

Janice's Story:

After facing a very challenging time, Janice walked through the Wellbeing Hub's door. This brave act changed her life.

Tentatively, she joined the coffee morning and art group, but soon became comfortable enough at re-connecting with people. Her warmth and kindness began to draw people to her, so she was invited to volunteer at the Hub, encouraging others and sharing her creative talent.

Janice says this has transformed her life and "I'm the happiest I've been in years".



Spring 2025

Diary Dates

May 12 - 18 - Mental Health Week

July 12th - Summer event

August 2 - Firs Fest

September 13th - Garden Event

Message from our CEO

Firstly, I would like to thank all our supporters who have donated their time, gifts and donations that we have received over the past year. It has been such an encouragement, particularly as it's been a challenging time financially for us.

We were also so fortunate to receive a legacy which has sustained us over these difficult economic times - where many small charities are looking at the possibility of closure, particularly with the increased NI contributions that are being introduced.

Whilst the local authorities are saying they will support us, their support would not cover the increases. It is plain that without all the support from you, we would be in a very difficult position. So again, thank you so much.

Best wishes, Kay

Benefit impact

People we support have been contacted by the Benefits office and told they must change over to Universal Credit. The letters are very 'bullish' which has caused a lot of anxiety and distress to the people we support, who are afraid of their benefits being stopped, and are bewildered by the forms they receive. Even though there are agencies 'out there' that can help people, many of the people we support are reluctant to share their issues with strangers particularly as some of the issues are embarrassing and offices are open plan. That would mean that they would not have been candid enough to let the DWP know the extent of their needs. We are very grateful to Kingston Community Fund for funding which allows us to support people to fill in the forms on a one to one basis. One person said: "I didn't think I would get Universal Credit. I thought the best option was to not be here. Thank you for helping me."



www.thefircrofttrust.org



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AGM 2025

We held our AGM in March which was chaired by our Patron - Bishop Martin Gainsborough. Our key note speaker was Rev Carol Clack - someone who attended the Wellbeing Hub for many years. She spoke about her amazing journey from severe depression through to her ordination. She was candid about the difficulties she faced, and the treatments she endured. Whilst she would not wish it on anyone, she states that depression has been a journey of self-knowledge and can say that "depression has served me well." We would like to thank Bishop Martin and Rev Carol for their time and inspiration at our AGM.



Thank you's

We are extremely grateful for the support we have received since our last newsletter:

- **John Lewis partnership**
- **Davis Rubens Charitable Trust**
- **Surbiton Farmer's Market**
- **St Matthew's Church**
- **Kingston Community Foundation**



Please support us:



www.theficrofttrust.org

A new resident at Firs Court

Meet Buzz, our new resident. This very lucky guinea pig was chosen especially for his friendliness. People we support have been a part of every aspect of Buzz's care, including putting together his new cage.



A Parent's Story:

My son Josh moved into Firs Court nearly 18 months ago in November 2023. It was a huge change for our family as Josh had always lived with us. Moving out and living independently from us was a huge step, but one he wanted and we needed as we were struggling physically to care for him.

We had wanted somewhere local to us, where we could visit him regularly and he could still be part of our church and attend activities there. Firs Court was ideal.

The staff at Firs spent lots of time with Josh getting to know him, his likes, dislikes and learning how to support him with his feeding, medication and personal care. His visits to Firs gradually increased allowing us all to adjust.

It was a tough day for us emotionally as parents when he moved in, but from the start Josh absolutely loved being at Firs and settled in incredibly quickly. He loved being with the staff and quickly made friends with the residents who made him really welcome. To see him so content, happy and well cared for was a huge relief to us and he continues to love living there and taking part in variety of activities each week. Firs Court is truly now his home.

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