

BelongLife

SPRING 2021

A tribute to the
exceptional dementia
champion and trainer,
Belinda Jones:
see pages 12 & 13

In this issue... Purchase of Wirral Waters site completed: See pages 2 and 3



Residents' pottery creations
to be exhibited nationally
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shares a colourful career
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- A customer's view
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- Village news and more!





Pandemic spurs job creation

Word from the team

Spring is always a time of new hope, but perhaps never more so than this year.

Certainly in Belong, we are encouraged that all our residents have now been offered the first dose of the Covid-19 vaccination and take-up has been over 98%.

We are pleased to report that second doses are now underway, and we look forward to the completion of this process and the reassurance it will bring to know that our community is protected from the worst effects of Covid-19.

By the next issue of Belong Life, we expect to be able to report that second doses have also been administered, and we look forward to the reassurance this will bring in terms of protecting our residents from the worst effects of Covid-19 symptoms.

Equally importantly, the majority of Belong colleagues have also been vaccinated and we are continuing to support people to attend appointments at their local hubs and push to achieve as close to universal uptake as possible.

So far, 73% of colleagues have received at least one dose of the vaccine, with a further 3% awaiting appointments and an additional 7% currently ineligible, due to medical conditions, pregnancy or a recent Covid positive test.

Of course, spring also marks a full year since we were first impacted by Covid-19 in our villages, and it has been a very challenging and, at times, emotional journey for everyone.

I would therefore like to take this opportunity to thank everyone in our Belong communities for their support over the past year, and in particular, to thank colleagues across the organisation for their dedication to our customers throughout.

Everyone has truly worked as one team, adapting and supporting residents and one another in a way that can only be described as inspirational.

As always, the positive impact this has on people's lives is there for all to see in the many heart-warming stories within these pages. Enjoy the read!

Stacey McCann
Belong Chief Operating Officer



Belong has launched a new recruitment drive, creating 40 jobs across the North West and providing a wealth of opportunities for people living in the communities of its care villages.

Throughout the care sector, regular Covid-19 testing, enhanced cleaning routines and the impact of colleague self-isolation are all factors driving care providers to expand their teams and Belong is bolstering colleague numbers to continue to ensure the highest quality of care for its village residents and customers receiving support within their own homes.

Speaking of this, Tim Kirk, people and development manager at Belong, said: "While there are a number of 'administrative' impacts of Covid-19, our biggest area of focus remains on resident wellbeing, and supporting residents to lead active, fulfilling lives, and maintaining their relationships with family and friends in the wider community. Our focus across all recruitment is finding people who share our values and are inspired to make a difference to the lives of older people."



Belong Life Spring 2021

Purchase of Wirral Waters site completed

Belong has successfully completed the purchase of land for its first waterside care village within Peel Land and Property's (Peel L&P) Wirral Waters scheme, in a move that will enable building work to commence on the £15 million development later this year.

The organisation was granted planning permission for the site by Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council in 2019 and this latest milestone will see Belong going out to tender for a contractor in the summer. The development is key to the shared vision of creating a dementia-friendly neighbourhood and, once complete, the village will provide a vital hub at the heart of the Wirral Waters project, with a range of inclusive spaces and facilities accessible to the local community.

Offering state-of-the-art care and accommodation for over 100 people, Belong Wirral will comprise six households with 24-hour nursing support, 34 one and two bedroom

independent living apartments and an array of outdoor spaces, such as spacious balconies for each household and a roof garden.

Commenting on the purchase of the Wirral Waters site, Belong chief executive, Tracey Stakes, said: "We are thrilled to be entering the next stage of our Belong Wirral development.

Wirral Waters is an exciting project to be a part of and provides an excellent location for us to create something of real benefit to the local community, both in terms of offering specialist dementia and nursing care and through generating over 140 jobs for people in the area."



"The Belong Village will offer an incredibly vibrant and versatile environment for residents to enjoy, whatever their needs or abilities, and we are really excited to be working alongside them on this project."

A Customer's View

Nothing is more important to Belong than our customers, which is why we love hearing about their experiences.

For this issue, we spoke to Celia Ridyard, 76, a year after she moved into an apartment at Belong Wigan during the first Covid-19 national lockdown.

At the outset of the coronavirus pandemic, Celia's family, many of whom are key workers, were worried about the risk posed by visiting her and also that she may become lonely as a result of being required to isolate. This and declining mobility were the reasons behind Celia moving to Belong Wigan.

Celia was already familiar with Belong Wigan as she used to enjoy visiting to go on day trips and to join in community activities and social events. One of her granddaughters, Katie, was an experience day support worker (she is now a receptionist at the village), so she and her family knew that moving into an apartment at the village meant that she could retain her independence while having access to support if required.

Celia has always been fiercely independent. A few years ago, she developed an autoimmune disease that left her paralysed from the neck down, but she fought hard to regain her mobility, and after six months' rehabilitation she was able to return home, albeit unable to do everything that she had previously done.

Having lived in the same area of Leigh for the past 50 years, including over 25 years at her previous home, Celia didn't find it easy leaving behind her neighbours and friends. In the first few weeks, her family say that Celia often said how much she missed her old home. It didn't help that it was the height of the pandemic and measures limiting social contact were at their strictest.



However, in the following months, as more interaction between people became possible, including the introduction of support bubbles, Celia kindled a new social life at the village. She has since developed friendships with other apartment tenants and enjoys attending activities, including bingo and arts and crafts, within her support bubble.

A year on, Celia's family are assured that the decision for her to move to Belong Wigan was the right one. Commenting on the impact on her mum's well-being, her daughter Janet said: "It's clear how happy mum is when we see her or speak to her. Knowing this, as well as that there is support there for her if she needs it gives us tremendous peace of mind. It was the best decision ever."

If you would like to contribute to the next 'A Customer's View' column, please pass on your details to a member of staff or email the editor at: tracy.brookes@belong.org.uk

Village News

Home is where the art is

Residents are reigniting their creativity by teaming up with critically acclaimed artists to explore the wellbeing benefits of using the arts at home, through a series of workshops.

The 'We Belong Together' project is being run in conjunction with Bluecoat, Liverpool's centre for the contemporary arts, and aims to research how the arts can improve the lives of those with dementia. Artists are leading regular virtual art sessions for small cohorts of apartment tenants living in Belong villages, with the initiative also serving to help tackle lockdown isolation by providing a vehicle for wellbeing and social interaction within the tenants' support bubbles.

Focusing on sound, artist Alan Dunn will exercise the brain and ear muscles of participants to unlock the hidden narratives from noises derived from everyday life. Meanwhile, sculptor Brigitte Jurack delves into the creative use of clay and ceramics, encouraging participants to gently improve dexterity by using their finger and arm muscles to roll, push, pinch and pull clay in the making of tablets pots, plates and animals.



Betty Ritchie, Participation Manager at Bluecoat and coordinator for the project, spoke of the unique project: "We Belong Together has got off to a great start; participants are reporting how much they enjoy interacting with the artists and each other, discovering new things and how much they look forward to seeing their work brought to life."

The We Belong Together project is funded by Arts Council England through the Department of Culture, Media and Sport, and is the latest collaboration between Belong and Bluecoat.

Images taken during a Bluecoat event at Belong Crewe in 2019.

Residents' pottery creations to be exhibited nationally

Residents living at Belong Newcastle-under-Lyme are paying homage to its ceramicist roots by moulding and sculpting their very own clay masterpieces to be showcased at the British Ceramics Biennial (BCB), later this year.

Leading the pottery classes, Joanne Mills, resident artist at BCB, appeared live via video-link to deliver the interactive sessions, providing an in-depth history of the art before working with participants and their support workers in making their own plates. As well as exhibiting alongside local and international artists at the UK's largest ceramics festival, the new creations will have pride of place in the Belong Heritage Gallery.

The themes for the sessions have been driven by residents' memories including hobbies, careers and their loved ones. Once the plates were modelled, participants received tuition in transfer printing, a method of decorating pottery, before the plates were fired in kilns at Spode, the birthplace of underglaze blue transfer printing — a signature feature of Staffordshire pottery — and the formulation of bone china.

A selection of the plates will be chosen for inclusion at BCB in Stoke-on-Trent, for which residents at Belong Newcastle-under-Lyme will be treated to a virtual tour of the festival when it commences in September. The remaining creations are set to be housed in the Belong Heritage Gallery and will be enjoyed by residents, their families, and the wider community, once Covid-19 restrictions are lifted.



Pictured: Support Worker, Marie O'Brien with resident Janet Frampton.



Joanne Mills resident artist at BCB leads the session



Memory Lane...

This issue, we catch up with Bets Sparrow, 92, Oak House resident at Belong Macclesfield and a former member of MI5; she shares with us her life serving the country with her late husband, Geoffrey.

Having grown up just a stone's throw from Buckingham Palace in Lowndes Square, Belgravia, a young Bets began working life as a secretary for MI5. In one of her more vivid memories, she recalls being called into her manager's office and being questioned about disclosing her employer to other people. Bets was horrified — not once had she breathed a word and following an enquiry Bets was exonerated. Looking back, she smiles: with age and experience came the knowledge that this was standard practice at the time, a tactic used with new recruits to ensure that secret information remained just that.

Family life

After courting for some time, Bets married Geoffrey Ernard Sparrow on 24th September 1949 and the newlyweds moved to Pale Lodge, Henbury, before finally settling at Birtles Old Hall, an 18th century manor house in Macclesfield. Bets speaks very fondly of the life she enjoyed with her beloved Geoffrey. His long and distinguished career in the army saw him awarded the Military Cross and he became Lieutenant-Colonel Commandant in 1960; he retired in 1981 and was appointed Honorary Colonel later that year.

Geoffrey was also very active in serving the local community, both as High Sheriff of Cheshire and Deputy Lieutenant of the county. Bets recalls Geoffrey's service as being extremely busy for them, with lots of official appointments all around the county, including dinner dances in Chester, which were a personal highlight, allowing her to dress in beautiful evening gowns. When entertaining very important dignitaries at their home, Bets would do all the catering herself and was an accomplished cook, she tells us: "It was hard work but I enjoyed doing it."

In her own time, Bets fielded calls and supported visits from those in great need during her 35 years volunteering as a support worker at Samaritans Macclesfield. In later life, the couple's joint love of nature and the outdoors led to Geoffrey being well known as a protector of the countryside, fighting to preserve greenbelt. Meanwhile, Bets could be found enjoying a game of tennis with friend Dorothy Cooper on the courts at Birtles Old Hall.

Colonel Geoffrey Sparrow died on 20th July 2014 and is dearly missed.

Moving to Belong

In 2015, Bets visited Belong Macclesfield with her sons Randle, Justin and Piers, and enjoyed a tour, guided by Caroline Ray, General Manager. She was very impressed and decided the village was to be her future home for life but felt she wasn't quite ready, wanting just one more summer with her beautiful garden. Prior to moving in, Bets would often call in and have an afternoon tea and chat with Caroline, before finally making her home in one of the independent living apartments.

After two respite stays in the households and a return to her apartment with the help of Belong at Home, Bets made an informed decision to move into Oak household in spring 2019, where she has remained since, enjoying the activities, company of good friends and looking forward to the reopening of The Bistro.

Platinum anniversary celebrations at Belong Atherton

As 2021 began, Belong Atherton enjoyed not a silver or gold, but a platinum milestone as Kath and John celebrated their 70th wedding anniversary.

A big fuss was made of the couple for their special day, with a romantic candlelit dinner, decorations, flowers, champagne, and a scrummy meal with chocolate cake dessert. Here, we get an insight into their seven decades of happiness, from their youngest daughter, Ruth.

John and Kath both grew up in Leigh, Greater Manchester (or Lancashire, as some of our older readers will recall it was, at the time!) and having known each other as children, started dating at the tender ages of 15 and 14, respectively. On completing their school studies, John took up work as a draughtsman and later, a manager at British Insulated Callender's Cables (BICC) and Kath started work at the main post office in Manchester, before building a successful career in sales.

The relationship quickly blossomed and the childhood sweethearts could often be found dancing at the Institute, or 'Stute', as it was known. John and Kath were pronounced Mr and Mrs Foulkes on 6th January 1951, exchanging their vows at Leigh Parish Church.

In the following year the newlyweds were blessed with a son, Steven, who was followed by Jane and finally, Ruth. Ruth remembers many happy childhood memories spent holidaying in Cornwall, Devon and Wales. In their early years of adulthood, Steven moved to Chicago and Ruth moved to Dartmouth — both providing excuses for more family holidays! Other favourite destinations included Italy and Cala San Vicente, Majorca, where John was known to put his feet in the sea, despite having a long-standing phobia of water.

At home, John was a dab-hand at making things, tinkering with cars and completing DIY jobs, whereas Kath prided herself on her cooking and sewing skills. If you were to go in the kitchen there would be pies and cakes all freshly baked and the house was always full of friends who were invited to stay for tea and sample the food she had baked that day.



When it came to fancy dress or Easter bonnet competitions at school, Ruth tells us she and her siblings would always win.

The family were also fond of animals, keeping dogs, cats, rabbits, doves and pigeons, as well as two horses, Drake and Shane. John would ride regularly, with Kath alongside on her bike in the fields, helping to look after them; she even supported with the mucking out!

Ruth shared why she thinks her parents' relationship has stood the test of time. She said: "Mum and Dad both have a great sense of humour, enjoy doing the same things and spending their time mooching about together on regular day breaks.

"They've had a lovely life together and are amazing parents, always there for us. As a couple, they are devoted to one another.

"Mum and Dad had a lovely anniversary; they enjoyed their meals in a beautifully decorated area and we were able to visit them by seeing them through the window, it was wonderful. We have got to know and love everyone at the village over the years. All the staff are so genuinely caring and thoughtful. It is a fantastic place to live."



*Congratulations John and Kath,
from everyone at Belong.*

Covid-19 vaccinations bring hope for return to normality

Residents, apartment tenants and colleagues at Belong villages were amongst the first people in the country to receive their Covid-19 vaccinations, following visits from healthcare professionals to administer the first doses at the villages.

As part of the government's Covid-19 plan, vaccinations have been deployed to protect the country's most vulnerable people, including older people, those living with dementia, and their carers.

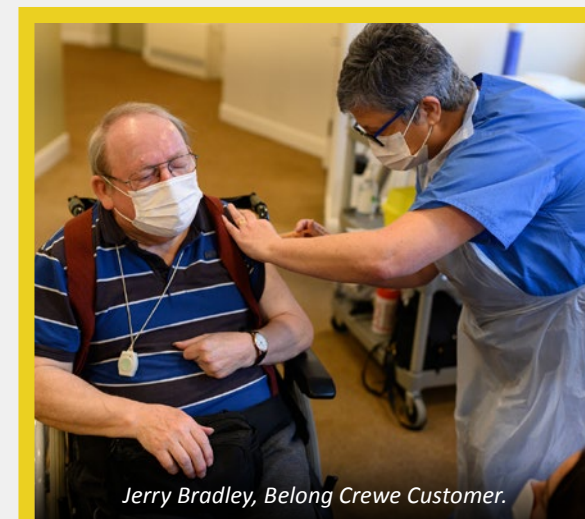
The vaccination rollout comes after household and apartment residents at Belong Morris Feinmann, Didsbury, were selected for a trial programme in December 2020.

Administered by gtd healthcare in conjunction with Manchester NHS organisations and Manchester City Council, the successful pilot led to the commencement of vaccinations across the rest of the region.

Bill, 77, a tenant in one of the independent living apartments at Belong who received the vaccine, said: "I was over the moon to receive my first Covid-19 vaccine. The delivery was well-organised and I felt safe and supported throughout."

Carolyn Ball, general manager of Belong Morris Feinmann, said: "We are absolutely delighted that our residents have had this opportunity to receive the Covid-19 vaccine. This is the additional protection we have long been waiting for and we are pleased to say there continue to be no Covid-19 cases amongst our residents."

"The commitment of the team from gtd healthcare to delivering the vaccine in our care setting, in spite of the complex logistics, is really impressive. We're so grateful



Jerry Bradley, Belong Crewe Customer.



Lewis Smith, Support Worker, Belong Warrington.

"The vaccine roll-out is our best hope of being able to re-open our village centres and offer more opportunities for social interaction in the confidence that our community is protected from the worst effects of Covid-19. We are delighted that the programme is continuing apace and look forward to brighter times in the spring and summer ahead."



Barbara, Belong Wigan Customer.



Belong at Home Customer, Doreen Eastwood.



Belong Wigan Nurse, Catherine Ashcroft.

as their well-organised approach meant our residents and colleagues were amongst the first in the UK to receive the vaccine."

Since then, all Belong villages have welcomed local health teams to support with the vaccination roll-out and 95% of residents have been vaccinated. As we go to print, 76% of colleagues have had at least one dose of vaccine or an imminent appointment in the diary, and this proportion is continuing to increase by the day.



Belong's Chief Executive, Tracey Stakes.

Belong Deputy Chief Executive, Tracy Paine, said: "The vaccine roll-out is our best hope of being able to re-open our village centres and offer more opportunities for social interaction in the confidence that our community is protected from the worst effects of Covid-19. We are delighted that the programme is continuing apace and look forward to brighter times in the spring and summer ahead."



Lead Support Worker, Anna Buryn.



Belong Warrington colleagues.



Belong Atherton colleagues.



Belong Wigan colleagues.



Belong Deputy Chief Executive, Tracy Paine (left) at Belong Crewe.

Sir David Nicholas on moon landings, breaking records and meeting future royalty.

Many of our readers will have fond memories of 1967, the year of television firsts: colour broadcasts began with live coverage of the Wimbledon Championships; the technical masterpiece, 'Our World', famous for The Beatles' 'All You Need Is Love' segment, brought together global talent live to television screens in 24 countries; and ITV launched its flagship news bulletin, ITN's 'News at Ten.'

In a rare interview, we chat to Sir David Nicholas, 91, Belong at Home Macclesfield customer and News at Ten's first producer, who shares with us just a snippet of a colourful career.

Sir David was born in Tregaron, Wales, and following completion of his National Service in Wakefield, Yorkshire, the budding journalist learnt his craft before moving to London in the late 1950s with wife, Juliet. Following roles at the Daily Telegraph and Observer, in 1959 Sir David made the move to Independent Television News, or 'ITN' as it is commonly known, and we join his story at the launch of their news bulletin.



What were the early days like for the programme?

ITV didn't want a half hour programme in the form of News at Ten (NAT), which it later became, and thought it would only last a few weeks. Very quickly, the bulletin started to get large audiences and soon NAT was regularly in the weekly top 10 most watched programmes, with more than 15 million viewers a night. Those viewing figures can only be dreamt of nowadays.

You've certainly had a distinguished career – what are your highlights?

Gosh, where to begin! I was the producer for all the Apollo moon landing missions, oversaw six general elections with my dear friend, Sir Alastair Burnet, and the Falklands War stands out for being a huge logistical nightmare. Buckingham Palace once asked me to organise a secret tour around the ITN studios for a then little-known woman, who at that time was called Lady Diana Spencer. It was a huge privilege and I worked with so many wonderful people. I was given many opportunities and I thoroughly enjoyed going into the office every day.

How has news reporting changed over the years?

At ITN, our priority was always to be accurate and impartial: our job was to give the viewer the facts, both good and bad, and leave it to them to interpret the information as they saw fit.

These days are very different times for reporting news, what with 24-hour broadcasting. As technology has changed, news is now instant, allowing us to see things as they happen. In many ways,



this is marvellous, but there is the increasing danger that misleading, or inaccurate, information can easily be put in the public domain. I always said to reporters: 'If you get an interview with the Devil, God must have the right to reply.'

Do you still like to keep an eye on the news?

Perhaps not unsurprisingly, I spend a lot of time watching 24-hour news programming from the UK, USA, China and Russia and read the four newspapers delivered every day, along with The Economist, New Statesman and Private Eye.

What else do you enjoy?

My late wife and I moved to Cheshire, to be near my son, James, in 2011. Until recently, we used to go flying, with me in the co-pilot seat. Just before the first lockdown, we flew to Haverfordwest a couple of times to see my brother, flying via my old University at Aberystwyth and circling over Tregaron. I used to go to Probus and enjoyed evening walks to the Legh Arms in Prestbury for a glass of wine and dinner but Covid-19 has stopped that.

And finally... tell us about your Belong at Home carers.

Currently, I have three visits a day, with six carers, and I look forward to the visits very much. The team are very considerate, helpful, and reliable. They are also very chatty, which I appreciate. As any journalist will tell you: it's good to talk.

Volunteer profile

In this feature, we recognise the outstanding contributions of volunteers to the Belong community. This issue, we meet 95-year-old Len Rose, organiser of Club Thursday sessions at Belong Morris Feinmann.



Born and raised in Manchester, Len has helped run Club Thursday at various city locations for over three decades. Founded in 1988 to provide local Jewish senior citizens with a place to meet and discuss topical issues, the club has been a popular fixture since it found its new home at the village's Venue four years ago.

Len is the club's co-treasurer and is also responsible for finding speakers for the weekly sessions. Highlights have included presentations from medical professionals on dementia care, surgery and wellness, as well as insights on current affairs, history, travel, the arts, and a range of live performances, including from singers and pianists.

The entertainment is often followed by tea and cake in the Bistro, with discussions of the latest presentation. Len tells us: "Club Thursday has a longstanding history in the community and we have been supported by brilliant volunteers over the years, including my late wife Pam who acted as club secretary until she sadly passed away.

"From our first meeting at Belong Morris Feinmann, we were made to feel at home. It's incredibly rewarding helping make people's lives happier, especially

when we receive positive feedback — ensuring we have a full programme of speakers can be a challenge!"

Belong Morris Feinmann's Experience Coordinator, Angela Luckett, commented: "The club is a real hit and has been very much missed during Covid-19. The diversity of the sessions is amazing, there is always something for everyone. The club's members have become part of the Belong family and we can't thank them enough and look forward to welcoming them back as soon as possible."

In the Spotlight: Caroline Knight

This issue we meet Caroline Knight, who, after dedicating over 35 years to her caring career, is retiring from her role as Front of House Manager at Belong Wigan.

Caroline's social care journey began in 1983, volunteering at the local authority-owned homes while completing a college course in community care. Having worked at Lakelands and Sherwood House, in 2009 the latter site was transformed into what we now know as Belong Wigan.

Caroline was integral in the village's opening and has continued to maintain its high standards, which have been reflected in the CQC's latest inspection, where Belong Wigan was awarded an 'Outstanding' rating. Caroline describes it as one of the many highlights of her career.

When asked about other happy memories, Caroline added: "Two of our apartment tenants were invited to a Wigan Warriors game, having followed the team for over 70 years. Granada Reports captured them meeting the players — I still have the episode saved on my telly."

On the topic of retiring, Caroline said: "I'm looking forward to spending time with my family, both at home and holidaying in the Lake District. It will also be great to take up another fitness challenge, such as the Great North Run!"

"But I really will miss everything about Belong, everyone has truly become like family. I'd like to say a big thank you to Gill Menguy for being a wonderful mentor and manager; she has helped me become the person I am today. And to wish Tanya Guy every success taking over the role — she will do a brilliant job."

Belong Wigan's General Manager, Gill Menguy, commented: "It's been a pleasure working with Caroline for the past sixteen years; there's never been a day when she hasn't got a smile on her face. She will be sadly missed and we all hope she enjoys a long and happy retirement — it's much-deserved!"



From us all at Belong, we'd like to thank Caroline for her dedication and for being a true champion of our values. Congratulations on your retirement and wishing you the very best of luck, keep in touch!



Living the Values

We honour the life of Belinda Jones, who not only lived the Belong values, but shaped and informed them.

A much loved member of the Belong team, Belinda's contribution to the organisation changed the lives of so many for the better. She leaves a deep and long lasting legacy on our approach to supporting people with dementia.

Belinda was sadly taken from us on 7 February 2021 at just 53 years old, her life cut short after several months of battling cancer.

Up until her illness, Belinda had dedicated her life to supporting others, driven by her passion for supporting people with dementia and what can only be described as true love for those entrusted to her care.

Starting out as a Care Assistant in 1986 for Cheshire County Council, she first worked at The Elms in Crewe and went on to gain experience within another six care homes for CLS, progressing to Senior Care Assistant, Care Team Leader, Home Manager and Support Manager. She joined Belong Crewe in 2009 and in 2012, she got her 'dream job' (her words) as the Belong Dementia Trainer and Coach.

Supporting people living with dementia came naturally to her and we have all experienced the laughter and tears with Belinda and she allows us to step into the person's shoes and to put people's feelings first.

She was highly regarded nationally and won a number of dementia and coaching awards through her career, including Excellence in Social Care and Dementia Carer of the Year in the Great British Care Awards 2011, Star Awards in 2013 and 2015 and the Award for Outstanding Contribution to Belong in 2020.

Celebrating her life

Her passing has prompted a monumental outpouring of love and sadness, but also of joy and gratitude for all that she gave us. It is impossible to reflect all this in one short article, but just a few tributes from her colleagues are shared here.

"A true dementia and Belong champion – she made the world a better place for the hundreds of people who were lucky enough to be supported and mentored by her."

Tracey Stakes, Belong Chief Executive

"If I was to describe Belong as a person it would be you... the true dedication to get it right for people living with dementia was outstanding."

Josephine Mollison, Assistant Support Manager, Belong Newcastle-under-Lyme

"Your passion for Belong and what we do was infectious and your legacy will forever live on through all those you have trained."

Carolyn Ball, General Manager, Belong Morris Feinmann

"You have inspired more than you can ever possibly imagine."

Nathan Moore, Support Worker, Belong Wigan

"Belinda was such a joyful person whose love and kindness touched many people. Belinda will always be in our hearts."

Zoey Nightingale, Practice Development Facilitator, Belong Macclesfield



Donations in her memory

It was Belinda's wish that any donations in her memory go to the cause she treasured so dearly – improving the lives of people with dementia. If you would like to make a donation to The Alzheimer's Society through a fundraising page set up in her honour, you can do so here: <http://bit.ly/belindajones2021>

"To know Belinda was to love Belinda, such a wonderful character: giving, caring, funny and with the biggest heart."

Gina Titley, Experience Coordinator, Belong Macclesfield

"She brought love and compassion to every person she supported and helped. She always talked about finding the key to understanding people. She always managed to find it."

Caroline Ray, General Manager, Belong Macclesfield

"God needs angels and he has chosen one of the very best he could."

Caroline Knight, Front of House Manager, Belong Wigan

"Belinda made me smile and laugh so much. Belinda was always there for me and had a lovely ability to make everything ok by listening and understanding."

Rebecca Woodcock, General Manager, Belong Atherton

"I was so impressed by her enthusiasm and very genuine belief in ensuring the needs of people under her care were met. I ended up working for Belong, in no short part due to her."

Dave Shaw, Lead Nurse, Macclesfield

"She will remain in my thoughts every time I deliver dementia training in the village and supporting the team with their knowledge & confidence."

Andrew Woods, Practice Development Facilitator, Belong Morris Feinmann

"Loved by every single person that ever met her."

Sue Hemmings, Lead Senior Support Worker, Belong Newcastle-under-Lyme

"I could trust Belinda to share her passion for 'feelings based' training for all Belong colleagues and everyone was safe in her caring hands."

Tracy Paine, Belong Deputy Chief Executive

Our online book of condolence is shared at: www.belong.org.uk/belindajones

Notice Board

For further details on these stories and more, from across our villages, follow us on Facebook or Twitter, or visit our news page on our website at www.belong.org.uk/news



Feathered friends find new home at Belong Atherton

As the nation seeks to keep occupied whilst under lockdown, a group of older people and those living with dementia in **Belong Atherton** have discovered a hobby for themselves: birdwatching.

In preparation for RSPB's Big Garden Bird Watch, the village took part in an array of fun and educational bird-themed activities and were supported in decorating birdhouses and creating birdfeeders which made for colourful additions to their balconies and the grounds.

Albert, 83, (pictured) resident at Belong Atherton, said of his new-found hobby: "The bird watch has been great fun. It's all new to me and making the birdfeeders and all the activities has got me more interested in birds — I'd like to do lots more birdwatching in the future."

Acts of Kindness

Belong Warrington were busy creating quotes, poems and writing kind comments to display around the village on National Random Acts of Kindness Day.



The tree of kindness on display in The Bistro.

Residents decorated hearts to display messages of kindness and experience coordinator, Carol Norman, treated each household to a box of biscuits, plus apartment tenants and colleagues to a bar of chocolate, all delivered with messages of kindness. Commenting on the day Carol said: "I've really enjoyed arranging all of this today to raise lots of smiles; it's the small things at times."



Forshaw House residents get creative.

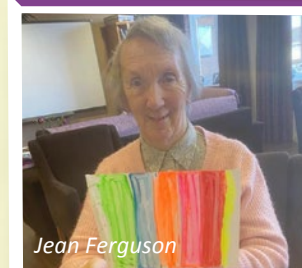
Why We Belong

Colleagues from across **Belong** villages recently joined a campaign, 'Why We Belong' to share why they love working at **Belong**. We received many great videos, all of which can be viewed on the village's Facebook pages.

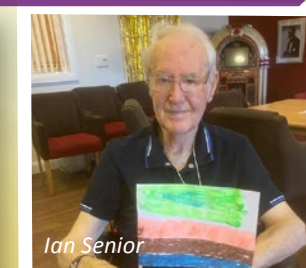


Here is just one of the many examples from **Belong at Home** Community Support Worker, Rachael House, who purchased these gifts to thank her colleagues for their support whilst isolating and for looking after her customers.

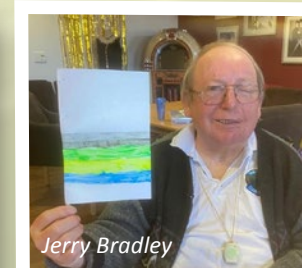
LGBTQ+ History Month



Jean Ferguson



Ian Senior



Jerry Bradley



Peter Bradbrook

Residents at **Belong Crewe** celebrated Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans (LGBTQ+) History Month in February with a series of social events aimed at discovering more about the history of the movement.

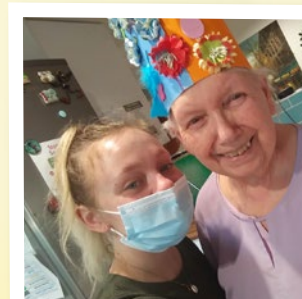
Topics included famous women over the years such as, Gail Lewis, Vita Sackville-West and Jan Morris. Residents enjoyed learning about the history of the flag and what the different colours represented. They then created their own flags using colours that represented their own personalities.

Residents get creative for Easter

Residents at **Belong Newcastle-under-Lyme** are 'egg-citedly' preparing for the Easter holidays.



Pictured: Guildhall House resident, Sylvia King.



Pictured: Brampton House resident, Gillian Blake, with Support Worker, Paige Podmore.

They have already begun to decorate the households and have been busy baking and creating cards and Easter bonnets.

Cakes and Kindness

Belong Macclesfield colleagues delivered cakes and coffees to local businesses on National Random Acts of Kindness Day.

First stop was to the staff and wonderful volunteers at Andrew's Pharmacy. Cakes were also delivered to staff at Bargain Booze and the Co-op. Chloe and Dawn (pictured) told us: "It brought a tear to our eyes when they realised that we were recognising them for how they continue to serve the community throughout the pandemic and we were delighted to deliver these thoughts of kindness on behalf of **Belong Macclesfield** to mark this day." **Belong** colleagues were also in for a lunchtime treat as Chloe and her bistro team prepared a selection of gorgeous cakes for everyone to enjoy!



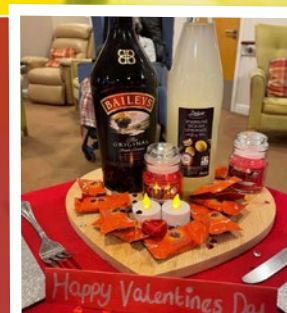
Love and Pancakes

Belong Wigan residents enjoyed a variety of activities during February as they celebrated Valentine's Day, National Marriage Week and Shrove Tuesday.

On Valentine's Day, households hosted parties and enjoyed Prosecco and chocolate dipped strawberries and the bistro teams made complimentary Valentines treats for the apartment tenants to enjoy.

The village also celebrated National Marriage Week and residents shared their wonderful memories and images from their wedding days. You can read their stories on the village's Facebook page.

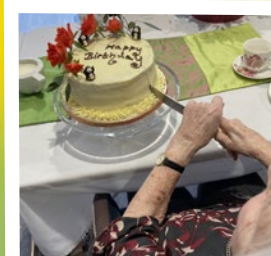
On Shrove Tuesday, residents were busy in the kitchen making pancakes! Beech House resident Percy is pictured right, cooking up a storm!



Party time!

Fancy dress, balloons, rattles and Hamantashen (a Jewish triangular filled-pocket cookie, associated with the Jewish holiday of Purim) adorned each household as part of the **Belong Morris Feinmann's** celebrations for Purim.

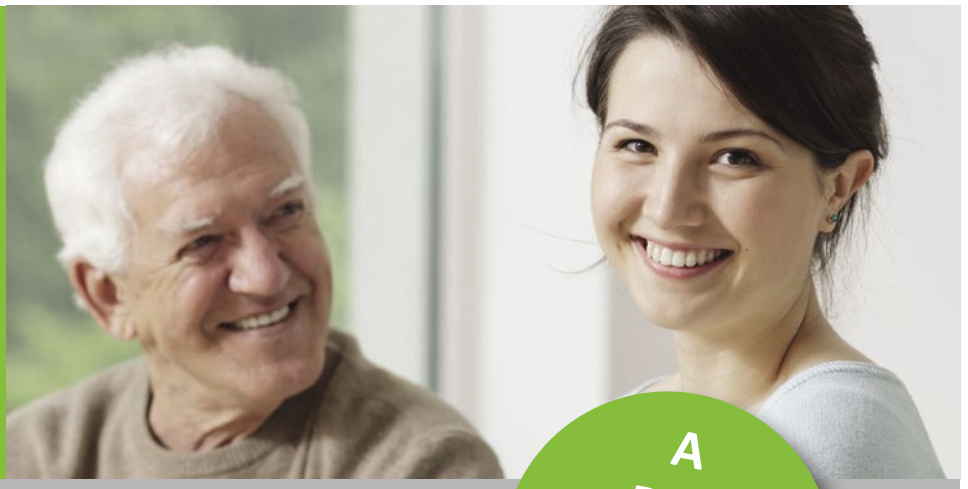
Residents enjoyed singing, dancing, food and gifts. As well as hand-crafting decoupage masks during an art session, thanks to Chava's Zoom Art club.



We also celebrated the 99th birthday of resident, Frances Waldek. Her family and grandchildren live all over the world (in Singapore, Australia, South Africa, Dubai and Hong Kong, London and Manchester), but that didn't stop them joining in the celebrations as they joined us online for a Zoom party!

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Belong is a not-for-profit equal opportunities employer and encourages applicants from all sections of the community.

