

Wychwood Community News

Bowerham

The first thing to stress about Bowerham is that it is not an old peoples' home. Built in 1966, on the corner of Ascott Road and Gas Lane in Shipton, it is a small block of flats providing sheltered housing for nine very independent people with the bonus of an on-site warden to provide a little extra help when needed.

The residents, eight ladies and one gentleman, are all totally self-sufficient, being well able to care for themselves and manage their own cooking and cleaning. They all have families or good friends living in the Wychwood villages who are able to visit regularly. Margaret, the warden, is a friend to all, providing help when needed but never intruding uninvited into their privacy; everyone has their own front door.

Gordon Warner has lived in the flats for seven years and can often be seen heading across the Green to do his shopping at Costcutters. The newest resident is Minnie Pratley who moved in just over a month ago. The oldest resident, Betty Page has celebrated her 90th birthday and the youngest, Margaret Rainbow is just past retirement age!

As well as twice-weekly coffee mornings, there is a regular bingo session on Monday evenings. No big prizes but plenty of fun for all. Anyone is welcome to pop in and join them at these times – just ring Margaret Walton, the warden on 830515, you will be most welcome.



The residents at Bowerham

Recently, those at Bowerham have formed their own Residents Association, run by a Committee of Residents, to liaise with West Oxfordshire Housing. They have applied for, and received, a small Lottery grant which enabled them to purchase extras for their communal lounge and kitchen.

A coffee morning held in March was a great success and raised

£263. Visitors to these open mornings are able to purchase beautiful handmade cards and other handicrafts. There is always a table of goods on sale in the entrance hall. The fund-raising of the Bowerham residents pays for regular trips; they often hire the Villager bus and head off for places like the Birmingham Botanical Gardens, Merryhill Shopping Centre or Cheltenham. Any spare seats are offered to friends as a way of covering costs.

The feeling I had when talking to a group of the Bowerham Ladies is of an extended family. In these days when 'big is beautiful' we must cherish this small unit in our midst. Not many places are lucky enough to have a resident warden able to ensure that independent living is possible for all. With the warmer weather we will soon become used to seeing the garden table and parasol by their front door and I hope you will stop and pass the time of day with the residents as they enjoy the sunshine. They all have a tale to tell and always enjoy a chat. **Christine Halliday**