

Premium care in fine surroundings

Stowlangtoft Hall in its lovely setting and below; Roger Catchpole inside the beautifully restored building



Occupying a special place in the Catchpole family's heart, Stowlangtoft Hall is a home from home for many residents

Stowlangtoft Hall has been in the Catchpole family for past 80 years, but in 2010 the family decided to take control of the building and the nursing home's future.

The family are farmers by trade, but the latest generation – Roger Catchpole, a chartered marketer and MBA graduate, and Ruth French, a former civil servant in the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills – were keen to explore other opportunities and challenges.

With the care home, Roger, Ruth and parents Cath (a former headteacher) and John wanted to establish themselves as providers of exceptional care in beautiful surroundings. They believe that it's their family values that set them apart from others.

"Our family is our unique selling point," Ruth explains. "It's quite unusual in this industry, as so many care homes seem to have a corporate feel about them nowadays."

"As a family, our individual skill sets work well together. We all bring different backgrounds and strengths to the business," she added. It's been very well received so far.

According to Ruth, both residents and staff alike are feeling more at home than ever.

The home has been rated highly by regulatory bodies too. The Care Quality Commission recently gave Stowlangtoft Hall the top rating in every category and Environmental Health also awarded the home five stars after inspecting the kitchen areas. "Stowlangtoft Hall looks and feels like a beautiful home," Ruth enthuses.

"With everything we're doing, we're trying to do it to the highest possible standard.

"What's nice is we've started to get lots of word of mouth referrals now. It feels like everything we've done has been validated." The building itself dates back to the 1860s and is a beautiful Italianate Grade II listed mansion, set in acres of glorious grounds. Since taking over the running of the care home, the family has invested considerably in its renovation and recently opened a new wing, bringing the capacity up to 44 residents.

There are four levels of suite available, all of which offer generous living space quality furniture, tasteful décor, and state-of-the-art bathing facilities. However, it is the standard of care that really sets it apart.

"Employing the right staff is vital," Ruth explains. "We don't use agency staff, we hire each employee ourselves."

"We have an excellent manager who has worked as a nurse at the home for 13 years and knows all the residents very well.

Care is offered around the clock and the highly qualified team give personal attention to all the residents, whatever their needs. The meals – freshly cooked and beautifully presented – are delicious traditional dishes, which are popular among residents. Communal areas include well-maintained gardens and a recently renovated activities room with a purpose-built hairdressing salon. "Our dedicated activities coordinator has put in place a comprehensive programme of activities," Ruth added. "These range from a gardening group to giant crosswords and cookery. She also makes space for one-on-one sessions, which are equally important." Recently, residents have been completing life story books, using old photographs and mementos.

"We've found this helps residents, particularly those with memory loss. It's through reminiscing that they open up," Ruth says. The home is also launching a 'silver surfer' club, where residents can learn how to use the Internet and applications such as Skype. The family are proud of what has been achieved so far and look forward to continuing to meet the needs of their residents in the future.

- Find Stowlangtoft Healthcare at Stowlangtoft Hall, Stowlangtoft, Bury St Edmunds, IP31 3JY.
- For more information call 01359 230216, email enquiries@stowlangtofthehealthcare.co.uk or visit www.stowlangtofthehealthcare.co.uk

