

Annual Review 2020-21



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# From the chairman

The 'retirement community' model — your own front door and a safe village designed for your generation, with world-class wellbeing services — seems simple, but it has taken years of hard work to bring the model to the UK.

For many years in America and Australia, people have been able to choose a retirement community but, until recently, UK consumers were denied this choice. Our team has changed this.

Inspired Villages has been in the vanguard of creating retirement communities in the UK and in the relatively short time we have been running, we have seen far greater awareness of the benefits of living in communities like ours. There is still much more to do, though, and we are ambitious to expand.

### COVID-19

2020-21 was a test of our values and our vision, and I am proud that we pulled together as one team working hard to keep our residents and colleagues safe and active. In fact, COVID-19 shone a light on the clear and pressing need for communities like ours to support our over-65s population, and alleviate the strain on the NHS and social care systems. We all want and deserve to live healthier, more independent lives, for longer.

#### Sustainability

As the UK comes to terms with the effects of coronavirus, we must also remember the other great challenge of our time: sustainable living. We support the global effort to stop adding CO<sub>2</sub> to the atmosphere by 2050 – and we have set out our own 'roadmap to net zero', in our *Inspired Impact* report. We are the first company to break ground on a retirement community development that will operate at net zero carbon use. This achievement, made possible by the talents and

commitment of the Inspired team, is a landmark event. From 2030, we will build to net zero, and our villages will operate to net zero.

We are very proud of the company's growth in just four years. Since founding, we have grown from four principal shareholders, 20 employees and two villages, to a team of nearly 300 covering six villages across the country. Over the next ten years, we plan to invest billions across 34 further sites and deliver 5,000 homes for around 8,000 residents.

To help achieve these ambitions, there are changes we would welcome from government; in particular, there should be a planning category for retirement communities; at the moment this kind of law exists in other countries like Germany, but not in the UK.

Internationally, we have seen countless examples of how active, community-focused living can change people's lives – we are making this happen in the UK.

Phil Bayliss, Executiv

Phil Bayliss, Executive Chairman of Inspired Villages and CEO of Later Living, Legal & General

# **Highlights**

Inspired Villages key facts and highlights at a glance...







66th

'Best Large Company to Work for' in the UK according to Best Companies







22,000

followers on our Facebook **Virtual Village Centre** 



# Market overview

There is a current lack of housing options for older people.

The UK's current supply of care home housing:



78,383

The UK's current population of over 65s:



12,400,000

The UK's projected over-65s population by 2040:

18,000,000



In the UK

only 7,000 later living homes are delivered per year









Based on an average household size of 1.3, the UK retirement living market has a penetration rate of just 0.82%

# Compared to:

US = 6%



Australia = 5.5%



New Zealand = 5%

We'd need a further... 400,000 units to match Australia

There are now 3.1 million last time buyer households in the UK



Last time buyers currently own £938 billion of UK housing stock















39% of homeowners have considered downsizing

Those that didn't downsize said:

"No suitable properties available" 49%

"The suitable properties are too expensive" 29%

- Knight Frank's Senior Living Annual Review 2020
- 'Retirement Housing: Residents' Experiences' report by NHBC
- Knight Frank's Senior Living Annual Review 2020
- 4 According to research conducted by Legal & General
- www.legalandgeneralgroup.com/media/2437/30042018-lg-ltbsdraft-v9.pdf

# The case for retirement villages

One of the great achievements of the last century was the creation of the National Health Service; for millions of people, the anxiety and agony of medical need without the means to pay for it, was brought to an end. Along with improvements to people's lifestyles, the NHS has led to a considerable extension of most people's life expectancy—when the NHS was formed in 1948, the average life expectancy for men was 65.9 and for women was 70.3, by 2016 it was 79.5 and 83.1 respectively.¹ What we did not get right in Britain, though, was joining up housing and care.

There are 12.4 million people over 65 in the UK today,<sup>2</sup> and there will be nearly 18 million by 2040<sup>3</sup>, and even with such a pronounced new pattern of life, there are still only around 7,000 homes built for retired people each year.<sup>4</sup> This failure to build more of the right kind of homes has caused a huge demand in the housing market from older people who want to move out of big, empty family homes that have become too impractical for them, and live somewhere that is better suited for their needs and ambitions in later life.

This is where retirement communities like those run by Inspired Villages come in – our modern homes are comfortable, the right size for a retiree's life stage, and designed in a discreetly age-appropriate way (see pages 28-30 to find out more about our designs) so they can flex with residents' changing needs as they grow older.

Retirement communities like ours aren't just about great bricks and mortar though – they also deliver great health and wellbeing improvements thanks to the people at their heart. Our village teams provide optional domestic support, a safe environment for residents (which includes fast assistance in instances of ill health or falls, and property security), and a vibrant programme of activities and social events in our state-of-the-art village centre facilities, which all contribute to improving the mental and physical wellbeing of residents.

A study by the Aston Research Centre for Healthy Ageing and ExtraCare Charitable Trust shows the following health benefits to those who live in retirement villages, compared to those who do not:



31% decrease

in planned hospital admissions

Hospital stays decreased from an average of

8-14 days to 1-2 days

Furthermore, research by the International Longevity Centre UK also showed retirement village residents are 50% less likely to need to move into more costly institutional accommodation like care homes.



Our ambition is to break the link between ageing and decline, which means we are relentless in developing innovative and life-enhancing services, facilities and resources. To take one example, we ran a project with Hero Wellbeing and ukactive at our Exeter community, Millbrook Village, before coronavirus hit. We gave 31 of our residents a Fitbit and asked them to walk 10,000 steps a day. Between them, they walked 15 million steps in three months. The average age of this cohort mirrored that of our villages - 79 years old - and this activity programme brought some incredible results for them. Cognitive function increased from 38.2% to 72.4% and their overall wellbeing scores - essentially, how positive and happy they felt - went from 38% to 43%.

Work like this is so important to ensure people aren't just living longer lives, but that those years are healthy and independent. The often complex health needs of older people who have survived events like strokes can cause them to feel isolated, and create further strain on our already stretched health and social care system. Organisations like Inspired Villages are uniquely placed to help address this problem.

Millbrook Village resident Veronica Pert, 65, believes living at an Inspired village has transformed her health:

"I feel fitter here now than I've ever done. I'm exercising more and walking more, because George and I bought a dog after we moved to the village.

"At Millbrook everything is on site, so I don't have to travel to go to an exercise class. I went swimming here every day before the lockdown and went to the gym three times a week.

"I've started going back to the gym.
There's a booking system to let everyone
have a chance. I now use the gym twice a
week and swim twice a week. And I'm still
doing the virtual classes run by Inspired,
and the YouTube videos. I feel a lot healthier.

"I like to exercise because I want to be able to move around. It's important for me to keep mobile as I get older. I try to do 10,000 steps a day. We were given fitness trackers by Inspired, so that's what we use."

#### References

- Nuffield Trust: 'Facts and figures on the NHS at 70'
- 2 Knight Frank's Senior Living Annual Review 2020
- 3 'Too little, too late: housing for an ageing population' by Professor Les Mayhew, ARCO and CSFI
- 4 'Retirement Housing: Residents' Experiences' report by NHBC



# **CEO statement: Jamie Bunce**

Welcome to our first Annual Review. It has been four years since my fellow originators of Inspired Villages entered into a proud partnership with Legal & General because we shared a vision for revolutionising later living. Inspired Villages was established by Legal & General's acquisition in 2017 of Austin Heath and Gifford Lea retirement villages from my former company English Care Village Partnership. Since then, we have wholeheartedly embraced together the challenge of addressing the shortage of age-appropriate homes in the UK, countering the stigma around ageing, and supporting our country's overburdened health and social care systems. I believe we have made great strides in a relatively short time.

As with any organisation seeking to change, disrupt and improve a nascent market, we have evolved, but our vision remains strong and true; namely that life with Inspired Villages can, and should be, the best years of your life. And today, nearly 1,000 people have chosen to make their home in one of our six operational villages, and are enjoying a healthy, independent lifestyle as a result.

The Inspired vision does not just set out to offer older people new choices of home, it has also powered the creation of an organisation with nearly 300 colleagues, who have kept residents safe during the pandemic.

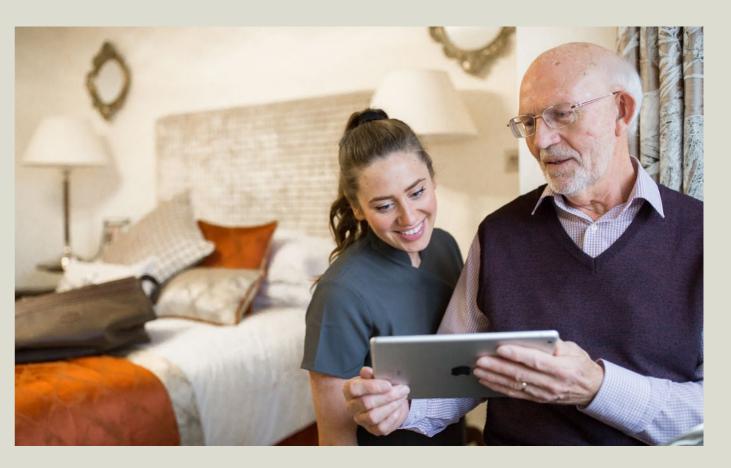
Inspired Villages is more than a business; it is a movement for community, choice, and independence.

We build our organisation around our residents. Each village has its own unique heartbeat and rhythm, and this has been achieved by knocking down the walls other providers rely on. Our communities are built on interactions between residents, colleagues, families and friends.

Any review of the recent past would be incomplete without addressing COVID-19 and its impact. Through 2020-21, which has been a devastating period for many UK families, our residents and colleagues have collaborated, and together maintained the safety of their communities. You can read more about our comprehensive response to the pandemic on pages 16-17.

In the summer of 2020, I wrote the following letter to Ben Ling, the village manager at our Great Alne Park Village:

"I must congratulate you on your leadership of the village team in such challenging circumstances. Thanks to your efforts our residents are safe but not isolated, and your team's morale is kept high. The tireless work of making sure facilities are clean, food delivered and buddy calls are made to residents is much appreciated. It's also been wonderful learning that the team at Great Alne Park has been working with residents to create the 'Woodland Walk' in the grounds.



"The thanks and compliments we are continuing to receive from residents stating how well looked after they feel is a testament not only to your hard work but how well you and the whole team at Great Alne Park have embodied our company ethos of 'stronger together'. What you and every other colleague who has been working in the villages during lockdown have achieved is so courageous and inspiring – on behalf of Inspired Villages, thank you."

I cannot state enough how proud I am of our teams for continuing to deliver such good service to our residents in such difficult times. Thank you to all of them for their hard work.

My colleagues and I have been overwhelmed by the 'thank you' notes from residents and their grateful relatives. So, I also want to say thank you for those notes, they mean so much to us all.

The last 18 months have really shown the value of communities like ours, to both individuals and institutions like the NHS. I want Inspired Villages to support the work of the NHS, and research shows the value of our approach to local health services. Data shows that, among the residents living in retirement communities like ours, there are 46% fewer GP visits and 31% fewer hospital admissions compared to the national average. They also spend just one to two days in hospital on average, as opposed to two weeks among those living in their own traditional homes in the open market. And that's our goal: we know people are living longer; we're here to help them live better for longer. The pressure we take off the

NHS as a result is significant: we calculate that we save the NHS £3,500 a year for every person who lives in our villages.

I helped establish Inspired Villages because I wanted to offer our customers more than bricks and mortar; I wanted to offer them freedom, choice and independence – to get the lifestyle everyone wants in their retirement. We are well on the way to achieving this.

"

Inspired Villages is more than a business; it is a movement for community, choice, and independence."

> Jamie Bunce, Inspired Villages Chief Executive Officer



# The Inspired Villages business model

We have designed the Inspired Villages organisation to ensure our residents can enjoy the best years of their lives. To do this we make a long-term promise to those who share our communities.

We are proud to be partnered with Legal & General, one of the oldest and biggest investors in the United Kingdom. They invested first in 2017, and their long-term approach will support our expansion in the years to come.

We are not a charity but neither are we just another business. We are pleased with our financial and commercial performance – and this is what allows us to continue to develop our villages and our services.

## The business model itself has three phases:

#### Phase 1

We secure the right land, architects, and specialists and shepherd our proposals through the planning system in each area. Once our villages are complete, we can then sell and rent the properties to new residents.

### Phase 2

To maintain the village facilities and first-class services residents can access, residents pay an annual 'service charge'. Our food and beverage services are also an additional form of income for Inspired.

# Phase 3

The final part of our business model is the deferred management fee. To keep our service charge levels predictable while residents live with us, which is hugely important for pensioners with fixed incomes, we charge a deferred management fee. This means when a resident's property is sold on, a process we can assist with, Inspired Villages takes a small percentage of the resale cost, which varies per village based on different factors, but is capped at 15%.

# Phase 1

Create the development, sell and rent the properties to new residents.

# Phase 2

Maintain our village facilities and first-class services through an annual service fee and the food/beverage revenue stream.

# Phase 3

Charge a deferred management fee when the resident's property is sold on and keep the service charge predictable.

# **Our strategy**

Our difference in the market stems from our relentless focus on supporting our residents' four key pillars of wellbeing – physical, mental, social and financial.

By focusing on holistic wellbeing we believe we can help residents enjoy a healthy, independent retirement for longer which may well be 'the best years of their lives'.

Key to delivering this vision are our wellbeing navigators. Four of our six villages have at least one and they are responsible for organising a range of activities for residents, working with individuals on their personal wellbeing needs – whether that's getting fitter, recovering from surgery or developing the strength to unload a washing machine of wet clothes.

As Inspired Villages CEO Jamie Bunce says: "...it's all done totally on residents' terms. One minute our wellbeing navigators will be doing a gym workout, the next minute they'll be running a swimming class or leading a walk. Then, in the afternoon, they could be playing Scrabble or having a game of chess. It's a vocation, not just a job. We match people's personal purpose to the role they play in the village, and our team are with us because they love what they do."

We are well on the way to achieving our vision – as our own research and multiple awards show our strategy is working – and there is much more to do.



We measured the impact of the eGYM equipment we installed in our gyms and saw a 35% increase in core strength over a six-month period, while the percentage of residents using the gyms went up from 10% to over 50%."

#### Accreditations and awards:

HealthInvestor Awards 2020 M WINNER

























#### References

1 Jamie Bunce, HCM August 2020

# **Our values**

Our values set us apart and bring us together. They define who we are, what we believe in and how we act. It's down to us to bring them to life every day with a positive mindset in everything we do.



# Be inspired

Be an expert in what you do and be an inspiration to those around you. Love what we do and why we do it.



### **Stronger together**

With our residents and each other; we succeed when we work together. There's always time for a cup of tea and a chat to make things better.



# Courage

Dream big, make the tough decisions and follow them through. We're not frightened to make mistakes and we learn fast.



#### **Deliver**

We keep our promises to deliver the right results. We don't do average.



# Straightforward and straight-talking

We keep things simple; we don't waffle.

# **Operations overview: Tom Lord**

Being faced with a global pandemic is a sobering thought for anyone. Being faced with a global pandemic when you are responsible for supporting the wellbeing of around 850 over-65s – the age group most susceptible to the disease – is a whole new level of challenging. 2020 truly tested the mettle of our operations team – the frontline of our business, so to speak – and I'm incredibly proud of the way they have risen to the challenge.



We moved quickly, as soon as news broke that COVID-19 had reached UK shores, and put in place a number of measures designed to keep our residents safe. We closed our restaurants and bars, and instead delivered cooked meals or groceries to residents' doorsteps. We moved exercise classes and other activities online, arranged socially distanced coffee mornings and 'wine o' clock' sessions on balconies and patios. We made 'buddy calls' to residents to check they weren't feeling isolated and had everything they needed, and much more. (You can read a detailed account of Inspired's response to the pandemic on pages 16-17). Thanks to the actions of our hardworking village teams, there were no widespread outbreaks of COVID-19 in our villages, and only a small number of unrelated cases across our six villages.

I have been impressed at the way the village teams have thought outside of the box to keep up morale in the villages, from delivering surprise flowers to every home in one village, to using our Cubigo software system (set up to deliver messages between residents and the village teams) to run quizzes for residents. That's before even taking into account the masterminding of socially distanced events, such as our VE Day celebrations, to bring joy to residents during lockdown.

The response from residents has been humbling, with many 'Thank You's sent in, plus gratitude expressed by their children, who felt better knowing mum and/or dad were somewhere with such a supportive structure in place. You can read these on pages 20–21. This goodwill developed with residents resulted in our highest average net promoter score yet, with a score of 24.2 achieved in 2020, an increase on 10.3 in 2019. A further icing on the cake was having 17 colleagues voted by residents onto the ARCO Roll of Recognition, with two – Sally Griffiths and Lucy White – being amongst the top four most voted for individuals on the list.

It's hard to predict what the rest of 2021 will bring us, but I am confident based on progress so far, we are in a strong position to tackle whatever lies ahead. We have proved over the last year the validity of the Inspired Villages model, and that we have some of the best operations colleagues in the business.

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Tom Lord, Inspired Villages Chief Operating Officer

# **Our operational villages**

# **Austin Heath**

Leamington Spa, Warwickshire

Total number of homes: 106 (167 once complete)

Number of 1-bed apartments: 32 Number of 2-bed apartments: 74 Village manager: Alison Harrison

Starting price: £217,000 Village centre facilities:

🖺 Gym

Event space **Manual** Cinema





Craft room

₽∰ Bar

# **Bramshott Place**

Liphook, Hampshire

Total number of homes: 191 Number of 1-bed apartments: 2 Number of 2-bed apartments: 77 Number of 3-bed apartments: 18 Number of 2-bed cottages: 13 Number of 3-bed cottages: 81 Village manager: Chris Bicknell Starting price: £549,950

🖺 Gym

Event space

Village centre facilities:



Games room

Games room



Uillage store

**Durrants Village** 

Number of 2-bed apartments: 69

Number of 2-bed cottages: 13

Number of 3-bed cottages: 89

Village manager: Liam Stack

Starting price: £339,000

Faygate, West Sussex

₽∰ Café/bar

Total number of homes: 173 (incl. 2 affordable housing apts)

Library

且 Pool



# Village centre facilities:

👸 Event space

🖺 Gym Restaurant Uillage store

且 Pool Library



# Millbrook Village

Exeter, Devon

Total number of homes: 164 Number of 1-bed apartments: 2 Number of 2-bed apartments: 75 Number of 3-bed apartments: 46 Number of 2-bed cottages: 4 Number of 3-bed cottages: 37 Village manager: Rachel Tottle Starting price: £368,500

# Village centre facilities:

B Event space

Gym

Restaurant

Games room

且 Pool

Library

₽∰ Bar

Cinema

# **Great Alne Park**

Alcester, Warwickshire

Total number of homes: 122 (172 once complete)

Number of 1-bed apartments: 4 Number of 2-bed apartments: 55 Number of 2-bed cottages: 5 Number of 3-bed cottages: 58 Village manager: Ben Ling Starting price: £345,000

### Village centre facilities:

Gym

Restaurant

且 Pool

₽∰ Bar

Croquet lawn

B Event space

Games room

**Library** 

**Manual** Cinema

Amphitheatre



# Gifford Lea

Tattenhall, Cheshire

Total number of homes: 104 (170 once complete)

Number of 1-bed apartments: 40 Number of 2-bed apartments: 64 Village manager: Jessica Bennett

Starting price: £229,000

### Village centre facilities:

Gym

Restaurant

且 Pool

營 Cinema

Event space

Library

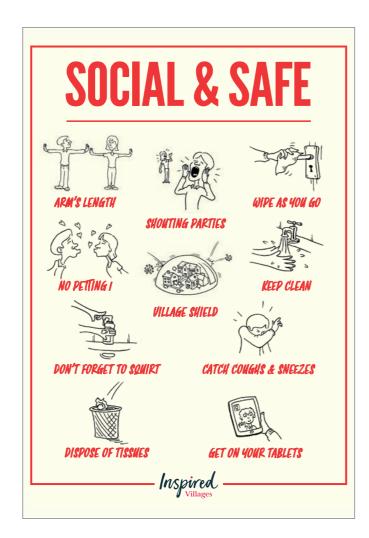
₽∰ Café / bar

# Navigating coronavirus and our Re-Inspired Plan

Inspired Villages is extremely proud of our rapid response to the COVID-19 pandemic. As soon as it became clear there was a possibility the pandemic could reach UK shores, a 'Coronavirus Response Team' was pulled together consisting – at its core – of CEO Jamie Bunce, COO Tom Lord, Operations Director Jackie Usher, Director of Operational Risk, Health & Safety Richard Higgins, and Communications Manager Ploy Radford, with other people within the business pulled in when required. The team met regularly with frequency dictated by the pace of the pandemic and lockdown restrictions introduced by government.

The safety of residents and colleagues was paramount, as was making sure we could flex the business to reflect changing safety levels and keep us in a strong position for growth once the pandemic ended. As a result, we brought in a four tier system (ahead of the government's own tier system!) so when appropriate, certain services or processes could be safely brought back, and just as quickly be able to revert the business back to high alert when government lockdowns were issued.

As a pandemic was an unprecedented situation for the company, the teams were quick to collate learnings and figure out what could and couldn't be easily done safely at various stages and adapt the tiers accordingly.









The following measures were brought in at the villages as soon as COVID-19 came to UK shores and the first lockdown happened, and have remained core to our highest safety tier ever since:

- Development of the 'Inspired Clean' programme that saw extra cleaning protocols introduced around the villages.
- The ordering of essential groceries and delivery to residents' doorsteps.
- Closure of restaurants and cafés, replaced with the delivery of cooked meals to residents when ordered.
- Moving resident activities online where possible and making the most of spacious village grounds for socially distanced activities to help keep residents fit and active.
- Restrictions on visits to the village, including colleagues.
- Enhanced operating procedures to enable people to safely move into the villages, including quarantining before and after the move for new residents, restricted routes for delivery vans etc.
- Setting up a 'buddy call' system, where every resident received daily calls from the village teams to make sure they were ok, and have a chat if they were feeling lonely.
- All colleagues encouraged to work from home where possible.

Where appropriate, in line with government measures and local data on the number of COVID-19 cases, we would ease safety measures in the villages accordingly, for example:

- Allowing customers to safely tour the residence they are interested in.
- Opening up the pool and gym to single household use with the village team cleaning the facilities between uses.
- Allowing small groups to use the communal areas of the village centres, such as the libraries, in a safe way.

Meanwhile, to help keep central support colleagues safe, we:

- Moved quickly to enable home-working.
- Kept the office open with a booking system and safety measures in place so people had somewhere to work if they needed a break from their home environment.
- Introduced measures such as 'Time for Tea' and upped the wellbeing resources on our internal platform Inspired World (read more on page 43).

Thanks to this approach, we are proud to say there were only a small handful of unrelated cases, linked to hospital visits, of COVID-19 among residents, as well as only a small number among colleagues.

# Life has gone on in our villages...

The pandemic has seen our village teams really step up to the challenge of not only keeping residents safe and secure but also not isolated. This has meant the organisation of socially distanced activities and events to keep residents active and entertained in a safe way. These included...

## VE Day celebrations across all villages

All of our operational villages put on a VE Day parade, draped bunting everywhere, held a procession, had 40s music playing, themed food and much more to help residents celebrate this momentous occasion!

### Opera in the amphitheatre

2020 saw works complete on our, open-air grass amphitheatre at Great Alne Park. To christen the space, as well as provide entertainment for residents, we hosted opera singers Alex Haigh and Rosie Clifford plus pianist Louisa Lam for a sunset performance in early September.

# Socially distanced activities outside

From coffee mornings and 'wine o' clock' to dance sessions and walking the equivalent of John O'Groats to Land's End, we made the most of the resident patios, balconies, spacious village grounds, and the lovely surrounding countryside to get residents safely outside, moving and socialising.

### A visit from Mr Motivator!

Physical wellbeing is one of the core pillars of the Inspired Villages lifestyle. Therefore, we invited Mr Motivator and his wife to Austin Heath for National Fitness Day on 23rd September 2020 to run an exercise class for residents, which we also streamed live on our Virtual Village Centre. Residents had great fun joining in!















# What our residents have to say

Even in the most challenging of circumstances, we have had amazing feedback from the residents in our villages, praising the hard work of our village teams in keeping them safe during this global pandemic.



The way we are being looked after during this time is quite remarkable, with the most wonderful staff going out of their way to do what they can for us. The best thing we ever did was moving here 3 years ago."

Mrs C

"I was doubtful, 2 years ago, about joining a community of all older people, but it has been a blessing. Everyone is friendly, we have plenty of ways of being sociable and we now have excellent support during this current situation."

#### Mr and Mrs C

Mr E

"I just wanted to say how much we appreciate the efforts of the staff for their support of residents during this problem. Each person here has done their utmost to help us through difficult times.

"The shop, restaurant and laundry are facilities that help on a daily basis.

"We've been here for 3 years and don't think that we could have chosen a better place to come to and find ourselves 'locked in'."

"Lockdown has been pretty easy for us really, as we have kept busy with the allotment which is just minutes away. We also have a woodland walk which goes all the way around the village. When things were at their worst, the village team delivered essentials like milk, eggs and bread, and would even deliver meals if we didn't wish to cook.

"We've kept in touch with friends and family via telephone and Skype, we've been in touch with lots of people and even our friends in America. We're quite tech savvy which has been a big help.

"We're very happy here, we do enjoy the facilities here and feel very safe."

Mr and Mrs L



"In normal times, there's lots of activities and I usually organise swimming pool Pilates once a week. There's really something for everyone to enjoy; bridge, painting, singing, and it's easy to make friends if you join something you enjoy!

"The restaurant here has also been doing Saturday evening three-course dinner deliveries, so I've met friends in the garden a couple of times and we've enjoyed dinner together at a distance.

"We've been really lucky with the village team here, they are wonderful, I can't fault them, they've been absolutely brilliant and gone out of their way to support us all.

"The retirement villages are a really good concept because so many people in the wider community are really lonely, but if you're lonely in a place like this, you've got no one to blame but yourself!"

Ms E

"My parents are residents of Great Alne and like most of the residents, are classed as 'vulnerable'. I just wanted to say thank you so much for all that you and your staff at Great Alne are doing to support your residents. The compassion and care you all are demonstrating towards the residents at such difficult times for everyone, is so reassuring to me, as a family member worried about them."

# Ms J, daughter of an Inspired Villages resident

"We never cease to be amazed at everything that you are doing to make our lives here as easy and enjoyable as possible, in these difficult times. The icing on the cake was the arrival of the goody bag on Tuesday, it will provide a good few hours of brain challenges - I might even manage a cryptic crossword! We are so very lucky to have your great team look after us. Those wonderful smiles from you all is a real tonic, so thank you."

Ms S



I feel safer and looked after. That is down to the heroic efforts of the staff here in the village looking after our welfare!"

Mr W



# The view from the frontline...

The village teams at Inspired Villages went above and beyond in 2020-21 to keep residents safe but not isolated. Here, two members of Inspired's frontline share their experiences of village life during the height of the pandemic.



Liam Stack, Village Manager, Durrants Village

Well, what a year it has been at Durrants Village and for Operations as a whole. 2020 was full of both professional and personal highs and lows, so if I were to use certain words to describe this year in a nutshell, they would be; challenging, emotional, rewarding, creative, unifying and, at times, uplifting.

The year itself began quite normally, we had all been hearing of this faraway virus that, let's face it, didn't mean much to us in the West other than a small news piece on the radio on the way to work. Then slowly but surely, these reports were getting closer to home until all of sudden, it reached our shores and we went into full lockdown. At first this was hard for both the team and the residents to adjust to. Now, I am certainly not saying that we ever really did adjust to it, but we all certainly got better at it over time.

The first plan we had to spring into action was ensuring all residents had the basics (food and drink), which involved liaising with our local Waitrose and turning into a shopping delivery team for over 100 properties. This soon morphed into a customer service desk for queries about the wrong berries, flavours of yoghurt, imperfectly shaped oranges etc.

We made sure socially distanced events and activities continued in the village to help with resident morale and wellbeing, aided by the

constant, beautiful sunshine. These included the amazing VE Day celebrations where all of the team dressed up in 1940s outfits and paraded around the villages, there was even dancing in the streets which will never be forgotten by any of us. The themed fine dining events have been such a hit and most certainly brought variety to the food delivery service which has been provided all year. The prize winners for the best dressed for those particular events will live long in the memory. Other activities included a gardening competition, art, nature trails, line dancing, carols, and a summer singalong. These provided welcome relief for both the residents and the team.

The village itself had an explosion in population with an extra 36 new residents in 2020, which is phenomenal; altogether we sold 22 properties! This is a great achievement and reflects the growing recognition of the benefits of what we offer.

It would take many pages of words to do justice to the year that was 2020, but suffice to say, despite the trials and tribulations we have all faced, we have come out far stronger as a team. And we're proud that the residents are safe and relatively happy.



Leah Jackson, Wellbeing Navigator

Lockdown as a member of the team at Inspired Villages meant that we could not have been more separate but in fact, I believe, it brought us closer than ever before. One of the highlights of my working week through lockdown was my digital Time for Tea call. This scheme run by the company saw us paired with colleagues from different teams each week and we would have a 20-30 minute conversation that was not supposed to be about work. Often on these calls you would also get to meet family members and fur babies and we all got to know each other personally. I will forever smile when someone is talking to me and then they realise they are on mute.

I was able to work from home which meant I was around to look after my family but still feel part of the team, which was great. The wellbeing navigators across the villages have been running a range of socially distanced and virtual activities. Some of the socially distanced activities include balcony coffee mornings and afternoon teas, guitar playing and singing along on the terrace, outside classes and organised walks, balcony bingo, nature walks, darts, table tennis and boules tournaments. Some of the digital sessions we organised included online quizzes, choir practice, wine tasting, wreath making, exercise and meditation classes, G&T nights, and elevenses coffees and catch ups.

We have also been calling residents regularly as part of our 'buddy call' service to check in with them and have a chat. We've posted puzzle books and printed exercise programmes, and set fitness challenges (such as our Cardio Wall challenge) and delivered hot meals and groceries.

Residents have made new friendships both digitally and in person, and meeting someone on your walk around the village has become a highlight of the day.

We have been regularly updated on what was happening across the business and at each village, either through the weekly Inspired Live session or through email and written correspondence. Colleagues have posted pictures and shared activities on our platform Inspired World as well as Facebook groups which were created to enable everyone to stay in touch.

A 'Thank You' goes a long way and it was great to receive letters from the CEO to thank us for our hard work, as well as gift vouchers and an additional three days annual leave.

The pandemic has taught me to be grateful and appreciate everything I have, and I am truly grateful to be part of Inspired Villages.

# **ARCO Roll of Recognition**

To honour the number of employees in the housing with care sector going above and beyond to help residents during the pandemic, the sector trade body, ARCO, put together a Roll of Recognition. ARCO invited retirement village residents and employees to nominate individuals they believed should be on this document and Inspired Villages was thrilled to have 17 colleagues featured. The icing on the cake was learning two of our colleagues – Sally Griffiths and Lucy White from Millbrook Village – were amongst the four most nominated individuals!

Adam Jones, Maintenance Manager

Aida Quince, Food & Beverage Team Leader

Alison Theobold, Food & Beverage Assistant

Carol Gardner, Housekeeper

Chris Ford, Maintenance Supervisor

Denise Smith, Housekeeping Team Leader

Gary Lacey, Chef

Jessica King, Housekeeping Supervisor

Leah Jackson, Wellbeing Navigator

Linda James, Housekeeper Lucy White, Welcome Host

Nathan Cawston, Maintenance Manager

Olivia King, Front Office Administrator

Olivier Guyard-Mulkerrin, Head Chef

Paul Hayman, Maintenance Assistant

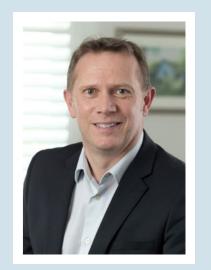
Richard Higgins, Head of Health & Safety

Sally Griffiths, Assistant Village Manager

Thank you for all of your hard work and commitment!

# Development overview: Neal Dale

It's safe to say 2020 didn't quite go according to anyone's plan, but I'm pleased to report that a global pandemic didn't deter Development – comprising our land, planning, design and development teams – from having a busy and fruitful year.



The land team reviewed over 300 sites in 2020-21, that varied in size and planning status and 11 were presented to the board for permission to undergo detailed due diligence. As per the company's ambition to be a sector leader with 50 sites over the next decade, the geographical spread of the sites viewed has grown, with sites near Cambridge, York, Edinburgh and Portsmouth all under review.

In a sign there is growing recognition of the benefits to society of retirement villages like ours, 2020 was a remarkably successful year for us in terms of securing planning permissions too. We secured planning consent for sites in Caddington, Turvey, Chandler's Ford, Tunbridge Wells and of course Kingswood, with the latter set to be one of the largest retirement villages in the UK when complete. This meant we were then able to acquire the sites in Caddington, Turvey, Chandler's Ford and Tunbridge Wells last year.

We also secured planning for phase 2 of work at Ledian Gardens, Kent, which will be our seventh operational Village when complete in early 2022. In addition, South Kesteven District Council and the Burghley Estate chose Inspired Villages as their preferred partner to deliver the retirement village element of St Martin's Park, a new mixed-use development in Stamford.

Finally, we exchanged conditional contracts on sites in Halstead, Walkern and Matcham's.

Overall, these sites put us well on the way to achieving 5,000 units. You can see our pipeline set out on a map on pages 26-27.

To ensure we are designing attractive and age-appropriate homes for these sites, we expanded our design team in 2020, welcoming Sonia Parol as Design Director. One of Sonia's key focuses has been the design of a more compact village centre building which will shorten our delivery programme and make us more flexible in the size of sites we require. You can learn more about how we design high quality retirement villages on pages 28–30.

So all in all, it has been a challenging year, but there have been plenty of achievements we are proud of that have laid the groundwork for a hugely exciting few years ahead which will keep the Construction team, under Shaun Whelan's directorship, hugely busy. (You can read Shaun Whelan's Construction overview on page 31).

Neal Dale, Inspired Villages Development Director

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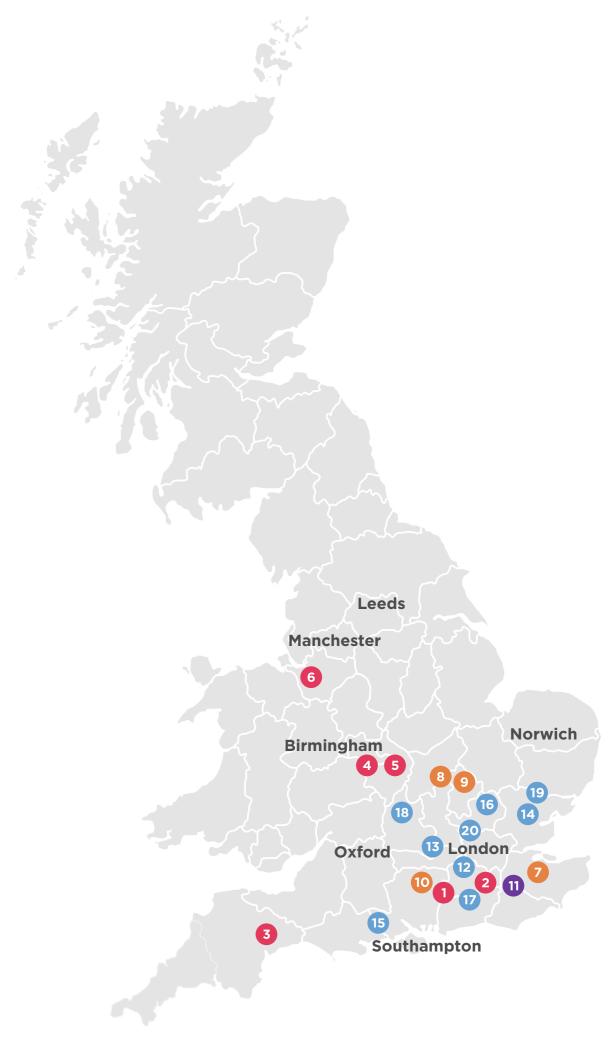
# Overview of our current schemes and pipeline

- 1 Bramshott Place, Hampshire
- 2 Durrants Village, West Sussex
- 3 Millbrook Village, Devon
- 4 Great Alne Park, Warwickshire
- 5 Austin Heath, Warwickshire
- 6 Gifford Lea, Cheshire
- 7 Ledian Gardens, Kent
- 8 Elderswell, Bedfordshire
- 9 Millfield Green, Bedfordshire
- 10 Ampfield Meadows, Hampshire

- 11 Tunbridge Wells, Kent
- 12 Kingswood, Surrey
- Sonning Common, Oxfordshire
- Great Leighs, Essex
- 15 Matcham's, Dorset
- 16 Walkern, Hertfordshire
- 17 Broadbridge Heath, West Sussex
- 18 Freeland, Oxfordshire
- 19 Halstead, Essex
- 20 Sunbury on Thames, Middlesex

# Key

- Owned operating
- Owned under construction
- Owned pre-construction
- Due diligence / planning



# How we design our villages

Creating discreetly age appropriate homes for residents, that are also desirable, means design is always at the forefront of our minds. We want our villages to feel like home and help people live their best independent lives in retirement. We therefore always take the following factors into consideration:

### The exterior aesthetics

It's important to us that we are clearly differentiated from the care home sector. So we apply different finishes to prevent the village having the monotonous look associated with institutions. Different windows and dormers across the villages, bay windows positioned to take advantage of natural light, and different coloured doors all help with preventing an institutional feel. We also avoid putting in garden fences and use positioning to get around the privacy issue.

# An organic village layout

Traditional villages are not made in grids; they grow organically in a less structured way. So we lay our apartment blocks out in a way that means the paths gently wind like in a traditional village, and homes are closer than the set distance on new housing estates. We also cluster apartment blocks and cottages to create 'squares' and intermediate spaces to naturally create different environments across the village.

We also discreetly spread car parking across the village so they feel like a natural part of the landscape. Big parking lots are not attractive and detract from a 'village feel'.

### A vibrant village centre

The beating heart of a retirement village obviously needs to be accessible; so we make sure all paths lead to the centre and those entering the village are naturally directed there first by the village access road.

All the communal facilities are located in the village centre to encourage residents to frequently congregate there and create the buzzing environment you want in a successful retirement village. Inspired's village centres typically have a restaurant, café-bar with shop (to encourage traffic between traditional meal and drinking times, as well as be convenient for residents), library, cinema room, craft room and wellbeing centre (this comprises a swimming pool, spa, gym, salon and treatment rooms).

We give the interior design in the village centres particular attention - we want them to be stylish places so they are inviting and a treat to bring family to. We always add little touches like a desk in the lounge area that means residents, visitors and village team members can sit and work in a public area, promoting a community feel.

We are always careful to factor in outside space around the village centres too. Our café-bars can always open out onto a courtyard to allow for outdoor seating which has been very useful in an age of social distancing.

## New year, new village centre

One of the key design focuses in 2020 has been creating a more compact village centre so we can complete our villages more quickly and be in a position to offer buyers quality apartments starting at a lower price point. This means our future villages, starting with our scheme in Tunbridge Wells, will be 24 apartments over 2.5 storeys and 35,000 sq ft GIA, compared to our existing design of 80 apartments over 117,000 sq ft GIA. The new village centre design will give our sites a space efficiency level of 80% for 170 units compared to 74% for 170 units at the moment.

### Choosing the right technology

Wellbeing is at the heart of the Inspired Villages model. So it was important to us to fit out our gyms with equipment over-65s would feel comfortable using. After considerable research, we chose to partner with eGym; once set up by a team member, it's not intimidating to use and it acts as a virtual personal trainer, adapting fitness and strength exercises to each user. Currently we have it in 3 of our 6 operational villages and in the first 5 months we saw an average strength increase in users of 35%, which is particularly important given the government's chief medical officer's call for more focus on strength activities.

Another tech innovation in the gym is our cardio wall – this interactive wall has different settings that allows people of all abilities to engage with tapping the lights as they flash around the different parts of the wall – so someone in a wheelchair using a stick to tap the lights can use it, as can someone more mobile and very fit, enabling it to be enriching for everyone and quite competitive between the residents.

## Age-appropriate homes

The vast majority of our residents are looking to downsize to a more manageable property from big family homes that are now empty. This means we typically offer apartments and cottages between one and three bedrooms in size, which allows room for them and visitors.

We then design the homes with small but important details such as windowsills that aren't too high (to reflect the stature of older people), plug sockets that aren't too low down, wide staircases in the cottages so a stairlift can be installed at a later date if needed, and wider doorways for any potential wheelchair use. The WC pedestals in our bathrooms are also installed at a higher level than normal and showers are designed to be large enough for wheelchair access.

We also install tablets in each home that not only provide a way of sending important messages from the village teams to every resident, but also a way to discreetly check in that all is well. If a resident isn't 'checking in' on their tablet one day, the village team will be alerted and can make a discreet call to ensure everything is alright.

## Designing for dementia

Dementia is sadly a condition that is more prevalent among the over-65s and we recognise that residents may develop the condition after moving in with us. We therefore are focused on introducing design features to our villages that can support those living with dementia, including:

- Clearly defined village paths
- Fall detection and prevention technology
- Automated lighting
- Design details that reduce sound transmission
- Avoiding psychedelic prints and table tops with glare
- Easily operated doors and windows



# How we design our villages

### **Green spaces**

We don't treat the grounds and external landscaped areas as an afterthought; they are extremely important for resident wellbeing and add to the village feel. Allotments, activity areas for croquet, bowls and Pétanque, and formal and informal gardens provide visual and sensory variety for residents, encouraging them to keep mentally and physically active as well as keep socialising. Our allotments have proved a great distraction and form of exercise for residents during lockdown, and some residents even helped our grounds team create a woodland walkway through lockdown at one of our villages

Great Alne Park.

2020 also saw the completion of the grass amphitheatre in the grounds of Great Alne Park, as part of our drive to make the arts more accessible to older people. We believe we are the only retirement village in the UK to have one. In a world beset by coronavirus, with more and more people re-evaluating the importance of nature, safe green spaces are going to be even more of a draw to potential residents.

### Taking COVID-19 into consideration

The global COVID-19 pandemic has added an extra dimension to our design planning for villages. The existing designs and the hard work of our village teams have helped ensure we have kept our residents safe and free from any widespread outbreak of the virus, but we are keen to build on that with the experience gained over the last year. Future village designs will therefore:

- Ensure every apartment has a good view from the window
- Enable easy access to outdoor areas
- Have improved technology installed to keep residents connected
- Ensure smaller blocks are designed in such a way to help with social bubbling



# **Construction overview: Shaun Whelan**



It's impossible to talk about 2020-21 without referencing the global COVID-19 pandemic – a testing time for the construction industry and its supply chains. Our contractors stepped up to the challenge and found alternative suppliers of key materials which helped us make as much construction progress as possible.

During 2020-21, Inspired Villages had five sites under construction:

- The first phase of Ledian Gardens, our seventh village, in Leeds, Kent.
- The first phase of Elderswell in Bedfordshire, which will be our eighth village.
- Phase 3 of Gifford Lea, our village in Cheshire, started on site in autumn 2020 and will complement the existing village with a further 39 homes.
- The third and final phase at Austin Heath in Warwick, one of our more urban locations, will complete in Q3 2021, bringing the total number of homes in the village to 167.
- Phase 2 of Great Alne Park, our most rural site in Warwickshire, completed at the end of Q1 2021, adding 44 cottages and 24 apartments to the village bringing the total number of homes to 122. This phase also included substantial landscaping work with an amphitheatre, wildflower meadow, allotments, croquet lawn, and picnic area.

We are exceptionally proud of our safety record over the year with no reportable injuries or accidents occurring while these works have been ongoing.

A highlight of this year has been the launch of our inaugural regional contractor partnership group; covering the south east of England. The partnership comprises nine contractors and operates via regular workshops focusing on key issues such as health and safety, sustainability, and sharing best practice on a range of issues from waste reduction to adding social value. We are now actively tendering and delivering with several contractors in the partnership and are expanding this procurement model to other regions. The scheme helps us move quickly from design to delivery across our expanding pipeline of sites around the country.

Another initiative we have embarked on, to ensure we scale up quickly and effectively, has been the crafting of our governance framework and design standardisation principles. The robust project review element of our governance process allows us to extract detailed learnings from each phase of construction we complete, to inform the design principles that make up the 'Inspired' style.

Finally, a key development is our commitment to construction sustainability. This period has seen us commission several studies into reducing embodied and operational carbon, expanding the use of renewable technology in our villages, and increasing the efficiency of our buildings. Q2 2021 has seen us start on site with the UK's first net zero carbon regulated energy retirement village, Millfield Green, in Bedfordshire. It's been a challenging 12 months but I'm proud of my team who have overcome the obstacles thrown at them and made this a highly innovative period for the business.

5. Whelan

Shaun Whelan, Inspired Villages Construction Director

# **Upcoming sites**

Inspired Villages has ambitions to be a world-leading operator of retirement villages and is currently on track to deliver 5,000 age-appropriate homes for over-65s. As part of that journey, in 2020-21 we secured planning permission for and/or began construction on these new sites.

# **Ampfield Meadows**

Hampshire

Set in Hampshire near Chandler's Ford, Ampfield Meadows is ideally located for residents looking for an adventurous lifestyle in a beautiful setting. The beautiful New Forest, miles of stunning coastline and the Solent - famous for its sailing history and cruises - are nearby. Meanwhile, excellent road connections to the M3 and M27 mean residents will also have easy access to the whole south coast, London and beyond.





# Kingswood

Surrey

Set in leafy Surrey on the site of Legal & General's former headquarters, our Kingswood village will be one of the biggest retirement villages in the UK once complete. As part of the project, we will be refurbishing the Grade II\* listed Legal & General House, thus preserving the future of the building for the local community, as well as opening up 16 acres of green belt parkland for local use in perpetuity.

Total number of units: 280



# **Tunbridge Wells**

Kont

Located in the Wealden District in East Sussex, the 9.5-acre site benefits from a beautiful landscaped setting with mature trees and a lake, and is only two miles from the centre of Tunbridge Wells. It will be our first scheme with our newly redesigned, compact village centre.

Total number of units: 146



## Elderswell

Bedfordshire

Nestled in the countryside, Elderswell and the surrounding area is steeped in history. The village is adjacent to the Station House; a Grade II\* listed former railway station building, and is named in connection with the 17th century farmhouse that used to be on the site and was surrounded by elder trees. Neighbouring town Turvey was even recorded in the Domesday book of 1086 and was renowned for lace-making in the 18th and 19th centuries. Residents will be able to enjoy living in a historic, picturesque setting with easy access to Bedford, Milton Keynes and Northampton, should they want a taste of urban life.

Total number of units: 130



# Millfield Green

Bedfordshire

Millfield Green, in Bedfordshire, will be the UK's first net zero carbon regulated energy retirement village, and a testament to Inspired Villages' serious commitment to sustainability. The scheme will use renewable energy generation through on-site photovoltaics, EV-charging, improved building fabric and insulation, Mechanical Heat Vent Recovery units and ground source heat pumps provided by Kensa Group; a business Legal & General has a significant stake in.

Total number of units: 200



# Ledian Gardens

Kent

Ledian Gardens will be Inspired Villages' seventh scheme and the first village built entirely under Inspired Villages' ownership. Set in the idyllic Kent countryside near Leeds Castle and two Areas of Outstanding Beauty, the village will offer residents a relaxing, rural retreat.

Total number of units: 153



# **Estates management**

While Inspired Villages has an ambitious pipeline of future villages that is keeping Development and Construction busy, the company is always careful to make sure existing villages are kept in the best condition and facilities and grounds updated so residents continue to have the best experience living with us. Beyond the building of extra phases at Austin Heath, Gifford Lea and Great Alne Park, mentioned in the Construction overview on page 31, the following work has been carried out by the estates management team:

#### **Bramshott Place**

Nearly £300,000 has been invested into Bramshott Place to ensure the facilities are truly delivering for the needs of all village residents. Enhancements included:

- Replacement boilers
- New automatic gates
- Fire protection measures
- The replacement of dead trees

### Millbrook

Nearly £200,000 was invested into Millbrook over the past year to upgrade the facilities for residents. Enhancements included:

- Restaurant and function room refurbishments
- New communal lighting controls
- Upgraded restaurant doors
- Internal road signage
- A new cycle store



#### **Great Alne Park**

An investment of £142,000 was made into building a new gym and reconfiguring the clubhouse at Great Alne Park to make sure they are truly accessible, attractive and enjoyable spaces for all.

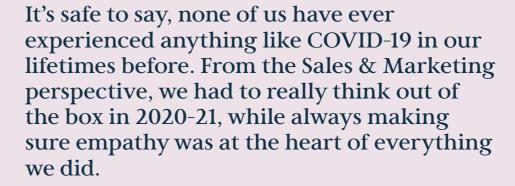


#### **Durrants**

Nearly £170,000 was invested into Durrants over the past year to ensure the facilities were truly delivering for the needs of all village residents. Enhancements included:

- Repairs to dormer windows
- The replacement of the road near the lake
- Alterations to oven housings across the village
- The replacement of dead trees

# Sales & Marketing overview of the year: James Cobb





Our customer base and the residents in our villages are the demographic most at risk of COVID-19, and everyone, regardless of age, has been scared by this pandemic. We had to tread carefully, empathetically, and innovatively. This means that our top priority in 2020 was primarily aligning with other departments to keep residents safe while our focus in 2021 is sales velocity.

Key to this strategy was to have a flexible marketing plan aligned to customer sentiment, which we measured based on the Canvas-8 stages of denial, anxiety, adjustment and re-evaluation.

One of the first things we did once lockdown hit, was transform our Facebook page, which only had a small number of followers, into a 'Virtual Village Centre' with activities, celebrity messages of encouragement, online exercise classes, quizzes and much more, to bring together over-65s (not just our residents) and help make sure older people weren't feeling isolated. By April 2021, we hit 22,000 followers and are now in a position where we can say content shared about our villages is drawing in sales leads as a secondary benefit. (You can read more about the VVC on pages 36-37).

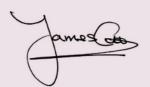
Our big direct marketing campaign last year was Inspired Voices, which also put residents front and centre. They have always been our best ambassadors, and so it made sense to let the residents explain the benefits of living with us via Zoom videos pulled together for the digital campaign. It was well received, and no doubt played its part in what was a tipping point in recognition for the retirement living sector.

On a related note, I'm proud of the part my team played in keeping customers and residents safe. We've been offering virtual viewings, introduced COVID-19 screening questionnaires, and only allowing pre-booked viewings to enable live tours to safely happen. Enhanced operating procedures such as new residents self-isolating before and after they move in, and moving teams being screened for COVID-19, all helped make the move-in process as safe as possible, too.

The fact that we managed to match 2019's sales levels despite the global pandemic halting our normal marketing and sales activities, is a fantastic testament to the hard work and dedication of our colleagues.

We are positive for 2021-22 as the COVID-19 vaccines are rolled out nationwide and the country eases out of lockdown. Plus, increased time in our home offices has allowed us to move to a more data-led approach that will put us in good stead for expansion.

The last 12 months have required us to think outside the box, but innovative and empathetic thinking is helping us stand in good stead for the future.



James Cobb, Inspired Villages Group Sales & Marketing Director

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# **Virtual Village Centre**

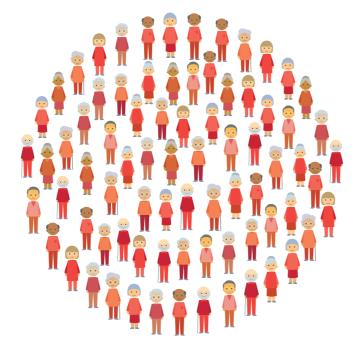
When COVID-19 hit the UK and the country went into its very first lockdown, the Inspired team pondered the issue of how we make sure self-isolation isn't isolating for our residents. The obvious answer was technology, and we hit upon the idea of turning our Facebook page, which only had a small 250 followers, into a 'Virtual Village Centre' with entertaining and informative content, tailored to an over-65s audience, to keep them feeling connected to others during lockdown.

Opening this to all over-65s and not just our residents, aligned with our ethos of creating communities that extend beyond the physical boundaries of our villages, as well as allowed us to build further awareness of the Inspired Villages brand.

We drew upon the internal expertise we had within the business – wellbeing navigators and chefs – for content, as well as asking celebrities who had worked with Inspired previously, such as Gloria Hunniford, to record messages of hope for the page. Online quizzes, photos of life in our villages, and 'nostalgia' posts for items over-65s might remember from their youth, also feature on the page.

As a result, the Inspired Villages Facebook page grew from a mere 250 followers in April 2020 to over 22,000 by end of March 2021. This phenomenal growth has allowed those who might otherwise be isolated to forge new connections, and the platform is now getting to such a size, we are seeing sales leads come through, making the Virtual Village Centre a success on several levels.

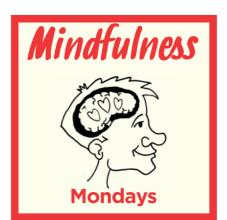
## **March 2021**

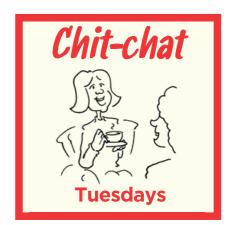


Facebook followers 250

**April 2020** 

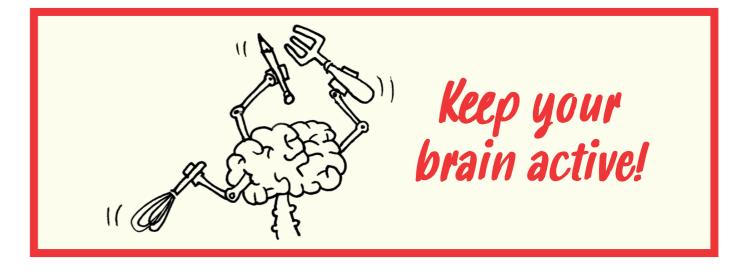


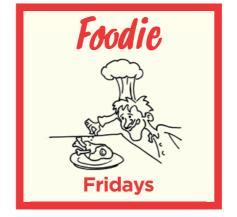






# The Virtual Village Centre



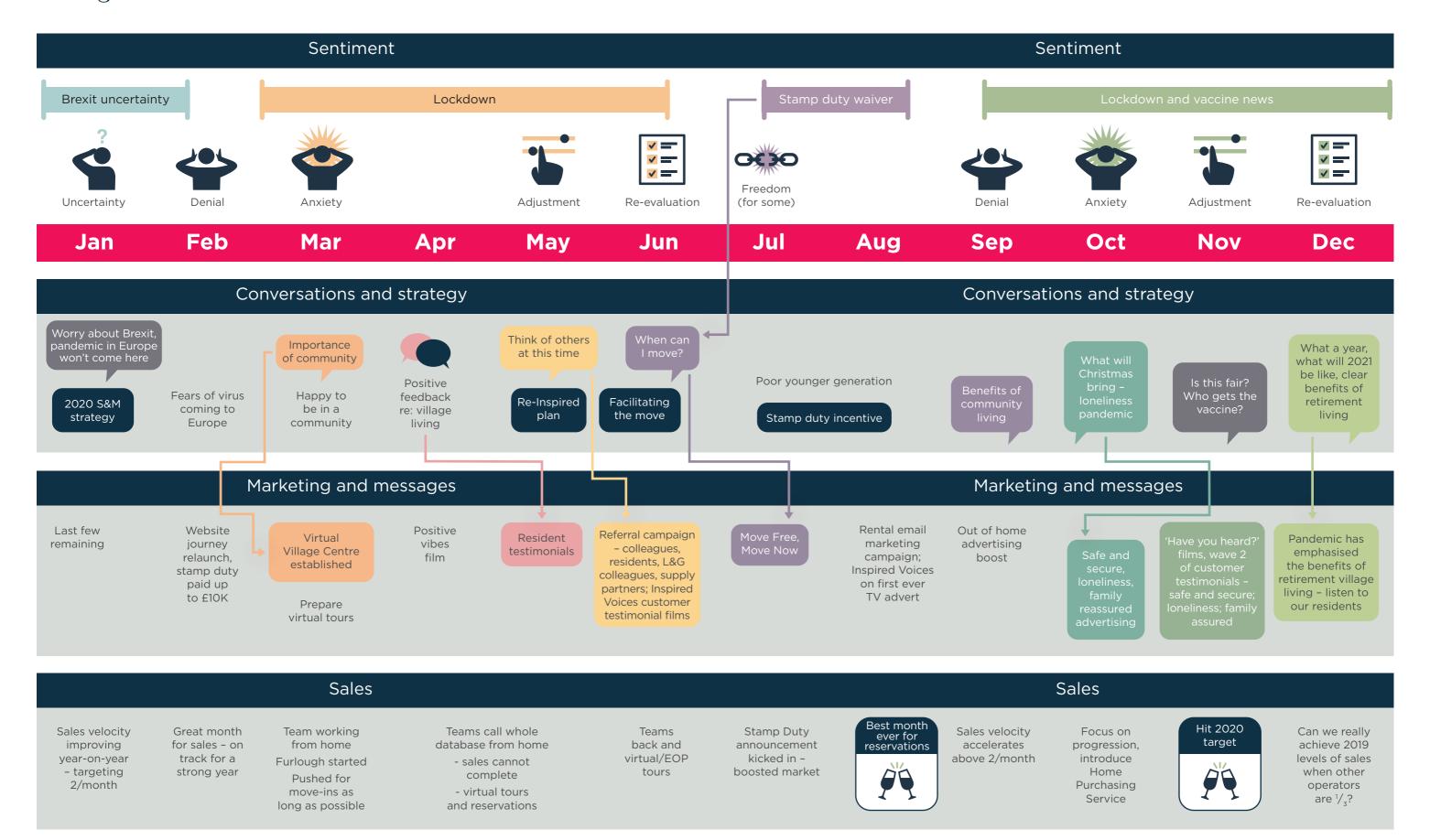






# Staying ahead of sentiment in 2020

Truly empathising with our customers' feelings has resulted in sales



# Resident stories: Moving to Inspired during lockdown

As well as keeping existing residents safe, it was also important for Inspired Villages to make sure anyone who wanted to move into one of our supportive communities was able to do so safely.

Sales & Marketing and Operations worked closely together with Health & Safety to put in place a safe move-in process. Safety measures included:

- Asking the new resident to self-isolate 7 days before their move-in date and then self-isolate for a further 14 days upon moving into the village. As with all residents, the village team was on hand to support them through self-isolation with grocery and meal deliveries, 'buddy calls' and delivering goody bags with quizzes to help keep them entertained.
- Ensuring the removals team only went straight to the new property and did not enter other parts of the village. Where a resident was moving into an apartment in the village centre, the village team took over the moving process and ensured all communal areas were cleaned.

It's a testament to the safe communities Inspired creates that residents were still looking to move into our homes during the pandemic. Here, a resident shares their story of moving in during lockdown and why they made the decision to move:

After living in London for 47 years, resident Deirdre Iles, 70, made the move to Durrants in West Sussex. Deirdre is enjoying living closer to her daughter and being part of the supportive and sociable community at Durrants.

"I used to live in Wimbledon with my husband, Cliff, while my three children all lived locally. But one by one, the children moved away. About three-and-a-half years ago, my daughter Lorna moved to Horsham, West Sussex. My husband had dementia, so we realised it wasn't a good thing for me to be left on my own.

"Lorna found Durrants Village and we fell in love with it. We felt it offered a lot, including companionship and support, and the social life also appealed because that was what I needed. I liked that there were so many clubs, outings and things going on. So, if I were on my own, I'd still be okay and supported by people.

"Sadly, my husband died in 2019 before I moved to Durrants, and there has been a lockdown for a lot of the time since I came here. But I'm enjoying it here and I've never regretted the move. I can phone reception and ask them anything; they're all very good. And if I don't want to cook, I can get a meal.

"I'm missing being able to go out and join up with people, but if I go for a walk, everyone says hello, and there's always a conversation somewhere. I'm really looking forward to when the clubs are up and running again, though.

"It was lovely last summer. The back of my house is open towards a grass meadow area and a lot of people walk along there, so I've spoken to quite a few people who are out on a walk, while socially distancing, of course. I could sit there in the sunshine and talk to people. And all the staff at Durrants are very good. They're interested in you, which is lovely.



"I live in a cottage at Durrants. When I was in London, I lived in a detached three-bedroom house, by Wimbledon Common. The house was beautiful, but it was absolutely for the best that I moved to where I am now. It had to be something really special to make me move – and what I have at Durrants is special, because it offers more. I also feel safer here – I've not felt anxious since I came here, because there are people around. It's a safe environment.

"The important things for me now are family, being able to socialise with people, and making friendships. I'm looking forward to being able to enjoy my time properly at Durrants, for example going on trips. I'm hoping to join clubs at Durrants and make friends. I want to be able to meet up with people for coffee. I'm looking forward to using the restaurant and being able to take my family there, too. I'm also looking forward to coffee mornings at the clubhouse and quizzes, and things like that.

"At the moment, you only pass people, but my next-door neighbour here has been very good. He phones me up every now and again to check I'm okay.

"In London, I only had one neighbour, who was a bit of a way away, so I didn't have neighbours as such. But here at Durrants, I know all the people in my cul-de-sac, and they're all so friendly. I feel more supported here, and I feel safer than at my previous home."

# Resident stories: Moving to Inspired during lockdown

Sheila Salter, 81, made the move to Durrants in West Sussex, in June 2020. Sheila chose to move because she wanted to make the most of her later life – and she reveals she's "never felt better".

"There were many reasons why I decided to move; my husband, Terry, died in 2015 and all my family lived overseas. I was living in a five-bedroom house, which my husband and I had retired to, and I loved it. I didn't have a huge amount of memories there but I loved the garden. However, as the years went on, the maintenance was becoming a bit of a worry. I got to a stage in my life where I decided to give up the garden and concentrate on having a really enjoyable last few years. I also liked the idea of living in a community area, and I'd often talked about moving somewhere smaller.

"Durrants Village is only about 10 or 15 miles from where I lived before. When I came to see Durrants, I loved the look of it, including the grounds. Another attraction is that I know the area. There was no doubt in my mind that this was what I wanted.

"I'd been living on my own since Terry died, and although I wasn't feeling isolated, I was feeling extremely grateful for the life I'd led up to that point. There was no way I was going to waste whatever time I had left. I missed Terry dreadfully but it didn't make me feel lonely.

"The welcome I received when I moved in was amazing, including the telephone calls on the internal system (I had a 14-day quarantine when I moved in). People welcomed me and said we'd get together when we were allowed. And there were a few informal, socially distanced get-togethers outside. People go out of their way to make anyone welcome. I've been extremely happy here; I love it and I felt at home the moment I settled in.

"During the pandemic, I've taken part in a line-dancing class outside, which was a way for me to meet people - I loved it, it was extremely funny. I've not had a chance to use the gym at Durrants, so I'm looking forward to going there and doing classes. There are so many possibilities here. We're lucky because there are about 30 acres of parkland at Durrants. There's a trail around the lake and there's also a bluebell wood.

"I thought I would really miss the garden I had at my last house but, oh my goodness, the maintenance. My first thought when I moved to Durrants was that I wouldn't have to do all that leaf clearing I had to do where I used to live.

"The grounds at Durrants are so beautiful. We're in the country but close enough to Horsham and Dorking to not feel isolated.

"I find it really exciting to be here. I'm so happy to get to the age of 81 and still feel life is exciting. There's so much to see and enjoy. We're reasonably close to London and there's a train that runs past the village, so access is easy if you're not going to drive there.

"I've never felt better. For me, moving to Durrants is fantastic. I'm really really happy to be here."



# People & Culture overview: Lawrence Cramer

When Inspired Villages was established, we were determined to focus on colleague wellbeing and become an employer of choice.

The unprecedented events of 2020 tested whether we were living our values, and I am pleased to report employee engagement levels continue to be high. This is evidenced by our Best Companies to Work For results (see more on page 50).

Safety has been our top priority through this pandemic. To help reduce chances of COVID-19 transmission, we enrolled some colleagues on the government's Job Retention Scheme during the first lockdown, bringing them all back after it ended. By second lockdown, we were confident we had gathered enough experience to safely enable the full village teams to keep working on-site. Within our central support teams, we quickly mobilised everyone's ability to work from home by providing the right equipment, and kept our offices safely open to those who needed the space for business.

Maintaining the physical and mental wellbeing of colleagues was important. Colleagues are able to access information on nutrition, exercise, mindfulness and financial wellbeing through our internal communications platform – Inspired World. This is complemented by the support of our 42 wellbeing champions across the business, meaning there is always someone colleagues can turn to if they need to talk.

We introduced initiatives such as no Teams calls between 12.30 and 2pm for colleagues to take a break from screen time to exercise, do home-schooling, or catch up on work undisturbed. We also introduced the Time for Tea scheme – whereby we regularly pair up two colleagues from different teams and encourage them to schedule in a half an hour chat on non-work matters.

Maintaining and communicating the 'Inspired family' philosophy, values, culture, and our purpose, and culture has been so important during these times. Our executive team would

normally be regularly visiting the villages and different offices to enhance our values. However, with lockdown we had to find a way to replace those channels of communication, which is how Inspired Live was born. Every Friday, Jamie Bunce and Tom Lord chat with colleagues across the company via Teams, along with a guest speaker or two from other parts of the business.

Finally, as well as providing support, the People & Culture team worked hard to celebrate our colleagues' extraordinary achievements. Alongside surprises such as a Christmas hamper, we hosted the inaugural VIVA Awards (see more on page 51), put together the second edition of our Little Book of Inspiration, which captures incredible colleague stories, and gave everyone three days off over the Christmas break to recharge. 2020-21 was unquestionably a challenging year, but it has helped prove that our value of 'stronger together' is at the heart of everything we do.

As we look to the future, we will continue to innovate, use data insights to inform decisions, create a high-performance culture, enhance our leadership capability, and attract, develop, and retain the best people.

Lawrence Cramer, Inspired Villages People & Culture Director

# **The Executive Committee**

At Inspired Villages, people are at the heart of everything we do – both residents and employees. We don't have a hierarchical structure; our residents are the core focus of the business, wrapped around with layers of support from different teams, with our Executive Committee — the outer shell — holding everything together.



Jamie Bunce
Chief Executive Officer

Jamie has over 30 years' worth of expertise in property — spanning both construction and development. His vision for later living was central to the formation of Inspired Villages. He co-created the English Care Village Partnership in 2010 and guided it through a joint venture with Places for People before establishing Inspired Villages from the joint venture sale to Legal & General in 2017.



Tom Lord
Chief Operating Officer

Tom has over 20 years' experience in the hospitality industry. A considerable amount of that time was spent with InterContinental Hotels Group where he managed a large number of properties, including the InterContinental Hotel in Dubai, which concluded his time as Head of Global Operations. Tom joined Inspired Villages in September 2018, where he focuses on continuous improvement of our villages.



James Cobb
Group Sales & Marketing Director

James oversees the sales and marketing function for Inspired Villages and was part of the founding team. He has spent nearly 20 years specialising in the retirement villages sector both in the UK and overseas, and has a reputation within the industry for being innovative at developing, marketing and selling retirement villages. James is excellent at understanding our customers.



Phil Bayliss
Executive Chairman

Phil joined Legal & General Capital in 2013 and is currently responsible for leading its investment into the retirement housing sector, following the acquisition and establishment of Inspired Villages Group and, more recently, Renaissance Villages. He was previously head of transactions, with notable deals including CALA Homes, MediaCity and LGC's first two build to rent schemes. Phil has 14 years' experience in the property sector, joining LGIM in 2007 from AMP Capital.



Neal Dale
Development Director

Neal has over 30 years' experience of property development and is respected within the industry for his expertise in site identification, acquisitions and onward project development. Neal helped create the English Care Village Partnership and Inspired Villages, and his extensive experience is key to the company's growth plans. He oversees the teams responsible for the delivery of the pipeline of future sites.



Shaun Whelan

**Construction Director** 

Shaun brings over 30 years of extensive commercial and construction experience to Inspired Villages. During that time, he has worked on a wide variety of residential, leisure and retail developments and held senior positions within contractor, developer and client organisations. Shaun oversees commercial, procurement, technical, and delivery of construction activities.



Lawrence Cramer

People & Culture Director

Lawrence is an innovative and results-focused HR professional with over 20 years' experience. A Fellow of the Institute of Leadership & Management and Chartered Management, Lawrence believes great service is delivered through engaged teams who embrace the company's purpose and values. Attracting, developing and retaining talented individuals is essential to an organisation's success and is a key part of Lawrence's role.

# **The Delivery Committee**

There are many facets to the company, and making sure we are as efficient as possible involves all our departments working closely with each other. To speed up the process, we introduced the Delivery Committee, which has senior managers from all parts of the business on it. The Delivery Committee meets regularly to discuss all aspects of the day-to-day of Inspired Villages and ensures a multi-disciplinary approach to all processes.

# Neil Burgin

## Senior Programme Manager

Neil is part of the construction department's Programme Management Office (PMO). The PMO co-ordinates all stages of new village projects within property development from start to finish, putting them together in an overall programme that regularly informs and guides the business.

# **Emma Connelly**

# **Resourcing Manager**

Emma is responsible for delivering a top-class candidate to employee experience at Inspired Villages. This means Emma is involved in all aspects of developing Inspired's reputation as an employer including creating an extraordinary workspace for central support teams.

# Tim Wilson

### Strategic Projects Director

Tim joined Inspired Villages from McCarthy & Stone. Here, he is responsible for a number of strategic projects. For example, he helped launch our new Home Purchasing Service, developed the new business intelligence system and developed a new long lease for Ledian Gardens.

# Jackie Usher

## **Operations Director**

Jackie supports the operations teams in each of our villages in developing, building and delivering brilliant services and facilities, along with exceptional customer service for residents. Jackie brings many years of experience in the hospitality industry to her role.

# Jez Conen

#### Senior Development Manager

Jez looks after development for Inspired's six operational villages. This means he tracks the progress of the sites against the company's business plans. He is also setting up the company's estates department to ensure our communities are maintained to an excellent standard.

# **Fab Marcarian**

#### Director of Sales

Fab has many years' experience in empowering sales teams, achieving high levels of satisfaction among customers and hitting commercial targets. Her full understanding of the frontline staff experience and love of mentoring team members is instrumental to hitting sales targets.

# **Stuart Garnett**

## **Planning Director**

As Planning Director, Stuart works closely with the land team within Development to review all sites for their potential as a retirement village and then prepare and submit applications for new villages.

# **Tatiana Smith**

## **Group Financial Controller**

Tatiana oversees all financial processes for Inspired Villages, including income and expenditure across the business. She is also responsible for statutory reporting, financial controls and compliance.

# **Richard Higgins**

## Director for Operational Risk, Health & Safety

Richard makes sure we are doing everything we can as a business to keep colleagues safe while doing their job and to keep residents safe and secure within the villages. Richard has been core to the company's response to COVID-19.

# Doug Warren

# **Operations Director**

Doug's focus is managing various projects to ensure operational processes are in place at our new villages so when they open, residents receive a first-class experience straight away.



# **The Future Leaders Programme**

Inspired Villages is committed to creating the best possible work environment for colleagues, which encompasses making sure there is a clear path for progression within the company. To assist with that, we developed the Future Leaders Programme (FLP), which sees us mentor and support a cohort of our most up and coming colleagues. The programme involves mentorship for each FLP member from an Executive Committee director in a different department. Regular day courses on leadership are also provided for them through the University of Leicester. Meet the Future Leaders Programme cohort...

# Lizzie Antill

## Programme Manager

Lizzie is responsible for reporting on all development projects, maintaining and communicating the governance process for them, managing risk and capturing lessons learned. She also supports project and development managers by helping streamline work processes.

# Jess Bennett

#### Village Manager - Gifford Lea

Jess joined Inspired Villages from the hospitality sector where she worked in a varied selection of hotels. At Gifford Lea she has overseen its transition from a small village and team to a larger one with new village centre facilities and an expanded team.

# Dean Bower

#### **Development Manager**

Dean is responsible for the development process of new Inspired villages. By working closely with land owners, local authorities, consultants and construction contractors, Dean makes sure we deliver world-class new retirement villages. One of his projects includes the UK's first net zero carbon regulated energy retirement village, Millfield Green.

# **Nick Cox**

### PropCo Management Accountant

Nick is responsible for the production of the PropCo management and statutory reporting across all parts of the business. A key focus for Nick is the integration of our financial system into the wider business.

# **Phil Docherty**

#### **Development Manager**

Like Dean, Phil is responsible for co-ordinating multiple stakeholders to deliver a new Inspired village right from the planning stage to the point at which the village opens and the operations team take over.

# Steph Janes

### People & Culture Manager

Steph is passionate about wellbeing and a key focus for her within the business is looking after the development of our company culture and making sure we live our values every day.

# **Darcey Nolan**

## **Marketing Manager**

Darcey delivers useful marketing insights and campaigns that boost the business' return on investments. On top of that, Darcey looks after print advertising and targeting customers.

# Liam Stack

# Village Manager – Durrants Village

Liam looks after the delivery of a world-class service to residents at Durrants Village, which involves driving and leading engagement within the village team, as well as a large sprinkling of property management at ground level.

# Gary McNamara

# Strategic Partnerships Director

Gary leads on initiating and managing strategic partnerships to help grow Inspired Villages' pipeline of new sites. A key focus area for Gary is developing a mass market offering to customers.

# Phil Parker

#### **Commissioning Manager**

Phil works across all departments developing and enhancing all future projects, with the aim of producing the perfect retirement village.

# Dandi Li

# Investment Manager of Later Living – Legal & General Capital

Dandi focuses on capital strategy analysis for Legal & General's later living businesses. She brings many years of experience working for hotel investors and operators around the globe and holds an MBA from the University of Cambridge, MS in Real Estate from MIT, and BSs in International Hospitality Management from Ecole hôtelière de Lausanne.

"Being a part of the initial Future Leaders Programme has been both an honour and a fantastic opportunity! It has enabled us to have very open and - at times - challenging inter-team conversations, and it has challenged our thinking and approach to the "accepted norm". By challenging each other we are able to reflect on what we do and push ourselves to be better, stronger, kinder and, ultimately, more effective."

Steph Janes, FLP member



# **Best Companies**

Thanks to the leadership of our directors and managers, the hard work and dedication of all colleagues, and the clear internal messaging around our values of teamwork and innovation, Inspired Villages has created a fantastic work culture. This has been confirmed externally with Inspired named the 66th best large company to work for in the UK in 2021, by Best Companies in their prestigious annual ranking system.

Not only did Inspired Villages achieve this accolade, it was also ranked in 6 further categories:



### Number 2

Top 75 large companies to work for in London.



## Number 5

Top 10 health and social care companies to work for.



#### Number 34

Top 50 companies to work for in the South West.



#### Number 36

Top 100 companies to work for in the Midlands.



#### Number 49

Top 100 companies to work for in the South East.



#### Number 84

Top 100 companies to work for in the North West.

This is the first year we have officially entered into the Best Companies listings as in previous years we were too young! From entering unofficially in previous years though, Inspired has been able to use the data gathered to keep working on delivering a welcoming and innovative workplace.

### Inspired Villages CEO Jamie Bunce said:

"When we formed Inspired Villages in 2017, we were determined to get the company culture right straightaway to ensure we would make a real difference to people's lives. These results, from the first time we have officially entered the Best Companies listings process, show we are heading in the right direction, which makes me hugely proud of the team here at Inspired Villages."



Rated a 2\* Outstanding employer by Best Companies

# The VIVA Awards

Inspired Villages has a number of ways to champion outstanding work by colleagues – ecards on the Inspired World platform, mentions in the Inspired Live sessions every Friday, and for the first time, in 2020, an annual awards ceremony.

The inaugural Very Inspired Villages Awards, or the VIVAs for short, occurred on 6 November 2020. In line with the circumstances caused by COVID-19, the ceremony took place online, with COO Tom Lord acting as the compère and speeches given by different members of ExCo. Village teams gathered together with balloons, fancy dress, and food and drink to watch the ceremony from their respective villages, while those who worked from home were sent an Inspired World voucher to spend on drinks for the ceremony.

The winners and runners-up for each village and for central support were nominated entirely by employees in the run up to the event. Hampers were given out to the runners-up and the winners also received a trophy in addition to a hamper.

While in ideal circumstances the inaugural VIVAs would have been a live event, great fun was nevertheless had by all, with the ceremony helping reinforce that, as a company, we're 'stronger together'.



And the winners are...

### **Austin Heath**

Winner: Nathan Cawston

**Runners-up:** Claire Timms, Beverley Flowers, Adam Harris and Tracy-Ann Margrave.

#### **Bramshott Place**

Winner: Nigel Shortland

Runners-up: David Durrants, Rachel Roberts,

Sharon Zanin and Clare Worman.

### **Durrants Village**

Winner: Spencer Lawton

**Runners-up:** Clive Meech, Craig Etheridge, Lorraine Graves, Mike Kelly and John Porter.

#### Gifford Lea

Winner: Aida Quince

**Runners-up:** Darren Fletcher, Rodney Jones, Genesis Valenzuela and Lesley Jones.

#### **Great Alne Park**

Winner: Adam Jones

Runners-up: Kelly Webb, Andrew Beattie,

Angela Stanley and William Apps.

### Millbrook Village

Winner: Lucy White

**Runners-up:** Paul Hayman, Jess King, Leah Jackson and Allan Highman.

## **Central Support Colleagues**

Winner: Damien Fox

Runners-up: Nelson Vasconcelos, Emma Connelly, Richard Higgins, Elizabeth Antill, Will Gardiner, Jo Warsop, Irene Gifford and Tatiana Smith.

# **Inspired Friendships**

At the heart of Inspired Villages' ethos is creating communities that help older people live their best lives and not just within our villages. Research by Age UK has found that 1.9 million older people feel isolated or ignored, and Inspired Villages is keen to be part of the solution to that loneliness. It was therefore a natural next step, when the opportunity arose in 2020, to set up Inspired Friendships; a service that helps stop older people from feeling isolated.

Inspired Friendships facilitates events for older people, such as coffee mornings, lunchtime meet-ups, bus trips, and walks in the park. Where COVID-19 and safety precautions prevented these community events from taking place, the members were still supported with telephone befriending and a pen pal service.

The Inspired Friendships team is made up of Wendy Pfeiffer and Diane Bromley who joined from Age UK Maidstone, where they ran a similar befriending service that Inspired Villages has supported in the past.

Currently the service is just focused on Kent, and will complement the offering of our seventh village; Ledian Gardens, once that site is complete. The plan, however, is to roll the friendship service out further to all areas surrounding Inspired's villages.

"Creating communities that help older people live healthier independent lives for longer, is what Inspired Villages is all about. Helping alleviate loneliness and isolation, which can have serious mental and physical health implications, is key to that and why we feel so passionate about setting up Inspired Friendships.

"We were delighted to bring Wendy and Diane on board to launch Inspired Friendships. We feel very strongly that it is our duty to spread the sense of community fostered in our retirement villages further afield."

Tom Lord, COO, Inspired Villages

"The challenges faced by older people who are living with the feeling of loneliness and isolation on a daily basis were challenging enough before COVID-19. Over the past few months, I am sure we have all experienced some feeling of loneliness. I like to think that we are all now able to resonate in some way with how our older community members feel.

"Diane and I are absolutely delighted and very grateful to be working for Inspired Villages. From our first meeting, it was evident that we had a shared passion for tackling loneliness and isolation among older people and I'm very excited to see what we can achieve with Inspired Friendships."

Wendy Pfeiffer, Inspired Friendships Manager







"Wendy and Diane have been a lifeline to me during lockdown. They have sometimes come to see me, often bring a little gift, stood at a distance to chat. Other times they sent a communication through the post. One of these was a verse accompanied by a wooden hug. This was a great comfort to me during the short time I spent in hospital.

"All in all, it has been a great help during lockdown to have the friendship of Wendy and Diane, knowing that if I just wanted to speak to somebody, I could ring them."

### Beryl Sutton, 92, Maidstone

"Although Inspired Friendships has only been going for a short time, it has been a godsend to me as I live alone. This was made worse by the COVID-19 pandemic which meant that I was not able to meet with other people in the same position due to the lockdown. Both Wendy and Diane were in contact with me every week, making sure that I was OK. Not only that, I would have been able to ring them at any time if I had any problems. In short, Inspired Friendships was a lifesaver."

Eric Roberts, 82, Maidstone

# **Environmental and social impact**

Inspired Villages takes its environmental and social impact seriously. We see committing to be a sustainable company that makes a positive social impact on the communities we operate in, as closely interwoven with our purpose of transforming the later life experience in this country.

You can read our environmental and social impacts in full in our separate *Inspired Impact* report, but in summary, we are demonstrating our commitment to having a positive environmental and social impact in the following ways:

### **Environment**

- Building new net zero retirement communities.
- Through reduction and offsetting of carbon we will negate our carbon footprint, since inception, by the end of 2022.
- We will prioritise the introduction of clean energy sources and clean technology in the development of our villages.
- We will have zero waste going to landfill by 2030, across all areas of the business.

#### Social impact

- We create communities for over-65s focused on holistic wellbeing, helping our residents live healthier independent lives for longer, which aligns with one of the government's 'grand challenges' to help people live five extra years of healthy independent life.
- Developing later living communities also supports the wider community by freeing up housing stock, and reducing the burden on the social care sector and the NHS (see pages 6-7 'The case for retirement villages' for further evidence).
- We create local jobs in each area our villages operate within.
- The wellness and leisure facilities are open to the local area as well on a membership basis, allowing us to help more people improve their wellbeing.

- We operate Inspired Friendships, which runs befriending services for older people who feel isolated in the Kent area, and are looking to expand to all areas our villages operate within.
- All employees are given three 'giving back days' on top of their annual leave allowance, which they can use to volunteer with a charity.





**Lonely** Community

Restricted Freedom

**Downsize** Rightsize

**Ageing** Wellbeing

**Worry** Security

**Facetime** Family time

Old memories New memories

Old life New life

One day Today

Retired Inspired

When you're ready to *rethink retirement* and embrace the best years of your life... our retirement villages are ready for you.



Ready for your best years?

0808 301 9896 | inspiredvillages.co.uk



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