all the good things going on and, more importantly, to share and learn from them.

Hanover Inpractice began last year as a reminder to colleagues and residents about these inspiring, and in some cases very resourceful, initiatives. I was particularly impressed at how staff and residents had explored partnerships with probation and

youth offending services. There was no shortage of material for this edition.

It's very important at Hanover that residents can exercise choice and control, and live life to the full on their estate and in the wider community. I'm convinced that giving more control to residents makes sense: if choice can be extended to either a resident or to an estate, then I'm keen to make it happen. And what my colleagues and I are finding is that 'letting go' – giving residents more say over the management of their homes and services – usually goes hand in hand with best value.

As we face some tough economic times ahead, it's even more important to share good ideas and provide opportunities for people to find local solutions. I hope the second edition of Inpractice will help to show that retirement housing can be a positive choice.

Bruce Moore
Chief Executive, Hanover

Joint statement



The first edition of Inpractice last year proved popular with residents and staff alike. It really brought home to us how many good ideas were being put into practice and what can be achieved when residents and staff work together.

This year's edition is packed with even more examples and shows the range of different approaches taken locally – at a time when residents and staff are especially mindful of resources.

Our experience shows that Hanover is serious about involving residents and staff in management decisions, and ensuring they're at the heart of what the organisation does. Both Residents' Council and Staff Council have a big input at national level, but Hanover is going the extra mile to ensure there are opportunities for local solutions to local issues. This is because it knows that no estate is the same and because it acknowledges the importance of individuals' views and choices.

So whether you're a Hanover resident or a staff member, or someone interested in Hanover's work, we hope you'll take inspiration from, and apply, the ideas in this publication in a way that works for you locally.

Antony Hamilton
Chair, Residents Council

Cathie Burns
Chair, Staff Council and estate manager

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Voice and choice

Retirement shouldn't mean fewer choices and a smaller voice. In fact, older people on average are the most active age group when it comes to having their say.

Some residents may prefer Hanover to take the lead but we've found that many residents are keen to get involved. When residents have health issues it's perhaps even more important that they can still have a say over their service.



What's clear is that the residents of Hanover's 19,000 homes are all different. We respect their wish to get as involved as they want: the most important thing is that Hanover makes it easy for them to have their say, and to exercise choice, if they want to.

This approach to voice and choice was key to our Customer Service Excellence award in January 2010.

Since then, we've continued to ask residents for their say. Ongoing initiatives include Hanover World, our social networking site for residents, staff and their families and Hanover Intouch – our panel of over 500 residents who have indicated they're happy to be regularly asked about issues of interest to them. And between May and June this year we held a series of resident events, 'Future Choices', in locations ranging from Darlington to Plymouth.

This chapter shows how we:

- encourage residents to take the lead locally through new 'local agreements'
- support residents to have their say in the community
- ensure all residents can get involved if they want to





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- 5th May Darlington
- 6th May Bolton
- 7th May Leeds
- 19th May Ipswich
- 20th May Peterborough
- 26th May Heathrow
- 27th May

Focus on: Local agreements

Hanover estates have had written 'local agreements' since October 2009.

Each of the 600-plus local agreements is different. They capture local decisions – and what's expected of both Hanover and residents – on that specific estate.

The idea is that drawing up and reviewing a local agreement gives residents greater choice and say on their estates. So, if residents aren't happy about something, they can explore

alternatives. For example, residents now decide which firms carry out repairs on their estate. And they can also decide what 'rules' should apply on things like use of their car park if issues arise. Any key changes are then captured in the local agreement.

Local agreements cover a range of issues. The only local things that are non-negotiable are where Hanover needs to take the lead as a responsible landlord and a fair and reasonable employer.

WINDSOR COURT, BOLTON

The residents' car park and guest room were becoming a bit of an issue at Windsor Court. Residents asked estate manager John Harding about reviewing both – and setting down any decisions in the estate's local agreement.

John says, "While there were enough spaces for all residents, the car park had become a bit of a 'free for all' with little or no policy setting out

where and when visitors should park."

The existing guest room policy was seen as unfair by some residents. John says, "It said that residents' bookings had to be cancelled if the room was needed urgently."

Options were reviewed by the estate's Residents Action Group, with the help of area manager Joanne Greenhalgh.

Following consultation, they agreed it was fairer to:

- Have a 'residents only' parking policy, but with guidance on where and when visitors could park.
- Amend the guest room policy so that all bookings stand, but with a guide to other places where residents' family and friends could stay in emergencies.

The estate agreed to review the new parking policy in six months' time when a longer term policy on parking can be considered. Action Group member Laurie Newton says, "The process was about working as a community and everyone having a say over how things work."

➔ For more on local agreements at Hanover contact: inpractice@hanover.org.uk





Staff spotlight

Name: Joanne Greenhalgh

Job: Lead Retirement Housing Manager (RHM), North

Time at Hanover: 11 years

Jo's job is to make sure things run smoothly in her patch. Her team includes three estate managers who she supports in the overall management of their estates. As a lead RHM, Jo is also there for her fellow RHMs.

They all have a key role in helping residents use local agreements. "We've learnt as we've gone along," Jo says. "The main lesson has been that residents need to drive this work."

As each estate is different, Jo's involvement in local agreements varies. "I got involved quite a bit at Windsor Court," she says, "but I was much less involved at a home ownership estate where residents were mainly interested in the clarity that a local agreement could offer in addition to their lease."

Jo says that residents don't always use the term

“It doesn't matter what the process of 'local agreement' is called: so long as a process is happening!”

'local agreement'. "What's important," she says, "is that residents know that things can be changed: the guest room policy, estate manager services – or whatever it is that people want reviewed."



The battle of hustings

“I asked Mr Clarke at the end about the potholes on our road – he listened to what I had to say.”

– Albert Watling, Violet Elvin Court resident

Sherringham and Cromer estate manager John Walsh has a keen interest in politics. With the General Election around the corner, and Norwich South a marginal seat, he thought the parliamentary candidates could do with a grilling from Hanover residents.

John invited candidates from the main parties to Violet Elvin Court in Norwich and was delighted when all four accepted.

The hustings event was a hit: the candidates addressed a packed room and local and national media were present.

John had a few questions of his own up his sleeve just in case things went a bit quiet.

But he needn't have worried: the politicians were put on the spot about health, pensions, social care and benefits and how the candidates' parties planned to fund their promises. One resident, Albert Watling, also managed to grill incumbent Charles Clarke MP on his own about some local issues.

Residents got to know the candidates better – but didn't reveal if it would affect their ballot paper!

John is already thinking about a local hustings event for councillors and would-be councillors too. “That could work even better,” he says, “we could really get stuck into some very local issues then!”

➔ To find politicians in your area go to: www.direct.gov.uk (Government, citizens and rights link)





HANOVER CLOSE AND DANBURY GARDENS, LEICESTER

Bus gets 'Thurms-up'

When their local bus service was shelved, Hanover Close residents vowed to bring it back.

The bus was a vital local service: without it many residents struggled to visit friends and to make regular trips to the shops, the library and their local GP. Some residents even moved out because they didn't want to rely on taxis or help from family and friends.

They needed to show that the route was commercially viable. Estate manager Marion Waddington knew that Hanover residents in nearby Danbury Gardens needed a bus service too. She supported residents from both estates to lobby local bus companies, local councillors and others at Leicester City Council.

Success came three years, and hours of meetings, later: local company Thurmaston agreed to serve both Hanover Close and Danbury Gardens and the Council gave the new route the formal nod.

“The new bus service is brilliant. It shows that older people can help each other and make a difference.”

– Margaret Murray, resident

The service started on 4 May and Marion says, “I’m very proud of those residents who gave up their time and spoke for others who were not able to attend the meetings.” She thinks the campaign worked because it had a clear aim backed up with evidence, it targeted the right people and it was driven by very determined residents!

➔ For local campaigning ideas go to: www.ageuk.org.uk/get-involved



#4

POPPYFIELDS, ST NEOTS, CAMBRIDGESHIRE

Planning for the future

“Having the planning people here helped us to visualise the proposals.”

– Muriel Shuckburgh, resident

When planning permission was asked for new homes next door, Poppyfields estate manager Nicky Ellison made sure that all residents had the chance to have their say.

Nicky says, “It was important that residents played an active part in expressing any concerns they had, particularly as the only access to the proposed development was the estate road.”

Several residents at Poppyfields have dementia, so Nicky contacted Huntingdon District Council who agreed to provide a range of large scale plans and colourful visual images and extended the consultation period. The extra time meant

residents, their families and friends had plenty of time to view the display of plans.

A special daytime meeting, with tea and cakes, was then held at Poppyfields for residents, planning officers and local neighbours.

At the formal planning meeting, councillors turned down the plans, citing many of the residents’ concerns.

When new plans were submitted, a public display was held at Poppyfields and residents were able to discuss their concerns with developers directly. Amended plans were eventually passed on appeal.

Nicky says the process was a real success: “The residents rose to the occasion like you’d expect any group of adults who cared about their neighbourhood to do.”

➔ For more on Hanover’s engagement with residents with dementia, email: inpractice@hanover.org.uk

“Our care team does a great job. But it’s good to know we can have more say about our care if we want.”

– Olive Williams, resident



HARP HOUSE/HELMORE ROAD, BARKING & DAGENHAM, LONDON

Up2Us

#5

Residents at Harp House and Helmore Road see a lot of Sandy Foskett. She’s been asked by Hanover and Barking & Dagenham Council to explain to residents how they can have more say over their services when ‘personal budgets’ are introduced.

Personal budgets and ‘personalisation’ is a government idea that aims to give people who benefit from social care and housing support funding more say over how that money is allocated to them.

Sandy is one of six coordinators for ‘Up2Us’: a three year national pilot project overseen and part-funded by housing charity HACT.

Up2Us looks at how personal budgets will affect housing association residents. Site-based services like care and support, which Hanover and others provide, currently rely on most residents using them to make them viable. These services will need to be more flexible to respond to personal budgets.

Some residents may still want to ‘spend’ their allocated funds on the current service; but others might want to ‘buy’ alternative services – individually or together as a group. ‘Bulk-buying’

could result in better value for money – and encourage new services too.

Sandy’s pilot is the only one to focus on older people. She says, “Many residents are pretty happy with the services they have now, but there is always room for improvement!”

➔ For more on Up2Us go to: www.hact.org.uk/up2us



#6

RUNNYMEDE COURT, NOTTINGHAM

You can Canton us



Estate manager Carol Graham works hard to ensure that all Runnymede Court residents have an equal chance to get involved.

Nottingham has a large Chinese community and language barriers initially hampered efforts to engage all residents on the estate.

Residents Mr and Mrs Yu have played a big part in turning this around. Iris Yu is very active in the local community: she chairs the Nottinghamshire Chinese Community Association and is an impressive fundraiser – she recently received one of three coveted MuLan Chinese Community Woman of the Year awards.

Iris offered to interpret at meetings and boosted attendance at these and social events from virtually nothing to at least 80%. She explained to Hanover staff that, for historical reasons, literacy among female Chinese elders was likely to be low. As a result, Iris says, “Hanover’s leaflets in Cantonese were well-meaning but not really working.”

When Iris isn’t around, the estate hires the interpretation service offered by the Chinese Welfare Association.

The estate plans to review social activities to boost interaction even more. But Carol says, “I often overhear Cantonese and English speaking residents teaching each other basic new words!”

➔ For more on promoting diversity within Hanover email: inpractice@hanover.org.uk



“I’m always trying to get more Chinese people to live here: the staff are so friendly, helpful and understanding.”

– Iris Yu, resident



NORTH EAST ESTATES

Power to the people!

Retirement Housing Manager Colin Garbutt and his team of estate managers in the north wanted to reach out to more residents.

They knew that many residents found existing regional forum meetings a little formal. So, Colin sent a 'sincere invitation' to all 20 estates in his area to a meeting where they would set the agenda.

The majority of the 30 residents who went to the February event at estate Howden Dene had never attended a Hanover meeting before. After an introduction, the residents were given 20 minutes alone to come up with their own agenda, which caused quite a stir!

Residents' issues included social activities and contact between estates. But Hanover's transfer policy surprisingly topped the agenda.

A follow-up meeting in July attracted 70 residents. Chief Operations Officer Rona

“I know I'm not alone in recognising, and appreciating, this more customer-facing attitude from Hanover.”

– Barry Bromley, Claypath Court resident

Nicholson was invited and after she heard more about transfer issues, she asked Hanover's Senior Management Team to review the policy.

'It's Your Day, Have Your Say' received great feedback and will now be a regular event in the north. Colin says it cost very little to organise. He's got more ideas too and says, "Ultimately, we'd like the residents themselves to start leading this new open approach to meetings."

➔ For more on other engagement initiatives at Hanover email: inpractice@hanover.org.uk

Better homes

Retirement can mean more time to enjoy your home – so it's important to live somewhere nice. Many Hanover residents also benefit from communal space on their estates where they can socialise and enjoy group activities.

Hanover already has a good record in providing high quality homes. We met the Government's Decent Home standards – the minimum requirements in social housing – well ahead of the 2010 deadline. But we're keen to help residents make their homes as attractive as possible – going beyond the basics – and to make money go even further in these tough economic times.



For example, Hanover's Greenshoots fund helps residents to improve their communal areas by giving grants of up to £2,000 for anything from garden spruce-ups to large plasma TVs. In return, we ask residents to raise 20% of the total cost – they've come up with an impressive

range of fundraising ideas, often helped by their estate manager, which have helped them secure this cash for their estate.

This chapter shows how Hanover is seeking to improve residents homes through:

- new approaches to repairs and small jobs
- incentivising residents to invest in their homes
- working in partnership with organisations to bring in voluntary expertise – saving residents money and helping individuals from the local community into the bargain



#8

Focus on: Local repairs

Repairs is a hot topic for residents. Many housing associations use one national contractor for all their repairs. But Hanover residents like using local contractors and said they'd like more say on local repairs.

So, from 1 April 2010, Hanover gave each estate its own repairs budget and estates now only use approved local repairs contractors selected by residents.

Individually, residents can now:

- nominate contractors, and choose them from the estate's approved list

- ask their estate manager to log it or report the repair themselves by calling our Chippenham repairs centre
- agree an appointment that suits them
- score how well the contractor did their repair: this is fed into performance information for the estate

Collectively, residents can now:

- Review contractors on their estate-approved list, especially if performance isn't up to scratch or isn't value for money

DOVE COURT, BRADFORD

Dove Court was built in 2007, so its new repairs budget is small compared to older estates. Estate manager Mohammed Ajaz says, "If we're spending wisely, that's fine."

Mohammed says, "Some repairs were being called in as emergencies – at the weekends when I'm not here – when they probably could have waited." Being clearer about what repairs might be 'emergency', 'urgent' and 'routine' has helped: residents have now asked for a full breakdown of contractors' call-out and hourly costs.

'High' care needs at the estate hasn't stopped interest in repairs – and most residents are offering feedback on their repair jobs. Resident Mr Shaikh says, "I feel I've got more say over my repairs now – it's easier to see if repairs are good value."

Residents' views, often sought and received in different languages, have come together in the estate's 'local agreement'. Mohammed says, "Residents were, by and large, pretty happy with the contractors being used by the estate already. But they felt it was very important that the repair was completed on the first visit, the area was left 'clean and tidy' and agreed appointments were kept."

These and general performance issues, along with costs, will be discussed at the residents' annual service charge meeting. As well as updates through the estate newsletter and regular coffee mornings, residents will be sent a six-monthly repairs statement. "The new system's involved a lot of change for residents and estate managers," says Mohammed, "but it's all good change so far!"

→ For more on Hanover's local repairs email: repairsteam@hanover.org.uk





Staff spotlight

Name: Mohammed Ajaz

Job: Estate manager, Dove Court

Time at Hanover: 7 years

Mohammed's job is to make sure that residents at Dove Court, an Extra Care estate, are happy in their home. He says, "I check they're OK, remind them about our facilities and put them in touch with local services. I also get new residents settled in, organise repairs and make sure all's well in our halal-friendly restaurant."

Mohammed aims to make everyone feel comfortable and at home. He works alongside Bradford Home Care, the on-site bilingual team who provide care to residents and the multi-cultural Day Centre which meets at Dove Court.

Mohammed is fluent in Punjabi and Urdu. And his manager, Extra Care Housing Manager Jas Samplay, speaks Punjabi and Hindi. Local agreement sessions are therefore offered in different languages – so residents can get fully

“No two days here are ever the same. This job needs you to be flexible.”

involved in estate decisions, including repairs. Free English classes are also offered on Sundays. The volunteer also teaches Arabic – “I'm learning too!” says Mohammed.





#9

HANOVER COURT AND CLAYPATH COURT, DURHAM

‘You’re hired!’

When Finchale Training College in Durham asked estate manager Frank Peel if he could offer a work placement, Frank was happy to give it a try.

Students are referred to Finchale from across the country by Job Centre advisers. The college offers expertise and support in finding employment, so work placements are key to this.

Frank and Paul Routledge (an estate manager at a nearby home ownership estate) came up with a 10-week general maintenance placement – across both sites – for 37-year-old Nick.

There was quite a bit of paperwork involved, and Nick had to undergo a CRB check, but Finchale took care of all expenses in return for Hanover’s support. Nick did a range of work including painting, installation and maintenance of light fittings, gardening and lots of general tidying up.

“Through my training and work placement at Hanover I’ve gained full-time employment – thanks!,,

– Nick, vocational trainee

Frank says, “Residents noticed the improved appearance of the estates, especially the attention to detail.” Residents were also very aware that much of the work would have been ‘service chargeable’.

Nick has now secured a full-time job as a maintenance operative at Finchale College itself. Frank and Paul are very pleased with the outcome and are ready to help out again.

➔ To find local vocational colleges go to: www.direct.gov.uk (Education & learning link)

“It’s lovely to have somewhere nice to meet up with friends and neighbours for a get-together.”

- Mrs Phyllis Smith, resident



WHEELERS FARM GARDENS, NORTH WEALD , ESSEX

Easy as 1, 2, 3D

#10

The Residents’ Association at Wheelers Farm Gardens thought it was a shame that the communal lounge wasn’t used more to socialise.

They agreed that a big screen to watch sports and other events, plus films, would encourage them to use the room together more often – especially in the winter months when they were less likely to venture out!

With the help of estate manager Helen Brown, the residents applied to Hanover’s Greenshoots fund and were thrilled when they received their £1,353 grant for a TV and entertainment system. The Association had already raised their 20% contribution through regular coffee mornings.

Since getting the new telly, residents have

watched World Cup matches and tucked into a champagne cream tea as they watched the Wimbledon Final! They’re planning ‘race nights’ and also intend to buy a Wii.

The fancy speakers make watching films that bit more special – and the screen handles 3D nicely. Helen reckons that she’s seeing the residents in the lounge a lot more these days. She says, “It’s a lovely room, and I know that when it gets colder the residents, especially the frailer ones, will enjoy getting together for cosy film afternoons.”

➔ For more information on Hanover’s Greenshoots fund email: engagement@hanover.org.uk



#11

HILL VIEW MANOR, KNARESBOROUGH, NORTH YORKSHIRE

A spa-kling idea

Estate manager Jan Gallagher's weekend spa break made her wonder if residents could enjoy similar treats – but on their doorstep.

The estate's Social Committee loved her idea of turning a relatively unused room into a well-being centre. But they needed cash to buy initial items.

After a successful application to Hanover's Greenshoots fund, bringing with it £2,000 to match their own 20% contribution, 'The Sanctuary' was born.

The Sanctuary welcomes residents, staff and the wider community.

Treatments include facials, massages, reiki healing, reflexology, aromatherapy, manicures, pedicures, nail-cutting and much more. The rates are cheaper than the local high street, and the Social Committee even get 20% of the funds back into their takings.



But, most importantly, it's enabled residents to participate in a full range of services and has improved quality of life on the estate.

Jan says, "All it takes is a room that isn't used much and time to look on websites for ideas." A start-up fund will also be needed but this could be recouped quickly if The Sanctuary is anything to go by!

→ For more information on Hanover's Greenshoots fund email engagement@hanover.org.uk

“It's great to have a facility like this, especially for those of us who can't go out much.”

- Jean Elsdon, resident



#12

ESTATES IN HACKNEY, LONDON

The fixers

Hackney residents can call on their friendly handyerson service if they need something fixed.

The free service was introduced in July 2008 to deal with small jobs ranging from light bulb replacement to minor plumbing repairs – some of the jobs are those that residents would normally be responsible for themselves.

To report jobs, residents can call the Hackney office – or their estate manager can email the Hackney office on their behalf. Handyersons Emilio and Islam are then assigned jobs – they average around seven or eight each per day.

Emilio and Islam have proved a hit with residents – with almost 800 Hanover homes in the London borough they're kept busy. The volume of work – plus the money it saves on calling out repairs contractors – means the service offers good value.

“Emilio and Islam are brilliant. Now I don't have to worry about small jobs I can't do myself.”

– Suliman Amod, resident

The pair also know that residents really appreciate their help. Emilio says, “Changing a light bulb, or nailing down loose carpet, might not seem like a big deal. But these things cause accidents and it's a stress if you can't do it yourself.”

➔ For more information on the handyerson service contact: inpractice@hanover.org.uk

#13

ALDWYN PLACE, ENGLEFIELD GREEN, SURREY

By Royal appointment

“We were happy to help out and I know the students really enjoyed getting creative!”

– Phil Simcock, Volunteer Manager, Royal Holloway

Estate manager Lynn Ireland knew that some of the communal areas at Aldwyn Place could do with a bit of ‘pizzazz’. She called on the help of students at nearby Royal Holloway.

The undergraduates were looking for local work to coincide with National Volunteering Week. For the past five years the university’s Community Action Volunteers, Students’ Union and sports association have teamed up to help out local organisations.

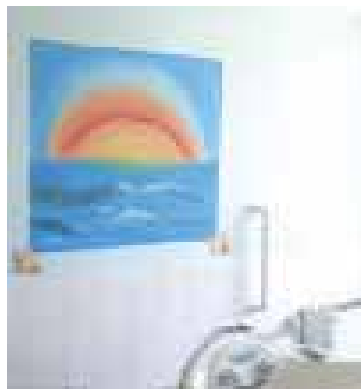
Residents at the Extra Care estate agreed that murals and wall decoration that fitted with existing themes would be really welcome.

So, over two days, the 16-strong student group set about cheering up communal corridors, lounges and other areas which were a bit ‘drab’.

Their impressive works include a Paris skyline along the tea-bar, a washing line in the laundry, a sunrise and a sunset in the assisted bathrooms and a striking hallway jazz band.

Lynn says, “Some murals were more popular than others, but we think the group did a fantastic job and hope we can work together again next year.”

➔ For more information on National Volunteering Week go to: www.volunteersweek.org.uk





HANOVER CLOSE, ST NEOTS , CAMBRIDGESHIRE

Ideal homes

Alan Fosdicke and his wife Marion were first in line for Hanover's 'copayments' pilot scheme.

The scheme helps eligible tenants to buy the kitchen or bathroom of their choice - Hanover then pays towards the price and installation and takes care of future maintenance.

The idea is that residents who don't want to wait for Hanover to replace their kitchen or bathroom can get one sooner if they contribute cash themselves. Hanover's level of contribution depends on the age of the kitchen and bathroom and when they would have been replaced otherwise.

Alan and Marion's estate, Hanover Close, is one of the 38 pilot sites. When the couple learned that they could get 80% (the maximum) towards their kitchen and 40% towards their bathroom, they signed up. The combined total that Hanover will pay as a contribution is £10,000.

“Our new kitchen and bathroom are lovely – the copayment scheme was ideal for us!”

– Alan Fosdicke, resident

The couple decided to use one of their estate's local contractors and they're very pleased with the work. Estate manager Denise Bedding says, “The pilot's been really popular on our estate – two other flats have had stunning new bathrooms.”

The pilot is due to be reviewed in September when Hanover will decide whether to 'mainstream' this initiative.

➔ For more on copayments email: inpractice@hanover.org.uk

Value-added support

Retirement can mean more time to enjoy life, try new things and look after yourself.

But living on a retirement income can also make it important to ensure services are cost effective and value for money.

Some things, such as mutual support and the companionship of neighbours don't cost anything.



But for those who want and need more, Hanover seeks to offer a range of flexible 'value-added' services that don't break the bank and that residents can opt in to if they want.



Value-added support can range from volunteers sharing computer know-how to an on-site care team at one of our Extra Care estates.

There's huge pressure on the public purse at the moment: and also interest in services that retirement housing can offer to prevent and reduce costly health and social care bills.

This chapter shows how Hanover seeks to offer individuals and public services value for money by:

- maximising residents' income
- boosting residents' health by encouraging them to eat well and be active
- improving quality of life through extra services that, for some residents, make the world of difference



Focus on: Benefits advice

Hanover staff are always looking for ways to help residents maximise their income.

This is mainly achieved by helping to keep residents' costs down. But we also try to make sure that residents are getting the financial help they need.

Encouraging residents to apply for benefits is an important service at Hanover. Many older people don't claim benefits that are rightfully

theirs: maybe because they don't know they're entitled, they want to keep their finances private or because they feel uncomfortable about claiming.

More estate managers are being trained to use Lisson Grove – a computer package that calculates whether residents are eligible for benefits. The idea is that residents are often encouraged to make a formal benefits claim once they know they may be eligible for help.

HANOVER COURT, THETFORD, NORFOLK

Estate manager Dennis Eames could see that one of his residents, Myrna Browne, was struggling money-wise.

Myrna had previously owned a home and had a little saved so she didn't think she'd be entitled to benefits.

But Dennis says, "I thought there was still a chance she might be eligible and told Myrna that she had nothing to lose by trying."

“I couldn't believe I was entitled to all that money! More people should look into benefits.”

Dennis had been trained to use Lisson Grove. When the programme indicated that Myrna could qualify for Pension Credit, and therefore housing and council tax benefits, Dennis put her in touch with experts at their local Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB). The CAB helped Myrna with her application.

Because Myrna had sold her property, and had then used some of the capital for other things, the local Pensions Service needed to visit Myrna to check her claim. Dennis was able to personally advise them that he had persuaded Myrna to apply for Pension Credit.

Myrna is now a whopping £105.48 better off per week, and was also owed £2,830 in backdated benefit. She is over the moon: "It's only because of the Lisson Grove programme and Dennis' perseverance that I've got this extra money. It's made such a difference to my life."





Staff spotlight

Name: Sharon Moore

Job: Welfare Rights Adviser

Time at Hanover: 21 years,
in different roles

Sharon is Hanover's resident expert on welfare benefits. Based within the Service Centre team, a big part of her role is sharing her up-to-date expertise with colleagues around the country. Sharon says, "It's very rewarding work, but there are never enough hours in the day!"

Four of Sharon's Service Centre team colleagues have volunteered to be 'benefit champions': they receive extra training on welfare benefits. And Sharon helps to train estate managers and any staff who are well-placed to assist residents. Training includes basic information on key means-tested and disability-related benefits. Colleagues are also guided on how to use the Lisson Grove programme. "The programme is only an initial assessment as it relies on the

“Benefits information is tricky; it's much better to signpost than to give the wrong advice.”

accuracy of the information provided by the resident,” Sharon says, “but it's enabled us to help lots of residents.”



“The class keeps me mobile, and I like the social side too!”

- George Birtkenshaw, resident



#16

CEDARWOOD, POYNTON, CHESHIRE

Fighting fit

The fitness bug is spreading at Cedarwood after estate manager Cheryl Jackson started offering keep fit classes to residents!

Demand is so popular she now runs two sessions every Tuesday. One class is chair-based – and using yellow bands residents reckon they can lift their arms higher than before.

George Birtenshaw is a regular. He moved to Cedarwood just over a year ago and is new to the area too so he found it was a great way to get to know fellow residents. Cheryl says, “It’s pretty sociable – we tend to round off the classes with a chat over tea and biscuits. After the workout, we think we deserve it!”

Cheryl’s oldest student Derek, 96, used to be a champion swimmer. “He’s in amazing shape, and a real inspiration,” says Cheryl. But she reminds each class they only need to do exercises to their own limits. “Even wiggling your fingers to music is still gentle exercise,” she says.

Residents pay £2 for each class – but this is donated to Age Concern Cheshire East who provide a lot of services, including computer lessons, to the estate. Cheryl paid to complete the Beth Johnson Foundation’s Active in Age training programme so she could teach the residents but says that local charities might help with the cost. “Residents love the classes – I’d definitely recommend that others get trained up,” she says.

➔ To find out more about the Beth Johnson Foundation’s training go to: www.bethjohnson2.cswebsites.org





HANOVER CLOSE/LORD WARDEN AVENUE, WALMER, KENT

95 not out

Mrs Sibson, 95, hadn't been taken out in her wheelchair for at least a year – save the odd hospital visit or trip to see her doctor.

When Mrs Sibson told Sue Sheppard, one of three new floating support officers who provide extra support to Hanover residents in Kent, Sue offered to take her for a walk. They went to nearby Walmer seafront and Sue says, "It gave Mrs Sibson a great deal of pleasure."

Mrs Sibson often isn't up to going out, but Sue pops round at least every week to check she's OK. "She's an avid reader so I bring her a selection of books from the mobile library –she's read a lot of them already!"

Sue's post is funded by Kent's Supporting People team and offers help, especially to more vulnerable residents, in addition to assistance from their estate manager.

Sue's job can be varied and has included

“I'd not been out in a long time. I thought: how nice that someone cares this much about older people.”

– Mrs Sibson, resident

putting residents in touch with social services, helping with benefit entitlements and a blue badge application. She offered particular help to a resident and his wife after a hospital stay.

Sue says, "My job can involve small things, but they do seem to really enrich the lives of the older residents that I visit."

➔ For more on Supporting People-funded services at Hanover, email: inpractice@hanover.org.uk



#18

CHERWELL CLOSE/HANOVER COURT, CROXLEY GREEN, HERTFORDSHIRE

Clay of sunshine

When Croxley Green residents said they were interested in an arts and crafts class, residents Jane Wallbridge and Yvonne Walker were keen to offer their help.

Jane has taught music and enjoys crafts – and Yvonne is a dab hand at needlework.

The two estates, one home ownership and one rented, come together every two weeks. They vary the materials, so they could be working with clay and paper – or embroidery if Yvonne is there.

Residents who rarely go out pop down just for the class. And the crafts are geared towards those with arthritis – that includes Jane who says crafts, such as claywork, help flexibility in her hands.

The crafty bunch, when they're not concentrating, have a good chat too – so it's a very sociable activity. Jane particularly appreciates the enthusiastic thanks she got from one usually quiet resident with dementia.

“I love crafts and I like teaching others, so I was happy to lead the new group.”

– Jane Wallbridge, resident and tutor

Estate managers Candy Sands and Verona Douglas-Grant say they'd recommend a resident-led group to other estates. Verona says, “Anyone can run the group if they have some knowledge of crafts.” And Candy says that materials needn't cost the earth either: “Jane and Yvonne managed to get a Greenshoots grant, but residents could also fundraise themselves.”

➔ For more information on Hanover's Greenshoots fund email: engagement@hanover.org.uk

“I’m surprised to see how much growth there is with the fruit and flowers – the colours are really amazing.”

- Mrs Thelma Joseph, resident



HEDGEROW COURT, NEWHAM, LONDON

Food for thought

#19

Hedgerow Court, an Extra Care estate, is big on healthy eating.

Their restaurant has always promoted healthy menus – and now residents have started to grow their own veg too!

The restaurant also serves as a lunch club open to older people in the community. It’s just received a ‘Healthier Options’ gold star award from Newham’s Stay Well Healthy Living Network which aims to make healthy food affordable and accessible for people over 50.

The award will give Hedgerow residents access to free training and access to most

health and fitness activities run at other partner organisations within the Stay Well network. This includes yoga, Tai Chi, salsa, African dance, cake decoration and cooking and healthy eating demonstrations, to name a few!

Estate manager Caroline Emerure says, “Residents will be able to learn how to prepare more healthy meals themselves.” Hopefully that will include handy tips on how to make nutritious dishes with all that homegrown fruit and veg!

➔ For more on healthy eating on Hanover estates, email: inpractice@hanover.org.uk



#20

ASHBY MEADOWS, SCUNTHORPE

Gym'll fix it!

“The Tai Chi machine’s great: but I prefer going out there in the summer when it’s less chilly!”

– Frank Lucas, resident

Who needs gym membership when you’ve got gym equipment on your doorstep?

Residents at new Extra Care estate Ashby Meadows have an outdoor gym right outside their homes – including a Tai Chi spinner and a Hip Twister. Both machines encourage gentle, but effective, exercise.

Outdoor gyms are becoming more common. But Vivien Lyons, who helped to develop the new Scunthorpe estate, says an article about one in Manchester gave her the idea of something specific for older people. “Since then, I’ve been speaking to Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) to see if we can get some gym equipment on our new Extra Care

estates. The one at Scunthorpe is the first to be realised.”

Vivien and the local PCT successfully applied for funding from two sources. The Big Lottery Fund’s Awards for All programme offers grants of between £300 and £10,000 to community projects. And Tesco’s Community Aid scheme provides one-off donations of between £500 and £4,000 for community equipment and resources that benefit older people and others in the community.

The gym was unveiled at Ashby Meadows’ official opening in February by Hanover Chair Lord Best and Local Government Association Chair Dame Margaret Eaton.

Estate manager Dionne O’Sullivan says, “The machines are designed to be used by two or more people at the same time, so that residents can exercise sociably!”

➔ For more on the Big Lottery Fund and the Tesco Charitable Trust go to: www.biglotteryfund.org.uk and www.tescopl.com/communities/tesco-charity-trust





#21

HANOVER COURT, MULBARTON, NORFOLK

No shaggy dog story

“It’s lovely to see the pleasure the dogs bring, especially to those who used to be dog-owners.”

– Karen Turner, Pets As Therapy volunteer

Fendi and Roman are regular visitors to Hanover Gardens. The two Leonbergers are owned by Karen Turner, who volunteers for Pets As Therapy (P.A.T.).

The national charity’s network of around 4,500 dogs and 108 cats, all temperament-assessed, visit 130,000 people every week in UK establishments. Research shows that pets can improve mental and physical health, even lowering blood pressure. Hanover’s own pet-friendly policies reflect this, but P.A.T. dogs are

able to visit people with no access to their own pet.

The friendly P.A.T. Leonbergers have been making fortnightly visits since March 2009 – after they proved a hit with residents at an estate tea to raise pet awareness.

Residents Hazel and Elsie are just two of the residents who look forward to the visits – they love to fuss over Fendi and Roman.

Estate managers Debra Genery and Karen Howe can really see the dogs’ positive impact. Debra says, “Residents often reminisce and interact with the dogs. Amazingly, some residents with dementia who find it difficult to hold a conversation will speak clearly and coherently.”

This brilliant service is totally voluntary too.

➔ To find out more about Pets As Therapy in your area: go to www.petsastherapy.org

Local links

Moving to retirement housing provides opportunities to be part of an estate community, but also to build links with the wider community and local groups and organisations.



Hanover has over 600 estates in over 175 local authority areas and each of our estate managers makes an effort to build local partnerships. Our estates enjoy good relationships with their local police teams, Primary Care Trusts and other key public services.

Some of our estates are able to go even further and have come up with some fantastic initiatives that both residents and others benefit from. Working in partnership in this way can deliver bigger results and can also represent better value for money locally.

This chapter shows how Hanover works locally with others to:

- build relations with younger age groups, to help bridge the 'generation gap'
- reach out to residents and community members who may need a bit of extra help to access opportunities and really enjoy life
- open its doors to the local community so that residents and non-residents can enjoy the same services – and each others' company





Focus on: Local partnerships

Hanover works in partnership locally when it can.

With unemployment rising among younger people, Hanover has teamed up with TNG, an independent organisation paid by the government to help 18 - 24 year olds find work.

Hanover and TNG hope to expand their joint work. Current projects, in the Norfolk area, include:

- 13-week trainee estate manager placements in Dersingham and Mulbarton
- Void property redecoration in Great Yarmouth and elsewhere

“I’ve found myself arriving earlier or leaving later every day because I really love the work.”

– Michael Brannigan, trainee estate manager

■ Sensory garden project, Hunstanton

Hanover benefits from extra help, and access to potential future employees. Young jobseekers get hands-on experience and a Hanover reference.

HANOVER GARDENS, HUNSTANTON, NORFOLK

Estate manager Carol Smith and residents at Hanover Gardens had a great idea for a sorry looking corner of their garden.

Carol says, “We’d heard about accessible ‘sensory gardens’ with features that could be

appreciated by all visitors. So even if certain senses were poor, visitors could still, say, appreciate edible plants and view plants better through magnifying glass screens.”

Local TNG coordinator Mick Clarke thought it sounded like a great project for young jobseekers. What’s more, Mick – a keen biker - offered to organise a fundraiser with his local bike club. The 76-strong ‘ride out’ which ended at Hunstanton, raised more than £1,500!

Resident Ivy, 95, who used to ride pillion with her husband, was chuffed to have another go with the bikers. But she also says, ‘We’re all really glad that we can do our bit to help these youngsters find jobs.’

➔ To find out more about TNG visit: www.tng.uk.com. And to find out more about Hanover’s Greenshoots fund email engagement@hanover.org.uk





Partnership spotlight

Name: April Dobson

Job: Retirement Housing Manager, East (based at St Neots)

Time at Hanover: 5 years, different roles

Name: Mick Clarke

Job: Project Supervisor, (based at Kings Lynn)


Time at TNG: since February 2010

April manages the Norfolk patch and has a keen interest in community programmes. She says, "I'm always on the look-out for initiatives that benefit both residents and the wider community." Mick's job is to find and work with partners who can offer placements to TNG's 'clients'.

“It’s a win-win partnership for TNG and Hanover.”

“I was a client myself and get real satisfaction from my job,” says Mick. The biker fundraiser is a clear example of this. He says, “We all had such a laugh, it was a real pleasure to help!”



A photograph of two men sitting on a wooden bench outdoors. The man on the left is older, wearing glasses and a patterned sweater, and is using a wooden cane. The man on the right is younger, wearing a blue t-shirt and dark trousers, and has his hand on the older man's shoulder. They are both smiling and appear to be in conversation. The background shows a brick building with windows and a paved area.

#23

HANOVER COURT, FILTON, BRISTOL

A steer in the right direction

Estate manager Lynne Stevens works part-time and wished she had more time to spend with residents. Some just wanted a chat over a cuppa, others needed a bit of confidence to go out on their own.

Lynne decided to see if local volunteers could help. She says, "Residents were grateful for extra help from any friendly source, it didn't really need to be me."

She registered with her local agency, The Volunteer Centre for Patchway, Filton and The Stoke. Through the Centre's network, four residents have received regular visits from regular helpers which can include a chat or a trip to the shops.

Volunteer Andy visits resident Roy Seymour every Monday. Roy recently got a mobility scooter but was a bit wary of using it on his own. He's gone out a few times for a spin with

“I was nervous about going out on the scooter on my own but Andy's really built up my confidence.”

- Roy Seymour, resident

Andy close by and now feels a lot better about it. If they're not out and about, then Andy and Roy are happy enough to have a 'man to man' chat!

Lynne says the idea was easy to arrange – Rolls-Royce's Bristol branch even helped with a donation towards the volunteers' police checks. "Other estates should definitely give it a go," she says.

➔ To find volunteer organisations in your area go to: www.volunteering.org.uk

“We got to know the students, and they got to know us. It helped to nip any future problems in the bud.”

- Eric Metcalfe, resident



RUNNYMEDE COURT, NOTTINGHAM

The Generation Game

#24

Runnymede Court residents got to know their student neighbours over a game of snooker – and made a regular thing of it.

The get-togethers were a response to perceived local anti-social behaviour. Students coming home late from nightclubs or playing street football in the summer were costing residents' sleep.

Runnymede's estate manager at the time, and their local policeman, decided to set up a meeting with residents, the local council and the Students' Union to smooth things over. Current estate manager Carol Graham says, "They all appreciated that late night noise, including loud music, was causing a bit of bother."

New students start in October so the Students' Union offered to

invite those at the flats opposite to meet the residents over a cup of tea. To their surprise, about 60 students came. Resident Eric Metcalfe says, "It went really well – they asked if they could come back and have another game of darts or snooker!"

Meeting informally led to increased mutual understanding between the residents and students. The students came back lots and even held a bingo day at the estate, providing a buffet and drinks.

The get-togethers now take place each year with the new October student intake.

Carol says, "We need to start planning the next one!"

➔ For more on Hanover's approach to anti-social behaviour, email: inpractice@hanover.org.uk





“I’ve been allowed to be creative! All the activities here are vehicles for social interaction.”

- Lesley Gilmour, Therapy and Well-being Coordinator

#25

MARINA COURT, TEWKESBURY, GLOUCESTERSHIRE

Therap-easy does it!

Marina Court’s Therapy Suite offers preventative therapy and activity to anyone over 55 in Tewkesbury.

Marina Court is a joint venture between Hanover, Tewkesbury Borough Council, NHS Gloucestershire and Gloucestershire County Council. At the heart of the action is Lesley Gilmour, who has an Exercise and Health Sciences degree under her leopard-print belt, and says: “Exercise and activity are key to well-being: there’s something for everyone here, including health walks and excursions.”

The Suite’s flexible space, with non-fixed gym equipment, means it can host sessions including ‘Chance to Dance’, Wii-fit, healthy eating workshops, oral health and falls prevention. Lifelong Learning, subsidised by Gloucestershire Adult Education Service, has included cookery, watercolours and archaeology.

Resident Bill Morgan attends Lesley’s community classes twice a week and says, “My GP’s been able to reduce my blood pressure medication as a result. At the age of 88 I can honestly say that I’ve seldom felt better.”

‘The Salon’ focuses on holistic therapies including ear candling, reflexology and footcare. Lesley says, “Healthy and pain-free feet improve balance and help to prevent falls.”

The estate also hosts a free weekly drop-in Surgery. The small room is just by the estate’s reception and is used for personal consultations on hearing aids, diabetes risk, blood pressure, mobility aids and benefits advice.

Sian Davies, estate manager, says, “It shows that even with limited facilities estates can still offer a visible and ‘free’ community service.”

➔ For more on other well-being initiatives and partnerships at Hanover, email: inpractice@hanover.org.uk





#26

ST CATHERINE'S COURT, GLOUCESTER

The Centre of attention

St Catherine's Court has worked with the Black Elders Day Centre since day one. Every Tuesday and Thursday the centre uses the estate's lounge to lay on plenty of activities – and a tasty Caribbean lunch!

Although it targets African Caribbean elders, the centre is open to all older people living in Gloucestershire.

St Catherine's residents are just a few steps away from exercise classes, craft workshops and much more. Centre activities are kept fresh through regular meetings of a 'user group'. But centre manager, Verona Vidal reckons the chance to catch up is just as important as the activities. She says, "Local people and organisations tell me the centre is a rich source of information!"

Residents Mr and Mrs Augustus, originally from Jamaica, have enjoyed day trips together with the centre including one to Stratford-upon-Avon.

“The day centre arranges trips out – we like to go on those together if we can.”

– Mr and Mrs Augustus, residents

Mr Augustus also likes a good game of dominos in the lounge when the day centre meets.

St Catherine's estate manager Dona Woolfe-Sekinger thinks the centre gives people an insight into life at the Extra Care estate too. She says, "Plenty of people have moved because they've visited the day centre and then fallen in love with St Catherine's."

➔ For more on day centres based on Hanover estates, email: inpractice@hanover.org.uk



#27

HANOVER COURT, CINDERFORD, GLOUCESTERSHIRE

The Memory Café

Hanover Court hosts a monthly Memory Café – a joint venture with the local Alzheimer’s Society.

Estate manager Helen Lee and local coordinator Viv Shorney wanted to create a relaxed environment where residents with dementia and others could come with their friends, carers or family to support each other and share information over a cup of tea and a biscuit. Health and other professionals also visit to answer questions and offer advice in an informal setting.

Helen says, “Quite a few of our residents live alone and have memory problems. Like a café, it’s a very relaxed affair and is open to residents, their family, and friends – whether they have memory problems or not.”

Viv facilitates the informal get-togethers and is helped by colleagues, volunteers, Forest of Dean Age Concern and the local village agent

“Exchanging memories and passing on wisdom can give people with dementia a real sense of value and belonging.”

– Val Shorney, Alzheimer’s Society

who provides information services to older people. She says, “Reminiscence can encourage a feeling of peace in people with memory problems.” But Viv says it can be fun too: “A recent session with photos of the royal family during World War II prompted some very funny stories about life in war-time Britain!”

➔ To find your local Alzheimer’s Society go to: www.alzheimers.org.uk

Oasis in the city

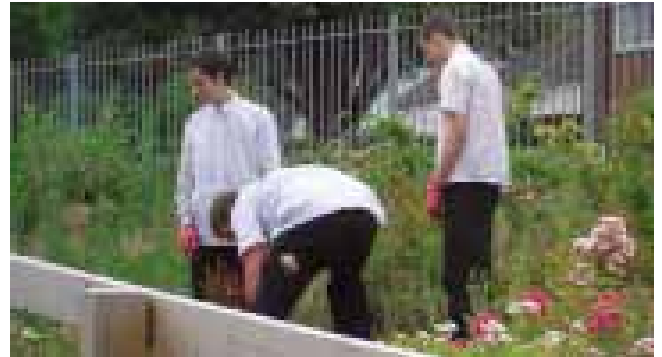
“It can be difficult growing up these days – helping out in the community is good for young people, and for us too.”

– Jim Doherty, resident

When Oasis Academy Senior School approached estate manager Sara Mason about community projects for their pupils, she was keen to help.

Blaise Weston Court already has links with the local primary school, who enjoy reading with residents. Sara thought older children, who were maybe having a few problems, could benefit from voluntary work and she was impressed that they received a Community Services Certificate at the end of it.

The Year 10 pupils helped in the garden every Thursday afternoon, planting and clearing overgrown land. Sara says they soon learnt to correctly identify weeds!



The project was such a success it will now continue with the next Year 10 pupils.

Autumn's a good time to start planting and Sara thinks the project could be even better. She says, "We're taking on new gardeners and they're really keen on community projects."

The plan is that the gardeners and the pupils will work at the same time, so that the students can benefit from professional advice and mentoring. Sara says, "We're also looking to give the students a patch of land of their own that they can claim credit for come the spring!"

➔ For more on Hanover's partnerships with local schools, email: inpractice@hanover.org.uk



Acknowledgements

Thanks to all the staff, residents and partners who contributed to Inpractice Volume 2.

Special thanks go to Hanover staff for additional photography: Rob Ghosh (numerous images) and Roddy Atkinson, Denise Bedding, Ian Buckley, Colin Garbutt, Carol Graham, Rachel Slater and Cressida Stanley-Williams, (all provided a specific estate image).

This volume is just a selection of good practice at Hanover. For more examples, or for more information on featured case studies, please email: inpractice@hanover.org.uk or call Gillian Connor, Head of Policy and Public Affairs on 01784 446 140.

All those pictured are Hanover staff, residents and partners.

Front cover

Mike Pinner: Hanover Gardens, Mulbarton

Voice and choice

Intro page 1: Residents Maurice Gardner, Preston Close, Amphill and Mrs Linda Hamilton, Chadwick Drive, Milton Keynes.

Intro page 2: Mrs Margaret MacDonald, Hanover Court, Cromer and (from behind) Loraine Harris, Engagement Officer

#1: Cheryl Jackson, Estate Manager, Cedarwood, Poynton; Joanne Greenhalgh

#2: Albert Watling (with Charles Clarke)

#3: Local campaigners including residents from Danbury Gardens and Hanover Close

#4: Joan Smith, Support Worker Tracey Newman, Muriel Shuckburgh, George Orbell and Louise McMillan.

#5: Olive Williams, Shirley Casciani and Sandy Foskett; Doreen Ewing, Helmore Road resident

#6: Mrs Iris Yu

#7: Residents and estate manager Val Ward from Boundary Court, Bishop Aukland: Sandra Zissler, Sheila Vasey, Betty Dixon, Eunice Lindsley and (back) Linda Watson

Better homes

Intro page 1: Anita Clarke, Hanover Gardens, Mulbarton and Mrs and Mrs Gormlay, Marina Court, Tewkesbury

Intro page 2: Mr Edward Beckford, resident, St Catherine's Court, Gloucester

#8: Islam Omanovic, and Mohammed Ajaz and Joan Ash

#9: Nick, Finchale College



#10: Mrs Ivy Hopkins, Mrs Christine Edwards and Lesley Parrish

#11: Jean Elsdon and therapist

#12: Suliman Amod and Emilio Dominguez

#13: Royal Holloway students

#14: Mr Fosdicke, contractor Chris Hill and Marion Orford

Value-added support

Intro page 1: Hairdresser Michelle and Mrs Louise Ferrarin; Mrs Vala Davies and estate manager Dona Woolfe-Sekinger, St Catherine's Court, Gloucester;

Intro page 2: External user at Tewkesbury

#15: Dennis Eames and Myrna Brown, and Sharon Moore

#16: Gladys Edmunson and George Birtenshaw, and Brenda Ashurst

#17: Mrs Sibson and Sue Sheppard

#18: Rose, and Jane Wallbridge

#19: Thelma Joseph

#20: Pauline Johnson and Frank Lucas

#21: Karen Turner, Roman and Elsie

Local links

Intro page 1: Duke Woodcock and Marjorie Budd with local school children; Lily Harper and farm shop assistant – both Hanover Gardens, Mulbarton;

Intro page 2: PCSO Sore and resident Cliff Elvin, Hanover Gardens Mulbarton

#22: Ivy Duff and 'biker', estate manager Karen Howes and Michael Brannigan, April Dobson and Mick Clarke

#23: Roy Seymour and volunteer Andy

#24: Kath Hatherley, David Farmer, Beryl Parkin and Eric Metcalfe

#25: Leslie Gilmour

#26: Mr and Mrs Augustus

#27: Viv Shorney, Alzheimers Society

#28: School children from Oasis Academy, Bristol

Back pages

Anne Woodall; Mrs and Mrs Gormlay; Marina Court, Tewkesbury



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