

A glass half full

Stuart Brawn has a charismatic and positive personality – a valuable asset to chair the residents' association at Oaktree Park, in Weston-Super-Mare



Above: Catherine Look, director of Oaktree Park, with Les Mason, Julia and Frank Richards and Stuart Brawn

Stuart Brawn and his wife Pam moved to Oaktree Park two years ago after deciding to downsize. They had spent six months scouring the south coast but frustratingly found either the right home in wrong location or vice versa. That was until they found Oaktree and stepped into their

Treasurer Les Mason, secretary Stella Thompson, and chairman of the committee Stuart Brawn



home. 'I know it sounds crazy,' Stuart said. 'But it was the homely, community feeling of the area, the quietness, and the home that just felt right'. They were further sold by the garden enriched by the surrounding fields and countryside where horses graze and deer wander. Stuart and Pam are now surrounded by fantastic neighbours and are very content.

The home was not new, nor was it initially in a great state. In fact, Stuart spent the first nine months refurbishing the two bedroom Omar to its current desirable, modernised condition.

Spreading their wings!

Stuart retired 11 months ago. Pam is still employed as an accounts assistant but looks forward to retirement later this year when she can spend more time meeting residents and enjoying her Women's Institute activities. Stuart worked for Lovell Plant Hire for nearly 20 years, starting out as a JCB operator, then progressing to branch manager. It was a great

job but the 1990s slump in the building trade encouraged him to take voluntary retirement.

Next stop... Cape Town, South Africa! Stuart describes it as a 'five-year working holiday'. Stuart managed a garden machinery maintenance branch. The weather was good and life was fine. The couple enjoyed long hot summers, as they had bought a bungalow with a swimming pool. But blood is thicker than water and once all three daughters had returned to the UK for university, Stuart and Pam felt it was time to do the same.

They first moved back to Wellingborough (which is how they are familiar with some of the park home manufacturers based there). Thereafter, they fulfilled their desire to relocate to the western counties, sold their house and rented a property in Worle, near Weston-super-Mare prior to embarking on their new chapter at Oaktree Park.

Outdoorsy!

The Brawns are hugely family-orientated, spending much valuable time together. Their grandchildren love visiting their grandparents who take them on rambles over the fields, blackberry picking and spotting wildlife. Stuart and Pam are outdoor enthusiasts. They both enjoy fell walking and Stuart was a keen mountain walker before that. Their eldest daughter owns a ski chalet in the French Alps

where the family can holiday and ski together. Pam loves reading and all music, ranging from classical to Take That (not Stuart's taste he hastens to add!)

Best practice

Since moving to Oaktree Park, Stuart has immersed himself in the residents' association and has formed an energetic and vibrant committee, after succeeding the chairmanship from the highly-regarded John Raglan. John retired as chair after spending 15 years serving in different roles on the committee.

When neighbours Frank and Julia Richards were keen to have an underfloor inspection of their home, Stuart thought this could be of benefit to all and contacted Cathi Foale of Park Home Chassis Services (PHCS) to organise a group discounted survey. He said, 'We printed a notice in our newsletter and compiled all queries for Cathi. That was Phase One and we are now on Phase Two for all those who missed out on the first round.'

As a previous contented customer, it was John Raglan who endorsed PHCS. 'The chassis looked like new again once the work by PHCS had been completed,' John stated in

a testimonial. 'I was very pleased with the quality of work and the workers on site. They completed the job in a very professional way.'

The feedback on the PHCS team has been highly praiseworthy. 'The surveyor, Michael, is friendly, warm and helpful and able to answer any questions we raised. We have agreed as a group that those of us who do need any work on our chassis, or re-supporting, are going to book as a block. We are confident in PHCS.'

It doesn't get better

Frank and Julia Richards' story sum up the quality and variety of life at Oaktree Park. They had always wanted to move back to Somerset as they used to live there back in the 1970s.

Their house in Wales sold quickly, and with little opportunity to purchase another locally, their son-in-law suggested buying a park home as an interim measure to allow time search for a permanent home in leisure. Frank and Julia toured park sites and Oaktree Park won hands down. They moved in September 2000. That was meant to be a temporary measure...

'Although the plan was to move on

In a nutshell

- Stuart and Pam were drawn to park home living by the community aspect and were touched by the warm welcome they received from other residents.
- Stuart and the residents' association recognise the need to identify good suppliers and negotiate rates for the benefit of all on site.
- PHCS is a specialist in the inspection and maintenance of the underside of park homes and customers benefit from its friendly, open and informative approach.
- For further information on Park Home Chassis Services Ltd please contact 0333 456 3056 or 0118 984 3107, email info@parkhomechassis.co.uk or www.parkhomechassis.co.uk.

eventually, we enjoy the peace, quiet and companionship of living on Oaktree Park, so much that we have actually decided there is nowhere better to live!'

They have made so many friends and shared many enjoyable parties and events.

Frank and Julia have already undertaken repairs to their home but are now looking to make more improvements. 'We are very impressed with the service from PHCS. The report was succinct and explanatory to enabled us to make an informed decision about the chassis and maintenance work required.'

New innovative ideas!

Stuart and residents' association treasurer Les Mason and secretary, Stella Thompson, are eager to create new initiatives and benefits for the members. There are weekly coffee mornings where people can openly discuss ideas in addition to regular association meetings and a monthly newsletter.

The residents' association committee has also introduced a Membership Discount Card with various suppliers with whom Stuart has negotiated discounted prices –from the local garage, builders' merchants, garden centre, pet store and possibly the most important...the local pub! Stuart states that it is the committee members and the residents who are the driving force, and, without their ideas, input and wishes for a vibrant community, he hasn't got a role, but he will push for the benefits for and on behalf of his members. Stuart's committee is working on other eagerly-awaited discount ideas, too.

I asked if Stuart could relax if all works are now completed on the park home. 'No! I've still got to get the chassis done by PHCS,' he explained. Plus a small issue of ripping out and replacing the central heating. Just a fraction of Stuart's energy, cheeriness and buoyancy wouldn't go amiss please!



Above: Stuart and Pam with their grandchildren Lucas, Caoimhe, Madison and Ellie