



# **THE NEW ABBEY**

**A Community Proposal**

**8 October 2021**

**An action from Staveley with Ings Community Plan**

## The New Abbey

1. During the conversations that informed The Staveley with Ings Community Plan, residents celebrated the community spirit and the mixed community in the villages. They were proud of the Abbey and how elderly residents had the security of knowing, that even when they could no longer cope in their own home, they had an option of remaining amongst familiar people and places. So, when the last resident left the Abbey in 2019, members of the community knew that they had to do something.
2. We - a group of volunteers, unknown to each other until a few months ago – have come together to explore how the iconic Abbey building can be protected whilst being transformed to meet the future needs of older residents in the locality. Times change, and so do expectations, so a creative response is needed that breaks down divisions between those who can afford their own care and those who need some financial assistance: those whose homes can be adapted to their changing needs and those who need a more specialist environment and enhanced support.
3. The New Abbey proposal offers a radical, innovative and creative response to support in rural communities. It draws on the good practice across the country and beyond to create something that is unique. At the heart of it are the older residents themselves and the physical, cognitive, emotional and social challenges they face as they get older. The proposal is based upon the expressed views of residents and they will continue to be involved in shaping developments.
4. With the support of Cumbria County Council, we will create an example of care in a rural community that will help meet County and national targets and can be followed, adapted and developed to meet needs across Cumbria. It will be a vibrant, affordable addition to the housing offer for older people in this part of the Lake District National Park and will demonstrate that offering coherent and responsive support to an individual is more powerful than offering them a series of disjointed services.
5. The New Abbey will become a central point for domiciliary services, specialist support and social activity for people as they get older but do not wish to move, as well as providing accessible apartments for independent living for those who want the peace of mind of accessible care and shared facilities.
6. Fundamental to our model is the importance, for many older people of remaining, within a familiar community. We recognise the damage that can be done when an older person has to leave their home and believe that this disruption can be minimised if they can remain in the community and live in a building which already provides them with trusted local services. This means that, although we are a welcoming community, our first priority for those moving to the New Abbey will be local residents, those with local connections or those with family nearby.
7. A respectful approach will be taken to the heritage of The Abbey. We will work with the fabric of the existing building as far as possible and keep disruption, expense and resource waste to a minimum. Integrating on-site energy generation with additional measures to improve heat loss will make the building cheaper to run and substantially reduce the carbon footprint. Similarly, the use of Smart technologies to monitor how the building is being used will help to reduce wasted energy, and also help to keep people safe and comfortable in their living space.
8. The New Abbey is an amazing opportunity for us to show the power of community action and how scaled-down, rather than scaled-up models of care allow for a warmhearted and local approach that nurture and sustain all members of a rural community. This proposal is a realistic starting point for more detailed conversations with partners and community members about the future. It is still work in progress and we welcome your feedback.

## Executive Summary

9. The working model outlined in this proposal has two parts:
  - **The Abbey Hub** - this will host private and community services, focusing on the needs of older residents (social care needs; physical and health needs; and wider personal wellbeing) meeting the aspiration of Cumbria County Council to take a 'life course approach' to health and wellbeing, and,
  - **The Abbey Apartments** - this will include 14 flexible and adaptable rented apartments for local older people. Cumbria County Council projections show there will be a shortfall of 500 'extra care' houses in South Lakeland by 2025 (appendix 5). The New Abbey will make an important contribution to addressing this shortfall.
10. Within the Hub we would like to host short term residential provision for those who do not live in the Abbey Apartments but who's needs increase due to unforeseen circumstances - such as a stay in hospital or a fall.
11. The Abbey is a significant local landmark which we have been saddened to see decline and eventually close. Since 2019 the community has spoken strongly about a desire to retain local care for elderly people. Earlier this year a community survey showed overwhelming support (98%) for care in the parish for those who could no longer manage at home. There was also 92% support for this care to be delivered by a community not for profit organisation.
12. Consequently, we have two aims:
  - that no resident **has** to leave the village in search of the care they need
  - the site of the Abbey care home is retained as a community asset so integrated support for elderly and frail residents can be provided in the local area.
13. The Abbey Development Group has been established to make sure that proposals presented to Cumbria County Council are supported by the community, and that they are financially robust. Following initial community consultation, we have taken advice from a range of potential partners to inform our proposal. This has included building, housing and care professionals as well as our community-based healthcare services at the GP and Pharmacy.
14. The principles which guide our delivery are informed by the community and include:
  - not for profit community ownership
  - ongoing community oversight and partnership development
  - adding value to our existing parish services and facilities
  - innovation in building design and care service co-ordination and
  - meeting the needs of people in our local area.
15. The priority catchment area for the accommodation at The Abbey Apartments will be the parishes of Staveley with Ings and Kentmere.
16. Following substantial re-modelling and some demolition and rebuild we will create The Abbey Apartments. These will include independent living space to rent for between 14 to 20 older people from the local area. There will be shared spaces, indoors and outside, and the option of communal dining. It is also expected that there will be accommodation for visiting family and friends available to rent.

17. Spaces not used for accommodation will form The Abbey Hub and will support the porous delivery of voluntary, social and personal care services for both residents and non-residents. The Abbey Hub will facilitate a wholistic approach to growing older in our community. It has the potential to offer group and individual support from medical professionals such as, counsellors, chiropodists and physiotherapists; and volunteer support with shopping, transport and other activities, alongside care services.
18. Without the annual overheads of the County Council, or the need to show significant profit, we are confident that a sustainable, self-supporting financial model is open to us. Our assumptions include close working with the County Council to satisfy their requirements for Best Consideration, without paying full market value for the asset.
19. Income will be largely from rent in the long term, but for start-up costs we have a fundraising plan and have budgeted to borrow for some of the significant financial outlay involved in building renovation.
20. Our capable and caring community is coming together to make this possible and we are delighted to have the opportunity to present this proposal for consideration.

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## Introduction

23. This paper sets out how the Abbey Development Group – on behalf of Staveley with Ings and surrounding parishes - propose to use The Abbey site to enhance care for older people in the local area, both in their own homes and as residents of The New Abbey.
24. The working model outlined in this proposal has two parts:
  - **The Abbey Hub** - this will host private and community services, focusing on the needs of older residents (social care needs; physical and health needs; and wider personal wellbeing) meeting the aspiration of Cumbria County Council to take a 'life course approach' to health and wellbeing, and,
  - **The Abbey Apartments** - this will include 14 flexible and adaptable rented apartments for local older people. Cumbria County Council projections show there will be a short fall of 500 'extra care' houses in South Lakeland by 2025 (see Appendix 5). The New Abbey will make an important contribution to addressing this shortfall.
25. Any care provided will be consistent with current national and local authority policy and be contracted from professional care providers. If an older person moves to an Abbey Apartment, it will be a home for their lifetime. Any care provision that can be accessed in homes outside the Abbey will be available in the safer and more suitable accommodation within it. This means we can accommodate people with dementia or people in palliative care, for instance, to the extent that their medical or safety requirements can be met in private accommodation.
26. Within the Hub we would also like to host short term residential provision for those who do not live in the Abbey Apartments but who's needs increase due to unforeseen circumstances - such as a stay in hospital or a fall. In order to determine if this is viable, further extensive discussions with specialist Care Providers and Adult Social Care will be required.
27. The location of the Abbey, at the centre of the village, will require sensitive development and this proposal will prioritise the maintenance of the iconic building and the garden spaces for the use of residents and others using the facilities. The impact on traffic flow and demands on infrastructure, for example sewage management, will be addressed.
28. The existing Abbey buildings will be remodeled sensitively to make best use of the space, keeping demolition and new build to a minimum. This means that apartments may vary in size and layout. There will be one-bedroom apartments suitable for one or two residents. Shared social spaces and Hub facilities can be used by local residents.
29. A building condition report was completed for us by local Building Surveyor and we also briefed local architect to help us maximise reuse of the existing building, within the current frameworks for delivering housing for older people. Our up to date plans suggest some demolition and new build will be required. See Appendix 1 for basic Building Condition Report and Appendix 2 for architect's drawings showing potential use of the site.
30. Without the overheads of the County Council, a not-for-profit community enterprise will be able to meet local need and keep elderly and/or frail residents safe and well at home or in residential provision close to home. Comparable examples are run by numerous organisations around the county, in Ambleside, Appleby and Milnthorpe for example.

## Who are we?

31. The following people have attended weekly meetings of the Abbey Development Group:

- Fran Richardson
- Deborah Michel
- Robert Perkins
- Andy Pimblett
- David Brockbank
- Marian Carey
- Mike Flynn
- Alan McBirnie
- Louise McBirnie
- Heather Stobbart
- Karen Tredwell

32. The Abbey Development Group was commissioned by the Parish Council in April 2021 to consult local people and pursue a community supported vision for the Abbey site. The group has grown and is now made up from volunteer residents of Staveley with Ings with a range of experience. We are still growing.

33. The group have been supported by a range of local professionals, including:

- Anothai Chareunsky, Staveley Pharmacy
- Graham Collingridge, Architect
- Daniel Hughes, Staveley Surgery
- Alistair Kirkbride, Sustainable Transport consultant
- Alasdair Muir, Building Surveyor
- Andy Swanson, Home Care specialist

34. Alex Wolfenden at The Oaklea Trust has agreed to offer support and advice through an informal arrangement during the proposal stage and beyond. A more formal arrangement might be agreed in due course.

## Our Mission

35. The group's role is to make sure that any proposal presented to the Cumbria County Council on behalf of the community represents the wishes of the community. The fundamentals of this proposal are based on input to our community plan, initial consultation about The Abbey site and follow up community engagement detailed in Appendix 3.

36. Informed by this engagement, we aim to ensure that:

- a. no resident **has** to leave the village in search of the care they need
- b. the site of the Abbey care home is retained as a community asset so integrated support for elderly and frail residents can be provided in the village.

## Our Principles

### 37. The principles that underpin our proposals are:

- i. Community ownership of the building, through a not-for-profit legal structure.
- ii. Community oversight of the development and ongoing delivery, establishing the brief for development and service delivery professionals.
- iii. Complimenting current facilities and services in the village, such as cafes, community buildings, the fire station and health care services. We will take care to add value to existing facilities where possible, and will work with others, to prevent the loss of any valued local service, such as the fire station.
- iv. Separation of the funding of care from the funding of accommodation whilst giving residents choice, effective and coordinated delivery, and best value.
- v. Innovation in building use and design for greatest benefit to the community, quality of life for residents and flexibility for changing requirements. This will include outdoor space and the environmental impact (carbon footprint and biodiversity) of the site and development.
- vi. Innovation in care service provision to facilitate a range of care services on and off site.
- vii. Meeting the needs of the people in our local area (parishes of Staveley with Ings and Kentmere, with adjacent communities) with the flexibility to meet the needs of a wider area only to the extent it supports financial stability.

## Who will the New Abbey facilities be for?

38. The community facilities of The Abbey Hub will be for all older residents of the Staveley with Ings Parish and Kentmere, their neighbours, friends and family. We aim to support the many people who take on informal care roles at home, as well as those who simply enjoy the social engagement.
39. The priority catchment area for the accommodation at The Abbey Apartments will be the parishes of Staveley with Ings and Kentmere. Accommodation requests from older people in nearby communities, relatives of residents and those with a long-term connection will be considered favourably if there are available spaces.
40. The support offered from The Abbey Hub will be for those in the Parish of Staveley with Ings, Kentmere and local villages as agreed with partner care providers.
41. For the purposes of this proposal 'older people' are those over 75. Anyone over 55 with specific care needs who needs a safe place to live will be considered for accommodation. See Appendix 4 for further explanatory notes about specialist housing for older people and Appendix 5 for population breakdown and predicted demand for provision.

## How will the New Abbey support older people?

42. The Abbey Hub and Apartments will provide the following support for older residents in the local area:
- i. Social care – The Abbey Hub will become a base for carers who support people in the village. The kitchen and dining room will provide meals for residents of the New Abbey and residents of the village. It will offer a ‘meals on wheels’ service that might be developed in conjunction with local cafés to produce a daily healthy meal.
  - ii. Physical care - The Abbey Hub will provide consulting space for health professionals – such as physiotherapists, district nurses, podiatry services, the pharmacy and mental health professionals.
  - iii. Social and emotional wellbeing activities - The Abbey Hub will host community dining and other activities that enhance social and emotional wellbeing, for example Men in Sheds, exercise groups, creative classes. We will do this by working in conjunction with Age UK and other charities for the elderly, local service providers and local organisations (including Staveley Village Association, Women’s Institute, Staveley with Ings Together, Staveley Playground and Pumptrack Action Group).
  - iv. A Safe Environment - The New Abbey will be a safe environment. It will include:
    - The Abbey Apartments for approximately 20 older residents. The accommodation will be devised to meet a range of needs and be as adaptable as possible. We will use smart technology to keep the residents safe. We aim to provide an overnight on-call carer.
    - Accommodation for short-term residential care for residents of the parish if their needs can no longer be met following a rapid deterioration in their abilities to care for themselves or on return from hospital. This will require further extensive consultation with care providers and Adult Social Care to assess the viability.

## How will we redevelop the existing buildings?

43. The Abbey building is in a central location in Staveley and is seen as iconic by the inhabitants. It is mentioned as a building of interest by LDNP, though it is not listed by Historic England. This proposal will preserve it as a vital community and historic asset.
44. It has been providing support to the people of Staveley and surrounding villages since Kendal Guardians bought it in 1890 for use as a Children's Home for the children of paupers. In 1956 it was converted for use as a home for 30 men and women. This proposal will ensure the Abbey remains central to local, social provision for elderly residents.

The Abbey comprises:

- The original Abbey building with cellar and attic.
- A stone extension built in the 1930s
- An extension built in 1980s and 1990s
- The garden
- A car park

45. This proposal aims to keep the garden, remodel the original Abbey building and 1930's extension. Currently, the plan shows demolition of the single story 1998 extension and its replacement with a two-story block of 14 independent living apartments built to HAPPI standards. Each has their own front door, full facilities and a view of the gardens. (See Appendix 2 for initial architects plans.)
46. The plans show how the 1930s extension will be remodeled into two apartments. Consideration will be given to how this space could provide a unit with up to 6 single rooms and a fully accessible shared bathroom.
47. The original Abbey building will be remodeled to become the Abbey Hub that will become a central point for domiciliary services, community dining, specialist support and social activity for residents of the Abbey Apartments and for those who do not wish to move from their family homes.
48. Redevelopment of the site gives an opportunity to maximise energy efficiency and renewable energy generation. High insulation and draft proofing standards will be part of our specification to reduce heating costs and energy demand. We are planning for this to be an exemplary project with integrated reduce, reuse and recycle principles embedded in design and delivery as far as possible.
49. By working to reduce carbon emissions, and to generate on-site renewable energy, we will be making a positive contribution to Cumbria's carbon reduction programme. We anticipate that gaining planning permission for redevelopment will be conditional on integration of on-site energy generation, amongst other things.

## Who will Own and Manage the New Abbey?

50. The New Abbey will be held by a Charitable Trust for the community requiring on-going commitment to ensure delivery meets the current and future needs of local residents.
51. An oversight group including local residents, residents of the New Abbey, recipients of care in the community and the parish council will be responsible for setting and reviewing entry procedures and criteria.
52. They will also have oversight of how the building is maintained and developed. The day-to-day management of the New Abbey will be carried out by a paid manager and an assistant. (Care needs will be met by care professionals, independent of the New Abbey.)
53. It is likely that the model for ownership will be a Community Benefit Society or Community Interest Company. These are models commonly used for community ownership of building assets. They allow the project to be managed on a not for profit and charitable basis. They also give the flexibility to raise money from a wide range of sources including Charitable Trusts, government funds, community shares and donations.
54. Residents of The Abbey Apartments will pay rent for their home and use of The Abbey Hub to the community enterprise (eg The New Abbey CBS) which holds the building. Separately, if needed, they will purchase their own care from a specialist provider.
55. It is expected that the New Abbey will provide facilities on site for one or more groups of carers, but residents will be free to buy in care from elsewhere if they wish.

## How will we pay for it all?

56. Our financial model for the initial development of the Abbey is based on researched grants, donations, sponsorship and loans.
57. Although social care funding is in crisis at the moment, the need for social care will only increase. We offer a sustainable local solution that supports and contributes to meeting national and at local authority targets.
58. The New Abbey Hub will be eligible to apply for grant funding because it will:
  - provide an innovative solution to the challenges of care in rural communities that could be replicated elsewhere,
  - contribute to county and national targets for social care provision and social prescribing,
  - enhance social cohesion and connectivity,
  - promote rural development and sustainability,
  - involve the refurbishment of a significant building,
  - address national and local priorities such as tackling loneliness and mental health,
  - prioritise energy efficiency, green sustainable energy,
  - free up homes for families by providing opportunities to downsize.

59. Financial modelling for The New Abbey is shown here in these headline tables. See Appendix 7 for more detailed breakdown.

<b>60. The Abbey Apartments</b>	
<b>Initial Outlay</b> Including demolition, rebuild and professional services	£2,067,000
<b>Funding for capital works</b> Including grants, sponsorship, donations and community shares (estimated 40% grant from Homes England)	£1,468,800
<b>Building Loan</b> (repayable over 25 years)	£598,200

<b>Operating costs per year</b> Including heating, cleaning, management, maintenance and professional fees	£73,333
<b>Operating income per year</b> Including rent @£712 per apartment	£113,567
<b>Debt repayment</b> including interest at 4%	£36,371
<b>Balance</b>	£3,863

<b>61. The Abbey Hub</b>	
<b>Initial Outlay</b> Renovation and refurbishment of old building to create the Hub	£503,750
<b>Funding for capital works</b> Including grants, sponsorship, donations and community shares	£200,000
<b>Building Loan</b> (repayable over 25 years)	£303,750

<b>Operating costs per year</b> Including on-call service, heating, cleaning, management, maintenance and professional fees	£105,000
<b>Operating income per year</b> Including hub charge to residents and non-residents, on-call service etc.	£128,810
<b>Debt repayment</b> including interest at 4%	£18,468
<b>Balance</b>	£5,342

62. There are a wide range of grants available from Charitable Trusts and Foundations, government and NGOs, for example:

- Sainsbury Foundation
- Joseph Rowntree Foundation
- Lottery Funds - Awards for All
- Reaching Communities
- Heritage Lottery Funding
- The Shared Ownership and Affordable Homes Programme
- Community Led Homes Fund
- South Lakes Community Homes Fund
- The Community Ownership Fund

63. We will also seek donations and sponsorship from individuals and ethical businesses. A detailed fundraising plan is in development.

*For further information about the detailed work which supports this proposal so far,  
please see the supporting documents.*

*The details of delivery will change over time as our knowledge and partnerships develop,  
however we will remain clear about our principles and will continue to respond to what  
the community wants.*

*Thank you for your support.*