

A Life Shared



Welcome to the first edition of A Life Shared

We're delighted to bring you the very first issue of A Life Shared, our new magazine created especially for Abbeyfield Living Society residents.

Many of you told us that, while Abbeyfield Voice is a great way to hear news from across all Abbeyfield Societies, you wanted something just for Abbeyfield Living Society (ALS). This publication is our response - focused on celebrating our homes, sharing your stories, and highlighting the services that matter most to you. We have also been very focused on value for money as residents told us this was important to them. It cost us less than £1 to print a copy of this magazine and we think that is worth it to keep you informed.

In this edition, you'll find highlights from a recent visit to our Isle of Wight homes, information on Decent Homes, how services like AbilityNet are supporting digital inclusion, and we're also celebrating an incredible 70-year wedding anniversary.

This is your magazine, and we want it to reflect the life and spirit of our ALS community. If you have a story - an event, achievement, or something special from your home - please share it with us. You contact the Resident Engagement Manager at resident.engagement@abbeyfield.com or call Justin on 07553 424367 for more info.

CONTENTS

Spotlight on the Isle of Wight	3
What is a 'Decent Home'	5
Hope Bank View goes digital	6
Alister joins the Resident Panel	7
Celebrating 70 years married	8
Winnersh garden party	8
Puzzle Page	9
Customer Experience Team	10
Resident Roadshow	11
Have your say	12

Need to get in touch?

- Email customer services
customerservices@abbeyfield.com
- Emergency Repairs (out of hours):
0333 005 0135
- Don't forget you can use your pendant alarm in an emergency too
- Questions about your rent or charges?
customeraccounts@abbeyfield.com

Have your say

- Share your ideas or feedback:
resident.engagement@abbeyfield.com
- Interested in the Resident Panel?
Email us for more information or call Justin on 07553 424 367

Spotlight on the Isle of Wight

A weekend of sunshine, seaside views, and warm welcomes across four Abbeyfield homes

Justin O'Brien, Resident Engagement Manager

In early August, I had the pleasure of visiting our four Abbeyfield houses on the Isle of Wight - each one unique, each filled with stories, laughter, and the occasional bit of feedback to take away. With the sun shining and the ferry crossing smooth, I arrived just after midday on Friday August 1st ready for a busy and rewarding weekend.



Church Road, Cowes

Friday: Cowes – two houses, one warm welcome

My first stop was Abbeyfield House on Church Road in Cowes, where I joined two residents in the dining room just as lunch was wrapping up. We chatted about the home, their routines, and the joys and challenges of communal living. I also spoke with a resident's daughter who shared a few concerns, which I agreed to take back to our Regional Operations Manager.

Just a short walk away is Clifton House on Bath Road, a lovely home with views not far from the sea. Although only two residents were in during my visit, both were happy to chat. John told me enthusiastically about the academic degrees he's currently pursuing —an inspiring reminder that learning never stops! Chris also welcomed me warmly and raised a practical concern about the dining room chairs, which I assured her I would pass on.

That evening, I stopped by a local pub for a delicious Caesar salad and a chance to reflect on the conversations of the day.



Clifton House, Cowes

It was such a lovely evening, after eating I decided to take my book and head to the Beech in Bembridge and relax for a bit before taking on Saturday.



View from the beach in Bembridge

Spotlight on the Isle of Wight

Saturday morning: Parkrun, Newport and positivity

I had planned to visit Avondale in Newport at 11am Saturday, however the sunny weather tempted me to take part in the local Parkrun before going - a scenic 5K route that winds along the seafront, supported by friendly volunteers. It was a great way to start the day.



Isle of Wight Parkrun

Later that morning, I made my way to Avondale in Newport, where I was warmly welcomed by a lively group of residents. We talked about their garden, the importance of out-of-hours support, and their experience with Alertacall, which is now installed in all our Isle of Wight homes. The feedback was overwhelmingly positive, especially around the reassurance and independence it offers. Pauline then showed me around the garden and Bryan expressed an interest in the Resident Panel so I agreed to send him some details

Saturday afternoon: summer celebrations at Bembridge

My final stop was Abbeyfield Bembridge, just in time for the annual summer BBQ. I arrived around 1:30pm to find the garden already buzzing with over 50 people - residents, neighbours, and staff, all enjoying the sunshine and one another's company. Our contractors RPL, who support our properties on the island, were also there helping to run the BBQ alongside the house team.



Avondale, Newport

One highlight was Phil's lively (and competitive!) quiz, followed by a lovely house and garden tour from Lesley, who proudly showed me their home-grown fruit and veg.

Final reflections

The Isle of Wight was every bit as charming as promised - hillier than expected, with narrow winding roads that reminded me of the Irish countryside. But it was the people who made the trip special. From inspiring residents to dedicated staff, each home embodied the values that make Abbeyfield unique. Thank you to everyone for the warm welcome - I'll share your feedback with our team and follow up where needed, until next time.



Poplar Lodge BBQ



What does a 'Decent Home' mean - and what can you expect

At Abbeyfield, we want every resident to feel safe, comfortable, and proud of their home. That's why we're committed to meeting the Decent Homes Standard - a national standard that sets out the basic requirements every social housing home should meet.

But what does that actually mean in practice - and what can you expect from us?

What is the Decent Homes Standard?

The Decent Homes Standard is a set of rules introduced by the Government to make sure all social housing meets basic quality and safety standards.

To be considered 'decent', a home must:

- Be in a reasonable state of repair
- Have modern, safe facilities (like kitchens and bathrooms)
- Be warm and weatherproof
- Be free from serious hazards (like damp, mould, or unsafe electrics)

These standards are not just about bricks and mortar - they're about your health, comfort, and peace of mind.

What Abbeyfield Living Society is doing

We carry out regular checks and inspections to make sure your home continues to meet the Decent Homes Standard. If something falls short, we'll take action to put it right.

This includes:

- Responding quickly to repairs and maintenance
- Planning for improvements or replacements, such as kitchens, bathrooms, or windows
- Listening to resident feedback to help us prioritise what's most important

We also work closely with trusted contractors and our own maintenance teams to keep your home in good condition, now and into the future.

What you can do

If you ever feel something in your home isn't up to standard - whether it's a broken fixture, signs of damp, or something that feels unsafe - please let us know. You can:

- Speak to a member of staff in your home
- Report a repair through your usual channels
- Contact our repairs team for further support: repairs@abbeyfield.com

Because you deserve a home that's...

Safe, secure, comfortable and treated with care. Meeting the Decent Homes Standard isn't just a box to tick - it's a promise to you.

Digital Inclusion at Hope Bank View

Helping Residents get online at Hope Bank View

Digital skills, confidence, and connection - all in a friendly setting

In July and August, residents at Hope Bank View in Sunderland took part in a three-week digital skills course run by AbilityNet - a UK charity that helps older people feel more confident using technology.

The sessions were delivered by Helen McGuigan, a brilliant trainer who created a welcoming and relaxed atmosphere. The programme was sponsored by BT, so there was no cost to Abbeyfield or residents.

What residents learned:

- **Week 1:** How to stay safe online - including spotting scams and protecting your information
- **Week 2:** Using email and messaging apps to stay in touch with family and friends
- **Week 3:** Discovering online entertainment like catch-up TV, music, games and more



Helen McGuigan - Trainer

Helen also offered 1-to-1 support for residents who had specific questions - from using tablets and phones, to managing passwords and settings.



Charles, Hope Bank View

One of the highlights was Charles, a resident at Hope Bank View, who sent an email to his daughter during the session. "She'll be very surprised to get an email from me!" he said, smiling. It was a proud moment - and a perfect reminder of how small steps with technology can make a big difference in staying connected.

Want something like this at your Abbeyfield home?

We'd love to bring digital skills sessions like this to more Abbeyfield services. If you think this would be helpful for you or residents in your house, please let us know! Email resident.engagement@abbeyfield.com or speak to a member of staff.

Ongoing free support from AbilityNet

Even if a course isn't running near you right now, free 1-to-1 support is still available to all Abbeyfield residents. This is delivered by trained AbilityNet volunteers, either in your home or in a shared space - and it's completely free.

Whether you're new to technology or just want a little help using your device, support is available at your pace.

To request support or learn more call AbilityNet on **0300 180 0028**.

Alister's journey to the Resident Panel

When Sarah our Regional Operations Manager visited Downing House in Manchester earlier this year, she met Alister - a resident with a sharp mind, a great sense of humour, and plenty of ideas to share

During their chat, the Resident Panel came up in conversation, and Alister's interest was immediately sparked. Sarah contacted the Resident Engagement Manager to see what we could do to support Alister.

The Abbeyfield Resident Panel is a group of residents from across the country who meet each month on Microsoft Teams to discuss important topics, share feedback, and help shape the services we provide. Alister liked the idea of getting involved, but there were two challenges: he didn't have a tablet or laptop, and he had never joined an online meeting before.



Alister, Downing House

Although Alister is bed bound, he has a very active mind and was keen to find a way to take part. Together, we found a solution. A tablet was ordered and set up for him, complete with his very own email address. We then spent time practising how to join a Teams call - something completely new for him. While he managed well when supported in person, it was trickier when he tried alone.

After a few attempts, we chatted about the difficulties and agreed to put in a referral to AbilityNet for volunteer support. One of their volunteers soon began working with Alister, building his confidence and helping him feel at ease with the technology.

With this support in place, Alister was ready. On Tuesday 3rd June, he proudly joined his very first Resident Panel meeting - and he's now looking forward to being a regular part of the discussions.

Alister's story shows that with the right support, there's no reason for anyone to feel left out of opportunities to have their voice heard. His enthusiasm is a reminder of why resident engagement matters: because every opinion, every perspective, and every voice adds value to Abbeyfield.

To find out more about the Resident Panel email resident.engagement@abbeyfield.com

Celebrations at Hampton House



The wedding day

Jill and Eddie Dinshaw celebrate 70 years together

Jill and Eddie Dinshaw, residents at Hampton House in Solihull, are celebrating their Platinum Wedding Anniversary on 17th September 2025, marking an incredible 70 years of marriage.

The couple met at a dance in Hall Green in the 1950s, where Eddie was playing trumpet in his brother's band. He wasted no time asking Jill on a first date - and from there, a lifelong love story began.

They married at Knowle Church in 1955, just ten years after WWII ended.

The wedding was tinged with sadness after the recent loss of Jill's mother, but she honoured her memory by laying her bouquet on her mother's grave after the ceremony - a quiet moment of reflection that has stayed with the family.

laying her bouquet on her mother's grave after the ceremony - a quiet moment of reflection that has stayed with the family.

Their reception was held at Bentley Heath Community Hall and they set off in Eddie's 3-wheeled Morgan for a honeymoon in Snowdonia, despite a puncture just a mile into the journey!

The couple volunteered for many years at Solihull Hospital and are proud parents, grandparents and great-grandparents.

Their anniversary will be marked at Hampton House with a cake styled after their original horseshoe wedding cake.

From everyone at Abbeyfield - congratulations, Jill and Eddie!



Jill & Eddie

Fun and frolics at Winnersh

Over 100 people had fun-filled afternoon in the garden of Winnersh.

Families, staff, volunteers, and friends enjoyed tasty treats like toffee apples, popcorn, and homemade cakes.

We were thrilled to welcome pupils from Oak Tree School, who had a great time on the teacups, helter-skelter, and bouncy castle. Rhona had fun in the teacups too (pic). The Mayor of Wokingham, Cllr Carol Jewell, also popped in to enjoy the event.

A raffle raised £562.50 for our residents' activity fund - thank you to everyone who took part!

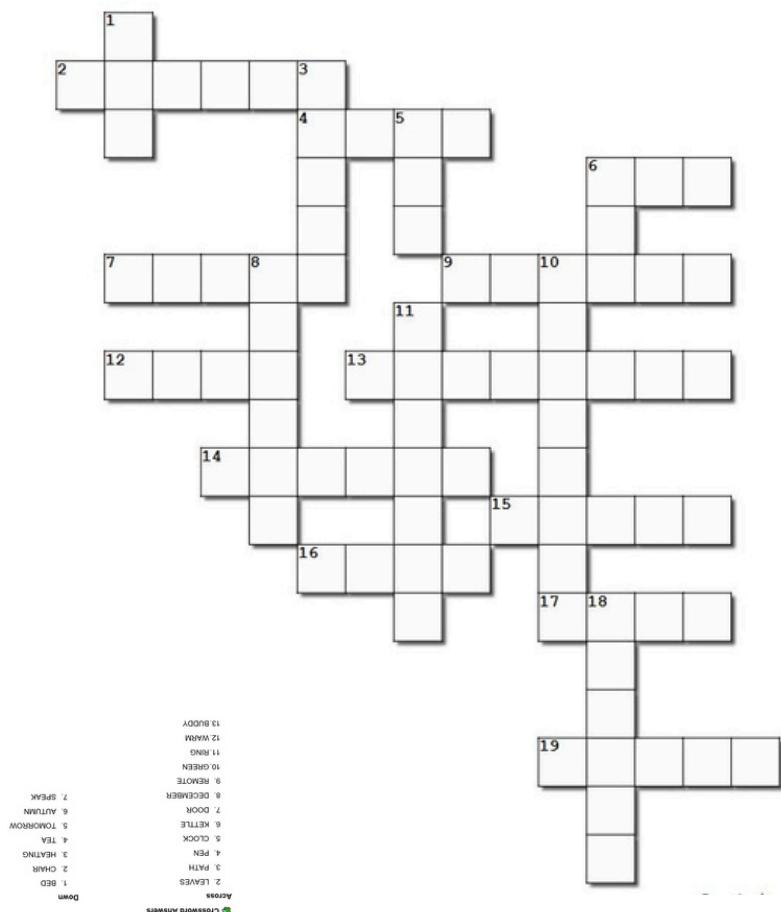
With games like coconut shy and tin-can alley, and even staff getting dunked and splattered with cream, it was a day full of laughter, sunshine, and community spirit.



Rhona, Winnersh

Puzzle page

CROSSWORD - can you complete it?



Across

2. Feeds the trees
4. Course of action, perhaps
6. Animal enclosure for writer
7. Tells you the time
9. Used to make tea
12. You open this to leave a room
13. Last month of the year
14. Used to watch TV
15. Colour of envy, reportedly
16. Sound of a bell
17. Friendly and heated
19. Companion, informally

Down

1. You sleep in this
3. Say something
5. Favourite British drink
6. Stroke a companion
8. Choice of floor covering
10. The day after today
11. Keeps you warm
18. What comes after summer?

All the words have been used in the magazine! Can you find them?

Wordsearch

S	N	B	E	L	I	S	B	L	D	E	R	I	T
S	E	A	M	R	C	S	N	L	R	S	Q	C	M
H	W	R	A	N	Y	O	E	A	P	U	R	O	S
A	P	V	I	O	D	I	W	E	I	P	E	M	R
R	O	N	L	N	F	B	A	E	E	P	S	P	E
E	R	W	A	Y	W	E	I	V	S	O	I	L	N
D	T	L	E	T	K	B	A	N	K	R	D	I	I
I	S	B	O	E	L	A	N	P	A	T	E	M	A
I	B	H	I	N	G	A	R	D	E	N	N	E	R
A	D	O	E	R	B	H	O	P	E	A	T	N	T
B	L	M	B	E	M	B	R	I	D	G	E	T	T
R	A	E	M	T	A	P	A	N	E	L	E	P	B
B	R	T	E	N	Y	T	I	L	I	B	A	S	W
M	N	P	H	I	Q	S	E	O	B	B	Q	P	E

BEMBRIDGE
ABBEYFIELD
SHARED
VIEW
INTERNET
NEWPORT
SUPPORT
ABILITYNET
PANEL
GARDEN
TRAINER
EMAIL
COMPLIMENT
COWES
HOPE
RESIDENT
HOME
BBQ
ISLAND
BANK

Meet the Customer Services Team

The Customer Services Team is your friendly first point of contact for any questions, requests or concerns (Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm)

Here to help

The Customer Services Team is here to make life easier for you. Whether you have a question, need support, or just want to check something, they're your first point of contact. You can reach them by email

CustomerServices@abbeyfield.com and soon by phone too, so help is always close at hand.

Making life easier

Their goal is to take the stress out of everyday issues, making sure queries are handled quickly and clearly. The team knows Abbeyfield inside and out, so they can either give you the answer straight away or connect you to the right person if you need more specialist help.

Staying connected

Most importantly, the team is dedicated to making sure you feel heard, supported, and valued. They'll keep you updated until your query is resolved, so you're never left wondering what's happening. Every call or email is also a chance for them to listen, learn, and improve your experience at Abbeyfield.

Your friendly first point of contact

The Customer Services Team is approachable, knowledgeable, and committed to helping residents, families, and staff. By giving you one clear place to turn, they make sure that getting the help you need is simple, stress-free, and reassuring.

Meet the Team



L-R Claire Rhodes, Sarah Tokley & Sarah Gupwell

Claire Rhodes has been part of the Abbeyfield family for over 5 years. She first worked in Human Resources before moving into customer services in April, bringing her knowledge of the organisation and commitment to residents.

Sarah Tokeley brings extensive experience in customer services and joined abbeyfield in April. She's passionate about supporting residents and making sure queries are handled quickly and smoothly.

Sarah Gupwell is part of our Customer Services Team and is based at our Head Office in Solihull. She has lots of experience in dealing with day-to-day queries from residents, families, and staff. With her strong knowledge of Abbeyfield, Sarah can provide quick and clear answers to your questions.

Resident Roadshow Southampton



In June, we held our first Resident Roadshow in Southampton. Residents from the Isle of Wight, Gosport, and Southampton came together with senior staff and members of the National Resident Panel to share their views.

It was a fantastic opportunity to talk directly about what matters most - from repairs and rent accounts to how we keep you updated on services.

We heard loud and clear that communication is a top priority. We also discussed maintenance and our food service. Resident feedback was that the day was engaging and informative. All in all the day was a success and we got lots of valuable insights from a residents perspective. But we also learned that some residents felt a little anxious about leaving their home for a full day to attend the event and trips out can be a little difficult for some. So we listened and we have changed our approach to be more inclusive with our 'Open House' events.



'Open House' Events

We listened to your feedback and changed our approach. Instead of large regional gatherings, we're now hosting Open House events right in your own communities and homes. These are shorter sessions, lasting one to two hours, making it easier and more comfortable to take part.

What is an Open House Event?

Open House events are relaxed, on-site sessions where residents can share their views without needing to travel. Lasting just an hour or two, they bring engagement directly into your home, making it easier and more comfortable to take part. Feedback is gathered and shared with managers, with follow-up updates so you can see the difference your input makes.

Our first Open House was held at Esk Moors Lodge, Whitby in July, and residents gave us some brilliant ideas which we're already following up on.

The next Open House will be at The Firs Complex, Nottingham, on 9 September - and more will follow in other services.

By bringing events directly to you, we hope more residents can get involved and see the difference their voices make.

Email resident.engagement@abbeyfield.com to find out more about 'Open House'.

We welcome your feedback



We love to hear from our residents, their relatives and visitors across all our houses and homes. We pride ourselves on delivering a high standard of service, though realise that things can go wrong from time to time, and when that happens, our aim is to resolve things as quickly as possible.

We're keen to get to the bottom of whatever the issue might be, so please talk to us as soon as possible and we'll do the best we can to help find a solution.

You might even be helping other residents in future by bringing it to our attention.

We also really like to hear feedback on what we do well or about an Abbeyfield staff member who has really made a difference. Compliments let us know where and how we are succeeding in providing good service and provide examples of good practice that we are committed to sharing with our residents and throughout the organisation. Please speak to an Abbeyfield staff member in the first instance or alternatively contact us by scanning the QR code or using the contact details below; we'd love to hear from you.



SCAN ME

**Abbeyfield Living Society, Hampton House, 17-19 Hampton Lane,
Solihull, West Midlands, B91 2QT**

Tel: 01727 857536

**Email: compliments@abbeyfield.com or
complaints@abbeyfield.com**