

Summer Edition 2025



Welcome...

What a glorious summer of fun. We all made the most of the long warmer days to enjoy trips, holidays and days out in the sun. The beach was of course a popular destination, we enjoyed lots of ice-creams, shooed away seagulls, and made many fantastic memories.

Now we're looking forward to cosy autumn evenings, hot chocolates, games and movie nights.

What a wonderful summer we have had!

My absolute favourite highlight from the summer happened at the Summer Party - Expressive Elements making their debut. It is so important that everyone gets a moment to shine and much to everyone's delight they gave an outstanding performance.

I attended the King's Fund conference on the NHS Ten Year Plan, it's an interesting time with the review of the NHS and Social Care alongside the Local Government reorganisation. We will keep you updated when we know how this will affect Whitmore Vale.

Our AGM this year was such a celebration of who we are as a community and we were delighted to have many wonderful guests, family and friends. This gave us the opportunity to show who we are. Special thanks to Adriana and John for signing with Makaton, everyone who created a display and talked about the wonderful things we do. Also to the High Sheriff of Surrey for being so enthusiastic and warm, and for his short history of the office of High Sheriff.

Sonja

Sonja Jones,
CEO WVHA



Summer party
Find out who our 'celeb' singers were



Oliver!
We want more!



Boat trips & ponies
Our summer holidays

Our Summer Party

We were all looking forward to this year's summer party, it was great to welcome over 140 guests to our home and spend time with friends, family and people from across our community.

Our guests were excited to hear that there would be an up-and-coming music group performing on the day, US! After attending weekly music workshops, which we really enjoyed, we hit upon the idea of forming an expressive music group. We pondered over lots of names for our group and held an in-depth discussion to come to a final decision. There were so many good name suggestions that choosing was a difficult task, so we picked our two favourite name suggestions and merged them. Our first performance as 'Expressive Elements' was a huge success.

Hindhead Supported Living also used the excuse of our party to think about healthy eating. They hosted a stand at the party to share lots of information about the importance of healthy eating, a balanced diet and exercise, with info packs, samples and stickers!



News from around our community

Haven House

Haven House had a wonderful summer enjoying lots of outdoor activities.

There were too many walks, visits to the beach and time in nature to mention them all, so we have picked some of our highlights to share with you.

Vikkie celebrated her birthday with a fabulous party. She invited lots of friends from across Whitmore Vale to spend her special day with her. We all had great fun singing happy birthday to Vikkie and enjoying a delicious buffet.

Sally, Vikkie and Lizzie had a great adventure in London. Their big day out started with the excitement of a train journey to London, whizzing through the countryside until the buildings took over the views and London surrounded the train. They had two main things they wanted to do in London, find somewhere to enjoy a tasty lunch, and, the main event, the theatre to see one of their favourite musicals, Oliver! They were pleased there was time to fit in an unexpected surprise, which helped everyone to feel cool on such a warm and sunny day...water fountain fun! They loved splashing around and having fun in the cool water.

Helen also did some travelling over the summer, choosing a long weekend by the sea in Weston-super-Mare with her aunty and uncle. Their time together was particularly special as they hadn't seen each other in person for a long time. Helen really enjoyed spending time with her family and said her favourite memory of their time together was going for lunch with her uncle.

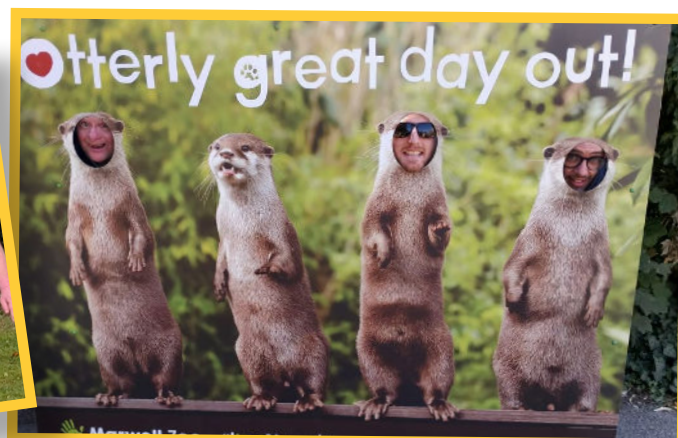


Hindhead Supported Living

Residents and staff at Hindhead Supported Living also enjoyed more outdoor activities with the arrival of the summer heat and sunshine.

The Old Manse planned a BBQ, inviting everyone from the Ferns and members of Whitmore Vale's admin and management teams to join them. We had the day perfectly planned, we'd done the shopping, chosen the music, set up the BBQ, made sure the garden looked ready to welcome our guests... but the weather decided to change, and we were worried we would have to cancel! Luckily the rain that arrived with our guests was only a quick shower and we soon got back to BBQ mode. Chef Phil was a whizz on the BBQ, entertaining us all with his celebrity-chef skills and feeding us with sizzling burgers. We also tried out an unusual sport – axe throwing - aiming for the target and celebrating when we got close to it made lots of us feel strangely relaxed, it was also great fun!

Another highlight of our summer of fun was a trip to Marwell zoo, a favourite for many of us. As you can see from the photos we had 'an otterly great day' exploring the zoo, trying to spot all the different animals, and learning interesting facts about them and their habitats. It wouldn't be summer without a trip to Amberley Museum! A few of us headed there for another day of engines, railways, and wheels. We took time to check-in on our most-loved engines, visiting all our favourite spots across the museum, and of course, taking a train ride – unfortunately no James Bond movies were being filmed so we're not movie stars...yet!



Treetops, Rose Flat & The Pines

Treetops went on tour to the north of England to explore Manchester.

There were so many interesting locations and museums to choose from, but we thought about our shared interests, and finally chose to visit the Imperial War Museum and Old Trafford Stadium.

The Imperial War Museum was really interesting, and we learned lots of facts about history. We got to see a Harrier Jump jet and hear stories and wartime experiences from people who lived and fought in the world wars. We also got to meet Morecombe and Wise and sing 'Bring me sunshine' with them (ok, it was really wax works (in London)).

Jane and Amanda had a lovely day at the seaside. They enjoyed all the delights of being by the sea, watching the boats, avoiding the seagulls and eating ice-creams.

The Pines enjoyed a fabulous summer holiday in wonderful Cornwall. The weather was glorious, with lots of long, warm sunny days to relax and enjoy time at the beach. Our favourite part of the holiday was a boat ride out of the bay.

We had the best seats in the house to watch the world go by, spot wildlife and feel the cooling sea breeze!



Westlands

Members of Westlands celebrated a birthday with a trip to the New Forest.



We also enjoyed not having to wear our coats all the time with the arrival of lovely warm summer weather and sunshine. We enjoyed exploring the forest and seeing the beautiful ponies wandering around. It was really peaceful to sit in nature and listen to the birdsong.

Noel decided that summer was the perfect excuse for a festival, and as Guildford had the Taste of Caribbean Food Festival he headed there to see and smell what food was cooking and also listen to some Caribbean music.

We also held a karaoke party at home, taking turns to sing along to some of our favourite songs and wiggle to the music. Karaoke is always such a fun way to spend an afternoon!

Martin decided to advance his tech skills, learning the art of taking selfies.

He loved it so much he took loads of selfies with lots of different people, with a thumbs-up trademark.



Wishing Well

Wishing Well's summer trip was to the Isle of Wight.

Sheila and Victoria chose some places to visit, deciding on the Wildheart animal sanctuary, English Heritage site Osborne, and the model village.

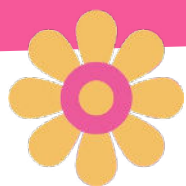
Osborne made us feel like queens, we got to wander around the house imagining what it would have been like when Queen Victoria was there. The state rooms were particularly impressive, the golden colour was so shiny, and the ceilings were beautiful to look at, but sadly no royals were there to entertain us with a lavish dinner.

Ken and Arthur chose to visit the bus and coach museum to look at all the historic vehicles, it was great to see the old buses and photos of the Isle of Wight. There was also, of course, lots of visits to the beach to sit and look out to sea and breath-in the sea air.



Summer Snaps Wall

Can you see yourself?



Congratulations and thanks



Congratulations to Jack, who became an Oliver McGowan Co Trainer this summer!

Jack has very kindly given his time to become an “Expert by Experience” Co Trainer for Oliver McGowan Training. Jack attended three separate preparation sessions before he then became part of the Whitmore House Oliver McGowan Tier 2 Training Trio!!

This comprises a full day’s training which is split into two halves – the morning covering Learning Disabilities and the afternoon covers Autism – which is the session that Jack kindly helps with.

It is a challenge to train any subject in front of others but even more so when the subject is so personally connected to you, your own life and family.

We are really grateful and privileged that Jack has agreed to help us share education about what it is like to live with Autism. He is the subject expert, so who better to help others gain knowledge and insight and understand ways in which they may be able to help and support others. And more importantly - what reasonable adjustments could be put in place to help.

We talk about better communication, better person-centred care, listening to the person and their family and having a better understanding of what can improve life for someone with Autism.

Jack is always open to any questions and is happy to discuss them in detail with the learners which is such a good opportunity for us to learn direct from the expert.

Congratulations to Phil, voted Surrey People’s Group West Chairperson!

Phil was voted in as Chairperson of Surrey People Group West, in a landslide victory. The role includes overseeing people with learning disabilities & autism in sharing their experiences and ideas on a range of topics, from confidence in reporting hate crime, to public transport.



Remembrance

We remember Gordon with warmth and fondness

A thoughtful and cheerful soul who brought joy to those around him. His love for gardening was evident in the care he gave to The Old Manse garden, and his shelves full of CDs and DVDs reflected a passion for music and film that he was always eager to share. Whether he was singing in the corridor or offering a cup of tea or coffee to a visitor, he brought a sense of comfort to our lives. He will be deeply missed, but his spirit lives on in the little things he loved and the kindness he showed every day.



Eulogy for Paul

On behalf of all the staff and residents

Paul, you had no family to stand beside you, but you were never alone.

We became your family.
We carried your music, your laughter, and your joy.
And when the time came to say goodbye,
we made sure your send-off was filled with dignity,
beauty, and love.

A coffin imprinted with musical notes,
flowers chosen with care,
your name written in blooms,
memory pins to hold you close.
We chose the very best,
because you deserved nothing less.

Your presence will always be with us:
in your morning greetings,
in every playful "What you doing in the bin?",
in the papers you proudly carried,
in every "Rock and Roll,"
in every "Paul is the best,"
and in every "Oh Happy Days" you sang.

We will miss your singing, your dancing,
and the light you brought to our days.
But your song is not finished,
it lives on in each of us.

With love,
Your friends, staff and residents together.



TRANSPORT CHAMPION

CONNECT BUSES NEAR YOU



Hi! My name is Phil and I'm the Whitmore Vale Transport Champion.

Check out my interview on our website:
whitmorevale.co.uk

Surrey Connect Buses on Demand

Connect buses operate in the Cranleigh, Farnham and Guildford areas. They have now expanded to Godalming, Haslemere and Hindhead.

You can book online at surreyconnect@surreycc.gov.uk or phone up and book a connect bus on 01483 744807

How much does it cost?

Adult Single Fare

Under 5 miles: £2

5-7 miles: £4

7-10 miles: £6

10-12 miles: £8

Travel times

Saturday, 8am - 6pm

Monday to Friday, 7am-7pm

Booking Information

can book up to 7 days ahead

must book at least 30 mins before travel

Plan ahead and make sure you are ready on time

Stay in touch

To keep up with what's happening at Whitmore Vale please visit whitmorevale.co.uk or join us on social media.

If you know anyone who would like to receive our newsletter, please ask them to contact us.

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