

# Fundraiser Fun Day



Back in October, we held our first fundraising event for a few of our local properties in Wigan, Manchester. As well as wanting to raise funding to give each tenant the opportunity to spruce up their homes, we also wanted to make it a community day to get everyone involved and to give everyone the chance to make new friends and generally have a great day out!

We decided to keep things local and hold the fundraiser at Wigan Council's community centre, Sunshine House, as this was local to all the properties.

Our biggest challenge was deciding what to do on the day to get everyone involved. We quickly decided to hold a funfair/carnival style day with lots of games, activities and prizes to be won. As most of our budget went on the venue and gathering prizes, we decided to make a lot of the games ourselves. I really enjoyed making the games and even my 2-year-old little girl helped with painting some of the activities and especially enjoyed helping arrange the ducks for Hook a Duck: although, I think, she may have hidden a few of the ducks around the house as the pile of ducks kept getting smaller every day!

To try to raise as much funding as possible, we also held a tombola and Maynette, our Tenancy Sustainment Officer, reached out to the local community champions to donate gifts and prizes. Manchester City F.C. and Wigan Warriors rugby team both generously donated tickets to their upcoming games.

We had some lovely tenants turn up who really got involved in the majority of the activities. The teddy tombola was the biggest hit, with the lovely Ann winning the gorgeous Marie from The Aristocats. She was over the moon when she won her prize.

I want to thank all the BeST staff for getting involved and donating their time and gifts to the event. Without you all, the day wouldn't have happened.

I also want to personally thank Ann, Lynda and Barry for coming to the event and getting involved in all the activities. We hope you enjoyed the day as much as we did!

Sharna Wild



# Ho Ho Ho!

BeST is holding its third annual competition for the *Most Beautiful Christmas Tree Competition* in 2018.

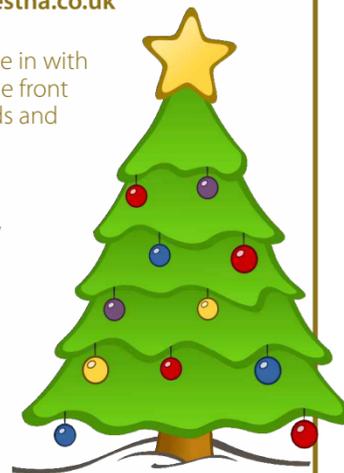
For the past two years we have held this event and last year's winner was Luke from 506 Narborough Road.

If you would like to take part in this great competition please email your pictures to: [beautifulreehunt@bestha.co.uk](mailto:beautifulreehunt@bestha.co.uk)

You will automatically be in with a chance of being on the front cover of next year's cards and a chance to win a £50 voucher!

**All entries received by 7th January 2019 will be entered.**

Good luck to all properties entering and Merry Christmas!



# Snippets

Edition 10



## From the CEO

"Rule number one is, don't sweat the small stuff. Rule number two is, it's all small stuff";

• We are shortly undertaking the 2018 "Annual Audit" as we are past the September year end, so please liaise with Marlene and the Accountancy Team closely where needed and required, to make this happen, as we are now into another financial year.

• As we have now officially "sprinted" over the 1000 tenant mark, we are undertaking a sensibly invested exercise with Campbell Tickell for a pre IDA (in depth assessment), this will highlight what we are doing well as well as areas for improvement from a policy and process point of view. We are now clear as to the complexity that NROSH+ response requires and the mechanism and reporting strategy required which will create further positive scrutiny and overview from the Regulator. This piece of work will begin with the Regulator post May of 2019.

• We can now give confirmation on some numbers. Due to a recent acquisition we are all now part of a circa £80 million asset based charity with a circa £13 million turnover that houses 1300 vulnerable adults. Our business strategy and goal of being "awesome" at what we do, from our time in Fort Augustus, has gathered vast momentum and we are more than on track to achieve all we set out to do. Alan Clayton visited us in late November to assist us with assessing our progress on New Ambition Strategy to date.

• Obviously I expect us to have welcomed all our new faces to the team by now and, of course, said goodbye to those team members who have moved on to pastures new and we wish them all the best with their future endeavours.

• Our exciting plans in relation to part of the "Big Picture" re Blue Sky in early Jan 17 and updates to such will be released separately. We have strong initial momentum from all stakeholders to support this initiative. We are now fully engaged in professional discussions with a Local Authority and relevant potential stakeholders to deliver this ground-breaking prospect.

• New schemes planned for 2018/19 and beyond are still under discussion and meetings with all stakeholders remain positive. Thorntree Farm in particular had some open days in August 2018. Further details and invitations will be released for definitive dates moving forward for site visits up to and including scheme delivery...

Kevin Appleby

## Farmer Kev

Shovels in hand and we're off .... We're on site developing a fantastic ground-breaking scheme from a 4 year old dream ...!! Planning applications all passed, scope and schedule of works in hand with potential further opportunities to base on site post-delivery including;

- Petting Farm
- On site catering Social Enterprise
- Soft Fruit retail option
- Annual Community BBQ with Artisan Cider production
- Respite Lodges
- Access to Sports facility
- Hydrotherapy unit
- Grand Marquee for fundraising events
- BBCTV Coverage



We've also added in an onsite orangery, assistive technology and a renewable heating and hot water solution through Biomass.

Told you to watch this space .....!!

Kevin Appleby



# Welcome to BeST!



## Margarita Chapman

I am from Lithuania originally. I suspect you opened Google maps to see where it is. I do not blame you. Statistics show that Gatwick airport have more people travelling in one summer day at the airport than currently living in my country, 2.5m to be precise.

I am a Sales Ledger Clerk. Somebody said that my job is boring, but I am passionate about what I do.

My husband named me "Mrs. Talk-a-Lot" after he spent a six hour journey with me and my Aunty in the car. He said there was no space to insert a word into our conversation. Most of the time I am nice with a bit of nastiness. Love glamping.

## Mario Daniel

I started to work for BeST three weeks ago and in the time I have been here I have enjoyed every minute. The staff are very welcoming.

The staff made me feel part of the team from the beginning. During this past week I have learned a lot as well as becoming a father again to a beautiful little girl. I hope to repay the company the trust and confidence with hard work and commitment.



## Luca Porta

My name is Luca Porta. I recently joined BeST (BESPOKE SUPPORTIVE TENANCIES LTD) as Rent Accounts Administrator. From 2012 to 2015 I studied Finance and Accounting at the University of Salford where I achieved a First Class Degree in Accounting. Since I successfully completed my education I have gained 2 years experience in accounting working in Balfour Beatty which is one of the leading construction companies in the UK.



I'm a passionate, optimistic and dedicated person who takes on responsibility with utmost enthusiasm and see to it that I complete my tasks in time. I've a great amount of perseverance to achieve my goal. My optimistic and planned approach in things I do is what is driving me towards my success.

I love playing football as well as watching it on TV. I now play for Urban Bubble in a very competitive Business League where me and my team have been achieving great results. I also like to listen to music and socialise.

## Jay Johal



My name is Jay Johal, I have joined BeST as the Housing Officer for the Midlands. I started with BeST on 15th October 2018 where the staff have made me feel welcome. I have 2 sons

Aryan & Sai and a beautiful wife called Malika. I have worked previously as a Support Worker & Housing Officer with various organisations including the local government.

Cooking, listening to music, playing sports, swimming and DIY are just some of the things I enjoy when I get time to myself. Looking forward to making a difference in BeST.

## A Typical day in the Repairs and Maintenance Department

Where do I begin, as there is not a typical day in the Repairs and Maintenance Department. Each day is different and offers different challenges to each of the team, especially when you realise that there are over 1000 jobs raised alone on a monthly basis and these jobs vary in complexity from a simple dripping tap to major structural and refurbishment works, to adaptations etc.

The only constant is the dedication the whole team bring with them each and every day. I believe you must be a certain type of person to work in the maintenance environment particularly in this housing environment especially when our customer base is so diverse. Our main (and only) aim is to provide an excellent service and meet the expectations of our tenants and customers who are as varied as the day to day challenges we face.

We will be the first to admit that we are not perfect but always strive to improve the services we offer so any feedback is gratefully received as we can then adapt and improve our service even further.

Our day begins at 9.00am when the whole team are sat at their desks waiting for the repair reports or queries to begin until 5.00pm. Even then there is always one of the Team managing our Out of Hours phone as issues do not restrict themselves to business hours. This obviously includes Saturdays, Sundays and Bank Holidays.

We are a close team of six who all support each other at all times, as the role at times can not only be challenging but stressful too, as we want to ensure all our tenants are happy and comfortable in their homes.

Over the past 12 months we have worked very closely with our tenant support staff and our partnering contractor to ensure we provide the service we offer is of the standard expected. The mainly positive feedback we receive proves that the measures and work we do are working and improvements are being made on a daily basis.

As we move towards 2019 things will not become any easier as new challenges are already coming. We have a large programme of cyclical and improvement works to prepare for as well as preparing ourselves for further growth and our relaunch in April 2019. I would like to take this opportunity to thank my team Helen, Casey, Leah, Liam and Dave for all their hard work and dedication they have given throughout this year and to wish all our tenants and customers a very Happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year.



Alan (Head of Repairs and Maintenance)



## Warm Home Discount Scheme 2018/2019

15th October 2018 – March 2019

The warm home discount scheme is a scheme whereby those who qualify, may receive £140.00 towards their electricity account, or vouchers, to top-up your electricity meter.

- The scheme is usually open to all those on a low income, or who are in receipt of means tested benefits. However, the eligibility criteria vary between suppliers, so you will need to check with your current electricity provider to see if you qualify.
- In order to qualify, you will need to have held a registered account in your name with your current supplier, on 8th July 2018.
- Those who are in receipt of the Guarantee Element of Pension Credit (known as the "Core Group" will automatically qualify. You will receive a letter by 7th December 2018 which tells you how to get your discount. If you believe you are in this group and you have not received your letter by 7th December 2018 you may need to call the Warm Home Discount Team on 0800 731 0214 Monday to Friday 8.30am to 4.30pm.
- In order to receive the discount, you must stay with your supplier until the £140.00 is paid.



Patricia Mokhberi

# From the Chair

Earlier this year our Chairman David Poppitt passed the mantle of Chair to myself. Let me firstly thank David for his tremendous contribution to the development of BeST and for helping lay the solid foundations on which we can build the future. Excuse the metaphor! I would also like to further thank David for agreeing to continue as Deputy Chair and supporting me in my future role.

The Chair of a charity is a Trustee with a specific remit, to support the Chief Executive and their team, acting as a channel of communication between the Board and staff. This requires me to lead on the development of the Board and ensure its decisions are implemented.

To enhance this I have, with the agreement of my Trustee Board, the CEO and his team, introduced functional responsibilities for individual Trustees. They will work alongside designated Staff Leads, to lend support (not to manage) toward each function achieving their strategic objectives. This should help the Trustee Board going forward, to make decisions in an informed way.

### The Roles and Leads are as follows:

Tenant Champion .....	Marjorie Tutte and Matthew Fay
Communications .....	David Poppitt and Steve Boyd
H R .....	Andrew Bailey and Denise Jolley
Commissioning /	
New Schemes .....	Stuart Connell and Andy Bate
Finance .....	Peter Howitt and Marlene Wride
Operations .....	Hugh McCaw and Shelley Hobbs

It is important as we develop our culture through "New Ambition", that Trustees are more visible and accessible in providing support. We bring a wide range of knowledge and experience, which helps us in our ultimate responsibility for governing the charity and directing how it is managed and run. However, we are all partners within team BeST and our functional roles will give us all the opportunity to share and contribute to the way forward, which was agreed for the Business Plan for 2018 through 2021.

I hope you enjoy seeing us around and please feel free to have a chat.

**Hugh McCaw (Chair of Trustees)**



# In Memory of Cathy

As everyone will be well aware, we are working hard to raise funds for the Charity Fund at BeST, in the aim of enhancing the lives of our tenants. We have successfully completed several sensory gardens at a number of our tenancies as you will have seen from previous editions of Snippets.

As part of my research to identify potential projects, last October, I visited 9 Old Fallows Avenue in Cannock. I met all the tenants and was particularly impressed with Cathy Rogers, a Downs Syndrome tenant who introduced me to her fellow tenants. She was obviously the life and soul of the group and was almost matriarchal in her relationships with them.



I was so sad to hear, in November, that Cathy had suffered a major epileptic fit and had been admitted to hospital where she passed away. Cathy was 58 years old and had been living at Old Fallows since 30th June 2014. There was little doubt

that she was extremely happy there and the other tenants looked up to her.

Following discussion with our Housing Officer, Matthew Fay, we concluded that it would be an excellent use of our charity funds to acquire a garden bench in memory of Cathy. This would hopefully give everyone a lasting memory of Cathy and provide a much needed seating facility in the garden.

Last week, I went back to see the bench in situ and chat with the carers. Please see photographs of the bench showing the plaque and of carer Pat Robinson and David, one of the tenants. The brass plaque on the bench reads "In Loving Memory of Cathy Rogers".

**David Poppitt**



# Baby Boom!

Well it's all been happening here at BeST.

As you are aware Housing Officer LJ (who is currently on maternity leave) had a beautiful baby boy- she's named him "Freddie". LJ will be back with us in the beginning of December.

Then new starter Mario Daniel, our Revenues and Benefits Officer, had a gorgeous little bundle (a girl) and has named her Jael Yasrah Yakirah.

Liam our Maintenance Co-Ordinator welcomed a gorgeous little baby boy and has named him Caleb.

Then we all had a surprise when Sharna one of our Housing Officers gave birth suddenly to a little girl and has named her Sofia. She is a much-welcomed baby sister to Izzy.

Congratulations to all you new mummies and daddies out there from all at BeST.

**Maynette Francis**





## Eric's Got A New Friend

*Now I'm Not Alone*

Meet the newest member of my family Pearl. She is a fawn French bull dog with a squashy face! At only eleven weeks old she has achieved so much! By day she is a fierce, determined puppy and by night she is a relaxed cuddly bear.

Mischievously, she has chewed a selection of items including cushions, blankets, letters and even my toys which I am not best pleased about! She tries to eat my food, but I do have to put my paw down there, I'm the boss!!

Pearl is my little sister and best friend. Our relationship is growing stronger by the minute and we are gradually forming a wonderful friendship! I will protect my little sister forever. I'm so excited for the day she can come out to play, mummy told me she has to have some special medicine before she can go outdoors but I don't have to wait too long now!

We are putting our Christmas tree up soon, so it is a good job that mummy and daddy have two of Santa's little helpers. We are very excited to try our Mr and Mrs clause coats on this year, they will keep us warm when we're playing outdoors. My mummy has told me that Pearl and I are right at the top of Santa's good list! We are so excited. We are looking forward to opening our presents and to see what Santa leaves in our stockings.



Merry Christmas and a happy new year from Eric and Pearl. Ho ho ho!!!

**Written by Harriette Hobbs Aged 11**

## Apprentice to Permanent Role



In October I was offered a permanent position with BeST. I cannot tell you how happy I am able to continue my adventure whilst it's still a growing company. In my year and three months that I've been with BeST there has already been so much change, and I know there's so much more to come.

**Georgia Dawson**

# Improving Our Culture



Over the last 12 months many of you have contributed towards the improved Culture at BeST. If we can cast our mind back to our very first Away Day at Monton Sports Club with the opening ice breaker of "Stand Up Bingo" which was very enlightening to say the least.



This was closely followed by a game of "Chinese Whispers" the outcome of which was hilarious; so why does a cow not have green milk??!! .... These select days have been vital in building on the improved Culture within the organisation and long may this continue.



Our Operational Away Days have been closely followed by Team Building Events which have been very well received by all members of the team at BeST, whatever the occasion. Our latest Team Event was applauded by all and emphasised the fact that no one person is a winner. To achieve success we must work as a team and I am proud to say that we are well on this journey.



The comradery that is shown in the work place has vastly improved over the last year and that is testament to our dedicated team who put our residents first! Our business has grown exponentially over the last few years and many of you have been party to the successes and achievements to date and for that you must commend yourselves.

Our Board of Trustees are also working towards aligned cultures and behaviours so that our synergies are parallel as this is

paramount to our existence. Working collaboratively together and replicating internal behaviours is excellent to see. The Board play a fundamental part in the success of our Business and this should be recognised.

The Meet & Greet with Trustees on the 7th December headed by Chairman Hugh McCaw should be well received by all.

Heading towards our key milestone next April - "New Ambition"; it is imperative that we continue to be the BeST we can be and to treat one another with the respect that we all deserve. Our defined behaviours should not be compromised as we have worked tirelessly to carve the future.

BeST will continue to seek betterment and explore diversity in the midst of change. What is important is that we embrace the change together.

**Steve Boyd and Shelley Hobbs**



## Welcome to Millbrook!

Our latest new scheme links us with an exciting new care provider in Blue Ribbon Health and Wellbeing. Blue Ribbon are a relatively new provider but are staffed by an incredibly diverse and experienced team who are specialising in Supported Living for adults with higher support needs.

Sharing BeST's approach of client centred working they have developed two sites in Penwortham, Preston with 4 Millbrook being opened in December for Supported Living.

The site is off-road with a tarmac drive leading to an open car park and landscaped gardens. Although close enough to walk to local amenities the site itself is very quiet and secluded and ideal for vulnerable tenants who require a safe and quiet environment.

The property consists of 5 studio apartments with a great deal of communal space and 1 self-contained apartment. The property has been developed with Blue Ribbon who have spared no expense in making sure the refurbishment creates the very best home for our tenants. Features include safety blinds and heavy-duty furniture, safety handles on all doors, anti-ligature furniture, as well as being beautifully decorated using specially designed pallet recommended for tenants who may experience anxiety through mental health issues or autism.

Two referrals are already being processed and we predict the property will be full within the new year.

As you can see from the photographs this is a very special house and we look forward to creating more excellent homes with Blue Ribbon in the very near future.

**Andy Bowler**



## New Scheme

Time for a quick Progress report on our exciting new build in Kent.

As previously reported we are building 12 apartments with Kent County Council. The build is a first for BeST in that it is modular build using the most modern materials and allowing us to design and build in a more imaginative way (think Lego on a big scale!)

We have been working closely with the Commissioners and possible tenants and Andy Bate has consulted with the builders, Greenacre, on an amazing spec for the apartments.

Formal planning has been submitted and rent levels agreed so its full steam ahead in the new year on turning these dream homes into a reality.

If you want to know more about these new schemes or any other being developed in the pipeline myself, Andy Bate and Ellen are always happy to discuss.

**Andy Bowler**

