

WE HAVE some good news this week for all of you who have been desperately missing seeing your loved ones. As the latest national lockdown in England got under way last week, new government guidelines have been issued, allowing care homes to receive visitors again.

We've been working hard on finding a way of navigating the difficult path between access for visitors – which obviously is an enormous boost to the mental wellbeing of your loved ones – and the strict control of infection from Covid-19, which can be so dangerous to our residents.

After careful risk assessment, we are relaunching our visiting programme. For the moment visiting will be in gazebos outside the homes, but these will be warmed by powerful electric heaters so no-one should feel chilly. They will be well ventilated and social distancing will be in place.

Appointments will start with immediate effect (except for Springview, where visits will be paused for the moment because of an asymptomatic Covid-19 case), and we'll be grateful if you could abide by the following code of practice:

- Visits will need to be pre-booked in advance for a specific day and time. This is to limit the volume of people through the home at any one time.
 - Weekend visits are possible as well as those on weekdays.
 - Visits will be limited to 45 minutes, in order to support additional cleaning between visits.
 - Only one family member or friend will be allowed per visit (or two from the same household), and with one visit per week, though it may be possible to book last-minute unused slots at the manager's discretion.
 - Children under the age of 18 will not be allowed.
 - On arrival you will be asked some health screening questions at the start of your visit; if you are showing any symptoms which could indicate COVID-19, please do not travel to the care home, as we will refuse entry.
 - On arrival you will also be asked to use the hand gel provided and will have your temperature taken.
 - Visitors will be required to wear a face covering for the duration of their visit, even if you have brought your own, we ask that you use the ones provided.
 - A member of staff will be provided to escort visitors, who must follow them to the designated visiting area and the staff member will be required to remain there for the duration of the visit.
 - Social distancing measures will remain in effect, which, we regret, means a no-touch approach. This includes hugging, hand-holding or kissing.
 - Visitors will not be able to use facilities such as toilets.
 - Wherever possible, visitors should try to walk or travel by car,
 - and avoid public transport when visiting the home.
 - Any gifts that a visitor has brought for the resident they are visiting will be sanitised appropriately.
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We have had plenty to celebrate over the past few days. We are especially delighted to mark the 100th birthday of Spring Lane's Mrs Dorothy Quill, who achieved her centenary last week. Home manager Lori laid on a splendid event, making Dorothy resident of the week. There was a host of colourful balloons, a delicious, iced birthday cake and some lovely bouquets of flowers. Dorothy proclaimed she couldn't have been happier!



Celebrating, too, is Rosalind Mendel (below), who won the hard-fought Scrabble tournament at Spring Grove. Everyone who observed the final game thought how impressive in range the words laid out on the board were, including a number of top-ranking triple-letter scores. Congratulations, also, to Dr Marcelle Jay, who was the runner-up.



Our new Resident of the Week scheme is now in full swing across all three homes, much to everyone's delight. Residents of the week are treated to some special pampering and invited to make requests for some of their favourite things. Following on from Dorothy Quill, the latest resident to be appointed is Hannah Whitwell at Spring Grove, who was enchanted by the flowers and chocolates she received.

Hannah opted for some music by Mahler as her special request. For her treat, Springview resident Julia Price requested fish and chips with mushy peas, followed by warm apple pie. We're with her on that one!

There's been a topical theme in the homes this week, with Odile running an American election special at Spring Grove, which everyone found most informative. For Armistice Day, Eirlys has been leading folk making poppies for the window display. At Springview, Susie has also been making remembrance poppies, as well as running bowling, bingo and some brain-teasing quizzes. The Spring Lane residents helped to make their own delicious Christmas cake, queueing up for a stir and a wish.

For fans of art and politics, Odile gave a very entertaining talk at Spring Grove about the French artist and caricaturist J. J. Grandville. It was enjoyed by all, who discovered many fascinating facts about the artistic scene in France in the early 19th century. Also in the home, Steve organised carpet bowls and *Play your Cards Right*, as well as karaoke, with some great old favourite songs. Eirlys was singing at Springview, too.

We're also thrilled by the continuing high quality of the music in our "Midweek Proms" series. Last week's concert was given by Gaby Lester and friends – Caroline Palmer, piano and Jonathan Williams, horn. The main piece was the "Brahms horn trio", one of the most beautiful pieces ever written for the instrument. There was also the very charming "Sonatina" by Dvorak for violin and piano.

The iconic voice of Kathleen Ferrier was showcased in this week's concert. Ferrier was born in 1912 and died tragically young in 1953. Her tones were vividly brought to life by British singer Diana Moore, whose rich, velvety voice bore an uncanny resemblance to Ferrier's. The recital featured favourite works by Handel, Gluck and Schubert and some signature folk songs, including "Blow the Wind Southerly."

Next week's recital is by Rebecca Gilliver, principal cellist of the London Symphony Orchestra. You can tune in live on Wednesday November 19 at 2.30pm using the link www.artistsandresidents.org. Perhaps you would like to give some cash support, too? It would be very welcome in keep the concerts going. And you can leave your comments, too.

As the winter draws in, our residents are snug and warm inside, but there is still too much homelessness in the streets, and we're pleased that some of our staff have been helping out by taking food parcels to the homeless. Lisa Omar, our recruitment coordinator, and her son Kieran, a weekend receptionist at Spring Grove, have been working through the charity Helping Homeless Action in Barnet. It's a very good local cause and you can find out more about it here: <http://www.habcentre.org/>

Lastly, we're very much looking forward to our tree lighting ceremony at Springview which will take place on November 27. Morrisons supermarkets and Springtime Nurseries have each donated 7ft trees and Sainsbury's have given some cheerful bunting. The ceremony will be presided over by residents Gladys Gathergood and Ken Newman, aged 107 and 99 respectively, and there will be roast chestnuts, mince pies, marshmallows and hot chocolate. "It'll take me back to my childhood," says Mrs Gathergood. We're certain a brilliant time will be had by all!

As another Christmas treat, our Springview reception manager Kathy has organised one of her legendary raffles, this time in aid of Medical Detection Dogs, the charity that has done so much good work on Covid-19 research. The dogs are being trained to sniff out cases of Covid-19 with great accuracy. (We wrote about it in the newsletter the other day.) There is a splendid display of the goodies up for raffle in the reception (pictured below). Tickets are only £1 – you can buy by ringing 020 8367 9966. We're sure you will be generous!



Stay safe and stay well!.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Jeremy Balcombe". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jeremy Balcombe
CEO Springdene Group