



# THE ELDER



Spring 2021

**Remembering where it all started...**

**Our 5 year plan**

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**Lockdown Stories Part II**



## Remembering where it all started...

Norwich Housing Society was founded in 1934 by Canon Charles Comp Lanchester, who was vicar of St Barnabas for more than half a century. He was an extraordinary man who became the oldest serving clergyman in the whole country.

Known to all as CC, he was also rural dean of Norwich for more than 30 years and an honorary canon of Norwich Cathedral for over 40 years, and sped around on an autogyro his parishioners bought him to mark 50 years in the parish in 1956.

Educated at Cambridge University he arrived here in 1902 as curate of St Bartholomew Church, Heigham, which was later gutted in the Baedeker Raids of 1942. He was the

man for this busy, bustling parish where most people were not wealthy and life was a struggle for many, but in CC they had a dear friend who reached out to one and all.

However four years after he took on the job, this part of Norwich became a raging torrent in the terrible floods of 1912. Many of the houses could only be reached by water and CC was among those who rowed round with food to be passed to families trapped in upper rooms. He had a keen interest in motors, and in 1915 he responded to a Red Cross appeal for motorists to drive ambulances in battle areas of France.

During the Second World War St Barnabas was also damaged in the bombing raids, and for three months the congregation had to worship at St Margaret's in St Benedict's. CC was there for them as a loyal and had to worship at St Margaret's in St Benedict's. CC was there for them as a loyal and respected



support at those desperate times of death and destruction.

CC had a long association with the old Board of Guardians, looking after the poor and needy, and was chairman of the Norwich Education Committee. He had a deep and active interest in education, knowing full well how important it is, becoming a governor of Norwich High School for Girls in 1939 and then chairman of the governors in 1949. He was made an MBE in 1955.

When he was invited to take over St Barnabas he'd replied "I am inexperienced but I will try for a little while anyway". The 'little while' spanned generations, and thousands mourned him when he died in February 1970 at the age of 93.

We are very grateful to Derek James for this wonderful article that was recently featured in the Eastern Daily Press. We have taken an extract for The Elder. The full article is available on our website.

## Pull cords, what are they for?

This is just a reminder as some tenants are still unsure what their pull cords are for and how and when to use them. Located in your home are red or orange pull cords hanging from the ceiling. If you have an emergency repair to report out of office hours, e.g. loss of heating (October to May), flooding, blocked drains, total loss of electricity (check your trip switch first), you can activate your pull cord/pendant.

Out of hours is when the Bracondale office is closed (5pm-9am, Mon-Fri), at the weekend and bank holidays. Your call will go straight through to the out of office hours service, Centra, who will assist you. If you are prone to falls or would like to feel safer in your home, you can request a wrist or necklace pendant which can also be activated for assistance. You can also activate your pull cord/pendant if you require medical assistance. If you have an emergency, and you are able to, it may be necessary to call 999 directly, rather than activate your cord/pendant. Centra hold

your next of kin details so please ensure you keep us updated of any changes. If you have a pendant, please ensure you wear it at all times. Please may we ask that you do not telephone contractors directly but instead you activate your pull cord/pendant during out of hours and telephone the office during working hours. Thank you.



## Our 5 year plan

**Our mission** Is to provide independent living with support

**Our plan** Shows how we will do that and what our priorities are for achieving it

**Our values** Will drive how we'll deliver our plan:  
Professional • Progressive • Transparent • Caring & Fair

## Our priorities until 2023 are:



### Managing & Improving Homes

We will:

- Let homes quickly
- Sell properties no longer meeting tenants' needs
- Reach out to everyone who could benefit from a home with us
- Remain small & unique whilst working with and learning from others
- Listen to tenants' views on the service they receive and changes they want to see.



### Raise Our Profile

We will:

- Raise our profile within greater Norwich to help more people
- Use our website, social media and newsletters to tell everyone what we do



### Managing Our Finances

We will:

- Build up enough reserves in the bank to cope with the unexpected
- Collect all rent and service charges due
- Support our more vulnerable customers to pay their rent
- Use loans to help us build more housing to help more people



### Be A Good & Fair Employer

We will:

- Develop and manage our staff to deliver a professional, caring high quality service
- Review how we run the society and comply with regulations

## Looking After Your Drains

Over the past few months we have received many call outs for blocked drains due to the disposing of fat and jay cloths. We featured this article a few years ago however we would like to remind you and inform new tenants of the importance of looking after your drains.

- Expensive repairs
- Properties flooding with sewage
- Public health risks
- Infestation of rats or insects

### An oily, fatty problem...

We all use oils and fats for frying and roasting. It also drains out of meat when we're cooking it. But as we don't eat it, we're left with waste fat that we need to dispose of.

### DO NOT POUR IT DOWN THE DRAIN!

Many fats are liquid when hot but turn to gooey gloop on contact with cold drains. They will congeal, accumulate and eventually block the drains! Dispose of oils and fats in your bin or food caddy, NOT down the drain. Washing-up liquids and dishwasher tablets will only disperse small amounts left over. Even better, pour your oils into old bottles and take them to your local recycling centre where they can be turned into clean fluids or disposed of sensibly.

### Foods to Avoid Putting Down the Kitchen Sink

**Raw meat.** Putting raw meat down the sink is a no-no; especially if it's fatty meat, or meat containing gristle.

**Rice and Pasta.** It doesn't matter whether it's cooked or uncooked. Either way, putting rice or pasta down your kitchen sink is bad news. It expands when soaked in water, so running loads of water to wash it through is a fallacy.

**Potatoes and potato peel.** Both are full of starch which ultimately transforms into a sticky goo.

**Flour.** Flour and water make glue. Avoid putting it down the sink. It will cause problems if it's allowed to build up.

**Tea-leaves.** Many of us stick ardently to the loose leaf, rather than using tea bags. Loose leaf tea is another thing that will build-up; eventually causing a blockage.

**We advise once a week you pour a solution of hot water and weak bleach down your kitchen sink to flush it through.**

### Can I Flush it?

Toilets cope with many litres of waste every day, but household drainage systems are relatively delicate pieces of engineering, designed largely for the removal of liquids and bodily waste. Many call-outs for unblocking drains turn out to be entirely preventable. They are caused by tenants attempting to flush things down the toilet that should be disposed of in the bin.

**Please, please do not flush wipes, jay cloths or anything else that isn't toilet paper or waste down your toilet.**

If the result of a blocked drain, whether it be from your sink or toilet and we have proof it has been caused by tenant carelessness, and we have to pay for a call out, then that tenant will be recharged.

If you have medical issues that may effect your toilet habits then we advise you to double flush your toilet.

Costs relating to blocked drains, pest control, washing machines/tumble driers are reflected in your service charge so please think twice before you flush unsuitable items, feed the birds/squirrels or abuse the laundry facilities.



## An Annual General Meeting with a Difference

This year's AGM for Norwich Housing Society and Stuart Court was a little different. Not only was it held remotely by "zoom" over the internet, which allowed one member to join for the first time in 30 years, but it also marked the retirement of the Society's Chief Executive; Mike Allen. Mike has been at the Society for ten years, seven of which as Chief Executive. He leaves it in good shape as he hands over the reigns to me as the new Chief Executive. I've joined the Society, having worked for Housing Associations in the North of England all my career. I have managed housing for older people, as well as housing for single people and large estates of family housing. For many years I was responsible for developing new affordable housing, often in areas of very high house prices where secure, affordable housing was scarce, such as in the Lake District. I look forward to working with colleagues and the Board to continue to deliver great services to the tenants and to ensure we do everything we can to allow you to live and thrive independently whilst having the support you need, when you need it.

The AGM was held on only my second day in post and I am pleased to report that everyone made me feel welcome and that it went without a hitch. A number of Board members had completed their initial terms of office and were re-elected to the Board;



Tim Pinder

Jamie Kidd, Gavin Sargent, and Maurice Land. One board member has retired from office, Chris Haystead, he was thanked by the chairman for the contribution he has made over the three years. As is of course customary at AGMs, the annual accounts were approved without any concerns being expressed by the auditors.

Indeed the Society is well run and in a strong financial position. In her closing remarks, the Society's chairman, Carol Sangster reflected on just how difficult a year it has been for many of you, for the staff and Board members. The one thing that we all have in common is that we just haven't been able to see each other face to face, which is rather sad and makes all the staff's job that more difficult. Let's hope that restrictions ease shortly and that some kind of normality will resume. As it does I look forward to meeting you all as I come around each of our schemes.

**Tim Pinder,**  
Chief Executive

## Another Lockdown Birthday

Last month Steve Gamble celebrated his 60th birthday. Unfortunately, he wasn't able to celebrate how he would have wanted to but he still had a good day nonetheless.

Once restrictions are eased he can go for a long drive for a lovely walk. He can meet up with friends outside, maintaining social distancing rules of course. He can even enjoy a pub lunch in a pub garden!

Whatever postponed birthday celebrations you have planned Steve, we hope you have a fab time!



## Welcome

We welcome another new face to the Society. Susie Alexander will be joining us as Senior Scheme Manager and will be responsible for the Scheme Manager duties at Rotary Court, Leander Court and St Barnabas Court from Monday 5th April 2021. Susie has worked in retirement independent living for many years and has loved every minute of it. She's very excited to be working for Norwich Housing Society and meeting the tenants.



Susie Alexander

## Retirement

Thank you for your good wishes for my retirement. In the last 14 years, I have seen the Society go from strength to strength. It's become a far better organisation, more organised and more professional. The service we offer has also improved and it's been great being involved and helping these changes take place. There have been hard times but with great team work we have weathered many storms.

I shall miss my colleagues and residents alike, you have all been a big part of my life. It's exciting times with new members of staff joining the group and I am more than happy to hand over the baton to Susie, who will be a great asset to the society. Along with Tim our new CEO the Society is in a great place to face the challenges that may lay head.

**Best wishes to all, keep safe and well,**  
Sarah Batchelor



# Quiz time

Following the recent Easter break, what better quiz to have than a chocolate quiz! Can you identify the 15 chocolate treats below? Please send/phone/email your entries to us by Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> May. Good luck!



## Lockdown Stories Part II

When we went into lockdown again on 5<sup>th</sup> November, I began to go for walks again. On Friday 13<sup>th</sup> I followed The Marriotts Way to Drayton and back. On my return, I decided to go to the stretch of river by Hellesdon Road, just passed the Gatehouse Pub on Dereham Road. Sitting on the branch of a dead tree were a pair of Parakeets, with another one above them.



Photo of Parakeets taken by Susan

Just over a week later, I walked down to the Whitlingham Country Park where I saw lot of birds including a large number of coots.

On my way home, I went back down Carrow Road and along the river to see what else I could see and to my amazement, I saw a pheasant. It flew into the water and flew out again. How it came to be there, I do not know, although there is a field near Trowse which isn't that far away. Maybe that's where it came from, who knows?

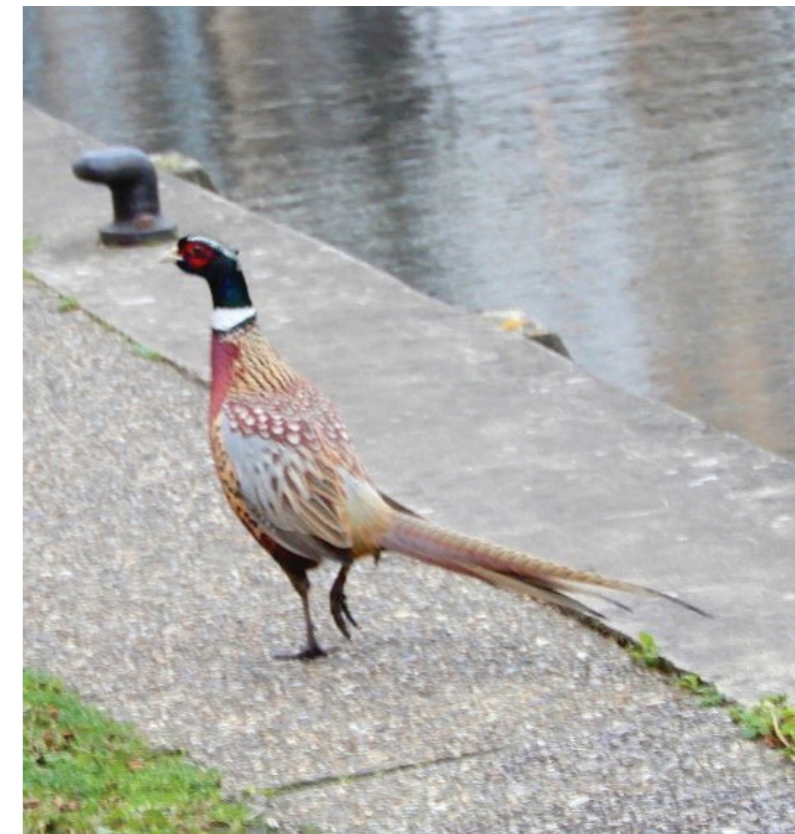


Photo of Pheasant taken by Susan

In December, I went for a walk round the University Broad and spotted two white egrets in a tree. There was a heron as well. Two weeks later, on Christmas Eve, I had another walk around the Broad, after going to Eaton Park first and there were four egrets this time. However, they were a long way off as they were in trees over the other side of the Broad from where I was and they were well spaced out between each other.

Finally, on 28<sup>th</sup> December, I went for a walk up to Carrow Road and back and saw the flooded part of the Riverside walk by Cow Tower. Previous to that, I spotted an otter swimming in the river between Gibraltar Gardens and Andersons Meadow, from the Mile Cross Bridge. In fact, a socially distanced line of spectators saw it including a couple who had a 2 year old with them.

**Susan Wright,**  
tenant at Nelson Street



Mr Cooper of Eleanor Road sadly lost his wife in 2019. He is fortunate enough to have a little garden area outside of his home, but he didn't always have the time to tend to it as caring for his wife was his main priority.

Last year Mr Cooper had the time to focus on getting the garden just how he likes it. We think he did a great job, and we look forward to seeing what it looks like this summer.



## Laundry Charges Explained

We're sorry to hear that you have concerns about us changing the way we charge for use of the laundry and wanted to explain our decision further by grouping together answers to the most Frequently Asked Questions we've received:

### Q1 Why are you taking away the coin payment?

**A1** During lockdown it became much more difficult to manage. Many tenants aren't able to get out to get hold of coins. We have found damage is being caused by people using older, bent coins which have blocked the coin mechanism. If we need to call an engineer to unblock the mechanism, this costs money and causes disruption to machines being available. We have also had to hand wash coins before banking, which is hugely time consuming. We have to pay bank fees to deposit money at the bank, which doesn't seem good value. Put simply, it is no longer efficient for us to continue with coin operations. Some of our schemes have been coinless for some time and this is becoming the norm in most laundries belonging to other housing associations and societies.

### Q2 Why do I have to pay a service charge when I don't use the laundry

**A2** Service charges are set on the basis of

the service being available to all tenants. It is of course a matter of choice whether tenants use particular services. Some tenants use lifts; others use the stairs. Some tenants use the communal lounge; others choose not to. Some tenants get great satisfaction from the gardens, others don't. It's the same with the laundry. Even if you don't plan to use it, it's there if you need it - if your own washing machine breaks down or you occasionally need something tumble drying. As the laundry is a communal facility and available when anyone might need it (whether they have their own washing machine or not), there just is not any way of limiting the charge just for regular users.

### Q3 If its included in the service charge, what's to stop some people bringing their families washing in?

**A3** Of course we don't allow this now and won't allow it in future. We hope that people won't abuse the service and will monitor its use and will investigate any issues if they arise.

### Q4 Will you just keep increasing the service charge every year?

**A4** The service charge only ever covers the cost of providing the service- it's not a way for us to make money. So any future increases are unlikely to be different to any other elements of the service charges.



## Contractors Donate to East Anglia's Children's Hospices

Every year at Christmas, our contractors kindly gift us presents as a way of thanking us for our continued support throughout the year. 2020 was not the year that we thought it would be. It brought us new challenges as well as worry, uncertainty and the need to adjust to a very different way of living. With this in mind, the Society made the decision to not accept gifts but instead ask that the contractors make a donation to a local children's charity.

After much thought, East Anglia's Children's Hospices was the chosen charity and collectively the contractors donated a fantastic £625.00.

We would like to thank Draper and Nichols, CBS Boilers, Bob Shearwood, D & R Construction, Eastern Windows and K & K Electrical for their generosity and for working together to get us through what has been a very difficult year.

Following receipt of the donation, EACH sent us this email:

If your gas boiler is located in your kitchen, please do not boil your kettle under your gas boiler as this can cause the components to gunge up.

If you receive a rent revision letter and you are in receipt of Housing Benefit, whether it be paid directly to you or to the Society, it is your responsibility to notify Norwich City Council of your new rent amount. If you pay your rent calendar monthly by standing order and you need to know what your new rent amount is, you need to multiply the weekly amount by 52 and then divide by 12. e.g. £100.00 x 52 then / by 12 = £433.33.

## Thank you!

On behalf of the children, young people and families we support, we would like to thank you for your donation of £625 to East Anglia's Children's Hospices - we are so grateful for your generous support.

Your gift will help us provide vital care and support services to children and young people with life-limiting conditions and their families across Cambridgeshire, Essex, Norfolk and Suffolk.

Our hospices aren't just about end of life care; they're often very happy and fun places, where young people can live life to their full potential. They are places where families feel safe and where they can spend quality time together; enabling parents to be parents not caregivers.

When time is short, we help families make the most of their precious time together and create memories that last forever. Without our supporters, we wouldn't be able to be there for families facing an impossibly difficult time - thank you.

If you have any questions about your donation or the services and care we provide please contact us on 01223 800807 or email [supportercare@each.org.uk](mailto:supportercare@each.org.uk) and we will be happy to help.

**With best wishes, Team EACH**



## Christmas Quiz Answers

1. Fairytale of New York
2. I saw Mommy Kissing Santa Claus
3. White Christmas
4. Rockin' Around the Christmas Tree
5. Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas
6. All I Want for Christmas is You
7. Deck the Halls
8. Little Drummer Boy
9. Santa Baby
10. Step into Christmas
11. Do they know it's Christmas?
12. Baby it's Cold outside
13. I Wish it Could be Christmas Everyday
14. Santa Claus is Coming to Town
15. Last Christmas
16. Jingle Bell Rock
17. Mistletoe and Wine
18. Driving Home for Christmas
19. Silent Night
20. Let it Snow

Well done to Jean Robertson from Lanchester Court, who named all the songs correctly. A Marks & Spencer voucher is on it's way to you. Jean regularly enters The Elder competitions and has been very successful having won twice! Remember, you have to be in it to win it!

What would you like to see in the next newsletter? If you have any stories, poems, jokes, interesting hobbies, recipes, holiday stories or if you would like to see anything else in the newsletter; we would love to hear from you, please get in touch on: 01603 625078 or email: [information@norwichhousingsociety.co.uk](mailto:information@norwichhousingsociety.co.uk)

**Editor: Joanna Oakley**