



Evans's Cottage Homes

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Mr Robert Trigger

January 2019

Dear

A Newsletter to keep you informed about events at Evans Gardens and plans for the future.

It is a while since the last Newsletter. This is not because there has been nothing happening. On the contrary, there has been so much happening that there has been no time to produce a Newsletter!

Outings and Events

Since the last Newsletter there have been many outings and excursions including Weston super Mare, Stratford upon Avon, Leamington Spa (town and Guide Dog Training Centre), Evesham Country Park, Liverpool and Trentham Gardens.

The regular fish and chip lunches on alternate Wednesdays, light lunches or toast and crumpets on other days have all fed the body. Whilst card making, jig-saw puzzles, beetle drives, snakes and ladders, ludo, knit and natter, and craft group continue to 'feed' the mind and provide much laughter and socialisation. It is unfortunate that the Tai Chi was not able to continue due to falling regular numbers. We are grateful to Pam and Margaret for all their hard work in helping with the catering.

The Lord Mayor has not made an annual visit to Evans Gardens for afternoon tea for the last couple of years due to the building work and other celebrations.

There have been the annual visits of the school choir singing Christmas carols and a Christmas lunch.

There have also been regular visits by Toni and Sal (the local Community Support Officers). They have spoken about important topics including the effects of drug dealing, personal security, hoax telephone calls, and how to stay safe when shopping. They have also brought along some freebies to keep credit cards safe.

It was most pleasing to hear that a group of residents celebrated the New Year together in the lounge. The television provided the chimes of Big Ben and the firework celebration.

Fund raising

There have been events held in order to raise funds for the various charities that are supported. Often the money has been presented to the charity at lunchtime when many residents have been able to be present. The donations would not be possible without all of those involved, especially the regular gifts of prizes for the raffle, tombola and fundraising prizes.

Sadnesses

We note the departure of Marilyn Onions, Barbara Clark, Wyn Stimpson, Flos Goode and Barbara Holt. We are saddened to report the deaths of Pat Morrison and Elizabeth Freeman. We were sorry to hear that Ian, the gardener, had decided to move house to Telford – but were pleased when Darren said that he would look after the grounds (along with all the other jobs he seems to do around Evans Gardens).

Welcomes

We are pleased to welcome Olive Hinsley, Val Docker, Gill Taylor, Pat Phelps, Julie Goodwin, Maxine Bayliss and Iris Pickering. Also, Annette Gurney and Richard Trengrouse as new Trustees. We hope that they will all be very happy at Evans Gardens.

Evans Gardens developments

During the last two years you have experienced some major upheavals –

The communal area development:

This major project spanned more than 6 months and we are grateful for your patience and forbearing. The facilities are now used extensively and are an asset to the communal life at Evans Gardens. During the course of the building work it was decided to develop the security and ease of access to the new facilities by installing a fob entry system. After the inevitable teething problems and re-learning, the system is working well. Recently it has been possible to further enhance the security of the site by the installation of CCTV around the exterior of the building. The area by the steps has been fenced off in an attempt to discourage young people from congregating in the area. The fence has also provided an area in which to develop a secure outdoor drying area. The new extension had a total cost of over £125,000 -this was financed from realising a long-term investment plus grants from a number of Trusts. The grants financed the furnishing and equipping of the area.

The 'Beast from the East':

On March 3rd flats 16-19 suffered the wrath of the freezing wind followed by a sudden thaw. This resulted in substantial flooding in the block with bathroom ceilings crashing down and a waterfall off the landing into the lobby below. There then followed several months of negotiations with our insurers, dryers blowing full time, and a variety of different contractors to sort out the problems highlighted by the catastrophe. Again, the patience of those affected is much appreciated whilst the building works and decorating took place. The total cost of the insurance claim was over £60,000.

As a result of these refurbishments it has prompted us to:

- Employ a cleaner for the communal areas – the communal lounge and kitchen area is cleaned weekly, with the communal areas in the blocks on a rota,
- The damp proof areas on the ground floor areas are assessed and treated when possible,
- There will be new carpeting in the communal areas in the blocks with a new foot mat when possible,
- The lobby and stairways will be redecorated when possible,
- ALL hot water tanks have been removed and replaced with an 'on call' hot water system which operates direct from the cold water feed. Hence there is no longer any need for hot or cold water tanks. The tank in the loft and any unnecessary pipework has been disconnected – thus reducing the possibility of freezing and sudden thaws in the pipework.
- The removal of the hot water tank also reduces the amount of 'standing' hot water and hence reduces the risk of any legionella contamination.

Roof works:

It was noticed that some of the ridge tiles on the roof were in a poor state and were, potentially, becoming dangerous. In the better weather it was decided to give the roofs a 'full service'. Ridge tiles were replaced where necessary along with attention to the gullies and the overall condition of the tiles. The flashing was replaced around the various pipes which come up through the roof. This was a major undertaking and your patience is, again, much appreciated. There is still the need to check all of the guttering around the site.

Royal visit

In November we were pleased to receive a visit from HRH The Duke of Gloucester in order to mark the 150 year anniversary of Evans's Cottage Homes and to officially open the new communal extension. His visit had taken nearly 12 months to secure and lasted less than 45 minutes! He gave a short speech, unveiled a plaque, chatted with guests and then visited Val and Trish in their flats before moving 'next door'.

Townsend Gardens, next door, is built on the site of the original Evans's Cottage Homes and they were celebrating their 40th anniversary since the opening by HRH The Duchess of Gloucester. We had worked closely with next door in securing the visit but although we started in January it came all of a rush and we had about 10 days' notice of the actual event. It was rather disappointing that there were so few residents experiencing the celebration of our achievements.

Some reminders

It is probably appropriate to remind you of a few things:

- The WHOLE of the Evans Gardens site is "No Smoking" – this includes for visitors and tradesmen. The prohibition includes within the flats, except for those smokers who were resident on Jan 1st 2018.
- The large 'communal' store cupboards, off the landing in most blocks, should NEVER be locked. Any property stored in these rooms should be stored tidily and should only be 'short term'.
- Access to the laundry and the communal facilities is available with your fob at the following times:
Mon, Wed, Fri between 7 am and 5 pm; Tue, Thu between 7 am and 7pm; Sat, Sun between 9 am and 5 pm. Access other than within these times may be arranged with the House manager

GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation)

You have probably received many communications about GDPR. We hold personal data about our residents and it is appropriate to inform you of our policy as follows:

- Evans's Cottage Homes will only keep limited personal information about residents. Usually: Name, Date of birth, National Insurance number, Next of kin (and their contact details), Address, Telephone numbers.
- When a person ceases to be a resident at Evans Gardens all information held will be deleted.
- The information is held to facilitate the smooth running of Evans Gardens e.g. to complete necessary documentation to provide a concessionary television licence, to provide information to response services in case of an emergency and to contact family (or other representative) if there are concerns regarding a resident's welfare.
- The information is securely held in a paper system, and on a computer which is protected by anti-virus software. All data is destroyed, or deleted, when it is no longer to be used.
- We do not engage in direct marketing and will not knowingly pass on any data to such bodies.
- We will pass on data, which has been obtained by their own documentation, to a Careline provider, for use in case of an emergency. This data is subject to the GDPR for the provider.

CCTV

For the security of the residents all outside areas of the premises are covered by CCTV surveillance. Images are monitored for the purpose of crime prevention and public safety.

Finance

The Trustees have considered the budget for 2019-20. They are suggesting an increase to the charge of 1.1% (a new monthly charge of £445 pm). Each year included in the budget is a figure of 6 months loss of income to cover void flats and refurbishments. So far this year there have been 17 months loss of income, this includes the 'Beast from the East' problems.

Each year the trustees have a meeting, chaired by the Lord Mayor of Birmingham, to consider the accounts of the Charity (Evans's Cottage Homes) which owns and manages Evans Gardens – overleaf you will find a summary of Income and Expenditure April '16 – March '17 and April '17 – March '18.

It may be helpful to make a few comments about the finances of Evans's Cottage Homes:

- Income is interest on savings, the laundry contributions and the monthly charge, plus some occasional donations
- Management costs include the cost of the House Manager, telephone, stationery etc. plus the Accountancy charge for checking the books
- The largest part of the expenditure is maintaining the premises, whether larger projects or day to day. Including maintaining the stair lifts, door entry system, CCTV, heating system etc.
- Evans Gardens is metered for the water supply for the whole of the site
- Heat and light – all heating is paid for 'centrally' plus any electricity used in the communal areas for lighting and other appliances
- Grounds, window cleaning also includes communal cleaning
- The Trustees insure the premises. Residents are responsible for insuring their own property
- Sundry costs are costs which don't fit neatly into the other headings
- Careline is provided for those with a landline telephone – it is 'worth its weight in gold'.

Year ending March 31 st	2017	2018
	£	£
<u>Income</u>		
Interest and sundry income	4,543	5,233
Contributions from residents	131,740	132,174
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	136,283	137,407
<u>Expenditure</u>		
Management costs	18,831	18,922
Repair fund contributions	32,391	40,609
Routine maintenance	7,624	10,035
Water charges	3,818	2,955
Heat and light	13,800	13,005
Garden maintenance / window cleaning	5,098	6,839
Insurance	3,910	4,842
Sundry payments	4,801	1,457
Careline monitoring of personal alarms	3,690	3,949
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	93,963	102,613
Under spend on the year	42,320	35,004

You will notice that there is an **under spend** against the income received for each of the last two years. This has allowed the trustees to extend the rolling programme of upgrading flats, install more security around the site, and plan for major works to the roof and gulleys. The money will also contribute to any funds '**over spent**' in past years, and allow other enhancements to be considered.