

# Whitgift Care News

Spring/Summer 2020

A newsletter for all residents and staff, families and friends of the Whitgift Almshouses, Whitgift House, Wilhelmina House and the 1596 Club

Welcome to this spring edition of Whitgift Care News. Within this newsletter, I am sure you will agree there are two very different themes. One of course is the dreadful pandemic we all find ourselves in. The other, is that in the face of adversity, we have all pulled together as one Foundation whether that be our staff who have faced numerous challenges over the past weeks to continue their vital roles, our schools' students writing letters to our residents, staff supporting the local community effort to combat the virus or our residents providing vital

support for each other in the form of friendship or taking part in the wonderful activities on offer in the homes. I feel so proud to be part of this charity and I hope before the next edition is written, I will be able to say thank you to you all in person.

**Martin Corney**  
Chief Executive,  
John Whitgift Foundation



## Wilhelmina House named top 20 care home in London for second time

Staff and residents at Wilhelmina House in Park Hill are celebrating after being named top 20 care home in London for the second time by leading review website carehome.co.uk. Reviews have been submitted to the website by residents or family and friends rating all aspects of the home including cleanliness, food and drink, dignity, activities and value for money, with 85% of overall reviews submitted rating the home as excellent and 15% as good.

This is the second time that Wilhelmina House has made the top 20 care home in London having achieved the accolade in 2018. The residential care home that looks after up to 25 residents has been praised for its friendly atmosphere, dedicated and caring staff, the activities on offer, delicious meals and its beautifully landscaped garden.

Deborah Pearson, Wilhelmina House Home Manager, said: ***"I am absolutely thrilled that we have been rated top 20 care home which is thanks to my team***



***who go above and beyond to deliver first class care to our residents. We are proud of our friendly and caring atmosphere, as well as our facilities and activities on offer to enable residents to take centre stage and live full and happy lives. Thank you to all that submitted reviews – it makes our hard work worth it."***

The home's day care service, the 1596 Club for anyone over 60 years old (subject to assessments), received glowing reviews due to the activities and celebrations for residents to take part in.

This article continues on page 2

## Wilhelmina House top 20 care home (continued)

One relative said that after a short respite stay, their mother had decided to stay at Wilhelmina House permanently due to the quality of care she received.

The home has recently been extended to increase the size of communal spaces which all have modern and stylish furnishings. As Wilhelmina House is part of charity, John Whitgift Foundation, that also runs three schools, there is a strong intergeneration mix with visits from school children to the home and outings to school musical and theatre productions.

***A recent five-star review from a daughter of a resident, said: "My mother was cared for in Wilhelmina for 15 months. I couldn't have asked for a better care home for her. The staff are very kind, caring and professional, and more importantly, they are all long-term employees, so they get to know residents and their needs really thoroughly. The staff managed Mum's many special needs whilst***

***working hard to maintain her independence. The rooms are light and bright, kept very clean, have individual heating controls and opening windows for fresh air. Mum had a room with a lovely view over the beautifully kept gardens where she loved to sit out. There is ample room in the public areas for all residents to sit (unlike other homes I visited), and a great team of helpers provide varied activities and exercise for residents and day visitors. The food is varied and freshly prepared, with attention to individual preferences. I was impressed by how the Covid-19 crisis was handled, with visitor restrictions and PPE evident early on. Absolutely 5 Star - Thank you!"***

To read more reviews or to submit a review of either Wilhelmina House or Whitgift House, please visit [www.carehome.co.uk](http://www.carehome.co.uk)



## Covid-19: easing the lockdown

Whitgift Care continues to follow Public Health England (PHE) guidance and the advice given to us by our specialist Infection Prevention and Control Nurse. Our approach to easing the lockdown is to remain extremely cautious due to the vulnerability of our residents. Each care home manager is reintroducing visitors and other external personnel on a week by week basis following a thorough risk assessment, and so there may be some differences between the homes due to their layout and other factors. We urge our sheltered housing residents to also continue with observing PHE guidelines to protect themselves and others.

We have really appreciated the support residents and relatives have been giving to the homes and their compliance with our strategy. By working together, we have been able to minimise the impact of Covid-19 compared to other UK care home groups. However, our condolences and thoughts are with the families and friends of those who have passed away due to this terrible virus. We are discussing with Governor and Chaplain, Father Andrew Bishop, a service next year when we are all able to move around more freely, to remember the loved ones we have lost and to celebrate their lives. Once again, John Whitgift Foundation and Whitgift Care would like to thank you for your co-operation and support.

## Dolores Pickersgill

An update from our Director of Care



Dear residents, colleagues and friends,

Isn't time the most incredible thing?

I realised this morning I have been with the Foundation for almost 18 months now. The time has passed so quickly. In February, I had booked a holiday to Malta, but time had a different idea. Instead, most of my time, and I am sure most of yours, has been devoted to either worrying about or responding to this pandemic we all find ourselves in. Sadly, we have lost a few of our much-loved residents and our condolences and thoughts are with their families and friends. I am hoping our communications with you have helped to outline our approach to this and I am deeply grateful to all residents, their families and my colleagues who have followed the guidance we have been issuing. It is due to a collective effort that I can report that we have had extremely low numbers of residents and staff testing positive for Covid-19.

As we now come to the end of spring and look forward to the summer with the continued new growth we see in our gardens, balconies and window boxes, I have been focusing on hope for the future, that together we will come through this, enjoying meeting each other again at the various events we hold throughout the year. In the meantime, I have been looking at photographs when I was last with my family enjoying time together and anticipating when we will be together again.

If you'd like to send in some of yours to share your story, we'd be delighted to receive them for our next newsletter

Please stay safe, stay well and remember myself and the team are all here for you.

Best Wishes

Dolores



Dolores, second from right, with her sisters and niece

### My photograph, my story

This is me with my two sisters and niece outside St George's Cathedral in Southwark last October after I had just been commissioned as an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion. It was very special for me personally but made more special my family were there. We had a fabulous day together and I am looking forward to more of those happy days when we can all meet up again.

## Saying farewell to Philomena

Philomena Kavanagh, Home Manager for Whitgift House, leaves the Foundation after 17 years to enjoy a better work life balance. She will be sadly missed by residents, their families, friends, and staff alike who recognise the incredible contribution she has made to the Foundation over the years. Everyone wishes her well in spending time with her family. She has promised not to be a stranger so we look forward to seeing her at forthcoming events.

We are delighted to welcome Joe Patterson who will be taking over the role. Joe shares Philomena's passion for care and joins us with over 20 years' experience in the care sector. He will be a very valuable and welcome member of the Whitgift Care leadership team; we will be profiling Joe in our next edition.

## Whitgift School teacher 3D prints hundreds of protective visors for NHS staff

Whitgift School DT teacher, Mr Wendes, has designed and printed protective visors to act as essential PPE for Croydon University Hospital NHS staff on the frontline of fighting Coronavirus. To date, 2000 visors have been distributed to around 25 healthcare organisations across the borough, with an output of 350 visors per day. Trinity DT department has also joined in the efforts and have circulated the design to other local schools. Visors have also been delivered to staff working at Whitgift House and Wilhelmina House.



## Resident knits for new bundle of joy

Whitgift House resident, Daphne, has put her knitting needles to excellent use by knitting clothes for a premature baby. Activities Organiser, Angela, has a friend whose daughter recently gave birth to a beautiful baby boy named Jamie. Jamie weighed just 3lb 14oz and with the family struggling to find clothes to fit, Daphne knitted Jamie a lovely cardigan. Jamie is now growing by the day and doing well.



## Staff thankful for transport to work in schools' mini-buses

In order to follow Government advice to avoid public transport during the pandemic, staff across Whitgift Care have been getting a lift to and from work in mini-buses from Whitgift and Trinity Schools. Many of the school staff who have been furloughed have volunteered to drive the mini-buses picking staff up from New Addington to Thornton Heath. The fleet of mini-buses has also been supporting

Croydon Voluntary Action to deliver surplus food in the borough to food banks, as well as distribute food parcels to families in need.





## Whitgift House welcomes Alexa – the latest hi-tech gadget

Activities Organiser, Angela, was thrilled to have won an Alexa Echo Show 5 with 6 months free subscription for Whitgift House after entering a competition organised by The Utley Foundation. This will enable the home to have an additional device alongside the iPad for residents to connect to their family and friends during the lockdown. The multi-function Alexa comes with a small screen and allows users to play music, the radio and audiobooks, watch films and it will even play the latest weather and traffic updates! Angela and Ann cannot wait to give residents a demonstration.

## John Whitgift Foundation Office says a big thank you to Whitgift Care staff

Each week, Whitgift Care staff and residents show their appreciation by clapping for the NHS. Keen to show their gratitude, John Whitgift Foundation Office staff have made a short video for staff and residents. Featuring Chief Executive, Martin Corney, and Chairman, Chris Houlding, the video shows staff holding up thank you posters, many of which were created with the help of their families. Please ask a member of the Activities Team to view the video.



## Carers Information Service delivers for Croydon's carers during Coronavirus Crisis

The Carers Support Centre may be closed but the Carers Information Service is still delivering vital support to Croydon's 35,000 carers during the coronavirus outbreak. From helping carers get food parcels to posting emergency cards so carers can get to the shops during protected shopping times, members of staff have been helping out wherever they can. The service has received hundreds of enquiries from carers needing support, with carers from as far afield as Plymouth and Milton Keynes contacting the service to seek advice and help. Many are in desperate need, struggling to manage their caring role while self-isolating or living apart from the person they care for. If you need support caring for a relative or friend, do get in touch with the service by calling 020 8649 9339, option 1 or emailing: [info@carersinfo.org.uk](mailto:info@carersinfo.org.uk).

## Life in lockdown

Little did we know that at the start of the year we would be spending several months in lockdown due to the Coronavirus pandemic. Even our vocabulary has been filled with new words such as 'flattening the curve', 'social distancing' and 'the R rate'. Whilst this has been a challenging and anxious time for staff and residents across Whitgift Care, it is fair to say that an even greater sense of community has arisen out of the situation. Here we take a look at what has helped us through these difficult times:

### Schoolchildren team up with elderly pen pals to spread some cheer during social isolation

Schools in Croydon are using the art of letter writing to help bridge the gap between generations and tackle loneliness during the ongoing Coronavirus pandemic as part of a new pen pal initiative from the John Whitgift Foundation. The pen pal project asks schoolchildren who are now learning from home to write letters, poems and drawings detailing everything from their family and school life to holiday memories and favourite pets before sending them to elderly residents at the Foundation's care homes to help bring a smile to their faces and provide some welcome relief from the loneliness of social isolation.

Year 6 and 7 pupils at the Foundation's three schools, Old Palace of John Whitgift, Trinity and Whitgift, as well as local school Oakwood Primary, have sent over 40 letters and pieces of art to residents so far. Residents who are able to put pen to paper are sending replies to the children expressing their delight at receiving the surprise letters and sharing their own stories. The children have found all manner of subjects to talk about with their elderly pen pals, with a common theme of missing school and the teachers, their friends and even their minibus driver. The younger generation also shared recommendations for things to do during lockdown, such as keeping a dream journal and using Skype or FaceTime to stay connected with people.

Mariyana Nesheva, Senior Care Officer, Whitgift Care, said: *"The letters we have received from the children are wonderful and have really brought a smile to our residents' faces at this very difficult time. Actually, I told them beforehand that we were expecting letters from the children and everyone got very excited! Thank you so much for sending them, our residents are so grateful and happy when they receive their letters. You and your students are amazing!"*



As well as funny anecdotes and fond memories being shared on both sides, extracts from the letters show both generations united in the shared hope that normality will return soon:

*"I understand that during this time we are all a bit lost, worried and concerned. I am not sure about you but I am also extremely bored. I prefer to be at school because I get the chance to ask for help and see my friends every day."*

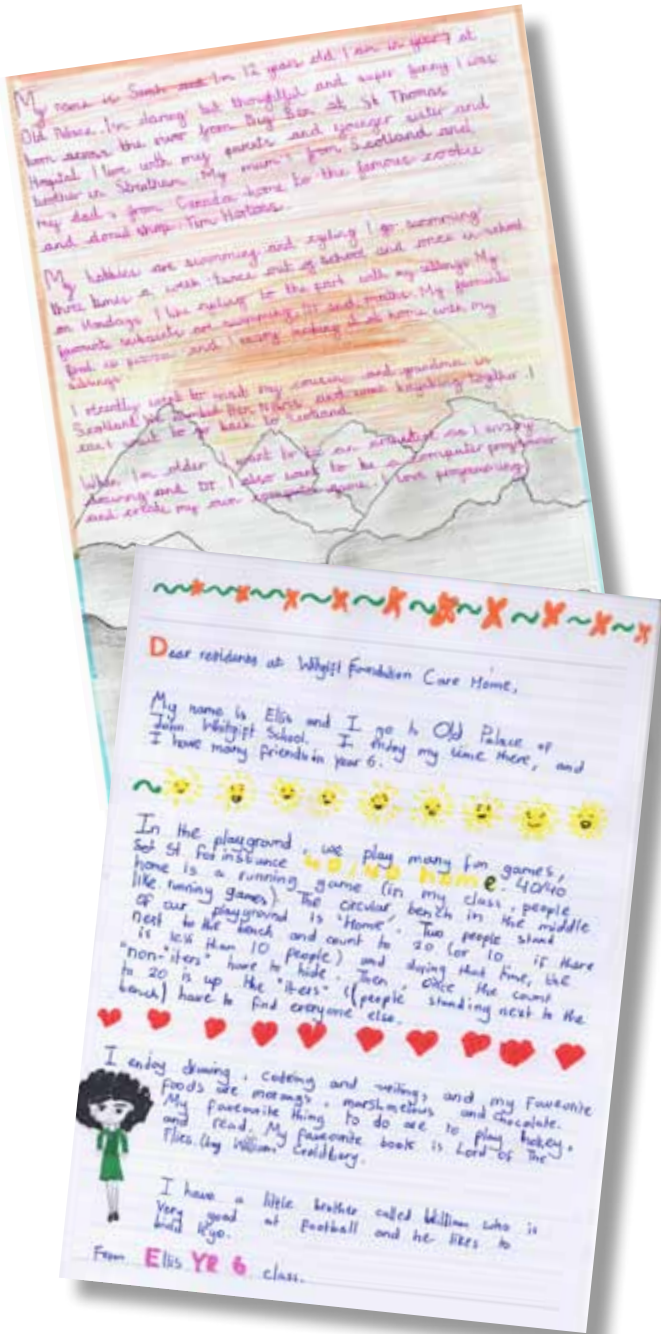
**Diya, Old Palace of John Whitgift School**

*"During this terrible time, I know you might be feeling a bit lonely, so I have written an autobiography about my life to give you some comfort. I hope you enjoy it and hopefully feel a bit better."*

**Sayyida, Old Palace of John Whitgift School**

*"My name is Aaliyah and I am a student at Old Palace of John Whitgift School and wanted to take the opportunity to write to you while we are all stuck inside rather a lot. My favourite holiday was when we went to Tanzania on safari and met all the wonderful creatures from a hippo to a crock, from a giraffe to a snake. We were glamping in the safari, and we heard a beautiful sound. We actually woke up to the sound of exotic birds."*

**Aaliyah, Old Palace of John Whitgift School**



## What is saving my life right now

When fellow resident, Peter, asked me this question my mind sprang at once to my home here at Whitgift House, the little oasis where I have lived now for 16 years. So many memories of many friends and neighbours through the years, as well as the lovely sheltered and full care staff who look after us so well. At this time when we are "locked in" I appreciate their help; delivering lunch, shopping, posting letters and many other ways.

Although there is no access to the community room or the Nursing Home, and the grass is getting long (have you noticed the wild flowers?) and with the boys not at school we have day long access to the grounds. I found a

gentle stroll around the field with fellow residents is most relaxing - keeping 'social distance' of course.

I do miss the chapel being open but my faith is sustained with Peter's weekly news and prayers, and watching local priests on the internet. My family have been regularly on the phone. The younger ones - four of them - all had babies within a few weeks of each other. So last year I became a great, great grandfather. I trust you will stop once in awhile and have a think about the good things around us.

**by Harold, Whitgift House resident**

We are proud of all our dedicated staff at Whitgift Care and in each edition will meet a few of our staff.

## ‘Don’t Panic Mr Mainwaring ‘

We caught up with Deborah Pearson, Care Home Manager at Wilhelmina House, to find out how she is keeping a level head during the pandemic.



• **How long have you worked at Wilhelmina House?**

*16 wonderful years since 5th May 2004.*

• **What have been your highs and lows during the Covid-19 outbreak?**

*Highs have been how well the staff and residents have adapted to the new social distancing rule - they are all incredible people. Lows have been at the start with not knowing or understanding the virus. Many of us, including residents were looking at too much television press coverage of what might happen to you if you're over a certain age or have underlying health conditions. It was quite frightening actually to think that staff and residents may actually die from it. We are now working as one top team of residents and staff together. It is actually wonderful!*

• **Have you learnt anything new during this period?**

*I have learnt to trust my instincts, to be level-headed, and do not go into Dad's Army Mode as in 'Don't Panic Mr Mainwaring'!*

• **How do you feel your staff have responded to the situation?**

*My staff are absolutely upbeat and positive, and to be honest, at first, we were all very worried as there were so many things said on social media that were quite alarming at the start of the outbreak. Now everything has settled we know exactly what to do and what to expect. Staff are interacting and reassuring our residents that we are doing the very best we can for them. I would also like to pay special mention to Whitgift and Trinity Schools who have stepped up to ensure that my staff are safe when travelling to work. They now have a pick-up service to and from their individual homes organised by the schools, this is to prevent staff from contracting Covid-19 if they had to use public transport. It is truly wonderful that the whole John Whitgift Foundation has come together as one to support care staff. Plus, not to forget the added bonus of being able to stay at Whitgift's boarding house if need be.*

• **Do you have any quotes from residents about the letters?**

*We have had so many fantastic letters from the absolutely delightful young ladies at Old Palace School, our residents have enjoyed reading them. It may take us a good while to respond to each and every one, however, we would like to officially invite them to afternoon tea once it is safe to do so as a thank you to them.*

• **Any other golden nuggets to add?**

*Only one...Mr Corney have you booked my ticket to Barbados yet, as a thank you?!*



## Thank you from Simon



Although the Estates Team are currently running a limited service and only undertaking essential works, one team member, Simon Sargent, has been on call since lockdown to provide help wherever needed. He has a message for everyone at Whitgift Care just as he takes a well deserved break:

Hi Everyone

As I am off on holiday next week for a much needed break after 8 or 9 weeks of lockdown I would just like to say thank you to members of staff on the front line:

To Flea and all her staff at Whitgift House.

To Deborah and all her crew at Wilhelmina House.

To all the Care Officers and the extra duties they have performed over the last eight weeks.

Special thanks to Rob Tolfield and Steph Davidson for all their help and assistance.

Keep up the brilliant jobs you have performed in a very difficult time for all of us.

Simon Sargent

## And finally...

A message from Suzanne Spooner, Head of Estates

I would like to thank everyone in my team during this difficult time for their great teamwork, unstinting devotion to the Foundation, support, professionalism, good humour, and of course, the occasional song (Simon!).

## Green fingered Ann makes Whitgift Care grounds blooming marvellous

After a short period on furlough, Whitgift Care is delighted to welcome back its gardener, Ann. With spring being the perfect month for growing, our gardens greatly needed Ann back to add her green fingered touch. Despite only being back a few weeks, she has worked tirelessly and has already transformed many of our flowerbeds bringing vivid colours and wonderful aromas throughout our grounds. Here's an image of what she has achieved so far. Thank you, Ann!

### Ann's top 5 gardening tips:

- Less is more.
- More plants die from over-watering than draught.
- Take time to enjoy yourself - it's not all hard-work.
- Buy the best you can whether that be equipment or flowers.
- Put your sun cream on and drink lots of tea!



### Whitgift Care celebrates VE Day 75th Anniversary and shares tales of victory



Staff and residents at Whitgift Care enjoyed a weekend of celebrations and shared their tales of victory to mark the 75th anniversary of the ending of the Second World War in Europe. Our care homes, Wilhelmina House and Whitgift House, adorned communal areas in flags and bunting and activities co-ordinators proudly put on a full programme of entertainment for residents whilst adhering to social distancing measures.

On VE Day at Whitgift House, staff and residents paid their respects to the war veterans in a two-minute silence before residents recollected what they were doing on VE Day with snippets of stories shared below. Corridors were filled with renditions of Daisy Daisy, We'll Meet Again and Pack Up Your Troubles as activities co-ordinators, Angela and Ann, sang to residents in their rooms.

In the afternoon, residents who were able, joined in a social distancing afternoon cream tea with the home's finest china in the Anne Dynewell Suite whilst watching the celebrations on TV. On Saturday, with the sun out and temperatures soaring, residents enjoyed ice cream and a glass of Pimms.

Meanwhile over at Wilhelmina House, residents took part in quizzes and puzzles in their rooms with plenty of cake on offer.

#### Resident tales of VE Day in 1945

**Flo F:** Flo worked as a dressmaker in Bermondsey. When they heard the war was over, she and her friend left work and went up to London where they met their friends and family outside Buckingham Palace. There was a great atmosphere with lots of noise singing and dancing. They saw King George VI and the Queen come onto the balcony. The crowd was cheering. Flo said it was overwhelming and would not have missed it for the world. She could not remember what time she went home.

**Daphne R:** While working at Park House in South Kensington as a shorthand typist, Daphne heard the news on the wireless. She left her work and met her mum at Victoria. They went up to Buckingham Palace where there was a lovely atmosphere. After seeing the King and Queen they came home by train. They had a street party a couple of days later with lots of food and dancing. Daphne said it was lovely to take down the black out from their window and to see the streetlights on again.

**Margaret M:** Margaret's husband had to go to the Middle East on VE Day as he was a sub lieutenant on HMS Malaya. Churchill wanted to send his troops to Hong Kong before the Americans got there. Margaret and her husband walked to Streatham Common train station where Margaret said goodbye to her husband. It was a very sad time as she didn't know if she would ever see him again. They had only been married a month and she was six months pregnant. She lived with her parents until he returned three years later.





*Residents at Whitgift House are doing their bit to help our local healthcare workers by sewing scrubs – by hand!*

*Valerie at Wilhelmina House enjoying a video call from her family (and their dog).*



*Whitgift House residents celebrated St George's Day with singing and cake and residents also learnt about the history of St George and how he became a saint.*



*Wilhelmina House residents had a wonderful afternoon of 'Elderdance' in the garden filled with sunshine.*



## Happy 100th Birthday Margaret!

Whitgift House resident Margaret celebrated her 100th Birthday in true Whitgift House style with tea and cake, and plenty of messages from family and friends from across the globe on 25th May. Her grandson created a piece of music especially for her called ***Margaret's Centenary*** which he played on his violin and another grandson played the piano; both pieces were streamed to her which she loved. Margaret said that she had never imagined to live until 100, but she puts it down to being happy throughout her life with her five children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Among the many fond memories she has over the years, particular highlights include: belonging to the Brownies and Girl Guides; swimming in Tooting Bec Lido and ice skating in Streatham; working as a civil servant in Colwyn Bay, North Wales, and meeting her husband, Frank; enjoying time growing vegetables on their allotment and holidaying in Greece and Spain with their children.

Margaret's advice to herself if she was 18 again and to every young person is take things as they come, have a cheerful attitude and look for the best in people. Her advice to everyone is take life as it comes and enjoy every day. Margaret now enjoys crosswords and quizzes and is happy living at Whitgift House with her fellow friendly residents with all the entertainment on offer - particularly the cream teas!



## In my One Room with a Commode

I'm in my one room with a commode  
 Yes that's my new abode  
 I'm warm and I'm fed and I've got a comfy bed  
 In my one room with a commode


I'm in my one room with a commode  
 There are times I could explode  
 I'm nearly 98 does it matter if I'm late back to  
 My one room with a commode

I'm in my one room with a commode  
 I've shed my heavy load  
 Friends and family will visit me lovingly  
 In my one room with a commode

I'm in my one room with a commode  
 No need to dress a la mode  
 I can still hardly see and I've got a gammy knee  
 But underneath that all  
 There's still a person who is me  
 In my one room with a commode

by Pam Maurice, Whitgift House resident

 [www.facebook.co.uk/whitgiftcare](http://www.facebook.co.uk/whitgiftcare)

 Twitter: @1596Whitgift

## Facebook and Twitter

Don't forget to find us on our social media channels. We regularly post the latest news and activities from Whitgift Care on our feeds. We love to hear from you too when you like or comment on our posts. Make sure you LIKE our Facebook page so you don't miss a post.

## Quiz time! History of the John Whitgift Foundation

Please circle your answer

**When did Archbishop John Whitgift lay the first foundation stones to the Almshouses?**

- a. 23rd March 1569      b. 22nd March 1596  
 c. 22nd March 1956

**How much did Archbishop Whitgift pay for the site of the Whitgift Almshouses?**

- a. £200      b. £2000      c. £20,000

**What year was Wilhelmina House built by the Dutch Church?**

- a. 1980      b. 1988      c. 1984

**What is the communal space called at Whitgift House?**

- a. Joan Harris Suite      b. van Hoorn Suite  
 c. Anne Dynewell Suite

**What is the collective number of rooms and flats at Whitgift Care?**

- a. 56      b. 111      c. 138

Answers: 1b, 2a, 3c, 4c, 5b

## Have you got news for us?

Do you enjoy writing or are you a budding poet laureate? Please send us your articles via the activities staff or email: [communications@johnwhitgiftfoundation.org](mailto:communications@johnwhitgiftfoundation.org).