

Trustees' Report for the year ended 31st March 2017

“Granny trackers may solve care funding crisis - Local councils plan to invest in controversial granny trackers which keep elderly people under surveillance at all times in a bid to solve the care funding crisis. The devices, which cost £2,860 a year, can be used in connection with a range of “smart” household devices to track a person’s whereabouts as well as check whether they have a stocked fridge, taken their medication or if they are watching TV. The system can also tell the “remote carers” whether the person is standing up or lying down and transmit their pulse.”¹

If this goes ahead the elderly lonely are to be left even more alone. The Silver Line reports that “our charity gets more than 10,000 calls a week from lonely and isolated older people many of whom have no one to talk to. We have found that failing health, immobility and lack of social contact are combining to leave older people trapped at home. Increasing numbers of those who call us are showing signs of poor emotional and mental health”²

It is for these reasons that Heritage House provides, and must continue to provide, day care for those living in Wells and the surrounding area of north and west Norfolk. Day Visitors come from as far afield as Hunstanton and Thursford, an area of 250 square miles. Currently 32 Day Visitors attend each day - 160 places a week - to receive a home-cooked, two-course meal, the option of a bath and hairdressing, access to a wide range of public sector support agencies and NHS services, activities such as singing, painting, seated exercise to music or enjoying the garden and looking after plants and, for many most importantly, companionship. Knowing that the one they care for is safe and being looked after also gives respite to their carer.

During 2016-17 we received grants and donations which enabled us to replace the elderly kitchen cooker, which had also become too small to handle the increase in the number of Day Visitors, to install heating in the greenhouse, to update the office computer system and to replace one of the wheelchair accessible mini-buses.

We run three wheelchair accessible mini-buses and a wheelchair accessible car which are staffed by volunteers and they, together with those volunteers who drive their own cars, collect and return 32 Day Visitors each weekday.

During the 2016-17 year we appealed to trusts and charities for monies to enable Heritage House to extend and modernise the kitchen and build a small staff room so releasing the present staff room to be used for training. We have been donated sufficient funds to carry this out, planning permission has been gained, builders shortlisted and a final decision on a builder will be made early in the 2017-18 financial year.

The Trustees would like to thank Mary Britton, Day Care Manager, for the way in which she leads the staff team and for the time she has spent at meetings and in negotiation with Social Services and other agencies to guarantee that we continue to receive referrals for day care places. We would also like to thank her and all the staff for the considerate, friendly and cheerful way in which they treat all who come into Heritage House which ensures that these agencies regard the care offered by Heritage House as outstanding.

Our thanks go to Juli Cushion for all the planning and effort that she puts in to providing nutritious meals, to the office staff for their administration work and to the care assistants, hairdresser, kitchen assistants and cleaner for their continued hard work and dedication.

¹ Olivia Rudgard, The Daily Telegraph, 20th October 2016

² Sophie Andrews, Chief Executive, The Silver Line, 19th March 2017

Thanks also go to all the volunteers without whom the running of Heritage House would not be able to continue. We are grateful to those who facilitate the day-to-day work of the centre and to those who assist with the major task of fundraising at many functions throughout the year. Fund-raising activities bridge the significant shortfall between the cost of running Heritage House and payment that is received from Social Services and those who attend who are self-funding.

We are also most grateful for the legacies we have received.

Thanks must also go to the Trustees and members of the Management Committee for their expertise and time, especially Janet MacNab, our Honorary Treasurer.

Pamela Underwood

Chairman of Trustees