

# Community Matters



OSBORNE

## Superheroes Clean Up

Litter busters help clear up valuable community recreation space

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## Demelza Space to Grow

Hospice given space to grow in build celebrating 50 years of Osborne

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## Work-based Learning

Students join us as part of pilot learning programme.

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## Welcome to the Winter edition of Community Matters.

It's been a very busy winter for us here at Osborne as our communities continue to grow.

Since our Autumn edition we have commenced new partnerships with Optivo and Slough Borough Council and have enjoyed getting to know our new communities there. We have also been helping our residents to shape their own customer experience through our Customer Journey Mapping approach (page 11).

We were proud to play a part in a very special project for an incredible charity as part of Osborne's 50th year in business celebrations (page 10) and honoured to attend the 100th birthday of former Banardo's nurse Doris in our Waltham Forest community (page 13).

Christmas was, of course, a particularly busy time for community events and you can find a round-up of our activities on page 5, whilst the New Year has brought the exciting news that we have been shortlisted for an Employment Skills and Training Award by TPAS (page 6).

It is hugely rewarding to see the development of skills and confidence in young people and you can read about some great examples (pages 8 and 9) in the form of Rhys, Ashley and Connor.

I hope you enjoy!

Jo Fletcher  
Head of Engagement



**347**

initiatives supported/delivered

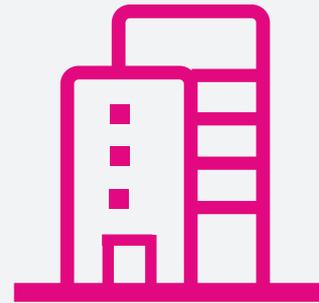


**26,348**

local people engaged/benefited

**99**

community facilities improved



**1400**

extra staff hours



Cost of materials:

**£669,191**



# Community engagement



## Supporting Sunnyside

**Sunnyside Rural Trust supports local adults with learning disabilities by offering them trainee opportunities in horticulture, woodwork and shop assistant roles.**

They aim to provide stimulating activities and support in order to enhance their personal development and improve their quality of life.

We returned in September to support their local food and music event which raised awareness and money for the Hemel Food Garden Site.

Osborne sponsored a face painter who created

butterflies, beetles and more to help raise money and our volunteers worked with Sunnyside Staff to run the 'Kids Corner' Activities including Apple Pressing, a Butterfly Treasure Hunt and lots of crafts.

Gemma Vine, Communications Officer at the charity, said: "Thank you very much for volunteering at our fundraising event on Saturday and MASSIVE thanks for kindly paying for the talented facepainter. We couldn't run the event without the support of volunteers so we are very grateful."

## Superheroes Clean Up

Osborne were pleased to support a team of 'superhero litter busters' who took part in a community litter pick at Manor Park in Slough.

The park, a popular and valuable recreational space for all the community, got some TLC from over 40 volunteers, with young and old all keen to get involved.

The event, organised by local resident and Chairperson of Paving the Way, Sabeena Akram, with support from Slough Borough Council, generated a great sense of community cohesion with more and more volunteers coming out to help throughout the day.

To add a sense of fun to the occasion, we handed out some 'superhero' masks, as well as more practical equipment.

Akram said: 'This activity created a real buzz in the park with local residents initially curious and then wanting to be a part of the clear up.'

Councillor Nazir also joined the heroes and was enthralled with their enthusiasm. 'It is great to see so many people coming together of all ages with a shared passion to make a difference to their local environment!'

## New Kitchen for Gadebridge

.....

When Councillor Isy Imarni visited our offices during the summer, she mentioned that they were looking to improve the kitchens at Gadebridge Community Centre, which was very dated.

Along with our Supply Chain Partners Shadbolts and Rixonway, the team were happy to donate and install new units, flooring and tiling as part of our community investment work.

Karen Watts, who manages the centre, got in touch to say: "We would like to send out a BIG 'Thank You' to Osborne



“ We would like to send a BIG thank you to Osborne for all for all the work that has been carried out. ”

Karen Watts, Centre Manager

for all the work that has been carried out on both our Halsey & Galley Hall kitchens. It has made a big difference to the people who use our halls for both regular users and family party occasions.”

The centre is used by over 200 people every week including activity groups, Church services and toddler groups.

“The kitchens were looking very tired and worn out, but now freshly decorated with all the new cupboards, work surfaces and shiny new sinks it is a pleasure for people to use them” added Karen.

## Festive Fun in the Communities

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Our team were busy spreading festive cheer benefiting over 400 people across our Communities in the run up to Christmas.

The Osborne penguin (aka Neal), proved a popular quizmaster at two festive lunches for sheltered residents, whilst a team of Osborne Christmas elves dropped in to deliver a relaxed christmassy afternoon of fun for the residents of Phyllis Courtnage.

Over 150 lunches were served as the team helped out at the Trinity homelessness charity and a 'Recycled Teenagers' Christmas party, which included line dancing, bingo and a quiz.

Users of The Waterside Centre – a day centre for adults with various learning and physical disabilities, enjoyed a film

afternoon with Hannah, Carley and Ashley transforming the centre into a mini cinema experience for those unable to attend a pantomime trip, whilst an evening of fun and games for Young Carers was also supported.

Neal stepped in to deputise for a delayed Santa at the Priory Court Christmas Fair in the grotto we had built with support from the Aston Group, whilst Hannah supported Santa on a Rotary organised walk around local estates, raising money for local charities.

The team, which received more than 60 staff hours of support for these events, also donated children's goody bags to Reigate and Banstead Women's Aid.



# Education, culture and employment



'unemployed' to 'employed' is a big step to take.

Whether leaving education or being long-term unemployed due to health or personal reasons, we hope that through the skills and knowledge of our staff and our collaborative work we can help to bridge that gap.

Jo Fletcher, Head of Engagement, Osborne Communities, said: "We have worked hard with community partners to develop training programmes to best suit their needs.

## Osborne Shortlisted for Employability Skills at Tpas Award

**The Tpas Awards, which take place in London on Friday 9th February, recognise and showcase best practice in tenant engagement and celebrate the inspiring success stories achieved by their members, partners and unsung heroes.**

Tpas are England's leading tenant engagement experts. The not-for-profit

organisation brings together tenants, landlords and contractors to provide impartial advice, support and training to improve and enhance tenant engagement across the country.

This year we are delighted to have been shortlisted in the South Region Finals for their Excellence in Employment Skills & Training Award.

The submission highlighted our inclusive and pro-active approach to delivering a pre-employment package for residents.

Activity across Osborne Communities includes mock interviews, career workshops, work experience placements, partnerships with education providers and our bespoke training centre which offers free DIY workshops for residents.

At Osborne Communities we understand that for many people, moving from

"Our agile approach means that we can tailor what we do to ensure the best outcomes for individuals.

"I am very proud of what we have achieved and look forward to continuing our work in supporting employability."

We will be joining residents, clients and contractors from across the region in London on the 9th February for the official ceremony.

## Safety at Swing Gate

**When we set up a new site, it is essential that everything is in place to keep the local community safe.**

Our new development site in Berkhamsted is right across the road from Swing Gate Infant and Nursery School so engagement began early on.

Our Community Investment Team delivered an interactive 'Site Safety' Assembly for pupils which raised awareness and got them thinking about the dangers of playing on sites, why professionals wear protective clothing and finished with an educational video.

At the end of the assembly we set pupils a poster

competition to help reinforce the key messages they had learnt.

We returned with our partners Dacorum Borough Council and special guest, Rosie, to present the 12 winners with their prizes and medals!

The winning posters are now displayed on the site to show other local children the dangers beyond the hoarding.



## HR Advice for Holy Family

**Members of the Osborne People Team (Human Resources) headed off to The Holy Family School in Waltham Forest to share their combined careers knowledge and interviewing techniques.**

They were joined by volunteers from other business professions as they put the 6th form students through their paces, giving them the opportunity to experience and learn from a mock interview.

Students then received constructive feedback from their interviewers and other students. Post interview the group received invaluable career and employability advice.

Lynne Bailey, Senior HR Advisor at Osborne said: "Taking the time out of my busy work schedule to help support this initiative has to be one of the most rewarding



things I have done in my career. Giving students the opportunity to understand and practice what an interview looks and feels like, in a safe environment was a very positive experience."

**“ To support this initiative has to be one of the most important things I have done in my career. ”**

**Lynne Bailey  
Senior HR Advisor, Osborne**



## What's the Story?

**Osborne Communities hosted a Storytelling Coffee Morning at Pond Close to celebrate National Storytelling Week (27th Jan – 3rd Feb).**

Dacorum Heritage Trust kindly brought along a box of original items from the 70's and led an informal workshop, with items such as old TV remotes, cassette players and music annuals sparking memories and stories from the group.

There were also questions spread across the room such as "what music did you listen to in the 70s?" and "What did you do for the Queens Silver Jubilee?" which encouraged everyone to share their memories about national and local events.

After the workshop, our team spent time with residents discussing some of the items they had been asked to bring along, which included war medals, photographs, cookbooks and family

history documents. Osborne Communities Senior Site Manager Steve Dunn even brought along his old tools from his days as an apprentice, which led to more than a few questions.

The power of reminiscing and storytelling was really clear to see with the room full of laughter and bright faces as words and old items sparked memories and funny anecdotes.

Following its success, it is hoped the initiative can be rolled out more regularly.



## Rhys Returns For Experience

**We were delighted to welcome back Eastleigh College student Rhys for a second work experience placement with us last month.**

We first got to know Rhys when he was a pupil at Osborne school, when he and other pupils helped to build a recycled green house from 1500 plastic bottles in 2015.

Two years on he joined the Osborne Communities team for a week, helping to carry out responsive repairs in and around Winchester.

This time Rhys, who does not allow the challenges of autism and asperger syndrome to hold him back, was given the opportunity to experience working on a construction site.

In advance of the week, Rhys and Dad, Kevin, met Project Manager Mike Teasdale on site to ensure Rhys was happy with our plans and would get the

best learning experience possible.

Trainee Site Manager Leire Saavedra Rodriguez and Assistant Site Manager Ben Shaw then took him through all site safety procedures.

Throughout the week Rhys was kept busy, experiencing 'on the tools' trades and joining site progress and planning meetings.

Our team were so impressed with Rhys' commitment, dedication and hard work that they presented him with an achievement certificate and rucksack full of Osborne goodies.

The team also presented his mum with a bunch of flowers for being taxi driver for the week, she said: "I was a little nervous at first, but after meeting Mike and the team I knew Rhys would be ok. Thank you all for all for allowing him to achieve another step in his life."

## Connor & Ashley Join the team

**With a current skills shortage in the industry, one of our key aims through our work in the local community is to encourage young people to consider a career in construction and realise the variety of roles available. We were therefore excited to be able to offer two very different placement opportunities for a new workbased-learning programme in the area, in partnership with Astley Cooper School.**

Connor has joined our Repairs and Maintenance Team as a Multi-Trade Operative where he has been mentored by our electricians, plumbers, painters and decorators, drainage operatives and supervisors. He has also been helping in-house by putting the painting and decorating skills he has learnt to practise by painting a new section of our Osborne Training Facility. Visiting residents' homes on a daily basis, he is also able to develop skills in customer service, communication and safeguarding. We hope that the varied experience will help Connor decide on his career choices.

Erica Hodges, Work Based Learning Tutor for the programme, met with Connor for his first review and was amazed with his progress; "I wanted to let you know what a pleasure and privilege it was visiting Connor last week. When I first met him in the summer he was very quiet but I've watched him turn in to a friendly, confident young man over the last month or so. It's a joy to watch I hope you're as proud of his progress as I am."

Ashley, who was unsure of what he would like to do, joined our office team and has been

supporting a number of different departments to help him decide what career he may want to pursue. To utilise his creative skills, he has been helping the Community Investment Manager to research, plan and deliver events with a variety of community partners.

He has also helped the Customer Experience Team better showcase their compliments by redesigning the compliments board.

Each Friday, Ashley goes out with Garry, a Building Surveyor who produces surveys, drawings and plans prior to work taking place.

Both young men have also taken part in training, such as Dementia Awareness and Health and Safety, and attended company briefings from the Managing Director to give them the full experience of working for an established construction company.

We have been impressed to see how Connor and Ashley have developed over the programme.

Supporting work placements like this also has an extremely positive impact on our own employees, who enjoy the chance to mentor young people and pass on their skills and knowledge to the next generation. We are extremely impressed with the attitude, behaviour and work ethic of Connor and Ashley and believe that this programme could really help to bridge the gap between education and employment for young people.



*“ I would just like to say how wonderful it is to work with Osborne. You have been such a champion supporter of this course and have been instrumental in helping to set it up. Hopefully we can give some of our young people a great start into their careers. ”*

**Erica Hodges,  
Work Based Learning Tutor**



# Demelza Given Space to Grow



Late last year Osborne celebrated 50 years at the top of their industry by delivering an impressive two-storey extension with the support of our supply chain as a gift to the Demelza Children's Hospice in Eltham, South East London.

The charity, who were successfully selected from more than 20 worthwhile causes nominated by Osborne staff, provide bespoke expert compassionate care services free of charge to families 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

The emotional well-being of everyone at the hospice is central to the care and support they provide, and the new extension will allow them the opportunity to further look after the well-being of staff and volunteers.

The build, project name 'Space to

Grow', was delivered in just 14 days.

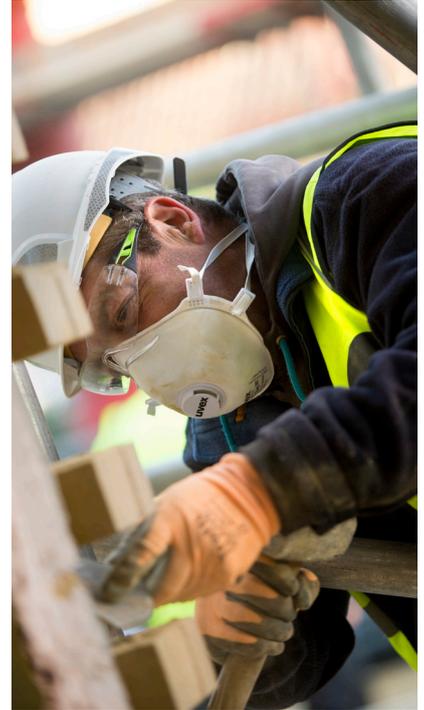
Osborne Chief Executive Andy Steele said: "I am delighted we have made a difference with the Demelza Space to Grow Project and marked our 50 years in business.

"I felt it was important to leave a legacy and achieve an outcome which will positively impact on the lives of children and families in our society for the next 50 years.

View the video at:  
[vimeo.com/OsborneNews](https://vimeo.com/OsborneNews)

“ We are so grateful to the team at Osborne and all their colleagues and suppliers for giving us such a phenomenal gift.

Lavinia Jarrett,  
Demelza Director  
of Resources



# Residents Map out their Customer Experience



**Residents are helping to shape their own customer experience through workshops with their new property service provider.**

In the last few months Osborne Communities have entered into partnership with Optivo in Hastings and Slough Borough Council to provide repairs, maintenance and investment services to thousands of local homes.

Aimed at understanding what is important to the customer and how services can be improved, Osborne Communities have begun engaging residents in Slough through special 'Customer Journey Mapping' workshops, with sessions for Optivo residents to be rolled out soon.

"To deliver an exceptional service we need to listen to customers, discover how they feel and understand their current and future expectations" explains Claudette Ara, Osborne Communities Regional Customer Experience Manager.

"Our customer journey mapping approach provides an environment that allows customers to talk openly and methodically from their own first hand experiences."

More than a dozen local residents attended the first session in Slough, joined by Cabinet Member for Corporate Finance & Housing Councillor Mohammed Nazir (pictured centre), filling the Fox Road meeting room

with an array of colourful post-it notes, sharing their views and expectations at each stage of the process from reporting a repair to completion.

Councillor Nazir commented; "The residents of Slough are central to everything we do and this initial session has provided them with an opportunity to share their personal customer experiences. We finished the day with a greater understanding of what really matters to the people in our borough. We want our residents to know that we're listening closely to their concerns and working hard to understand their expectations. These recent learnings are invaluable as they will help us shape and improve future customer services."

The session, and others to follow, provide Osborne and our partners with a true insight into the needs of customers in order to improve their experiences in the future.

"Understanding the customer journey and how they feel at each touch-point is a key learning benefit for us" Claudette says.

"We can now cross check the current customer journey against our internal processes and customer expectations to identify improvements we can make considering their needs."



# Health and wellbeing

## Adding Colour to the City

**Our planned works team brought some colour to the city when they re-installed planters which were removed during our works to City of Westminster Dwellings and Dufours Place.**

Over the past six months both buildings, within a conservation area and classed as 'unlisted buildings of merit', have benefited from £1.5m worth of internal and external maintenance works including window replacements, roofing works, redecorations and flooring, balcony works and more.

Engagement and consultation with all residents has remained constant throughout, with Customer Liaison Officer

Rosie visiting every home and remaining on site to discuss any issues or concerns. Communication with residents was also maintained through regular newsletters and coffee mornings.

Site Manager Mark Dishman also received an award from the Considerate Constructors Scheme (CCS) for his care and consideration of surrounding properties and people during the works.

As a final touch, we arranged for all the renewed planters on the buildings to be filled with flowers to add a splash of colour for residents and passers-by to enjoy.



## Dementia Awareness Training

It is vital that we stop and think about our customers and how we can best adjust our service to meet their needs.

Following the Dacorum Tenant Inspectors report, from their inspection of our Out Of Hours Service, it was recognised that we often work with residents who are suffering from Dementia. As a result, we teamed up with our Community Partner, AgeUK Dacorum, to deliver awareness workshops in October.

Melanie Clarke, Community Support Manager for the charity, delivered an interactive and very useful session on the different types of Dementia, common misconceptions and tips and advice for communicating with people who are suffering

from the disease.

An important message to take away was that although somebody with Dementia may not remember what you said or did, they will remember how it made them feel.

As a result of the workshop, two Osborne employees applied for volunteering positions within the charity to give back to their local community.

*“ The session was very personal and interactive and will make me reflect and think more. ”*

**Feedback from the session**



## Bringing Colour to Lime Court

On a sunny, cold winters morning we dropped into Lime Court in Waltham Forest to help residents plant some new bulbs in their communal garden.

We had heard Olga, a sheltered scheme resident who has tended to the garden for many years, was keen to add some colour to the many planters she looks after, so our Community Investment Manager, Neal, arrived to donate some bulbs to help brighten up the space in preparation for Spring.

## Happy Birthday Doris

Osborne were delighted to support a 100th birthday party, organised by our partners at Waltham Forest Council, for Doris, a resident at the Lime Court sheltered scheme, which is currently undergoing refurbishment works to residents flats and community areas.

Doris had been staying with her daughter while work was being carried out on her home of 17 years. But she wanted to come back to celebrate her birthday with her friends and family including great grandchildren.

On her arrival, Doris was pleasantly surprised by the lighter, fresher, bigger community room. The Mayor then presented our guest of honour with flowers before everyone enjoyed some centennial festivities including singing, dancing and of course, birthday cake.

Trained as a nurse, Doris, whose friends describe her as warm, kind, smart and funny, spent much of her working life looking after children in a Banardo's children's hospital.





## All in the Planning

**Ben Barton is a Lead Planner for Osborne Communities working on our partnership with Optivo, a contract we commenced last September to maintain 7,000 homes across East Sussex.**

We asked him a few questions about his key role ensuring our operatives are deployed efficiently to meet resident's needs.

**Q: Ben, tell us a little about your background?**

I became a planner about 3 ½ years ago so I've a good understanding of the role, the area and our residents.

I was keen to progress my career so when Osborne Communities took on the contract last September and the offer to join them was made, I was hopeful I might be able to bring my knowledge and experience in the role across and progress to a higher level.

I took the offer and I'm really pleased I did as I have now become a Lead Planner managing a small team which is really exciting.

**Q: So what does your role involve?**

As Planners we run the day to day diaries and movement of our operatives across several different trades, making sure we deploy them efficiently so we can respond to residents needs as quickly as possible.

We take lots of calls and keep in constant touch with our operatives and our colleagues in the Optivo call centre to keep right up to date with progress on every job so we can manage our operatives time and skills effectively.

**Q: You share your office with the Optivo call centre team, how valuable is that ability to work closely alongside them?**

It benefits everyone including, most importantly, the residents.

It means there's constant communication and sharing of information between us so we can operate more effectively and when there are issues, work together to resolve them as quickly as possible.

**Q: So how has the change to Osborne been?**

Busy, but in a positive way and there's a really good sense of the team all supporting each other to provide the best possible service.

As you might expect with any new contract there have been one or two things to iron out but we are working really hard to resolve these and there is a really good atmosphere amongst the team.

**Q: Could you give an example of a recent issue and how it was resolved?**

We recently had an emergency raised at the end of a very busy day where a resident reported water pouring through their ceiling.

Our plumber, who was on his way home, immediately attended to bring the situation under control.

Next morning I was able to work closely in the office with my colleagues at Optivo to follow up, and through combining our knowledge and resources, we were able to fully resolve a potentially serious issue for the resident safely and efficiently within 24 hours.

It really demonstrated how our co-location helps us to make fast, informed decisions that benefit the residents.

**Q: Finally Ben, what's the best thing about your job?**

Although some days can be absolutely manic we're busy because we're helping people and that's really rewarding.

Also for me at the moment I'm really enjoying the opportunity to improve my leadership skills and help our new planners through passing on my knowledge and experience.



# Environment



## Fruitful Charity Work

Property and Pears - The two don't often collide, except for when Community Investment Manager, Neal Allison, used his Development Day to attend a charity run harvesting event.

Neal took on the charitable task of picking pears as part of an event for Community Food Enterprise. This social enterprise food business, works with diverse communities in East London to fulfil their rights to access nutritious foods. Like every charity, volunteers are core to their success, and the Community Food Enterprise often organise fruit harvesting events.

In one single day, the volunteers can gather over 2.1 tonnes of pears, the equivalent of 27,500 portions of fruit.

All the fruit is directly donated to the National Fareshare network, who distributes the food to their associated homeless hostels, food banks and charities. Several local charities and schools often also benefit from the haul.

However, on this particular day, some of the fruit went slightly further afield. The charity allowed Neal to take away and deliver several bags of pears to a range of community projects, many of which are associated with Osborne Communities work.

They included two primary schools, Trinity homeless shelter, domestic violence refuge families and four other sheltered schemes; the fruit was delivered and greatly appreciated.



## Upcoming events

**26th January**  
National Young Carers Day

**27th January - 3rd February**  
National Storytelling Week

**14-21st February**  
National Bird Box Week

**19-25th February**  
Student Volunteering Week

**1st March**  
Work Book Day

**5-9th March**  
National Apprentice Week

**8th March**  
International Women's Day

# Community Matters

# Contact us



**Hannah Bailey**  
Community Investment  
Manager  
[Hannah.Bailey@osborne.co.uk](mailto:Hannah.Bailey@osborne.co.uk)



**Neal Allison**  
Community Investment  
Manager  
[Neal.Allison@osborne.co.uk](mailto:Neal.Allison@osborne.co.uk)



**Kasmine Moses**  
Community Investment  
Co-ordinator  
[Kasmine.Moses@osborne.co.uk](mailto:Kasmine.Moses@osborne.co.uk)



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**Osborne Property Services**  
Fonteyn House, 47-49 London Road  
Reigate, RH2 9PY  
0800 0258 008

[www.osborne.co.uk](http://www.osborne.co.uk)

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