

# the meriden

Regeneration update and neighbourhood news



Meet happy resident,  
Lyn, who tells us all  
about living in her  
new home

# Welcome to The Meriden

**It's hard to believe that it is over a year now since we entered the first national lockdown and normal life was put on hold due to Covid-19.**

It has been a really tough time for everyone but thankfully with the successful roll-out of the vaccine we are starting to see community life returning to a degree of normality despite some restrictions remaining.

During the first lockdown we quickly established new site safety measures which enabled us to continue with construction activities, so we are much further along the build programme than we had first anticipated due to the delays caused by the pandemic. We thank you for your patience and understanding throughout this challenging time. The staff at Watford Community Housing, our contractor Mulalley, local councillors, the residents' association, local stakeholders and you, as residents, have all played an integral role in keeping our services going and helping us to deliver the new homes and improvements to the Meriden. We have adopted more agile ways of working over the past 15 months and we'll continue to embrace the methods that have proven the most successful.

As always, our plan is to deliver much-needed, high-quality affordable homes and improvements to the wider area. Turn to page 4 to find the latest updates on the construction progress.

On page 6 discover all the exciting environmental initiatives we are implementing to lower our carbon footprint and create cost savings for residents. We also meet long-standing resident, Lyn Gurney, who has recently moved into her new bungalow and is already enjoying reduced fuel bills.

We wish you a happy and healthy summer and hope you enjoy spending long-overdue time with friends, family and neighbours.



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# Keeping you informed

Since our last issue of The Meriden we have created a regular news bulletin to provide updates on the regeneration.

Over lockdown this was distributed digitally, but now that restrictions are easing, we will be able to return to posting these through letterboxes. We will also resume our quarterly issues of the newsletter. Now that lockdown is over, we can once again distribute to residents' homes safely.



## You've got mail

**There are some changes happening over the coming weeks which will temporarily affect access to postal services.**

We have launched an exciting new free shuttle bus service with local bus company ArrivaClick. This is a temporary service fully-funded by Watford Community Housing to help residents access the Bushey Mill Lane post office while the post office on the new retail parade is being completed. Hopefully, all residents received the leaflet about this service which included all the information you need to be able to make a booking. If you did not receive a leaflet and would like one, please call Watford Community Housing on 0800 218 2247.

Unfortunately, it has come to our attention that the post box on The Gossamers falls within the boundary of a new building to be constructed and needs to be removed. The post box will be removed this month. We hope this does not cause too much inconvenience. Once the new permanent post office opens on the retail parade then a new fixed post box will be located outside.

May 2021

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### Service Update

## Free shuttle bus service for Meriden residents!

**Watford Community Housing is pleased to announce the launch of a temporary shuttle bus service to the Post Office on Bushey Mill Lane.**

In partnership with local on-demand bus service ArrivaClick, this is a short-term free service fully funded by Watford Community Housing, and is expected to operate for eight weeks while the Post Office in the new retail parade is being fitted out.

The service is open to all residents, but in particular our older and more vulnerable residents, who rely on the local Post Office.

Making a booking is quick and easy and there are no fixed travel times. Just call up, book your time slot and the shuttle bus will pick you up from a suitable location close to your home address and return you to the same location when you are ready.

This service will not replace the planned 'pop up' Post Office which is expected to be available in June.

**Hours of operation**  
Monday to Friday:  
9:30am - 5pm (last bookings accepted at 5pm)

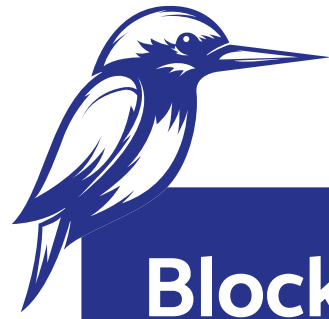
**Make your booking**  
Call the dedicated number:  
0345 501 0000  
(local rates apply)  
Mention code CLICKMERIDEN



# All in a name

We are pleased to reveal the new block names for the development, which are inspired by a water bird theme. The Meriden Residents' Association held a naming competition via Facebook in 2019 and this theme was the runaway winner!

Although the majority of blocks will have a name that follows this theme some blocks will adopt the name of the street where they are located. In accordance with policy and national guidelines, new properties will also follow the existing door number sequence.



## Block names:

**York Way (as existing street name)**  
Block A

**Kingfisher Way**  
Block B

**The Turnstones (as existing street name)**  
Block C1

**The Turnstones (as existing street name)**  
Block C2

**Robin House**  
Block D

**Drake House**  
Block E1

**Plover House**  
Block E2

**Cygnets House**  
Block E3

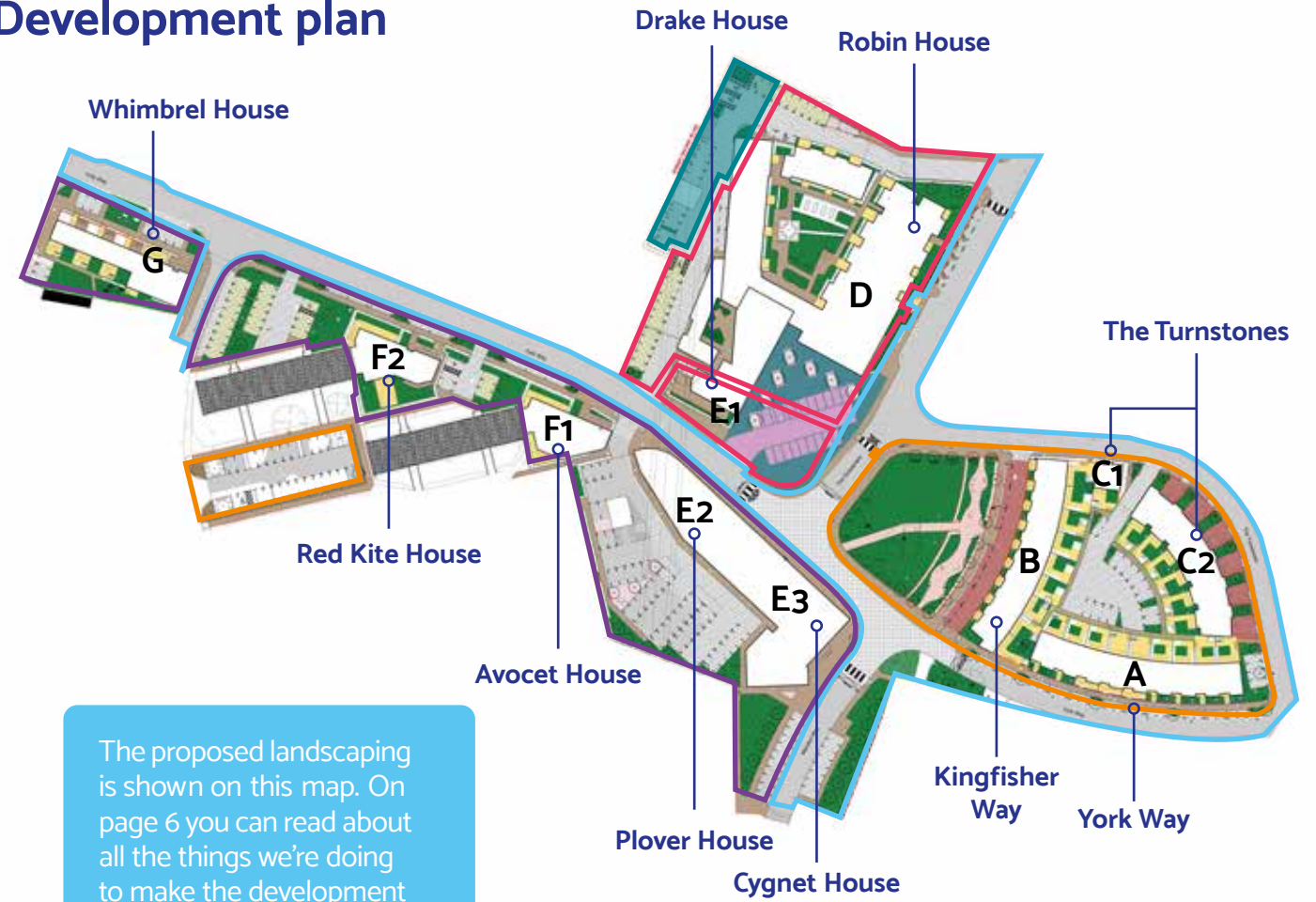
**Avocet House**  
Block F1

**Red Kite House**  
Block F2

**Whimbrel House**  
Block G








## Development plan



The Meriden regeneration masterplan

### Key with project milestones

 <b>Section 2</b>	Block A (full completion) – May 2022 Block B (full completion) – March 2023 Block C1, C2 – March 2023	 <b>Section 4</b>	Block E1/D – March 2023
 <b>Section 3</b>	Block G, F1, F2 – June 2021 Block E2/E3 – September 2021	 <b>Section 5</b>	External works and new services – May 2023
		 <b>Section 6</b>	Existing car park – May 2023



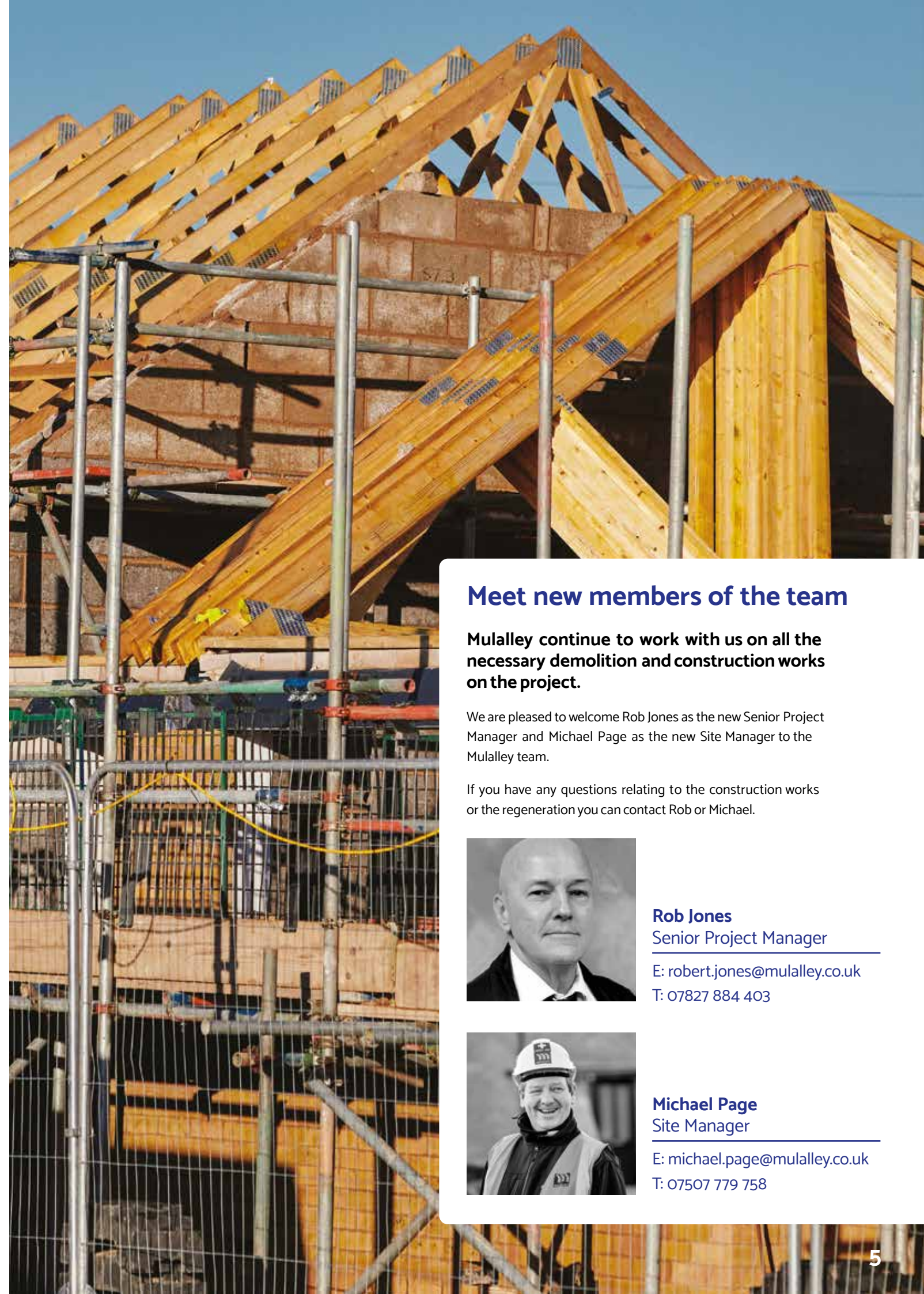
CGIs showing indicative site overview



# Construction on track

Although the three lockdowns did cause some disruption to the construction schedule, we quickly adopted safety processes to allow for our construction team to continue working on site efficiently and safely.

This included state-of-the-art body heat scanners to determine core body temperature, hand sanitising stations throughout the site and staggered work times to maintain social distancing. Despite the setbacks we have continued with construction throughout and have progressed well.



## Summer delivery for apartments

Homes at Avocet House (Block F1), Red Kite House (Block F2) and Whimbrel House (Block G) are almost complete and ready for residents to move in this summer. As the adjacent photographs show, these homes have a modern design with flexible living space to adapt to different lifestyles.



As part of our promise to build much-needed homes for the local area, the completion of these blocks will see the delivery of 24 1- and 2-bedroom homes for affordable rent. These homes will be offered on the council's waiting list and will be advertised in the usual way via the council website.



## Bungalows and houses

The first four houses at Kingfisher Way (Block B) are ready for occupation this summer and the first three of the remaining six bungalows at York Way (Block A) will be ready in November. Read our Spotlight on page 10 to find out more about one of the happy residents who has now settled into their new home in one of the first releases of bungalows.

## Meet new members of the team

**Mulalley continue to work with us on all the necessary demolition and construction works on the project.**

We are pleased to welcome Rob Jones as the new Senior Project Manager and Michael Page as the new Site Manager to the Mulalley team.

If you have any questions relating to the construction works or the regeneration you can contact Rob or Michael.



**Rob Jones**  
Senior Project Manager

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Site Manager

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### Going green

**The green credentials for the development have always been a key focus of the regeneration project and we have adopted initiatives that will benefit residents as well as the wider environment.**

We are creating an attractive neighbourhood space for our residents; rich with flowers, plants and trees, which will encourage wildlife and biodiversity and protect existing wildlife that is already flourishing. We are also actively reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in the way that we are building and fitting out each home, which will create energy cost savings for residents as well as reducing the environmental impact.





## Trees and planting

**At the start of the project we created a detailed plan outlining the existing trees that will remain, as well as the new trees and plants we would introduce in order to make the area greener.**

Across the site as a whole, the landscaping will include both new and existing species of trees, such as hornbeams, acers, and red and weeping birches.

As construction has progressed, it has become clear that a few trees can now not be planted within certain areas of the development as originally planned. In response to this we are creating a dedicated 'Tree Committee' with resident representatives to collectively agree suitable alternative locations within the site. We will provide more updates on this in the next issue.



## Energy-efficient homes

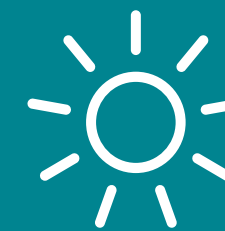
We are building a low-energy development which will exceed environmental building regulations wherever possible and make all homes more efficient and economical to run. This will reduce the Meriden's carbon footprint. These initiatives include:



High levels of insulation and air tightness limiting winter heat loss and reducing heating demand



Low solar transmission window glazing to reduce overheating in the summer months



Carefully designed living spaces to maximise natural light thereby reducing the need for artificial lighting



Low-energy lighting installed throughout



High-efficiency A-rated gas combination boilers providing instantaneous heating and hot water



Energy-efficient white goods and cooking equipment installed in all homes



Some solar panels installed on the roof of each apartment block and individual houses

The total predicted net CO<sub>2</sub> savings are: a 19% reduction for the residential part of the site and a 17% reduction for the site overall. The selection of high energy-efficient white goods and cooking equipment may also reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 5-10% compared to a standard practice new build.



### Spotlight on **Lyn Gurney**

**As a resident on the Meriden for over 7 years, Lyn was keen to experience all the benefits of the regeneration and, in particular, the modern homes being built. She has recently moved into one of the new bungalows in York Way and is delighted with her home. Not only are the new homes bigger and more energy-efficient, they have also been carefully designed to maximise space and natural light.**

“My new place is so much better in every way. Because it is larger and better designed it’s much easier to keep clean. I’ve really noticed the difference with my energy bills too – because the bungalow stays warmer for longer, I spend much less on fuel every month.

“I really enjoyed being involved in the fit-out choices. I was able to choose options that worked for my lifestyle such as the bathroom and kitchen fittings, and choose the paint colours I wanted too.”

Lyn was particularly impressed with how smoothly the move went. Moving home can be a daunting prospect, but Watford Community Housing can offer extra support and assistance to residents, particularly more vulnerable and elderly residents, who might find the experience overwhelming and need extra support.

“The move was easier than I thought it would be. The removal men were great and did everything they could to help me and to make it go as smoothly as possible, which it did! I’ve settled in so quickly, it’s such a big improvement on my old home. I haven’t looked back.”

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Construction is continuing on the remaining six bungalows and the next three will be ready for occupation in November.





# What's in store for the new retail parade?

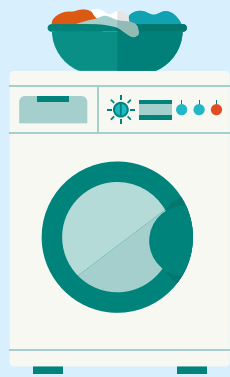
**We are pleased to announce the final line-up of shops in the new retail parade.**

You'll find some familiar favourites such as The Co-op, Meriden Fish Bar and Chiquitas Chicken Shop alongside some new names. We are also excited to have a new Watford-based charity shop on board. We'll reveal the charity's name in the next issue of The Meriden. A hairdressers, post office, café and launderette complete the line-up, and ensure we have a good range of businesses to cater for all the day-to-day needs of our residents.

The Co-op reopened on Friday 6 May as planned, and you'll gradually see the opening of the other retail units in August and September of this year, as and when fit out is completed in each one. The residential apartments above the retail space will likely be ready in September.



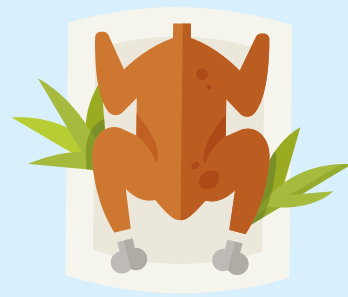
## Look out for:



Unit 1 - Launderette



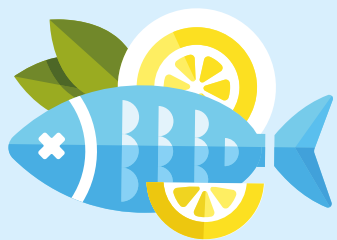
Unit 2 - Hairdressers



Unit 3 - Chicken Shop



Unit 4 - Café



Unit 5 - Fish & Chip Shop



Unit 6 - Charity Shop



Unit 7 - Post Office



Unit 8 - The Co-op

# Meet our new Community Engagement Manager



"My role, along with my co-workers in the Community Engagement team, is to increase engagement and enhance community spirit within the neighbourhood. We want to get to know all the residents and find out how we can help.

"Recently, we launched our Let's Go! campaign which included a Customer Promise to invest £1 million into the community over the next five years. I'm working with Ruche Peng, the Project Manager, and representatives on the Meriden

Regeneration Project, to look at ways we can improve the social and economic elements of this project which will benefit the entire Meriden community. This is such an exciting element of the project and I'm looking forward to finally meeting and speaking with residents about it."

*For now, stay safe and I hope to meet you soon!*

Edel Maher

# A tribute to Lesley Lewis

**We fondly remember Lesley Lewis, our Estates Officer, who was an integral part of the Meriden community.**

Lesley joined the team in October 2017. She had originally been a carpenter and had also worked at Kingsway infant school where she had been the driving force in setting up the Leavesden Green Residents' Association Group. She started in her new role with a wealth of local knowledge and practical experience.

Lesley made the Estates Officer role her own and brought much enthusiasm and community spirit to the job. She quickly got to know residents, was a keen listener and liked to keep an eye out for everyone. She made a positive difference wherever she could, either by offering advice or helping residents obtain the guidance they needed elsewhere.

Lesley had a wonderful sense of humour and could be counted on to see the lighter side of life. She helped with many of the community initiatives such as estate tidy up days, helping with days out for the single parents' group and even took on the role of Santa's elf at festive events for local children.

Even when Lesley became ill she continued to work hard for local residents from home, never once losing interest in how everyone was doing and what needed to be achieved.

Lesley's passion for life is sorely missed by everyone who worked with her and she will be remembered as an amazing woman, mother, friend and work colleague.





# Future events



## Community Coffee Morning

Meriden Community Centre,  
every Wednesday.

9.30am - 12pm



## MRA Coffee Morning

Community Centre on York Way, every Friday.

9.30am - 12pm



## The Random Café

The Random Café meets at the Meriden Community Centre on the second and fourth Saturday of every month between 1pm and 3pm. Delicious lunches and homemade cakes are available, as well as donated cakes and food that you can take away in return for a donation in the pot.



## Meriden Community Centre Gym

9am - 10pm Monday to Friday  
(last entry is 9.30pm)

9am - 4pm Saturdays  
(last entry is 3.30pm)



## Councillor Surgery

Community Centre on York Way, every Friday.

9.30am - 12pm



## Meriden Community Choir

Second and fourth Thursday of every month at the Meriden Community Centre.

8pm - 9pm

## Get in touch

### Rob Jones

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*If you know anyone who would like to receive a copy of this newsletter please contact Ruche Peng:*

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