

Cohousing - Community at Its Best

Twenty-five years ago, Erica Elliott stumbled upon a group intent on forming a cohousing community in Santa Fe, New Mexico. Her decision to join has changed her life so much that she can no longer imagine living in ordinary housing. Pioneered in Denmark, cohousing offers social, economic, environmental and practical benefits. These novel communities can provide a caring and supportive place to raise children as well as grow old. Some say that cohousing reminds them of an old-fashioned neighbourhood at its best, providing a balance of privacy and community. For Erica, it provided the sense of community that had been missing in her life.

“Imagine coming home from work, exhausted, too tired to cook and the idea of leftovers is not appealing. Then you catch a whiff of red chilli baking in the community house and you remember, you signed up to the meal tonight with your community. Since it is not your turn to cook or wash up, all you have to do is sit down with your neighbours and enjoy a delicious home cooked meal.

*Imagine being left helpless after a major accident or illness. That’s what happened to me – bedridden for three months after a snowboarding accident. Fortunately, I was not alone; I live in a cohousing community called ‘The Commons’ in America. **Cohousing is community at its best.***

During my recovery my neighbours took turns to deliver home cooked meals every single day. They showered me with comforting words, massaged my feet and drove me to doctor’s appointments.



So...What is Cohousing? It is not a commune!** It is just like an old fashioned neighbourhood. There is plenty of privacy. You have your own self contained flat / house - **I can say personally, after living in ‘The Commons’ for almost 25 years, that communities make the world a better place. Cohousing is community at its best.

Would you like to be involved in the first cohousing scheme in Hampshire?

- Many people in the UK do not know their neighbours, perhaps only waving to one another from time to time and engaging in small talk. People do not feel as though they are part of a community.
- Social isolation and depression among older and younger generations is a major concern. Our ageing population is leading to increased demands on our NHS; older people are often unable to be discharged from hospital as they do not have any care and support at home.
- Cohousing schemes help to reduce social isolation, depression and reliance on the NHS by providing informal care, recreating the neighbourly support of the past.
- The UK government recognises the value these schemes bring to both the individual and our society as a whole.
- A number of successful cohousing schemes have been built in the UK but none have been built in Hampshire, yet...

Catherine has been appointed to help deliver community led housing schemes (such as cohousing) in parts of Hampshire. She provides groups with guidance and support every step of the way. Please contact Catherine for more information.



Please get in touch with Catherine Kirkham our Community Housing Officer for more information

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