

# Couple get greenlight to build Alexandra House of Joy day centre in Bicester



By [Indya Clayton @oxmailindyac](#) Reporter



AFTER two years and two months of waiting, a couple's dream of opening a state-of-the-art adult care centre in memory of their daughter has taken a huge step closer.

Rachael and Ian Scott-Hunter, from Bicester have finally got planning permission to build The Alexandra House of Joy (AHOJ).

AHOJ aims to provide a place for adults with learning difficulties and follows Rachael and Ian's own experience with their daughter Alexandra who had complex needs and passed away in March 2019, at the age of 47.

She had suffered a brain haemorrhage when she was just four days old and grew up with profound and severe learning disabilities.

The parents took on the mammoth task of raising the money needed for AHOJ after seeing their daughter's care provision erode over the years, culminating in the closure of the Day Time Support Centre she relied upon.



Now, the couple have been given the greenlight to build.

Rachael said: "We are very excited. Of course now there's going to be a really hard fundraising drive because we've got to raise £3 million so we've got a long way to go but we've got two years to do it in. We've started now making lots of contacts and doing lots of applications for grants, but it's just wonderful to know that finally we've got our planning permission - it's made it very real. I'm over the moon."

The facility will be built on land south of Seelscheid Way between the A41 and Wretchwick Way in Bicester and plans include bedrooms for respite stay and end of life palliative care, for adults with learning difficulties age 35 and upwards.

There will also be a day centre for adults aged 19 years and upwards that would include a music room, sensory room, computer room, arts and crafts, outdoor space, and a hydrotherapy pool.

Rachael said that due to the pandemic and lockdowns, she feels people have forgotten about the project but is hoping to hold events again to continue raising funds.



Banbury Market on a Saturday showing Ian and Rachael with Tom Duckham (Street Scene Manager) on the right, and Richard Slatter (Street Scene Supervisor) on the left

Rachael added: "We're fighting to get known again. We were doing really well up until the Covid shutdown in March 2020. But we're moving along at long last and will be out there in the public again doing events and doing talks.

"This will be a very much needed centre for adults that is so unique it hasn't been done before. Under our roof we're covering all the needs of somebody with a learning disability.

"There are very few hospices that know how to look after somebody with a severe learning disability - they know the palliative care side of it but are not informed enough about people with profound learning disabilities.

"I really want the local community to be behind us, it's not about me it's about these wonderful adults who deserve an equal life to the rest of us."

For more information, go to [alexandrahouseofjoy.co.uk](http://alexandrahouseofjoy.co.uk).