



Birtley
House

House & Home

The Newsletter for Birtley House

Edition 1 • 2021

Brighter Days

We look back on a unique year at Birtley House and embrace a brighter year ahead

Learning new ways to keep in touch

Birtley Woodland
ART SPACE

SPRING GARDEN REPORT

MEET OUR Chef

Latest activities



“The thought of Strawberry Teas in the rose garden with our residents is just so tantalising”

Welcome...

to the latest edition of the
Birtley House Newsletter

As I write, every resident has received their vaccine jab. I cannot begin to say how long I have looked forward to writing that short sentence, but the day is here, and we can now begin to dream of better days ahead when our residents can properly be re-united with their families again.

As we look back on winter, I feel that 20th January will be remembered as the day that the first green shoots of Birtley House's emergence from a long, dark year of stress and worry were seen. Now we hope and pray that during the spring and summer we can get back to some real normality once again.

I cannot praise the staff highly enough for the strength and perseverance they have shown in the past twelve months, especially when they know that this is not yet the end of the pandemic.

Thank you for keeping going when I know that you have so many other worries and concerns in your own lives. It is literally impossible to make this place work without you.

My article in the first Birtley House newsletter of the year usually refers in some way to "fresh beginnings" or "exciting prospects for the year", but never has this been truer than now.

The thought of having regular activity afternoons again, the summertime Strawberry Tea in the rose garden, or any number of 'normal' Birtley goings-on, is just so tantalising.

We all desperately hope that this will be the case and, if it is, I am sure we will be celebrating our regained freedom with the residents in ways that we know very well at Birtley House!

Keep safe and well,

Frank Whalley
Director



Brighter Days to come

The publication of this edition of House & Home coincides with the one-year anniversary of the coronavirus pandemic taking hold in the UK. Whilst we would rather not be marking this 'occasion' it does give me cause to reflect some more on what has transpired since March 2020.

In our summer newsletter, I talked of my confidence that the tide would turn very soon. While it didn't pan out that way, the New Year did bring us a reason to be hopeful - the vaccinations. I felt extremely privileged to witness this momentous occasion for Birtley House. Speaking to some residents afterwards it really did feel like a celebration. The joy and relief were palpable.

Despite the vaccinations, the path ahead is still a long one. Under Sylwia's expert leadership, our focus is on resident wellbeing. We have worked hard to find ways to stimulate and engage our residents and maintain staff morale over the last 12 months. Creativity knows no bounds at Birtley, whether it be in the form of poetry writing or photography, we have tried it all!

The gardens and grounds have been a sanctuary for residents and staff alike and long may that continue. With the long, dark days of winter behind us, spring is literally a breath of fresh air; a time when everything in nature is changing and promising new life and new hope.

So many sacrifices have had to be made on all our parts. Let's keep talking and keep moving forward and looking out for each other. With spring on our doorstep the fresh shoots of brighter days ahead can start to feel more realistic.

Best wishes,

Sinéad Whalley
Resident Liaison Director



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A
positive
approach to change



It's hard to believe that a year has passed since our world changed so dramatically.

Rather than reflect on the hurdles of the past twelve months, I can't help but look back on the achievements we made at Birtley House during this time.

My aim as a manager has always been to inspire and motivate those around me. But in 2020 this felt more important than ever.

I am not one to panic and I stand strong when it comes to dealing with obstacles and this has been true throughout the pandemic.

When I was at nursing university, some twenty years ago, I was fortunate enough to work with and learn from the best.

There were several people who stood out to me during this time – namely for their gentle and holistic approach. They had a determination to get things right and it was an approach I have never forgotten.

This guided me throughout 2020.

Social care is changing dramatically, and care homes need strong leadership. Looking back on the past, and looking into the future of care, it is clear that we need to become leaders to provide a safe and holistic



I am guided by an approach to get things right

We celebrated achievements and danced together – socially distanced of course.

service to residents and staff.

While managers oversee people, leaders possess an ability to influence and inspire others towards an agreed vision.

My approach over the past year has been to lead the Birtley team in a way that embraces our values: with kindness, integrity, positivity, and – perhaps the most poignant value of all – adaptability.

Living by our values

Along with the day-to-day changes that rapidly became a necessity over the past year – such as additional PPE and enhanced cleaning regimes – I felt the need to make additional adaptations, to make this new world more comfortable for my team.

I added more plants and photographs to staff areas, put up motivational posters, and introduced both compliments and wellbeing boards to boost morale.

We spent more time in the gardens and enjoyed shared mealtimes. We celebrated achievements and danced together – socially distanced of course.

A new monthly initiative was introduced on the first Thursday of every month – gathering the team to spend time together over coffee and cake. This time is used to observe the small things

and acknowledge everyone's efforts.

New skills were developed, different working styles were required, and new boundaries were set. A constant reevaluation of practices was required to keep staff and residents safe.

And all while ensuring the compliance of the home. Auditing, quality control, and resident support have never wavered, despite the overwhelming requirements of COVID management.

It is almost impossible to measure the time invested in dealing with COVID-19 over the past year. It completely absorbed our daily routine and added additional stress and pressure to what we all try to do every day.

I am so proud of every resident and staff member for the tremendous resilience they have shown.

And one year on I can confidently say this – with everything that I have seen of the flexibility and adaptability at Birtley House, our home can conquer anything.

With best wishes for the year ahead,

Sylvia Indycka
Registered Manager





Activities

at Birtley House

We have always run a thriving group activity schedule at Birtley House. Therefore, we have had to use our creativity to work the recent restrictions. Through one-to-one interaction, the activities team has provided an entertaining and stimulating schedule for residents to enjoy.

Discovering new pleasures

From playing board games and watching the fish in our aquarium to walking in our beautiful gardens, we have found great pleasure in one-to-one time over the past year.

Taking the time to enjoy an easy chat together was a real treat for our residents and the activities team.

One of our residents, Elisabeth, adores cats and had expressed her wish to stroke a real cat again.

Lotty, our Wellbeing Companion, made Elisabeth's dream come true by bringing



her pet cat, Izzie, to Birtley House for a visit.

And a visit from two adorable baby ducklings was a real highlight for everyone at Birtley. The fluffy duo did the rounds of our home, visiting many of our residents. Everyone adored them, and who wouldn't?

Ensuring continued wellbeing

The wellbeing of our residents is so important, and it has never felt more so than at a time when loved ones were unable to visit.

Along with regular video calls to keep in touch with family and friends, our residents have even enjoyed therapeutic treatments via online technology.

As time progressed throughout the pandemic, we were delighted to introduce some smaller-group activities.

With a few residents at a



A resident enjoys an Indian Head Massage with Caroline Whalley. We promise it's not a game of, "Heads, Shoulders, Knees & Toes"!

time, and always adhering to social distancing, our residents participated in activities from crafts to gentle exercise.

With luck, we will be able to return to a normal activity schedule this year.

But we won't forget the new experiences we have adopted at Birtley over the past twelve months, and I am sure we will carry some of these into the future with us.

Best wishes,



Tina Bell
Head of
Activities and
Wellbeing

The wonders of technology

We introduced new forms of entertainment around the home throughout the year, including smart speakers.

These quickly became a firm favourite with our residents:

"Alexa, tell us a joke!" and "Alexa, what will the weather do today?" have become regular requests.

Everyone loves to ask the smart speakers to play their favourite songs. And to hear the music throughout the building has been so uplifting.

Technology has also enabled us to connect with our musician, Kevin Jacot. Under normal conditions, Kevin would come to Birtley

House to entertain us monthly with his wonderful music.

Thankfully, our big screen and surround-sound system in the activities room enabled us to enjoy his many talents.

And the big screen came in very handy for a spot of online shopping too!


The season of

new beginnings

Every changing year in gardening always feels like a fresh start. A chance to start again, put right the errors of the previous year and put to good use all that new knowledge acquired over the 12 months just gone. And for 2021 that feels even more relevant than usual.

We will each have experienced many different emotions in 2020. Let's hope we can take the lessons we've learned and head towards the next 12 months with optimism and enthusiasm.

Despite lockdowns and tier systems, I hope in some small way that the gardens have provided some release from the pressures of the pandemic



and allowed residents, and visitors, temporary relief in the beautiful surroundings at Birtley House during this most difficult of times.

Preparing the garden for spring

Nothing stands still for long in gardening and we're already getting on top of things in preparation for the spring with lawn edges freshly cut, beds mulched and the last of the previous year's herbaceous growth cut back, although our progress was hampered slightly by saturated ground from heavy rainfall.

Even that won't dampen our spirits though and any inclement weather offers an excuse to venture down into the woods to tackle the invasive bamboo that if left unchecked will soon run riot, a job made easier with the ever-enthusiastic help from *halow*. Along with coppicing of hazel and alder, there's plenty to keep us busy on cold days. Just never enough time to get it all done before more important tasks in the garden require our attention.

Growing new plants from old

Gardeners by our very nature are thrifty people. Why buy new plants when you can create your own



“We may not all be in the same boat, but we are in the same storm. I hope we can emerge and look forward to happy times ahead.”

from cuttings, division of perennials and the collection of seedlings? It's one of my favourite tasks to do during the quieter months and the cold frames are currently full of pots of various shapes and sizes, all containing new plants whose only cost is a small amount of compost to give them the best start.

During late winter and early spring these will be used to fill in gaps, bulk up established groups and keep the beds and borders continually evolving, offering something different each new season. As usual I've created far too many so the excess plants will be offered for sale at a very small cost, with any money made being put straight back into the garden to make further improvements. Watch this space for further details.

Creating new paths

Water running off the hills and through the gardens



Major tasks this year will be the creation of a new strawberry bed to replace the existing one and the installation of some new raised beds for the shorter season crops.

As usual we will be offering any plants for sale and, throughout the season, any excess produce, so please see myself or Sam and we'll let you know what's available. Hopefully, some of the restrictions will be lifted this year and we can enjoy some much-needed time with our friends and family so please, bear in mind, we also offer BBQ charcoal and seasoned logs for sale, details of which will be displayed at the entrance.

It's been a tough year for all of us and we may not all be in the same boat but we are in the same storm so I hope we can all get through this difficult time and emerge on the other side appreciating all the good things we have and looking forward to all the happy times ahead.



Best wishes.
Matt Miller
Head
Gardener

always makes them very wet making access difficult for residents to safely venture out during these times. So, this year a new path will be installed along the top of the Ha Ha allowing easier access down to the pond and to enjoy the views across the parkland and beyond to the woodland and trout lakes. Hopefully in the future this can be linked up to the existing paths creating a circular walk that will take in the many different areas of the estate.

Birtley's plants and produce

With *halow's* help the kitchen garden will once again provide the chef and his team with a selection of fresh, organic seasonal fruit and veg. The tried and trusted favourites will once again be used, along with some different trialled varieties, to see if they're happy in our sandy soil.





Birtley Woodland Art Space

Birtley Woodland Art Space is a community arts, crafts, and wellbeing space nestled within the woodlands of the 48-acre Birtley estate



Lorraine Ellery Matthews (left) with Ruth Wheeler

Birtley Woodland Art Space is a unique place for people to come together and learn from professional instructors who are passionate about passing their knowledge and skills on to others.

Co-founders Ruth Wheeler and Lorraine Ellery Matthews offer a wide variety of workshop experiences and courses between them. The duo is growing the team of guest artists, makers, and wellness instructors to provide a learning experience that is interesting, affordable, and fun.

We asked Lorraine to tell us more about this exciting new initiative.

How did this community venture materialise?

Ruth and I met through our membership of Surrey Hills Enterprises. We found we had a shared love of nature, the outdoors and working with natural, sustainable materials – and a strong desire to bring people together!

Ruth had run *Sculpt It* workshops in the woods for many years and had a long-held vision of creating a community art space. I had made a huge career change and wanted to pursue a creative career with my business, *Hedges & Hurdles*

Country Skills & Crafts. We decided to combine the two.

Birtley Woodland Art Space was born in January 2020, with our first collaborative Woodland Workshops held in March the same year.

We offer a broad range of activities throughout the year including basket making





Which arts and skills can people learn at Birtley Woodland Art Space?

We pollard and process willow grown on the estate and use this to teach the heritage skill of weaving traditional willow wattle hurdles, and to make plant supports.

I also buy specialist basket willow from Somerset for my varied workshops. From this, we make everything from butterflies, dragonflies, and flower sculptures to foraging baskets, tension trays, and my unique botanical and willow collection of crafts.

Hazel, chestnut, and other natural materials are also coppiced locally and used to create wood art



and structures of various forms.

Ruth teaches traditional wood carving, using locally sourced wood, to make 2D relief artwork and signs. She also runs pyrography workshops (meaning: to draw with fire). She is also a qualified Yoga and Nia instructor, running classes on site.

Additional skills visitors will be able to learn in 2021 include: spoon carving, felt making, soapstone carving, ceramics, decoupage on wood, natural wreath making, mindfulness, wattle hurdle making, hedge laying, plus seasonal arts and crafts activities offered by guest artists and makers.

Who can get involved?

Birtley Woodland Art Space caters for all ages and abilities. The site is perfect for hosting events for private groups including corporate businesses, families, clubs, societies, institutes, and those with special needs.

We run regular Friday workshops and courses designed with adults in mind plus additional ad-hoc adult-only events throughout the week.

Home educators are also attracted to the site and our regular mixed-media workshop programmes are designed in collaboration with this community to ensure their needs are met.

At weekends and during the school holidays a selection of seasonal events will be on offer catering for adults, teenagers, and family groups.

If you are an artist or maker and would like to learn more about joining our growing team, please make contact.



What do you have planned for 2021?

In addition to the activities already mentioned, ten amazing artists and makers will take part in an open studio this coming June, in collaboration with Surrey Artist Open Studio (SAOS).

They will join us to exhibit their work of paintings, textiles, mosaics, wood, and ceramic sculpture, willow art, 2D art, jewellery, metal, green woodwork, and outdoor furniture. This will be hosted in and around Birtley Woodland Art Space.

Taster workshops, "Art in the Woods" will be delivered on each Saturday by the SAOS Group members. The first taster workshop is on Saturday 5th June and the following two Saturdays thereafter.

How can people get involved?

To find out more about Birtley Woodland Art Space and our volunteering opportunities, please get in touch with Lorraine or Ruth:

Web: www.birtleywoodlandartspace.co.uk

Phone: 07446 837492

Email: lorraine@birtleywoodlandartspace.co.uk or ruth@birtleywoodlandartspace.co.uk

Social: [@birtleywoodlandartspace](https://www.facebook.com/birtleywoodlandartspace) on Facebook and Instagram

Embracing technology



“Many residents now enjoy regular weekly chats”

that she says she really does feel as if she is there! It certainly ticks the box for successful wellbeing!

A positive and permanent change

To date, I have recorded that over 250 Zoom or FaceTime meetings with families and friends have taken place, as well as many private ones which are not included in my diary!

This figure does not include the Zoom physio sessions that took place during the first lockdown when Janet and Trish were unable to come, as well as various medical appointments, and other business meetings.

I see this way of communicating becoming even more popular as everyone becomes more familiar and confident with using it.

Three cheers for modern technology!



Caroline Whalley
Director,
Birtley House

I am pretty certain that if, in March 2020 I had suggested to our residents that we arrange to FaceTime or Zoom their families, they would have asked me what on earth I meant!

In fact, I myself was then only familiar with FaceTime, but what a difference a year makes!

As soon as lockdown was officially announced in March, and with the thought of not being able to welcome visitors to Birtley, I began to offer FaceTime opportunities.

Before long I had set up a dedicated diary for these “appointments” which have now become the ‘norm’ for many residents and loved ones.

Zooming into the future

We soon added Zoom as an alternative which offered the chance for several members of one family, even if in another country, to link in and give so much pleasure to their mother/father, grandmother/grandfather, aunt or uncle, sister, or brother.

Many now enjoy regular weekly chats. Others prefer to be more spontaneous, and some residents now have their own iPads – using

them without any assistance, although we do check that the iPads are well charged up!

For those relatives who live thousands of miles away, it is wonderful to be able to “see” them as if they were in the room, and this amazing technology has certainly been a godsend.

Keeping hobbies alive

One of our residents is still able to join a monthly meeting with a social group of which she was a founder member. This means she can still participate with members, and vice versa. I can tell how thrilled she is to see all her friends, and what a welcome boost they give to her!

Another of our residents has been able to continue “seeing” her art tutor on a weekly basis, watching her painting in her studio, and becoming so totally absorbed with the moment,



News from The Mews

Birtley Mews is a unique development of eight apartments situated in a peaceful courtyard setting behind Birtley House. The accommodation offers an independent lifestyle for those not yet requiring care, but with support on hand should residents require it.

Life has of course been different in Birtley Mews over the past year, but our wardens have been creative and adaptable with activities – always maintaining a positive attitude. Quizzes, TV programmes, virtual concerts, scenic and nostalgic drives, alongside creative activities have provided mental stimulation. A sense

of humour has been essential and there has been lots of laughter!

One positive outcome from the lockdown has been relationship-building, with our wardens getting to know residents' families better. Technology has been key in liaising with families. One resident was able to see his son on WhatsApp

video after a few years of only speaking on the phone. Moments like that have been heart-warming.

Our Mews residents are looking forward to seeing their wider families and friends outside of their support bubble. Personally, I am most looking forward to taking our residents out again – whether for a cream

tea, visit a local garden, or simply a scenic drive.

Hopefully, it won't be long before we are sitting in the Mews courtyard together enjoying a cuppa!"



Jane Baker
Mews Wardens
Co-ordinator

A view to fitness

John Fleming and his wife Libby are two of our newest residents at Birtley Mews.

A keen sportsman all his life, Mr Fleming is passionate about personal fitness and has already installed a stationary bike outside his apartment overlooking the stunning views of the Surrey Hills.

Recalling his active past, Mr Fleming said: "I've always been good at sports, with rugby being my sport of choice during school and university. While I never competed at county level, I was a keen first division sportsman until the age of 35."

In his late thirties Mr Fleming was inspired to join a group

of runners. This led to him taking part in The Comrades Marathon, in his home country of South Africa. The 56-mile race between the cities of Durban and Pietermaritzburg is the world's largest and oldest ultramarathon race, and a huge test of endurance. It is a memory that Mr Fleming looks back on with honour.

Determined to continue exercising on moving to Birtley, Mr Fleming looked to buy a second-hand stationary bike, but his family decided to go one better and order a new bike for him as a birthday surprise.

He now enjoys working out while facing the stunning backdrop of the hills behind

“Keeping fit is something that has been embedded in my life. I know how important it is.”

Birtley Mews.

Having settled into their apartment, the Flemings are looking forward to enjoying the Birtley House gardens in the spring and summer with Mr Fleming eager to explore much more of the surrounding countryside.

A very warm welcome to Mr and Mrs Fleming from everyone at Birtley House!



In every issue of House & Home, we talk to the team leaders who make Birtley House such a special place to live and work.



Meet The Chef

At Birtley, we pride ourselves on producing wholesome home-cooked food. Using fresh and seasonal fruit and vegetables grown in our kitchen garden along with locally sourced produce, our in-house kitchen team ensure we provide the correct nutrition for our residents.

We spoke to Steve Hounsham, Chef Manager at Birtley House, to find out more about the cuisine at Birtley and to learn about the man behind the apron.

How long have you worked at Birtley House?

I've known Birtley and the Whalley family for many years but, during the summer of 2019, I helped during the transition from contracted catering to an in-house kitchen team. It was after this short stint that I was offered the position of Chef Manager and joined the Birtley Team permanently.

Have you always worked as a chef?

I studied catering at Guildford Technical college after leaving school. I then went into the family manufacturing

business for two years before deciding that I wanted to start my career in catering. At his point I joined Surrey University and worked my way up through the ranks over the next few years with various companies.

Where have you worked previously?

I spent 14 years in catering at McLaren (the formula one team and super car manufacturers). We catered for so many different needs, from feeding the 3,000 staff members to strict diets for the drivers, not to mention various hospitality events. I even cooked for the Queen (my third time of cooking for her in my career).

I was also Head Chef at Farnborough Airport where we ran a small terminal café and provided on-board dining for private jets. During this time, I provided catering for various Royal families, football and rugby teams, and A-list celebrities including Mick Jagger, Hugh Grant, Arnold Schwarzenegger and Sylvester Stallone! Kylie Minogue said my Shepherd's Pie was the best she had ever had!

My final role before coming to Birtley was Head Chef at the prestigious Cranleigh School. Again, this was a varied role catering for the 800 children, and various hospitality events.

What do you like about working at Birtley House?

I like to challenge the perception of food in a nursing home. Creating the menu and food at Birtley is no different to catering for celebrities or school children. Job satisfaction for me is simple: for people to enjoy what I have created.

What has been your most successful creation at Birtley?

My team is my most successful creation! I am incredibly proud of how they have all coped over the past year, especially the two new chefs who have joined the team: Marius and Barry. Our long serving kitchen assistants, Suree and Magda, have been amazing as have our kitchen porters, Michael F, Debraj and Michael P. The quality and presentation of food leaving our kitchen is excellent.

Which is the dish that you are most proud of?

I was recently asked to make a Whalley family dish which was Simon's grandmother June's famous Game pie. It received great reviews from the residents as well as from Simon, thankfully! I also thought the Chinese lunch was a great success, but again with so many elements to create and serve, it was a great team effort.

What are you most looking forward to at Birtley House this year?

I'm looking forward to welcoming the residents back down into the orangery. I miss popping in to see them during service to hear how they are and their feedback, good or bad!

I am also looking forward to working with the *halow* project this spring to create a calendar of what we would like or can use in the kitchen from the gardens. We have purple sprouting broccoli and beetroot almost ready and will look forward to adding these to the menus!



*“Kylie Minogue
said my Shepherd’s
Pie was the best
she had ever had!”*



The Birtley Bulletin

News and celebrations
from Birtley House



Rudo (left) and Viorica



Congratulations to...

Our Group Marketing Manager, **Kerry Holloway**, (left), and her husband Charlie, on the birth of their baby daughter, Rosie Evelyn on 21st January 2021

- Our receptionist, **Lulu Ball**, (above right), on her recent promotion to the position of Administration Co-ordinator effective 1st February 2021. Lulu settled into Birtley quickly since joining us in May last year and we very much look forward to her development within the admin department.
- **Viorica Darie** (Clinical Nurse Lead) on her 5-year work anniversary at Birtley House
- **Rudo Rumveye** (Clinical Nurse Lead) on her 20-year work anniversary at Birtley House!



A fond farewell to:

Barbara Mintz

Barbara has been a warden at The Mews since 2005! She left Birtley House on Sunday 7th March to embark on her retirement. Congratulations on this special milestone, Barbara. Barbara (pictured centre) at her farewell gathering with other members of the Birtley Mews team.



New starters

- Melanie Phillips** – Interim Group Marketing Manager
- Charlotte Williams** – Care Assistant
- Joshua Njikho** – Care Assistant
- Katarzyna Zielinska** – Care Assistant
- Stephanie Parker** – Care Assistant
- Ellie Chant** – Care Assistant
- April Hutchinson** – Housekeeping Assistant



Melanie Phillips

Melanie specialises in care home marketing and will be covering Kerry Holloway's role while she is on maternity leave.

... and the very best of luck to:

- Smolly Taringa** - Registered General Nurse (Smolly worked at Birtley since March 2009!)
- Hayley Roberts** - Care Assistant
- Sam Mungwariri** - Care Assistant



An inspector calls



The prospect of a nursing home inspection is always daunting. They are unannounced and notoriously hard to anticipate (it is no exaggeration to say we waited on tenterhooks for over six months last time round) and the business implications of a rating based, at least partly, on impressions made during a single inspection visit is enough to cause anxiety in the most experienced of managers.

Perhaps rightly so, you might say! However, our regulator, the Care Quality Commission (CQC), has recently undergone a significant strategy review with proposals that aim "... to develop ongoing collaborative relationships with services built on openness and trust", and "... to move away from a set schedule of inspections to a more flexible targeted approach".

Working hand-in-hand

This shift in approach is something we have been fortunate to experience first-hand during the past 12 months. Throughout this time, our inspector has without fail, been there to help us navigate a number of challenging situations, providing expert guidance combined with a positivity that Sylwia and I both agree

has been uplifting and motivating in a way we had never experienced before.

You may recall that last June we had what was termed an Emergency Support Framework meeting by video-link with our inspector to discuss the impact of COVID-19 on the service and to provide assurances that we remained compliant in all essential areas. Our experience of this contingency arrangement was one of supportive conversation and less like an inquisition and proved to be an unexpectedly cathartic 90 minutes during which time we were able to share our challenges of the pandemic up to that point.

A proud moment for Birtley

In February this year, Sylwia and I were especially proud to have been invited to speak in front of 15 Surrey inspectors as part of their own internal monthly meeting to share our experiences of the

pandemic and specifically the positive changes we had made as a result. I can only conclude that CQC satisfied themselves of the standards we are delivering as our inspector's response shows:

"I just wanted to thank you all so much for your wonderful contribution to our team meeting today. The positive feedback on your presentation and the enthusiasm for your approach to care was shared in abundance after you left us. So, once again a heartfelt thank you from me, not just for today but everything you continue to do for all those living at Birtley House."

In both cases, the few weeks of preparation leading up to the meetings were particularly busy and not just a little stressful, but they ensured that we took the time to reflect with the wider team in a way we might not have done otherwise. The

sense of achievement in both instances was hugely rewarding and reinforces to me how important it is to have these moments of recognition for the hard work done by all our amazing teams.

Positive transformation

In whatever format CQC decide to inspect in the future, the combination of these experiences, together with the more open and trusting relationship we have built with our inspector feels like yet another aspect of life that has been transformed through COVID-19 and will likely not revert back. I, for one, am sure that this is for the better.

You can read the CQC's public consultation document at <http://www.cqc.org.uk/Strategy2021>



Tim Whalley
Director



“Whether we can hold services and sing these great hymns together or not this Easter, we can still rejoice in its blessings.”

An Easter message

During the past year, a year like no other, we have spent much time shut in or confined to our local area, and unable to spend time with family and friends in the usual way.

Our residents have impressed me by how positive they have often remained. They are so appreciative of their lovely surroundings and all that is done to keep them well, and it is wonderful to hear them focus on the blessings they enjoy more than the restrictions they face.

Easter is a time of great joy and celebration, the high point of the Christian year. We remember the death of Jesus and rejoice in his resurrection, and the new life we have as we believe in him. Alleluia, (*Praise the Lord*) rings out clearly during the season in our hymns and greetings. Whether we can hold services and sing these great hymns together or not this Easter, we can still rejoice in its blessings, in the fact that Jesus is alive and promises to



be with us always.

This prayer, used during the Easter season, struck me in a new way during the first lockdown, and reminds us again this year that God is never in lockdown! I think I will always remember 2020/21 when I hear it:

Risen Christ, for whom no door is locked, no entrance barred: open the doors of our hearts, that we may seek the good of others and walk the joyful road of sacrifice and peace, to the praise of God the Father. Amen



Easter blessings.
Liz Tilley
Chaplain

A note on the future of **social care**

As an industry, care providers have undergone much upheaval in the past year. From infection control and visitor limitations to the rollout of the COVID-19 vaccine, social care has never featured in so many headlines.

I believe that the time has come for all care providers to look to the future and collaborate – whilst managing the present and learning from the past.

My grandfather called on his experience as an army surgeon in the First World War to pioneer the private care of those with mental health problems, as far back as the 1920s.

Birtley House has survived numerous depressions and a second World War, but it has successfully built a reputation for innovation as well as continuity and quality.

One hurdle for Birtley, and other social care providers alike, has been the omission from the structure of the NHS over the years. This is an issue I hope will now be addressed.

The power of collaboration

If there is one positive to be learned from this crisis, it is the importance of working together.

The care industry will emerge from the pandemic



to a new world – one where collaboration and mutual support will be the new normal.

I am hoping that the importance of social care integrating with the NHS will finally be recognised. A joint approach could reduce the risk of the health service being overwhelmed in the future – and save substantial costs in normal times.

Reinventing social care in Surrey and beyond

As a founder member of the Surrey Care Association, and long-term member of Care England, I have an active interest in shaping care throughout the county – and nationwide.

Birtley House has worked with the Surrey Care Association (particularly with David Holmes) to report the deliberations of the Surrey Care Association

those with learning difficulties and other younger people experiencing issues.

The first steps towards change

On 6th November 2020, Surrey Care Association launched its initial proposal at a Zoom conference chaired by Professor Martin Green OBE, with Jeremy Hunt MP and Sir Robert Francis QC as the main speakers.

Surrey Care Association's mission is to help achieve a consensus of goodwill and renewed public interest that will encourage the government to radically reform social care to secure better outcomes for those in need.

Care is our future, and we must act to ensure it comes

with dignity and quality of life for all.



Simon Whalley,
Chairman

to key influencers. David is Chairman of Peak 15, and a director, and recent chairman, of the Surrey Care Association.

We have worked throughout the pandemic to identify the key factors that will result in a re-invention of social care. And social care is a term which we would like to re-name as *Life Care* to reflect the importance of the whole range of care services provided.

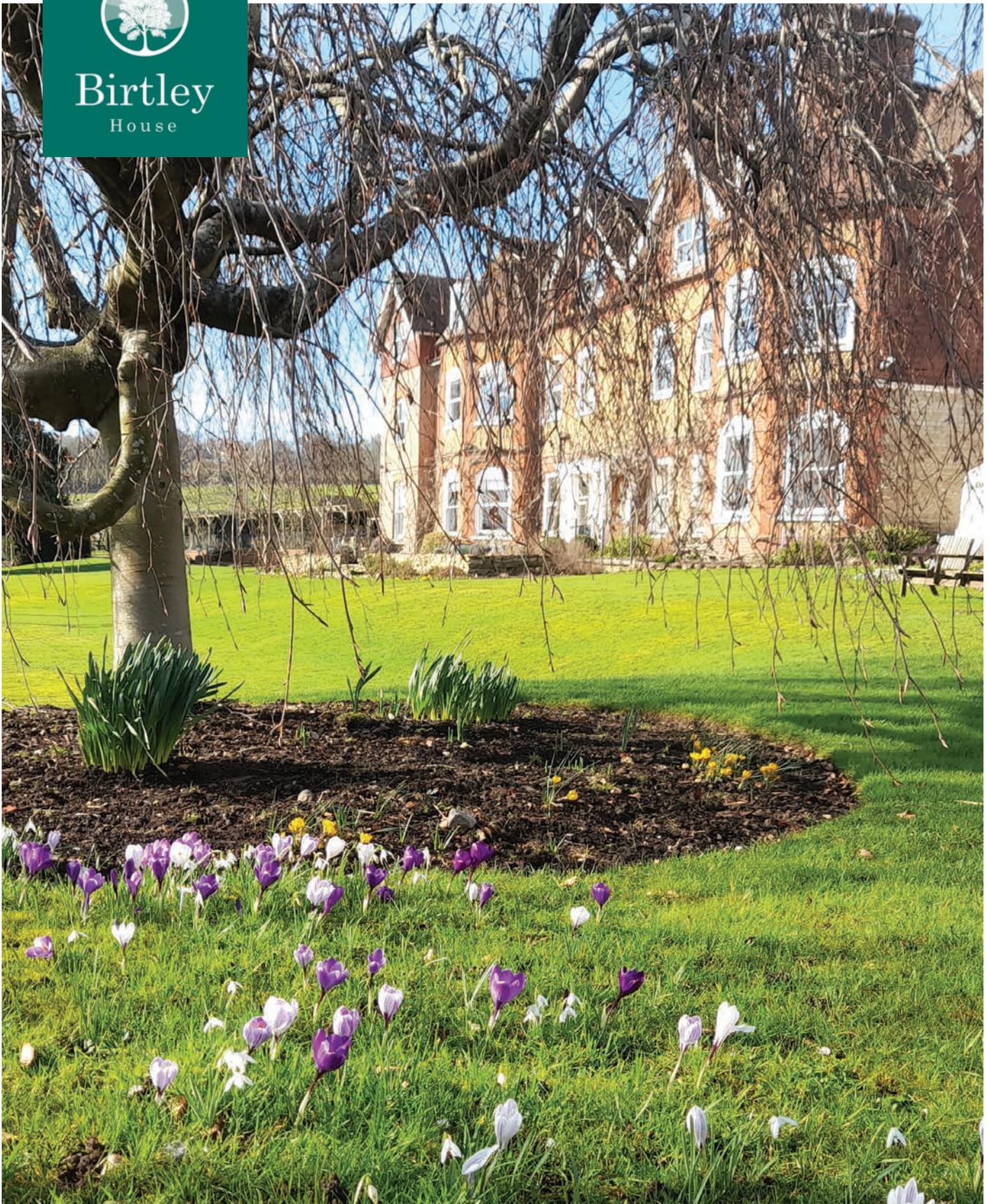
The proposal not only addresses the care of older people, but the care of

The proposal stated that its key elements require:

- **a fresh start with a new ethos**
- **recognition of a valued workforce in the sector**
- **new processes developed in partnership with the skilled owners and managers of ethical providers**
- **fair and transparent funding arrangements**
- **reformed roles and structures avoiding the current siloed systems and duplication.**



Birtley
House



House & Home

If you would like more information about Birtley House Nursing Home, or you would like to subscribe (or unsubscribe) from this newsletter, please email info@birtleyhouse.co.uk or write to:

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