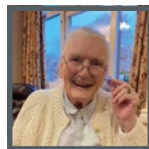




**Meallmore Ltd**  
*Making Care Mean More*



# MeallmoreMatters

..... Winter 2021

## Update from **Mary Preston**

**After a challenging 2020, we start this New Year with a mix of sadness and hope.**

While 2021 hasn't got off to the start we had all longed for due to the national lockdown, our vaccination programme is well underway, and we're feeling very hopeful for a brighter year ahead.

We were particularly disappointed that visits over the festive period were impacted by tighter restrictions, but it was a joy to see lots of fun and merriment continuing in all of our homes. Our *Heilan Hame* Gingerbread Challenge was a real highlight, and the results were incredible. Well done to everyone who took part, and special congratulations to Leven Beach care home who were

named overall winners for their wonderful gingerbread train.

As 2021 gets underway, we continue to support the government vaccination programme. We hope that, in doing so, our residents and staff will be better protected against the virus and this will allow for greater visiting opportunities very soon. We have also trained our staff to conduct lateral flow testing prior to visiting and are prepared to welcome families and friends back into our homes as soon as it's safe to do so.

We understand the importance of visits and the much-needed contact with our residents that is so vital for relationships and wellbeing.



We continue to support essential visits and look forward to facilitating even more visits safely and comfortably in the not-too-distant future – there certainly seems to be light at the end of the tunnel!

Thanks to everyone for all of your support, patience and understanding during 2020. We look forward to the day we can all be together again and wish you a safe, happy, and healthy 2021.



## Celebrations at Head Office

There have been many reasons to celebrate our fantastic staff recently.

We'd like to start with a big thank you and farewell to Lesley Marelo and Marji MacLeod, who have both retired. Marji was one of our call answering assistants for almost 6 years, and Lesley was with us for 12 years as an accounts assistant.

The team have also celebrated a silver anniversary, as Angela Morrison celebrates 25 years with Meallmore. Angela started as office manager at Meallmore Lodge and is now Meallmore's finance manager based at Caulfield House.

Please join us in thanking Lesley, Marji and Angela for their fantastic efforts over the years.

## Words of wisdom from Bayview

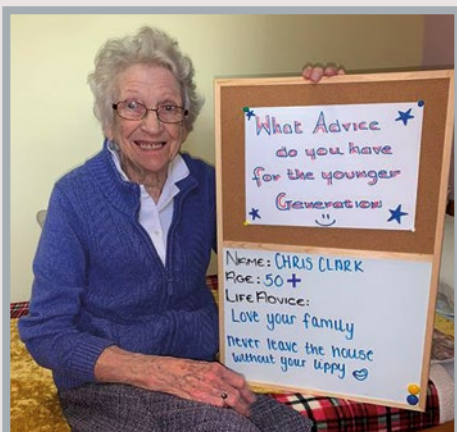
Staff at Bayview recently asked residents what advice they would give to the younger generation. Spending time reminiscing and sharing memories with each other, their final responses offer a wonderful insight.

Answers ranged from 81-year-old Chris' light-hearted suggestion to "never leave the house without your lippy" to a more reflective recommendation from 92-year old Isobel, who said to "look after your pennies."

100-year-old Gladys shared her top tips and advised the younger generation to "be happy" and "look after old ladies," while 81-year-old Beth warned: "Don't get married!" 70-year-old James suggested not to "believe the saying 'women know best'," and from 82-year-old Sheila are the simple words – "love yourself and those around you."

*"Our residents are a wise bunch and it's been a brilliant way to hear some of the many stories they each have to tell from their lifetime of experience. Their words of wisdom for the younger generation are very special – and many of them have given us all a good laugh together!"*

**Debbie Simpson Bayview's manager**



## Staff profile: Tatiana Garcia

As you know, we are committed to the personal and professional development of all staff. As part of Meallmore's Nurse Development Programme we signed up to *The Nightingale Challenge*, which is a worldwide campaign providing leadership and development programmes for nurses. Our "Nightingale Nurses" will be involved in ILM-credited leadership and management courses and policy development projects to further advance their skills.



One of our Nightingale Nurses is Tatiana Garcia, who joined Meallmore in 2019 as a staff nurse at Kynnaird House. Here she shares her reasoning for becoming a nurse and her fascinating work in Colombia:

"Nursing is a career I wanted to pursue since I was young. I grew up in Bogota, Colombia and when I was a teenager I work-shadowed my aunt, who was a chief nurse in the area. During this time, I started to grasp what attributes a good nurse has and these qualities have stayed with me ever since.

"At the start of my career, I was a chief nurse in a conflict zone. I delivered primary care to families who lived rurally and struggled to reach health services. I visited patients either by car, horseback or even on foot, walking for hours through the mountains – all with plenty of medical equipment in a backpack. Nursing duties included everything from family planning and childbirth to vaccinations and emergencies. The area was sometimes dangerous, but it was incredibly rewarding and set me up well for a career in nursing."

In 2008, Tatiana moved to the UK and has lived in Scotland for the last three years. She talks about her career at Meallmore:

"Being a nurse at Kynnaird is very different to being a nurse in Colombia, but it's just as brilliant and rewarding. I love working in a care home as I've really got to know the residents and have built up strong relationships with them. The residents at Kynnaird all have many stories to tell which makes coming to work particularly enjoyable and interesting.

"Since working at Meallmore, I've been able to develop myself professionally, and being part of *The Nightingale Challenge* is one of the ways I am able to do this. At Kynnaird we function incredibly well as a team; working with colleagues really feels like working with friends. I feel well supported and truly appreciated, which gives me the confidence to make the best decisions for our residents."

# Christmas competition takes the biscuit

Our homes finished the year with an exciting bake-off competition, putting their best foot forward for the *Heilan Hame* Gingerbread Challenge. Residents and staff baked and crafted delicious bricks and panels made of gingerbread, allowing residents' imaginations to run wild with ideas.

Eleven Meallmore homes entered the challenge, each providing amazing entries and unique concepts. We saw a miniature gingerbread Wallace Monument, a scenic gingerbread Winter Wonderland, and some cosy gingerbread cottages.

In the first round of voting, the polls were put to the public to decide which homes were through to the next round of the *Heilan Hame* Challenge.

From this, four homes: Redwoods, Belleaire House, Leven Beach, and St Modans, went head-to-head for the final round. The 2021 *Heilan Hame* Gingerbread Challenge Winner was Leven Beach, with their masterpiece of the 'Gingerbread Train'.

Leven Beach's care home manager, Ruth Kinnear, said: "Residents were inspired by fond memories of Leven's railway station and reminisced about trips taken with their loved ones. As a result, our residents created *The Gingerbread Train* and we're all delighted to have been crowned the winners of the *Heilan Hame* Gingerbread Challenge."

Group Hospitality Manager, Jody Marshall, was delighted to see such an amazing turn out from residents and staff: "All entries to



our gingerbread challenge were a true showcase of talent and it was brilliant to see such a high standard of baking taking place across all our Scottish care homes. It brought a real sense of community, both within the homes and across our network."

We look forward to seeing more bake-off creations in 2021. Well done to everyone involved.



## Christmas at Meallmore

Christmas at Meallmore homes provided 'snow' shortage of activities and celebrations for residents to take part in. The homes enjoyed an additional splash of colour and joy from lovely artwork sent in by local primary schools.

The award-winning Meallmore catering teams hit the spot with some delicious Christmas meals which went down a treat with residents and staff alike. Refreshments and presents were delivered by Santa and his team and everyone enjoyed getting into the traditional Christmas spirit.

## Greenan Manor is officially open

Our newest home, Greenan Manor, officially opened its doors on the 5 January 2021. Care home manager, Amanda Harland, and her team of frontline workers are looking forward to welcoming residents throughout 2021.

Over the past months, the team at Greenan Manor has been getting involved in the South Ayrshire community. Prior to opening, local students from Doonfoot Primary School and Wellington School were asked for ideas to name the care home's floors. They were encouraged to choose something that would reflect the history and character of the local Ayrshire area. The winning names were Dunure and Arran View which are now up and in use at the home.

We are excited with the plans for our newest home, which you will read about in future newsletters.



## Award Season at Meallmore

We're incredibly proud that two of our chefs, Anna Koziarska of Auchtercrag and Paul O'Brien of St Modans reached the finals of the NACC Care Chef of the Year awards. The awards are a national competition with entrants from all across the UK so making the finals is a huge achievement for both chefs.

We're also thrilled to have four finalists in the Scottish Care National Care Home Awards which highlights the breadth of talent across our organisation. The finalists are from Belleaire, Airthrey, Hilton Court and Culduthel.

## Keeping healthy this winter

Winter can pose a challenge to our health and people of all ages can be affected. However, those over 65 or with long-term health conditions can be particularly affected. The safety of our residents, staff, and their families is a priority for Meallmore.

It has been great to see so many residents receive their first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine and take their yearly flu jab. With news of the new COVID strain, it is crucial we continue to follow the rigorous infection control procedures and hygiene practices within the homes.

We would also urge eligible staff, if you have not done so already, to receive the COVID-19 vaccine, which is another step in protecting yourself and residents. Don't forget FACTS for a safer Scotland:

- F** - Face coverings
- A** - Avoid crowded places
- C** - Clean your hands regularly
- T** - Two metre distance
- S** - Self isolate and book a test if you have symptoms

# Memories of a **year past**

**Below we've included an excerpt of a speech delivered by CEO of Scottish Care, Donald Macaskill at a recent virtual conference.**

Over the last year the sea has been a place which has reflected the changing moods and experiences which the care home sector has gone through and endured. In a very real sense the sea in its constancy and renewal, its predictability and surprise, its storm and quiet, holds the history of our time.

When some of us gathered in a Glasgow meeting room in February to consider the news reports that were coming through the media about a new virus – a Coronavirus – and how it was affecting parts of China, few of us would or could have imagined that we would be beginning a period of time which would occupy and consume our every waking thought and influence our lives in such a profound way.

It is very hard indeed to try to capture in words the experiences of the last ten months. Like the waves of the sea there have been emotions and feelings which have rolled in over us with a constancy which has drained and exhausted. At times there have been waves of fear combined with anxiety, at other – emotions of relief and thankfulness. But always – a constancy of the dangerous presence of the virus; a watchfulness for the actions of others and an awareness that focus, and attention was turned inexorably upon our care homes.

It has been a year of strange rhythm ... of loss ... of sadness ... but also of remarkable dedication, sacrifice and strength.

But in the midst of all this negativity, and sadness, of loss



and emptiness... there have been waves of humanity the like of which we have rarely seen.

For right from the start when little was known and fear was suffocating, staff put themselves last and every day went out to care and be at risk; some moved into their care home; every day folks made their way to work even though with the loss of transport even getting there was itself a challenge, and they were present to care, to soothe, to be with.

Every day when the outside clapped for carers, women and men dealt with the absence of family and friend for resident; they were there to connect and make sure contact was maintained, even though workload was enormous.

Every day they were there to read the Guidance, do the training, learn new skills, and work with mask and visor, gloves and gown.

Every day they were present... despite the pain... because of the pain...

They were there – being, loving, caring.

Every day they showed to those with eyes to see and the willingness to listen, that they were the best of us in the worst of times.

So as we come to take a minute when in silence we will piece together our own memories let us together remember all our care homes, and all staff, and all residents, both who have been and who still are...

We remember the tiredness and exhaustion, the weariness which washed over us ...

We remember those whose faces will for ever be etched upon our hearts and souls... people we came to know and name,

We remember the hours we sat and waited, listened and held another in their fear and in the emptying of their life

We remember the hard days and we remember the sparks of laughter

Let us remember...