

All the intangible things really add up

BIRCHGROVE, IS A SPECIALIST DEVELOPER OF HIGH-QUALITY RETIREMENT PROPERTIES IN KENT AND SURREY. MARION MOVED TO BIRCHGROVE'S QUEENSGATE APARTMENTS, SIDCUP, JUST BEFORE THE FIRST LOCKDOWN AND TELLS US ABOUT HER EXPERIENCE.

I'd lost my husband, he was a musician and teacher and suddenly passed away. Ours was a very happy house full of music but it suddenly just went quiet. I was very lonely and having to shield so started to look around. I'm a person who needs the company of others and I'd been on my own for quite a long time. I was looking at various retirement properties but was put off by the service and maintenance charges.

One day, I was driving near Queen Mary's hospital with my son when I saw the signage and this building.

So my son said, 'let's have a look'. I was amazed at how lovely it was when I came in, and my son felt the same, so we started looking at the different apartment options.

I started to think about it, but what decided me completely was I woke up one night to hear this terrible banging. I lived in a bungalow, so went into the kitchen, and it was the boiler, and I was frightened. No point in calling family at that hour so I called the gas company at 2am and they asked if I could smell gas. I told them I've

not been able to smell for years. Thankfully they came immediately but had to turn the gas off. I was left freezing cold and thought this place can't be for me anymore.

Birchgrove was wonderful, so I decided to go for it. They offered me a trial stay, but I said, 'no, I need to make a clean decision whilst I've got all my faculties and I'm able to do as I want. Life's not going to get any easier; don't expect it to.' My family are very much at peace now because they worried about me being on my own. That's very important to me.

Now, a year later, I feel more than ever I've made the right decision. It's a bit like being in a hotel, really; everyone is so lovely and kind and will do everything for you. I like getting up and having a coffee morning; that starts me off for the day. Having lunch in the restaurant as I prefer to eat lighter in the evening - means hardly any cooking. Most of all I love the freedom of being able to do what I want, when I want. Of being around people, seeing them smiling at you, meeting others for a cup of tea or coffee. It's impossible to put a price on what happiness I get living here. Yes, it seemed expensive at first but



when I think about all the softer things, like not having to be lonely or worried anymore, it's worth every single penny. It's not just simplified my life; it's given my life quality, value and meaning.

If you would like to find out more about living at a Birchgrove community contact the team who will happily talk through the options and tailor something that works to support your personal needs. Call 020 3929 5599 or visit www.birchgrove.life

