

Burston's Retirement Village

Good evening. I am Joy Mendelsohn, Chair of Park Street Residents Association, and I am speaking in favour of the Burston Retirement Village.

During the past 18 months I have been working with HCC and Rural Communities to identify vulnerable older residents and PSRA have received grants to support our work to combat loneliness and isolation and to improve mental health and well-being. I am also a Covid Information Officer and have been ensuring older residents are kept up to date. It is sad that several residents have had no face- to- face contact for over a year.

The facility which is planned at Burston's would be a considerable asset to our community in many ways.

The care facility would ensure independence and security, two important factors. Many residents I have spoken to feel that their present home is too large, and they would love to be able to downsize, but there are very few affordable options in this vicinity. It is important to them that they can stay close to family and in many cases remain in the area in which they have grown up.

A purpose- built retirement village would admirably serve their needs and free up family houses for others.

A communal hall, which is planned, would be an asset to the whole Park Street/Bricket Wood area and would be widely used for social events and appreciated by many. Loneliness can lead to mental health and physical problems. We need to work on combatting this.

PSRA is holding an end of lockdown tea party in our village hall in July for over 120 over 80's and delivering afternoon teas to many housebound and bedridden residents. The take-up is overwhelming and the responses have led to us organising a monthly get together, as there has been such a positive reaction.

The Retirement Village would lead to employment opportunities for local people and enhance what at present is something of an eyesore. Sympathetic planting, including a pond, would increase biodiversity. The area is already bordered by How Wood and Birchwood forests and further tree planting around the perimeter will enhance and increase these woodlands.

There is already a safe footpath of 200 yards from the corner of the site which leads to a diverse row of eleven shops including a hairdresser, stationers, pharmacy and Co-op. This path also leads to a bus stop with frequent services to St. Albans, Watford

(including the hospital) Hatfield and Stevenage. How Wood Station is close-by with links to St Albans and Watford Junction. With the recent closure of Grace Muriel House off Vesta Avenue there is an even greater need for places. Many local families have struggled to find local places for their parents and have had to move them out of the area.

In conclusion we feel that this development is an asset to our Community and the surrounding area and believe that such a scheme should be endorsed.