

# T H E AHH WAY

Delivering Happy, Healthy and Affordable Communities

Spring 2022



## Fighting loneliness

Bringing like-minded people together to create real communities

## Making life affordable

Solving the housing crisis with shared ownership and not-for-profit services

## Creating vibrant communities

We cut the ribbon on our new affordable homes in Taunton and Sherborne



**AHH**  
Affordable Housing  
& Healthcare Group

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We believe that everyone should be able to afford healthy and happy lives in the comfort and security of their own home and community.

We're on a mission to solve the housing crisis by creating vibrant affordable communities for first-time buyers, key workers and elderly people.

Investing in affordable housing and healthcare is good for everyone; it creates sustainable value, builds communities and changes lives.

The Affordable Housing and Healthcare Group is a leading social impact investor acting on behalf of high-net-worth individuals and institutions. We co-invest in the delivery of essential housing and healthcare infrastructure that improves lives.

We create vibrant, affordable communities through shared ownership and deliver non-profit services so that our homeowners can live happy and healthy lives.

Our approach is proven to reduce pressure on local health and social care systems. We align the needs of investors, operators, and residents to achieve significant social impact and strong, sustainable returns whilst delivering cost savings for the public purse – **everybody wins.**



**Julian Shaffer**  
Chief Executive Officer  
and Founder

## Reducing social isolation

Jack Francis, a Chapters resident, purchased a share of an apartment in October 2020. He moved to Salisbury at the age of 92 to be closer to his daughter after living in the same house in South Wales for more than 60 years.

With the help of his daughter, Jo, he looked at alternative homes to live in following the death of his wife, which had caused him to feel lonely. Due to the age of his friends, Jack says that many of them had passed away or were increasingly becoming immobile meaning that they were unable to socialise in person together.

Jack wanted to find somewhere that would enable him to be part of a community and make new friends, which he has gone on to do in our Salisbury independent-living site.

He said: "My daughter heard about it because she lives nearby in Laverstock and decided that it was the better place to go rather than an old people's home. I had looked at care homes brochures, but I hadn't decided on anything. Then when my daughter described Chapters and I thought that it might be ideal for me."

Jack said that his daughter told him about the modern kitchen facilities, generous-sized bedrooms, and walk-in shower in the bathroom. "Things sounded ideal. There didn't sound to be any drawbacks to it. Everything sounded good. She was right and I was right in my decision to move here. It has become my home."

**So many people are friendly. It's just so easy to talk to each other**

Jack said that the real benefit of moving to Chapters has been becoming part of a friendly community of like-minded people. "We have coffee mornings twice a week here, where we meet at 10am in the communal lounge. That's very pleasant. I've made friends here and of course, I meet them on those mornings.

"The gentlemen get together at the happy hour, which we have after other activities. I have a few friends that I have made here now and that's where we get together.



**Jack Francis - Chapters Homeowner**

**I would recommend people look at the scheme here as a priority**

"That's the sort of place that it is here. So many people are friendly. It's just so easy to talk to each other and get acquainted.

"I was not always somebody who could make friends easily like that, but here it's so relaxed. Everybody likes to talk. We get chatting and it is a very pleasant atmosphere here."

Jack said that the activities organised by Chapters' dedicated Community Managers further enhances the opportunities to make friends with his neighbours.

"There was a trip to Wilton House which was arranged by the Community Managers, and I enjoyed that. Particularly since I've made a good friend here called Mick and we went there together. We also had a trip to Beaulieu and Mick said that he was going to hire a mobility scooter and so I rang up and I arranged one too. That was a marvellous trip. I'm looking forward to something else being arranged now."

Jack enjoys Chapters' communal facilities onsite, with a particular interest in the bistro, which provides a host of delicious meals for the homeowners to enjoy such as fish and chips, sandwiches, curry, and roast dinners.

**Social isolation significantly increases the risk of premature death from all causes, which may rival those of smoking and obesity and a 50% increased risk of dementia.**

*Research by National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (2020)*

"I have found the bistro to be very, very good. What's happened with that is that instead of cooking for myself like I used to, I'm getting lazy and using the bistro. I'm a big eater, so I like the bistro. That's important to me."

As well as serving meals, the bistro also acts as a venue for live music events for the homeowners, which enable people to come together over dinner and drinks before enjoying a song and a dance, which Jack has enjoyed.

When asked if Jack would recommend Platinum Skies to friends, he said: "I would recommend people look at the scheme here as a priority. I've settled in here and I would recommend it."

[Watch the full testimonial here](#)



# Retirement Living

Elizabeth Adams, 81, purchased a share in an apartment in Chapters after moving from out of the area in neighbouring Hampshire. She says that she thrives on being near the 'buzzing' Salisbury city centre, where she volunteers at Salisbury Cathedral, and enjoys being close to the local amenities.

Elizabeth said: "There are two reasons that I love living at Chapters. Predominantly, I love the development and I think the design of it is fabulous. We all have lovely homes and there are central parts of it like the bistro, where we all gather and have lovely times. It's a very happy place. It's a lot of fun. When I moved here, it just felt like moving into a lovely, welcoming home.

She added: "The second reason is that it's very close to Salisbury city centre and for people who are just retiring, or are retired, Salisbury is buzzing. It has everything – Music, theatre, shops, and the market – everything that you could want, and it's a short walk, or a short bus ride away."

"The foremost attraction in the city is the Cathedral and everything that it brings with it. I have become a Friend of Salisbury Cathedral and I love the music. From the Cathedral, you get a lot of things opening around it. I love the buzz. I feel alive when I go into the city."

**In this community,  
it's very easy to make friends**

Elizabeth says that she moved from out of the area to Salisbury and so a huge benefit has been the many friends that she is making at Chapters.

"I don't come from around here and I don't have any family here, but I have a few friends from nearby where I used to live, I'm also I'm making new ones here. It's quite easy to do. In this community, it's very easy to make friends.

"We have a focus group which consists of the Community Managers and a few homeowners, and we organise tons and tons of lovely events. We've got quite a few things lined up for the next few months."

[▶ Watch the full testimonial here](#)

Elizabeth Adams - Chapters Homeowner



Jeff Carter - Hamble Heights Resident

**Strokes cost the NHS  
around £3billion per year,  
with an additional cost to  
the economy of £4billion in  
lost productivity, disability,  
and informal care**

*Research by NHS England (2017)*

# A home away from home

Jeff Carter, 65, moved from Wales to Hamble Heights in Fareham, Hampshire, following a stroke which affected the right-side of his body and left him unable to stay living in his own home or ride his beloved motorbike.

**This isn't just a care home, this is my home.  
The care team are like my relatives and  
that's the way they treat me**

It took five years after the stroke before Jeff could walk with a stick, and once he was able to do that, he wanted to be closer to his daughter who works at Southampton General Hospital. At Hamble Heights, he is assisted by the care team with washing, dressing and day-to-day tasks and loves the way he is treated like he is part of the family.

Jeff said: "This place is absolutely gorgeous. It is immaculately clean and the food is beautiful so I would recommend it 100%

"What I say is I can do 90% of everything, but it's the 10% I can't do, and that's what the carers do for me. They do it without any fuss and they don't question it. I can't do things like wash myself or put myself to bed. They are wonderful and what I like is that as well as being individually brilliant, they work well together."

Jeff says after doing his daily laps of the corridor to keep up his fitness, he often sits in an armchair in the living room. From there, he hears the care team talking as they carry out their duties. "If a colleague is having a hard time, they pick each other up. It gives the residents a lift when they hear that and makes for a nicer atmosphere because this isn't just a care home, this is my home. The care team are like my relatives and that's the way they treat me. They don't treat me as some sort of fragile ornament.

"They treat me like somebody who they can have a laugh with and share a joke or two. That's what we want because this is every resident's home and we have led full lives before we came here. I joined the Navy when I was 16 and I've travelled all over the world and I've seen and done things that most people haven't done. So, I'm not just this person you see sitting in a chair that can't do those things that I talked about before."

[▶ Watch the full testimonial here](#)



Jeff using his call button for care assistance





# Taunton's new community

We were thrilled to welcome the Mayor of Taunton, Cllr Sue Lees, to cut the ribbon on our new community in Taunton, Quantock House. As someone who is visually-impaired, she was particularly impressed by the design concept of each apartment being made accessible as standard with the future in mind, as well as the sense of togetherness of our Taunton homeowners.

Invited guests included our homeowners and local stakeholders from Taunton businesses, who enjoyed drinks, a light lunch and live music.

The Mayor of Taunton, Cllr Sue Lees, said: "I wish that I could move in tomorrow. It is absolutely wonderful

“

**I think anybody that moves in here is going to have a wonderful life**

**More than half (55%) of older people are retiring earlier than planned**

*Research by ABRDN shows (2022)*

and the views over Taunton from the top floor are just something else. I was given an amazing tour of the community and I am so impressed with every detail as you have thought of everything. I think anybody that moves in here is going to have a wonderful life."

The Mayor also met some homeowners to hear about what life is like in Quantock House, including our first Taunton homeowner, Ian Mackenzie. He said: "It was a smashing day. The newer homeowners were brought together to meet their neighbours and there was a good mix of people. I'm very happy here. For me in my circumstances, it's the ideal scenario. My children are very happy with me being here as well, and I've made lots of good friends already."

Wendy Del Grosso, and her husband, Len, also made time to chat to The Mayor. Following the event, Wendy said: "It was a wonderful experience and everybody had put their heart and soul into making the event very special for us. We got a lot out of it, and it was lovely to get together. We absolutely love it here."



Laura Warwick, Community Director



Dee, Margaret and Sherry raise a glass



Meryl, Dee and Verene share a laugh



Cllr Sue Lees looks across Taunton



Homeowners enjoyed live music and dancing at the party



# Ill health and mobility issues

Ann, 81, and David Thomas, 87, who live in Esprit, Poole, purchased a share of an apartment in December 2019.

They moved to their apartment in Poole from a bungalow which they were finding difficult to maintain as they grew older. At Esprit, they enjoy living in a community with access to the communal areas via two lifts and there are no stairs for David to contend with, which he can find difficult due to having Parkinson's.

Ann said that the other homeowners are very friendly and they enjoy chatting to them during various activities hosted in the communal lounge and bistro.

"All our neighbours are friendly, and they always say hello if they meet you, so you can have a chat and meet for coffee mornings. It's good.

"We see our Community Manager most days and we've no complaints at all, it's been good. It's useful having a Community Manager on site. We don't often ask for help but it is a good idea knowing that they're there just in case you ever have a problem or if you don't know the area.

"We moved because we got old. All of a sudden, you get old. You don't have a car anymore, you don't have a dog anymore and to get anywhere to see anyone was very difficult. There was no easy way to get to a local shop for anything, so we decided that we had to move into town where we could walk to a shop. Platinum Skies fitted the bill and that's why we came here."

"Our last property got old and needed redecorating, all that responsibility has now gone. There's no big garden to keep in order, especially cutting the grass. It's great and we have more time to do things that matter."

"It's easier for my husband to go for a walk now, and practice his walking. Inside Esprit, the ground is flatter and easier to walk on than where we were before.

"I can now walk into town to go shopping, the doctor is just around the corner and the other homeowners are very friendly. If you had asked me if we'd move here 20 or 30 years ago, I'd have said 'Never in a month of Sundays' but life changes and it's ideal for us.



Ann & David Thomas - Esprit Homeowners

Older people living without support are 1.8 times more likely to visit their GP, 1.6 times more likely to visit A&E, and 1.3 times more likely to need emergency admission. Research by ONS, NHS England (2020)

# Widowed

Mick Spooner, a Chapters resident, purchased a share of an apartment in July 2020. He moved to a ground floor apartment in Salisbury after the death of his wife, leading to him living alone in a four-bedroom house which he could no longer look after due to mobility issues. He now leads an active social life in Salisbury, acting as a friendly, welcoming face to our new homeowners as they move into the community, as well as providing childcare to his grandson three mornings a week.

"I moved to Chapters because I sadly lost my wife and I was living in a three-bedroom house with quite a large garden and it was quite a large house. There were lots of lovely memories, but the place was miles too big with lots of stairs and a massive garden.

I have made so many friends

"I spent six months in that property on my own and I just thought that I couldn't cope with that. It was well beyond me as an individual and I have a few mobility problems, such as going up and downstairs.

"My son and I saw this place advertised so I came and had a look and fell in love with it because it's a one-bed apartment and everything is just spot on for my needs. I have never regretted it. I am so, so happy here. I've never looked back and I am so pleased that I came and took up the offer of moving here.

"I have made so many friends. So many people are happy to chat, and we get on so well. You can come and go as you want. It's superb. People can just be together and they are happy."

Mick said that a big surprise is that Platinum Skies homes do not resemble a care home and instead offer the homeowners complete independence to live how they wish to, in their own space, with the benefit of neighbours their own age to socialise with.

"Because it's retirement living

rather than a retirement home, you have your own freedom so that was immediately a big draw. I can come and go as I want. I didn't have to sign in and out. Nobody was looking after me and knocking on my door to see how I am. It was fresh, it was freedom.

I just love this place, and nobody can ever take that away from me

"I can go into my apartment, and it would be home, rather than a spare three bedrooms upstairs like in my previous property. It's a joy. It really is.

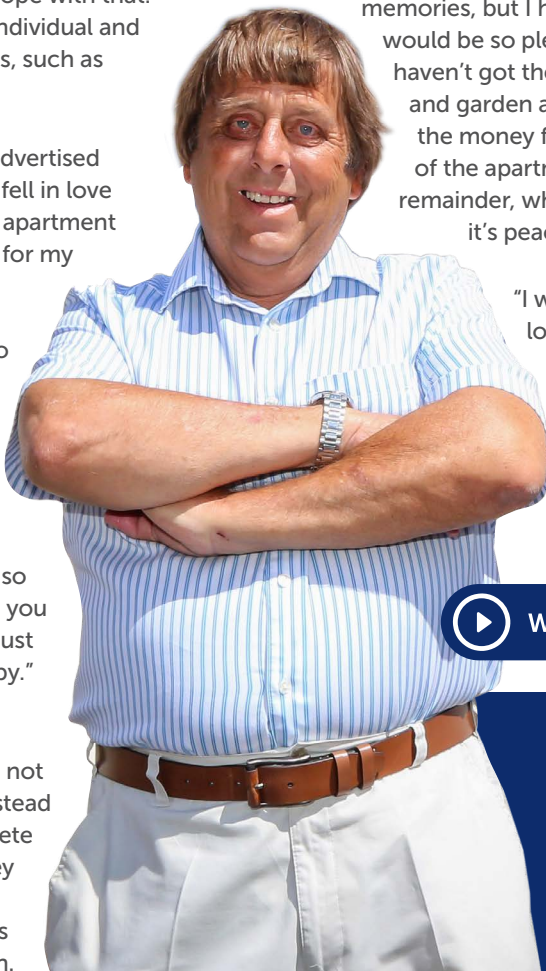
"The key thing is that you have moved to a place while you're relatively fit where you can live comfortably and you don't have to worry about when you can't live in that place anymore and have to move into a care home. People are happy here. They can cope here."

Reflecting on what his late wife would think about the move, Mick said that she would be proud of him for putting himself and his needs first.

"It's freedom that's released me from memories of what I had with my wife for 42 years, which are fantastic memories, but I have brought them with me. She would be so pleased that I have moved on. I haven't got the worry of a three-bedroom house and garden and all of the maintenance. I have the money from the house which pays for half of the apartment and you pay the rent on the remainder, which comes out of your bank and it's peace of mind.

"I would recommend Chapters. I just love this place and nobody can ever take that away from me.

"My daughter and son are so pleased for me that I have made a go of it and am really enjoying the whole place."



Mick Spooner - Chapters Resident

Watch the full testimonial here

Over 500 homeowners, like Mick, are now benefiting from a healthier and happier life in a Platinum Skies community.





# Meet the Community Director: Laura Warwick

Meet Laura Warwick, our Community Director, who joined the team last year in a newly-created role which looked to supercharge our events and lifestyle offering to enrich our homeowners’ physical and emotional wellbeing. Informally known as our resident ‘Dr Happy’, you can find Laura supporting a whole host of activities and events for our homeowners from garden parties, afternoon teas and summer barbecues to gardening talks, coffee mornings and social focus groups.

## What does a typical day look like for you?

I In my role there is no typical day – which is one of things I love about developing our communities.

I will often be at one of our beautiful developments – helping the on site teams to deliver a range of activities and events. I also work with local business and community groups to establish ways Platinum Skies can ensure our development and our homeowners

“  
Age has nothing to do  
with how much fun  
you can have!  
”

are an asset whenever we build. I also have a strategic role to play in looking at the future and how we build our services – working with homeowners to shape the future and their voice is very important to Platinum Skies. I ensure I spend a lot of time listening, also watching out for anything that may need the support of my customer service function to ensure we are being supportive in every way.

## How do our Community Managers boost our homeowners’ lives?

Our Community Managers love coming up with new fun ideas like hosting a special wedding reception-type party for a couple of newly-weds or simply ensuring they check in with a homeowner who is going through a difficult time. They often stay late to host activities like wine tastings or supper clubs because they are developing the communities from their inception and want to ensure that the homeowners enjoy a fantastic

lifestyle with us. They work with our homeowners on ideas for activities and will always try to make it happen, where possible, and will encourage suggestions for local organisations to support. They also look out to the wider local community to make sure we are a valuable asset to each location that we are in.

## Tell us about some homeowners whose lives have changed since moving to our communities?

Our homeowners really are amazing and whilst they join our communities from a variety of backgrounds and locations, one thing you can be sure of is they all bring their own treasures.

One homeowner in Vista joined us after she was widowed and was used to being part of a very sociable couple. With a bit of encouragement, she has set up a bridge club – firstly teaching others the finer details of the game and now leading regular matches with growing popularity. This all started with a conversation about a bridge tabletop and where to store it!

A homeowner in Esprit has dedicated her spare time to supporting many volunteer groups, which most recently includes a premature baby unit locally – coordinating visits through Covid and working with the hospital in many ways. She even found time to work with the social focus group on fundraising efforts for the local hospital, creating crafts to sell at Christmas and coordinating a very successful raffle.

“  
Seeing people start their new  
beginning and knowing you had  
a hand in it is gives me great  
satisfaction  
”

A couple in Sherborne have previously spent time coordinating events and activities and brought a very big back catalogue of quizzes with them to their new home. They now host a regular, very popular quiz which offers a great way for people to meet their neighbours and form new friendships while showing off their general knowledge, which is always a great conversation starter.

## Tell us about some of your favourite homeowner events that you have helped to host?

My favourite events are normally when new friends meet while learning and enjoying shared experiences – whether it is the two ladies that nodded in the hallway that bonded over learning the skills of wine tasting, or the shared love of drawing that was discovered by one homeowner who thought he was no good at art (finding out later that his mother was also a fabulous artist).



Laura Warwick - Community Director

## What is one of your proudest achievements since you joined the Platinum Skies team?

It is so hard to pick a proudest moment – and anything I achieve is a real team effort. I think launching two brand new, very different developments over a two-month period really makes me proud. Seeing people start their new beginning and knowing you had a hand in it gives me great satisfaction. I may have needed a very long sleep after we finished those launches but what an achievement by the whole team!

## What would surprise most people about Platinum Skies?

I think many people would be surprised about how flexible our service offering is – whether that is that the chef who can accommodate your favourite treat or the launch of a new class for all to try. We have even opened up a storage area for our homeowners to store and dry out their spring bulbs that brightened up their balconies recently. We really are here to listen to our homeowners and support them to lead and grow their own communities. And there are lots more exciting new services we are working on together!

## What do you love most about your job?

Who wouldn’t love a job that is all about making people happy? Every day is different and when you receive a thank you from a happy homeowner it gives you that extra boost to your day. I also love how Platinum Skies listens to ideas and allows me to action new and exciting services – our homeowners are never short of ideas.

## Final thoughts?

Every one of our homeowners is an individual with their own interesting story. I know many under 55’s who are very jealous of the life in our communities – age has nothing to do with how much fun you can have!



# Partnering with the NHS to solve the care crisis

The first of its kind in the UK, this joint venture was created to secure NHS services on Christchurch Hospital's site including a GP surgery, pharmacy, X-ray department, and community clinics. An 80-bed purpose-built, state-of-the-art care home - and 35 senior living apartments were also built as part of the multi-million-pound project.

Richard Renaut, Chief Strategy and Transformation Officer, RBCH NHS Foundation Trust, said:

"Our partnership with AHH started when we were looking to secure the future for Christchurch Hospital. It is through that partnership that we used some of the spare land on the site to develop a care home and senior living community. Our return from that investment has been hugely beneficial in allowing us to bring up the quality of all of our estate on site.

"Communities that offer affordable, purpose-built homes and wellbeing for older people are a key part of healthier, independent living. This helps provide a solution to the challenges faced by the NHS and Local Authorities in meeting the health and social care



Fairmile Grange - Encore Care Homes



Monterey - Platinum Skies

needs of our growing elderly population. Partnerships founded on long-term aligned goals, such as ours with AHH, are good for our local community."

Each building's fantastic design features beautifully landscaped gardens, large windows and bright, spacious rooms. The care home - Fairmile Grange - offers specialist residential, nursing, and dementia care - and continues to receive recognition from the care quality commission (CQC) and carehome.co.uk.

At the opening of Fairmile Grange, David Hines, Chief Executive of AHH, thanked the management and board of RBCH NHS Foundation Trust, which had set out to find a way to retain services at Christchurch Hospital for the community five years prior to Fairmile's opening in 2016.

David said: "This ground-breaking and successful initiative between the public sector and private enterprise is something that we can all be very proud to be part of."

Through its joint venture partnerships with NHS Trusts, AHH has provided much needed value to local hospitals which in turn give the best possible public benefit for health, the community and local housing.

The national housing shortage directly affected Christchurch and the surrounding areas. AHH provided a solution for the local authority by bringing affordable homes to people over 55, backed by care-led communities with a focus on health and wellbeing.

Paired with the care home at Christchurch Hospital, our joint venture has been instrumental in creating a new, connected community that has changed people's lives.



Christchurch Hospital



Richard Renaut - NHS Foundation Trust

# An age appropriate home

Long-standing Salisbury resident, Margaret Moore, purchased a share of an apartment in Chapters in August 2019, where she now enjoys a view of the city's most famous landmark.

She was looking to downsize from her three-bedroom family home to somewhere which is easier to maintain and comes with the bonus of neighbours her own age who she can socialise with at Chapters' various onsite activities.

Margaret said: "I only moved from 1.5 miles down the road, downsizing from the family home I had been living in for the past 62 years. Naturally, it took a couple of months to get used to my smaller apartment, however now I am very settled, and I couldn't be happier.

**"My previous house was dated, and my large garden was difficult to maintain, whereas this apartment is wonderfully modern, and just the right size for me"**

"Having lived in Salisbury for so long, I was already well aware of the fantastic amenities in the city - Chapters' proximity to the centre means that I can easily enjoy them, as they're just a short bus ride away.

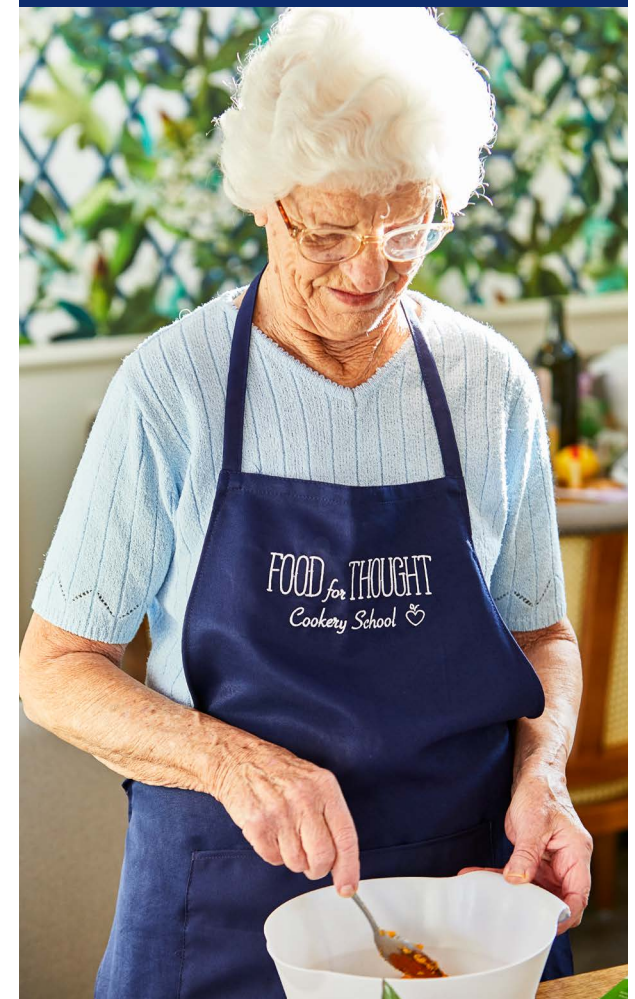
"The view of Salisbury Cathedral was the cherry on top when I was buying at Chapters. I have traded my view of the main road, to a view of Salisbury Cathedral.

"Having spent my life in Salisbury, the cathedral is naturally something I'm very proud of. To be able to see it from my balcony is truly special. I love the grandeur of the architecture and the extraordinary spire which can be seen throughout Salisbury. To be able to say that I have my own view of the cathedral, from my home, is better than I could have imagined."

Margaret said that the thoughtfully-designed facilities at Chapters make her life easier and having light, bright windows lets the sun come into her apartment to lift her mood. She says that it was also important to make the move to a property that is the right size for her so that she can enjoy it now and into the future, while making new memories with her fellow homeowners.

**1 million older people in the UK are socially isolated.**

Research by Age Concern and The Mental Health Foundation (2006)



Margaret Moore - Chapters Homeowner

"My previous house was dated, and my large garden was difficult to maintain, whereas this apartment is wonderfully modern, and just the right size for me. I love the floor-to-ceiling windows, which bring in huge amounts of natural light - I barely have to turn the heating on, as it's such a sun-trap. Plus, it was hugely beneficial moving to somewhere brand new, so it was guaranteed to be low-maintenance.

"Downsizing has signalled a new chapter in my life, with the chance to build new memories, make new friends, and try out new activities and events. I make brilliant use of all the social activities here - it's a fantastic way to get to know my neighbours and get out of the apartment every day. There's always so much going on in Chapters, from keep fit sessions, to knit and natter, and cheese and wine masterclasses."



# Celebrating our latest community

We had a huge turnout for our happy, fun-filled Sherborne community launch event. It was lovely to see our homeowners get together over drinks, food and live music to celebrate the next chapter of their lives.

The Mayor of Sherborne, Cllr Juliet Pentolfe, joined us for the special party, which started with a tour of some of the homes available within the Sherborne community, as well as the communal facilities. The tour was led by Mark Edwards, Co-Managing Director of Platinum Skies, and Sara Rowan, one of our Relationship Managers, who gave the Mayor an insight into life within the over-55s community.

We were also joined by our Sherborne homeowners, reservists and prospective homeowners. We also welcomed stakeholders from the Sherborne business community, who were keen to get a sneak peek inside the community's stunning bistro.

Mayor of Sherborne, Cllr Juliet Pentolfe, said: "I love the Sherborne Platinum Skies community. I think it's absolutely fantastic. It's a brilliant concept, and has a wonderful community feeling. I've looked around the apartments and the houses and as soon as you walk through the door, it feels as though you're on holiday. It's gorgeous."



Mark Edwards gave an opening speech

“As soon as you walk through the door, it feels like you’re on holiday

Among the party’s guests were Pamela and Derek Emerson, who moved into a house in Canon Woods Close, in March. Talking about the move, Derek said: “We have been here two months and I’m a total convert. I didn’t want to move house at all, but I love it here and we have settled in well. It’s one of the best new-build houses that we have seen. It was also nice for the Platinum Skies team to come and check in with us and make sure we were okay when we moved in. From my point of view, I think it’s one of the best moves we’ve ever made and that’s coming from me, someone who really didn’t want to move out of our last house.”

Pamela added: “We came from Devon and lived on Dartmoor in a five-bedroom house with no neighbours. It meant that we were isolated, although I was happy to spend all day in the garden. To be faced with coming into a complex with houses was quite daunting. But as Derek says, we settled in quite quickly and there are some lovely walks in the Sherborne area.”



Cllr Juliet Pentolfe officially opening Mulberry House in Sherborne



Guests raise a toast in the bistro



Live music entertained guests



Patricia Woodsford with Rose & Bob Raymond enjoying dancing



Tour of Sherborne



Maureen Collins, Noel & Gillian Smith & Maureen’s husband Gerry at our Sherborne launch





Frank & Julie Abram - Vista Homeowners

## Help when you need it the most

Frank and Julie Abram moved to Vista just before the Government guidelines changed to advise against moving house in March 2020, so they felt incredibly lucky to have moved to their new community just in time. Since moving in, they have both been really impressed with life at Vista.

Frank said: "As far as we're concerned, the whole Platinum Skies concept and reality of living here has been very incredible. We've been especially impressed with the Community Manager. Everything we've asked of her has been done and she's not kept us waiting on anything."

Being quite philosophical, they both understood that sometimes things don't go to plan, and no one anticipated how COVID would affect their lives, but having moved just in time, they feel grateful to have their new neighbours and friends to talk to within their new home.

"During the lockdowns, our Community Manager was organising Pilates and dance classes that we could

join from our balcony. It's amazing that they think of activities to keep everybody happy and yet they manage it. Because of that, we feel that we want to participate in anything that keeps us active and able to interact with other residents."

Hoping to move to a community full of like-minded people, Frank and Julie were delighted to have such a warm reception when they first arrived at Vista. Frank recalls that they haven't felt isolated or neglected throughout the process, despite the restrictions early on into their move preventing the homeowners from socialising.

"Every day without exception, our Community Manager sends us an email or text to make sure we are alright or if there was anything that we need. Or she will ask if we have got any ideas for activities that we would like to do and then she tries to make them happen.

"We found out that she was a great cook and so she brought in cakes for us to enjoy. They don't have to do things like that. We are very happy to be here.

"It's lovely having the security. Our apartment ticked all the boxes for us, and we like where we are at Vista."

Frank and Julie have been chatting to their neighbours about the boost that living at Vista provides to their wellbeing, and they are looking forward to spending many more happy years doing the things that they enjoy doing.

As far as we're concerned, the whole Platinum Skies concept and reality of living here has been incredible

Talking about the Platinum Skies concept itself, Frank notes: "People can't help but be impressed with the communities and it will appeal to over 55s. Most people that move in have spent most of their lives building up to this point. It's evident that you understand your customers' needs and it shows that you have done your homework very well."

Frank and Julie wanted to maintain their quality of life, but they understand that as they get older they need to consider their own health for the future. This is why they decided that now was the time to downsize and to take some money out of their last property.

Every day without exception, our Community Manager sends us an email or text to make sure we are alright or if there was anything that we need

"We've got a very good package for the next five years, which we are really happy about. We came here with an open mind and when we saw the stunning views of Poole Harbour, it was breathtaking. Just to walk out of your apartment everyday day and see those sea views, it's fantastic.

"But it's more than that. It's everything from the NEFF appliances, the two really lovely sized bathrooms and the large patio. We had a big garden before, but this is much better regarding the maintenance that we don't have to do to it."

Platinum Skies ticked all the boxes for this couple, and they feel like they have the best of both worlds with no regrets since moving.

50% of older adults who live alone have multiple long-term conditions compared to 42% of older adults who live with others.

Research by Age UK (2019)





# Creating communities, building friendships, improving health

AHH is working together with the local GP network, with the support of Dr Julian Abel, Director of the registered charity Compassionate Communities UK, to empower local volunteers to connect local residents with the services they need to live well.

“AHH has taken responsibility for building a local resource directory for all Christchurch residents to use, including Platinum Skies’ homeowners

“The depth and quality of our friendships and relationships are more important in helping us live a long, happy, healthy life than anything else we know.

“The aim of Compassionate Communities is to make the communities owned and run by AHH great places to live. Friendship and laughter are key to a happy life, as well as living in the pleasant surroundings, comfort, and security to be found in Platinum Skies’ communities. It turns out that the depth and quality of our friendships and relationships are more important in helping us live a long, happy, healthy life than anything else we know, including giving up smoking, drinking, diet, exercising and treatment of high blood pressure. This is because humans have evolved to be social creatures living in community settings.

“Care, cooperation, and compassion are built into our biology. If AHH can create happy environments where our homeowners have a sense of belonging, then the communities and the people who live in them will flourish.

“How does this happen? Developing strong friendships occur when people do things they enjoy together. This might be walking, knitting, attending Men’s Sheds, dancing, gardening, simply chatting over tea and cake or any of the hundreds of different activities that are already taking place in the community, including in Christchurch. It makes sense to have an easy-to-use web-based directory where all this information is stored. If people want to know what is happening in Christchurch, they will be able to look it up starting this winter.

“This seemingly simple way of building activities and friendship together is so important, it has become embedded within the NHS, across all Primary Care Networks in England. General Practitioners contact their link workers to do something called ‘Social Prescribing’.

“People who feel lonely and go to see their doctors can be put in touch with others in their community to follow interests and activities. Although directories of local resources are becoming more common, they are by no means present in all areas, and this includes Christchurch. AHH has taken responsibility for building a local resource directory for all Christchurch residents to use, including Platinum Skies’ homeowners. In addition to all the great activities already organised, our homeowners will be able to see what is going on in their surrounding community. They can then follow up their interests and meet other Christchurch community members at the same time.

“The magic happens along the way. There are countless stories of developing friendships, with people becoming lifelong companions, through this simple way of simply following our natural interests. When strong bonds of friendship develop, we have a sense of belonging, of being held in someone else’s heart and mind. This makes a big difference in helping us feel happy. Care and support are a natural part of good friendships. If AHH can help our homeowners to feel happy, they will naturally support each other when hard times appear. If we want to live long, healthy, happy lives, then our relationships come first. This is true for all of us, not just our homeowners.”

Dr Julian Abel is one of the UK’s leading authorities on introducing compassion in communities which can provide transformative benefits to the health and wellbeing of older people.

“Care, cooperation, and compassion are built into our biology



Compassionate Communities UK



Dr Julian Abel, Director, Compassionate Communities UK



# 10 lives that changed the moment they moved into a Platinum Skies community

## Moved just in time for Christmas

Following the death of his wife, Mr M did not want to stay in his existing apartment in Chapters for Christmas and instead wanted to downsize the property he had. Our team worked hard to enable Mr M to use our home exchange service to swap apartments, which meant he was able to move in a week before Christmas.

Mr M at Chapters

## We purchased a lease extension to help the buyer to move quickly

We purchased the extension of the short lease that Mrs S had on her property so that she could sell her home, enabling her to move to a light, bright new apartment in Esprit, to start enjoying the benefits of her new lifestyle.

Mrs S at Esprit

## We help people to move closer to their family

A customer was keen to move from his large home in Wales that required lots of maintenance. With no family close by, our team worked tirelessly to make sure that he could move into his new home before Christmas. This was achieved within just four weeks.

Mr W at Chapters

## We offer support after the customer moves in

Using our assisted move package which included help to pack, move and unpack, Mr and Mrs W settled into their apartment in Chapters in December 2020. Mrs W requires some support due to being diagnosed with dementia, so we have linked up Mr W with our local partner care provider. They are both happy in their new home and are enjoying the many activities we provide onsite.

Mr & Mrs W at Chapters

## Helping to escape the equity release trap

We have recently helped three people, Mr and Mrs C, & Mrs H, to access their new homes within our communities through our Redemption Fund initiative, which we use at our discretion to pay off a homeowners' existing equity release product. We make a small charge for the service and then we reclaim the outstanding amount once their property has been sold. This meant that they were able to use our Platinum Exchange scheme to move within six weeks of the loan being paid off and can now enjoy happy, active, and fulfilled lives.

Mr and Mrs C, & Mrs H

## We assist with complex property management issues

Mr and Mrs Ree felt trapped living in an age-restricted block of flats, where they had sub-let their leasehold flat so that they could move to a larger property. All of their money was tied up in the property, which had a tenant in situ, so we stepped in to serve the tenant with a section 21 to end the tenancy and took ownership of their existing flat, while we granted Mr and Mrs Ree a licence to move to Esprit while we sold their flat.

Mr and Mrs R at Esprit

## We want each homeowner to love their new property

Mr and Mrs Shepherd were our first homeowners to move into a cottage in Chapters, which enabled them to be closer to their children. They asked if they could make a few amendments to the property to suit their needs and we were happy to make this happen for them, and they now live there happily with their dog, Martha.

Mr and Mrs S at Chapters

## Keeping people connected

Two lifelong friends have purchased apartments in Chapters so that they can live out their golden years together.

Chapters

## Nothing is too much trouble

Mrs Bright developed a fear of heights due to her declining health, so she spoke to our team and we enabled her to move to an apartment on the first floor, which can be accessed by stairs, so that she could continue to live with her friends in our Poole town centre community.

Mrs B at Esprit

## We help families stay together

We have four homes that are being purchased by two different families in Sherborne which will enable two generations to live together in one of our newest communities.

Sherborne





# Discovering a sense of purpose at Swanage Railway

Each of our communities has a small group of volunteers who sit on a social committee to represent their neighbours when considering the upcoming entertainment and events calendar for both inside the community and out in the local neighbouring area. They are also instrumental in considering local good causes that their communities can support and give back to.

As a result, two members of our Vista social committee went to meet Jonathan Evans, Volunteer Recruitment and Retention Officer at Swanage Railway along with Laura Warwick, our Director of Lifestyle, Wellbeing and Entertainment.

Laura said: "We were exploring the volunteering opportunities at the railway along with funding requirements that Vista homeowners may be able to support with. On a beautiful sunny October afternoon, it also became apparent that an informational talk – including one of the drivers visiting – may also be on the cards for January.



Vista Residents at Swanage Railway

"As well as a great way to give back, it is clear that we have many train enthusiasts at Vista and Jonathan managed to secure a ride on the engine plate for Mac – who jumped at the chance. Volunteers can work in the railway shops, help with gardening and upkeep, as well as getting involved in more technical support such as learning the signal person's role. I think giving back to such a wonderful local cause will be a very worthwhile way to spend some time."

All of our communities select their own charities, which are personal to them. These causes include local branches of Marie Curie, a ward supported by Poole Hospital Charity, and the Trussell Trust in Salisbury.



Jonathan Evans with Vista residents Ron Kernighan and Mac Blackman



"Our homeowners love to see the difference they make and work hard to raise funds from selling delicious homemade cakes, quiz nights, and raffles. We are always open to looking out for new partnerships and enabling homeowners' ideas to come to life to give a real purpose to our communities."

Interest in volunteering peaks in the years immediately following retirement.

Nearly a quarter of people aged 50 and over are engaged in formal voluntary activity.

Research by Age Concern and The Mental Health Foundation (2006)





# Meet the Relationship Manager: Jes Gill

“It’s very satisfying to change people’s lives for the better.”

Jes Gill is one of our Relationship Managers from the sales team, who invites prospective homeowners to have a look around our vibrant communities and explains how our Platinum Skies homes can meet their needs.

How do we help people to live happy, healthy, affordable lives?

Our lifestyle provisions offer happy and healthy, and our products offer affordable. These elements all start with a happy engagement from the first appointment, introducing them to our Community Managers from the outset and the communal facilities. Our communities bring people together to socialise through a range of activities and events organised by the Community Managers, who are also on-hand

to offer them practical and emotional support. Our homeowners feel reassured that there is somebody onsite available to help if they need it.

When somebody comes in for an appointment, how do we find out if a Platinum Skies home is right for them?

Our customer journey begins from the first contact that we establish with them. There are a whole host of external factors for us to consider at their appointment and it’s a chance for me to find out why now is the time to move to one of our communities.

Often, we find that a life event such as ill-health or the loss of their partner can prompt somebody to move to a more age-appropriate home, or perhaps they’ve realised it’s time to put their happiness first after a life of looking after others. They come to us so that we can

match them up with a home within walking distance to the shops and health services, in a place where they can make a whole new group of friends, and they can have a space they can relax in without needing to worry about the upkeep. It feels fantastic to make that happen for them.

Tell us about some homeowners whose lives have changed since they moved to a Platinum Skies community?

Ron, who is in his mid-sixties, reserved his apartment during the first lockdown after his wife had passed away. He said that he was ready for a change. He had a nice bungalow in Broadstone but he wanted to move to us for the lifestyle aspect and to be nearer to town, so he is in close proximity to everything.

He wanted the facilities, the interaction from the other homeowners, and now whenever there’s an event, he’s always part of it.

Similarly, I had probably been speaking to Ian for two years before he became our first homeowner to move into Quantock House. He was really keen to move from his big four-bedroom house in a small village which was a bit out in the sticks after his wife died. Both his son and his daughter live in Taunton, so they said that he ought to move closer to them.

Now, he lives in one of our seventh-floor penthouses and he’s in his early eighties, but he comes across as a lot younger, because he’s very energetic. He said to me: ‘You know what? I just love it here because I can walk to town and do everything. I’m not having to drive here and there anymore.’

What do you love most about your job?

I believe that my role in life is to help. I love engaging with our customers and get great satisfaction from changing their lives for the better, effectively taking their retirement living from ‘Black and White’ into ‘Colour’ with Platinum Skies.





# Finding friendship

Sally Lawrence, 70, moved from a four-bedroom townhouse in West Sussex to a more futureproof apartment in Vista where she now enjoys views over Poole Harbour and Brownsea Island. She attended an afternoon tea event in Vista's garden with her fellow neighbours, and met Lorraine Coughlan, 71, who had moved in just a few weeks before her. After enjoying a chat at the event, Sally and Lorraine have become firm friends in our Parkstone community.

Talking about why she made the move while she was still fit and able, Sally said: "It was fine at the time, but I could see that in the future there would be a problem as I had two staircases. I had thought that I could have put in a lift or something if I had needed it. But it was also the situation I was in because all I would've been looking at would've been a garden, which was landlocked so I wouldn't have seen anybody.

"I think Vista as a community is a great place to live. We have various events that Mel, the Community Manager, organises, but also the homeowners do organise things for themselves. We all decide what we want and then somebody organises it and we'll host it down in the communal lounge. Nobody is forced to go if they don't want to, but there's quite a few events that do take place and I enjoy them immensely. We have a lot of fun.

**Lorraine Coughlan and Sally Lawrence**  
- Vista Homeowners

"It's very easy to make friends at Vista. When I moved in, I didn't know anybody within Poole.

It was completely alien to me. However, I met Lorraine the day I moved in at the cream team afternoon. I think I went down to that at about 1pm and I got back to my apartment at about 6pm, so it was a really good introduction to life at Vista. I thought that I should fit in well here, and I have."

Lorraine headed for Poole after moving out of her three-bedroom house in Kent when her daughter made the move to Bournemouth.

**Vista's community is very sociable.**  
**Making friends here is very easy**

"When I first came to look at Vista, I thought it was way out of my league to be honest. I just thought that there's no way I could afford it. But once I started speaking to Gemma, the Relationship Manager, she showed me round and explained the shared ownership scheme to me, I just fell in love with it. I was already arranging furniture before I had even said 'Yes.'"

"Vista's community is very sociable. Everybody here is extremely friendly. Making friends here is really easy because people are so friendly. When I first moved in, because I was on my own, I went to the coffee morning first and obviously didn't know anybody, but they were welcoming and friendly. I have more of a social life now than I did before, so that's lovely.

[▶ Watch the full testimonial here](#)



George Jenescu and Sebastian Ouseph - RRT

# RRT help in a care crisis

We are proud to have launched the UK's first care home Rapid Response Team (RRT) to help older people in a care crisis.

The Rapid Response Team (RRT) at Encore Care Homes operates across Dorset and Hampshire 365 days a year to assist older people who urgently require permanent or respite care. A relative can call our RRT 24-hours a day, seven days a week, to arrange for our Clinical Assessors to carry out a face-to-face or virtual assessment in a hospital or out in the community to discuss the best course of action. The RRT can arrange an admission into one of Encore's homes, where necessary, within 24-hours of the initial call, depending on the person's care needs.

**The help and support from Encore's Rapid Response Team was exceptional**

Since its creation, our RRT has supported and screened over 1,000 referrals and enquiries, which has led to them facilitating over 300 admissions into our four dedicated care homes. Our RRT aims to make the process of moving to a care home a simple and smooth one, alleviating the anxiety, uncertainty, and burden that comes with organising care for a relative.

Les, son-in-law of an Encore resident, said: "Urgent respite care was needed to get my father-in-law out

**Care homes providing nursing care account for half of all care home beds**

*Research by Public Health England (2017)*

of hospital. The help and support from Encore's Rapid Response Team was exceptional. Within 24-hours, a place was arranged at Oakdale Care Home, and he was out of the hospital within 48-hours, being cared for by the superb care home staff."

It is the brainchild of George Jenescu, a Registered Nurse who works as a Clinical Assessor at Encore, who has first-hand experience of seeing the pressure that the NHS is under to discharge patients and free up beds. Through Encore's partnership with University Hospitals Dorset NHS Foundation Trust, our RRT act as a single point of contact between the hospitals and the patient's relatives. They work with the local hospitals' discharge teams, social services, and local care commissioning groups to facilitate access to a wide range of independent, assisted, and care home living services for older people.

Donna Yates, Brokerage Officer at BCP Council, said: "The RRT team are always very courteous, professional, prompt, helpful and always go out of their way to help with our, at times, complex referrals, or will always signpost me in the right direction.

"The past year has been very challenging for us all, so to have a direct point of contact makes the whole process a lot easier, matching our clients to the right home and we can always rely on the RRT team to get back to us quickly with an answer to our referrals, which is exactly what we need."



*"It has changed  
our lives"*



**John and his wife, Toni, a Hamble Heights resident**

## Feeling of a partnership

John Donovan's wife, Toni, receives respite care at Hamble Heights care home where our team provide dedicated round-the-clock support as she faces a host of side effects linked to Parkinson's, which often requires hospital care. John first made contact through the UK's first dedicated care home Rapid Response Team (RRT), who handle enquiries from the public and enable admission into a care home within 24 hours, where necessary.

John said: "We first started thinking about the need for care homes because we became aware that we couldn't cope on our own all the time. It started off because of Toni's Parkinson's, which deteriorates and there are other associated medical needs as well, which meant that as we get older, particularly as I get older, I would need support and help.

"I got in touch with a couple of local care homes, in advance of an emergency need, I thought, and we built a relationship with them. I had an instant rapport with Hamble Heights and with the values and philosophies about inclusion and a holistic approach to the care of an individual. Initially, I spoke to the RRT team every six weeks to two months, and that enabled us to have a conversation about how Toni was and how she was progressing or otherwise, in

relation to her hospital admissions. It also provided me with an opportunity to say how I was doing, which was important, and it was all part of the process of me acknowledging that I'm not infallible..

"It was a wonderful feeling of a partnership that detracted from the isolation and considerable loneliness that we felt as two elderly people living on our own, struggling, and not knowing where this journey was going to take us. It was invaluable to know that we had a potential place that we could pick up the phone and say 'Help.'"

**It was invaluable to know that we had a potential place that we could pick up the phone and say 'Help'**

John visits his wife each afternoon at Hamble Heights and says that every member of the team offers unfaltering kindness and compassion towards Toni, which means he has no concerns about the level of care she receives.

"We knew as soon as Toni came in here that we were going to get a very warm welcome, from very supportive staff, and that we were going to be encompassed in a lovely, friendly atmosphere. We've had many occasions when we've had to call upon them very frequently, sometimes six or seven times in an hour, at a time of day when they've been incredibly busy, and I have never, ever not had a

**Around 4 million older people (40% of people aged 65 and over) have a limiting long-term illness or disability. This is expected to rise to over 6 million older people by 2030.**

Research by MHA.org.uk (2021)

highly professional, sensitive, respectful response. They really are the epitome of good care. It has been wonderful for the both of us.

"It's a relief that Toni is somewhere where I know that if she has emerging needs then there's a team of people that can pick that up and run with it. That's taken that layer of anxiety away from me and I can't tell you what a relief that is. It has changed our lives.

"Everyone is important here, regardless of their job role. They are all part of the care team. We all talk to them, and they all talk to us. It feels like they're all committed to moving in the same direction. One senses a great unity between the team, and I think that's what makes it work. It just touches me greatly."

John says that the care home benefits from a host of activities organised by the Wellbeing team for the residents to participate in, which boost Toni's emotional wellbeing and enable her to make friends with her fellow residents.

"Toni has been up on the first floor for drawing and art classes, and they sometimes have concerts outside where people come in and sing the old-fashioned songs like 'Show Me The Way To Go Home' and the 'White Cliffs Of Dover' and all those songs of yesteryear. I know that Vanessa, the Wellbeing Manager, keeps a close eye on what's going on and if she feels that Toni could benefit from extra activities, she'll encourage her to go.

"Although I would quite like to be with Toni all the time, I have to resist that urge, so I usually get to Hamble Heights in the afternoon, and if Toni is out in the garden listening to a singer, then I'll go and sit with her. I'll then stay with her into the evening until she gets into bed and falls asleep.

"That's how our day goes so that we still have a life together, which is another factor. The layout and structure of Hamble Heights lends itself to someone like me being able to have my needs met in spending a lot of time with Toni.



**John and his wife, Toni, a Hamble Heights resident**

"I'm grateful for that because I would not be happy if I couldn't come in and spend quality time with Toni. We spend a lot of time together and we're very close. It's going to stay like that forever."

John says that the Hamble Heights team fulfil all of his expectations when it comes to providing first-class care for his wife, which is something he did by himself for such a long time and continues to do in-between Toni's respite care stays at the home.

"My overall summation of Hamble Heights for our experience is that it's a place that I'm absolutely relieved and so pleased that we've become involved with it. I can't see any need that can't be met here

**I'm very glad that we got in contact. It's opened up a new chapter for us**

within the home. I'm very glad that we got in contact. It's opened up a new chapter for us.

"It has been a time of massive change and re-ordering of our lives and in the right circumstance. Hamble Heights certainly fulfils my expectations.

"I have a background in the care industry from many years ago, which is probably not relevant in many ways today, but what I do like is that many of the values, principles and the holistic approach to care that I grew up with when I was working in the industry is present now. I am so pleased that they are still alive and going well and I'm sure that this will perpetuate."

[Watch the full testimonial here](#)





Rita Satchwell with Kim Butters, Wellbeing Manager

# A Wellbeing Manager's perspective

Kim Butters is our Wellbeing Manager for Fairmile Grange, providing different activities to support the care home residents' emotional, mental, physical, and holistic wellbeing. These activities are tailored to the individual, who is encouraged to pursue their existing interests as well as looking into new passions.

When a new resident arrives at the care home, initially they may feel unsettled as they get used to a new home with new people looking after them as they transition from potentially living alone or with family. However, Kim says that she has seen a marked improvement in

many residents since moving to Fairmile Grange, who have gone on to flourish as they know that support is on-hand as and when they need it.

She said: "We had a gentleman who was looking around various care homes as it had come to the time that he decided that he needed to be somewhere to be looked after. He walked through the doors here and instantly said, 'This is where I want to be', which was lovely and that's how he always felt about living here.

"His routine was pretty much the same as he had at home, other than he had his meals prepared for him, and care was provided for him. He still had his morning newspaper delivered each day at the time that he wanted it, which was as early as possible, and he still had his glass of wine with his meals, just like he had at home. He lived happily here until he died aged 96. He always used to say, 'I made the right decision, and it was at the right time', which was lovely for us to know and lovely for his family too."

Kim said another resident, who enjoys dancing to music, was delighted to see a singer performing in the care home on her move-in day. Her daughter came in with her for the day as part of the settling in process.

"The lady came straight into the middle of the lounge floor where we were all dancing and just joined in. She came up to me and she said, 'This is so lovely. Can I stay here? I just love it', and of course the daughter was so pleased to see that her mum instantly felt comfortable here. She's still with us, enjoying life here, and she's been dancing ever since, which is just lovely.

"Her daughter said that her mother had really been struggling at home. The lady didn't live locally to her daughter, and the daughter said, 'Our visits were really stressful because her dementia was progressing'. She said that coming here, she knew her mum was safe and that she was looked after. The daughter can come here and have quality time with her mum and really enjoy those visits, so that stress has all been taken away."

Kim said that another resident came into Fairmile Grange following a period in hospital due to a fall, which reduced her mobility and left her feeling vulnerable when it came to walking around the home.

"It just so happened that we had Captain Sir Tom's walk of 100 laps of this garden, and a 'Memory Walk' for the Alzheimer's Society so we asked her if she'd like to be involved in the walk along with our other residents, which she agreed to do. This really spurred her on and she just got up and did it. She did her 100 laps walking around our garden and got her medal and certificate. She was really proud of herself.

"I'm very pleased to say that still continues to walk every day, which has really enhanced her wellbeing. She feels so much better in herself emotionally, and obviously, her legs have got stronger and the swelling has gone down. Through the winter, she goes up and down the corridors, but in the summer, she walks around our garden, which is fantastic as she's so happy to be here."

[Watch the full testimonial here](#)

“She still continues to walk every day, which has really enhanced her wellbeing”



Kim Butters - Wellbeing Manager



Kim sings at the opening of The Merry Fairmilers bar





Sherborne Social Committee

# First homeowners move into Mulberry House in Sherborne

Following the completion of one of our newest communities, the first homeowners have moved into Mulberry House in Sherborne.

Thanks to the team's hard work, we were able to welcome the first home buyers to exchange and complete on their new home purchase in time for the festive season, while others moved in following one last Christmas in their old home.

Around 20 homeowners have started the next chapter of their lives in our purpose-built Mulberry House apartment complex located just a stone's throw from

Sherborne town centre. Communal facilities available for the homeowners to enjoy include a residents' lounge, bistro and bar area, treatment room, and activity room, which can also be accessed by our homeowners who have purchased a house in the community.

Speaking about her new home within Mulberry House, Muriel Pennell said: "I absolutely love it here. I have made new friends and I really enjoy living here."

To help the two dedicated Community Managers to organise events that the homeowners will enjoy, they met in the onsite bistro for the first bi-monthly meeting of the social focus group while enjoying tea and cake. Discussion included looking ahead to think up ideas to mark to the Queen's Platinum Jubilee at the start of June, which they have lovingly nicknamed the 'Platinum Skies Jubilee.'

**I absolutely love it here. I have made new friends and I really enjoy living here**

It also offered the first chance for the homeowners to chat together to get to know each other and share stories about their different working backgrounds which include an architect and a doctor. Some homeowners who have lived in Sherborne for more than 45 years also shared knowledge of the local area.



Moving Day at Sherborne



Sherborne homeowners

# Combating loneliness

Claire Mackendrick, 76, bought a share of an apartment at Vista having moved from a two-bedroom bungalow in Poole which had a garden that she was no longer able to manage.

After losing her husband three years ago, Claire's daughter encouraged her mum to view the apartments available at Vista, which has offered her a fresh start.

**It's the best and the easiest move that I have ever made**

Having lived in the community for just over a year, Claire has become one of our most popular homeowners. Thanks, in part for this, go to her standard poodle, Harry, who shows love to everyone he meets and loves his new home, which is based just a stone's throw from Poole Park."

Claire said: "My daughter found Vista online and persuaded me to come and a look. The moment that I was shown around, I knew it was for me. I couldn't have afforded to pay the full price for this apartment so that's why I went for shared ownership. I was also very surprised when they said that I could bring my dog, which was a big plus for me."

"I have to say that it's probably the best move that I have ever made and it's also the easiest move that I've ever made because I literally did nothing. The removals men came, packed my old home up, put it all in a van, and 20 minutes later, I was here. It all went extremely smoothly."

Speaking about her reasons for moving to Vista, Claire said: "I was a widow and I had been for three and a half years. I was rattling around in a bungalow having all the cleaning to do and the garden, which I could no longer manage. Whereas, now my time can best be spent making friends with the people who I now live amongst and I think Vista is particularly a really good place to come to."

"If somebody is feeling lonely and they want to make some friends easily, then this is perfect because everyone joins in with everything, no matter how old you are, or whether you consider yourself old or not."

**1.4 million older people in the UK are often lonely**

Research by Age UK (2021)



Claire Mackendrick - Vista Homeowner

"The best bit about living at Vista is when I wake up in the morning, the first thing I do is take my dog out, and get back for our coffee morning every Monday. It starts at 11, but it can go on until 3pm once everybody gets talking and you can sit there chatting for as long as you like. That to me is one of the best things - waking up in the morning and knowing that you can go out for the day, and when you get back, there's always somebody here. Plus, if you're not feeling too well, there's always a door to knock on."

[Watch the full testimonial here](#)





Homeowners at Chapters enjoy festive fun

## Enjoying the Christmas spirit together

Our vibrant communities organised a vast programme of events to bring our homeowners together over the festive season.

An in-house craft market took place in the activity room of Chapters for our Salisbury homeowners. They enjoyed music, drinks, mince pies and the opportunity to purchase a range of items including handmade crafts at the market.

Other festive events that our Chapters homeowners took part in throughout December included carol sing-alongs, film afternoons, coffee mornings, and roast dinners in the bistro.

Jenny Abbott, Community Manager at Chapters, said: "We organised a whole host of activities in the lead up to Christmas Day to help our homeowners enjoy some festive cheer and enable them to celebrate such a wonderful time of year together."



Homeowner at Vista's Christmas Party

**Around 1.5 million over 65s feel lonelier at Christmas than any other time of the year.**  
*Research by Age UK (2021)*

Meanwhile, our homeowners at Vista in Parkstone got together for an afternoon of festive fun at their annual Christmas lunch in the communal lounge. The event featured a traditional Christmas dinner, drinks, crackers, and music. Afterwards, Mel Litchfield, Vista's Community Manager, invited each homeowner to collect and open their Secret Santa present from under the Christmas tree.

**It was lovely to see the homeowners having so much fun**

Mel Litchfield, Community Manager for Vista, said: "All of our homeowners had a fantastic time while having a laugh and a chat during their Christmas lunch. It's an event in the calendar that they all look forward to each year, so it was lovely to see them having so much fun."

Over at Esprit, which is based in Poole town centre, the homeowners also enjoyed a Christmas meal, as well as hosting their own in-house Christmas market in partnership with the Vista homeowners, which featured a number of gifts and homemade items to purchase for friends and family.

**More than 330,000 older people in the UK expected to spend Christmas Day alone.**  
*Research by Age UK (2019)*



Vista's Christmas Party



Chapters homeowners enjoy their craft market





Jackie & Graham Ree - Esprit Homeowners

# Affordable homes

Jackie, 76, and Graham Ree, 81, purchased a share of an apartment in Esprit in September 2020. They moved with the help of the Platinum Skies shared ownership scheme, which has enabled them to live a new happy, healthy, and affordable life where they can enjoy the companionship of others who live in their community.

Jackie said: "If Platinum Skies didn't have the shared ownership scheme, then we wouldn't have been able to buy our apartment."

**If Platinum Skies didn't have the shared ownership scheme, then we wouldn't have been able to buy our apartment**

"We couldn't have done it without it being on a shared ownership basis. The team at Platinum Skies gave us all the figures and explained it to us so that we could make up our own minds. It worked out well for us so I would recommend that people did look into it."

**The average pension income for single pensioners is £231 per week, less than half that of pensioner couples, who have an average income of £482.**

Research by ONS, Pensioners' Incomes Series (2020)

"We are now living a lifestyle that we can afford because of shared ownership."

"Platinum Skies explain all the figures and the projections for the years ahead, not just for the first year, but for the next 10 years. I think it's important to have a company like Platinum Skies who will explain it and talk you through it, especially as you get older."

"The team were also very good with our family as well, as they got my daughter to come along to an appointment and explained it all to her, which was really good because they involved all of us. My daughter was a little bit cautious about it, as she was looking out for us, I suppose. The Platinum Skies team got us together and answered any questions that we had, so we were quite happy to do it."

"I think we've always been good at looking forward to make plans for the future. A lot of people don't want to think about it, but I think when you get to our age, it's something that you need to do."

"I had no idea what was on offer until we came here and then I realised that it would be good for us."

# Overcoming the fear of moving

Chapters residents, Peter, 89, and Maureen Shepherd, 88, purchased a share of a cottage in September 2020. They moved to Salisbury with their dog, Martha, having lived in a rural area of Lincolnshire throughout their lives. They initially purchased a home in a retirement village based locally to them before realising that they wanted to be closer to their family, thus reducing the travelling distance, as they get older.

Peter said: "We had a small cottage before moving here. The independence part is very important to us. We're full of praise for the staff at Platinum Skies who have looked after us very well."

"Both the staff onsite in Chapters and in the head office in Bournemouth. We're very lucky. It has taken us quite a long while to get used to because this is something that is totally different for us. We have spent our whole lives living in the countryside and it was a bit of a culture shock initially."

"We're now very happy. We're very pleased that we re-located and looking forward to spending the rest of our time here."

**The staff at Platinum Skies have looked after us very well**

Speaking about their hopes for their home in Chapters, Peter said: "The reason that we moved to Salisbury is to be closer to our family in our old age. Prior to moving here, we lived in Lincolnshire, right on the edge of The Wash out in the wild. It was a 200-mile distance to get to see our family and as I'm approaching old age, it was felt that I wouldn't be up for driving the 200-miles forever."

"This is our second retirement home as we'd already moved into a retirement home in Lincolnshire. However, we had underestimated the distance between ourselves and our family, and that was the main reason that we decided to leave Lincolnshire after living there for the whole of our lives."

Peter said that they were assisted in their search by their daughter who found the Chapters community during its early stages and discovered that they were building a number of cottages on the site.



Peter & Maureen Shepherd - Chapters Homeowners

"We heard about Platinum Skies through our daughter who has been extremely helpful in getting us moved closer to her and our son who is in Gloucestershire. She did quite a bit of research for us and managed to discover that there was a new development at Chapters. We're now extremely pleased that we made the decision to come here."

"We were quite impressed with what we saw initially with the apartment complexes, and we went to look at one of the show apartments. We were very interested in the plans for the houses which were due to be built and there was a very good model where we were able to see the whole set up. It was really while looking at that model that we were really trying to select a plot that we would be happy with."

"Our family have been very impressed with it. They are very happy for us. I would be very happy to recommend it. As country-dwellers, we are very impressed with Salisbury as a city. It has been quite an advantage to us to live in a very nice city with nice countryside."

[Watch the full testimonial here](#)

**On average, people aged 65 and over have lived in their home for 22 years and eight months, with more than one in three (35%) having lived in their home for more than 30 years.**

Research by Independent Age (2019)





Mel Litchfield - Community Manager

## Stories from a Community Manager

Our Community Managers are our eyes and ears on the ground, who provide dedicated emotional and wellbeing support, as well as organising a host of events to bring our homeowners together to socialise. Mel Litchfield, our Community Manager at Vista, talks about homeowners whose lives have improved since moving to a Platinum Skies home...



Vista, Poole - Platinum Skies

01

"I invited Sally Lawrence, 69, to a summer afternoon tea we were hosting in the garden in May, as she had moved in that day and it would be a great opportunity to meet her neighbours. I sat her next to Lorraine Coughlan, 71, who had only moved in two weeks previously, and they got on like a house on fire.

"They were sat chatting all afternoon and now they are the best of friends. They do everything together including going out for lunch and trips to Swanage. They both say that they feel like they have known each other forever."



02

"Rita Swann, 90, who moved in November 2019, was living by herself in an apartment for older people which had no communal facilities for her to socialise with friends.

"She moved to Vista and built up a friendship with Frank and Julie Abrams at our coffee mornings, and they ended up forming a social bubble, meaning that they were able to go out together for daily walks, lunches, and coffee. Rita also loves to play table tennis and go to Pilates with Julie, and they all spent Christmas together as Rita has no family that live locally to her."



03

"Gill, 81, and Dennis Broadhurst, 89, who moved to Vista in October 2019, always tell me how much they love living here. Initially, Gill was going to drop Dennis off for the initial appointment with our sales team, but when they arrived and she saw the place, she just fell in love with their apartment.

"They used to live in a four-bedroom, detached house with a big garden that backed onto Poole Park, so they enjoy not having to worry about the maintenance of their property."

04

"Claire Mackendrick, 75, moved in between lockdowns in December 2020 and she describes moving to Vista as 'The best decision she has ever made.' She comes to all of our events and makes friends very easily.

"She fits in well here and she's the life and soul of the party. There's not one person that she doesn't get on with. She lives with her poodle, Harry, and said that one of the big draws for her was that she could bring her dog."







Kim & Russell Wicks - Monterey Homeowners

## Making life affordable

Russell, 71, and Kim Wicks, 62, purchased a share of an apartment in Monterey after moving from their three-bedroom bungalow. They were keen to start their new life in our thriving Christchurch community but were unable to sell their existing home, until we stepped in to help through our Platinum Exchange scheme. It meant that Russ and Kim could set up home in their new apartment, while we took care of selling their old home, which was no longer fit for purpose, for its full market value.

Kim said: "We'd seen this apartment and we agreed to buy it. But we couldn't sell our property. Platinum Skies got in touch with us and did everything. They sorted out the estate agents, legal side and we were in our new home within three weeks."



It's the best thing we've ever done

She went on to say that it didn't take them long to find their feet in their new location, making friends with the other homeowners and feeling glad to make the move to a purpose-built, affordable home, where they can enjoy their future together.

Kim added: "As soon as we moved in, we thought 'This is home.' We'd done the right thing."

If something had happened to one of us, we would need to do something like this, so we thought that we would do it now, while we can and enjoy it together.

Many retirees want to 'rightsize' and live in retirement housing in later life, but there is a chronic under-supply of high quality, affordable or desirable accommodation in the right locations.

Research by Local Government Association  
'HOUSING OUR AGEING POPULATION' (2017)

I would advise anyone who was in our position to seriously think about doing this. It's the best thing we've done."

Kim's husband, Russ, said that it has given the couple a new lease of life as they are no longer tied down to looking after the maintenance of an ageing property and the costs that come with that, and can instead spend their time doing the things that they enjoy.

Russ said: "Now we're sorted for the rest of our lives really. We've got no worries now. It's a much easier life than we'd had in the past, which is why we moved."

The cost of living for us to live here is so much cheaper and easier, which is great for us.

We couldn't really enjoy life before because all our money was tied up in our previous property. So now, we're able to release money and so we can enjoy life. It gives us more leisure time, which we intend to have."

[Watch the full testimonial here](#)

## Receiving dedicated care

Marilyn Atwill, 82, moved to Great Oaks after suffering a stroke, needing a pacemaker, and being diagnosed with kidney failure. Her family initially created a shared rota system which involved them taking turns to cook her meals and provide care. However, Marilyn and her family soon realised that this was unsustainable long-term, so they contacted Great Oaks about providing residential care.

"My children were supporting me marvellously, but they have their own lives to lead. Every day we had a rota so that someone came in to cook my lunch and sometimes they stayed the night because I was having panic attacks due to the amount of time that I was spending on my own. I realised then that this is the best place for me."

Marilyn said that her choice of where to live was hugely influenced by one of her best friends, Margaret Newbold, who already lived at Great Oaks and who told Marilyn about how happy she was at the Bournemouth-based care home.

"I've had the privilege of knowing Margaret for 25 years. She lost her husband and moved to Great Oaks three years ago. Every morning, we have a chat together and she brings me a newspaper."

"My daughter, Lorraine, went on the Encore Care Homes website as she knew that Margaret was already here and that I have many, many friends in the Kinson area because I lived here for 50 years - so I came home, really."

Talking about life at the care home, Marilyn said: "We do lots of different activities. I enjoy the quizzes, we've made banana splits, and we have had a cheese and wine party with the other residents and that was lovely."

"I have the luxury of my breakfast in bed with the television on, so that's really nice. To begin with, they used to bath me and shower me, and then as I

got stronger, I was able to do more than I did before, so now I wash myself, but they need to wash my back, and they give me a bath or a shower and I say, 'Please make my bed!'"

Marilyn said that the staff go out of their way to help her 24 hours a day as she suffers with disrupted sleep due to ill-health.

"The staff are fabulous. Nothing is too much trouble. They will make you a coffee in the middle of the night if you need it. They are always here to chat and are very pleasant. I am allergic to mushrooms so the other day, the staff made me a meal without mushrooms. It was steak pie but I had no mushrooms, so the dietary problems are taken care of too, which is good."

"The care home manager is good. I know if I had a problem, which I haven't had yet, she would support me. She's a ray of sunshine. She always speaks to us in the morning and says, 'How are you today, ladies?' That is very pleasant as well. We're a very special home, really."



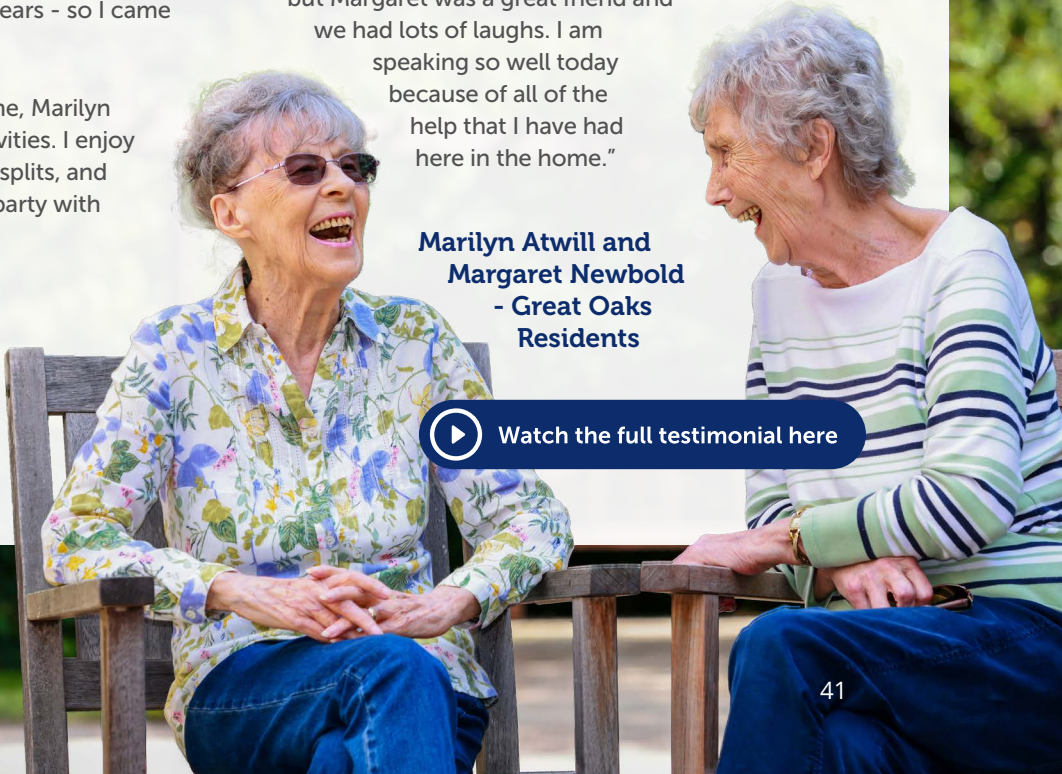
I would recommend Great Oaks because I couldn't have lived as long as I have, maybe, without the full support of the home.

Marilyn says that as soon as she moved to Great Oaks, she was supported to re-learn how to walk and talk following a stroke.

"When I moved in, the staff always made time to chat to me, and also my grandchildren used to phone me and all of my relatives, so that encouraged me to talk. I was locked down for a fortnight, as all residents were when you first came in due to Covid restrictions, but Margaret was a great friend and

we had lots of laughs. I am speaking so well today because of all of the help that I have had here in the home."

Marilyn Atwill and Margaret Newbold - Great Oaks Residents



[Watch the full testimonial here](#)





**According to Age UK, more than 2 million people in England over the age of 75 live alone, and more than a million older people say they go for over a month without speaking to a friend, neighbour or family member.**

*Research by Age UK (2019)*

# Fighting loneliness

Charles Pyman 77, a Sherborne resident purchased a share of a house in January 2021. He moved with his dog, Hinney, from an isolated, rural location in Devon to a house in one of the Platinum Skies newest communities in Sherborne. He was living in the West Country close to one of his sons, who has now moved abroad for work, as has Charles' daughter, and he has one son remaining in the UK who lives in London.

He said: "I lived in an old mill in Devon where there were five families, but they were all working so they were out for the day. The farmer opposite dealt with the field around it so I saw the farmer and his wife now and again, but not that often.

**"I'd been living on my own for seven years and I really wanted to have more people around"**

I see more people here in a day than I did in a week in my previous house, so that's nice.

"The family had been down in the West Country in the far end of Devon for some while but my son, Thomas, was leaving there, so I was going to be slightly stuck on my own. So, I decided to move further east so I'd be closer to London where my other son is and closer to Heathrow for when my daughter comes back from Dubai.

"I am no further from those relations that I have in the West Country than I was in Devon, but I'm a great deal closer to my son in London who has got three children. Really, a five-hour drive down to the western end of Devon is impossible, but three hours to come down here for lunch and go home again is far more manageable."

"Also, I was in a four-bedroom house, and I just didn't need four bedrooms. I was living on my own and my family didn't come and stay very often for exactly the reason I described and so one seemed to be getting to grips with a number of problems which were only going to exacerbate rather than getting better."

Charles first heard about Platinum Skies in one of the national Sunday papers and with the help of his son, he came to have a look around a house in our Sherborne community.

"I think Sherborne is a nice place and it's on the edge of the town, which is what I would prefer to be, and geographically it's suitably much better than being in Okehampton, close to Dartmoor.

"I liked the place immediately. I have lived in an awful lot of places, and this is really not unlike a lot of them. I'd been living on my own for seven years and I really wanted to have more people around.

"I often thought in the previous place that if I had fallen down the stairs, nobody would've known until the dog complained because she hadn't been fed. This really wouldn't happen here."

Charles says that having a dedicated onsite Community Manager reassures him that he has someone to call upon, who not only arranges activities to bring himself and his neighbours together but also to keep an eye on him if he did need assistance.

"We say 'hello' most days and it's a very nice change because before I was living absolutely on my own, whereas here there is a society of friendly people. It's nice to have active neighbours with whom one is in touch with and to have someone to provide professional help if something went wrong, it would be very nice to go next door and ask for help.

It's also nice, although it doesn't matter to me so much now, but as I get older, the evil day will come when one falls down the stairs or whatever, and it's nice to have somebody whom the dog can go and shout at."

[Watch the full testimonial here](#)

**There is a society of friendly people here**



Charles Pyman - Sherborne Homeowner

**Being part of a community improves an individual's mental wellbeing through reduced loneliness, lowering levels of depression and anxiety, and improving cognitive function.**

*Research by The Kings Fund (2020)*





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