

Extra Care Housing in the Wychwoods

A Planning Application for 44 flats for Extra Care Housing, off Green Lane in Milton under Wychwood, was lodged with WODC by Cottsway on the 7th July.

What is Extra Care Housing?

ECH provides purpose-built ‘lifetime’ homes for rent, sale or shared ownership through the local housing association, Cottsway. There is an on-site team of carers who provide personal care on a 24 hour basis that gives an alternative to residential care and more services than sheltered housing. There is the facility to provide a daily hot meal, usually from an on-site kitchen, served in a communal dining room. The housing development includes enhanced bathing and toilet facilities and a laundry and there are various communal rooms/areas offering a range of therapeutic, health, leisure and activity functions. Overall the ethos is to promote independence, and to avoid a culture of dependency. Wherever possible, people are assisted in performing tasks themselves, rather than having them done for them.

The Plans

Cottsway and OCC gave a public showing of the plans in Milton Village Hall on 4th and 5th of June, and Milton Parish Council then had quite a spirited public input on the 16th June. A further public meeting took place on the 7th July, with OCC, Cottsway and WODC Planners present. Some complaints have been received that the development is too big. However, the County Council, in partnership with the District Council, undertook extensive research and consultation two years ago to examine the local need for this type of service. The final report produced by the

independent consultant recommended that a scheme of 40 or more flats was required to meet current and future needs. It is also true that it will not be economic to provide the facilities listed above unless it is of the sort of size being projected. On a ‘glass half empty’ scenario, you could complain that building was taking place in the Wychwoods to house some people from afar: but on a ‘glass half full’ outlook, you would be better to consider that those with a need in the Wychwood villages were able to remain in close contact with family and friends. Some complaints were made about the proposed architecture. This was put forward by Cottsway, following close consultation with WODC Planners, and is for WODC to make a decision. The full planning application is at their website reference 10/0950/P/FP, please look at this and comment.

The Need

Our Care Professionals take into account many factors in deciding need. The over 80s population in West Oxfordshire has grown from 2,800 in 1988 to 5,400 by 2008 and is projected to be 11,100 by 2028. This will have a significant impact on all of us.

In this year’s Annual Report, Jonathan McWilliam, OCC Director of Public Health states, “the growth in the number of older people in Oxfordshire is now universally accepted as one of the major challenges to the wellbeing of this county.” We need to look after increasing numbers of our senior citizens in a positive and affordable way, ECH is one weapon in that armoury.

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