

# CourtCIRCULAR

SUMMER 2023

40 YEARS OF RETIREMENT SECURITY



## TIME FOR A CELEBRATION!

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Mrs Eve  
King's 100<sup>th</sup>  
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Chairman for  
22 Years and  
counting  
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Retirement  
SECURITY





## Welcome

I and our team welcome you to our revived and reinvigorated Court Circular. I know it has been a while since our last issue, due in no small part to our rebranding and we hope you like both. We are so glad to be sharing news from Retirement Security and from around the Courts. We hope that going forward we can produce these publications seasonally. Please enjoy the read.

### What is happening at your court?

We would love to hear from you, so we can share it in the next edition of our new Court Circular.

Email [helengregg@retirementsecurity.co.uk](mailto:helengregg@retirementsecurity.co.uk) or send handwritten notes and printed material via your Court Manager.



Find your Court Circular Supplement inside

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20-23 **Court celebrations**  
It's been a busy year for events, check-out how our Courts have celebrated





# 40 years of Retirement Security

It seems unbelievable nowadays, when retirement properties are ubiquitous in our communities, that 4 decades ago virtually no thought had been given to the provision of appropriate and adequate housing for later living.

In Warwickshire for example, older people made up only a very small proportion of the population, so the issue hadn't been properly considered. At that time housing for older people typically consisted of bedsits, which sounds like a depressing solution to us today. But someone was thinking about a better solution for later living and an idea began to form.

In 1974 Bob Bessell was Director of Social Services for Warwickshire and he began to recognise that there had to be something better than the limited option of a bedsit for people in the later years of their lives. In the years that followed, Bob's idea of how to tackle the problem progressed and Retirement Security was born. Incidentally, the name was chosen on a train travelling across Canada when Bob found himself in the unusual position of having nothing to read!

Now for a piece of land to make the idea a reality. Pope Saint John Paul II visited England in the summer of 1982 for six days and although the visit was a great success, it was a costly event and assets would need to be sold. In the village of Tiddington near Stratford on Avon, there was a piece of land owned by the Church which had been earmarked as the site to build a new chapel. This land now became available for purchase. Bids were placed and Retirement Security was successful, becoming the new owners of the land where Tiddington Court sits today.

Bob teamed up with an architect, a solicitor, a surveyor and of course his wife, Margaret has been heavily involved in the design of the Courts and their evolution over the decades.

Tiddington Court opened its doors in 1984 as the very first Retirement Security Court.



The Court's very first owner, Mrs T. lived there until she was 103 years old, enjoying her independence for many years, with support when she needed it. It just so happens that there is another gentleman, Mr S. who, at age 102 also calls Tiddington Court home so it just goes to show that independence in a supportive community really does work!

Following the success of this first court, Retirement Security went on to build further courts, including Tannery Court, which was the first development for later living in Wales.

From the outset it was important that owners have a strong voice in the way their community is run, and this has always been part of the Retirement Security model. Bob is the first to acknowledge however that having that voice does bring a certain level of responsibility with it, but it has worked for 40 years!

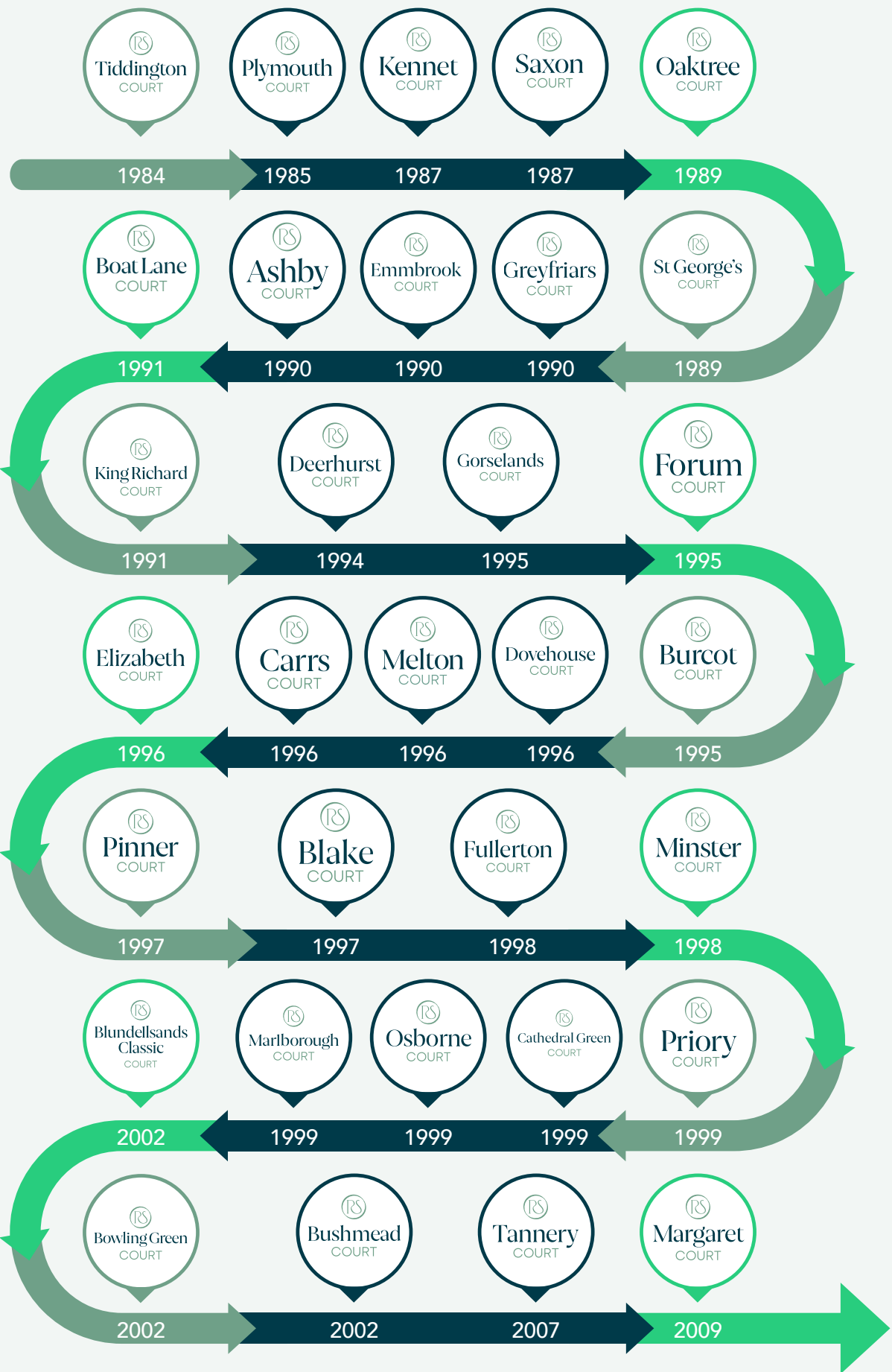
We asked Bob his thoughts about the last 40 years and he commented that, like anything in life, there have been some fraught times and many good times but his belief in the ethos of the company has not changed. In fact, he believes in the product so much that he and Margaret bought an apartment and have lived there for over a decade.

**Bob commented that lots of people have contributed a huge amount over the years, but he recognises that there is lots still be done and change is inevitable.**

**Here's to the next 40 years!**



Timeline for our Courts...



Melanie Gowers  
CEO of Retirement Security

Where has the time gone...

...It's flown by! In 3 months I will be able to celebrate 2 years as CEO here at Retirement Security.

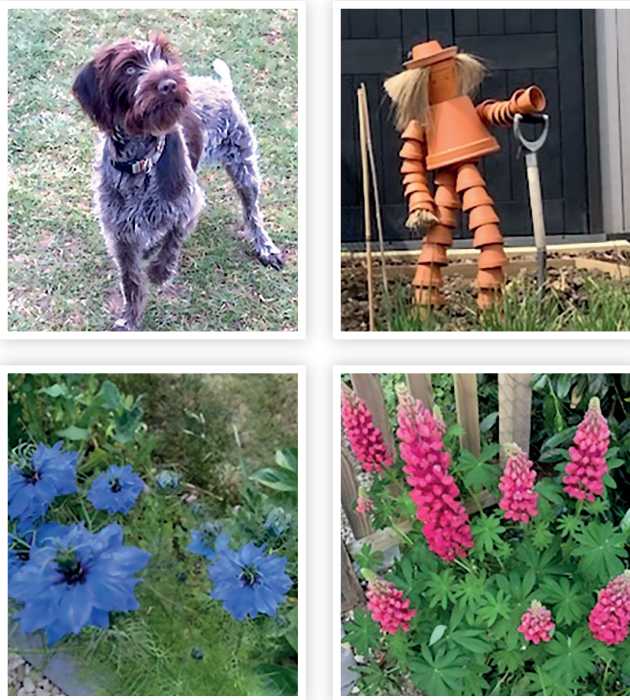
I took a big leap of faith when I joined the business, knowing that there would be many obstacles and challenges ahead of me. I was right but I have never looked back! I'm proud to support the founder, Bob and share his passion for supported community living where owners 'have a say'. However, from 1983 to today so much has changed in the way businesses operate, and to say the 'rule book' has evolved (and to a degree, gone mad) is an understatement! I continue to ensure Retirement Security is 'fit for the future' and in good time, we can add more wonderful Court environments to the portfolio.

Enough of the serious...

Summer is here and if there is any time of the year that puts a skip in your step it has to be when Spring has sprung and we head into Summer

(despite the heat, of which I'm not a great fan; even though I grew up in Africa!).

This is the perfect opportunity for me to share with you what I do to switch off... a bit of down time. Lilli our German Wirehaired Pointer



(pictured above) blessed my family last year and what a bundle of joy and fun. At only 10 months old she keeps me on my toes – and fit!

I also love getting my hands dirty... donning gardening gloves whenever possible. The rewards for patience and dedication are plentiful.

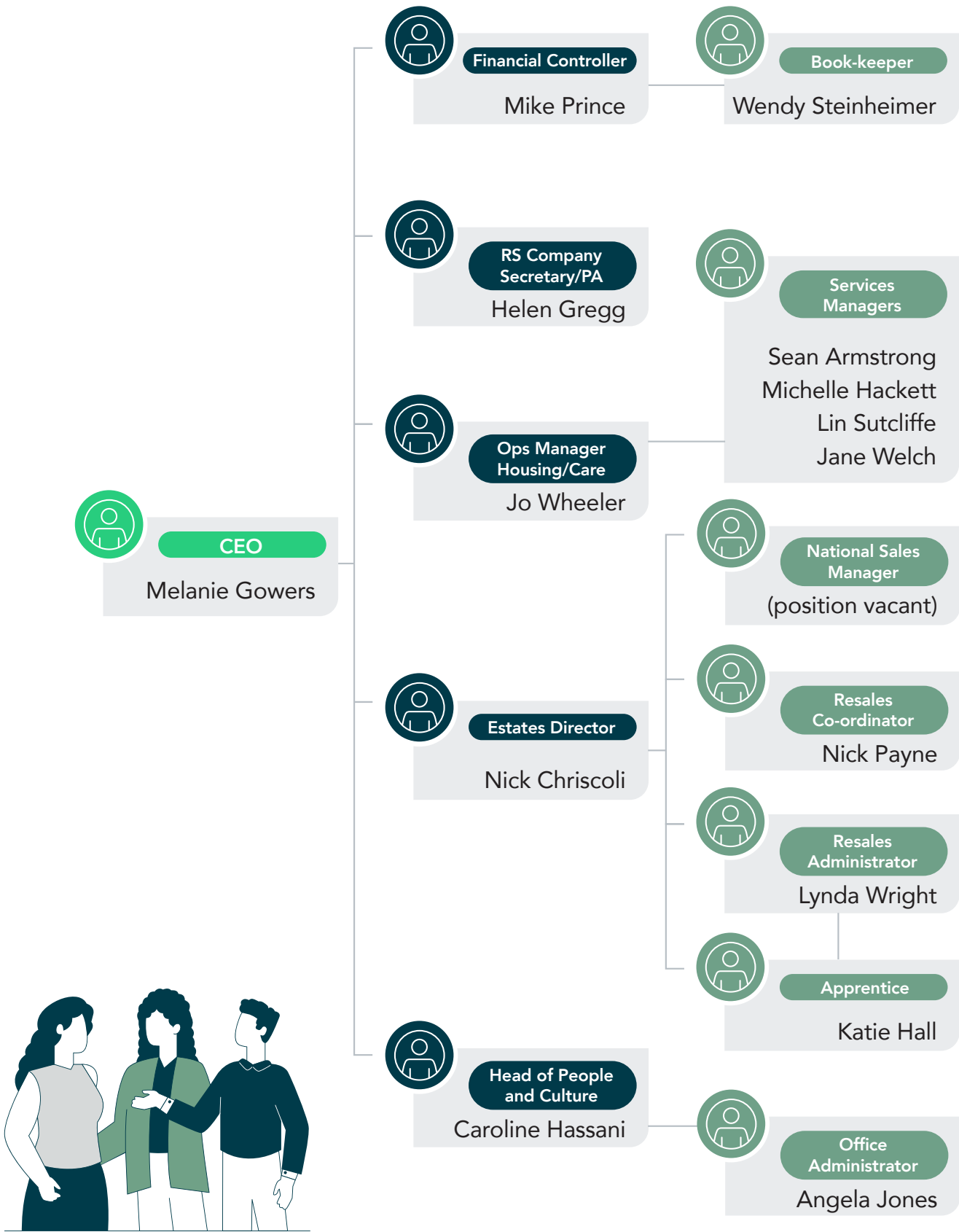
The team continue to embrace change and as a result we have succeeded in strengthening the Company for successive years, and I look forward to that continuing.

I hope to meet you over a coffee soon.



# Our company structure

June 2023



Nick Payne,  
Lin Sutcliffe,  
Angela Jones,  
Katie Hall  
(Left to right)

## Employee of the Month Award

There have certainly been a few positive changes at Retirement Security over the last couple of years and our Employee of the Month Award is no exception.

We began this initiative in February and have had some very worthy winners.

This is a lovely award because colleagues get to have their say about who deserves to win and why, via a vote each month. There are a number of criteria that coworkers take into consideration in accordance with the values of the company. For example:

- Integrity**  
Doing what's right over what's easy
- Quality**  
Striving to deliver the highest quality
- Learning and development**  
Embracing opportunities for further knowledge and realising your full potential. We were delighted to see Steph Reed, Manager of Bushmead Court scoop May's award.

Here is a list of all our wonderful winners so far, who each received a certificate and a £25 Marks and Spencer gift voucher.

- FEBRUARY**  
Nick Payne,  
Resales Co-ordinator  
Record number of resales completions for last quarter – resales Guru!
- MARCH**  
Lin Sutcliffe,  
Services Manager  
For living the values of the company by supporting others without being asked
- APRIL**  
Angela Jones,  
Office Administrator  
For her positive and proactive approach in her role and always supporting colleagues



- MAY**  
Steph Reed  
Court Manager  
For demonstrating drive, resilience and a positive approach to meeting challenges
- JUNE**  
Katie Hall  
Court Manager  
For living the company culture and carrying out all her duties with a smile on her face.  
We look forward to finding out who will bag the prize in July!





Retirement Security establishes its first apprenticeship program

Retirement Security has teamed up with Stratford on Avon College to create our first ever apprenticeship program and we are proud to announce that Katie Hall is our first apprentice under the program.

Katie is working towards a Business Administration Apprenticeship, and she has begun her journey with us in the resales department. Over the coming months, Katie will move through the different departments in the company learning the necessary skills to successfully complete her apprenticeship.

Katie has hit the ground running and is already in regular contract with the Courts. We are delighted to welcome her to the team.



An update from the resales team

On the back of our record-breaking resales in 2022/23, Retirement Security is not resting on its laurels.

Our back-office systems continue to develop with the aim to streamline the resales process whilst bringing in our colleagues at the Courts into one, seamless system.

To help us achieve this, a rollout of software has begun, allowing us to share with Court Managers the base data we possess for each Court, enabling the sharing of resales information and progress on individual resales, all with the aim of working closer together to achieve faster and more efficient resales. We call this software the Court Manager Portal. It will be rolled out over the Summer to all Courts.

Through this collaborative effort, we will now be able to quickly assess the condition of a property before it comes onto the market, it allows a meaningful report to be automatically sent to each vendor, complete with photographs and with a recommendation on price.

We continue to market resales at the Court via resales open days, new signage and banners, Rightmove advertisements, marketing of Courts on Autumna, part-exchange opportunities for buyers as well as Social Media/PPC advertising. Retirement Security is determined to play its part in the marketing and promotion of Courts resales activities.

New Look ‘Handbook’

If you’ve missed your handbook this year, we have good news. Our traditional handbook has undergone a complete transformation and will be delivered to you soon.



Like many other companies, Retirement Security is looking towards a greener future and cutting down on print waste is part of that initiative.

So what’s changed?

Your new Court brochure contains all the information you need about your Court and this book won’t be reprinted every year.

We have taken the information that changes annually, like costs and charges, and put it into a new key facts booklet. An updated key facts booklet will be sent to you every year for you to keep with your Court brochure in a stylish new folder.

You should have received your key facts booklet for this year and we look forward to sending your new Court brochure and folder to you hot off the press.





Supporting You

There are many ways in which we support our customers, and regular training and updates for your local on-site teams is a part of that.

In November 2022 we held a 2-day training event for Court Managers at The White Swan Hotel in Stratford on Avon and in January this year we ran an online Director training session for your Boards of Directors.

Both events were very well received and will return again this year.

Directors’ Update

Keeping you informed - 7th August

After receiving positive feedback about the use of technologies like Zoom and Teams (people seemed to like the fact that they could attend a meeting, close the computer and get on with their day) we’re following the same format for the next Director update on 7th August.

Details to follow.

Court Manager Training

Autumn 2025

The event in November was a great success and a chance for Court Managers to get together to share best practice, learn new things and socialise. There were many compliments about the venue in central Stratford on Avon so we are looking to host it at the same place and will be contacting Court Managers with the details soon.



An estimated 850,000 pensioner households fail to claim £1.8bn annually in pension credit, which is designed to support retired people struggling on low incomes.

We have found that many of our Owners are not aware that they are entitled to pension credit and could be missing out on additional weekly income, as well as financial support towards their service charge.

Owners who are struggling with their personal care due to health or disability could also be entitled to attendance allowance or personal independence payments. Also, Owners who receive a lower rate of benefit due to their disability may be entitled to additional money if their care needs have increased since they first applied.

You may think you are not eligible because you:

- Have savings
- Own your own home
- May be getting a small occupational pension
- Do not think it worth applying as the amount would be very small
- May have been turned down in the past
- Think it’s a complex and confusing subject

It’s easy to find out if you are eligible and it could mean extra income for your household. If you would like confidential advice or support on any welfare benefits please arrange an appointment with your services manager.



# Dennis' Half Marathon



In November last year one of our lovely Owners, Dennis Smith ran a half marathon in a fantastic time and for a great cause, and here is what his Court Manager, Christine Bather had to say.

A note from Christine Bather, Tannery Court

“ We are all extremely proud of Owner Dennis Smith who took part in the Conwy Half Marathon. Dennis completed the run in a time of 2 hours and 45 minutes. Well done and congratulations!...

...Many thanks to Retirement Security for donating a running jacket to Dennis for use on his runs and who also sponsored Dennis for his marathon. The charity to benefit was chosen by members of the Social Committee at Tannery Court who all voted in favour of Ty Gobaith, which is the local Children's Hospice. The grand total raised was £4,184.00 which was presented to a member of the fund-raising team from Ty Gobaith

during a coffee morning at Tannery Court. Thank you also to Court Managers and Retirement Security staff who donated for the charity at the Court Manager training in November. Dennis was extremely delighted and thankful for all the support that he had received.”

# Mrs Eve King's 100<sup>th</sup> Birthday

at Tannery Court

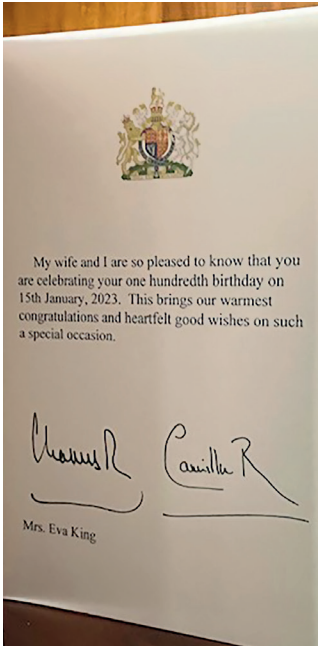


One of the highlights of Eve's birthday was receiving a birthday card from the new King and Queen Consort and the card was proudly displayed for all to see.



It was a great pleasure to plan a 100th Birthday Party for Eve. It was an event which she had been looking forward to for the last couple of years. Eve was able to celebrate with family and friends including her great great granddaughter (named after Eve) not to mention the Mayor of Abergele, Alun Hunter and his consort. Eve also enjoyed music and songs from yesteryear by the Vale Singers and a cake was made and decorated by her granddaughter. Eve was born in 1923 and was the youngest of 7 children. At the age of 18 she joined

the Royal Army Pay Corps and in 1944 her unit sailed from Southampton to Belgium. She was a Lance Corporal and has very fond memories of her time spent before finally being demobbed from Hamburg. Eve married in 1949 and raised 3 children in Timperley, near Altrincham. Eve then spent 10 years in Cornwall before moving to Kinmel Bay to be nearer to family. In 2013 Eve made the perfect move to Tannery Court, where she made new friends and continued her cross stitch club which is still running today.





# Colin's Story

One of the things we've heard a lot from Owners over the years is that they love the environment at their Court, where they can enjoy their privacy and independence but also have the company of friends and neighbours.

Owners share many common considerations when it comes to the decision to move from the family home. However, there is also a common regret, that they wish they'd made the move sooner.

Colin's family wrote this wonderful account of his new beginning.

At the age of 85 Colin found himself in a bit of a dilemma. Thus far he'd had a great life – 50+ years of happy marriage, a successful career as a surveyor, two daughters, four grandchildren, a cat and a lovely home in the Northeast.

However, things were changing. Marian had finally lost her battle with Alzheimer's, Sue and Helen were settled with their families a few hours down the motorway and their wonderful friends and neighbours of the last 30 years were all beginning to drift away in one way or another. For the first time in his life, Colin was starting to feel a bit lonely. He loved his home and garden (though admittedly he was needing a little more help coping with both).

He enjoyed the freedom of having his car – though the running costs were proving high for the number of journeys he made – and

actually if he was honest, he wasn't so confident taking the motorway to see the family anymore. The girls did visit as often as they could and – maybe he was imagining it – but did these visits involve more 'helping out' these days?

He was definitely coping, but was he living? Was it time for a change? A smaller bungalow nearer one of the girls perhaps, or maybe one of those retirement villages he'd read about? But what was the first step? Was he ready, able or confident enough to start a new life? And what about Millie, the cat?

Maybe it was easier to stay with what he knew and wait for the inevitable.

**This is how Colin's new life began.**

With the support of his family, he put his lovely home up for sale and together they researched the right new

home – independent yet sheltered, private yet sociable – Deerhurst Court. A hub of similarly aged, like-minded people who had led fulfilling and interesting lives, with memories to share and so much more to experience. Men and women who valued their independence and the privacy of their own home with a social life down the corridor. Games of Whist or Bridge, a jigsaw companion, afternoon tea and a chin wag in the lounge, even the odd evening of Bagatelle or an exercise class! Or actually just settling down in the lounge to watch a film with his friends.

His spacious apartment had 2 bedrooms and he used one as an office. The kitchen was perfect for making his own meals (though he did often choose to meet up with others for lunch downstairs) and the living area was easily big enough to entertain family and new friends.

He liked the idea of a friendly manager, always on hand at the touch of a button in times of need and the weekly 'Owners time' giving help with cleaning, ironing or errands. The management fee was subsidised and without the cost of running his previous home and car he found himself saving money! It was all so much simpler too.

Deerhurst's location, a short walk to Mell Square and Solihull town centre with all manner of shops, cafes and restaurants was so convenient he surprised himself by selling his car. His new GP and

optician were round the corner, Solihull hospital a stone's throw away and the local Morrison's had a pharmacy- frankly, all essential commodities for an octogenarian!

We could wax lyrical for longer but the truth is Deerhurst Court and all its occupants opened up dad's later life. He met all manner of society with owners, their families and visitors and the cheerful staff. He made new friends and memories. His experiences at Deerhurst were a worry-free mix of fun and friendship, privacy and respect. He saw more of his family and every day had the potential to be different and fulfilling.

**His only regret?**  
**He wished he'd taken the plunge sooner and indulged longer and actually, so do we!**







## Chairman for 22 Years and Counting

Run by Owners for Owners – that’s the model that Bob Bessell established in 1983 and it would be hard to count the number of people over the years, who have put themselves forward to give their time in support of their Courts.

One such person is Alan Archer, Chairman of the Board at Emmbrook Court. Alan was elected to the Board in 2001 and has been re-elected every year since. Alan has given us a snapshot of his life, from education to a career in engineering, his passion for country dancing and family life and his eventual move to Emmbrook Court with his wife, Heather.

## The Story of my Life.

Alan Archer

I was born in 1936, in Farnborough Hospital, then in NW Kent, now in the London Borough of Bromley. My father was a bank teller/accountant, and my mother was a civil service stenographer.

My father went to TA camp in July 1939, and was demobilised in September 1945. I was evacuated to Canada with my mother in September 1940, on one of the last evacuee ships before the City of Benares was torpedoed. We returned from Canada, some 5 days short of qualifying for Canadian citizenship, in September 1945.

After a short time in a private school in Orpington, NW Kent, I passed the 11-plus exam to Eltham College, the School for the Sons of Missionaries. My O and A levels gained me acceptance to King’s College, Cambridge, to read Mechanical Sciences. Graduating after a four-year course, I joined Sir Alexander Gibb & Partners, Consulting

Engineers, in Westminster in September 1959.

Initially I worked on the design of reinforced concrete buildings for Lea Hall Colliery, near Rugeley. Then similar work for Thorpe Marsh Power Station and Bombay Naval Dockyard, prior to site experience as a junior engineer at Tilbury B Power Station, on the Thames opposite Gravesend. After qualifying as a Member of the Institution of Civil Engineers, I remained with Sir Alexander Gibb & Partners for the whole of my working life. Jobs included ancillary works for the Latiyan and Lar Dams in Iran, structures for irrigation canals in Syria, and underground hydro-electric power stations at Kariba and on the Orange River in South Africa. My longest work was on the structures and the operating manuals for the Great Man-Made River in Libya, which was designed to provide two million cubic meters of water

per day to supply Benghazi, Tripoli and agriculture along the Mediterranean littoral. I retired from Sir Alexander Gibb & Partners in 2001.

I started country dancing during the square dance boom in 1952, after Princess Elizabeth and her husband were seen square dancing on a visit to Canada. This interest has continued, introducing me to my wife, Heather, who accompanied me to Syria (with son Robert) and South Africa (with Susan also) when I was working on those jobs. I still dance regularly, and occasionally call for some of the local clubs. I try to arrange for some dancers to come one evening in summer to dance on the lawn at Emmbrook nearly every year.

While I was working in South Africa, Sir Alexander Gibb & Partners moved from Westminster to Reading. When I returned to the UK it was necessary to move from NW Kent, to a house in Earley, in April 1976. The children attended the local primary and secondary schools, and Heather was a supply teacher for the primary school until

diagnosed with Parkinson’s disease in 1981. Initially she was mobile, but difficulty increased. One of her friends at the local branch of the Parkinson’s Disease Society moved to Emmbrook Court shortly after it opened in 1990. Some days after we first visited Thelma here, it occurred to us that a four-bedroom house with large garden was getting too much for us to manage, so why not talk to Larry Klein, the then manager at Emmbrook. Larry was able to persuade Reading Borough Council that Heather would benefit from being here, while I was allowed to continue to work with Sir Alexander Gibb & Partners, so we moved into Number 42 in December 1992. Heather enjoyed being at Emmbrook, with helpful and caring staff and making many friends, until she passed away in 2003.

When I retired, I was elected to the Board of Emmbrook Court Ltd, becoming Chairman until the present time. I cannot think of anywhere else to be living better.



## Eileen wrote a book!

During the period of the Covid 19 pandemic, Eileen Nicholls a respected music teacher celebrated her 90<sup>th</sup> birthday in lockdown!

During this time, Eileen typed her autobiography on her computer, in her own words.

The book, Ninety Glorious Years and More! has been published unedited and chronicles her life growing up in the South Yorkshire mining town of Mexborough and her experiences of over 90 years.

Eileen is a lady with deep Christian faith and a love for singing, her outlook is one of positivity and inspiration.

Eileen’s book can be purchased at [www.blurb.co.uk](http://www.blurb.co.uk)





Tannery Court

# Easter celebrations

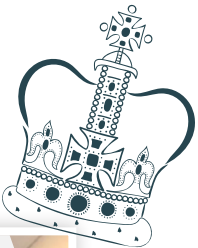
The residents at Tannery Court got in the Easter spirit by donning their bunny ears



# Coronation celebrations

The residents of our Courts celebrated the King's Coronation with true class

Tiddington Court



Burcot Court

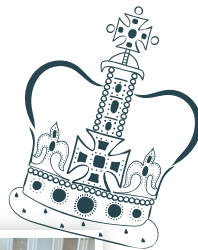




# Coronation celebrations, continues...

The residents of our Courts celebrated the  
King's Coronation with true class

Elizabeth Court



## Get in touch...

We would love to hear your recollections from the last 40 years.

Please send your content to [helengregg@retirementsecurity.co.uk](mailto:helengregg@retirementsecurity.co.uk).  
For all articles printed we will donate £25 towards your next Owners' coffee morning to buy some yummy cakes (or the sherry!!).





# CourtCIRCULAR

SUMMER 2023

**BACK IN**  
**1983**

40 YEARS OF RETIREMENT SECURITY

Year of the

**PIG**

CHINESE ZODIAC



## AVERAGE PRICES

1. New home .....£28.437
2. Litre of petrol.....£0.37
3. Annual income.....£6,792
4. Pint of beer.....£0.74
5. First class stamp...£0.16



World Population  
**4,699,569,304**

## 'Breakfast Time'

The first British breakfast TV programme was broadcast on the BBC

Top Baby Names



**MICHAEL**  
**JENNIFER**

**Red rain** fell in the UK  
in January Caused by sand  
from the Sahara Desert

## TV SHOWS 1ST AIRED

Blockbusters:  
**Blackadder**  
**Surprise Surprise**



The one pound coin  
was introduced in  
England and Wales  
on the 21st April

NO.1 IN SINGLES CHART:

**KAJAGOOGOO -**  
**TOO SHY**



**Tories** were in power and  
**Margaret Thatcher** was PM



Best Picture:  
**Gandhi**

Best Actress:  
**Meryl Streep**

Best Actor:  
**Ben Kingsley**

**THE OSCARS**

**Microsoft**  
word was first  
released



**ALSO BORN**

**IN 1983**

CHRIS HEMSWORTH  
**MILA KUNIS**  
**JONAH HILL**  
**EMILY BLUNT**

**Seatbelts** became mandatory  
for front seat passengers in the UK



**Retirement**  
SECURITY