

# News from Cunningham House, Pirbright

Independence, good food and companionship – all under one roof  
Summer/Autumn Newsletter 2022

## Coffee and Cake



From our administrator Katherine: "Sitting at my desk, I heard the residents return from their coffee morning, kindly hosted by a resident's daughter. The buzz of conversation was about a delicious homemade cake, very good coffee, and the spectacular views of the countryside. They all really enjoyed the morning, and a big thank you from the residents and volunteers for your hospitality Sarah."

## Keeping Fit Run by Elizabeth Jessop



What a difference a workout makes!  
On Wednesday, the residents enjoyed a 30-minute workout – moving and stretching, lunging, and loosening! Being seated didn't stop the residents being put through their paces, guided by fitness instructor, Elizabeth. Coffee and biscuits were the perfect reward, and everyone is looking forward to next week's session.



## Sponsors Party Returns!

Residents, their friends and families, and CH staff and volunteers were over the moon at the return of our annual Sponsors Party following a three-year gap due to Covid. It was extra special to get together to socialise over a delicious afternoon tea of sandwiches, scones with cream and strawberry jam, rich chocolate brownies and fresh fruit tarts brilliantly organised by Lucy our house manager and her deputy Rachel.



## A Helping Hand in our Village

The residents are kindly helping with the Village PeriNews every month by inserting one off flyers and notices into the 900+ copies of the newsletter and sorting them into batches for the delivery volunteers to hand deliver to households around the village. A tedious task for one, but many hands make light work, especially when fuelled with chocolate!!

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## Meet Two of Our Volunteers



### Graeme Marks

My working life for over 30 years was in international corporate banking. I managed teams and banking relationships with major clients around the world. My career took me from London to Sydney, Melbourne and Abu Dhabi. When I returned to Pirbright from Abu Dhabi in November 2016, I became involved at Cunningham House, where my wife Sarah had volunteered for some time. I became Chair of the trustee body, a role I held until June 2021; I remain a trustee.

Over the years, I have volunteered in a variety of ways and to a number of causes. Early in my married life, my wife and I were both involved in our children's schools when they were young. In the midst of my international career, I volunteered with the Bobby Moore Cancer Trust as one of 40 British volunteers sent to Brazil to build a village school in 8 days – this was such an inspiring experience! Over the past 5 years, and in addition to Cunningham House, I have been deeply involved in fundraising and applying for grants to build a new cricket pavilion in Pirbright. It is wonderful to know that the building work will begin in October!

There is a strong sense of community at Cunningham House, a positive spirit, a sense of sanctuary that is evident to anyone who walks into the House. It has been a wonderful place to volunteer, and it has been a totally compelling experience. Age or background doesn't matter, everyone has something to bring, and there is so much to gain. When I tell people what I have been up to recently, they always want to know more about Cunningham House than anything else – it stimulates conversation, and with good reason. I am always very happy to promote it!

So, even if you only have a little time to spare, pop in for a coffee and a chat. For further details ring Lucy on **01483 488751**.

### Fiona Jolley

The Pirbright Abbeyfield Society was in its fledgling state in our village in 1977 when Sylvia Cunningham asked me to join its 'steering committee'. She was determined to mark Queen Elizabeth II's Silver Jubilee with something meaningful for the elderly in Pirbright and an Abbeyfield house became her goal. I was working for a large firm of Guildford architects and she saw potential connections and interest in the search for a suitable building site or property.

Nearly a decade later we had our site in School Lane, and Cunningham House was built to provide independent living for nine residents with local connections. The rest is history – we have survived the test of time, numerous social changes, Covid lockdowns, and we are flourishing.

Volunteering with Cunningham House has been the most fulfilling experience for me. It has been such a privilege to work with our devoted staff, sharing the joys, sorrows and challenges with residents and their families, and contributing alongside a team of like-minded local volunteers. I have made many long-term friends, and gained an understanding of how to plan better for the later years in life, and make the most of being 'elderly'. This can seem far into the future and from my perspective it is now well after 90!

My other volunteering activities have included being a Parish councillor, and many years as a Peribus driver and a Citizens Advice adviser. Throughout all Cunningham House has been like a magnet!

Much was said about service to others after the death of our Queen and this one sentence sums it up perfectly for me:

***"Genuine human happiness and satisfaction lie more in giving than receiving; more in serving than being served"***. Absolutely! There are so many opportunities and delights for volunteers at Cunningham House. Give it a try!