

# WINTER 2025 NEWSLETTER

News from Elizabeth Finn Homes



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## A message from our CEO

As autumn deepens and we head towards winter, I've been reflecting on the season of change and on how much energy and imagination continue to thrive across Elizabeth Finn Homes. One word keeps coming to mind: active!

Across our homes, residents and colleagues alike have been keeping body, mind, and spirit busy. From the opening of our new exercise room at The Lodge, where residents are taking confident steps towards greater strength and independence, to the flurry of creativity behind our Inter-Home Scarecrow Challenge, there's movement, laughter and purpose everywhere.

Science tells us that staying active isn't just good for fitness; it sharpens the mind, lifts the mood, and strengthens connection, something we saw in abundance at our Merlewood Dog Show, with wagging tails and smiling faces all round.

Our Golden Heart Awards also shone a light on the dedication and warmth that make our homes such special places to live and work. Every nomination, every story, and every smile reminded me that activity comes in many forms, not just physical, but emotional and creative too.

Thank you all for bringing such energy, kindness, and heart to our homes every single day. As the nights draw in, let's keep that light burning bright, staying active, inspired, and connected right through the winter months ahead.

With warmest wishes,

**Olivia Curno,**  
Chief Executive

## CEO out & about



Visiting Merlewood on Waggy Wednesday.



Speaking at The Care Show in Birmingham alongside Peter Norgate People Director, discussing employee welfare.



Olivia joined a rehearsal of "The Lodge Community Choir", all wearing their new branded polo shirts for the first time.



Visit to The Lodge, Exeter to meet and chat with residents. Whilst there Olivia met our new Maintenance Assistant, Matthew.



Presenting our first Golden Heart Awards in Oxford.

## 5 minutes with... Molly Horne

Hotel Services Manager,  
Merlewood

After leaving school, Molly completed a chef apprenticeship with Compass Group, where she gained experience in recipe development and had the opportunity to work at high-profile events such as Wimbledon and The Brit Awards. She went on to further her career as the lead hospitality chef at Brunel University and then Roehampton Golf Course before taking on the role of Bar and Café Manager.

This shift to a more management focused position led to her role as the Hotel Services Manager at Merlewood, where she now oversees the Housekeeping and Catering teams. Molly's role focuses on ensuring that our residents receive the best possible service every day.

### Why did you choose care as a sector to work in?

I wanted to find a role that felt more meaningful, where I could build real relationships with the people I provide a service for. Working in care gives me that sense of purpose. It is incredibly rewarding to know that what we do makes a difference in someone's daily life.

### What are you most proud of in your career to date?

One of my proudest moments was during my apprenticeship, when I entered the Apprentice Chef of the Year competition and won second place in the live cooking final.

### What has been your biggest challenge?

Recruitment always seems to be the biggest challenge in my role.

### What would you say to someone wanting to start a career in care?

Go for it! Moving into care was one of the best decisions I have made.



### What is your favourite place to visit?

Anywhere sunny with a nice beach!

### What would we most likely find you doing when not at work?

Having bought my first house this year I'm normally at home trying to complete one of the many DIY projects I've started and half finished

### Do you have a life philosophy?

My philosophy is to always do my best and treat others with kindness and respect. I believe that even small positive actions can make a big difference to someone's day, especially in a care setting where compassion and teamwork mean so much.

### Who do you most admire?

I have huge respect for the staff I work alongside. Their commitment and kindness constantly inspire me. Across all departments they all show care and compassion in their jobs.

### If you could do any one thing in your life, what would that be?

Win the lottery and build and design my own house from scratch!

## Scarecrow fever sweeps Elizabeth Finn Homes!

What do a farming hero, a world-famous crime writer, an industrial pioneer, a warrior queen, and a golf pro have in common? They've all been spotted, in straw form, across Elizabeth Finn Homes. Our homes were buzzing with creativity for the *Inter-Home Scarecrow Challenge*, celebrating harvest time, community spirit, and a touch of friendly competition.



At The Cotswold Home in Burford, residents paid tribute to local legend *Jeremy Clarkson* with their very own "Jeremy" scarecrow, complete with farm-style attire kindly donated by local businesses. The project even caught the attention of BBC Oxford, who featured it on air!

Over at Rush Court in Wallingford, residents turned detective with their *Agatha Christie* creation which was chosen as the Scarecrow Challenge overall winner. To complete the entry, the residents added Poirot, Miss Marple, and an enjoyable mystery trail.

In Droitwich, the Rashwood team honoured local

philanthropist *John Corbett*, "The Salt King," while Grove Court in Woodbridge brought history to life with their fierce *Boudica* scarecrow, a warrior queen who perfectly captured the home's bold and creative spirit.

Not to be outdone, Merlewood in Surrey "teed off" with a charming *golfer*, inspired by nearby Wentworth Golf Club and the residents' shared passion for the sport.

While Rush Court may have taken the top spot, all our scarecrows were utterly amazing and a wonderful reflection of Elizabeth Finn Homes' creativity and community pride!

## Wagging tails and smiling faces at our Merlewood Dog Show

Merlewood hosted its first canine event, delighting residents, staff, families and local dog owners. The event brought together 37 dogs of all sizes for a day of dog skills and canine fun, making good use of Merlewood's beautiful and extensive grounds. Over 80 dog owners, friends and family enjoyed a very entertaining afternoon with obstacle courses for the dogs and unique dog toys on display.



The dogs competed in six categories, with the ultimate winner being Molly, the 'Dog that the judge most wanted to take home'. Merlewood resident Helen sat on the judging panel and there was Doggie Ice cream prepared by the Merlewood team and prizes for all the canine winners.

Following the event, Stressless Dog Training and Coaching, have agreed to hold their classes at Merlewood grounds, which the residents are looking forward to watching.

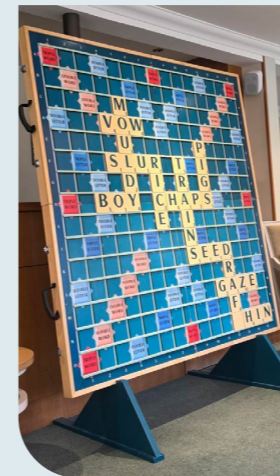


## Building connections for our Oxford residents

Our wonderful social engagement teams have been busy connecting residents from The Cotswold Home in Burford and Rush Court in Wallingford, helping new friendships blossom across our Oxfordshire homes.

The initiative, led by Louise and Sonia, has led to a lunch hosted by the Rush Court team, followed by a lively game of Big Scrabble organised by The Cotswold Home. There are future trips planned to view the lovely gardens at our home in Droitwich and another shared lunch at The Cotswold Home.

It's all part of the Elizabeth Finn Homes family, where connections, care, and community truly thrive.



## Launch of new exercise room at The Lodge, Exeter

Long rated Outstanding by the CQC, The Lodge Care Home in Exeter proudly launched its brand new exercise room, designed to enhance residents' physical health, mobility, and circulation.



Equipped with parallel bars and steps, the facility supports residents in maintaining strength and flexibility. The launch was marked by a visit from the High Sheriff of Devon, Mrs. Caroline Harlow, accompanied by her consort Tim, son and daughter-in-law of resident Sylvia.

## Go Orange

Across our homes in October, residents and colleagues took part in Challenge Poverty Week by supporting the Go Orange for Turn2us campaign to raise awareness and funds to help tackle financial hardship across the UK.

From sponsored walks to themed parties, our teams have gone above and beyond to support this vital cause, all while bringing plenty of colour, community spirit and creativity to their homes.

As a profit for purpose organisation, we're proud to work in partnership with the national charity Turn2us,



supporting their mission to help people across the UK gain access to the financial support they need. Together, we're making a difference.



## Shining Bright: Elizabeth Finn Homes staff recognised in prestigious care awards

We are proud to announce that several exceptional staff members across various home functions have been shortlisted for regional and national awards.



Great British Care Awards



The National Care Awards



THE PALLIATIVE & END OF LIFE CARE AWARDS  
Celebrating Excellence in Palliative & End of Life Care

Kelly Lockwood, General Manager at Grove Court, and Anthony Patchett, Head Chef at Grove Court, have been named finalists in the National Care Awards, to be held in Park Lane, London, this November.

We have three Merlewood staff members nominated as finalists in the Great British Care Awards, South East. Kim Arthur for The Care Home Worker Award, Karen Slater for the Care Home Newcomer Award and Jane Aves for the Ancillary Worker Award.

Sonia Evans from The Cotswold Home is a finalist in the Great British Care Awards, South West, Care Home Activity Organiser Award.

And finally, earlier in the year, Rashwood were announced as finalists at The Palliative Care Awards in the category of Nursing Home Provider Award.

Congratulations and best of luck to all our shortlisted winners!

## Welcome to our new General Managers

**Karl Pay,**  
Halliwell

Karl has worked in adult social care for 35 years, predominantly in the not-for-profit sector. He brings extensive experience and knowledge working across sectors that provide for older people, those with physical and learning disabilities and the associated conditions and complexities.

**Josephine Gbadamosi,**  
Eversfield

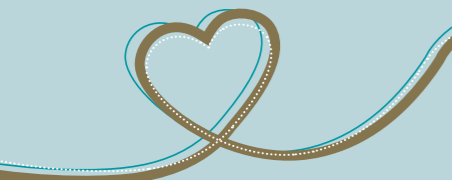
Josephine began her career in social care as a Support Worker for young adults and now has over 40 years of experience under her belt. She has specialised in leading residential and nursing homes for older adults, a role she says is her true calling. Josephine studied Management and Marketing at Metropolitan University and is a qualified NVQ Assessor in Health and Social Care.

**Nike Ajewole,**  
Rush Court

Nike is an accomplished nurse and healthcare leader with extensive experience in creating, delivering and communicating corporate visions that unite teams and drive excellence. She is passionate about empowering staff to achieve shared goals and deliver outstanding care. Nike specialised in dementia and complex palliative care.



## Golden Hearts shine at Elizabeth Finn Homes



On 11th September, Elizabeth Finn Homes celebrated its inaugural Golden Hearts Awards at the stunning St Hilda's College, Oxford. The ceremony recognised staff who go above and beyond, embodying our core values: *Bring Love, Welcome All, Inspire More, Act with Purpose.*



Each of our eight homes nominated a quarterly winner, with the final awards highlighting three exceptional individuals.

Kim Arthur, Carer at Merlewood, took Gold. Lynne Hall, Clinical Training Coordinator at The Cotswold Home, received Silver, while Paulina Hartshorne, Carer at Rashwood, proudly claimed Bronze. Sophia Salem received the central team award as much for her endless smiles as for her unwavering dedication.

Teamwork shone through as The Cotswold Home was named Home of the Year, celebrating their commitment to residents, support for colleagues, and consistent high standards.

With over 50 colleagues attending, the evening was a joyous celebration of talent, compassion, and the extraordinary people that make our homes such special places to live and work.



Bring love



Welcome all



Inspire more



Act with purpose

## Rush Court, an elegant country home

Located in the beautiful Oxfordshire countryside, just outside the market town of Wallingford, you will find Rush Court. An elegant, Queen Anne style house set in its own grounds, a haven of beauty and tranquillity.

The current house was built in the 1920s but the original manor house on this land dates back to the 17th Century and even had a moat. Elizabeth Finn Homes acquired the house in 1949, converting it to a care home.

Now modernised to the highest standards, the house still retains its original elegance along with some of its unique features creating a warm, welcoming home with individuality and charm.

Rush Court has 47 ensuite rooms, including a suite suitable for a couple, and provides both



residential and nursing care on a long term or short stay basis, as well as offering end of life care.

The stylish and comfortable rooms are tastefully decorated, and some have direct access to the courtyard garden. The home offers restaurant-style dining in a lovely classically-styled dining room embellished with coving, original panelling and a fireplace. There is also a bar area in the foyer, a library and games room and a hair salon.

Perhaps one of Rush Court's most appreciated features are the beautiful gardens. Now well established, there is an

abundance of nature with long views across trees and open countryside. There are several outdoor seating areas, a large patio area, a vegetable patch tended by residents and various water features. The grounds are easily accessible for all to enjoy.

Set on the River Thames, Wallingford has played an important part in English history and today our residents enjoy visiting the town and taking boat trips out on the water.

Our new manager at Rush Court, Nike Ajewole, will be leading this beautiful house through its next chapter, as it continues to provide a warm, comfortable and homely environment for its residents and staff.



A wholly-owned subsidiary of the charity Turn2us

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