

Newsletter of Keniston Housing Association

## Daphne and Doris and how they helped keep Britain safe

**In separate flats in Keniston's Tarling Close live two women who helped keep Britain safe and free from invasion during the Second World War. Although they didn't know each other, both were in the ATS, the women's branch of the British Army. It's all too easy to forget the vital role that many women played in the war, so it's a real honour to hear their stories.**

Daphne Fryer was a young woman living in Kent when she was called up in 1942. After her army training in Guildford (marching up and down, Daphne says she didn't know her left

from her right!) she was sent to a small unit which assessed men's emotional suitability for war. As Daphne explains: "by that time, so many young men were being killed, it was important to make sure they were able to cope." She really enjoyed the work and they were very kind to her - allowing her time off to see her fiancée when he came home from his dangerous job as a fighter pilot in the RAF.

In 1944 Daphne and her fiancée married. Unfortunately she was then reposted to a big camp and a job she really didn't like as much – counting every tank, gun and screw that went out of the camp. But of course, like everyone, she got on with it and did

her best for the war effort. It was a frightening time says Daphne – there were terrifying doodlebug bombs coming over whilst

Sent to work as a clerical assistant in the pay office, she was there right until the end of the war. Doris did her training in North Wales and she loved doing all the drilling. "It was a big barracks" she says, "and it felt like real army life." But like Daphne, Doris found the sounds of bombs dropping all around whenever she went to London very frightening.

Both ladies wore army uniforms of khaki skirt, jacket, overcoat, peaked cap and brown lace up shoes. But Doris had a sister in the WAF (Women's Air Force) who was a clever tailoress. She took Doris's uniform off her, nipped in the jacket, took up the hem of the skirt and and by the time



Daphne Fryer



Doris Fielding

they were working, but being in the army, they had to just sit there and pretend they weren't scared. At one point their building caught fire, but it wasn't a bomb, it was accidentally done by a sergeant who'd been smoking!

Whilst all this was going on, another Tarling Close resident, Doris Fielding was working in the ATS in Nottingham.

she'd finished Doris looked very stylish!

After the war Daphne and Doris were demobbed and went back to their

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normal lives. Both married and had children, but unfortunately neither marriage survived and they brought up their children on their own.

Daphne now has twelve grandchildren and six great-grandchildren and her daughter comes and visits her in Tarling Close every week. 'She really looks after me' says Daphne.

Doris's two children live in the US, but her niece lives near Tarling Close and recommended it to her. She really likes her flat – it has a lovely open view and there are so many facilities in Tarling Close. "There's a utility room which is very nice – we can do our washing and ironing there and it's lovely and warm so things dry very easily. The new lift is wonderful too – it means I can get downstairs easily to go for a walk."

**Doris and Daphne have so much in common and it's interesting that they've both come to live in Tarling Close in their later years. Apparently there's another lady there who used to be in the Land Army, but that's a story for another day!**

# It's all about communication

**We're really pleased to be able to tell you about two brilliant work-oriented courses we've got lined up for you this Autumn.**

The first one is all about communications, including listening skills, how to make yourself understood and how to read body language. It's a taster session for a longer course called World Class Customer Service, which is aimed at people interested in a career in retail or dealing with customers. It's taught by training staff from the famous Bluewater Shopping Centre so

we know how good it is going to be. And if this taster session is popular we'll be running the full course which has seven different modules. It's a marvelous opportunity and even if you're not looking for a job in retail you'll learn some really valuable communication skills.

**The course is on 6th October and you can find out more by ringing Vivienne Astall or Lynn Walsh on 01689 889700 or there is more on our website [www.kenistonha.co.uk](http://www.kenistonha.co.uk)**



# Financing your own business

**More and more people work from home these days and many of them are doing it by starting up their own small business. The flexible hours are perfect if you have a family, and if you are an independent type of person, being your own boss has enormous appeal.**

But if you are thinking of doing it yourself you've probably got some worries about going ahead. Being self employed means not having a regular income at first and you'll need funds to actually start up the business, as well as pay your day to day living costs. You'll be responsible for your own tax too, so you'll need to keep accurate

records of your income and outgoings. That's why budgeting is one of the most important skills you need, and on 12th September we've organised a session to teach you some of the basic skills.

It will cover best use of money, basic financial calculations, tips on borrowing money, and how to balance your income and spending. You'll also be taught some simple calculations using Excel.

**This session is absolutely free and it's a fantastic opportunity for anyone thinking about becoming self employed. Find out more by ringing Vivienne Astall or Lynn Walsh on 01689 889700 or there is more on our website [www.kenistonha.co.uk](http://www.kenistonha.co.uk)**



# Welcome to our new chief executive!

**Everyone at Keniston was very sad to say farewell to Nevil Osborne who has steered the association so expertly over the last 30 years, but we're absolutely delighted to welcome our new chief executive, Jonathan Card, who is joining us in August.**

Jonathan has a wealth of experience, having worked in social housing for many years. Indeed at one point he was actually responsible for managing Tarling Close and Nethewode Court, when they were part of Circle 33 Housing Association! As well as big associations like Circle 33, he's worked at many small associations with strong community links and that's where his real passion lies.

As Jonathan says: "There's something unique about small associations. They are much closer to the residents and to what's happening on the ground."

He was particularly drawn to Keniston because of its independence and he's absolutely committed to keeping that independence in the future. As Jonathan points out, Keniston is a very well managed organisation, with strong finances and good quality homes, so it's



well placed to weather any storms that might come its way. The other great thing about Keniston says Jonathan, is the high levels of tenant satisfaction

which he would love to build on. "I'd like to look at how the association communicates with residents and whether there is potential for using new technology to improve our communications in the future" he says. "But first I want to listen!"

Jonathan's first few months at Keniston will be very much about meeting people and listening to what they have to say. He'll be out and about on the estates, meeting residents and staff and finding out about their priorities and how they think Keniston might improve.

**So do look out for Jonathan's visits over the coming months and, if possible, take the opportunity to talk to him about your experiences of Keniston and whether there are ways the association might improve in the future. He's looking forward to meeting you all!**

## Green Doctors provide a cure for Keniston residents

**Right now you're probably wondering what a Green Doctor is! Green Doctors are a team of environmental specialists who visit people's homes to advise them how to save energy and cut down their bills.**

They also give advice and support on environmental issues such as recycling, composting and water use. In the last year they have helped thousands of households make their homes more environmentally friendly and cheaper to run.

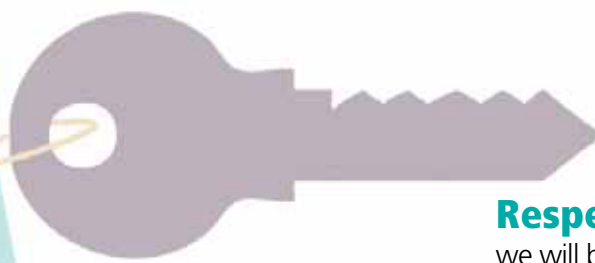


Keniston resident Miss Mascio was thrilled with the advice given to her by a Green Doctor who came and visited her recently. "He gave me a smart meter to see how much power I am using in the home and I can now monitor my use better and am more aware of the cost."

She says she also learnt lots of new things about saving money and using appliances better – such as how to save money on the washing machine, more efficient use of the boiler and clever things like using a lamp instead of having all the lights on.

**If you would like to see a Green Doctor call Vivienne Astall on 01689 889700**

# Our Key Values



People often tell us that the way we deal with things at Keniston is different from other housing associations and the quality of service we give our tenants, the way we handle things and the friendliness of our staff is something we are rightly proud of. This is backed up by very high levels of tenant satisfaction we receive and was verified by an independent survey carried out for us last year.

It's really important to us that we continue to deliver these high levels of satisfaction, so it seemed sensible to try to describe what we expect from staff who work at Keniston. Not 'what we do' but 'how we do it'.

Through a series of workshops with staff, the Board and tenants we worked on trying to describe and then distil the way we do things so we could write them down into what we call our Key Values. The following list is the result of our consultation and we believe it successfully describes how we treat people now, and will help us ensure we continue to do so in the future.

## Respect

we will be courteous and considerate, treat everyone as individuals and value diversity.

## Openness

we will listen, be accessible and communicate clearly.

## Accountability

we will take responsibility for our actions and decisions.

## Honesty

we will say what we mean, accept our mistakes and learn from them.

## Excellence

we take pride in what we do and go beyond what is expected.

**Do you think these describe what Keniston is like? Let us know what you think.**

# What would we do without...

## ...our wonderful Resident Liaison Officers?

Many of you will have met Debbie Plumb and Jane Westpfel. They keep everything running as smoothly as possible for tenants when we have major works going on, such as installing new bathrooms, kitchens, windows or central heating. Obviously work like this has an impact on people's lives, no matter how welcome the improvements might be, but they do everything they can to make things that bit easier all round.

Debbie and Jane's involvement starts at the very beginning of the process, when they have a meeting with residents to let them know what's involved in the work and how it's likely to affect them. This is a great

opportunity for residents to ask questions and raise any concerns. Then, as the work progresses, they keep in touch with residents and the



contractors, to make sure everything is running smoothly and to address any problems as quickly as possible.

Jane says: "we always try to look at things from the tenant's perspective. We try and imagine it was happening in our own home – what information would we like and what would be important to us?"

At the end of the contract, they send out a survey to get feedback on how it all went and pick up any loose ends. As they point out, they are learning all the time – constantly looking for ways of improving the service they give, and making the whole process as smooth as possible for everyone.

**We think they do a marvellous job and hope you all agree!**



## We're on Twitter too!

As well as our Facebook page, we have a Facebook chat group called Keniston Gossip and we're active on Twitter too. Come and join in the conversation!



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