

Abbeyfield

New Zealand

ABBNEYFIELD NEW ZEALAND SOCIETIES NEWSLETTER

ISSUE FORTY SEVEN: SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2008

Message from the Chairman

At our recent Annual General Meeting I was pleased to report to the delegates representing our local societies on another successful year. Abbeyfield has the proven experience of providing, for small groups of older people of up to 10 residents, a style of housing within local neighbourhoods which is growing in popularity. An increasing number of volunteers from various communities across New Zealand are enquiring into how to set up a local Abbeyfield Society. Rising energy and food costs plus increasing insurance premiums, rates and maintenance charges is a growing worry to older folk who are often living on their own, experiencing loneliness and unsure if their retirement income will be sufficient. Abbeyfield living can remove much of these concerns for older people who wish to retain their independence, are not ready for a rest home and seek some assurance of fixed living costs.

One challenge facing Abbeyfield is to convince both local and central government of the added value Abbeyfield can add to society as a partner in response to local housing needs. Another is that we must be more active in recruiting, enthusing and energising younger volunteers to undertake the challenge and essential governance role of promoting and running an Abbeyfield society locally and nationally. The partnership Abbeyfield enjoys with the Housing New Zealand Corporation drew favourable comments at the AGM from the Minister of Housing, the Hon Maryann Street, and we agree BUT it appears that having been successful with our innovation there is no provision for funding for us to continue what has been innovated in Auckland, Hamilton and Golden Bay. It was also disturbing to realise that several local authorities, funded for years by successive Governments to build pensioner houses at no cost to the ratepayers, are negotiating to pull out and encourage the Government to buy back what the taxpayer had earlier funded. The need for local Social Housing policies involving local, central, private and community for future planning and resourcing is vital. Abbeyfield is willing to play its part.

Abbeyfield New Zealand has again benefited this past year from the diligence, experience and commitment of our General Secretary, Chris Armstrong. Thanks to our donors, including the Nelson-Marlborough DHB, the Public Trust's Royale Trust, the New Zealand Community Trust, the Housing NZ Corporation and other private and individual supporters, we were able to report a 10% surplus over expenditure. A number of training courses have been held across the country as we update our manuals, share ideas and experiences amongst volunteers, colleagues and staff. Our housekeepers have joined together in specific seminars and we have developed a programme of evaluation and monitoring of our services.

The NZ Abbeyfield Foundation, which is happy to receive donations and grants at any time for the work of Abbeyfield across New Zealand, has recently published an overview of the work of Abbeyfield in NZ thanks to the generosity of the combined NZ Methodist Women's Fellowship and the Association of Presbyterian Women. It is well worth reading and copies are available from the Central Office.

JB Munro
Chairman

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Reminder

Daylight saving starts at 2am on Sunday 28 September 2008. Put your clocks FORWARD one hour before you go to bed.



Thoughts to Ponder

- A fear of dying laughing is called Cherophobia.
- A tiger's paw prints are called pug marks.
- Flounders swim sideways.
- Snails have teeth.
- Vintage port takes 40 years to reach maturity.
- Greyhounds eyesight is the best of any breed of dog.

Abbeyfield houses provide companionship with independence for older people

Abbeyfield Roslyn House, Palmerston North

The first five residents moved in on 28 April 2008, and a sixth just two weeks later. Construction was still being finished off outside, so Army personnel attending to tasks gave the residents an interesting few weeks, with the Army personnel getting to know them well. On the first day of residence, we held a House Blessing with the Committee in attendance.



Palmerston North Chair, Carolyn Hayes

Full time housekeeper Gloria, with relief housekeepers Dawn and Gwen working alternate weekends, are working in so well together and with the residents. The house has a warm, friendly atmosphere with wonderful harmony. The lounge is always so busy, with visitors, family members and Committee calling in frequently. The book shelves are filling up, the residents have set out their personal pieces of china and puzzles have been given by the local Arthritis Support Group.

Residents are assisting with setting and clearing the table, doing the dishes, one gentleman resident has cooked tea, and the ladies make batches of scones, etc. The dishwasher hasn't got much use so far. The local Rose City Quilting Club has loaned four beautiful quilts which adorn the walls,

and local artist Barry Doyle has loaned three of his paintings.

Saturday, 14 April 2008 was the official opening, the honour carried out by the Hon Steve Maharey, MP. Steve has given much support throughout the society's planning for this house. JB Munro also spoke at the opening. It was a beautiful autumn day, warm and calm and attended by 95 guests.

The residents have made Friday evenings their movie night, watching DVDs together and all enjoyed an outing recently to the Esplanade Café. A few of the ladies attend a weekly craft class, and a special treat 'mid winter Christmas dinner' – secretly planned, complete with all the Christmas decorations was enjoyed by all. They are also planning a formal dinner and have invited all Committee members and their partners.

Landscaping is being organised but a lot of the work will have to wait until the spring.

On Sunday, 29 June the Committee welcomed the public to have a look through the house in the afternoon. It was a very cold and wet day but still we received many visitors, including people who expressed an interest in living in Abbeyfield Roslyn House.

We have had good exposure in the local newspapers on a regular basis; monthly during construction and four times since the end of April – all complete with photos. The house continues to receive visitors, both local and from neighbouring regions – interest is certainly out there. The Committee is very hopeful of filling the house prior to Christmas, and currently have four vacancies.

We wish to express a special thank you to our residents and housekeepers – who have together, all, created a wonderful family home.



Hon. Steve Maharey, MP for Palmerston North

For the mathematicians ...

111,111,111 x 111,111,111 = 12,345,678,987,654,321

Residence In Abbeyfield Roslyn House - Thoughts from two residents, written in the first few weeks of living in their new home

We have arrived – nearly three weeks and after watching the construction for almost a year.

It was a strange feeling at first, leaving a home and familiar things to give away or leave behind, or see them around our new home. We are getting to know each other and feeling very comfortable and enjoy sitting around and chatting, or watching the news and catching up on Coronation Street (very exciting at the moment).

Our home is lovely and warm. The meals are very good and so nice to sit and share with each other. I know my family are pleased with my decision with the move to Abbeyfield. It's something I was able to do for myself, not theirs to make.

We are the lucky ones and see plenty of activity with the final works outside.

Nancy Smith

As I write this, it is now seven weeks since the first residents took occupation in Abbeyfield Roslyn House. From my perspective it has been an easy transition to settle in and make myself at home. I feel secure and happy in this new home where I am able to enjoy the company of fellow residents. I feel a sense of belonging and I do enjoy socialising with my new friends.

Although it all felt a little strange at first, the ice was soon broken and we have learned to understand and respect each other. We work well together in assisting each other as well as our very cheerful housekeeper, Gloria. We assist by setting the table, helping serve meals to each other and clearing the dishes after meals. It is wonderful to see how some of the ladies help out in washing up and drying the dishes after meals. We are also appreciative of our two relief housekeepers, Dawn and Gwen and their cheerful manner in which they provide our meals and carry out their other duties.

The food is good and wholesome and there are no set menus, each meal is a surprise. Seeing to our own breakfast needs is no problem and it is good to note that we all see to it that the kitchen area is left clean and tidy.

I am fortunate to still be working mornings only, as this enables me to continue my involvement in the community, notably with the Senior Citizens Association on Tuesday afternoons. I also have other outside interests that I enjoy pursuing that enables me to remain active. Most afternoons and evenings I am able to socialise in the house. Friday evenings we view DVD's together and so have time to enjoy each other's company.

It is good to note that all of us lead busy lives doing our own thing as well as spending time with family and friends. In many instances, we have visitors who bring their children with them and this is great as it brings a new dimension to our house.

Ken Bowden

Residents Help With Research

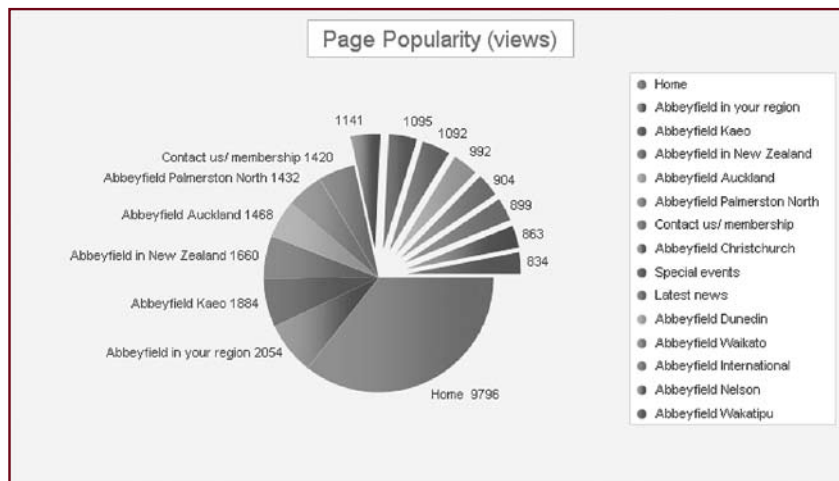
Abbeyfield Auckland members have provided invaluable help to an Auckland University researcher investigating 'Support for Childless Older People'. Social scientist Ruth Allen is looking at the assumption that 'family support' is needed as people grow older, and that therefore those without adult children will 'suffer'.

"I've had the pleasure of interviewing three members at Abbeyfield Sandringham who have never had children, and heard invaluable insights into their lives as independent women," Ruth said. Other members (both with and without children) then joined a group discussion on the meaning of 'support', a complex concept ranging from the patronising and unhelpful to a useful part of life (especially when it's asked for, and when it's reciprocal). And friends of Abbeyfield members have added to the list of interviewees and advisors within the eldercare sector for Ruth's project.

Ruth has now joined Abbeyfield as a member (please save me a spot in 30 years' time!) and sees it as an ideal accommodation option for people without children wanting a good combination of independence and companionship.

- Every night, someone thinks about you before they go to sleep.
- When you think the world has turned its back on you, take another look.

Website hits are for year July 2007 to July 2008



For the historians

Each king in a deck of playing cards represents a great king from history:

Spades - King David

Hearts - Charlemagne

Clubs - Alexander, the Great

Diamonds - Julius Caesar

Report on the Abbeyfield Annual General Meeting, 26 July 2008

An overview:

1. JB Munro re-elected as Chairman for another year. JB indicated this was to be his last year at the helm.
2. Peter Smale and Denise White re-elected to the Board of Abbeyfield for additional two year terms.
3. Two new life members were elected:

Donald Beasley, who recently retired as Chairman of Abbeyfield Whangarei. Donald's sterling efforts in developing the first resident funded Abbeyfield house in Whangarei and his subsequent shepherding of the Whangarei volunteers into a competent and active house management, his contribution to the development of our "Best Standards" documentation and his service on the Abbeyfield Housing Co Ltd's Board were recognised when he was elected our fifth life member.

Hugh Thurston, recently retired Foundation Director of the Abbeyfield Housing Company was also honoured with the award of life membership of the Society. Hugh's sustained financial and moral support of the Whangarei project has also been recognised in its being named Abbeyfield Thurston House. In addition he has served for many years as Abbeyfield New Zealand's delegate to the Abbeyfield International Board, standing in for the New Zealand Chairman when he or she could not travel to the UK for meetings.



Hugh Thurston and former Governor General at the opening of Thurston House in 2002

4. The Minister of Housing, Maryan Street joined delegates for lunch and then addressed the meeting and answered questions. The Minister expressed her admiration at Abbeyfield's progress and confirmed her on-going support for the Society. Among general questions she was asked why the Housing Innovation Fund had not received additional support, and was scheduled to "die" in June 2009. The Minister was unable to commit her Cabinet colleagues to additional social housing funding, much to the disappointment of the delegates. There was some comment that the Government was not living up to its previous commitment to encourage third sector housing such as Abbeyfield.
5. The Sunday session was, as has become the usual practice, given over to addressing delegate's questions and discussing current issues concerning Abbeyfield house management and design developments. The Board also took the opportunity to explain its latest initiative – PIMA – the Programme for Internal Monitoring of Abbeyfield. This is a new programme where volunteers from neighboring Societies will visit each others houses and interview residents, volunteers and staff to develop better understanding of their roles, and explore and learn new ideas and opportunities they might not otherwise become aware of. The PIMA programme is not an "audit" but if there are any problematic issues uncovered they will be shared with the local Society. It is hoped to trial the first visits after volunteer training later this year.

For more information regarding Abbeyfield contact:

Abbeyfield New Zealand
105 Trafalgar Street, Nelson
PO Box 482, Nelson 7040
Tel (03) 546 6459 Fax (03) 546 6210
Email: office@abbeyfield.org.nz
Website: www.abbeyfield.org.nz

Abbeyfield NZ Societies Newsletter Editor:
Rosalind Black
33 Farnborough Street, Bexley
Christchurch 8061

Closing deadline
for the next
newsletter is
9 November 2008