

Rural extra care scheme gets planning approval

Housing 21 has been granted planning permission for an extra care housing scheme in Aldington, Kent. The scheme is designed to enable older people living in the Ashford Borough area to remain in a village environment when their existing accommodation may no longer be suitable.

The new development will provide 33 apartments available to residents from Aldington, Bonnington and the surrounding villages in line with Ashford Borough Council and Kent County Council's strategies for rural provision for older people.

David O'Neill, head of strategy delivery for Housing 21 said: "We are delighted that this scheme has received planning permission and are very pleased to be working with Ashford Borough Council, Aldington and Bonnington Parish Council and Kent County Council on the delivery of this valuable new housing for local older people."

The apartments will comprise 33 units with 16 two bedroom apartments for shared ownership and 17 one and two bedroom apartments for affordable rent. The scheme will be built on a Rural Exception Site owed by Ashford Borough Council.

Cllr Aline Hicks, the portfolio holder for housing at Ashford Borough Council, said: "The notification that planning permission has been granted for an extra care scheme in Aldington is welcome news indeed, being our first extra care scheme in a rural part of the borough. With an aging population schemes of this nature are going to be increasingly important for the borough as we try to afford older people the opportunity to live independently in their own homes.

"In fact it is anticipated that by 2016 20% of the population of Ashford will be aged over 65. Not only do the extra care standards that this scheme will be built to mean that residents retain their independence but all aspects of their wellbeing will be taken into account. This will give them an excellent quality of life and will help the scheme blend in with the local community, with facilities that can be enjoyed by everyone."

Anne Tidmarsh, Kent County Council's director of older people/physical disability, added: "The way we care for older people is changing - people tell us they want more flexibility and more independence, which helps to improve their well-being. This housing scheme will allow people to stay close to the rural communities they know and offer them tailor-made care."

Extra Care housing enables older people to live independently in their own apartments but with help on hand, tailored to individual need. The new scheme will also provide communal facilities including a hairdressing salon and restaurant which will be open to the wider local community.

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For further media information, please contact Wendy Gomicki, PR & Information Officer, Housing 21 on 0370 192 4338 or email wendy.gomicki@housing21.co.uk

Housing 21's mission is to promote independence and choice for older people through quality care, health and housing services. It provides around 130,000 hours of care each week and manages around 19,000 sheltered and extra care apartments, providing services to more than 31,000 service users.

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