



Whiteley Village

1917 - 2017

Living Longer, Ageing Well

NEWS RELEASE

Whiteley Village plans expansion for additional 150 people as waiting list for longer life grows longer!

Walton on Thames, 8 March 2017 Women residents of Whiteley Village in Walton on Thames – a retirement community for people of limited financial means - enjoy a longevity boost of up to 5 years compared to the general population, research has shown.

With demand for accommodation at Whiteley Village at its highest and a wait-list of over one year, the Whiteley Village Trust is now applying for planning to build an additional 62 almshouses, a new care hub providing an extra 30 care suites, and extra care flats. If approved, the planning will enable an extra 150 older people in desperate need of accommodation to live at Whiteley.

Run by The Whiteley Homes Trust (Charity Patron: HRH the Prince of Wales), in 2017 Whiteley Village celebrates 100 years of providing housing, care and support for retired people of limited means. The village is home to around 500 residents ranging in age from 65-106, the majority of whom live independently in almshouses, with additional support available to meet people's changing needs over time, with extra-care apartments, a residential home and a nursing home. Most residents rely on housing benefit to pay the cost of renting their accommodation. In many cases the Whiteley Homes Trust subsidises those whose accommodation and care needs are not fully met by the state.

Chandra McGowan, Chief Executive of The Whiteley Homes Trust comments: "For 100 years, Whiteley Village has supported older people to live as independently as possible. Our one-stop-shop solution brings together suitable accommodation and care on one site, and this enables our residents to live independently for longer.

"Our strength of community is a key driver to the longevity boost identified by the research from Cass Business School. Every day we see our residents helping each other and this inter-dependence is very important to everyone's well-being. People living at Whiteley Village tell us they feel safe, connected and cared for, underpinned by the security of having their 'own home'. For many this removes a huge amount of anxiety given their housing situation prior to arrival. The Whiteley example provides positive insight into much needed proactive solutions for our ageing society."

Analysing 100 years' worth of residents' records, the Cass findings suggest that Whiteley Village sets a good example of how retirement village living is capable of combating the negative effects on health and social well-being, especially when it comes to low economic means and isolation. This approach could help in the



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Government's aim to reduce mortality inequalities amongst lower socio-economic groups.

Professor Les Mayhew, Professor of Statistics at Cass Business School, said: "It is well established that people classified as having a low socio-economic status tend to have a lower life expectancy than the average member of the population, but instead we found the opposite at Whiteley. One of our main results is that we show that female residents actually receive a longevity boost from retirement village life, and that life expectancy for males reaches a similar level to that of the general population.

"The undoubted lesson of Whiteley is that it is possible to create a socially stimulating and safe environment in which older people can enjoy a longer retirement in peace and comfort compared to that experienced by individuals of similar backgrounds in the general population."

In the UK the population over age 65 is projected to increase by more than 40%, to over 16 million, during the next 17 years. With the population ageing so rapidly, finding ways in which the older population can live their later lives in relative health and comfort has become an increasingly important issue in the UK.

There is considerable interest in creating more retirement villages in the UK to offer housing and care for the increasing numbers of older people who are attracted to this type of retirement living. The benefits of communal living in later life - which include enhanced quality of life, reduced social isolation and greater independence - are of immense significance because of continuously rising cost pressures on health and social care.

This month sees the launch of The Whiteley Foundation for Ageing Well, as the Trust is keen to share what it has learned and invite collaboration from Government, policy makers, academics and commercial organisations to explore potential solutions for future policy on care, wellbeing, inequality and housing in later life.

ENDS

Enquiries: media@whiteleyvillage.org.uk

Link to photos (all have consent of subjects): <https://we.tl/Jp3Fh0VHyF>

Credit: Anna Butcher

Notes to Editors:

The Whiteley Foundation for Ageing Well

Ageing is about more than health and care; it is about everyday life. How do people's preferences and priorities change as they age? What does it mean to enjoy the added years of life to the full? What choices are most important to older people? What makes them feel valued in society?



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These issues affect everyone simply because they are getting older, irrespective of their wealth. Businesses, charities, and public services all need better insights if they are to be effective in helping people live well as they age.

Whiteley's century of helping people live longer and better gives us many clues, and a unique base to try new approaches. Our residents have an age span of 50 years, with a range of differing ambitions, needs and motivations.

The Whiteley Foundation for Ageing Well aims to understand what it means to live well in later life, and how best to help people do so. We will counter the fear of old age and encourage a positive attitude to ageing, from people of all ages.

We will publish, in time for the centenary of our first Villager, an inaugural volume of articles covering all aspects of ageing well, including well-being, leisure, personal relationships, finance, health, care and support, and the possibilities of technology.

Our purpose will be to learn by applying the lessons to our everyday work in the Village, and sharing our learning freely.

Our work with the Cass Business School and the International Longevity Centre is just the start. We have also agreed to work with Surrey University on projects that include: clinical training; ethical decision-making in social care; companion pets; and use of 5G technology.

We want to engage with other partners who share our interest - anyone keen that longer life should be better life, too.

HISTORY

Believed to be the first purpose-built retirement village in the UK, building began in 1914 and the first resident, Eliza Palmer, moved into her cottage on 10 October 1917. Established at the bequest of the estate of William Whiteley, the founder of Whiteley's department store in Bayswater London in 1863. He bequeathed "as nearly as may be whole but not exceeding the sum of £1,000,000 sterling" for the purchase of land and the erection thereon of "buildings to be used and occupied by poor persons of either sex as homes in their old age".

This bequest came to fruition sooner than anticipated when William Whiteley was murdered in his store by a man claiming to be his illegitimate son.

The architectural and social ambition of William Whiteley's vision made the village truly outstanding for its time and it is still unique today.



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ARCHITECTURE

Whiteley Village is a grade II listed site set in 225 acres. The original architecture was subject to a design competition featuring a team of leading architects at the time including Sir Ernest George, Mervyn Macartney and R. Frank Atkinson. Frank Atkinson – best known as the designer of Selfridges store with D H Burnham and Frank Swales - won the masterplan competition and the village was built between 1914-1921 by the country's leading architects of the age including, along with Atkinson and Cave, Sir Ernest George, Sir Reginald Blomfield, Mervyn Macartney, Sir Aston Webb and Sir Ernest Newton. In 1915 Walter Tapper was appointed to design the village church, St Mark's, in the Gothic style, and Inigo Triggs appointed to design the landscaping.

In 1965 the village underwent a major update with buildings refurbished by Ley Colbeck and Partners which included the removal of all working fireplaces, removal of leaded lights to windows, reconfiguration of internal layouts and subsequent changes to elevations.

ELIGIBILITY FOR RESIDENCY

Eligibility to become a resident at Whiteley Village is open to people of retirement age of limited means. This means an applicant should not own a property or have savings that give them choices to rent or purchase in the open market. People will receive greater priority to live in the village if they are due to be homeless, have local connections or a connection to the village. The majority of residents qualify for housing benefit but that is not a requirement for admission. Applicants must also have lived in the UK for a minimum of 5 years.

WHITELEY VILLAGE FACILITIES

Whiteley Village operates as a true village complete with village shop, post office, library, village hall, a church and a meeting hall for other faiths. Community spirit is core to the success of the village and the large proportion of volunteers are mostly villagers themselves, who organise a range of clubs, societies and help look after less able neighbours. There is no GP practice on-site but village staff help residents, where necessary, to arrange to see a doctor locally.