

# Tech lessons blossom for pensioners thanks to floral app

Residents at an Edinburgh care home who have been perplexed by tech during lockdown are now being given extra help to conquer their fears – thanks to an app which identifies flowers.

Throughout the height of the coronavirus pandemic residents at Edinburgh's most exclusive care home were encouraged to use tablets to keep in touch with loved ones, via Skype or other video services.

However, some of those at Cramond Residence were left baffled or intimidated by the modern technology, posing the challenge for staff to find ways of making it more accessible for an older generation.

Now the team have hit on the idea of using residents' love of the home's beautiful gardens to demystify the technology – by showing them how to use a popular app called Pl@ntNet.

James McDiarmid, a Lifestyle Coordinator at the 74-room, luxury Cramond Residence, said: "A handful of our residents are very comfortable with tech, but most of them are a bit intimidated by it. That became really apparent during early lockdown.

"We used tablets to keep residents in touch with their friends

and families. While they loved the way it kept them connected, many of them needed a lot of support to use the tech. That started us thinking about ways to get them more comfortable with tech.

“We have beautiful gardens here, which the residents love. They’re always asking what the various plants and flowers are. However, because we are so new, none of the plants are labelled, so we can’t usually answer.

“Now we are loading up our tablets with the Pl@ntNet app and we’re going to help the residents to use that to identify various plants. As well as getting them more comfortable using the technology, we’ll also make labels so that future residents will always be able to identify what grows in our gardens.”

The app was recommended to James by a friend who is an enthusiastic amateur botanist. To test it out he loaded it on his own phone first, then used it while out on his regular runs around the city.

He added: “It works a treat and is very straightforward. We’ll be running a number of events and courses to help get the residents as comfortable as possible with the tech. We know they are fascinated by the possibilities, we just have to help them overcome their fears.”

The Pl@ntNet App is a citizen science project which identifies plants from photographs. It is part of a research and educational initiative to promote plant diversity.

Cramond Residence is a purpose-built care home created at a cost of £12.5m and opened in October 2018.

It combines luxury, five-star accommodation with outstanding clinical standards. Each resident enjoys a luxury room with en-suite bathroom facilities – with places available from £1850 per week.

As well as the beautiful gardens, it also offers a library, a hair salon, a private, fine-dining space, a physiotherapy room and a cinema, which doubles as a large, multi-purpose space for a host of events.

It maintains a care staff to resident ratio of at least 1:4 at all times and promotes a small-group living philosophy. That means groups of eight rooms form distinct "houses", where residents are encouraged to eat and socialise together. This is believed to have played a major role in successful infection control during the coronavirus pandemic to date.

Places in the care home start from £1850 a week.

To find out more, call 0131 341 4037 or visit <https://cramondresidence.co.uk>