WORK ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF Markyes Close has been progressing well in the last two months, despite the snow and cold weather.

Stage 1, the development of the first bungalow is nearing completion. All eight people living at Markyes Close will move into the refurbished part of the building in late May.

The builders have done marvellously well to catch up and are on target to finish on time.

Above: Residents and staff at Markyes Close celebrated the 2012 London Olympics with a visit from an Olympic Torch. This Torch was part of the torch relay through Gloucester City centre and belonged to torch bearer Simon Lewis who kindly brought it in to show the residents. The picture shows staff members Jade, Ebony, Louisa and Sara with residents David and Harry holding the torch.

More information about Aspire at www.aspirehereford.org.uk
SINCE JANUARY three people have been living in a farm cottage about four miles away and five people have been in the second bungalow.

The people who have moved to ‘The Lea’ during the rebuild have really enjoyed the rural location and the quiet of living in the countryside. The residents all spend time with each other and one lady spends less time in her own room and has enjoyed socialising more. They all enjoy watching the rabbits in the garden eating the farmer’s vegetables.

To maintain the friendships between the residents at The Lea and at Markyes several times a week people do activities together such as visiting music clubs, social clubs, local places of interest, shopping etc.

In the new build many decisions have been made from the siting of each and every light and electric socket to planning the new kitchen, the bedrooms, en-suite bathrooms, shower rooms, the new dining room and the main lounge area.

The kitchen will be the heart of the home allowing places for people to sit and interact while food preparation takes place. There are opportunities for residents to take part in cooking if they wish. Wheelchair height accessible work surfaces and a breakfast bar will make this a relaxing yet practical space that can be enjoyed by all regardless of their mobility needs.

All the bathrooms will have red doors and signage for ease of identification and there will be ceiling tracking in several bedrooms and bathrooms allowing for safer and easier transfers.

All residents are to choose the furnishings and decoration for their own rooms. This will vary from Arsenal red, to natural shades of cream and grey to bright pinks. Each person will also personalise their own ‘front door’ with a picture of themselves and a personalised memory box next to their door.

Decisions on the shared areas have been made taking into account the needs of older people and people with dementia, as well as health and safety issues. Hard wearing, low pile carpets will avoid reflection and will help with spillages and trip hazards.

Extra ceiling lights and lots of natural light coming in from the windows will ensure good lighting and make for easy access throughout the communal areas. There will be neutral walls, clear boundaries and handrails along the corridors. This will help people to find their way independently around their new home.
Gail’s lessons learnt

THE BUILDING WORK has given everyone, residents and staff, a chance to have a say in how they want their new home to look. It helped us understand why some spaces and rooms haven’t worked well in the past and given us a chance to change them for the better. For example, we now have several bedrooms with ceiling tracking hoists going from the bed to an en-suite bathroom or shower room.

Recently, when a resident returned from hospital on an ambulance stretcher it made us look again at the main lobby. The architects had used computer software to plan the path of wheelchairs but had not considered larger means of transport like stretchers. Changes had to be made to the width of the lobby and exterior pathway.

We are planning our new environment to cater for a wide range of needs including older people and people with dementia, as well as for residents with physical and behavioural needs. We want it to be a home environment as well as a safe one for everyone who lives there. We are looking at both the physical building as well as at the support we provide within that environment. Discussions with residents and their friends and families and also staff meetings are an opportunity to review and to make changes early in the building process.

We are exploring the use of some assistive technologies, for example pressure pad sensors to let waking night staff know if a person has got out of bed and may be confused or might be in need of some support. Technology needs to be supportive but not an invasion of privacy.

People

LYNDA DRABBLE has worked as a support worker at Markyes Close for seventeen years. She started as a relief worker, then part time, eventually to being a full time member of staff.

Since joining Markyes Close Lynda has seen many changes, now only two people are living there who originally came to Markyes Close following the closure of Dean Hill Hospital, in Ross on Wye.

“Having a place for people to relax, enjoy music and reminisce will be great”

Lynda and the other staff are looking forward to the people having a new modern home to live in. They and the residents are looking forward to having the two bungalows connected together to make one home. The lady that Lynda is key worker for is excited about choosing things for her new bedroom. ‘It will all be pink and purple’ Lynda says.

In particular Lynda is looking forward to having a new multi sensory room as currently people need to go out and travel in order to access multi sensory rooms, sometimes as far as Worcester. ‘Having a place for people to relax, enjoy music and reminisce will be great’.