



# Martin Grant Homes

Quarterly Company Update



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FOR THE CUSTOMER



**Chris Hamilton**  
Managing Director

Welcome to the Autumn 2017 edition of the Martin Grant Homes Company Newsletter.

After a busy first quarter and early Spring, the 'snap' general election certainly stalled our sales activity in May and June. This was not unexpected given the political uncertainty and the negative effect this has on business and consumer confidence. However, July was a very positive month for us, boosted by the excellent new product releases at Penrose Park (Biggleswade Site 3) and at Buckton Fields (Parcel 2), and also the formal launch of our developments at Summerswood in Ifield and Maple Fields in Alton.

The 2017 outlook remains positive and we are on track to meet our new home delivery targets for the year and also start five new developments at West End in Woking, Stansted Mountfitchet, Aylesbury (Area HM06), Bramley and Birdham this year to secure delivery in 2018 and beyond.

The period since our last Company Newsletter has also been very productive for our Land Team and included the successful completion of a prime development opportunity in Stansted Mountfitchet and further works to secure new opportunities in Bedfordshire and Oxfordshire.

This edition will feature our latest sales and marketing activity including commentary and pictures of our fabulous new Show Home at Summerswood in Ifield and photographs following the re-modelling of our Sales Centre at Penrose Park in Biggleswade. We catch up with the Construction Team at Summerswood and meet the new Sales Advisors at Maple Fields, in Alton.

I am also delighted that we are able to share with you the Company's latest NHBC / HBF Customer Satisfaction Survey feedback. Huge progress has been achieved over the past 18 months following a Company-wide initiative to positively affect our new home delivery performance and in this edition we share our latest statistics, our best to-date, and our 'home buying' Customer endorsements. This achievement and the service levels we are able to provide are underpinned by our supply chain and the Company acknowledges the ongoing support we get from our business partners in our Company-wide vision of delivering the 'Exemplary Home Buying Experience'.

Finally, I would also like to highlight Martin Grant Home's ongoing community engagement and charity work with Cherry Trees. Nine brave colleagues (with myself) will be attempting the infamous 3 Peaks Challenge, summiting Ben Nevis, Scafell Pike and Snowdon in just 24 hrs! This will be completed over the weekend of 8<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> September 2017 and all I can say is, personally, training is way behind schedule!

Martin Grant Homes have been involved with Cherry Trees for the past 3 years and they really are an outstanding charity providing much needed respite care for disadvantaged children and their families. If you would like to find out more about their work please visit

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their website as noted later in this newsletter, where you will also find details of how you can sponsor the team in their latest fund-raising adventure. We also include a follow up with Craig Prickett from C&D Decorators, after his epic cycle from Lands End to John O'Groats.

I hope you find this Autumn edition of our Company Newsletter informative, we would always welcome your feedback and suggestions for content in future releases.

From all of us at Martin Grant Homes, we hope you had a great Summer and we'll provide you with further updates in the next edition of the Company Newsletter later this year.

## Show Home Opening at Summerswood Ifield



We opened the doors to our new show home at ‘Summerswood’ in Ifield on Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> July and the feedback we have had so far has been very positive. ‘Summerswood’ is our new development of homes in the village of Ifield in West Sussex, comprising of 27 private units and 9 HA apartments. It includes 3, 4 and 5 bedroom homes and is set back from the road leading out of the village of Ifield to the west. Whilst the idyllic landscape of West Sussex is on the doorstep, Ifield station is less than a ten minute walk from the development, offering our buyers easy access into Central London and we have discovered that the area is a popular destination for families, locals, and also for those moving out of the capital.

The specification of the homes at ‘Summerswood’ is excellent, with Karndean Knight flooring, LED lighting and contemporary integrated appliances as standard plus little extras such as outside taps and TV points for Sky Plus.

Andrew Henry, the interior designer behind the new Show Home, comments: “We had a buyer in mind when designing the Show Home at ‘Summerswood’ and were inspired by a modern family, upsizing to a new dream home to enjoy more space and the West Sussex lifestyle. The interiors scheme will appeal to discerning buyers who put a premium on style, whilst nonetheless including all the trappings of a family home, including

children’s bedrooms.”

Chris Hamilton comments on the scheme: “‘Summerswood’ is appealing to both buyers from the local area who are keen to upsize to a contemporary home, and those moving out of the capital. Buyers will be impressed by the homes’ value for money whilst also offering a very easy and fast commute into Central London. We are delighted with the Show Home, which excellently represents the lifestyle on offer at ‘Summerswood’.”

**For more information, please visit our website: [www.summers-wood.co.uk](http://www.summers-wood.co.uk)**



## We Catch up with Construction at Summerswood



**We caught up with Joe Beard, our Site Manager at Summerswood and asked him how construction was going since the site started, here's what he had to say...**



**How is the build progressing?**

Building has been difficult due to the close proximity of houses to each other and how the scaffolds tie in and interlink but we are progressing well and all the trades are communicating which is good.

**What challenges have you faced since site started?**

I wasn't here at the start, however I have picked up the build with the help of Gary Noble who has now moved on to Send. One of the challenges is the complexity of some of the internal details, like the roofs, main roof to side roof and linking to porch, all causing various visits for trades.

**What Sub-Contractors have you got working on site at the moment?**

The subbies we have on site currently are Norman Group, the bricklayers and scaffolders, plus SC Drylining, who have worked with us previously at our Fairfield Green development in Horley. The newbies are GJB Windows and Harrisons Electrical. Commodore Kitchens, Bracknell Roofing and R&P Carpentry are also Sub-Contractors that we have previously used and come back to.

**Has the site been well-received by the locals in the area?**

Initially I don't think the locals wanted the development however keeping the neighbours in the loop and trying to calm tensions on issues does always help. We are starting to build good relationships now with the local community and people are pleased to see the houses now taking shape.



**How long will the site be under construction?**

The aim is to be off site next April, however some issues like the roofs were not foreseen and have taken longer to sort out than we expected.

**When do you expect the first completions?**

The Show Home has been open some weeks now and we expect approximately one a week now until Christmas.



Early week progress on plots 15 and 16.



Plots 7 to 14 ready for a crane truss lift

## Penrose Park Gets a Makeover!



To coincide with the launch of our latest phase, our Penrose Park development in Biggleswade had a makeover and we re-branded the development. The Sales Centre and Show Home had an overhaul and we invited residents from the wider Kings Reach community to come and see us on the day we launched, Saturday 8th July.

Our new phase comprises 67 new properties and offers our buyers a new opportunity to purchase in this sought-after community. Our Penrose

Park development sits at the heart of King's Reach and the new tree-lined market square, which will boast a diverse range of facilities including a school and separate nursery, retail space, care home, convenience store and café.

With prices up 13 per cent in the last year and 33 per cent in the last three years, Biggleswade has been at the heart of Bedfordshire's emergence as a popular commuter region. Our buyers have been quick to capitalise on the excellent value for money in an area that benefits from both idyllic countryside and a good selection of town centre amenities.

### Success at Penrose Park

It's all smiles at Penrose Park where we have recently received some fabulous feedback from some of our very happy Customers...

*"The 'new build' journey was supreme quality from start to finish, thanks to the entire Martin Grant Homes team. I would highly recommend them as a high quality house builder."*

Alison Gee

*"The whole experience with Martin Grant Homes was fantastic. The sales team were friendly, professional and went out of their way to help me through the process. I'm delighted with my new home and I would certainly recommend the Penrose Park Sales Team."*

Grant Mynott



Lisa Jolly, one of our Sales Advisors



Our new interactive TV table



## Strategic Land Update

### Cokerhurst Farm, Wembdon, Bridgwater Update

This site remains in the draft Local Plan as an allocated site and, although we are working beside Persimmon Homes, who control land to the south of Quantock Road, we expect to prepare an outline Planning Application with our partners, Cavanna Homes Ltd, for about 700 houses in the new year following the examination in public into the proposed Local Plan. There will be a comprehensive Masterplan for the overall site which will amount to over 1200 houses but our Planning Application will follow the approximate boundary of the red line in the previous allocation.



### Hampton Green, Northampton Update

Our proposal to submit an outline planning application with Harcourt Developments for 525 houses was issued to the Landowners for approval a few weeks ago. This has been subject to a number of points raised by the Landowners which we have answered and we expect to be able to submit the planning application shortly.



### Walpole Farm, Stansted Mountfitchet Update

At long last, we have now completed the purchase of this land jointly with our partners, Bloor Homes. The site benefits from an outline planning permission for 160 houses/flats, commercial B1 unit, allotments and a primary school. The reserved matters approval is for 147 houses and we have benefited from an extra unit with our half share. Although the planning application was implemented some time ago, we have now properly commenced development.



### Village 1, Milton Keynes, Hayfield Update

The proposed Planning Application for 600-650 units will be submitted jointly with our partners, Miller Homes, Taylor Wimpey and Harcourt Developments. It has now been completed and is with the relevant Landowners for approval prior to submission.

## Immediate Land Update

### Iron Age Settlement Found at Our New Site at Benner Lane, Woking



We were recently featured on 'Get Surrey' online where the article detailed the archaeological findings at our new site in Benner Lane, West End, Woking...

*"Archaeologists working near West End have found evidence of an Iron Age settlement on the site of a new housing development. The dig at Malthouse Farm in Benner Lane has so far turned up the remains of two roundhouses, a granary and pieces of pottery thought to date from around 500BC.*

*The finds are believed to be the first evidence of Iron Age activity in West End, although settlements from that period have previously been found at Bagshot and the Arboretum at Windlesham. Along with the Iron Age finds, archaeologists have also unearthed evidence of a Bronze Age pit, suggesting people may have lived in West End for up to 5,000 years.*

*The excavation is taking place prior to the construction of 95 houses."*

Construction has now started at the development which will be called The Maltings. The roads providing access into the site will be finalised at the end of August and sales will launch from early October.



The topsoil was removed for the detailed archaeological dig



Replica roundhouses at the Stonehenge Visitors Centre. They illustrate approximately what our West End settlement buildings would have looked like.



### Steventon Road, East Hanney, Oxfordshire Update

This site has outline Planning Permission for 40 houses / flats but we have a contract conditional upon two issues. We have made good progress on both of them and although the conditional contract has been extended until late September, we expect all issues to be resolved by then and completion of the purchase to take place later in the year.



**Sharon Peplow**  
Sales Advisor, Maple Fields

#### Tell us a bit about yourself and your new role...

I joined Martin Grant Homes on the 19<sup>th</sup> June and spent 3 weeks at Grant House learning all about the Company. I found this very useful as I can now put a face to a lot of the staff I met when speaking on the phone. My colleague Carol and I then launched the 'Maple Fields' Development, in Alton on the 15<sup>th</sup> July.

We are currently selling 3, 4 & 5 bedroom homes, of which we have already reserved 2 three bedroom houses, the Woodston house type, from our cosy portacabin. We will shortly be moving to a more salubrious double garage, as our new Sales Office, the week commencing 4<sup>th</sup> September in readiness for our Show Home launch on the 9<sup>th</sup> September whereby we have lots of interested customers waiting to view.

I enjoy all aspects of selling new homes, including the implementation of procedures from inception of sale to legal completion, including the verification of prospective clients' details, chasing their Agents and Solicitors during the sale and completion phases and keeping our Customers well informed to ensure they are kept updated with any changes that may occur, including timescales.

#### What did you do prior to working at Martin Grant Homes?

I have over 25 years' experience selling new homes and began in the business working in an Estate Agency as a weekend assistant when our two children were young. We were living in Southsea at that time, taking in the sea air most days.

After several weekend jobs and temping for a new homes company, I joined Bovis Homes and stayed for 17 years before leaving to spend time with my daughter who was expecting our first grandchild. After a couple of months however she had made plenty of new mummy friends and I was quite redundant. Of course they now love to send them to us for a break!!

I then worked as a receptionist in a large National Health dental practise in the centre of Southampton for 18 months, quite an experience! I was keen to get back to what I enjoy most, selling new homes, and then went on to work for Bellway Homes on various sites in the South of England for 7 years before joining Martin Grant Homes.

#### Tell us about your home and family life...

My husband and I moved from Southsea to live in Warsash 28 years ago in 1989. Many of you will not have heard of Warsash but it is on the River Hamble, which most people know for its yachts and sailing (or, for those old enough to remember, the series "Howards Way" was filmed). However, we are one of the few people in Warsash who do not own a boat.

Our children have long flown the nest and have gone on to have very successful careers. Our daughter has also blessed us with three adorable grandchildren aged 8, 5 and 15 months, although very naughty at times (we wouldn't want it any other way!) The older two come to stay most weekends and Oscar, the eldest, loves to play football with his Papa in our garden where he has a large football net. He also enjoys playing for his local team and supports Saints which he has a season ticket along with Papa. Isabella and Evelyn are becoming really good friends, Evelyn being an age where the fighting has not yet begun. Give it time! They are developing into beautiful little girls.

#### What do you get up to outside work?

Most of my free time is spent with our family and helping out with the grandchildren. We also love walking where we have spent some time this year walking in the Brecon Beacons and in Northumberland. I also spend time regularly with my Mother and we have recently enjoyed a nice holiday together this year in Greece.

#### How have you found it so far here at Martin Grant Homes?

During my very short time here I have found everyone to be very friendly and really appreciate the guidance and support everyone has given to me.

#### Our two new Show Homes



CGI of Maple Fields Show Home 1



CGI of Maple Fields Show Home 2

**Maple Fields**

ALTON, HANTSHPHIRE | 01354 485



**Carol McLean**  
Sales Advisor, Maple Fields

**Tell us a bit about yourself...**

I'm Carol Mclean and I joined Martin Grant Homes on 10th July as a Sales Advisor at Maple Fields, Alton.

We opened the Sales Office from a Portacabin on Saturday 15th July and had a good response, doing our first reservation only a few days later.

**How have you found working at the development so far?**

I've been here for 6 weeks now and have found everybody so very helpful. I'm really looking forward to our Show Homes opening on Saturday 9th September, when we can physically show people what Martin Grant Homes are all about.

**What is your background and what did you do prior to working at Martin Grant Homes?**

I have been selling New Homes for over 32 years on and off and it all started when I applied for a weekend job selling New Homes when my youngest child was 9 months old. I have worked for various large companies and also did 2 years in an Estate Agents which was interesting, but my real love is selling New Homes. I was at my last job for nearly 7 years working for Bellway Homes as a Sales Advisor and I did quite a bit of travelling for them working on sites in Chichester, Bognor Regis, Littlehampton, Havant and Basingstoke.

**Where is home?**

I live in Locks Heath, Southampton with my husband, but am originally from North London.

**Tell us about your nearest and dearest...**

I have 3 grown up children. My youngest lives and works in Sweden and has just finished building his own house by a lake. My daughter lives and works in Fiji (South Pacific) as a Dive Operations Manager with her partner and my eldest son lives in Salisbury with his wife and my 3 beautiful grandchildren.

**What are your hobbies and what do you get up to when you're not at work?**

I love to travel and have been very fortunate to have seen a lot of beautiful places around the World.

My favourite places are in Malaysia and Indonesia and I have a holiday planned in October to go back to Bali, where I love the people and the culture.

OUR CUSTOMERS

**Our NHBC Customer Satisfaction Surveys**



**Benchmark Group 4** 79.4%  
**36394 Martin Grant Homes Ltd** 80.0%



**Benchmark Group 4** 82.0% 11.1%  
**36394 Martin Grant Homes Ltd** 82.0% 4.0%



— Benchmark Group 4: Average  
— Benchmark Group 4: MAX  
— Benchmark Group 4: MIN  
— 36394 Martin Grant Homes Ltd

We were very pleased to see that the latest data from our Customer Satisfaction Surveys has taken us up to an 80% satisfaction rating, marking us at 4 stars, ahead of our benchmark. This is our highest rating to date and sees us gradually improving at a steady rate from a starting point of only 1 star!

A lot of work has gone into putting the Customer at the centre of our business, largely driven by our internal programme which some of you may be aware of called 'Together for the Customer'. As a business we have created a number of new procedures and processes, across all departments, all with the Customer in mind. It is

great to see that the hard work that we have put in, is now starting to come out in these surveys and we look forward to continuing to improve on this rating in the coming years ahead. Watch this space!

# Craig Prickett of C & D Decorators Cycles from Lands End

to John O'Groats...



By Craig Prickett

I have to say the cycle trip was the best experience of my life. From start to finish, regardless of some awful weather, it was a brilliant thing to do and all the money raised is going to DSGN which is a Down Syndrome Group in Northamptonshire, which is close to me. The total raised was £2,433.38 and I thank Martin Grant Homes for their contribution.

conditions and suffered punctures and a pedal falling off but the feeling when I reached Bowness on Windermere was superb. I have to say I couldn't have done it without George Denyer, Contracts Manager for C & D Decorators Ltd, who drove the van to support me as I did all the cycling on my own.

Highlights for me was day 5 where I went from Warrington to Windermere in bad weather





**We've taken the challenge – Now we're challenging you!!**

Over the weekend of the 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> of September, a crazy gang of 10 from Martin Grant Homes are undertaking the 24 hour 3 Peaks Challenge. Starting at dawn on Saturday morning at Ben Nevis, then heading to Scafell Pike in the Lake District for an early evening climb and then onto Snowdon to finish, and we are doing this for our local charity Cherry Trees: Visit [www.cherry-trees.co.uk](http://www.cherry-trees.co.uk) or find them on Facebook @cherrytreesuk

Cherry Trees do fantastic work with children. They provide home from home short break/respite care for children and young people with a range of disabilities including learning, physical and sensory impairments. It has become a lifeline for many families, children and young people who are

regularly cared for, whether it be after school for a few hours, a weekend or even a couple of weeks stay.

Cherry Trees is a unique place, providing professional care in a safe, stimulating and fun environment, where every child is valued for who they are. It is a community that is dedicated to children and young people, enabling them to spend time with friends and enjoy new experiences and opportunities, which they wouldn't otherwise get the chance to do, whilst their families have a much-needed break.

***So as the group are challenging themselves, they are also challenging you, our Sub-contractors, Consultants, Agents and Suppliers to help raise £6,000 for this fabulous cause.***

So dig deep please for this excellent cause and donate to Cherry Trees. Your donation would be greatly appreciated. You can donate by making a cheque payable to Martin Grant Homes or online at [www.justgiving.com/fundraising/MartinGrantHomes-3PeaksChallenge](http://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/MartinGrantHomes-3PeaksChallenge)

We thank you in advance for your support.

**The 3 Peaks Challenge Crazy Gang:**

**From the Head Office:**  
Chris Hamilton, Faye Tompkins, Paul Gerry and Matt Elnaugh

**From Sites:**  
Joe Beard, Gary Noble, Danny Wilkinson, Carl Haskell and Dean Digby

**From our MGH Consultant Team / Organic P&O Solutions:**  
Natasha Kearslake



## Cherry Trees Gets Busy Over Summer

By Jill Cook, Head of Fundraising

*We catch up with our chosen charity Cherry Trees to find out what they have been up to over the summer months and their new Head of Fundraising, Jill Cook, gives us an insight...*

**W**e would like to thank everyone at Martin Grant Homes for their continued support that they have given Cherry Trees over the last 3 years. So far this year we have been very busy with the children achieving milestones in their lives, going out to various places such as Hampton Court, to the cinema and bauble blowing! Below are just a highlight of some of these...

Happy Circus came to Cherry Trees on Saturday July 22<sup>nd</sup> July for a fun day for some 200 people. The Deputy Mayor of Guildford opened the event, welcoming families to come and join in the fun with free face painting, fete games, cycling, Sumo wrestling, performance cars and dancing before the amazing Circus Show. Many of the families had never been to a Circus together or even been able to get their child to have their face painted and were so grateful for their whole family to enjoy such a great time together. Everyone that attended either had a child with special needs or were a sibling or friend/supporter of Cherry Trees so there was no pressure when their children got up and walked around during the show or shouted and sung when everyone else was quiet.



I love popping over to the house to see what's going on, who is in and what they are up to and as always there is plenty! Last week I was chatting with some of the care team and one of our boys came out of his room with sleepy eyes and ruffled hair, having just woken up. It was 10am and it filled my heart with joy to see a young lad being able to have a lay in as it was the summer holidays. Many care homes are very rigid with routines such as times to get up or go to bed, however what makes Cherry Trees special is that we treat each child individually and have a flexible approach, especially during holiday periods – just like the children would have at home. After a short while this young man was asked if he wanted breakfast and off he sauntered with his carer to get the breakfast he requested. Little things like that make such a big difference.

We are now in the busiest period of the year, as parents have their children home 24 hours a day and are in need of short breaks in order to cope. Our care team have created a great programme of events over the summer which allows the children to get out and about but also to relax with their friends – like we all love to! There has been visits to Birdworld, to the cinema,

joining Sean's amazing birthday party and the children also came out and supported our riders in the Pru 100.

We also had a visit from Bezerkaz Circus recently. What a fun afternoon for the children, interacting with the two performers and playing with massive coloured bubbles. The children were running through the bubbles chasing them around the garden. Staff were spinning plates, it was a delight to watch.

Honestly we do get some work done here in the fundraising office, but seeing all these things going on makes the job easier as we can see on a daily basis the impact our work at Cherry Trees is making.

For more information on this amazing charity – visit the website at: [www.cherry-trees.co.uk](http://www.cherry-trees.co.uk)



WEBSITE: [www.martingranthomes.co.uk](http://www.martingranthomes.co.uk)

PHONE: 01306 730822

T O G E T H E R