

# Residents' Annual Report







*Flower arranging at Rockdale House Care Home*

# Contents

This report sets out Rockdale's performance between March 2022 to March 2023.

Message from the Chair of the Board of Trustees	3 - 4
Our History – written by the niece of our Founder, Beatrice Wilson	5 - 8
Our Mission	11
Operational Information	14 - 16
Value for Money	17
Resident engagement	19

*Our full financial annual accounts can be found on our website [www.rockdale.org.uk](http://www.rockdale.org.uk) under the heading **About Us**.*

# Message from the Chair of the Board of Trustees

I am pleased to present Rockdale's annual report and accounts and to have the opportunity to provide an update on the Association's work in the past 12 months.

In common with many organisations in the housing and care sectors the past three years have proved very challenging. The COVID pandemic put a considerable strain on our care staff, having to look after our residents against a backdrop of new working procedures so that all could continue to be looked after and kept safe from risk of infection. And across Rockdale more widely, patterns of work were hugely affected by successive lockdowns and consequential working from home. With the decline of COVID I am happy to say we have seen a gradual return to normal, including in September the opening of the new sensory accessible gardens for Rockdale House attended by residents, their families and staff alike.

Our care home was inspected earlier this year by the Care Quality Commission, and we were delighted to maintain our overall "Good" rating. This is a great testimony to the leadership, professionalism, and hard work of our staff, particularly in such difficult conditions. External recognition also came through the award to Rockdale of a Sevenoaks Business Award in the Larger Business category. The recognition of our work in the wider community continues to be vital to Rockdale's future.

As the annual report sets out our finances continued to come under pressure in 2022/23. The financial statements show an operating deficit of £489,357 whilst the deficit before other comprehensive income was £655,685. We were fortunate that Reserves were sufficient to help us navigate through such a difficult period. But now, Trustees see the restoration of sound finances as a top priority. Over the course of 2023/24 we are working towards bringing operations back to at least a break-even position whilst in September 2023 a new 3–5-year strategy will be prepared setting out a path for Rockdale's longer-term future. This will include a focus on how we attract residents to Rockdale, the range of services offered to them and a new Fundraising Strategy to support our charitable aims.

In 2022/23 several projects delayed by the pandemic got underway. A new lift was installed at Beatrice Wilson House whilst the replacement of fire doors across the site was successfully completed. Many significant building projects are reflected in our 25-year planned maintenance programme. Expenditure on planned maintenance for

the current year (2023/24) is scheduled to rise to 8% of income whilst funding of £108,000 has been earmarked for capital projects.

Like many similar organisations in the locality, recruitment and retention of staff has been difficult. As a result, staff wellbeing has been a key focus. Staff received a one-off bonus to help with the rising cost of living, we offered free lunches during the winter and finally we became a Living Wage Employer. We also applied for and were given a Government Sponsor Licence enabling us to recruit care staff from abroad. This is proving very successful.

Changes have also been made to the Senior Management Team. In January Claire Adams arrived as our Head of HR and Governance.

Board Governance is also undergoing change. Following an external review by Q5 Consulting a number of initiatives are underway to bring the Trustee Board into line with best practice. This includes a new formal sub-committee structure (Finance, Quality Assurance and Resident Engagement, and Business Development), the overhaul of our appointment procedures, introducing fixed Trustee periods of office and a review of our Risk Management procedures. These changes also saw the work of the former Care Committee taken over by the QA sub-Committee. I would like to thank those members of the former Care Committee for the many years of devoted work in support of Rockdale and its residents.

I was also very pleased to welcome Alex Yew to the Board. We are fortunate to have such a broad range of knowledge and experience to support Rockdale moving forward.

Finally, on behalf of Trustee colleagues I would like to pay tribute to Chris Munday our CEO, the Senior Management Team and all staff who have worked so incredibly hard this year to support our residents through such challenging times.

**Ian Grattidge, Chair of the Board of Trustees**





# Our history

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## OUR FOUNDER, BEATRICE WILSON (KINDLY WRITTEN BY BEATRICE WILSON'S NIECE IN 2023)

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**Beatrice Alice Wilson**, known as Bea within the family, was born on 23 September 1896 in Chislehurst, Kent, to Sydney John and Helen Wilson. She had two older sisters, Marjorie and Stella, an older brother, Robert Percy, and a younger brother, John. The family lived at the Briars in Chislehurst until about 1912 and then moved to Birkby, Westgate Road, Beckenham, after family financial problems. She was educated at the Coed Bel School in Chislehurst. During WWI she served as a nurse with the Red Cross, firstly at the Auxiliary Military Hospital in Sundridge and then at the Royal Naval Auxiliary Hospital in Truro, Cornwall in early 1917. (Her parents had moved to Rockside, Flushing because of her father's health). After Sydney John's death in late 1917, the family moved to Prospect House in Sundridge, later known as The White House, to be near Helen's family. Bea and her siblings had been frequent visitors to their grandfather, Robert Robinson Drabble's, house at Woodside, Sundridge, during her childhood.

She trained as a physiotherapist at Guy's Hospital, one of the first women in this new medical profession. This involved practice in the East End of London. She became Sister in Charge of Massage and then Superintendent of the Physio Dept. at the Royal Portsmouth Hospital for two years. She then became a physiotherapist and Dietician at the Anglo-American Hospital in Rome.

From 1930-32 she appears to have lived at the Red House in Sundridge, home of her aunt, Elizabeth Polhill-Drabble, then at 64 Granville Road in Sevenoaks from 1932-5, opening private treatment rooms in 'a hut in the garden'. She then lived at 42 Granville Road from 1935-1939, with her mother, until Helen's death.

The Clinic moved to new purpose-built premises in South Park in 1938 and provided outpatient services. She was elected to the Council of the Chartered Society of Physiotherapists from 1939-42.

During WW2 she was Command Adviser in Physiotherapy to the Middle Eastern Forces from July 1942-November 1943, based in Palestine, and part of the Royal Army Medical Corps. A report in the Sevenoaks News of Jan 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1980, states that she was attached to the 'First Scottish Regiment', which may have been a reference to the Royal Scots Guards. It also includes a story about getting a lift from a man from Knockholt in Kent to Damascus to treat a wounded soldier. She was awarded the Africa Star medal, like all those who served in that arena of conflict.

She may also have worked in Cairo with Queen Alexandra's Royal Nursing Corps and she held several badges from the Red Cross. It is not clear when she returned to England, but she treated Winston Churchill at Chartwell during this period. By 1949 the Clinic was treating over



700 patients and was known for its innovative work. A royal visit by Queen Mary in 1938 attracted crowds of over two thousand people. Beatrice lived in a flat called The Yellow Balcony, which was an integral part of the building. A second storey was added to the Vitasan in 1953, which enabled the clinic to treat 50,000 patients a year. She was elected to the Council of the CSP in 1945, 1949 and 1954, chairing the Physiotherapy Services Committee for seven years, and being on numerous sub committees.

Through the Council she attended international conferences in New York, the USA and Canada in 1953. She also established a local branch in Sevenoaks.

In 1938, she became one of the founder members of the Sevenoaks branch of the Soroptimist Club, which had opened its British section in 1934. In 1941 Beatrice was elected President of the Sevenoaks branch. As well as the regular meetings, a Bring and Buy was held at the Vitasan Clinic, where among the attractions, Beatrice herself was running an auction. Funds collected that year were sent to the Lord Mayor's Relief Fund and a new flag for the local AFC. The Soroptimists were later critical in fundraising for Rockdale and in practical work converting the new home.

In 1946 she was an adviser to the Sevenoaks Orthopaedic Clinic and Holmedsdale Hospital, both later to become Sevenoaks Hospital.

### **Rockdale**

**In 1948 she established the Sevenoaks and District Old People's Housing Association, later named the Rockdale Housing Association.** After an extensive fund-raising campaign, she acquired Rockdale House (former home of the Laurie family) in Rockdale Road in 1951 and this opened as a pioneering old people's home in 1953. The guiding concept behind Rockdale was that it would provide affordable accommodation for older residents with varying needs, from full supported independence to a more substantial degree of care. Beatrice continued to fund raise tirelessly for Rockdale. Rockdale has remained a non-profit-making organisation, supported by fundraising. The annual Summer garden fetes, held on the many levels of the Rockdale gardens, were a highlight of the Sevenoaks



calendar, while Autumn fairs were held in the Cornwall Hall. Beatrice also maintained a strong personal interest in Rockdale residents, visiting each one with a card and small gift at Christmas, often accompanied by her little niece, Margaret. Since then, Rockdale has gone on from strength to strength, opening accommodation to suit the needs of the elderly of Sevenoaks. In 1985 a new block of flats, accommodating 50 residents, was named after her.

In the 1950 and 1960s she travelled to India and Russia to talk about her work as a physiotherapist, probably with the Soroptimists.

### **Personal life**

She was particularly close to her brother, Percy, who had founded Winchester House School,



a preparatory school in Sevenoaks in 1938. Percy had married in 1946 and had three children. She was a frequent visitor to their home and went on family holidays together. Despite her rather severe professional reputation, she was known as a 'fun aunt' within the family, outracing her nephews and nieces in their early years, and hosting an annual get-together for her wider family at the Yellow Balcony.

Somewhat to her family's surprise, she married her childhood sweetheart, Dr. Laurence Lockhart, a Fellow of

Pembroke College, Cambridge, in September 1963 at Pembroke College and at the age of 67. She had sold the Vitasan Clinic to the NHS in 1964 but remained on the committee of Rockdale for many years.

# Community



Cllr Parry, Mayor of Sevenoaks, volunteer students from St Thomas' Primary School, Laura Trott, MP and Rockdale's Head Gardener, Annette have been helping to clean up and plant the public footpath border between Rockdale and The Stag with Rockdale staff and other community volunteers.



Britain in Bloom and South East in Bloom judging day of which Rockdale was part of the entry. The Britain in Bloom Sevenoaks Town entry was awarded a magnificent and well-deserved Gold and Silver Gilt in the Britain in Bloom entry in 2022.



*Snapshots taken over the year of our care home residents enjoying various activities and trips.*



*'Everyone is always so kind, helpful, and friendly, nothing is ever too much trouble. My mother is well cared for and feels safe, secure, and happy.'*



# Our Mission

Rockdale's mission is to provide affordable housing, care and other help to improve the quality of life for older people.

We will:

- 1.** Provide good quality homes and support services for older people which meet their changing needs. This means we will:
  - Provide well managed housing cost-effectively and to high standards
  - Consult with residents, tenants and leaseholders on the services provided.
  - Regularly monitor, evaluate and strive to improve services.
  - Provide efficient and responsive repair services and make adequate provision for planned maintenance.
  - Make the best use of our assets to maintain a sustainable community.
  - Offer appropriate advice to services and welfare benefits.
  
- 2.** Offer high quality residential care. This means we will:
  - Aim to establish Rockdale House as a model of excellence in residential care.
  - Recognise that the quality of residential care is dependent on the quality of the staff providing it, and thus place a high priority on the recruitment, training and retention of staff.
  
- 3.** Sustain and develop our charitable work. This means we will:
  - Set aside such capacity and funding as can be afforded by the Association for the support of those who do not have the financial means to access our services.
  - Account clearly for our charitable work through external reporting
  - Seek grants and donations for the support and expansion of our charitable work.

# Collaborating with Schools

Rockdale has a wonderful relationship with local schools. Students volunteer at Rockdale, both within the independent living setting and our care home. Last year saw the start of a Life Stories project and students from Sevenoaks School worked with some of our independent living residents to write their story. At the end of the academic year, our residents were presented with a published book written in collaboration with the students. This article was written by one of the students.

## BRIDGING AGES AT ROCKDALE HOUSE



### *Bringing older and younger people together to hear – and write – their life stories*

As a part of the service programme on Thursday afternoons, a group of students visited residents of Rockdale House in Sevenoaks and took part in the Bridging Ages community project, which aims to bring teenagers and older people together, to turn their stories into professionally published books.

Each week, in pairs, we visited a resident of Rockdale, with whom we spent the afternoon speaking about their various experiences and significant moments over the years. Through these conversations, we gained a unique insight into their lives, which was a truly special opportunity – hearing about everything that they have been through and their reflections on all these times.

As we got to know our Bridging Ages partner, we also discussed our opinions on various matters. Our partner was particularly interested in talking about pressure in schools, as nowadays there tends to be a lot of pressure on pupils to pursue a certain career, whereas he says they didn't have much of that. He also recalls how our school has changed over the years. For example, Sevenoaks School pupils used to

wear straw hats (known as biffs), but we no longer wear them. Finding out about how our experiences differ so much from his own was fascinating!

Throughout our conversations, we took notes, which we then compiled into a book about our partner's life. The book that we worked on was separated into chapters for each part of his life, including childhood, relationships and later years. As we had to write these life stories from what we had heard during our conversations, I found it interesting bringing our perspective to the book and writing it from our point of view.

After writing and printing our books, we had a 'book ceremony', which took place in a reading room of Rockdale House, where we handed the finished books over to our partners and spoke to them about how they found the process. This was very rewarding, as we got to hold a physical copy of what we had been working on since the start of the year and hand it over to our partner.

It was sad to say goodbye to our partners, but it was enjoyable getting to know them and working on their books throughout our service sessions, which I found myself looking forward to each week, while learning many things along the way.

Thank you to Mr Harvey for supporting us throughout this process and making this possible!

*Claudia*

Many happy times enjoyed over the year at Rockdale House Care Home.



'Although my sister is new to Rockdale House the first few weeks have been so good. Staff have made her very welcome and already her health has improved.'

age



# Operational information

## Properties in Management

Rockdale House, Sevenoaks Registered Residential Care Home	48 rooms 2 short stay rooms
Rockdale Road, Sevenoaks	123 sheltered apartments for rent
Webbs Meadow, Sevenoaks	17 sheltered leasehold apartments 1 sheltered apartment for rent
Constant Meadow, Sevenoaks	10 sheltered leasehold apartments
Summerbank, Rockdale Road, Sevenoaks	10 sheltered leasehold apartments
Laurie House 1-19, Sevenoaks	19 sheltered leasehold apartments

## Rents

The average monthly charges for the various types of properties during 2022/23 were:

		Rent 2022/23	Services 2022/23	Support 2022/23	Total monthly charges 2022/23      2021/22	
Rockdale Road	Studio	£414.00	£273.59	£107.49	£795.08	£750.12
Rockdale Road	1 bedroom	£485.76	£300.94	£107.49	£894.19	£843.96
Stable Court	1 bedroom	£485.76	£256.44	£107.49	£849.69	£809.97
Rockdale House	Residential care home	£4,975.73	-	-	£4,975.73	£4,143.01

\* Heating & hot water not included in services

## Repairs

Measure	2019	2021-22	2023	Peer Quartile position	2023 Target
Homes					
Repairs completed within target (overall)	98	98	93	2	99
Emergency repairs completed within target	98	100	85	N/A	100
% of Rent loss through empty properties (excluding care home)	0.9	4.0	3.7	4	2
Services					
Satisfaction with overall services	96	96	96	2	98
Satisfaction with responsive repairs	96	96	98	2	99
Satisfaction - VFM rent	96	96	98	2	99

## Outside Contractor Maintenance

In total 487 jobs were raised; 422 requests were undertaken in the Sevenoaks apartments and 65 in the Care Home. Performance failed to achieve targets due to several factors which include, delayed access to the House and some contractors failing to notify formal completion dates which will be rectified for future orders.

Our target time for carrying out repairs is 24 hours for emergency repairs, 5 working days for urgent repairs, and one calendar month for routine repairs.

The table below shows how we have performed compared to previous years.

Contractors		2023	2021-22	2020	2019	2018
Emergency repairs		85.42%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Urgent Repairs		95.38%	100%	100%	100%	96.51%
Routine repairs		97.32%	92.61%	93.4%	94.34%	94.16%

*'Thank you and the team for your amazing responsiveness to the maintenance issues.'*

Independent living resident

## Independent Living Support Co-ordinators Visiting Statistics April 2022 to March 2023

	Main Site	Main Site	Akehurst	Akehurst	Summer	Summer	Laurie	Laurie
			Lane	Lane	Bank	Bank	House	House
	Visits %	Contacts %	Visits %	Contacts %	Visits %	Contacts %	Visits %	Contacts %
April	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
May	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
June	100%	100%	86%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
July	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
August	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
September	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
October	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
November	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
December	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
January	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
February	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
March	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

## Independent Living Support Coordinators' service

On average, 15 'out of hours' visits per month were made by Support Coordinators for an average of 30 minutes.

*'Thanks so much to all the team for all you do in Rockdale, we are very lucky to have it in Sevenoaks.'*

Family member of independent living resident



# Value For Money

The Board acknowledges that it is ultimately responsible for ensuring compliance with the regulatory standard on Value for Money (VFM). The Board regularly receives a range of internal and external information providing adequate evidence to demonstrate compliance with the Value for Money standard.

The Regulator of Social Housing issued a new Value for Money Standard in 2018, setting out specific requirements for registered providers to publish evidence within their statutory accounts of its value for money targets and metrics set out by the regulator, as well as setting out how performance compares to that of its peers.

Rockdale is a member of the Acuity benchmarking group for older people, the care home benchmarking group and the Sector Scorecard (administered by Housemark).

A key focus for the Association is on understanding performance and costs in relation to our peers through regular benchmarking.

The Association demonstrates Value for Money by: -

- Ensuring Value for Money is embedded through all decision-making processes.
- Setting clear strategic objectives.
- Having a framework of strategies, policies & processes in place to ensure optimal benefits are achieved from both assets and resources.
- Ensuring services are cost effective, efficient and customer driven.
- Recruiting and retaining the best staff to deliver our services.

*Some examples of where we have added value for money:*

- Lettings portal created on the website to express an interest in vacant properties – reduced the number of adverts being sent out by post.
- Laptops purchased for staff – providing a more efficient way of agile working.
- Photocopying has been reduced.
- Newsletters uploaded to our website – reduced printing and postal.
- Where possible attend and arrange meetings via a digital format – reducing in travel expenses.
- Volunteers appointed to assist with events.
- Replacement garden furniture – environmental and longer lasting products purchased, saves on annual staining and ongoing repairs.

# Improvements

The second lift installation in Beatrice Wilson was completed.



Rockdale House Care Home - planting of the newly refurbished garden. Volunteers of many ages got together week to plant the new garden at Rockdale House. Pictured below is Becca and Amanda. Amanda designed the garden, the planting plan and ordered the plants for Rockdale, all on a volunteer basis, for which we are extremely grateful! Very generous donations were received towards the planting.



We were kindly introduced to Becca in the first instance by the Head Gardener at Penshurst Place and Becca introduced Amanda to us. Amanda then took on this huge project on a voluntary basis and has created an amazing garden for Rockdale House Care Home residents to enjoy.

We are hugely grateful to Amanda and very grateful to the volunteers who joined us on planting day.

# Resident engagement

- During 22/23 Residents meetings were held. Residents were provided with updates on support and responsive maintenance service and the planned maintenance programme. These meetings also provide an opportunity for residents to feedback on concerns, ideas and suggestions.
- The Leasehold and Rented residents' handbook (Independent Living) were reviewed by several residents.
- Residents participated in several seasonal events and day trips.
- Activities such as regular art, book clubs, weekly tea, quizzes, and therapy sessions were arranged.
- Residents' newsletters are published, and residents have an opportunity to contribute material, ideas and suggestions.
- Estate inspections are arranged quarterly; residents have an opportunity to attend.



Easter fun in Beatrice Wilson, Independent Living



# Celebrations

The Queen's Jubilee celebrations were held at Rockdale. A large Crown was positioned in the centre of our site with sweet peas making their way up and residents added to our decorations with their memories of the Queen's 70 years of service to the people of the United Kingdom, the Realms and the Commonwealth. It was a wonderful celebration. Claire Billis, Deputy CEO/Head of Housing & Maintenance and Annette, Head Gardener, planted a Jubilee tree in the upper site.



Messages to the Her Majesty the Queen were written on bunting by our residents.



Left, students from Walthamstow Hall School can be seen here with CEO, Chris Munday and Denise Tucker, kindly delivering Christmas crackers and messages to our residents.



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[www.rockdale.org.uk](http://www.rockdale.org.uk)

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