

Work has now begun on site at Graven Hill, paving the way for construction of the first ten 'pioneer' homes to start later this year.

MARCH 2016

# GRAVEN HILL Overview

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Graven Hill Village Development Company is on target to deliver the UK's largest ever self-build and custom-build new homes programme.

FULL STORY ON PAGE 2

Preparing the  
Pioneers Site

# View from the top of the hill

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**This is my first newsletter since arriving in January to run Graven Hill. So welcome. I will be writing a piece for each newsletter to give you an overview of what we are currently doing and next steps.**

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**T**he job here is amazing. 2016 is a big year for Graven Hill Village.

You will see from this issue we are making real progress on the site. All the planning and financing work over the last 2 years or more means that we can now spend money and deliver action on site – you'll read here about demolitions, new roads, ecology and tree planting. These are activities that will create access to new parts of the site and invest in the future quality of the village. For example, we need to capture the right time of the year to give new trees the best chance to grow into our new orchard.

We have a small team here at the moment and part of progressing with delivery is the need to build capacity, to manage work on site and look after customers as we move to opening plot reservations and sales (more about this in the next issue). We are already actively seeking ambitious people to fill the first new jobs and more will follow. Do keep an eye on our web site for recruitment news.

We have been fantastically hosted by Cherwell District Council at Bodicote since our inception. Now is the time to locate the company and the team at Graven Hill, as we move into the next stages of this exciting ten-year programme. We plan to do that in the Spring.

I hope you find our regular newsletter interesting and informative. There is plenty more information online at [gravenhill.co.uk](http://gravenhill.co.uk), and our new website coming on stream later this year will provide an even better resource for prospective buyers, the local community and stakeholders.

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**Philip Singleton,**  
Managing Director  
Graven Hill Village  
Development  
Company



# Demolition of MoD buildings on track



Removing the 'Bolero Huts'

**A**rmac Demolition started in January and the £450,000 contract is due for completion by late summer. Materials from the demolished buildings will be recycled for use in the construction works.

The buildings cleared are reminders of the site's history as an ordnance depot. Planned as the main supply base for the British Army's operations during the Second World War, more than 20,000 people worked here by 1944. It became an important supply base for the United States forces in Europe, under Operation Bolero - after which a group of Nissan huts, demolished last month, were named.

The demolition team has now started on a huge warehouse, highlighting that even seventy years ago, the site had good connectivity to road and rail networks. Also being cleared are a social club and theatre - reminders of life for the thousands of military personnel who served at Graven Hill.

Site preparations are now well underway and include the demolition of disused Ministry of Defence buildings.



Final curtain for military theatre

# First roads taking shape

## DID YOU KNOW?

The 'Pioneers Site' is the location for the first ten homes to be built. We have found ten pioneer self-builders who will begin building their dream homes this summer. Their journey will be followed by Kevin McCloud for a Channel 4 series, 'My Grand Designs'. The Pioneers Site is a pilot for Graven Hill, from which we will learn and refine the development programme. Show homes will also be built on the Pioneers Site for prospective customers to view and meet our sales team.



**T**he first two roads at Graven Hill are taking shape. Contractors P J Carey - awarded the £2.2 million contract last year - began work on the access road on 5 February. They will complete this phase of infrastructure works by laying the road through to the Pioneers Site by late summer.

Graven Hill Village access road under construction

# Pond life, hedgerows and fruit trees

Graven Hill Village is designed for residents to live in harmony with nature and enjoy the health benefits this brings.



**W**e have worked with a team of ecologists to ensure plans for Graven Hill protect and encourage bio diversity.

Alongside the access road, we have begun laying hedges and planting fruit trees that will provide food and shelter for an abundance of wildlife. The site is already home to a healthy population of newts and new ponds are currently being dug to provide them - and other pond-loving creatures - with a secure habitat where they can thrive. Wildlife experts are on hand to help the newts move to their new home in May.

For more information about our ecology strategy, read the Graven Hill Design Code at [gravenhill.co.uk/design-code](http://gravenhill.co.uk/design-code)



Traditional hedge laying skills are being used at Graven Hill



Sapling fruit trees newly planted on site, alongside mature trees that are being preserved



# Easier routes to building your own home

For many people, the idea of building your own home can feel daunting. We understand this - which is why we are offering a ground-breaking new approach to self-build at Graven Hill.

When you buy your plot, we will prepare the ground, lay the foundations to your design and install the utilities connections. We will also offer a range of 'helping hand' options to choose from, to make your house-building journey as smooth as possible.

We are currently researching customer needs further to develop these options, and testing a new website in readiness for launch, with interactive tools to help you decide on the right route for your house-building journey. This approach is designed to give more people the confidence to create their ideal home - whether your dream is a bungalow for your retirement years, a house designed for home-working, a starter home with hobby space or a wheelchair-friendly family home.

Look out for more information about this in future issues and on the website.

[GRAVENHILL.CO.UK](http://GRAVENHILL.CO.UK)



**DATE FOR YOUR DIARY!**

**Build It Live Bicester  
11-12 June 2016**

Don't miss the **Build It Live** event at Bicester Heritage, a fantastic opportunity to get inspiration and expert advice about self-build projects.

**Build It Live** will be packed full of ideas, information, a vast array of self build products and a wide selection of leading suppliers to help you along your self build journey. Tickets on sale from late March - visit [builditlive.co.uk](http://builditlive.co.uk) for details.

# Getting a mortgage for self-build

Self-build mortgages are available from some lenders but are different from standard mortgages - [buildstore.co.uk](http://buildstore.co.uk) is a great source of information about this.

Graven Hill Village Development Company have been raising with the Government and lenders the need for more self-build mortgages in the

marketplace. Recently, we invited ten mortgage lenders and five valuation companies along to show them what we are doing and introduce the Graven Hill concept.

We are pleased to report that initial property valuations at Graven Hill by lenders validate our estimates.

**A key concern for most people - whether buying or building - a house is getting a mortgage.**



# Stamp duty changes

As expected (and reported to the Graven Hill Village Development Company Board in December), the Chancellor, George Osborne, announced increases to stamp duty on second homes in his Spring Budget this month.

This will affect anyone buying at Graven Hill who continues to live in their current home while their new home is built: you will need to budget for these changes. However, if you sell your old home within 36 months of buying your Graven Hill plot, you will be able to reclaim this tax from HMRC in full.

The changes take effect on 1 April 2016.

For more information and full details go to [hmrc.gov.uk](http://hmrc.gov.uk), where you will find a guidance note titled 'Stamp Duty Land Tax: higher rates for purchases of additional residential properties'.



## DID YOU KNOW?

If you purchase a Graven Hill plot, you may be able to rent an apartment on site until your home is ready to move in to.

[GRAVENHILL.CO.UK](http://GRAVENHILL.CO.UK)

# WE'RE RECRUITING!

This exciting ten-year project is progressing on target and Graven Hill Development Company is now expanding the delivery team ready for the next stage. This Spring we are recruiting to fill the following posts...

For details and information on how to apply, please visit

[GRAVENHILL.CO.UK/CAREERS](http://GRAVENHILL.CO.UK/CAREERS)



HEAD OF DIGITAL EXPERIENCE



SENIOR PROJECT MANAGER



SENIOR SALES CONSULTANT



HEALTH & SAFETY MANAGER



SALES CONSULTANT



The next Graven Hill newsletter will be published in MAY 2016. In the meantime, the Graven Hill website will provide up-to-date information about developments on site.

Alternatively, contact a member of the Graven Hill team on: **01295 753700** or email [info@gravenhill.co.uk](mailto:info@gravenhill.co.uk)

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