

**From:** Wendy Hardy  
**Sent:** 04 February 2020 17:32  
**To:** Sharon Groth <[sharon.groth@witney-tc.gov.uk](mailto:sharon.groth@witney-tc.gov.uk)>  
**Subject:** St Marys Court, Witney

Dear Mrs Groth

Please would you forward the following communication to the Witney Town Councillors?

### **Closure of St Marys Court, Witney older persons' housing scheme**

I am contacting you to let you know that Cottsway Housing will be closing the former older persons' housing scheme in St Marys Court, Witney.

We have held face-to-face meetings with residents to inform them about the closure yesterday, and we have reassured residents that we will be supporting them to find alternative homes and throughout the moving process.

We wanted to ensure that residents were the first to hear about this directly from Cottsway, however we also wanted to keep you informed. I have already contacted the Head of Housing at West Oxfordshire District and I will also be contacting the relevant ward councillors.

There are 23 one bedroom flats, 1 two bedroom flat and 3 two bedroom bungalows at St Marys Court.

### **Why are we closing the schemes?**

You will recall that we have already closed other older persons' housing schemes in West Oxfordshire following a review. As you will be aware, some of these sites have already been redeveloped to provide extra homes that meet modern housing requirements.

We have worked closely with the housing team at the council, and with other partner agencies, during previous closures to ensure that residents find alternative homes that meet their needs and will do the same as we prepare to move residents on from St Marys Court.

We want our homes to meet the high standards our customers expect and deserve. This housing scheme was built in the mid-1960s and is now deemed to fall below this standard.

We have carefully considered a number of options and we believe the best long-term solution is to redevelop the site, maximising the land available so that we can provide more homes for people in housing need, built to high standards. This work will start in 2022.

### **What are we doing to support residents?**

Myself and our Community Welfare Officers met with residents at the scheme and have visited the homes of those that couldn't attend the meeting.

We will work with each and every resident to find alternative homes that meet their needs and to support them with the move.

Residents were invited to bring a family member or friend to the general meeting for support, and we are now in the process of arranging more detailed one-to-one discussions with each household.

We are giving residents an information sheet explaining what is happening, why and how we will support them, to take away and read. A copy is enclosed for your reference.

Our Housing Team and dedicated Community Welfare Officers are experienced in working with customers to find and move to alternative homes and will provide a tailored support service for individuals where needed, working with partner agencies including the District Council.

Residents have been informed of the financial support that they will receive, including a statutory Home Loss payment of £6,400 per household. We will also provide a disturbance allowance to help with practical costs such as removals, redecorating, fitting carpets, blinds and curtain rails etc.

I hope you find this information useful and I would like to reassure you, once again, that we are working closely with all residents affected by this and will do our utmost to ensure that the moving process can be as smooth as possible for them.

If you have any questions, please do get in touch.

Kind Regards

Wendy

Housing Manager