

COGNATUM NEWS

Editorial: In praise of the service charge

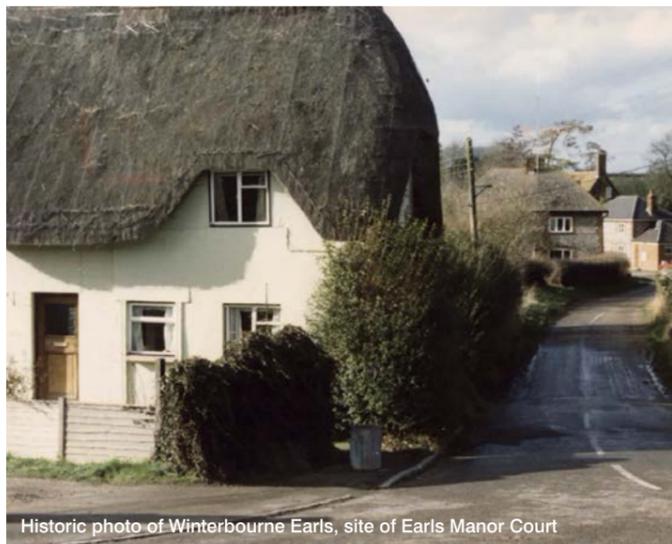
An ongoing annual service charge covers the cost of running, maintaining and repairing the grounds and buildings, any onsite staff and the upkeep of communal facilities. From a budgeting perspective, service charges need not themselves be a cause for concern as they mean owners are unlikely to get an unexpected bill for roof repairs, new windows, or any other cost associated with the property structure or grounds.

Our not for profit status is extremely important to us and has made us attractive to development partners looking for a reputable estate management company. We do not charge ground rents, nor do we charge fees for other services such as correspondence or landlord consents. All costs, including the managing fee and contribution to reserves, are contained within this single charge, the collection of which allows us to manage the estates in a responsible manner and ensure the continued viability of owners' investments.

In this edition of Cognatum News we reflect on our heritage and future in Wiltshire, reveal news of two new estates and celebrate success in our gardens.



Howarth Park, Salisbury a contemporary return to Wiltshire



Historic photo of Winterbourne Earls, site of Earls Manor Court



Howarth Park, Salisbury, 2020

News in brief

Henry Thornton retired from the board of Cognatum Estates in December, two years after stepping down from being chairman. Henry led the company for the first ten years from the time of the successful merger of the Beechcroft Trust and the English Courtyard Association in 2008. Previously he had been managing director of retirement housing specialists Beechcroft Developments, which he founded with Guy Mossop.

Operations Team – In the latter half of last year, Loraine Suter joined the operations team, enabling a smaller 'patch' for each of the operations managers. By making such a move we are committed to ensuring that the residents and managers of each estate get the time and support from the operations team that they deserve. Each estate will have four pre-announced visits from their operations manager each year, during which time residents are very welcome to meet with them. Estate managers should always be the first point of call for any queries but residents can contact their operations manager should the need arise.

A Mountain of a Challenge – Emma Youens, a relief manager at St Mary's Court, will be climbing Kilimajaro in February. She has taken this challenge on to fundraise for Child Bereavement UK who supported her when her son Ellis was stillborn. She has already conquered Snowdon and Scafell Pike as part of her training. We will be keeping you updated with her progress.

Wiltshire is, in so many ways, a place where you can have it all. Running south from the edge of the Cotswolds to the fringe of the New Forest and marking the start of the West Country, the county is home to a sizeable portion of the M4 corridor, and is a hop skip and a jump across the county border to the coast. The ultra urban Swindon is to the north, teeming with amenities and leisure facilities, the timeless beauty and elegance of Salisbury lies to the south, while smart market towns, the likes of Chippenham, Trowbridge and Marlborough, dot the countryside.

It was here in 1977 that Cognatum began the journey into independent retirement living with the acquisition of Manor Farm, which in time became Manor Court, our first estate. The carefully thought out estate sits neatly in former farmland and is inspired by the beautiful Elizabethan almshouses at nearby Froxfield. It set the tone for our style of development, and some ten years later the pretty village of Ramsbury was chosen as the site of the third Beechcroft estate, which would become known as Islescourt. Director Guy Mossop arranged the land deal, which involved several separate pieces of land being pieced together, one of

which was home to the village school which had expanded beyond capacity. Three classes were housed in mobile accommodation and clearly a more permanent solution was required. Beechcroft acquired this particular parcel of land with the proviso that they would build a new school which they duly did: a bright, well equipped, modern primary school, with six classrooms, a combined hall and canteen, a library, and a resource room, was opened in 1988. The bell from the original school was saved and installed at the new site, taking a piece of heritage with it.

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In the heart of the community

Cognatum's estates were always intended to be part of the local community, giving residents the opportunity to pursue interests and hobbies and to join local organisations. This aspiration also applies to our staff and estate manager Eric Dougherty has done just that. He is a Firefighter at Pewsey 3/7, a retained fire station of Dorset and Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service, which operates through the fire fighting crews responding to emergencies from their regular jobs. In recent months, the crews have handled a huge array of situations, including saving

lives in road traffic collisions, dealing with thatch and chimney fires, and hazardous material, flooding incidents and providing initial first aid prior to the arrival of paramedics. As well as the emergency response, they have raised money through carol singing and washing cars at the station, benefiting local causes in the community. With the arrival of heavy snow they provide a transport service enabling medical staff to get to their place of work. Watch manager Mark Hillier describes Eric as a valued member of a team, something we would wholeheartedly agree with.

Howarth Park, Salisbury a contemporary return to Wiltshire

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Like Manor Court, Islescourt is brought to life in the local red brick and clay tiled cottages, set in a perfect piece of England with sweeping lawns and a duck pond. It is somewhat surprising, given the success of Manor Court and Islescourt, that both Beechcroft and English Courtyard were slow to return to the county. Earls Manor Court, built in a chequerboard flint design, using stone from the same quarry as Salisbury Cathedral, in Winterbourne Earls, was the next ECA estate in 1992, and it was a full ten years later again that Beechcroft unveiled Wye House in Marlborough and Church Leat in Downton. In the meantime English Courtyard had acquired the old workhouse in Marlborough. After its closure it had been repurposed as a children's hospital, and more recently, a school for troubled boys. In an odd coincidence, former estate manager Peter Hussey, now of Bearwater but for many years of St Luke's Court, and previously a teacher for Wiltshire Education Authority, used to attend meetings in the headmaster's office, which would later become his bedroom. Bemerton Farm was the last of the Wiltshire developments, on the site of a model farm just outside Salisbury, taking the total number of estates to seven, the most we have in any county.



Manor Court, Pewsey, built 1979



Church Leat, Downton, built 2002



Islescourt, Ramsbury, built 1989



Wye House, Marlborough, built 2002



Earls Manor Court, Winterbourne Earls, built 1992



Bemerton Farm, Bemerton, built 2003



St Luke's Court, Marlborough, built 1998

Archive pictures of the Earls Manor Court estate show the barns on the former farm being used to store scrap metal during WWII. Indeed, many of the estates have their roots in far more industrious activity that the now tranquil surroundings would suggest. Perhaps the most striking illustration of this is Church Leat, built on the site of the internationally renowned Downton Tannery – until its closure in 1998 among the very last tanneries in the British Isles with the earliest record of tanning on the site in 1215. The site is flanked and bisected by a diversion of the River Avon, once used to wash the skins but now offering a far more relaxed environment. Of all the estates, perhaps Bemerton Farm has remained the closest to its origins. The farm was built for the Countess Catherine Herbert, born into Russian nobility as Yekaterina Vorontsova and later the second wife of George Herbert, Earl of Pembroke. The farm was designed with subtle Russian and Italianate flourishes to reflect her heritage.

Salisbury was voted 'Best Place to Live 2019' by The Sunday Times and some 200 years after the creation of Bemerton Farm, we turn again to Wiltshire in 2020. The city is a little over an hour and a half to London and Bristol by train and less than an hour from Stonehenge and the south coast. Our new estate Howarth Park, with a show home due for completion in the summer, is within walking distance of Salisbury city centre, and offers beautiful views of the cathedral spire. All of the properties have been designed with the thought and care our owners have come to expect, building on our experience of the past 40 years. Cognatum are working in partnership with award-winning developers Westcoast Developments, a partnership that we very much hope to see continued. For more information and to be added to the interest list, please call Cognatum Property on 01491 821170.

It is exciting to be coming back to where we found ourselves 40 years ago – inevitably with new people and new approaches but always the same aspiration, the same ethos and the same excellent service.

Gardens Awards Success

Congratulations to Muskerry Court and Wye House, winners of 'In Bloom' awards for 2019. Muskerry Court entered 'Tunbridge Wells in Bloom' and both staff and residents were thrilled to find out they had been awarded Gold (First place) in the Best Business Grounds.

The town of Marlborough was awarded Gold at the South West in Bloom awards, with the gardens at Wye House being entered in the 'It's Your Neighbourhood' category and judged 'outstanding'. Estate Manager Tricia Kilsby commented "The council gardeners and Andrew King (gardener at Wye House) do a great job and it's nice to see that recognized".



Left: Muskerry Court
Right: Wye House



The grounds of the estates have always been a key feature, and at Muskerry Court in Kent, they are being enjoyed with a new purpose. Estate manager Sue Moon invited a Nordic walking instructor to do a taster session at Muskerry with the result that nine residents are now enjoying a weekly session in the grounds!

Action for the River Kennet (ARK)

Back in the summer of 2017, the estate manager at Bearwater embarked on a joint project with ARK, Action for the River Kennet, to repair a section of riverbank along the Dun which runs through the estate. Starting with some pond dipping sessions for owners, this progressed to several volunteer days for the charity, supported by owners and staff. The work was very successful, with water vole spotted in the river shortly after the work was completed, and the project was runner-up for a national award. ARK returned to Bearwater last year, with more volunteer days (pictured). Below are the reflections of Anna Forbes, project officer for ARK.

'It was a pleasure to return to Bearwater in Hungerford to see how the river restoration project we carried out in 2017 had matured; and at the request of the new manager, Peter Hussey, to restore a stretch further upstream within the site during 2019.

The 2017 project had three main objectives: to prevent further erosion of the riverbank, improve the stretch for wildlife and connect the community with their valuable chalk stream. These were all achieved, with huge participation from Cognatum employees and residents alike. Within months of the work being completed water vole were spotted swimming in the channel and evidence of their presence observed amongst the newly established marginal vegetation. Water voles are nationally declining, so to be able to create and join up wildlife corridors for this mammal to expand into and thrive is really important.

Otters have been observed at Bearwater, this is truly exciting and a sign of a healthy river.

Getting back into the Dun the difference in the riverbed is huge. In 2017 we waded around in deep silt, whereas now underfoot is firm with clean gravel. This is a significant improvement for fish, which need clean gravel to successfully spawn. Many freshwater invertebrates also need silt free gravels. Invertebrates are key to a healthy river, they are processors of detritus and are food for fish, birds and other creatures.

In 2019 our professionally led volunteer team restored a stretch of bank that had suffered due to the invasive American signal crayfish. Hundreds of native plants were planted into the restoration work, their roots and rhizomes will help to naturally hold the bank together, whilst continuing to expand the corridor for wildlife, whilst making the riverbank walk more attractive to residents'.

Anna Forbes, ARK Project Officer

Action for the River Kennet (ARK) is a registered charity and is the Rivers Trust for the Kennet catchment which includes the River Dun bordering our estate at Bearwater.
www.riverkennet.org



Conserving our Heritage

Properties on Cognatum estates have always been designed to complement their surroundings. Often built with local materials, stone or flint or brick, with architecture inspired by the local vernacular, they are designed as a cohesive whole.

From the hanging tiles at Crittles Court to the timber-clad barn at Church Place, our estates reflect and enhance their surroundings. It is for this reason that applications to make a change to the exterior of a property must be approved by Cognatum.

A common request that Cognatum receives is for the use of plastic (or uPVC), and so called "composite" building components, such as windows, conservatories and doors. Cognatum's policy is to retain the original choice of materials. Where owners wish to replace their windows, Cognatum will help owners identify high quality and high performing timber replacements. These are widely available and have all the benefits claimed by the plastic window industry in terms of

security and energy efficiency, whilst maintaining the highest standards of appearance and quality.

uPVC discolours over time, and can become brittle, while plastic still requires regular cleaning, is almost impossible to repair, and there are many reports of problems with fittings such as handles and hinges. Well specified and well-maintained timber is as long-lasting as its plastic counterpart.

Another consideration must be one of the environment. The difficulty of recycling uPVC means that 97% of windows end up in landfill, and the manufacture of uPVC windows uses eight times more energy than timber windows, and involves the production of nearly 50% the hazardous gases that the government has targeted for elimination including the carcinogen benzene.

Recognising the importance of heritage maintains the beauty of Cognatum properties and estates and protects owners' property values.



Orchard Yard

It has long been a wish to see a new Cognatum development, so we are delighted that in 2020 two new estates will be added to our portfolio. In addition to Howarth Park, Orchard Yard in Wingham, Kent is scheduled for completion towards the end of the year. Orchard Yard is an entirely new development, consisting of 15 cottages and apartments featuring clever biophilic design principles. The properties will of course be finished to the highest standard, each with a garden or balcony and the grounds are designed to complement their natural situation: a wooded drive, a flower meadow and allotments; meandering pathways to an old walled garden and a carefully designed pathway, with sensory planting, that takes you to the heart of Wingham in a matter of moments. In addition to this, there will be the clubhouse, a social hub for residents who wish to enjoy the company of neighbours; offering a multi-purpose area fitted with a terrace and BBQ, and flexible indoor space.



COGNATUM PROPERTY

RETIRE IN STYLE



No.23 Spring 2020 www.cognatum.co.uk



Peter Walton

James Greenwood is our new Chairman; Peter Walton has been appointed Managing Director and Ruth Saunders has joined the administration team.

Cognatum has experienced a surge in visitor numbers to its website, and enquiries for more information this year. Rightmove, the property site, has confirmed it has had the busiest January for 20 years. Confidence seems to have returned to the property market, and we are confident we will see a busy spring.

This year we will be marketing two new developments, one in central Salisbury and the other in Wingham near Canterbury. Whilst contemporary in design they continue to reflect our design ethos with properties set around landscaped garden squares and garages tucked in the corners so as not to dominate the views. Both estates will have some of our largest properties built to date.



£425,000

28 Lyefield Court, Emmer Green, Berkshire

Perfect for golfers, this spacious two-bedroom cottage is situated next door to Reading Golf Course. The property overlooks beautiful landscaped gardens and has its own enclosed patio garden to the rear, from where there is direct access to the garage.



£315,000

2 Hayes End Manor, South Petherton, Somerset

This two-bedroom cottage sits on a beautiful estate, with a granary and manor house dating from the 14th Century, and five acres offering allotments and a greenhouse.



£420,000

26 Home Farm, Iwerne Minster, Dorset

This lovely three-bedroom wing house overlooks landscaped gardens and woodlands, and as well as the three bedrooms offers a sun room, balcony, patio and garage.



£199,950

19 University Farm, Moreton-in-Marsh, Gloucestershire

An airy ground floor apartment, recently refurbished throughout to the highest standards. University Farm has a private pool and beautiful gardens next to the high street.



NEW

£560,000

Orchard Yard, Wingham, Kent

An exclusive collection of cottages and apartments with clubhouse and energy efficient contemporary designs all set in historic orchard grounds. From £560,000 – £800,000+.



£330,000

11 Earls Manor Court, Winterbourne Earls, Wiltshire

This two-bedroom ground floor apartment, with ensuite and patio, is reached through an arch which opens on to a delightful garden courtyard, mostly laid to lawn with attractive borders and paths.



£450,000

7 Turnpike Court, Ardingly, West Sussex

This spacious, light-filled two-bedroom ground floor apartment has French doors to a private patio garden, and a sunny East-South-West aspect.



£440,000

6 Church Leat, Downton, Wiltshire

On the site of the former Downton tannery, a three-storey, three-bedroom cottage has two reception rooms, a sun room and views over the Barford Carrier running through the estate.



£415,000

2 Flacca Court, Tattenhall, Cheshire

A delightful sun room, and two private patio gardens add to the spacious feel of this ground floor two-bedroom apartment. There is also a laundry and minibus service on site.



£525,000

15 Bramley Grange, Bramley, Surrey

This two-bedroom ground floor apartment is set in five beautifully landscaped acres. Facilities include the use of a private pool and fitness area, exclusively for the use of owners.