

THE DOWER HOUSE

Residential & Nursing Care | WINCHESTER

MONTHLY SEPTEMBER NEWSLETTER

SHARING NEWS FROM OUR WONDERFUL HOME

OPEN GARDEN & FARM FUNDRAISER



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TALK & AFTERNOON TEA AT ST. SWITHUNS CHURCH

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Rev Paul Bradish provided residents with the history & tour of St. Swithun's Church at Headbourne Worthy. Grade I-listed building, constructed in 1043 by the Saxon.

NEWS FROM CHRIS OUR COO

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Looking back on August, we have made a number of operational changes which appear to be proving very positive. One notable improvement has been the installation of our new 'silent' call bell system.

MEET THE TEAM

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Every member of the team helps create a warm, welcoming home for residents. Read on to hear how members of the team describe their roles.

MUSICAL AFTERNOON

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A beautiful selection of well-known and much-loved music was carefully chosen to showcase the unique qualities of both the violin and flute bringing back wonderful memories.

NEWS FROM BEN

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This year has brought an exceptionally different summer, with prolonged periods of intense heat that have certainly taken their toll on the garden. Despite the conditions, it is still bursting with colour, character and life.

Open Garden & Farm Fundraiser



What a wonderful afternoon we had for our Open Garden & Farm Afternoon, especially after having to postpone the event due to the hot weather! It was certainly worth the wait, and we were delighted to welcome so many families and visitors to The Dower House.

The afternoon was held in aid of the Hampshire & Isle of Wight Air Ambulance, who kindly joined us with their fantastic flight simulator. Both children and adults had great fun taking control and experiencing what it might be like to fly over the Hampshire countryside. There were plenty of smiles and lots of enthusiastic pilots!

Among those taking on the virtual flying challenge was Head Gardener, Ben Weatherall, who proudly earned his "virtual flying badge". He said: "I really enjoyed having a go on the helicopter flight simulator and even managed to fly over The Dower House to see our glorious grounds from above. The simulator was incredibly realistic, but the best part of the day was seeing how much everyone was enjoying themselves together in the gardens."

One of the highlights of the afternoon was seeing the children enjoying the animals from Mill Farm Cottage. It was wonderful watching their excitement as they carefully stroked and held some of the animals. Tom, Owner of Mill Farm was on hand to show the children how to safely hold the rabbits and gently stroke the donkeys, along with some of the other farm animals they had brought along. For many of the children, it was a lovely opportunity to get up close to animals they may not normally have the chance to meet.

There was also plenty to keep everyone entertained, with a selection of traditional games. Tin Can Alley, giant dominoes and bean bag games proved very popular. The bean bag throwing game certainly brought plenty of laughter – particularly when friends and family members found themselves standing behind the holes!

Cont.



A huge thank you to everyone who came along and supported the afternoon, Hampshire & Isle of Wight Air Ambulance team, Mill Farm Cottage and everyone who helped make the event such a success. Resident Mrs Ottewill said: "It was a marvellous afternoon. Not only was it lovely to see old friends and family enjoying time together, but it was wonderful to know we were also raising money for such a worthwhile cause."

It was a lovely afternoon filled with sunshine, laughter, animals, games, cake and plenty of happy memories – all while raising money for such a wonderful and important cause.

We raised more than £500 on the day bringing our total to date in excess of £1,100 for the Hampshire & Isle of Wight Air Ambulance.

The event forms part of The Dower House's ongoing commitment to providing meaningful, enriching experiences for residents while strengthening community connections and supporting local charities.

Chris Golding, Chief Operating Officer at The Dower House, added: "At The Dower House, we believe that life should continue to be filled with new experiences, opportunities and moments of joy. This event brought together residents, families and the wider community in a way that perfectly reflects our values, and we are delighted to have raised such a fantastic amount for the Hampshire & Isle of Wight Air Ambulance."

Thank you to everyone who helped us make a difference!

St. Swithun's Church Tour & Afternoon Tea



Rev Paul Bradish gave us an excellent and very interesting account of the history of St. Swithun's Church, followed by a fascinating tour. Our residents thoroughly enjoyed the visit and were particularly interested to hear about the church's long and fascinating history. It was wonderful to see them listening so attentively and asking questions along the way.

St Swithun's is a Grade I-listed building, constructed in 1043 by the Saxon thane Chaping on land surrounded by streams and springs. The church was dedicated to St Swithun, patron saint of Winchester's Old Minster, and was recorded in the Domesday Book of 1086.

In 1280, Rector Henry Mortimer considerably enhanced the church by constructing the bell tower. Built of Quarr stone, its walls are four feet thick, and its roof was originally topped with a wooden cross. In 1380, a massive supporting oak bell frame was erected inside the tower.



By the early 1400s, the nave was in danger of collapsing. Two buttresses were therefore added to both the north and south walls, and a new barrel-vaulted roof was constructed. A century later, in 1502, the west porch was built.

In 1998, £100,000 was raised for essential restoration and modernisation. The work included repairing the bells, installing a kitchen and toilet at the foot of the bell tower, upgrading the heating and lighting, and constructing a staircase and gallery at the western end of the nave.

After our tour, Paul and Helen joined us by the stream for a lovely afternoon tea prepared by our cooks. It was the perfect way to finish such an enjoyable and informative afternoon, with everyone having the opportunity to relax, chat and reflect on all that we had discovered about this remarkable historic church.





NEWS FROM CHRIS GOLDING CHIEF OPERATIONS OFFICER

Welcome to September!

Looking back on August, we made a number of operational changes which I was delighted to hear at Matron's afternoon tea, have all been well received. To recap, for those who were unable to attend, one notable improvement has been the installation of our new 'silent' call bell system. Whilst the team are still instantly notified when support is requested, residents are no longer subjected to the loud and often disruptive bell sounds throughout the home. The difference has been remarkable, creating a much calmer environment for everyone.

We also carried out a full fire alarm drill, which went extremely well. Whilst you would expect this, it was nevertheless an excellent exercise and a timely reminder of the importance of being well prepared/practiced, particularly given the exceptionally dry conditions we have experienced this summer.

Behind the scenes, we have also refined our handover arrangements to improve communication and efficiency between teams, which ultimately creates more time for what matters most: supporting and spending time with residents.

On the social and community side, August was equally busy. We enjoyed a full programme of activities, an exclusive tour and talk at St Swithun's Church, and a wonderful Open Gardens, Farm and Flight Simulator Day in support of Hampshire and Isle of Wight Air Ambulance.

As we move into September, there is plenty to look forward to. I'm especially looking forward to the owls visiting. Plus, of course, I'm really enjoying our positive news hour every Friday afternoon – and thanks to all those who have come along. Remember, it's open to everyone but it is very relaxed and you don't need to come – it's just a small something that embodies the warm and vibrant community here at The Dower House, your home.

My very best wishes,
Chris

Friday's
POSITIVE NEWS HOUR!

Join **Chris Golding (COO)** in the Conservatory for a drink and nibbles as we chat about the week's headlines.

There's just one rule:
no negativity allowed!

Together we'll find the good news, the funny news, the inspiring news, and put a positive spin on the stories everyone is talking about.

A short and uplifting fun end to the week.

Drinks • Nibbles • Good Company

THE DOWER HOUSE
Residential & Nursing Care
WINCHESTER

Friday only | **Maximum 30 mins**

GOOD COMPANY | GOOD CONVERSATION | A POSITIVE END TO THE WEEK

MEET SOME OF THE TEAM

Our latest 5 star review highlighted the cleanliness at The Dower House and how good the food is. So this month we put the spotlight on Mariela, Jovia, Siobhan & Leele.

Review from P M (Respite Resident) published on 17 August 2026

Submitted via Postal Card • [Report](#)

Overall Experience ★★★★★

I found the staff of varying nationalities all very friendly + helpful.
The food was very good much to my surprise I had a beautiful room with an ensuite shower which was cleaned + immaculate, I can understand why there are permanent residents for years.

↪ **Reply from Celia Bailey, Manager at The Dower House Nursing Home**

Thank you so much for taking the time to leave such lovely feedback. We are delighted to hear that you found our team so friendly and helpful and that you enjoyed the food during your stay.

Facilities ★★★★★

Care / Support ★★★★★

Cleanliness ★★★★★

Treated with Dignity ★★★★★

Food & Drink ★★★★★

Staff ★★★★★

Activities ★★★★★

Management ★★★★★

Safety / Security ★★★★★

Rooms ★★★★★

Value for Money ★★★★★



MEET MARIELA - PANTRY ASSISTANT

At The Dower House, every member of the team helps create a warm, welcoming home for our residents, and Mariela is a wonderful example of this.

Having worked here for more than 10 years, Mariela takes great pride in her role as a Pantry Assistant, helping to ensure residents enjoy a comfortable and homely environment every day.

While maintaining high Pantry Assistant standards is a vital part of her job, Mariela says the most rewarding aspect is the relationships she has built with residents over the years. She loves spending time talking with people, hearing their life stories and learning about their families and pets.

For Mariela, it's often the little things that matter most. Whether helping a resident set up a favourite television programme or assisting with an iPad, mobile phone or TV remote, she enjoys going above and beyond to brighten someone's day.

MEET JOVIA - PANTRY ASSISTANT

Every member of the team helps create a warm, welcoming home for residents, and Jovia is proud to play her part. Through her role, she helps ensure the home is clean, tidy and presented to the highest standards, creating an environment where residents can feel comfortable, respected and at home.

Jovia joined The Dower House through a staff recommendation and brings a positive, person-centred approach to her work every day. She believes that every resident is unique and values treating people with kindness, dignity and respect.

Describing herself as independent, confident and ambitious, Jovia is passionate about personal growth and believes that caring for her own wellbeing helps her bring positivity and energy to those around her.

One of the biggest lessons she has learned is that everyone has their own story, perspective and way of seeing the world. Residents we asked describe her as kind and polite, qualities that shine through in the way she approaches her role each day.



SIOBHAN - PANTRY ASSISTANT

Siobhan has seen that first-hand during her five years with us. Starting at just 16 years old, she has worked across hospitality, housekeeping and the kitchen, giving her a unique appreciation of how every department contributes to residents' wellbeing.

One of the things Siobhan enjoys most is chatting with residents, hearing their stories, and building genuine relationships. She believes that taking the time to listen and engage with a smile can make a huge difference to someone's day.

A proud advocate for teamwork, Siobhan knows that outstanding care homes rely on every member of staff working together. As she says, people often assume everyone in a care home is a carer, but it takes a whole team to keep the wheels turning.

Residents know Siobhan as smiley, attentive and caring, and we're incredibly proud of the positivity, teamwork and warmth she brings to The Dower House every day.



LEELE - HOUSEKEEPING

Leele loves meeting residents and says the most rewarding part of her role is making people smile. She enjoys getting to know residents, learning what makes them laugh, and taking the time to listen.

For Leele, something as simple as greeting someone with a smile can make a real difference to their day.

She is passionate about showing that housekeeping in a care home is about far more than cleaning. As Leele says, people sometimes think the job is "just piloting a Henry", but the role is much bigger than that. From supporting residents when they need help to noticing when something isn't right, housekeepers play an important part in residents' wellbeing.

Residents know Leele for her cheerful personality, attention to detail and willingness to help.

Well done to everyone, but a special thank you to Mariela, Jovia, Siobhan & Leele for being a part of our meet the team featured this month.

A WONDERFUL MUSICAL AFTERNOON WITH PIPPA & MARYLYSE



Twice a year since 2024, we have had the pleasure of welcoming the wonderfully talented Pippa and Marylyse to The Dower House, where they have performed for our residents and brought a little extra music and joy into our home.

Pippa played a beautiful selection of well-known and much-loved music, carefully chosen to suit both the violin and flute. Our residents thoroughly enjoyed listening to the familiar melodies, with many happily joining in and reminiscing as the music brought back special memories.

Marylyse also joined Pippa for one of the songs, making the performance even more special. It was lovely to see them performing together and sharing their love of music with everyone.

Pippa has been playing the violin since she was just eight years old, and her teacher is a well-known violinist who has also been a familiar face here at The Dower House. It is wonderful to see Pippa's talent continuing to grow and to have the opportunity to enjoy her performances with us. As a small thank you for another wonderful performance, we presented Pippa with a selection of biscuits for her and all the family to enjoy.

We look forward to welcoming Pippa and Marylyse back again and enjoying more beautiful music together in the future. Their visits are always warmly welcomed by our residents and are a lovely part of our musical calendar.

MUSIC WITH MARCUS

Marcus, one of our regular and much-loved entertainers, recently returned to entertain our residents with a wonderful selection of great hits from the past.

As always, Marcus had everyone tapping their feet, singing along and enjoying the familiar songs. Kathy was especially enthusiastic and happily joined Marcus in singing along to many of the songs, adding to the lovely atmosphere.

What makes Marcus so special is not only his musical talent, but the genuine connection he has with our residents. He takes the time to learn their names and makes a point of chatting to each person personally. His warm personality and friendly nature make everyone feel included and valued.

It was another thoroughly enjoyable afternoon, filled with music, laughter and happy memories. We are always delighted when Marcus comes to visit and look forward to welcoming him back again in October.



NOTES FROM BEN



WHATS BEEN HAPPENING IN THE GARDEN DURING AUGUST

This year has certainly been an extremely different summer, with prolonged periods of heat and no rainfall having a noticeable effect on the garden. The hot, dry conditions have been challenging for both the plants and those of us caring for them, and some areas have needed a little extra attention to keep them looking their best. Despite this, the garden continues to be a wonderful source of colour, character and interest, and there is still plenty to enjoy as we begin to look towards the changing season.

There is something rather special about this time of year, when the garden begins its gradual transition, with the late-summer flowers still putting on a display while the first signs of autumn start to emerge.

Over the last month, Terry and I have almost completed a full lap of all the borders. It has been a busy few weeks of weeding, deadheading and general maintenance, making sure the pots received water!! Our focus is now turning towards the boundary yew hedges, which are quite a challenge in themselves!

We will begin with the yew hedge beside the main car park and gradually work our way through to the Hawthorn in Bluebell Wood, which I think of as our halfway point. From there, we will tackle the conifer hedge between us and our neighbour before working our way back towards the barns. It is quite an undertaking and should certainly keep us busy for around three weeks!

Once the hedge cutting is complete, we will return our attention to the borders and continue with our regular programme of maintenance. We will keep on top of the deadheading, tidy away any plants that have finished flowering and begin to gather the first of the autumn leaves as they start to fall. There is always something to do in the garden, and even as one job is completed, another seems to appear!

By October, we hope to have the hedges neatly trimmed and the garden looking tidy and ready for the changing season. Although the bright colours of summer will gradually fade, autumn brings its own wonderful display, with beautiful golden, red and copper tones beginning to appear throughout the garden.

So, if you are passing through the garden, come and have a chat and take a moment to enjoy it. There is always something different to see, whether it is a late-summer flower, the changing leaves or simply the peaceful atmosphere of the garden as we move from one season into the next.

A CREATIVE AFTERNOON WITH PAINTED DRAGONFLY POTTERY



Residents enjoyed a lovely and creative afternoon with Helen from Painted Dragonfly Pottery. Helen brought along a wonderful selection of pottery shapes for everyone to choose from, giving our residents the opportunity to let their creativity and imagination shine.

Helen demonstrated a variety of different painting techniques these included sponging, using dried sea sponges to create interesting textures, dotting with the opposite end of paintbrushes, and creating stripes and patterns using tape. Our residents then chose their own colours and designs, making each piece completely unique and personal.

There was plenty of concentration, creativity and, of course, lots of conversation and laughter along the way! We paused halfway through the afternoon for some well-earned refreshments, and Helen joined us for a much-deserved cup of tea and a chat.

The finished pieces will now be carefully fired and glazed, and we are hoping to sell them later in the year to raise money for our chosen charity. We are very excited to see how they turn out and can't wait to admire everyone's finished creations.

There are sure to be lots of happy faces when the pottery returns!

THE DOWER HOUSE

WHAT'S ON IN SEPTEMBER

Every Monday at 10.30 Knit & Natter with our ladies from Inner Wheel

Every Tuesday morning Keep Fit

Sunday afternoons 'Film Club'

Tuesday 1st

12.45pm Boat Trip on the Alison McGregor

Wednesday 2nd

11am Team Crossword

3pm Indoor Boules

Thursday 3rd

11am The Word Game

3pm Armchair travels - Scottish Highlands

Friday 4th

11am Games of Legs

3pm Sarah Hobbs singing our favorite tunes

4.30pm News hour with Chris Golding

Monday 7th

2 -3.15pm Garden Walks

3.30pm Lorna & Olga Therapy Dog

Tuesday 8th

3pm Colins Owls

Wednesday 9th

3pm Craft Time

Thursday 10th

11am The Word Game

3pm Making Cookies

Friday 11th

11am Ben Playing the Piano

3pm Marcus Singing

4.30pm News hour with Chris Golding

Monday 14th

3pm Games Afternoon

Tuesday 15th

11am Book Club with Celia

Aesop's Fable

2.45pm The Men are off to the 'King Charles'
the pub!

Wednesday 16th

10am Chats with Ben

3pm Quiz Time with Sara

Thursday 17th

11am The Word Game

3pm Hannah Spires on the Saxophone

Friday 18th

11am Team Crossword

3pm Garden Walks with Staff

4.30pm News hour with Chris Golding

Monday 21st

12.45pm Boat Trip on The Alison McGregor

Tuesday 22nd

3pm Team Crossword

Wednesday 23rd

11am Holy Communion

3pm Coffee & Cake at the Golfing Range

Thursday 24th

11am The Word Game

3pm Matrons Meeting

Friday 25th

11am Ben on the Piano

3pm Bian Budden Playing our favorites

4.30pm News hour with Chris Golding

Monday 28th

3pm Armchair Travels to the 'Heart of
England'

Tuesday 29th

3pm Craft Time

Wednesday 30th

11am Team Crossword

3pm Scrabble & Rummikub
Competition

THE DOWER HOUSE

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