

Welcome to
Thistle Court Care Home's
Edition 6 2026 Newsletter



EXCELLENCE * PEOPLE-DRIVEN * INTEGRITY * COMPASSION

newsletter

EDITION 6 2026

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Welcome From Sarah Jane

It's been a busy couple of months as we used spring time to start preparing our home and gardens for summer. Our weekly gardening club which family members take part in, has focused on getting our seeds and plants started for our garden tubs and baskets, this includes flowers, herbs and vegetables.

We have also had a number of celebrations within the home, including family member birthdays, welcoming new babies and workplace anniversaries. In addition, the expansion of thematic market place experience into snowdrop house has increased engagement by family members and their visitors receiving many compliments especially from visiting healthcare professionals.

We are truly blessed to have the creativity of Tracey's ideas for this project and the voluntary time from our in house artist Rachel Davies who hand paints our family trees and the engaging fruit trees with fruit that can be picked and put in baskets. You can learn more about Rachel in our featured team member article in this issue.

We also took the opportunity to hold a whole home celebration and enjoyed an array of food and drinks. The banner proudly displayed outside the home supports reminding the team that their commitment and hard work has been recognised and they are valued members of our community.

I hope you enjoy reading this edition and we look forward to seeing you soon.

Sarah Jane, Registered Home Manager





This Quarter's Features

Hello from our Care Home Manager, Sarah Jane Butfield

Thematic Music Shop

Recent Events/Updates

An Introduction to our New Catering Manager

Welsh Word of the Week

Team Member Story/Something Worth Sharing

Team Celebrations/Feedback

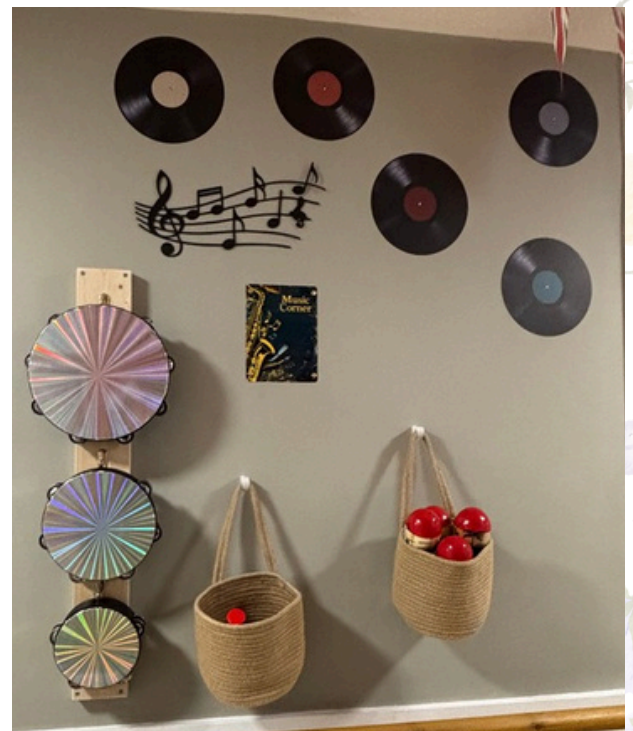
Family Member Birthdays

Upcoming Dates for the Diary

Thematic Music Shop

Our thematic market place in Bluebell House has been in use by our family members for over a year now, and has been featured in local newspaper articles due to the success we have achieved in reducing the impact and frequency of communicative expressions by using our indoor bus stop, apple tree and bakery as a sense of redirection, change of environment and meaningful engagement.

The marketplace has expanded into our Snowdrop Street, the interactive and engaging music shop has been very popular and induced spontaneous singing and some dancing in the hallways.. who knew we had so many talented family and team members!



Recent Events

VE Day at Thistle Court

Our celebratory street party was held in the home, due to the typical wet Welsh weather. The whole home was decorated with flags, and the communal areas had wartime songs playing, with many impromptu sing alongs. The mealtime experience areas had decorated tables with VE day themed occupation items and a menu based on traditional foods of the time, including fish and chips in newspaper cones at lunch and sausage rolls, sandwiches and scones for tea in true English style.



Fish and Chip Friday



Further to the success of fish and chips on VE day we have now introduced Fish and Chip Friday using decorative serving boxes like the traditional fish shops use. This has had an amazing effect on both the atmosphere of the mealtime experience and increased the food eaten. Its a win-win for fish & chips!

Recent Events

Knit and Natter



Finding ways to connect our family members with the local community took a big step forward in April with the launch of our Knit and Natter afternoons. It was an idea proposed by one of our family members during our February Family Member and Relatives meeting and with the support of a local charity with a lovely donation of wool.

Alpaca Visit



Our monthly visit by Bedrock Alpacas was again a success as our family members were able to walk alongside them and feed them and enjoy petting them. Steve who accompanies them takes great pride in ensuring all family members throughout the home are offered the opportunity to engage with them and this visit is always well received with lovely feedback from relatives here at the time of the visit.

An Introduction from Neil Whalen, Our New Group Catering Lead

"Here's a little about me and the work we've been doing"

I've been a chef for over 30 years, starting out as a commis chef and working my way through the ranks to Development Chef and Support Catering Manager. My career has taken me through some of the biggest names in contract catering – Baxter Storey, Compass, Sodexo, and Aramark, before finding my true passion in care catering, which I moved into in 2013 with Barchester in Bristol.

That move changed everything for me. Care is where food really matters on a personal level. You're not just feeding people, you're supporting their health, their dignity, and their happiness every single day.

When it came to developing the new menus at Evolve Care Group, I focused on four things above everything else: seasonality, nutritional balance, familiarity, and clinical need. I wanted menus that felt like proper home cooking, food our family members recognise and love, while also working hard nutritionally, supporting those who may be at risk of malnutrition, recovering from illness, or living with conditions like dementia.

Contrast and variety were equally important. Colour on a plate, a mix of textures, familiar favourites alongside the occasional something new, these details genuinely make a difference to whether someone eats well or not.

My vision going forward is simple: that every family member across our homes sits down to a meal that nourishes them, comforts them, and that they genuinely look forward to. Food should never be an afterthought in care – it is care.

To view our complete Summer menu, please visit our [website](#).



Welsh Word of the Week

Promoting the Welsh language and having Welsh-speaking team members within our care home is a really important way to help our family members, relatives and friends feel comfortable, understood, and creates a sense of home.

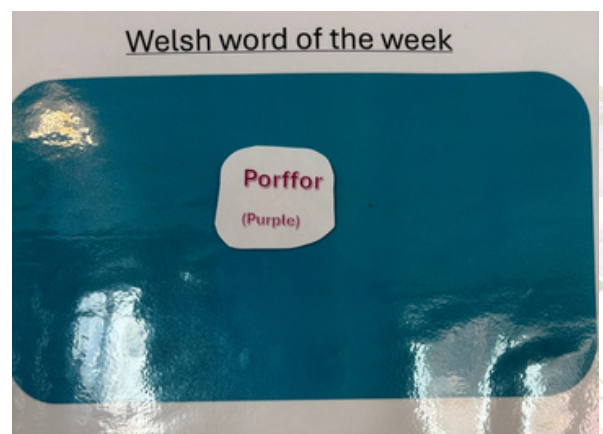
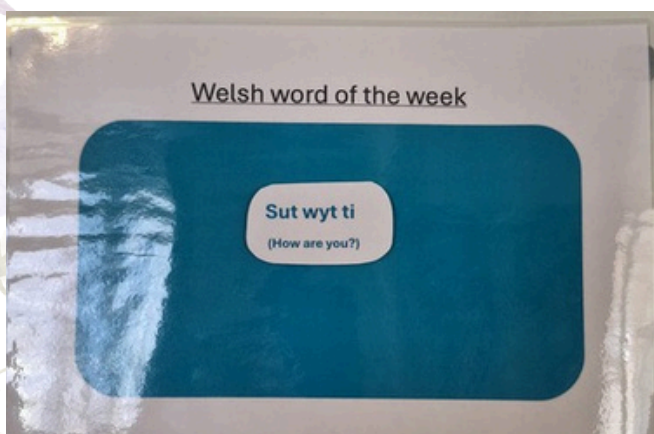
For many of our local family members Welsh is the language they feel most connected to, especially when they are upset, unwell, or living with a dementia.

Being able to speak and hear Welsh can bring reassurance, reduce anxiety, and encourage natural expression. It also helps build stronger relationships between teams, and families, creating a more personal and supportive environment.

A Welsh language offering shows respect for a person's culture, identity, and individual preferences, while helping care feel more meaningful and person-centred.

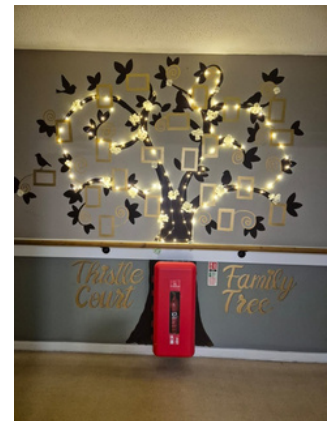
We undertook a project with local school children who are learning Welsh at school to help us create picture cards with words and phrases that can be learnt by our team and practised daily. It brings a lot of joy and laughter as everyone attempts to engage in this daily activity and is well received by relatives who appreciate the effort being made to promote not only the language but Welsh culture.

We strive to celebrate all Welsh national holidays and special events in addition to promoting Welsh recipes and food within the home and in our baking/cooking club.



Our Family Trees

Thistle Court is home to 36 family members and using our bespoke household model, we form individual houses within our community. We are very fortunate to have a long standing team member who is a very talented artist and she has crafted family trees in the houses with individual photographs of the family members added. The photographs are not posed they are everyday captures of our family members engaging in occupation, activities and enjoying special moments with our team members. The family trees are focal points in the houses, both visitors and professionals often stop to admire them. They induce a lot of smiles and engagement and truly show what wellbeing looks like in our home.



Team Member Highlight Rachel Davies

Rachel has been a valued member of the Thistle Court team for 21 years and has worked in a variety of roles within our home's teams. Rachel is an experienced care team house leader, and also supports home induction and moving and handling training for new team members, after completing train the trainer courses. Outside of her roles here she enjoys arts and crafts and shares her artistic passion with our family members during occupation, in addition to free hand painting in the hallways and communal areas, creating unique personalised art work which forms part of our thematic market place designs. Rachel lives locally and volunteers her time to supporting our family members in community events and projects. Thank you Rachel for everything you do for our community.



Team Celebrations



Sue celebrated 25 years
at Thistle Court



Abdul & his Wife Jasna
welcomed their baby boy



Lorraine celebrated 10 years
with Evolve

Feedback

“

I just wanted to take the opportunity to share some lovely staff feedback CIW has received about Thistle Court, they state the care and support provided is excellent, they would recommend the service to others because family members are looked after very well and they have very good support from management. In relation to working at the service they state there are excellent opportunities to learn and develop, a very pleasant environment to work in and friendly colleagues

Jacqueline Hay

My family member has been in Thistle Court for many years, where all the time there he has been cared for and treated with dignity at all times. There is always something going on at the Home and every important date/day is always recognised. Not only are the corridors always cleaned and pictures in them but dads room is always immaculate. A big thank you from me.

Joanne Ayres

Thank you, Tracy, You are so very kind. You're appreciated more than you know

Dolores Stephens

”

Recent Birthdays



Karen turned 67



Colin turned 84



Suzanne turned 70

Upcoming Dates for the Diary



2nd July - Ranntastic Toe Tappers

29th July - Marcus, Local Singer

5th August - Tiki BBQ/Ice Cream Van

15th July - Bedrock Alpacas

28th August - Bedrock Alpacas

10th September - Ranntastic Toe Tappers

We also have lots of in home activities on a weekly basis, including gardening club, bread baking and knitting club alongside other national calendar celebrations and frequent visits from Dora the therapy dog. Thank you for reading!