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New village welcomes first residents

HAMPSHIRE'S newest retirement village is celebrating the arrival of its first residents – having been forced to wait for a move in date due to the coronavirus pandemic lockdown restrictions.

Friary Meadow, in Titchfield, initially opened for viewings in mid-March, but with the advent of the coronavirus crisis, had to delay the arrival of its new residents until it was safe to do so.

Now, with lockdown measures slowly easing, and the housing market officially open again, the necessary arrangements have been completed, meaning the first residents have finally been able to move in.

With the first permanent residents now in situ, the village has taken its first steps towards becoming a thriving retirement community.

Dr Stephen Ladyman, founder of Oak Retirement – the firm behind Friary Meadow – and a former Minister of Health responsible for Social Care, said: "We're delighted to finally be able to welcome residents to Friary Meadow.

"Having been years in the making, including both planning and building, it's tremendously rewarding to see the first members of the new community arrive.

"Our ethos at Friary Meadow is centred on offering those of retirement age the opportunity to be part of a collective of like-minded people who, at a similar stage of life, share similar values and interests.

"Thanks to on hand care support, residents can maintain their independence for longer while still being part of and involved with the

wider community.

"We're very much looking forward to seeing this develop as the number of residents grows over time."

The development is centred on the Extra Care Living model, which aims to offer support to older people, while allowing them to retain their independence.

With the coronavirus crisis an ongoing concern, measures around resident safety on site are strict – something that has seen video tours only being offered over the past few weeks.

Stephen added: "We're extra cautious in our approach to our residents' safety.

"A sizeable proportion of prospective residents sit within the vulnerable category, so we've taken precautionary safeguarding measures

in line with Government guidance."

"This crisis is likely to be ongoing until either a vaccine is found or efficient track and trace starts to minimise any spikes in infection.

"With the very real prospect of a second wave happening over the next few months though, those who choose to live at Friary Meadow will be doing so with an added layer of protection, being able to stay in their homes, while their needs are catered to by our on-site staff."

The £35m development is comprised of 86 luxury homes, consisting of a mix of apartments, bungalows and townhouses.

The undertaking is a joint project, operated between independent retirement living specialist Oak Retirement and real estate fund manager Frogmore.