

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Festive celebrations and residents remembered as The Royal Star & Garter Homes gears up for Christmas

The imminent arrival of Christmas has been marked at The Royal Star & Garter Homes with the annual Starlight services and turning on of the festive lights.

The Starlight services were held on 2 December at St Matthew's Church, Surbiton and 8 December in St Alphege Church, Solihull, and celebrated the lives of people past and present linked to the Charity, which cares for disabled veterans.

And the Homes were filled with music, mince pies, mulled wine and general merriment when Christmas lights were flicked on in Solihull on 4 December, and Surbiton on 7 December.



Among those attending Starlight services were relatives and friends of residents who have passed away. They were open to the community and included readings, poetry and carols.

A Christmas tree at each church was also adorned with dozens of stars, each bearing personal messages written by friends and family in memory of loved ones no longer with us.

Following each service, guests were able to enjoy mince pies and mulled wine.

Bentley Heath Choir helped with the festivities when the Solihull Home switched on its Christmas lights, singing an array of Christmas classics to residents.

Consulting engineers Arup gave five real Christmas trees to the Home, including one standing 15ft tall. It also provided all tree tinsel, baubles and lights, as part of a £1,350 donation to mark its 50th year trading in the Midlands.



Arup staff even came in to help decorate the trees, including Business Development Coordinator Naomi Forrester, who



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had heard about the Home and how it cares for ex-Servicemen and women and their partners living with disability or dementia.



She said: *"To mark the anniversary we wanted to give back time and funding to community projects. A lot of our engineers come from military backgrounds or are Reserves, so this was a charity we wanted to be involved with.*

"The way they treat people here who have done so much for their country is amazing. This is not your ordinary care home."

Local police officers and Kingston Mayor Cllr Thay Thayalan danced for residents when they attended the turning on of the lights at the Surbiton Home.

Music came courtesy of Dave and Pat, who entertained the room with a rousing singalong including some Christmas classics.

Sgt George Alleway said: *"It was a lovely festive experience and a great way to kick off the festive season. It's really got me into the Christmas spirit."*



Activities & Volunteers Manager Raquel Pena Arisitizabal said: *"It was the best way to start our Christmas season, filled with lots of warmth and it was so nice to see our guests joining in the fun. We have lots more Christmas concerts, scented crafts, days out and fun activities to come to keep our residents feeling festive."*

Ends

VIDEOS

A video of our Starlight services can be viewed at: <https://vimeo.com/304818998>

Dancing Mayor and police officers at Surbiton:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u00MhLHwVsg&feature=youtu.be>

Bentley Heath Choir singing at Solihull Home:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fsm2uPG6m2Y&feature=youtu.be>

For further information please contact:



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About The Royal Star & Garter Homes:

The Charity provides award-winning care for veterans and their partners who live with disability or dementia.

The Royal Star & Garter Homes is a charity founded in 1916 to care for the severely injured young men returning from the battlegrounds of the First World War. Today we provide specialist care to the whole military family in our friendly, state-of-the-art Homes. Disabled ex-Servicemen and women, and their spouses, can all benefit from our pioneering approach to nursing, dementia and therapeutic care.

We are in the process of building new Homes around the country to provide specialist nursing care for disabled ex-Service people in the best modern surroundings, including dementia care facilities to address this growing need. The Charity has award-winning Homes in Solihull, West Midlands, and Surbiton, Surrey, which also enables the Charity to offer interim care for young disabled Service personnel. Following the successes of the first two Homes, a third Home in High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire, is being built, with a planned opening in 2019.

We are proud to have enjoyed Royal patronage since our foundation, including that of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II from 1953 to the present day.

Twitter: @starandgarter
Facebook: facebook.com/starandgarter
Website: www.starandgarter.org



The Royal Star & Garter Homes is a member of the National Care Forum – the leading voice for not-for-profit care providers. A national perspective may be available from info@nationalcareforum.org.uk or by contacting 02476243619. More details on NCF available at www.nationalcareforum.org.uk

