

Dovehouse Court increases Almshouses in Girton to 28

Ann Bonnett, Chair of Trustees, Girton Town Charity

Girton Town Charity has continued to steer a very busy programme with the opening of its major new Almshouse project at Dovehouse Court increasing Almshouses in Girton to 28; continuing to introduce new activities at the William Collyn Community Centre in response to community needs; and administering valuable Schemes and Grants which help Village residents with wide ranging needs.

There have been changes to our team of Trustees and staff and the need for flexibility in the day-to-day running of the Charity, with Rachel, Nicole and Gilly working from temporary accommodation in the Parish Office and new additions to the team at the William Collyn Centre.

Full accounts for the year to 30th June 2022 can be viewed on the Charity Commission website.

Trustees

There are normally seven Trustees who serve five-year terms. In consultation with the Parish Council, the balance of Trustees has been changed to five appointed by Girton Town Charity and two appointed by Girton Parish Council (GPC). We are currently in the process of appointing a new Trustee and we always welcome expressions of interest from residents of the Village and the wider community.

Charity Office and Administration

During the construction of Dovehouse Court, GTC Office moved to the Parish Office at 42 Church Lane. Trustees are very grateful to Rev. Michael Bigg and the Diocese for provision of this accommodation.

Trustees' Meetings

The Trustees meet monthly to consider the regular business of the Charity, in addition to an annual Strategy Meeting.

Almshouses

The Charity now has 28 Almshouses within Girton, occupied by residents over 55 and families from the community. Over 55's and anyone with a registered disability are appointed as permanent residents; families are appointed for three years. Currently 13 homes are managed on the Charity's behalf by the CHS Group, based in Histon and Trustees are in discussion with CHS Group regarding their ongoing support.

Centenary Court, Wellbrook Way

Seven family homes at Centenary Court provide a mix of permanent and three year appointments.

Suffolk Terrace, High Street

Three family homes at Suffolk Terrace on the High Street were completed in April 2021 and successful applicants are resident on three year appointments.

Dovehouse Court, High Street

The major project to redevelop the central Almshouse site on High Street, is now complete and provides a mix of bungalows and apartments for people over the age of 55, as well as a new office for GTC, all built to stringent passivhaus standards. The Trustees applied for a grant of £675,000 towards the building of these homes from Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority which was successful.

CarePlus Grant Scheme

This Scheme helps Girton residents to live independently in their own homes by providing short-term care to suit their needs including assistance on returning from hospital. This grant is over and above any statutory care to which they are entitled. Requests for help are made by referral from GP, Social Worker, Age UK Warden or Older Residents' Co-ordinator or other Healthcare professional. During the period 41 residents benefitted from CarePlus.

Educational Grant Scheme

This helps with the costs of buying books and equipment for study in further and higher education; some apprenticeships and similar qualifications at NVQ Level 4 or above. Claims totalling no more than £300 per Academic Year may be made for up to four years of study. 31 Educational Grants were awarded during the year.

Hospital Taxi Scheme

This helps people go by taxi to outpatient appointments at Addenbrooke's Hospital the Rosie or Royal Papworth Hospital and some of the additional outpatients clinics, when alternative transport is not practical. The Trustees continue to be grateful to Nelsons for supporting this Scheme. The Scheme operates a 'membership year' with a single annual renewal date on 1st April.

Prescription Delivery Service

Run by the pharmacist at the GP practice serving Girton, the Prescription Delivery Service is available for patients who live within the Pepys Way dispensing area

and are unable, through reasons of incapacity, to collect dispensed medicines from the Pepys Way or Huntingdon Road Surgeries.

Connections Bus Project Youth Group

In December 2021, Trustees were pleased to award the Connections Bus Project a grant to commence a weekly youth group. Whilst attendance is variable, Trustees are committed to provide this resource for young people in Girton

Relate Counselling Service

GTC continue to support Relate Counselling services for families and support for pupils at Girton Glebe School. In addition, a grant is awarded to relate to enable up to six sessions of Adult Counselling Services for Village residents.

Age UK Activities

GTC funds two Age UK activities. In the Community Warden Scheme, Sarah provides support to more than 20 villagers who subscribe. As Older Residents' Co-ordinator, Patricia continues to provide a number of initiatives to broaden provision and participation in a variety of activities across the Village.

Grants to local schools

Girton Glebe Primary School has received substantial grants for after school clubs, educational enrichment activities and funding of school trips that could not be met by the families of the children concerned.

Grants to individuals

Grants to individuals are given to cover costs such as modest fees for activities that were otherwise unaffordable, support for those in need of respite breaks and contributions towards household items such as support chairs, cookers, fridge/freezers and beds.

Future Focus

For the next year Trustees will focus on the completion of Dovehouse Court and creating a new community in this exceptional environment. It will be a year of consolidation as Trustees ensure that building blocks are in place to support the Almshouses developments, the William Collyn Community Centre and Schemes and Grants already established.

I'd like to thank all our Trustees for their huge voluntary contribution and also our Administrators who support us and run the office efficiently. We can't predict what challenges lie ahead but GTC is in a strong position, with a skilled, experienced and committed team to find the right solutions for us.

1st May 2023