



# FOREST CARE

CARING SINCE 1981



# Winter

## Newsletter 2025/26

Welcome to our latest newsletter packed with celebrations, meaningful outreach, cherished lifestories and joyful moments from across our Forest Care community, plus a delicious recipe to try at home. Happy reading!

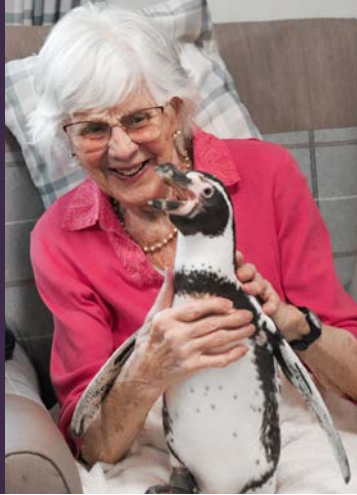




# Memorable Moments & Celebrations



Happy Feet at Holly Lodge!  
Holly residents were delighted by a surprise visit from two friendly Humboldt penguins, Pringle and Widget! Residents loved petting and holding these charming guests as they waddled through the home, creating smiles and unforgettable memories.



Oak residents got hands-on with exotic creatures from ZooLab, including giant snails, snakes and mice an unforgettable up-close experience!



'George & Ginger' treated Rowan & Elm residents to a fabulous musical performance, a truly special day honouring the past and celebrating together for Remembrance Day.



**Cheers to 2026!**  
Here's to a bright and joyful 2026! May it bring us laughter, love, and everything we've been hoping for.



Residents at Rowan first stepped into a world of mystery with a Sherlock Holmes-themed afternoon tea, then celebrated Halloween in style with a sumptuous 3-course feast, before being spellbound by Joanna Henwood's incredible Wicked performance!



## A season to remember!

Oak's Christmas Get-Together was magical, with a grotto, raffle, homemade treats, and live music for a cosy afternoon of cheer. At Cedar, residents and families enjoyed an outdoor market with singer Lucy, crafts, tasty treats, mince pies and mulled wine.





Rowan residents enjoyed two wonderful community events. First, a Re-Engage Tea Party in the Rowan Tree brought laughter, conversation, and plenty of tea and cake. Later, residents headed to the Irish Centre for the Golden Oldies Afternoon Tea, sharing chatter, sandwiches and even a Guinness or two! Both monthly projects help bring people together for companionship and fun.

# Community Engagement

**Coffee with the Mayor**  
 Basingstoke & Deane Mayor, Cllr Colin Phillimore, joined Rowan residents for a relaxed coffee and conversation.



Oak residents were delighted by a visit from Lance Corporal Ashley of the Royal Air Force (North Holt). Ashley shared fascinating stories about RAF history, its WWII role, modern aircraft, and recent changes, plus residents tried on authentic gear, including night-vision goggles!



The Rainbows delighted Oak residents with a joyful performance, while Elm residents enjoyed an exciting outing to Aldershot Football Club.



# Resident Spotlight

## Millie Harris at Elm Lodge



My name is Millie Harris, I was born in 1934 and lived in a three-bedroom detached house near Rotherwick. During the War years my school days were spent at Hook School, where I became a school prefect. After leaving school, I took on an apprenticeship in the world of hotel management which lasted four years before deciding to move on to new adventures.

Next, came a very different career change namely as a food manufacturer for biscuit production at Huntley & Palmers in Reading. They went on to become the largest biscuit manufacturer in the world and during my 43 years in the industry, we went from being British owned, to the American - Nabisco and then finally the French - Danone.

My time with the company took many twists, turns and presented new challenges including Production Lines, Machine Operator, Training, Package Development, Research & Development and finally as Legal Administration Controller. During this final stage I attended meetings across the UK and Europe.

At 63 years young I decided to take a gap year, before embarking on the most exciting time in the world of Event Management. This was a hugely diverse world with clients from the UK and worldwide, where I was responsible for the organisation of conferences, various corporate hospitality concepts, activities, celebrations, team developments, gaming events and press launches for corporate clients and VIPS. The number of attendees can be up to 1,000+ and on one occasion an enquiry for 10,000 attendees at a location in India.

I continue to work in this field to this day and during my time at Elm Lodge, I have been involved in organising a client incentive trip to South Africa and conferences in London, Manchester and Europe. Also executing the request, for an exclusive weekend at a private member's beach club in America. On occasion, I do also have to spend time at the events office which is near Elm Lodge.



# Staff Spotlight & Achievements

## Staff Awards

Cedar Lodge celebrated their Years of Service awards in style, combining the occasion with their 36<sup>th</sup> anniversary! Residents and staff enjoyed cake, fizz, a delicious buffet, and authentic Nepalese dancing.

Holly Lodge also celebrated their Years of Service awards. Congratulations to everyone on reaching their 5, 10, 15 and 20-year milestones at Forest Care!



### Maria Larkin - Senior Carer & Activities Coordinator at Cedar Lodge

Maria is a nursing graduate from the Philippines who moved to England after marrying her husband, Gary, in 2015. The couple have two children, Amelie and Scott.

Maria joined Cedar Lodge in 2021 as a Care Assistant. Her compassion for residents, kindness toward colleagues, and strong teamwork and leadership - shaped by her previous management role in the Philippines - quickly shone through. She became a much loved member of the team and was promoted to Senior Carer in 2024.

Maria's deep affection for her grandparents, who helped raise her, inspires the way she cares for residents. She often says, "Cedar Lodge is my second family, and I care for our residents as if they were my grandparents. Family is very important to me."

Outside of work, Maria enjoys cooking and baking, especially celebration cakes, which she decorates beautifully and are always a hit. She frequently creates cakes for special events and charity bake sales. Arts and crafts are another passion of hers, and in her role within the Activities Department, residents love joining her for creative sessions - making cushions, bracelets, and seasonal decorations throughout the year.

Her love of physical activity and sport is evident, whether she's participating in Forest Care's charity events, such as the inflatable 5k obstacle course, or cheering on her children - Scott at football and Amelie in gymnastics. It's clear her enthusiasm for sport has passed on to them. Maria also loves travelling and creating lasting memories with her family.

Some of Maria's happiest and proudest achievements include achieving her nursing degree, marrying Gary, becoming a mother, and, most recently, being named a finalist for Carer of the Year at the Surrey Care Awards.



### Celebrating Success at the Surrey Care Awards!

We are delighted that Cedar Lodge has been named 'Care Home of the Year' at the Surrey Care Awards 2025!

A huge congratulations also goes to our incredible Senior Carer & Activities Coordinator, Maria Larkin, who proudly reached the finals in the 'Care Worker of the Year' category. And let's not forget our amazing Domestic Team at Holly Lodge, finalists for the prestigious 'Team of the Year' award.

These awards truly highlight the compassion, professionalism, and dedication that define outstanding care, and we couldn't be prouder of our teams' achievements. The ceremony, held on 14<sup>th</sup> November at Denbies Wine Estate, brought together inspiring individuals and teams from across the care sector to celebrate the very best in care.

Cedar's Home Manager Nenita comments: "This is from the bottom of my heart...The best night of my nursing career! Honoured to win 'Care Home of the Year'. Well done to my exceptional Cedar Lodge team, we made it! Thank you to all of you. Your hard work, dedication, commitment and compassion are the key to providing the best life experience at our home. The team that I always treasure as part of my family, and I am very proud and always recognise your extraordinary contributions."



Congratulations to Cedar Lodge, who won Forest Care's mince pie competition! The residents and staff had their say and cast their votes, it was a close one! A big thank you to all our talented bakers across Forest Care for your time, effort and creativity.





## Baileys Cream Mince Pies

Recipe from Wendy at Cedar Lodge

### Ingredients:

375g plain flour, 260g unsalted butter cubed, 125g caster sugar, 1 large egg (plus 1 for glazing), jar of mincemeat, icing sugar, whipping cream, Baileys

### Method:

1. Mix flour, sugar and butter in a food processor until a breadcrumb consistency. Add egg and mix until the mixture clumps together. Add a splash of water if it looks dry.
2. Tip mixture onto cling film, bring together and wrap in the cling film. Leave to rest in fridge for 30 minutes. Take out and bring to room temperature. Preheat oven to 220c/200c fan.
3. Roll out the pastry 3mm thick. Use round cutters - 16 (for the base) and 16 smaller disks for lids.
4. Add pastry disks to a cupcake tray. Add a heaped teaspoon of mincemeat to each. Brush the edges with beaten egg before crimping on the lids. Glaze each pie with beaten egg and add a small steam hole to top using the tip of a sharp knife.
5. Bake for 15-20 minutes until golden. Leave to cool and dust with icing sugar.
6. To create the Baileys whipped cream topping: Whisk a healthy glug of Baileys with 1 pot of whipping cream until you have soft peaks. Add a little icing sugar for a sweeter taste. Decorate with edible eyes, pretzel antlers and glaze cherry noses.

## Testimonials

"My first impression of Cedar Lodge was the cleanliness, the smiling staff, how clean and well-dressed the residents were, and particular attention to detail. My husband is so happy here, and he loves the staff."

"Since my mother arrived at Elm Lodge, the management team and staff have been thoughtful, very caring, patient, with nothing being too much trouble with anything Mum has requested. The facilities are very special, along with the whole team. We are very happy with all aspects of Mum's care. What a find!"

"Holly Lodge is absolutely stunning...The staff are truly magnificent and always go above and beyond for your loved one. Above all, the residents are nothing but a phenomenal bunch of people from all walks of life. They are beyond wise even with dementia. Truly a remarkable care home."

"Oak Lodge is expertly managed and all the care team are wonderful... It is a huge relief to see my mother happy and thriving in the warm and welcoming environment...The staff are amazing and look after my mother with genuine care and attention to keep her happy."

"My father has been at Rowan Lodge care home since July 2025 and has been looked after by the care staff wonderfully, entertainment staff keep him engaged and the kitchen staff and chefs deliver excellent food."

## Some Upcoming Events

- 13<sup>th</sup> & 24<sup>th</sup> Feb: 'Talk on Trees' from Jonathan Newell (RHS Wisley) at Cedar, Rowan & Elm
- 19<sup>th</sup> Feb: "Kings of Swing" performance at Oak
- Feb: 'Winter Olympics' events at Rowan
- 4<sup>th</sup> Mar: Spring Babies (Browells Pet Therapy) at Cedar
- 6<sup>th</sup> Mar: Purple Company Choir at Oak
- Mar: Nutrition & Hydration Week - all homes
- 6<sup>th</sup> Apr: Easter Afternoon Tea at Cedar
- 16<sup>th</sup> Apr: Alpacas at Holly