



Press release

For immediate release:

Icelandic relatives' gift freshens up a Basingstoke residential home which helps people with mental health issues.

The generosity of a bereaved son's family is helping to change his and other people's lives for the better.

John Martin, 62, has lived at Portal House, in Wellington Terrace, for more than 13 years. Portal House provides a safe and secure home and constant support for up to 15 people with mental health issues. The service has been a haven for people in Hampshire with mental health problems since it opened in 1982. It is supported by housing provider Stonham.

When John Martin's father died in December 2005 he left some of his estate to his late wife's relatives in Iceland. They did not need the money and wanted to help make John's life at Portal House more comfortable, but did not know how to change the terms of the Will. So the relatives consulted Sheila Glyn-Owen at Phillips Solicitors who advised them that they could execute a Deed of Variation. This changed the terms of the Will so that instead of receiving the inheritance themselves, the money could be used to improve and update Portal House for the benefit of John and the other residents.

The generous gesture has given John a new en-suite bedroom complete with wheelchair access. It has also provided an extra bedroom at Portal House, a new office area, new furniture for the residents' learning lounge and a host of other improvements.

Portal House's manager, Diane Phillips, said: "The extra bedroom that the money has made possible means we can care for an extra person who needs our help. It really has had a positive effect on the service and our clients. John has enjoyed helping with some of the furnishing decisions and everyone at Stonham is very grateful to him and his family."

Stonham employee, Matthew Kerr, has worked closely with Mr Martin for two years. He said: "John is a lovely man and a pleasure to work with. The improvements we have made with the money from John's inheritance means we can give our residents a more comfortable and attractive environment to live in."

Sheila Glyn-Owen, partner at Phillips, comments: 'People don't realise that adult beneficiaries can redirect or change gifts made to them under a Will. John's Icelandic relatives were delighted to be told that their money could be used to substantially improve John's quality of life.'

The refurbishments are expected to be finished before Christmas.

ENDS

Notes for editors:

Portal House can accommodate up to 15 people with mental health issues at its Wellington Terrace premises. The ages of our clients range from 18-70 years old. The 24 hour, 365 days a year service was opened in 1982 and provides accommodation and support to our clients.

The service covers a wide range of things including helping clients with their medications, providing assistance with benefit claims and being around to offer emotional support whenever needed.

Due to the sensitive nature of John's condition he is unavailable for interviews but staff members from Portal House are.

- Stonham is England's largest provider of specialist housing, care and support. We have 545 projects across England helping over 15,000 people each year. We specialise in offering housing, care and support to vulnerable and/or socially excluded people including single homeless people, young people leaving care, vulnerable young women, people escaping domestic violence, people with disabilities and people with mental health problems.
- Stonham is a division of Home Group Limited, a Registered Social Landlord (Housing Corporation Register No: L3076) and charity registered under the Industrial & Provident Societies Act 1965 (Register No: 22981R).
- For further information about the Portal House, please contact:
 - **Jerry Lyons, Stonham PR Officer (Direct line: 020 8582 2287 or 07595 651 332)**
- Website: www.stonham.org.uk

Phillips Solicitors

Phillips is a leading law firm in Basingstoke, with around 50 members of staff. We offer a comprehensive range of services to business and private clients, locally and nationwide. We specialise in helping clients achieve what they want. Sheila Glyn-Owen, partner, specialises in Wills, Probate and older person matters. Call Sheila on 01256 854637, email: sglyn-owen@phillips-law.co.uk

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