

## AUTUMN NEWSLETTER 2018 - No. 44



**Changes to the Board of Trustees** The Annual General Meeting held on the 25<sup>th</sup> April 2018 at Cams Hall saw some changes to our Board of Trustees. One of our longest serving Trustees, Commodore Tony Lyddon RN who joined us in 2011, sadly has now retired. Tony (pictured left) has been involved in many aspects of the Association over the years, including the role of Trustee representative for Somerville Court. He will now focus his efforts on supporting ex-Service personnel as a representative in his local branch of SAAFA. We wish Tony the very best for the future and thank him for his unrelenting support over the past 7 years. Trustee, Mr Roger Harrison has kindly agreed to take on the role of Trustee representative for Somerville Court with immediate effect.

The Association is pleased to welcome Lieutenant Kelly Jenkins-Hill (pictured with her colleagues right) as a new Trustee. Kelly is currently a member of the Royal Navy Presentation Team and is about to embark on maternity leave. Kelly has kindly agreed to take over the role of Trustee representative for Neptune and Victory courts from Kim Mehta. Kelly would like the opportunity to encourage RN personnel to visit or attend functions in our courts to meet tenants. Kelly would also like to encourage some of the local serving RN personnel to volunteer to help tenants with gardening/vegetable patches etc - provide the "brawn!" She believes that some of the younger members are lonely and would benefit from such projects.



**Wellbeing Room Trial** The 6 month Trial to identify if our tenants would benefit from having a Wellbeing Room concluded in April 2018. The aim was to bring together a modern looking facility where treatments such as massage, hypnotherapy, reflexology, physiotherapy, beauty therapy treatments and light exercise can be offered by outside professionals to help people feel good, and in turn improve physical and mental wellbeing. The results from the trial have been mixed, with some services being popular but others not reaching their full potential. Therefore, the Board decided that it would be prudent to allow

tenants from Neptune Court to utilise the Wellbeing Room in Victory Court but hairdressing will continue in both courts. Secondly, the Board tasked the CEO to conduct a survey at Cornwell Court to identify if the tenants in its 55 flats would appreciate a Wellbeing Room. The result of the Survey will also inform the Board on the merits of rolling out future wellbeing rooms to our other courts.

## Wellbeing Service

As previously advised, the introduction of Wellbeing Support plans began in January 2018. Support plans are an effective mechanism for the Warden and Tenant to work together in a relationship to plan, construct and review the way in which both parties and others will interact. It can also help to clarify expectations of all parties. Within the sheltered housing sector, it has become clear that Support plans can produce desired outcomes and enable the service user to enjoy a quality living experience, maximised independence and assured security. It is understood that most of our tenants will not need or want a full Support plan at the moment. They can opt out of the service until they need it by simply ticking a box at the start of the form once personal details have been confirmed. Transferring your personal details to a Support plan is necessary if the Association is to comply with the new regulations regarding personal data, which come into force in late May 2018. Tenants will still be able to access the Association's Wellbeing Assistant without a full Support plan.



## Energy costs rise

Most of our courts have enjoyed a Service Charge decrease due to competition amongst energy providers when the Association negotiated 24 month energy contracts back in 2016. Unfortunately those contracts have now expired and today's prices are much higher than 2016. British Gas recently announced price increases for both gas and electricity by 5.5%; this equates to an extra £60 a year in energy costs for the 4.1 million dual-fuel customers on British Gas' Standard Variable Tariff. Just two days after British Gas' announcement, big six supplier EDF also revealed a price rise for its Standard Variable Tariff, of 1.4%, effective from 7<sup>th</sup> June. This will increase bills by an average of £16 a year for dual fuel customers, and affects 41% of their customer base. The danger now is that more price rises are on the way — the remaining big six suppliers could continue this trend. There are several theories on what factors cause energy prices to rise including world conflicts, scarcity of supply and levels of demand. So what? Consumers are able to take back control by switching. By comparing energy prices you can switch to a cheaper provider and ensure that gas and electricity suppliers have to stay competitive to retain their customers. The Association regularly negotiates when switching suppliers to keep the communal energy part of the Service Charge as low as possible. We strongly advise that tenants do the same before your contract rolls over to standard charges, which are usually much higher than fixed-term charges. Moreover, tenants can help to keep communal energy costs down in their Service Charges by working with the Association in keeping our energy usage down. Sensible usage of communal heating and lighting will go a long way to achieve this. Thank you in advance.



## Light Emitting Diode (LED) lighting

LED lighting is the latest technology in lighting, it offers a great alternative to traditional lighting systems. LED lights have the benefit of a super long life span of up to 80,000 hours, which means maintenance costs drop as the lamps last up to 8-10 times longer than standard lamps making them an ideal replacement. Most LED lights operate at low voltage so are cool to touch and much safer to handle during installation. Typically a LED light will use about 25%-80% less energy than traditional incandescent, saving money on electricity. We are happy to report that Neptune and Victory Court have recently been converted to LED lighting with automatic timers and switchgear. More courts will follow in 2019.

**Update on Universal Credit** Earlier newsletters informed tenants that Universal Credit is due to be rolled out in the South in 2018 and we pledged to keep you informed of its progress. Universal Credit is a single monthly payment and it will replace some of the benefits and tax credits that you might be currently receiving e.g. Housing Benefit, Income Support, Tax credits and some support allowances. The roll out will mean that claimants have to make a claim online and there will be a seven day waiting period. There is also a possibility that claimants may have to wait up to 6 weeks before they receive the first payment. It is still to be determined if Housing Benefit for sheltered housing will be included in Universal credit. Portsmouth will become a Full Service area in September 2018, which means that from September some people will need to apply for Universal Credit if their circumstances change or they need to make a new claim. We still await confirmation of who needs to claim Universal Credit in the Portsmouth area. Those that can claim will have to wait until September to do so. If an individual's situation doesn't change, they might not need to claim Universal Credit until next year or the year after. There is even less information with both Gosport and Havant Borough Councils, but both confirm that they will become a Full Service area in November 2018. It is recommend that anyone currently on Housing Benefit seek advice from their local Benefits Office who will be able to guide each individual claimant on how they should proceed.



**Nicky Miles: Letting and Finance Officer**

**Chairman's Lunches 2018** The new format of Chairman's lunches has been running for 3 years now and they are growing in popularity. The main reason for moving the lunches from the Naval Museum to the courts was to enable more tenants to attend each function and increase contact between paired courts. Please see the dates for this year's lunches below, the Board of Trustees look forward to seeing you there:

- Eliza Mackenzie Court hosting Somerville Court – Friday, 15<sup>th</sup> June.
- Sirius Court hosting Cornwell Court – Friday, 27<sup>th</sup> July.
- Victory Court hosting Neptune – Friday 24 August.



**Neptune Court** The last few months has seen a lot of internal moves caused by the Warden's flat becoming available and a few tenants leaving. The Court has had its usual activities including card and craft, knit and natter sessions, coffee mornings and also celebrated St Georges Day. Eric, the Warden unfortunately left the Court for pastures new in March 2018 and we will soon welcome our new Warden, Pride Daniel. One of our more senior tenants (left) celebrated her 90<sup>th</sup> birthday with her friends and during a family outing.

looking bigger and brighter than ever before. As the conservatory was seldom used, it was replaced by a solid insulated roof and the adjoining doors and windows were removed. Turning the lounge and conservatory into one large bright, airy room. The lounge was out of action for 3 weeks whilst work was being carried out, although minimal disruption was caused to our tenants as they were able to continue the majority of their social activities in the library. The Chairman (pictured right) kindly opened the new lounge on the 1<sup>st</sup> May 2018.





**Victory Court** Victory has had new LED lighting fitted in communal areas to help reduce costs and is soon to have the car park resurfaced. There has been many activities and outings going on, including charity events, lunches out to various places, a St George's Day celebration, Easter bonnet competition and a St Patrick's Day party, Quizzes, fish and chips and many more. The usual activities such as Hoy Bingo, coffee mornings, warblers singing group, knit and natter and games including darts and board games have also taken place. Victory Court will be hosting the Chairman's Lunch this year and hope that many tenants from Neptune Court will join us. The picture (left) is our Easter bonnet competition winner.

**Somerville Court** December was as busy as ever, Christmas dinner was enjoyed by the tenants followed very quickly by New Year celebrations. Somerville Social Committee applied and were successful in receiving a £250 grant from the Councillor's Community Grants Scheme, with which we purchased a full size table tennis table and everything we need to hold our own matches. Somerville decided to give something back to the community by having the Classique School of Dance in to do a show at our Tea party for the Queen's Birthday. We had a great turnout, tenants, singers and dancers had a great time.



**Sirius Court** So far we have had a busy half year with various functions including our regular Burns Night and Chinese New Year evening but this year our fantastic Chinese meal was prepared and cooked by our Warden Ling. However, the highlight so far was our Valentine's Day Tea when we entertained Clare Scherer, the Assistant Director of the Royal Naval and Royal Marines Children's Fund to whom we presented a cheque for £500, which was raised by our tenants during our previous years' functions.

**Eliza Mackenzie Court** We have had a very busy but fun time over the last 6 months. Lots of different activities were held including a quiz night, raffles, table top sales and finally, a fish and chip night. Funds have been raised through our Art group's paintings sales and the auction of the Red Arrow prints that were sourced by our quiz master. We had two cheque presentation days totalling £1,000, which were attended by many tenants and Board member, Nigel Langhorn. The first was to donation to Rowans Hospice and the second was the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Air Ambulance.



**Notices** Please take time to read the most up-to-date notices on the Notice Board. These policies and notices are put in place to ensure that everyone enjoys living with the Association in a safe, peaceful and dignified environment. Enjoy the summer, thank you.

*P Burns*