



# THE ELDER



Spring 2022

**Thanks to Carol Sangster**

**Together with Tenants**

**More Stories from my Travels**

**Tenant Celebrates a Whole Century of Life!**

## Retirement

I shall remember May 9<sup>th</sup>, 2012, long after I have retired from the Norwich Housing Society and Stuart Court Memorial Charity for two very different reasons, one it was the day David Robinson and I met for coffee to discuss becoming a member of the Board and two because my home was being burgled as we enjoyed our coffee. Not the most auspicious start to my ten years of service but I have never regretted my involvement and the many challenges my colleagues and I have had to address.

The Board in those early days was composed of a group of people with many and varied skills, a situation I have tried to continue since becoming Chairman in March 2014 which has not always been easy as the commitment is great without any form of remuneration, but it is my belief that we all come to value the work we do, and the time given. The motivation for us all is the wellbeing of our tenants most of whom love living within our various schemes where they can enjoy the many activities from coffee mornings, to tenant meetings, knit and natter sessions, quizzes, to fish and chip lunches or suppers, while others are quite happy to merely enjoy the support of the scheme manager knowing they are free to choose. Of course, we have our critics that is par for the course but that in turn encourages us to challenge what we do and why.

I was elected as Chairman in 2014, as David stepped down in order to serve as the Chairman of Finance for a further year, and much to the surprise of many of our colleagues at that time we worked together well and have enjoyed a continuing friendship over the years for which I thank him. Many Board Members once they retire continue their support as Shareholders, again not for financial gain but by being available to share their knowledge and by attending the AGM



having scrutinised the annual accounts and reports. The most valuable aspect of this is the encouragement we receive especially at difficult moments which occur from time to time.

Looking back over the last nine years as an elected member the most salient moments that come to mind are, celebrating the Centenary of Stuart Court, opening the new common room at St. Barnabas Court, marking special birthdays and wedding anniversaries of tenants, opening Leander Court and working through the minefield of planning for the new development at Bluebell Road, Eaton which should be ready for occupation in June this year. We purchased the house from Doctor Clayton who moved to Shaftsbury and hope he has followed our progress with interest by reading the reports in The Elder which he receives online. I have been interviewed on radio and TV as we celebrated 100 years of continuous service at the Almshouses we manage in Recorder Road, Norwich, joined the Norwich City Council scheme for safer neighbourhoods, as well as bringing us to the attention of

those who are seeking a home in the Norwich area within a supportive community. My scrapbook is full of articles and photographs from the local press featuring the Norwich Housing Society from the beginning thanks to Canon Lanchester plus the splendid initiatives of Board, staff and tenants alike. I also have a collection of The Elder and these plus my continued friendships will, I hope, bring me joy as the years pass and I find new ventures to keep me out of mischief.

It has been an unforgettable experience and my hope is that both societies will continue to serve the Norwich area for many years to come and those who pick up the reins of leadership and service will find it as fulfilling as I have.

**Carol Sangster**  
Board Chairman 2014 to 2022

## Special Thanks

Staff and Board Members attended a special afternoon tea at the Assembly House, arranged as a thank-you to Carol for all of her hard work. It was a wonderful opportunity to come together and mix with people we haven't had the chance to see over the past two years due to the pandemic. Carol happily opened a number of gifts from our collection for her, including a silk scarf and a beautiful specially engraved vase. We all thank Carol for her selfless commitment to the Housing Society, and she definitely won't be a stranger in future as we hope she'll be dropping in to see us from time to time!

### Thanks to Carol Sangster

I would like to thank Carol for her tireless support to the Society as Chairman over the last 9 years. The recent few years have not been easy with Covid and the rent overcharging issues, but Carol has guided us safely through them and leaves the Society in a strong and stable position. Carol is a people person, and care and support for our staff and tenants has been at the heart of her tenure as Chairman. Her name will be remembered with fondness, and we wish her every good health in her 'retirement' from the Society and in her future ventures and interests.



## Introduction

I am delighted to take over as Chairman of the Society following Carol's retirement at the AGM in March. I have served for 8 years as Vice Chairman, therefore my tenure will be limited to one year, when I reach my full 9-year term as a Board member, however I see my role as one of providing continuity while John, the new CEO gets his feet under the table. Several other Board members are due to retire over the next year so another priority is the appointment of new members to cover the broad range of skills which we have enjoyed on the Board, to support John and guide the Society forward – these include property finance, governance, housing, and operations.

As for me, I am an architect and run a small practice from the Enterprise Centre in the UEA. My skills are therefore in construction, and have chaired the Property Committee for several years.

I have met many of you, mainly at various Tenant meetings, but I hope I have the opportunity to meet you all over the coming year; I want to make sure that we have your interests at the core of what we do, and to continue providing the highest quality of services and accommodation that we can.

The Board is most grateful to the office staff, who have stuck by us through these recent turbulent years, and we hopefully now can look forward to a more 'normal' life, and face the future with confidence.

### Paul's departure

Following Mike Allen's retirement as Chief Executive in 2021, and Tim Pinder as his short-lived replacement, Paul joined us as interim Chief Executive in October last year. During his calm re-consolidation of the Society, he has managed the rent overcharging issue to a successful outcome,



gained the confidence of the staff and guided us through the appointment of our new Chief Executive, John Newstead.

On behalf of the whole Board, we would like to thank him for his contribution, and wish him well in, due to us, his delayed retirement!

### Welcome to John Newstead

I am delighted that John Newstead has now joined us as our new Chief Executive. John brings many years experience in affordable housing, particularly in the Care sector, and we look forward to working with him.

As it happened John and my paths crossed probably over twenty years ago so I am delighted we have the opportunity to work together again on behalf of the Society.

**Jon Boon**  
Chairman of the Board



Carol Sangster in her report last year said I had come out of early retirement in order to help the Society until a new CEO has been recruited. You will read elsewhere that a former colleague of mine from when I worked at Cotman Housing in Norwich more than 30 years ago has been appointed. In the 5 months I have been involved I have become increasingly fond of the Society and have found its history fascinating. I have observed

both the Board and staff caring deeply about the organisation and the work that it does. It has been wonderful to be back working in Norwich again even though I have been away from home in rural Suffolk. I have enjoyed my time at the Society and will no doubt keep in touch.

**Paul Kingston**  
Interim Chief Executive

## Norwich Housing Society and Stuart Court Memorial Charity Joint Annual General Meeting

The AGM was held at the Eaton Golf Club in Norwich and attracted a healthy attendance of shareholders. All current Board members were present.

The Annual Accounts and Report for both companies were approved. The members reflected on the financial challenges of the last 12 months which were partly due to the Society's and Stuart Court's previous rent setting regime. The Members believed that lessons had been learned and that the rent review process in place now was clear, transparent and fair to enable both companies to set affordable rents that would ensure the long-term viability of the Society and Stuart Court.

Lovewell Blake were appointed as Auditors for both companies for the next 12 months to carry out the key responsibility of auditing the Final Accounts for 2022/23. The Members recognised that Lovewell Blake are a reputable organization who provide an effective and professional service.

Maurice Land, Chairman of Finance Sub-Committee for both companies summarised the financial results for the year and



L-R Paul Kingston, John Newstead

confirmed that the finances were very strong which showed the resilience of the Society and Stuart Court during unprecedented times.

A new Chairman, Jon Boon was unanimously elected to the position following his nomination and seconding by members of the Board. Gill Tewson was elected as Vice-Chairman. On behalf of everyone present, Jon expressed gratitude to Carol for her 9 years of loyal and committed service to the Society and Stuart Court.

Following the AGM I officially joined Norwich Housing Society as CEO. I'm delighted to be joining such a professional and caring organisation with a great history. I'm aware that there are challenges ahead for all social housing providers, but I am committed to working with the staff and Board members to ensure we continue to meet local housing need and provide decent affordable homes. I have a strong social housing and care

background and will bring experience and knowledge in these areas to help the Society to continue to provide safe, secure, and happy communities for our tenants. I'm pleased to be part of a progressive organisation that is at the forefront of Supported Housing provision in Norwich.

**John Newstead**  
Chief Executive Officer

## Name your Newsletter

The Society's newsletter was created back in 2013. It didn't have a name back then, so in 2014 a competition was run for the tenants to give it a name. The winning name that was chosen by the staff was "The Elder". The name having two meanings, those of a greater age and a beautiful tree. Following feedback from our tenants, we have decided to run another competition to give The Elder a new name. So, it's over to you, what new name would you give The Elder?

**You can enter by telephone: 01603 625078,**  
**by email: [info@norwichhousingsociety.co.uk](mailto:info@norwichhousingsociety.co.uk)**  
**or by post: 13 Bracondale Court, Norwich, NR1 2AL.**

Closing date is Sunday 29th May 2022. All suitable entries received will appear in the next edition for you all to choose the winning name. We look forward to hearing your suggestions!

## Your Beat Managers – Safer Neighbourhood Team

Notice Boards across all the schemes now display "Your Beat Managers" posters. The posters are there to advise you on how to contact your safer neighbourhood team to report any problems relating to anti-social behaviour/crimes.

The Beat Manager PC's are here to engage with local communities and work to solve local issues and priorities within your neighbourhood. The Beat Manager's aim is to keep your neighbourhood as a safe place to live, work and visit.



**NORFOLK**  
CONSTABULARY  
*Our Priority is You*

## Together with Tenants

**We are delighted to say that we have signed up to the Together with Tenants charter. Together with Tenants is a national initiative that focuses on strengthening the relationship between tenants and housing associations.**

The purpose of the charter is to make sure you know what you can expect from us as your landlord. It will help us focus on our continued commitment in the following six areas:

### Relationships

Our Board and all our staff will treat all tenants with respect in everything we do. We will be open, honest and transparent.

### Communication

We will provide clear, accessible, and timely information on issues that matter to you. This will include important information about your home and local community, how we are working to address problems, how we are run, and information about performance on key issues.

### Voice and influence

We will seek and value your views through tenant meetings, feedback to staff and through surveys. We want you to be open and frank with us, and we will listen to everyone individually. We will use this information to inform decisions on services we offer and how we will run the Society.



### Accountability

We welcome the opportunity to work with tenants collectively, in partnership with us to make improvements to how and what services we deliver. We welcome independent scrutiny of our activities and are happy to be held to account for our decisions that affect the quality of your homes and services.

### Quality

We will ensure that your homes are of a good quality, well maintained, safe and well managed.

### When things go wrong

We provide a simple and accessible complaints process and we will provide timely advice and support when things go wrong.



## New Development Update at Bluebell Road Part III

The Society's latest development project at 11 Bluebell Road, is finally moving along with pace, as you can see from the adjacent photos, both the bungalow units and the extension to the original house, have been tiled in and the contractor is now progressing works internally, with the formation of stud walls, which allows the mechanical and electrical aspects of first fixing works to commence. Also, now that the scaffolding has been removed, the external areas of paving can be set out and laid, this will allow the areas of landscaping and planting to be defined. Progress has been slightly hampered by a few issues with refurbishment of the main original house, but these have now largely been resolved and our contractor, is working towards an early June completion.



## Spring Quiz

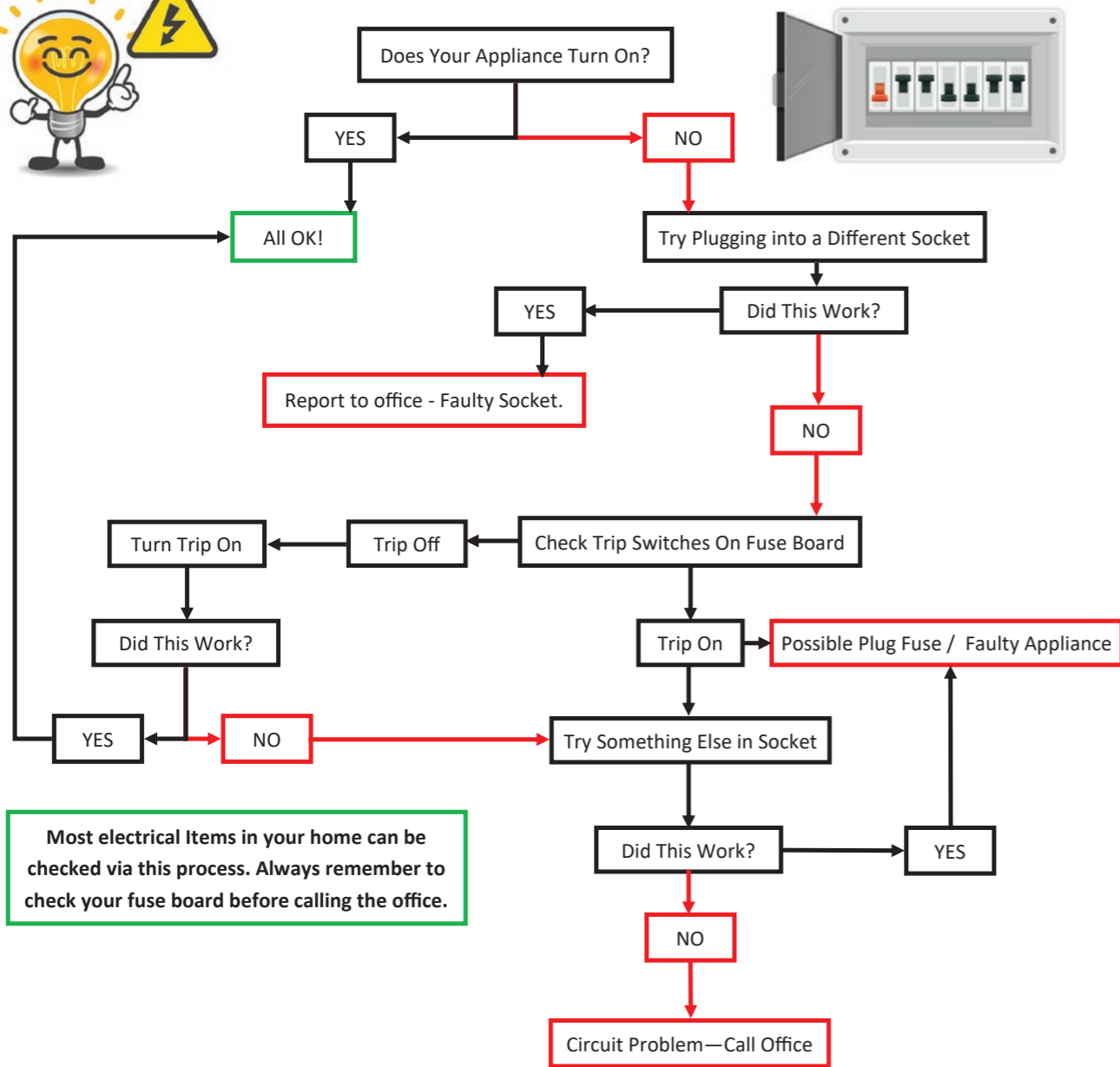
It's that time of the year again that so many of us look forward to. Spring is here, and the dark days of winter are a distant memory. With the clocks springing forward, our days are now much brighter and warmer. Hooray! Animals young and old are springing up everywhere this season, but how well do you know them? Hop into action and take this quiz to find out. Please post/telephone/email your entries to us by Sunday 29th May 2022. There is a Marks & Spencer voucher up for grabs for the winner. Good luck!

- 1 Badger cubs leave their den and start to explore the outside world from April. What is a badger's den called?  
A) A loft. B) A pile. C) A sett.
- 2 Where do Mandarin ducks usually nest?  
A) In ponds. B) In trees. C) In long grass.
- 3 Frogspawn are always laid in clumps. Once they've hatched, how do tadpoles swim around?  
A) They swim wherever their mother frog goes. B) In A Group. C) On their own.
- 4 Lambs drink their mother's milk until they are how old?  
A) Around 3 days old. B) 4 months old. C) Around 2 years old.
- 5 Queen bumblebees are some of the earliest pollinators in the springtime. Which of these is NOT a type of bee?  
A) Red Mason Bee. B) Leafcutter Bee. C) Hammer Bee.
- 6 Rabbits often give birth to litters of babies in the spring, but what are their babies called?  
A) Kittens. B) Cubs. C) Pups.
- 7 Common pipistrelle bats fly outside in the dark when they also eat insects. How many insects do they normally eat in one night?  
A) Up to 3. B) Up to 300. C) Up to 3,000.
- 8 Up to how much does a fully grown grey squirrel weigh?  
A) 150g. B) 300g. C) 600g.
- 9 Which of the following birds lays eggs like these?  
A) Blackbird. B) Woodpigeon. C) Wren.
- 10 The process of becoming a butterfly is called metamorphosis. Which is the correct order of a butterfly's lifecycle?  
A) Chrysalis, caterpillar, butterfly. B) Egg, larva, chrysalis, butterfly. C) Egg, caterpillar, butterfly.

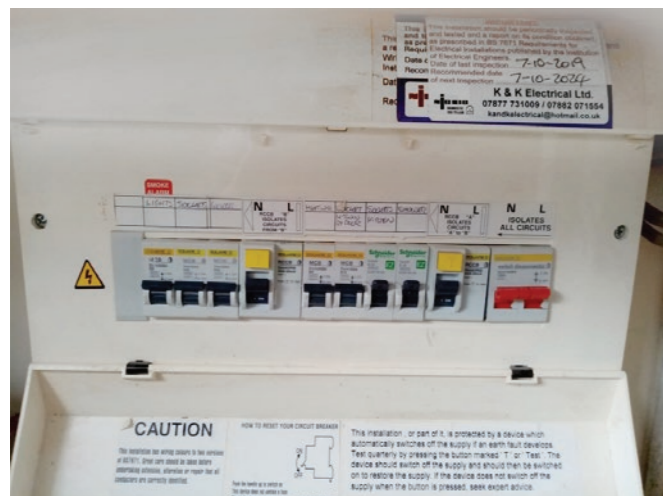




### Electrical Troubleshooting



Most electrical items in your home can be checked via this process. Always remember to check your fuse board before calling the office.



Fused Board



Fuse Board Tripped - this shows lights have tripped the fuse board.

## More Stories from my Travels

In November last year, in the redundant church of St Margarets in St Benedicts Street, I visited an exhibition of pictures featuring trees. Whilst I was there, I showed a lady on the desk, a photo on my ipad of some fantastic tree roots hanging down a slope somewhere on Mousehold Heath. She told me about another tree with fantastic roots in Trowse woods which are adjacent to the dry ski slope. So, on 31<sup>st</sup> December, I went to have a look and I was really impressed.



On 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2022, I went back that way, only this time, I went to Whitlingham Broad, however, I decided going around it because I thought it would be too muddy therefore, I stayed by the grassy area where all the birds were. Here, I took a couple of photos of a Mandarin duck, thanks to a man who pointed it out to me. "You don't get those down here very often" he said.



Susan Wright  
Tenant from Nelson Street

## Tenant Celebrates a Whole Century of Life!

Betty from our Eleanor Road scheme, recently celebrated her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday. She had a lovely day with her family, she was taken out for a meal then at the weekend her daughter arranged a small party. She received lots of flowers, chocolates, presents and over 50 cards. Betty says there are no secrets to living a long life, she is just very grateful to have such a loving family.

Many happy returns, Betty!



## Quiz Answers

- A) How the Grinch Stole Christmas
- B) Elf
- C) A White Christmas
- D) A Christmas Carol
- E) Home Alone
- F) Miracle on 34<sup>th</sup> Street
- G) It's a Wonderful Life
- H) Love Actually
- I) National Lampoons Christmas Vacation
- J) Frosty The Snowman

Well done to Sonia Brown from Lanchester Court.  
We hope you enjoyed spending your M&S voucher!

## Just for Fun Answers

Whose doggie did you think belonged to who?

1 Scampy – B Lee. 2 Eli – D Sarah. 3 Hector – G Amy. 4 Henry – H Joanna. 5 Ruby, Jazz & Jessie – E Andy. 6 Lola & Milo – C Michelle. 7 Molly – A Alison. 8 Max – F Susie.

Your rent statement is posted to you annually with your annual rent revision. Should you wish to receive a rent statement more frequently, please contact the office on 01603 625078. We can print a rent statement for you at any time.

You will have recently received your annual rent revision. If 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 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. £112.00 x 52 then divide by 12 = £485.33.

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**