

**RIVERVIEW VILLAGE PROJECT
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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British writer on community and the mentally ill backs Riverview Village project

Riverview Village is a “bold and valuable initiative that deserves all possible encouragement,” according to British writer Mike Jay, an expert on the Geel, Belgium model of foster homes for the seriously mentally ill.

In a probing 2014 article on Geel in online emag *Aeon*, Jay concludes the Geel model has been eroded by modern life, yet the idea of a community supporting and integrating the most seriously ill remains as valid as ever. He then wonders out loud what the alternative might look like, one taking advantage of the strength of community, but in modern circumstances. The Riverview Village proposal, for a mixed community of the seriously ill and those who are well, provides such a model.

Jay, in an email to the Riverview Village Project, writes “There is abundant evidence that being supported by a wider community is beneficial for many sufferers. ... The main problem, today more than ever, is finding those with the will, commitment and expertise to design and realise a community in which the mentally unwell can be accommodated.

“Riverview Village proposes an ‘intentional community’ to which this goal would be integral. Such a community would offer great prospects to all involved. The seriously ill residents will be able to lead a life that would be impossible for them to sustain elsewhere, and which for many will be their best chance of fulfillment and happiness.

“The non-mentally ill residents [for their part] will be residents and partners in a community brought together and bonded by its ethos of mutual support.”

The Riverview Village proposal for the Riverview Lands holds out the possibility of a major breakthrough for the most seriously ill, helping to break their isolation and putting the strength of a community to work to give them a sense of belonging and help them achieve their potential.

- Mike Jay’s complete statement is attached.
- For Mike Jay’s article on Geel, “The Geel question,” please see <http://aeon.co/magazine/health/the-town-where-the-mentally-ill-get-a-warm-welcome>.
- For the Riverview Village proposal, please see <http://riverviewvillage.ca/riverviewvillage-primarydoc.pdf>.
- For additional details on each aspect of the proposal, please see the Question and Answers section on the Project’s website at <http://riverviewvillage.ca/questions.htm>.

Contact:

Herschel Hardin, coordinator, 604-922-7153

Mike Jay 011 44 208 747 0687. Note that London, England time is 8 hours ahead of Vancouver’s.