

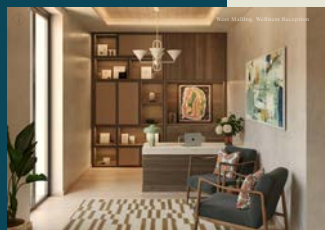
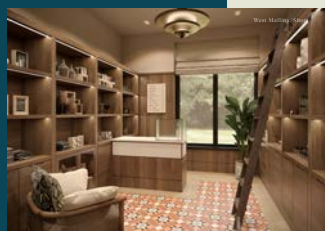
Summer 2025

# West Malling Community Newsletter

Welcome to the first edition of the Thrive Living in West Malling Community Newsletter.

As you may be aware, Retirement Villages Group (RVG) is building an Integrated Retirement Community (IRC) on land to the rear of 237-259 London Road, West Malling. This development, the fourth in RVG's pioneering Thrive Living collection, recently won the Homes England Exemplar Award at the Housing Design Awards, in recognition of its outstanding design and RVG's commitment to community integration.

Designed by award-winning architects RCKa, the West Malling development will feature 140 homes, with a mix of one- and two-bedroom apartments in low rise buildings and terraced cottages, inspired by the nearby Georgian architecture. Residents will enjoy beautifully landscaped surroundings and high-quality amenities such as a wellness centre, gym, bar, and restaurant—many of which will also be open to the public to the benefit of the local community.



**Thrive Living**  
*by Retirement Villages*

# Meet the team



## Alice Couchman, Development Manager at Thrive Living

**Q: How long have you worked for Retirement Villages on their Thrive Living collection?**

A: I started working at RVG in March 2024, so just over a year.

**Q: What do you enjoy most about your job?**

A: Being part of a team creating something lasting and meaningful, something people live and work in. We work with some incredible people who are all passionate about creating beautiful communities.

**Q: Can you tell us more about your role on the West Malling project?**

A: As a Development Manager, I work on the strategic planning, feasibility, and project management of a scheme. I collaborate with many parts of the business, from the initial idea/land acquisition to construction and the final handover. I help support and lead every stage of the development process.

**Q: What was your dream job growing up?**

A: My dream job was to be an architect. I was always fascinated by buildings and how spaces could influence how people feel and interact. I used to sketch floor plans and design imaginary cities, even before I really understood what architecture involved.

**Q: Which part of the West Malling development are you most looking forward to and why?**

A: Seeing the development reach completion will be a special moment. I am especially looking forward to the opening of our communal facilities, we have some fantastic spaces that will be open to both residents and the West Malling community.

## What is the Thrive Living collection?



**Thrive Living communities are located in the heart of towns or close to existing communities, enabling over-65s to stay connected to the wider community while enjoying access to local shops, restaurants, and cultural activities.**

Residents will have the peace of mind that comes with knowing care and support are readily available, and the freedom to live an active and sociable lifestyle on their terms.

All Thrive Living communities will be whole of life net zero carbon, leading the way in the later living sector. Carbon emissions will be minimised and offset over the entire lifespan of the community, contributing to a more sustainable future. The scheme will also deliver a 20% biodiversity net gain (BNG), setting a new benchmark for sustainability in the sector.

Local Kent-based contractor Keady Construction is delivering the West Malling project.

## Thrive Living connecting with the wider community

At RVG, we are dedicated to engaging with the surrounding community in the areas we call home. As part of this commitment, we recently held a fantastic coffee and cake meeting at Kings Hill Community Centre.

A huge thank you to the wonderful local groups and organisations that joined us, including Communigrow, Crossroads Charity Kent, Kings Hill Pre School, Malling District Lions Clubs International, Reef Financial Planning, Spadework,

The Malling Society, Town Malling Cricket Club, Viner & Sons Ltd, West Malling Chamber of Commerce, West Malling CE Primary School, and West Malling Community Choir.

It was a wonderful opportunity to connect with local community members and share our exciting vision for Thrive Living in West Malling. During the meeting, we discussed our construction timeline and plans, as well as holding a Q&A session. We're passionate about working



closely with residents to ensure Thrive Living in West Malling becomes a vibrant, connected space where people over 65 can enjoy an active, fulfilling, and purposeful lifestyle.

We are in the process of organising our first formal Community Liaison Group (CLG) and look forward to further engaging with the community.

## Celebrating with local dignitaries

**We were honoured to welcome the esteemed West Malling dignitaries to join us for a celebration to mark the completion of the foundation at the site.**

On a crisp, blue-skied spring day members of the Thrive Living team, including Neal Haywood, Director of Project Management for RVG, along

with Kieran Duggan, CEO of contractor Keady Construction, were joined by Deputy Mayor for Tonbridge and Malling, Chris Brown and local ward councillors Trudy Dean, Roger Roud and Michelle Tatton. The Deputy Mayor praised the project's ethos, design and approach to wider community integration, while the councillors welcomed the

development as a positive addition to the local area.

Deputy Mayor for Tonbridge and Malling, Councillor Chris Brown, commented: "I was very pleased to be invited to the ceremony to mark progress at the Thrive Living integrated retirement community at West Malling. When completed, this development will provide a mix of much-needed retirement apartments and cottages in the heart of West Malling, including amenities that will be open to the public as well. These homes will offer people an option of downsizing from their existing home, whilst maintaining independent living with the option of additional support if required."





# Local Spotlight

Welcome to Thrive Living's 'Local Spotlight', where we celebrate local individuals, groups and organisations. In this first edition, we speak to Joshua Piercey, Development Manager at Communigrow.



## **Q. What is Communigrow?**

A. Communigrow is an off-grid sustainable food education charity in East Malling. We show children, young people and adults how to grow fresh food in a chemical free, sustainable way, consequently benefiting physical and mental wellbeing in harmony with the natural environment.

## **Q. Who do you work with?**

A. As well as individuals, we are very keen to work in partnership with ethical organisations who share our environmental values. We are particular advocates of the benefits of therapeutic gardening and other green therapies, which can have a particularly positive impact for older people.

## **Q. How does your work support older people's wellbeing?**

A. The research and evidence on older people's improved wellbeing through gardening is extensive. It has been shown to improve fitness & mobility; 30 minutes of active gardening has similar benefits to a workout at the gym, with outdoor exercise in particular strengthening bones and bone health which can lead to a reduction in falls. Gardening also supports good mental health, helping to preserve cognitive skills while also reducing stress and anxiety. Finally, it can also reduce social isolation - gardening is a social activity that promotes good relationships and the sharing of knowledge and skills.



## Site update

The foundations for all blocks are now complete and you might have seen the concrete frames for the various blocks coming up recently, with the tall tower cranes standing above the treeline.

We are now commencing the substation works and continuing progress to the internal roads, including drainage works and open trench works for services.



## Keeping in touch

We will keep everyone up to date on construction and activity on the site throughout the journey, from progress updates to local engagement and events.

To stay up to date with the latest information, you can register your interest on our website [thrive-living.co.uk/Westmalling](https://thrive-living.co.uk/Westmalling)

