

## **ThorngateLiving**

# Annual Report 2022



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### Introduction



### Our Mission

Providing comfort and security to those in need since 1868 and committed to developing the highest standards of housing and professional care in a supportive, respectful and friendly community.

### Our Values

We seek to improve lives through passionately promoting excellence in support, care and housing.

We will each commit to take responsibility for our role in our teams encouraging, respecting and supporting each other. We strive to be transparent, approachable, listening to each other and acting with empathy and consistency.

We will respect and support everyone as individuals, treating residents and colleagues with dignity and compassion, behaving professionally whatever our role.



### Chairman's view Mark Hook



I'm writing the introduction to this year's board report as the newly elected Chairman of Thorngate Churcher Trust.

So, I must start with a thank you to the other board members but most especially to Jim Gilhooley who has just retired as Chairman and continues to sit on the board, and Diane Searle who retired from the board in May 2022 after a combined 12 years on the Thorngate Almshouse Trust and The Thorngate Churcher boards.

Jim has led the board while we opened our Lucas Court, Garden View and Bradbury House developments and led on the acquisition of the Grove Road site. He has also ably supported the executive team and led the rest of the board through the challenges of the pandemic. Meanwhile Diane has been a consistent steady presence throughout the many improvements and challenges we have faced over the last 12 years contributing to our strategy throughout this time.

This report to residents shows just how active we have been in the last year despite the many challenges, not least the pandemic. Nevertheless, we have continued to deliver our social housing with support model and increased our waiting list further. This coincides with our achievement of securing planning permission for 39 new homes in Gosport which is detailed in the rest of the report.

The delivery of care to residents in the care home and the support-led housing model would just not be possible without the leadership of our executive team and our amazing wardens, care, maintenance, kitchen, and housekeeping staff. I am sure you all appreciate them as much as the board do. However, I want to take this opportunity to thank them wholeheartedly on behalf of all our residents for the work they do.

We all look forward to a peaceful and successful 2022-23.

# Chief Executive's view Anne Taylor



Despite another year of challenges from the ongoing pandemic to the social care recruitment, we have achieved a

great deal to deliver for our residents.

Our housing and maintenance teams have worked extremely hard to catch up with maintenance jobs that could not be done during the pandemic and have worked on this throughout the year, helped by the recruitment of a new member of the maintenance team. We have also carried out improvements such as the refurbishment of the communal lounge in Elizabeth Court.

Much of our work has been behind the scenes working with our colleagues to deliver the best possible support and care. We are very proud to have achieved the Living Wage Foundation's Accredited Employer status, and at the time of writing we are the only care home in Gosport to do so.

Another achievement working with our architects and quantity surveying partners has been the site acquisition and gaining planning for 39 new homes under tight timescales. We will progress this during the remainder of 2022 and hope to start on site in 2023.

Behind the scenes we have also worked on our technology agenda to improve fire safety and energy efficiency, as well as moving many of our checks and records to a virtual platform to improve digital security. We could not have done this without the determination of our part-time CIO Mark Child. Mark has also

helped us gather more feedback so that we are continually collecting satisfaction data in a number of areas of our organisation.

Resident satisfaction has always been a priority of ours, not just because of the current regulatory thrust.

We believe we are able to respond to our residents' needs through a variety of ways including through our warden team, using our own maintenance team and the proximity of our managers who meet and talk with residents both formally at consultative committee meetings, and informally.

As we move towards 2023 the Trust knows that staff recruitment and retention in social care remain a strategic challenge and one which we work on daily. We believe our training offer is important and we seek to enhance it regularly with both vocational courses, such as NVQs in health and social care, but also through our leadership, diversity and mental health training, bringing in experienced outside consultants. I would like to thank all our colleagues for their hard work and dedication throughout the last year, they really have been amazing.

Finally, I want to thank my supportive board, especially the Chairman Jim Gilhooley who stepped down from this position in May 2022 but remains on the board. Throughout the pandemic, and the many challenges we faced this last year, the Thorngate board has been responsive and has helped us achieve the many things you will read about in this report, putting us in a strong position for the forthcoming year.

### About Thorngate Churcher Trust



### Our focus going forward

- To continue to be a destination of choice for housing residents, care residents and employees.
- To develop new supported housing schemes for our existing resident profile.



Founded in 1868



In excess of £3m



124 sheltered flats for assisted living



Care home rated GOOD by Care Quality Commission



**44** bed care home for the elderly



Available to singles & couples of limited means

#### We are members of















### Creating new homes for the future

At Thorngate we maintain our commitment to provide more housing for local people and in last year's annual report, we outlined plans for a new development of sheltered homes in Gosport.

We have now made excellent progress on bringing these plans to fruition. We have secured planning permission for 39 new homes and earlier in 2022 we completed the land purchase for the new development at Grove Road in Gosport.

The first phase of development will see 30 new homes created and intended to be ready for occupation in 2024.

These homes have been designed by Boon Brown Architects in conjunction with Thorngate to ensure we include all the special features we know are important to our residents.

The process to move from planning to start-on-site is a complex one including ecology, soil testing, drainage planning and energy strategy among many other elements before building work can begin. We expect these processes to take well into 2023. Our website will contain updates but if you know of someone who would like to be considered for one of these new units please contact our housing team.



### Your Home

One important thing we managed to do for our residents was to negotiate a three-year deal on gas and electricity in 2021 which means we have a really good long-term deal for all residents who do not have their own meter, which is all except Lucas Court, Garden View, and Bradbury House (14 flats out of 124 in total).

At present the vast majority of our residents have not been affected by gas and electricity price rises and these energy costs are fixed until January 2024.

A key driver of satisfaction among residents is the state of their homes and the effectiveness of the repairs and maintenance service, for which our Property Services Manager, Ken Lyon is responsible.

As well as continuing with high levels of completion of maintenance jobs, which we have been catching up on since the pandemic, a raft of other property related matters have been achieved by Ken and his team:

- New CCTV systems for the grounds at Russell Churcher Court, Elizabeth Court and Thorngate Court have been installed.
- New lounge furniture in Elizabeth Court. The residents at Elizabeth Court were involved in choosing new communal lounge furniture after the presentation of a range of designs from interior design consultants. The same process has been applied since the year end at Thorngate Court.
- Smartcool readers to enable us to monitor gas and electric usage more accurately have been fitted in Elizabeth Court so that we can investigate any unusual spikes in electricity. These are already saving us significant amounts of money because they alert us to items that have been left running on the communal supply, for example immersion heaters not turned off after electrical work.



- The innovative Plumis fire suppressant system was installed as a trial in two properties in Elizabeth Court.
- E reception now available throughout our properties. This enables us to track visitors and especially contractors and in the case of the care home, their Covid status including temperatures on entry. It has been extremely helpful during the pandemic. In addition, the reception system allows us to gather live feedback from visitors, sending an alert to the relevant manager if a low score is received.
- All radiator valves in our large care home have been replaced by TRVs to aid controllability and reduce energy costs.

#### And looking forward...

We have a comprehensive programme of works planned for the coming months including:

- Electrifying the various block doors at Thorngate Court which is made up of a number of small blocks.
- We expect to renew the main industrial boilers at Thorngate Court for much more efficient ones later in 2022.
- We are working through a number of benchmarks and gathering data to support our journey to cutting our carbon emissions such as updating EPCs where needed and checking our energy intensity calculations.



### Life at Thorngate



### The Thorngate Community

The last year has seen us able to restart some of social events following Covid and residents have really enjoyed getting back together again.

Some of the highlights included our Platinum Jubilee celebrations. The amount of money raised between the residents led by the wardens was tremendous, as was the sense of involvement and belonging experienced by so many residents.

Residents have also been developing a great relationship with pupils from St John's C of E Primary School swapping Christmas and Easter cards and joining the school for its Platinum Jubilee celebrations.

We have also introduced dark afternoons in the Bradbury lounge. The residents often hold afternoon meet-ups, but we have started having a dark afternoon monthly to make it more inclusive for a light-sensitive resident. Just using daylight has made this more inclusive.



# Residents rate Thorngate highly in customer survey

Feedback from our residents is so important to us as an organisation to ensure that what we are providing and doing is helping them live their best lives.

In our latest survey of residents, and potential residents of our sheltered accommodation in Gosport respondents gave us a strong vote of confidence.

We asked current and prospective residents about what is important to them and the timing is even more important this year as we finalise plans for our new development in the town.

Chief Executive Anne Taylor said current residents have given Thorngate a real vote of confidence for the homes, the community, and the support the charity provides.

"We are always looking to ensure our developments offer residents the very best in terms of independent living with warden support and the results of this latest survey suggest we have the balance right," said Anne.

"This year we also spoke to those on our waiting list to ensure that our new development will offer them the kind of living they are looking for, so their responses are crucial as we fine tune plans for our latest homes and the community we will be creating."

Thorngate scored a 100 per cent rating in aspects such as safety and security

at their developments, cleanliness of communal areas, the friendly and approachable staff, and their overall impression of the schemes.

There were also high ratings when residents were asked if they would recommend Thorngate to others with reasons cited including that they are happy at Thorngate and feel that others would benefit from living there.

The survey highlighted four key areas of success with residents feeling safe, making friends, praising the buildings and facilities, and enjoying the balance of their own independence with the knowledge that help is on hand when needed.

"This is exactly the balance we are looking to achieve in our sheltered accommodation flats," said Anne. "The whole team here works hard to ensure that a Thorngate home is one of safety and security where people live in attractive comfortable surroundings and feel they still retain their independence."

Prospective residents currently on the waiting list were asked about their expectations of a Thorngate home and their reasons for wanting to live in one.

Top of the list was a recommendation from existing residents while others said they liked the fact that Thorngate is a trust and more likely to create communities than living in a council run development.

"The prospective residents are keen to live somewhere with good facilities and the opportunity to be among like-minded individuals they can socialise with," said Anne.

"They are also looking for a home which is suitable for their needs and offers space, comfort, cleanliness and security which are features we will be incorporating into our new Grove Road development and will mirror the offering we provide elsewhere in Gosport."

### Local care homes market research

At Thorngate, our vision and values inform all parts of the Trust's operation and we continually monitor our offering and look at how we can continue to offer the highest standards of facilities as well as professional care to our residents.

In 2020 and 2021 we commissioned Acuity to carry out the research looking at over 20 care homes in the area and comparing a number of areas of operation from cost through to facilities, use of technology and staffing levels. The results informed the board decisions on refurbishing the care home as rooms became available to add air conditioning and new bathrooms all of which are currently ensuite. We found we were in the top 10% of homes for our facilities and the only one introducing air conditioning into rooms. We discovered that, compared to the facilities and care offered, we are in the lower end of pricing during the surveys.



### Innovations to support our residents

Our mission is to provide the best housing and social care that we can. To do this we recognise we need to be open to new ideas and better ways of working.

We approach this in a range of ways. At a strategic level we are members of the Disruptive Innovators' Network which brings together social housing providers to look at the ways technology might disrupt and improve existing ways of working. Through this we encountered the Plumis fire safety project.

We are also members of the National Care Forum's Digital Transformation Forum and our Chief Executive Anne Taylor chairs this national forum.

Operationally we have the following digital projects underway:

- Expanded our reception check in software to track visitors and vaccination/temperature status in social care and housing, and gain instant feedback.
- A solution for staff time recording and rotas in both housing and social care.
- Energy monitoring and recording in granular details at multiple points across our estate network using Smartcool sensors.
- Using data from our care home call bell system to continue to ensure call bells are answered in a timely fashion.

- Improving our reporting on vitals, fluids, BMI, and nutrition in the care home.
- Added to our housing reporting on Power BI and Sharepoint including our waiting list, communal safety checks, - areas that were previously done on paper files.
- Use of Sharepoint as a document store, and digitising residents and staff records.
- Improving processes across our accounts function including purchase orders and after the year end our payment approvals process.

During the year we also worked on our new website and this was launched just after the year end. It has significant improved functionality especially in the areas of applications to us for jobs in a challenging recruitment market and for housing and social care resident applications.

Going forward we do want to improve our ability to get feedback on our services more quickly and easily but we do realise that residents like the interaction with our wardens and staff, and we see improving our processes as a way to make our back office operations more efficient so we can have more time available for residents who need our support.

# Our people



### A strong team

Thorngate has always had a strong focus on our colleagues because we know we can't deliver services to our residents in our housing or in our care home without the most caring and best trained employees. Our colleagues all worked incredibly hard to keep our residents safe through the pandemic and as we emerged from the worst of it, we all remain grateful to them.

In our care home the Covid protocols continued in place into 2022 and as the time of publication those protocols laid down by the Department of Health and Social Care are still in place. Thankfully they have lifted to a certain extent in housing.

For much of the year we had a full housing and support team, and we were delighted to welcome Lance Campling to the team at Melrose Gardens. Lance's experience heading up a number of charities and as a nurse in the Royal Air Force provides a great background for his new role. He is responsible for ensuring the residents are supported and highlighting any buildings issues.

of support services, Covid infections among staff did unfortunately affect us at different times of the year but through the dedication of those colleagues who were able to work, we came through as a stronger team.

Recruitment in our care service remains very challenging and we are pursuing a process of continuous active recruitment. However, in the main we have managed to recruit enough staff to maintain our care services with relatively few agency workers except during Covid outbreaks. We have not had to employ any agency workers in our housing services.

Finally we can't end a piece on our people without mentioning Janet Ross, who has retired. Jan worked for the Trust for 12 years and was an incredibly valued employee. Jan led the night team for the last few years and was passionate, hard-working and enthusiastic. She was an inspiration to us all in her care for residents and positive approach. We wish Jan a happy and active retirement.



### The Real Living Wage

During 2021-2022 we agreed at board level to become a Real Living Wage Employer.

At the time of writing, we are the only housing and residential care employer in Gosport that is registered as a Real Living Wage Employer and this has been an important milestone for us as we seek to be an employer of choice in the area.

Our Living Wage commitment will see everyone working at our care home and sheltered accommodation developments receive a minimum hourly wage of £9.90, significantly higher than the government minimum for over 23s, which currently stands at £9.50 per hour.

Thorngate Churcher Trust is based in a region where more than 12% of all jobs pay less than the real Living Wage – around 533,000 jobs. Despite this, Thorngate has committed to pay the real Living Wage and deliver a fair day's pay for a hard day's work.

The real Living Wage is the only rate calculated according to the costs of living. It provides a voluntary benchmark for employers that wish to ensure their staff earn a wage they can live on, not just the government minimum. Since 2011 the Living Wage movement has delivered a pay rise to over 300,000 people and put over £1.6 billion extra into the pockets of low paid workers.

Thorngate Chief Executive Anne Taylor said the charity was committed to ensuring all staff are paid fairly for the tremendous work they do.

"We value the incredible contribution our staff make to ensure the health, happiness and well-being of our residents in Russell Churcher Care Home and also our 124 sheltered homes in Gosport," said Anne. "Becoming a Living Wage employer demonstrates our appreciation of their work and our ethical approach to fair pay."

Katherine Chapman, director, Living Wage Foundation said: "We're delighted that Thorngate Churcher Trust has joined the movement of almost 9,000 responsible employers across the UK who voluntarily commit to go further than the government minimum to make sure all their staff earn enough to live on."



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### Training for the future

During the year we organised and ran two more of our leadership days. These are aimed at anyone in a team leading role from wardens through to care team leaders, and those who are working towards becoming team leaders as well as managers.

These were run with leadership specialists Quarterdeck. Managing Director of Quarterdeck Laura Boutell says of working with Thorngate, "Over the past year or so I have really enjoyed working with Anne and the team on the leadership days as we have looked at personal resilience and creating a culture of excellence. It's been great to see the care and consideration that everyone brings to their work and then to help them stop and reflect on how they can be even better. I look forward to continuing to work with them in the future, supporting their growth and development as an outstanding leadership team."

As well as external training our teams have continued with their job-related training. In care this means many mandatory courses on dementia, safeguarding, dignity, manual handling and many others as well as health and social care NVQs.

In housing many colleagues have continued with the Chartered Institute of Housing's specialist housing courses.

Our Property Services Manager, Ken Lyon has also worked very hard to qualify as a trainer in health and safety and in manual handling. This means we can deliver accredited training courses ourselves without the need for an external trainer in these areas.

Looking to the future we intend to keep our leadership days going forward and we hope to sign up more staff to NVQs in partnership with local colleges.



Our staff undertake a wide variety of courses, depending on their role in the organisation, a few are listed here:



**Equality and Diversity** 



**Fluids and Nutrition** 



**Fire Safety** 



Mental Capacity Deprivation of Liberty safeguards



Moving and Handling



**Person Centred Care** 



Medication management and Administration



Communication



Safeguarding



Health and Social Care NVQ Levels 2 and 3



**Cyber Training** 



Challenging behaviour



Autism and Learning Disability



**Ageing** 



**Food Hygiene** 



**Dementia** 



**Mental Health** 



Working at height



**First Aid** 



Chartered Institute of Housing Level 2 Housing Practice



**Oral Health** 



**Data Security** 



Infection prevention and control

# Value for money financial report



# Our social housing financial performance

The Regulator of Social Housing requires us to report to them how we are performing financially overall on social housing (i.e. excluding our care home operations).

This metric indicates our financial stability – it shows the margin we make operating the organisation on a day-to-day basis. We compare this to a peer group of similar organisations.

Our results show that we compare favourably with similar organisations.



Operating Margin Social Housing Lettings

### **Void Reporting**

Both housing and care home voids are reported monthly to the board and Thorngate sets its own targets on voids. Thorngate also benchmarks itself against the Smaller Providers Benchmarking Group, and this figure has been reported on where relevant below. We report voids on a percentage basis monthly and on a lost revenue basis annually. Our target is 2.5% or less voids. This can be affected by for example, increased development or major repairs, if this means more transfers of residents or decanting.

_	_	Thorngate 2020-21	_	_	_	Peer Group 2020-21
Housing %	0.22%	0.27%	0.25%	0.51%	1.04%	1.98%
Care %	1.70%	3.90%	1.17%	1.98%	1.79%	18%

We have once again turned in an excellent performance on voids and are ranked first yet again in the peer group of smaller similar housing associations for both care and housing void control. This reflects just how desirable our combined package of high-quality housing and high quality housing support delivered by on-site staff are to residents. This is also reflected in our very long waiting list for units (currently around 70 applications for 124 flats) with a wait time of 16 months.

# How well we purchase - "Procurement"

Gas



2019-20 **£63,471** +23%

2020-21 **£61,045** -3.8% 2021-22 **£46,305** -24.1

**Electric** 



2019-20 **£46,916** +10% 2020-21 **£49,983** +6.5% 2021-22 **£50,515** +1.1%

Food (care home per resident)



2019-20 **£1,516** -10% 2020-21 **£1,404** -31%

2021-22 **£2,164** +54%

Thorngate differs from most small housing providers because of the proportion of care it provides through its care home Russell Churcher Court. This means that some of our highest value purchases include items related to care such as food. It also means we have high gas and electric purchases due to the need to maintain high levels of warmth and services within the care home and in our housing communal areas. Accordingly, we direct effort towards procuring these "big ticket" items as cost effectively as we can.

Consequently, as in past years we are reporting on the focus areas of utilities and food for care home residents.

These have been chosen because almost all our properties have gas included in the weekly maintenance charges, communal electricity is a large cost, and for our care home, food is one of the largest costs. These figures can only be considered year on year within the same organisation because of different characteristics between different providers.

While we seek to reduce our utility costs, we look to at least maintain our food cost budget per person level, as there is a correlation between quality and cost and in the case of food for care home residents nutrition is a key part of caring for residents.

On gas and electric procurement we go to the market and we are currently in three year deals on both gas and electric, concluding in January 2024. We were extremely lucky to get a good deal in Spring/Summer 2021. We typically tender a host of suppliers, both brokers and direct and usually we look at around 15 projections. Gas is used for heating and hot water in both housing and care homes and only the new developments of Lucas Court, Garden View and Bradbury House buy their own gas. It should be noted that if housing residents had to buy their own gas or electric they would not be able to buy this as competitively as we do, however of course they would have more control over usage.

**Gas:** Our spend on gas has fallen significantly this year. In summer 2020 we fitted a major new boiler system at Elizabeth Court, which has been in operation for the whole of this financial year. In June 2021 we have fitted boiler optimisers with digital data feeds to enhance the performance of our large communal boilers.

Overall usage dropped by 2% and this year is the first full year of the contract with extremely low unit rates (the previous year only had 2 months with these rates). The standing charges

increased by 112% (£8,850) but unit rates per kwh decreased by 41.38%.

**Electric:** Spend on electricity has increased marginally year on year but less than inflation. Our sensor project continues to monitor for unusual uses of electricity and sends alerts to our dashboards.

Overall usage dropped by 6.5% but in July 2021 we began a new three year contract with higher rates than previous year. Standing charges remain similar year on year however unit rates per kwh increased by 12.5%.

Food: Our care home food costs have increased significantly during the year. There was a drop during the height of the pandemic in 2020-21 because of restrictions and we expected costs to rise in this financial year. In addition we contracted out the care home catering for 6 months of the year because of staffing issues and this also resulted in unavoidable increased costs. Since December 2021 care home catering has been back in house and while food spend has now dropped back somewhat there has been a significant inflationary increase. The longer term food cost environment is uncertain although we are expecting to hold to the budget of £2,017 per resident per annum in 2022.

## Thorngate Trustees



### Profiling our Chair Mark Hook



Our trustees continue to play a vital role in the strategic direction of Thorngate and we are fortunate that our

trustees have a wealth of experience and expertise to help us move forward as an organisation and that our activities are in keeping with our charitable mission and the ever-changing regulatory regime in social care.

Taking over the role of chair of the trustees from Jim Gilhooley this year is Mark Hook who became a trustee in 2015.

Mark is well known to many people in the Gosport area having moved to the town in 1980 and being involved in politics, sport, charitable organisations, and local groups.

He served on Gosport Borough Council for 32 years, he was leader for 14 years and retired in May 2022 having served as Gosport Mayor during his final year as a councillor.

Mark has been involved with Round Table, Gosport Borough Football Club, St John Ambulance and Rowner Regeneration.

Mark was introduced to Thorngate by Don Lucas who played such an important role in the running of Thorngate during his tenure as a trustee for nearly 40 years. "Don was a very great friend who introduced me to politics when I first came to Gosport and invited me to join the board when he was looking to retire," said Mark.

"I'm now retired from the council but by being part of Thorngate I hope I can continue to give service to the community here and steer the organisation alongside the other trustees."

A passionate believer in social care, Mark says that Thorngate is a shining example of an organisation dedicated to offering the very best in terms of housing and care to residents.

He says that as chairman he will be looking to continue driving up Thorngate's impressive reputation in the area.

"We have plans for the new development in Grove Road and will be looking at whatever we can do to offer our residents a better quality of life.

"We have an amazing team here at Thorngate with great staff and excellent leadership which all help to ensure we continue improving in the future."

Away from Thorngate Mark is involved in running a building company and he is vice chair of Fleetlands Football Club which has been promoted to the Wessex League. Married to Lynn for 28 years they have four children and seven grandchildren.

### Our invaluable team



Mark Hook
In his role as trustee
Mark is committed to
both the wellbeing of
residents and the long

term future of the Trust. Mark is also the current Mayor of Gosport.



Julie Palmer
Julie's background in
social services is a key
area of expertise on the
board of trustees.



Jim Gilhooley
Jim stepped down as
chair in 2022 but his
expertise as an HR
professional continues to

be an important element of our board.



John Clark
John is an experienced
housing professional
who has worked across
England for various

large housing associations in roles ranging from repairs and complaints management to housing manager.



Christopher Matthews
Chris is a partner in
law firm Churchers.
There has always been
a partner from Churchers

on the board of trustees and Chris is mainly involved in strategic decisions and adding value to legal and business decisions.



Ollie Zaki
Ollie is a commercial
property lawyer at
local law firm Glanvilles
and says he is pleased

to be involved as a trustee using his professional expertise and the opportunity to give something back to the community.



David Popoola-Smith David joined the board of trustees in 2022 and as a social worker is highly experienced

in adult social care.



Reeta Ram
Reeta is founder of
DPR Housing Limited
and Dementia Partners
Limited, offering 24 hour

staffing for high level support.



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