

WHITELEY VILLAGE BUILDING AND PLANNING UPDATE – OCTOBER 2017

The Care Hub – construction work starting soon....

We are very close to signing the contract with Triodos /Unity bank for the funds to be released to build the Care Hub and convert Whiteley House. There are some minor drafting points which our lawyers are negotiating and we expect to be able to sign the terms of the loan by the end of October.

A similar piece of legal work is underway with Castleoak, our construction partner, and once again this is close to being signed. In the meantime, much of the detailed work on supply of utilities and tree removal will be starting soon. This will ensure the site is prepared and ready for foundations to be dug during November.

The total length of time for the building project is predicted to be 15 months, which takes us to spring 2019. The Castleoak team will provide regular updates as soon as they start construction work and we have appointed two of possibly three resident liaison leads, so that you can discuss any issues directly with someone you know. We are delighted that Sid Guichard and Christine Goldsmith have agreed to take on these roles, and though not solely responsible, they will be the “go to” people who can find things out for you. Martin would like to hear from anyone else who could help in the 3rd liaison role. For staff, there will be a regular update on our internal Yammer pages and there will be “news” at staff team meetings from managers.

We shall be holding a celebratory “First Dig” photo opportunity in late October or early November so be sure to watch out for news about this event. Come and join us on what will be the next momentous occasion in the history of the village.



Whiteley House – Support for Residents, Families and Staff throughout the next 15 months

Although building work for the Care Hub will commence in November we are aiming for “business as usual” at Whiteley House for all of our current residents. We will however, only be taking in new residents (unless villagers) , who are needing short respite stays. No new long-term admissions will be made after Christmas.

This is important as it means we can concentrate on supporting our current Whiteley House residents and their families through the transition period. We will also be working with staff to find alternative opportunities for working in other areas.

We have recently met with relatives to run through what is happening and how we can keep everyone apprised of progress. Martin and Katherine have already been meeting to plan staff transitions and all staff in the Care Centre have had 121 sessions to talk about what their roles could be in the future.

We are grateful to all our staff for the fabulous job they do, so we want to ensure they have the support they need to see them through a process of change that is going to last at least 15 months. During this time, I know they will continue to work to their professional best and give residents the service they deserve, even if feeling a little unsettled themselves. We aim to support each other with understanding and kindness during this time and I am sure that together we can manage, what will inevitably be, an anxious time.

Whiteley Walk and the Alms Houses – Decision to Appeal

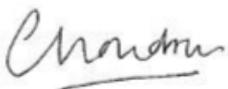
Since planning permission was refused by Elmbridge Borough Council in July we have been working hard to gather information to help us decide what to do next. So we have (1) spoken at length to key objectors (2) spent time with Council CEO (3) met with our 3 local Councillors (4) held a Project Development committee meeting (5) taken advice from an eminent QC.

In essence, we have been considering the delivery of our strategic aims for the charity and weighing up the likely chances of success of an Appeal, alongside the risks of a protracted and possibly expensive process. Given what we have learnt and after an extended Board session this week, at which the Board considered all the information and advice available **we have decided to Appeal**. Although the current guidance is that this process could take approximately one year, the benefit of this approach is that the decision is taken away from the local council and it is made by an Independent Inspectorate. Naturally there are other factors to take into account during the process and of course there are no guarantees. We will however keep everyone apprised as we move towards what we hope will be a formal Enquiry.

Care and Support – building services for the future

We are working closely with the local NHS, the Hersham GP practice, the new Community Services provider, Princess Alice Hospice and the local Social Services to enable us to deliver even better support across the village community as the Care Hub develops.

Alongside this several new initiatives are underway, including, introducing the Hobbs Therapy Team (83 people are using this service) for both physical and mental health improvement; the carers group supported by our faith team; the plans for new church facilities to enable us to provide food and drinks, plus good facilities for social related activity there; and now a new scheme aimed at those most lonely people within our Village. These important developments are all part of building the resilience of this community during a time when state funding continues to reduce.



Chandra McGowan
CEO