

Dear Kerry,

Sorry it's taken so long to write but life's hectic! I can't believe we've been living at Springfield Orchard for six months now. It's amazing, a gorgeous house and garden with loads of space. The whole place was built by a local community group, and run not-for-profit which is how they keep the rent so low. It's community owned, so when they started the project local people could invest in it too.



my new little patio 😊

It feels great living here, it's like a little village where we take care of each other and try to make a better future. The neighbours have been so friendly - they don't mind the kids running around the green while me and the cats watch from the kitchen window and get the dinner ready.



The cats have never been so happy!

I've borrowed a lawnmower from the community tool shed. The garden looks really lush now, and we can sit out there and listen to the birds when we want a bit of privacy. Dave, who lives in one of the accessible flats down the road has taken on looking after the bird feeders over the winter, I've never seen so many amazing birds!



great spotted woodpecker!!!



Birdman Dave with lovely Iris

I even got rid of our car, which I never thought I could, but it has saved me loads of money on insurance and garage bills. The bus stop is just out on the main road and buses go into Ivybridge, Plymouth and Totnes every half hour. I can walk the kids to school, but when they're a bit older they'll be able to walk or cycle by themselves. When I do a big shop, I rent one of the shared electric cars for two hours and nip to the supermarket. They're great to drive, very smooth, and no stinky exhaust! And they're always fully charged and kept nice and clean (the site manager sees to all that). Over

Christmas I even took one for a few days to visit my mum in Birmingham. I was telling her all about Springfield Orchard and she says she wants a place like that up there too!

Well, I told her she could come to visit. You can easily walk from the train station and there's a guest suite in the community hub building which she can hire for a couple of nights. That's as long as no one else is using it, because we keep getting reporters and researchers wanting to come and stay to see what it's like living here. Apparently, there's nowhere else like this in the UK yet.



Mum and Jack



Steve and Anna - love them!

The best news is that Lucy's asthma has really improved since we moved here, which Steve and Anna (who live at the top of the site) said is probably because all the kitchen units and paint are made from 'healthy materials'. Well it's worked for Lucy, though maybe it's something to do with all that fresh air and playing outside. Her and Jack have been helping me out with our allotment, the other day they even asked for spinach with their tea. I think they just love the fun of picking it and eating it straight away.

There's no gas here, everything's electric, and I don't miss the boiler in the old flat breaking down every five minutes! Even better is the fact that everything is on one bill - the rent, the electric and the car hire - if I've used them. Adding them all up its way cheaper than what I used to pay. More people are working from home now and they've got hot desks in the community hub, so I don't have to look at the washing-up while I'm trying to concentrate!

Right, better go, I'm going to try out one of the electric bikes to pop down to the Post Office before I have to do the school and nursery run.



Jack and Lucy, so grown up since you last saw them!

Come for a visit soon!

Jenny xx

Ps. Steve says if you want to know more, you should google Passivhaus!

