

Taunton Heritage Trust

JUNE 2020

NEWSLETTER NO 21

Dear Residents

Firstly, a huge thank you to you on behalf of us all at the Trust for how you have adapted and made changes to the way you live. We have all had to make significant changes in order to protect ourselves and keep those around us safe and it seems, that this will be more important than ever in the coming weeks and months as the lockdown restrictions begin to ease.

As you can imagine, the Staff team have had to make significant changes to the way in which we operate and have all managed to set ourselves up from our homes. This means that we are experiencing such challenges as poor broadband and phone signals, using out of date home IT equipment and often operating from our kitchens or bedrooms in order to accommodate the "home office" of other family members! However, I am so proud of the way we have all adapted and have managed to keep everything going, and most importantly, have kept the team spirit up!

We have been continuing with the business of the Trust by holding Zoom computer meetings with our Trustees and other advisers, and doing a lot by phone. As you would expect, due to the uncertainty of the economy as a result of the pandemic, and our inability to plan ahead with any kind of meaning, the Corfield Hall development project will be delayed. This is very disappointing bearing in mind the significant amount of work that has taken place to get the project to this stage, but we are hopeful of securing planning permission on the site in the coming weeks and would like to think we will be in a position to get the project up and running again in the next year or two.

We are proud to say that we have managed to keep our monthly grants scheme going and as you can imagine, the applications confirm that people's needs are greater now than ever before. We have received some heartfelt thank you's from the grant recipients and the referring agencies and this has been very much appreciated by us all at this time.

We intend, in time to reopen the Trust's office and planning is going on in the background as to how to do this safely and in line with Government guidance. We hope to have a skeleton Staff operating from the office from early June, but at this stage, the office will not be physically open to Residents or the public and so for the foreseeable future, please make contact, in the first instance with your Warden by phone in the normal way. Once we are back in the office, we have every intention of copying and circulating to you the feedback document from the survey that you completed at the end of 2019!

We hope you have appreciated the "buddying" scheme. Our intention is, as lockdown restrictions are eased, to reduce the frequency and number of calls that Staff are making and to finish by the middle of June. This has been a great initiative from Staff and we hope, provided assistance through uncertain times. Once the scheme comes to an end, if you feel you are still in need of additional support, please make contact with Ali, Jacqui or Lata in the normal way.

We hope you will continue to stay safe and are confident that all Residents will respect those around them by following the Government's guidance on how to gradually readjust to our new lives in a way that protects us and our neighbours.

Karen White - May 2020

Knitted poppies



Following our last newsletter article regarding the knitting of poppies for VE Day we were amazed by the amount of talented knitters we have amongst our Residents. The photos show the incredible display put together by our Residents Rita & Anne.

VE Day



With VE day on the 8th May and lock down restrictions in place this didn't stop our Residents from celebrating in style safely. With many of our residents decorating the outside of their homes with bunting and flags. More photos on page 3.

A message from our Chairman...

On behalf of the Trustees and the Staff, I want to thank you all for all your efforts in dealing with these extremely difficult and worrying times. You all have been affected by lockdown and I recognise that some of you must find it extremely hard. It is a wonderful reflection on our nation's spirit that everyone, even with their own personal problems, has contributed in so many ways to combat the risk of infection and shown concern, love and understanding for others.

Despite not being able to man the Offices, all of the Staff have been very busy keeping "the wheels turning" and at the same time coping with all the problems of their own family lives. The internet and modern computer technology have been a great help, but it can, however, at times be frustrating and slow. I know that you all are in regular contact with a member of staff and I am hearing such nice messages of appreciation from you. Trustees are trying to do their bit and are all involved in supporting the Trust in many ways as we move carefully onwards.

We are constantly reviewing the situation and hopefully soon be able to reopen the Office. It is imperative that we adhere to Government guidelines and I am sure we will slowly but sensibly return to normality.

Keep safe, keep in touch and please do not be too proud to ask if you have any problems.

Best wishes to you all.

John Ruff - Chairman

CORFIELD HALL UPDATE

The Corfield Hall project is largely dependent on securing a Grant from the Government (Homes England).

We had been very optimistic about this Grant especially when Homes England were awarded £12.2 billion in the recent budget.

However in light of the pandemic these funds have been diverted and we have no indication as yet, as to when the Government might make more funds available.

Until such time we have, unfortunately, had to suspend progress. Fingers crossed that the project will resume sooner rather than later.



The following information is from the Friends Against Scams website. They have given examples of some of the scams you need to be aware of:

Stop & Think – Be aware of people offering or selling:

- Virus testing kits.
- Vaccines or miracle cures – there is currently no cure or vaccine.
- Overpriced or fake goods to protect yourself from coronavirus such as antibacterial products.
- Shopping or medication collection services.
- Home decontamination services

Challenge – Question communications and encourage others to do the same.

- Don't be rushed into making a decision. If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is.
- Only purchase goods and services from legitimate retailers and take a moment to think before parting with money or personal information.
- Don't assume everyone is genuine. It's okay to reject, refuse or ignore any requests. Only criminals will try to rush or panic you. If in doubt speak to someone you trust.
- If someone claims to represent a charity, ask them for ID. Be suspicious of requests for money up front. If someone attempts to pressure you into accepting a service they are unlikely to be genuine. Check with family and friends before accepting offers of help if you are unsure.

Please do speak with your Warden or The Support Officer if you have any concerns.

Enjoying the sunshine in lock down...

Lock down restrictions regarding social distancing have taken a bit of getting used to for all of us. However our Residents at all of our sites have not let it spoil their fun and have found ways to enjoy their usual social events but in a different way.

It is so lovely to see our Residents still socialising and enjoying the sunshine in the gardens with their neighbours, whilst adhering to the social distancing rules and hygiene guidelines.

Many of our Residents can be seen here making the most of the VE Day celebrations and even enjoying a scone or two.



Residents enjoying the sunny VE Day.



Social distancing VE Celebrations at Leycroft Close



Our Warden Ali taking song requests



PARKING

Please could Residents ensure their visitors take care when parking in our car parks that they do not block others in or block access gates or routes for emergency vehicles and carers.



SITE SECURITY

The police have advised us to remind everyone to be vigilant when it comes to site security. Please can we make sure doors are not left open.



DEANE HELPLINE

If for any reason the piper system goes down in your flat, you are still able to contact the Deane Helpline on the following number: 01823 257185.

Working from home

As a staff team we are used to working alongside each other in the office. In the last few weeks and months we have adapted to life working from our homes.

Our usual staff meetings have taken place online using video calls. This has been a good way for us as a staff team to keep in touch whilst still being able to see each other but just in a virtual presence instead.

Whilst working at home we are now spending more time with our pets. Some of which I am sure are loving the 24/7 company and I'm sure some of our pets are wondering when we will be back to the office!



Ozzy helping Laura with the website.



Hebe responding to email enquiries for Karen.



Pippin updating spreadsheets for Jan.



Lemon assisting Claire with the finances.



Karen's cat Woody waiting for lunch.



Lilah & George wondering when Jeff is going back to the office.



Dave is not happy with Ali's choice of mouse for him.

Gill's dog Jambo is wondering when his walk will be...

OIL PAINTING – 'MORNING PRAYER' BY WALTER FUGE

The painting called 'Morning Prayer' by Walter Fuge is displayed in the Taunton Heritage Trust office at Huish Homes, Magdalene Street. It was always assumed that the gentlemen were the charity Trustees. Now, with the discovery of a newspaper article, we know that the painting is dated 1888.

The large oil painting represented the 'Inmates' as they were called at that time, of Huish Almshouses. The 13 men are assembled in the little Chapel (it was also called the Committee or Common Room) with the Reader standing at the head of the table with the open bible before him. At least one literate 'inmate' was always chosen to reside at the Almshouses so that they could perform the duty of Reader. The Reader in the painting is William Tape (1814-1895), a widower and former Tinsmith.

The painting was painted upon the spot, and each sat for their portraits and 'the careworn faces and infirmities had evidently been carefully studied'.

