



The Charlotte Straker Project NEWSLETTER

WINTER 2023

MESSAGE FROM BERENICE GROVES CHAIR OF THE TRUSTEES

As reported in the local media, I am devastated to announce that we must suspend our free of charge respite care bed service at the end of March 2023. The cost-of-living crisis means that, like many charities, we have experienced a severe reduction in the amount of funding and donations that previously supported this facility. This has been exacerbated by the rise in the cost of actual care, Covid precautions and a sharp increase in recruitment costs. The respite care bed costs £57,000 per year alone and raising that income is unfortunately unattainable in the current economic climate.

TEMPORARY CLOSURE

We are hoping that this is a temporary closure and depending on future support, we are committed to opening our respite care facility at a future date. At the moment, we will continue to concentrate on our core mission – of helping the elderly and frail with residential and nursing care. Respite care will also be available but will no longer be free of charge.

As a not-for-profit care home, any surplus income is reinvested for the benefit of our residents. So, instead of a free respite care room, we will continue to concentrate on helping residents stay in Charlotte Straker House by funding local authority fee shortfalls. Many of our residents have lived and worked in the area all their lives and want to live near their family but are unable to afford care home fees without charitable support.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

We have been embedded into the Corbridge community since 1916 and supporting older people is at the heart of everything we do. Our charity provides the very best in residential and nursing care to the elderly. Respite care will also be available but will no longer be free of charge. We hope that everyone understands the difficult decision that we've had to make and will continue to support us in our vital work.



BERENICE GROVES
CHAIR OF THE TRUSTEES



CHRISTMAS AT CHARLOTTE STRAKER HOUSE



We had a lovely Christmas Day at Charlotte Straker House. We asked each resident how they preferred to celebrate Christmas and helped them meet visitors and keep in touch with family and friends. Our hard working kitchen team pulled out the stops with a traditional roast turkey dinner with all the trimmings, followed by Christmas pudding and brandy butter. The atmosphere in Charlotte Straker House is always lovely, especially at Christmas time! All the staff work really hard to make it special for the residents this year, with decorations, glitter and lights and there are always Christmas carols on in the background, which we all love to sing along to. On Christmas Day, the residents were all given a carefully chosen individual Christmas present. Seeing their faces light up is what it's all about. The residents have shown us that you're never too old to get excited for Christmas.



THE CORBRIDGE CHRISTMAS TREE FESTIVAL

A group of residents visited St Andrew's Church in December to admire the amazingly creative entrants in the Corbridge Christmas Tree Festival.

Our residents used their crafting skills to design and make our own entry into the Tree Festival. One of our residents, Colin (aged 89) is a very keen model builder. With help from Paul, our handyman, he designed and made the unique wooden Christmas tree and our other residents decided that they would choose our staff team and volunteers as a theme for the tree, and turn them into "angels" to celebrate their dedication to our care home. So every little angel on this tree represents one staff member or volunteer and was carefully cut out of coloured card by our residents. Creating the tree has been a real team effort – and we hope you enjoy!

Our resident Claire told us that the Festival was "beautiful and the colours were so lovely" whilst Colin said "it has turned out really well and the lights on the side and the angel on the top is a great touch."



A group of residents visited the Christmas Tree Festival on a cold day in December



Charlotte Straker Project Angels

The Charlotte Straker Project is one of the largest employers in Corbridge and has over 60 permanent staff members. Our staff members and volunteers are often called "angels" by residents and their families, especially during the Covid pandemic. We thought that this year we would celebrate our "angels" for their dedication to our care home. Every little angel on this tree represents one staff member or volunteer - we hope you will join in celebrating their hard work and commitment.

Alice A	Lynsey F	Tracy P	Zoe W
Andrea A	Teresa H	Emily P	Mandy Y
Debbie A	Annette H	Nicola P	<u>Volunteers</u>
Laura A	Victoria H	Holly P	Margaret D
Megan B	Fiona H	Jayne P	Heather
Louise B	Catherine J	Tracy R	Debbie T
Janet B	Merilyn J	Christine S	Jen D
Karen C	Trudy J	Cheryl S	Sue P
Sophie C	Jackie K	Mandy S	Avril M
Angela C	Cheryl K	Kerri S	Jean C
Kim C	Jonathon L	Pauline S	<u>Trustees</u>
Iulia C	Helen L	Luke T	Berenice C
Helen C	Keith L	Judith T	Gavin B
Pam C	Jodie M	Jill U	Neil B
Kim C	Evheniya M	Sally U	Angela J
Clare D	Vicky M	Paul W	Anna B
Karen D	Karen M	Jane W	Anne W
Ian D	Mary M	Tracy W	Bill C
Carole E	Gill M	Emma W	Peter Wo
Debra F	Amy N	Lindsey W	Peter Wi
Jinny F	Karen N	Sam W	Lesley W
			Maureen G

Our Winter Activities



We have been very busy: enjoying a Chinese banquet to celebrate the Chinese New Year, making cushions, calendars and cards, plus enjoying Christmas lunches and services and much, more more!



A Concert at the Sage



This might have been the highlight of 2022! We took a group of residents, plus staff and volunteers to the Sage Concert Hall in Gateshead for "Christmas on Broadway". After an exciting bus trip through the bright lights of Newcastle everyone made their way to their accessible seats in the ultra-modern concert hall in the Sage building. The concert was amazing and everyone absolutely loved it, and we spotted plenty of residents (and helpers!) singing along to the music, clapping wildly and cheering the professional singers and musicians. Thank you to all those who came with us as helpers and volunteers who ensured we all enjoyed a brilliant evening out.

School Carols and Card Competition

As a special treat for us, children from Corbridge First School walked the short distance to Charlotte Straker House to sing Christmas carols to our residents. They stood outside and sang their hearts out. for their wonderful singing – we absolutely loved their choir!

We are also delighted to announce that Grace Baty, aged 8, from Corbridge First School has won our Christmas Card Competition with her festive drawing of a snowy penguin! We're very keen to keep in touch with the local community and this competition has been a brilliant way to strengthen ties.



Our Christmas Card Competition winner Grace receives a voucher prize from Sam, our Deputy Manager



THE CORBRIDGE BIG NIGHT OUT

Eighty people gathered on a very rainy night to celebrate the 2022 Christmas Big Night Out on Saturday at the Corbridge Parish Hall. Hosted by the Corbridge Youth Initiative and ourselves, the revellers enjoyed a three course buffet meal, one of Bill Cunningham's fiendish photo quizzes and dancing to music from Tapestry. The hall and tables were beautifully decorated with festive lights and the substantial raffle was made up of some very generous prizes from Corbridge traders and villagers. Over £1,300 was raised, to be split between the Charlotte Straker Project and the Corbridge Youth Initiative.



CELEBRATING A 100TH BIRTHDAY!

We were all delighted to help one of our residents celebrate their 100th birthday this month. Our resident received a birthday card from King Charles III and the Queen Consort as well as a special 100th balloon and over 40 cards from staff, relatives and well-wishers. Just before Christmas, pupils from Corbridge First School visited our home to present a hand made 100th birthday card and sung a lovely rendition of "Happy Birthday" outside her room. Thank you to everyone who helped our resident celebrate their special day!



HOW CAN I HELP?

There are so many ways you can help our charity!

Help us reach more people!

Share our news on Facebook and Twitter or sign up to our newsletter by emailing office@charlottestraker.org.uk

Give a one-off or regular donation

Help keep our respite care bed open by visiting www.charlottestraker.org.uk/donate



Fundraise for us!

If you want to organise a personal challenge or set up a fundraiser we can help. Visit our fundraising and events webpage or call 01434 633 999 for more details

Consider legacy funding

One unique way of helping us is to consider leaving a legacy to our charity in your Will.

Visit our donation page on www.charlottestraker.org.uk for more information

Join our friendly volunteer family!

For details on our volunteering opportunities please visit charlottestraker.org.uk/volunteers or call 01434 633 999

Want a career in care?

We offer joining bonuses, job progression and full training. For the latest vacancies visit our website or ring 01434 633 999