

# In touch

February 2021

Monthly newsletter from The Whiteley Homes Trust



## Valentines 2021: Sharing the love!

Valentine's Day this year was an extra special opportunity for many of our staff and supporters to show our residents how much they care at such a difficult time - bringing delight all round!

Sylvie Izzard, Whiteley's Clubhouse Manager and Head Chef, Dionne Patton decided to say a big thank you to villagers for supporting the Club and its staff during the pandemic – buying roses and making around 80 special Valentines treat boxes and paying for everything themselves. Volunteers made heart shaped biscuits for the boxes which also included tea bags and chocolates.



Although the Village Clubhouse had to close due to Covid-19, the team supported by a loyal group of volunteers has continued to cook and home deliver hot meals for residents. Sylvie said: "Many have been so appreciative and kind to the team and we wanted to give something back. Sadly, we couldn't afford to do a present for everyone,

but it was wonderful to see how it lifted people – especially those residents on their own or who have lost a partner this year.

"Our team of volunteers have been absolutely brilliant, but they are always so busy in the kitchen cooking and washing up, they don't get to see the residents. I asked them to come in to help us deliver the presents so they could get to meet those they help



each week in person."

To the delight of villagers, Whiteley volunteer Rebecca even asked her partner Ian, a fireman to come in and help out dressed in his uniform! Joan 98, said: "It was a real thrill to find a fireman at my door delivering a Valentine's rose!"

Another villager, Marian

Welch said: "Dear Club House Team - you brought so much unexpected joy into the lives of all those you delivered your Valentine gifts to. It was such a kind, thoughtful thing to do. The perfect example of going the extra mile to show you really care. Thank you!"

Elsewhere in the Village, residents were also treated to some Valentine's celebrations. Those living in Huntley House had a special tea party with love-themed cupcakes and chocolate liqueur. Support worker Terry Cracknell said, "The afternoon was filled



with fun and laughter in the company of friends and neighbours. We raised our glasses to the loved ones we can't be with and those we have lost. It was a truly special occasion for everyone."



Children of key workers at Notre Dame school also very kindly made some beautiful Valentines cards for the residents in the Eliza Palmer Hub. Activity Coordinator Kirstien said: "Residents were absolutely delighted with their cards and the lovely messages from the children. It meant such a lot to know someone was thinking of them."

### New Village Support Worker



Welcome to Donna Taylor, who recently joined the Housing & Support Team. Donna who was previously a Care Support Worker for Elmbridge Council will be working Monday to Friday in the morning.

The Support Team are based in the office at Huntley House, but spend most of their time out in the Village as they are not desk-based staff. So the best way for residents to contact them is to call their mobiles. You can contact any member of the team: Terry Cracknell on 07736 893517, Tracey Campbell on 07736 893510 or Donna Taylor on 07736 893514.

### Our priorities for 2021

In our last newsletter we said we would share our new priorities for this year with you. We are currently exploring how we can safely and practically engage with you all about our strategy and give you the opportunity to ask questions, and further information will follow about this soon.

**1. Re-establishing the Vision, Mission and Purpose of the Trust:** Raising our profile as a charity and housing provider for older people of limited means.

**2. Financial sustainability:** Continue the work started in 2020 to reduce costs and increase income, enabling us to deliver the required infrastructure

improvements.

**3. Prioritising community development:** Development of a co-produced community strategy that ensures new, innovative and cost-efficient support structures that promote culture change through stakeholder engagement.

**4. Property:** Development of a long-term strategy for ensuring properties are maintained on a cyclical basis and that there are ongoing funds available to facilitate this, bringing back any vacant properties into use wherever possible.

**5. Maximising assets:** Working with Elmbridge Borough Council we will develop a Master Plan and evaluate the best use of the site for the next 30 years to provide as many homes for the older population as possible.

### Our management of Covid-19 in 2020: Outcome of the Residents' Survey

Thank you to everyone who completed the Resident's Survey we issued at the end of last year. Below is an overview of your replies and suggestions for what else we could be doing, and our responses.

Overall, the outcome of the survey was overwhelmingly positive, with residents feeling the Covid pandemic has been managed well by the Trust and that they were kept well informed throughout. The majority of residents also said they felt well supported, cared for and safe within the Village.

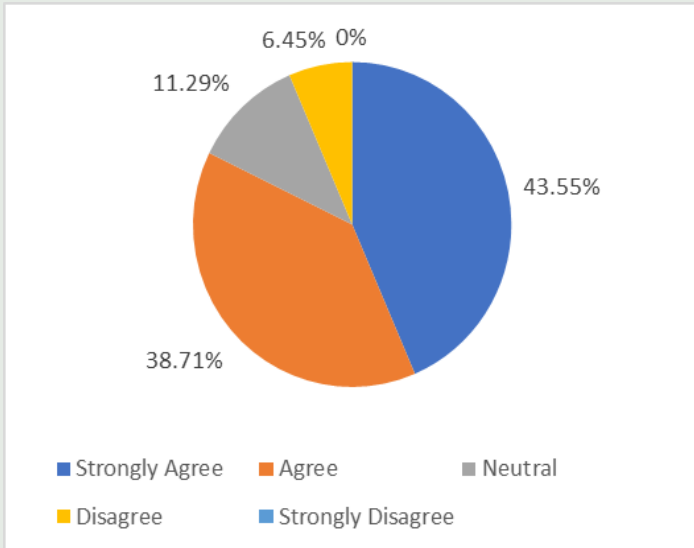
There were some concerns about issues such as security, support and the visibility of especially senior staff. This is hugely helpful feedback and we have outlined our initial responses below but will be taking your comments - positive and negative on board, and will consider them all and do what we can to respond.

#### **How are we doing?**

**1. You said:** We have managed the Covid pandemic very well so far.

*"The Trust has, throughout the pandemic acted professionally in every aspect. I cannot fault the care and attention to detail. Deliveries of medicine, availability of groceries and hot meals has been excellent. A super team. Thank you all."*

82% of responders (see graphic below) strongly agreed or agreed that they trust us to make decisions that protect them and their fellow residents.

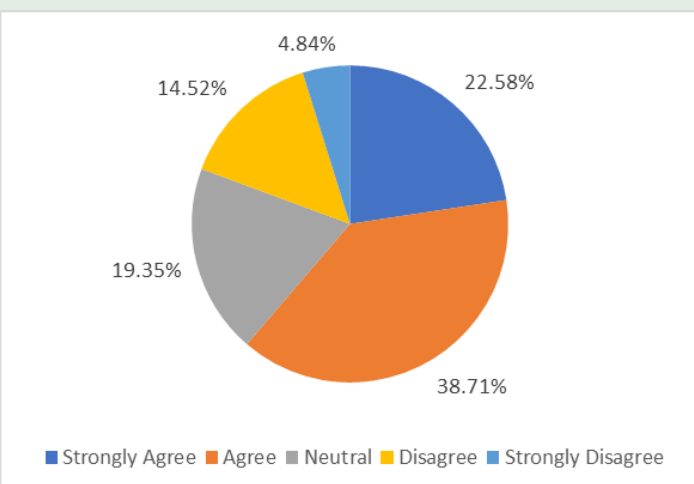


**Our reply:** We are pleased to hear this. The Covid-19 restrictions impact on all our lives but we will continue to prioritise your safety and that of our staff and volunteers, for as long as necessary.

**How are you doing?**

**2. You said:** 74% of responders strongly agreed or agreed that the Trust considered their health and wellbeing during the pandemic. But although the majority said they knew how to access support: *“I know the staff that can help me and how to contact them”*, others were less sure: *“Here in the village, we live independently, and realise that the Trust is not responsible for our wellbeing, though there are times night and day, when a familiar and qualified person, a phone call away, could be contacted to give advice and help.”*

61% of responders (see graphic below) strongly agreed or agreed that they know how to access sup-

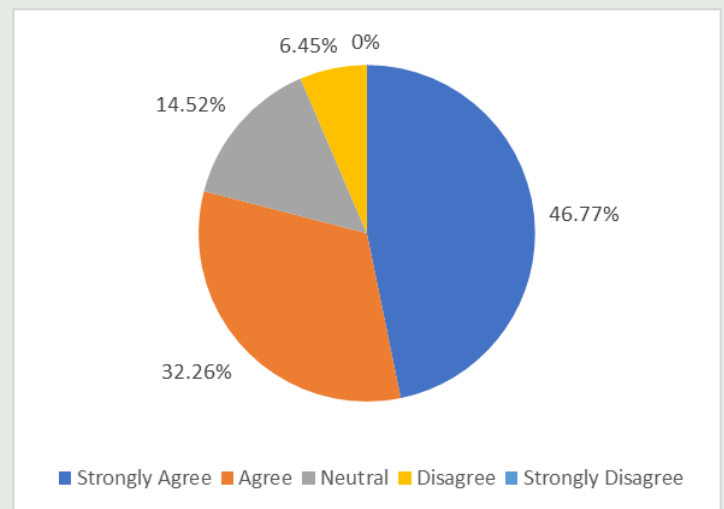


port and advice when they need it.

**Our reply:** Please contact a member of the Support Team in the first instance if you need help or advice, (see page 2 for information on the Team and their contact details).

The Trust does not employ staff to work out of hours except within our care services. The Out of Hours service is available to report emergency property related issues on 0333 321 6349 at weekends and between 5.00pm and 9.00am. For medical advice out of hours call NHS 111 or for emergencies such as a fall or other accidents, call 999.

**3. You said:** 79% of responders strongly agreed or agreed that they feel safe at Whiteley Village. (see graphic below) Others said there were factors which



made them feel less secure, such as other residents who don't always comply with the Government's Covid-19 rules such as social distancing or wearing masks, and those who were irresponsible dog owners. Others were concerned about the number of external visitors still coming into the village. *“There are huge numbers of “outsiders” walking dogs/children etc - very unessential.”*

**Our reply:** The safety of our residents is our top priority so we're glad to hear the majority of you feel safe. We will continue to strongly encourage all residents to follow the Government's rules and if you have specific concerns about another resident's dog please contact your Support Worker so they can investigate.

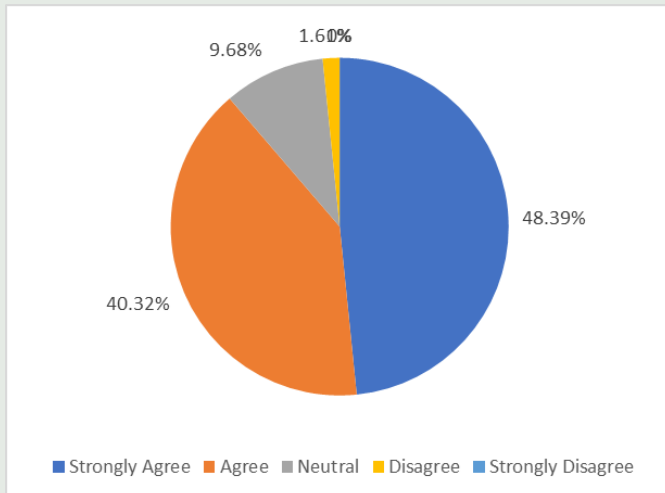
If you feel there is a danger being posed by a visitor, such as a dangerous dog or suspicious activity please contact the police on 101 or call 999 in an emergency. Stefan our Security Officer does patrol the Village and we also have signs on our gates urging visitors not to come into the village at this time, as well as on our



website and social media but we don't have the resources to do much more than this.

## Communications

**4. You said:** Our communications have been very good throughout the pandemic and 89% of responders (see graphic below) strongly agreed or agreed that they are kept informed about how the Trust is responding to the Coronavirus threat.



*“Regular bulletins at least once a week have been fantastic and full of information, these have been distributed to Villagers and staff.”*

92% of responders also said that they are kept informed about how the Government restrictions will affect them.

*“It is very important that villagers are kept informed as the media at times is very misleading and the news depressing so truthfulness is a must.”*

**Our reply:** We are pleased to hear our communications have been helpful. We're now confident we can reach every resident (either by email or paper copy) each week, and a big thank you to the section reps for delivering the Bulletin each week.

## What else could we be doing?

**1. You said:** You want to engage more regularly with staff, especially senior managers.

**Our reply:** Before the pandemic the Leadership Team began resident engagement sessions. Although we haven't been able to hold any more due to Covid-19, we do intend to restart these as soon as it's safe to do so. In the meantime, we continue to work hard behind the scenes even if we're not as visible to residents as we'd like to be.

**2. You said:** Too much staff time is spent on looking

after residents in the care homes and not enough on those in the rest of the Village.

**Our reply:** The safety of all our residents is our priority wherever they live in the Village. Obviously, we have dedicated teams for those we look after but to help protect those living independently in the Village during the pandemic, we established deliveries of groceries, hot meals and prescriptions to all those who need them. Providing regular testing for staff and volunteers and PPE for all staff has been for the protection of all our residents, not just those within our care homes and has been vital in keeping everyone as safe as possible.

**3. You said:** You don't always have the technology or knowledge to engage in online activities such as Zoom meetings, online fitness classes or accessing information.

**Our reply:** Residents have been offered the use of iPads and training on Zoom and other similar apps in during the pandemic in the Bulletin. But the Community and Foundation teams will be reviewing residents' access to technology this year to see what else we can do for those who would like to develop their knowledge and skills in this area.

**4. You said:** You are concerned about residents' mental health as we continue to be in lockdown.

**Our reply:** This is a major concern for us too – but we will get through this difficult time together. If you are worried about your own mental health, please discuss this with your GP in the first instance or talk to your Support Worker – or if you are concerned about a neighbour. We will also continue to promote information about the range of external support and services that are available.

When it's safe to do so, we hope to welcome IAPT (Improving Access to Psychological Therapies) back to Whiteley, who were running a pilot study in the Village before lockdown. Vivienne who runs our service is a trained mental health nurse and was offering free counselling sessions to residents. Previously interest in the service was quite low however, despite promoting it extensively in the Bulletin and the Octagon magazine. We will relaunch the service when we can and make sure it is well publicised to residents in our communications.