

# BeST's Hunt for the Most Beautiful Christmas Tree

It was a very strange winter in December 2017! We saw snow, ice, blizzards and the occasional sun spot!

BeST held its second Christmas tree competition, we're making it a tradition! We took a lot of effort discussing and voting to pick out a winner and the runners-up as everyone made such a wonderful effort.



## 1st Place – Luke

A big congratulations to Luke who's picture will be the face of our Christmas Card in 2018.

## 2nd Place – Harry

We just loved this picture which featured a meercat instead of a star on his beautiful Christmas tree.

## 3rd Place – Burlington Heights

Finally, Burlington Heights took third place for this beautiful tree submission.

Look out for Luke on your Christmas Card this year, and we hope even more of you will participate in our Christmas Tree competition 2018!

*Matthew Fay*

## Meet Our People: Patricia Mokhberi



### Call me Tricia

I recently joined BeST Ltd. as the new Housing Benefit and Rents Officer and I am very happy to be onboard the good ship BeST and in joining this motley crew (we have a great team in-house) helping our residents where we are able – and signposting when we are not.

I have many years of experience in dealing with welfare benefits, and the problems that arise from time-to-time with claims such as appeals.

To make this all a bit easier, we have created a new form of authority which allows us to perform these works on your

behalf with your consent (don't worry, we will always discuss issues with you first, or with your legal appointee if you have one). So, if you are asked to sign the new form, don't be alarmed, it is in your best interests! (excuse the pun).

We are always seeking new ways to improve and provide our services, so we will inform you of changes to welfare benefits which are likely to affect you, or any schemes that may be beneficial to you!

I am looking forward to a long and happy future working with BeST Ltd. and with you! All the best.

*Patricia Mokhberi*



## From the CEO

Hope you had a brilliant Easter!



• The "Annual Audit" completed and our accounts filed, huge thanks to all involved, we now need to focus our attention and efforts to efficiently streamline our operational delivery of this regulatory process moving forward, so please liaise with Marlene and the Accountancy Team closely where needed and required to make this happen, it all begins again in October 2018. ....

• NROSH+ report now due on units in management March year end 2017/18, we haven't quite stepped over the 1000 tenant mark but will at some point in 2018/2019 reporting year. Having received their guidance and decision on the report against numbers owned and numbers managed, we are now clear as to the complexity that NROSH+ response requires, and the mechanism and reporting strategy required which will create further positive scrutiny and overview from the HCA.

• Confirmation on some numbers, we are all now part of a circa £37 million asset-based charity with a circa £12 million turnover that houses 897 vulnerable people.

• Our business strategy and goal of housing one person a day every day, from plan inception 572 days, 611 people housed, we are more than still on track, however the meaningful strategy moving forward will be getting "awesome" at what we do, hence the Inch at Fort Augustus and the away days leading up to and beyond towards our exciting relaunch in April 2019

• Obviously, I expect us to have welcomed all our new faces to the team: Sharna Wild, Patricia Mokhberi, Yvie McGuckin, Vanessa Watson and Denise Jolley. We also welcome back Slavi! Some team members have moved on to pastures new and we wish them all the best with their future endeavours.

• We released our exciting plans in relation to the big picture regarding 'Blue Sky' in early Jan and updates will be released separately, we have strong initial momentum from all stakeholders to support this initiative, we are now engaged in professional discussions with a "close by" Local Authority to indeed deliver this exciting prospect.

• New schemes planned for 2018 and beyond are still under discussion, however meetings with all stakeholders are positive, this includes a ground-breaking farm scheme concept, which we are now in ownership and development!

*Kevin Appleby*

# Snippets

Edition 8

## BeST Bought a Farm!



Ooohh arrr! Time to adorn a red-checked shirt and a straw hat because we've bought a farm!



From a family's concern over vulnerable people and their future housing and support provision, we have turned their pipe-dream into our pipe-line development! A bespoke development which will meet the identified needs of local people, bringing people home and closer to their family support networks.

There's a rumour that a tree outside the cinema room was sat under by none other than Captain Cook as he planned his voyage to the discover the "America's", our voyage ahead with JPC Community Farm Support has undertaken lengthy planning and we're about to set sail.

This is what can be achieved by two charities working closely together to a common goal and aim, this all after a 15-minute conversation, a car park ticket and a run to the loo - it's a long story!



A special mention is deserved around our funders' efforts: Dimitrios Hatzis and David Wylde, as without their trust, faith and support this wouldn't have happened at all!

Watch this space!

*Kevin Appleby*

# The New Ambition

Anyone who has worked with BeST either as an employee or a business partner will have seen how quickly BeST has grown to its current size of just under 1,000 units of accommodation providing homes for around 850 vulnerable adults. For a young charity this growth was absolutely necessary for it to reinvest in its structure so that BeST can maintain its tenant obligations.

The executive team at BeST with the support of the Trustees decided the time was right to slow down on new schemes and focus on quality and adopted a new strategy of "becoming awesome at what we do" rather than just chasing numbers. A decision was therefore taken to appoint Alan Clayton Associates to work with BeST to create the New Ambition over a 12-month period starting with 3 days of seminars for 16 of BeST's employees at the Inch Hotel on the banks of Loch Ness.

## The Objectives

- > Launch BeST as a charity in April 2019
- > Agree our identity - The New Ambition
- > Develop our leadership
- > Align and develop our culture
- > Set behaviours and standards
- > Talk about money
- > Action plan

For 3 full-on days, working well into the evenings, we explored a number of topics including how the most successful charities behave, storytelling, leadership, the importance of money, individual behaviours and how marginal gains can have a major impact on future outcomes and of course planning. We agreed quite early on that for BeST to be different and not just be another housing association we had to take advantage of our charity status. So, what sets a successful charity apart from all the others? The way it behaves!

## The Behaviours

- > The dream is clear yet unachievable
- > Never compromise
- > Make it simple
- > Focus all your energy into the solution
- > Never forget the why, as the what and how is just a means to achieve it!
- > Focus on the emotional space
- > You need money and lots of it to achieve the why
- > Great leadership
- > Continuous learning
- > Great story telling

We explored all the above behaviours in detail and came to several conclusions. We need to get great at telling our stories (see Ann's Forever Home), we need to have one leader for this project: Shelley Hobbs and we need to adopt all the above behaviours by the time of our relaunch in April 2019!

## Final Day Conclusions

At the end of the seminars we came up with a number of conclusions, actions and timelines that have been agreed and communicated to staff and the board, however the only conclusion we can share in Snippets given the ever growing readership-base is that from April 2019 BeST will relaunch itself as a Charity with a new outlook on life and how we behave which will include providing the best homes, providing the best kit and providing the best people because vulnerable people need the best homes!

We have already started working towards achieving our New Ambition which is not going to be easy as there's lots to do but becoming awesome was never going to be easy as it's not just about us, our partners have to become awesome too!

We will be communicating progress internally on a regular basis and of course will keep wetting the appetite of others through Snippets so watch this space!

**Steve Boyd**

## Ann's Forever Home

"Hello! My name is Ann. I lived in a BeST home from 2014 to 2017. I moved into my BeST home on a sunny August afternoon. I had to move because I had been diagnosed with 'Early Onset Dementia' and my needs were rapidly changing. My new BeST home gave me a bedroom that was just the right size, bathrooms built to suit my changing needs and a support provider that helped me with everything I needed.

Over my short time in my home, I lost the ability to do many things. First, I forgot people's faces and then how to use my cutlery. Soon after, I lost the ability to wash and dress myself. Eventually, I was no longer able to even drink without help and support. My landlord, BeST, helped and gave permission for big changes to be made to my home to keep me safe so I wouldn't have to leave. These changes probably allowed me to live much longer than was expected.

I slowly disappeared as a person due to the dementia, but the people and services around me never gave up. I wasn't forced into a residential setting or moved to a hospital because it was cheaper or easier. I could stay in my own home, with my own comforts, with the people I loved. My home was called a forever home; a home that would change as I did. A home that was mine until the end.

I passed away just before Christmas in 2017. My room has been cleaned out by my brother and sister and someone new lives there now. They too need help and support to live a more independent life. They too have Early Onset Dementia and will not likely live a long life. However, like me, they will be able to live their life in comfort, safety and surrounded by the things they love in their new forever home.

Forever homes like mine can make a huge difference to the quality of life of a person. Bespoke properties that suit the needs of the person living there can increase their independence, promote good health and on occasions promote a long and healthy life."

BeST aspires for all tenants to have a home for life.

Everyone deserves the best home!

Some names and identifying details have been changed to protect the privacy of individuals.

**Matthew Fay**

## Blue Sky Update

It has been nearly a year since the Board of Trustees and the Senior Management team, decided to explore other opportunities for BeST, and to widen its vision beyond being a landlord.



From this we gave birth to "Blue Sky" as a vehicle for exploring community partnerships with a wide range of statutory and voluntary organisations.

The concept of a unique building to act as a central point for offering support to the wider community and a community cafe, began to take shape.

This was followed up by meetings with the charity Sense, who support children and adults with sensory challenges and who have set a template for this concept at their Touchbase sites in Glasgow and Birmingham.

Given that our head office is in Eccles, it made sense that we approached Salford Council to help us develop a pathway. This connection will help us to find an appropriate site, gain political support, introduce services in education and health, and involve active voluntary groups from the Salford community. All of which will be vital if we are to be successful.

This is an exciting venture for BeST and takes us on a step toward our vision and journey; to provide people with support-needs in every community a safe and supportive environment.

**Hugh McCaw**

## New Schemes

We have been in discussions with Kent County Council for 6 months and have now purchased the land needed and are ready to submit planning for 12 self-contained units designed for young people with autism.

This is a new and exciting scheme for both BeST and Kent as the properties will be designed with full tenant consultation and form a block of spacious flats built within its own grounds overlooking beautiful countryside and open areas.

The construction will be state of the art modular build which means the properties can be engineered precisely to the tenants needs, they will also be incredibly efficient and eco-friendly due to superior insulation and the other materials being used.

Regular planning meetings will be held over the next year to make sure we deliver exactly what our tenants need!

**Andy Bowler**