



# Area given £7.5m kick-start



Left:  
Architect's  
drawing of  
First Phase  
of next  
development  
of Collins  
and Aikman  
Site, with  
Morrison's  
supermarket  
and Mill Rise  
to be seen  
towards the  
bottom.

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In October 2009 Kier Ventures announced their planned development of the site of the former GEC Factory (demolished in 2004) off Lower Milehouse Lane (the Collins & Aikman Site) had been given a £7.5m boost. This followed their successful bid to the Homes and Communities Agency's (HCA) Kickstart Programme, designed to stimulate stalled new housing projects around the country following the economic downturn, to create jobs and ensure enough homes are built during the recession.

More good news followed in November when Newcastle Borough granted formal planning permission for Kier to build 80 homes, as part of the first phase of the development of the site, with 72 affordable to be owned by Aspire Housing. 32 of these will be intended for shared ownership, with the Borough agreeing to buy equity shares in the new units from its housing capital programme if they are not sold quickly. This would allow Aspire to rent them out to suitable applicants to avoid any void properties.

Work is now expected to begin by April 2010, taking a year to complete.

Phase 2 will provide a further 130 homes, mainly for outright sale. All homes will be built to Eco Homes "Very Good" standard.

The housing properties for rent and shared ownership will include:

- 22 x 2 bedroom bungalows
- 15 x 2 bedroom houses
- 21 x 3 bedroom houses
- 14 x 4 bedroom houses

Mark Roe, Senior Development Manager at Aspire Housing is excited about the plans. "All homes will be allocated through the nominations agreement with Newcastle Borough Council." Shared ownership is available directly from Aspire Housing with indicative costs from:

- £125,000 for a bungalow
- £110,000 for a 2 bedroom house
- £120,000 for a 3 bedroom house
- £162,500 for a 4 bedroom house

Mark added: "If people would like to register an interest in the shared ownership homes then please contact Parwin Khaliq on 01782 635200."

# More Improvements for Knutton

Aspire Housing is starting the New Year by giving a facelift to 150 homes in Knutton. It has joined forces with RENEW North Staffordshire to carry out £160,000 worth of investment to improve a straight row of St. Bernard's Road on the 'evens side' and the area of Knutton Village around Silverdale Street.

The cash injection will be spent on exterior renovations including new boundary walls and railings in St Bernards Road and repairs to render, re-pointing and supplying new rainwater collection goods in Knutton Village.

Aspire will provide a number of training opportunities to PM Training apprentices throughout the project. PM Training, a social enterprise which is part of the Aspire Housing Group, tackles worklessness by giving those with few or no qualifications an alternative route into employment.

Darren Green, Senior Regeneration Manager at Aspire Housing said: "Aspire Housing is very pleased to be able to deliver these improvements in the Knutton area, working with RENEW North Staffordshire.

"The initiative will enhance the local environment for residents, making it a more attractive place to live. The ultimate aim is to increase the demand and the market value of these houses, encouraging more homeownership in the area."

These properties in St. Bernard's Road were once considered for clearance, but these improvements will considerably improve the living environment. Affected residents will be contacted to discuss the individual proposals for the identified properties.

Newcastle MP Paul Farrelly commented, "Local residents will be delighted to see that Renew and Aspire are committed to refurbishing their homes and giving their properties a smarter appearance".



*Pictures: Residents from all ages gave their opinions about the suggested improvements for some of the properties in St Bernards Road, Knutton during an Information Event held by Aspire Housing in November 2009*



Local resident of Knutton Village, Mr Shone contacted to say "Brilliant news!"

St Bernards Road resident Mr Richardson was impressed with the ideas but added, "It's about time."

The work is due to start in January and expected to be completed by April 2010. It is part of a range of regeneration projects being jointly funded by RENEW North Staffordshire, Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council and Aspire Housing in the Knutton and Cross Heath area of major intervention. This includes clearance of housing stock, various refurbishment projects and improvements to public areas.



The Realise Foundation has been established under charitable legislation as part of the Aspire Group. The charity's main objective is to support the regeneration of North Staffordshire, with its focus for the current year to provide bursaries to students from Newcastle under Lyme, fund environmental initiatives within the Borough and fund apprenticeships through PM Training.

Picture Right:  
The Chosen Design  
(Great Crested  
Newt) by Felicity

Year 4 children from Knutton St Mary's came up with about 15 proposals all based on the wildlife that can be found locally in the area. PM



Training is gearing up to produce and install the piece of art for generations to enjoy in the future. They will be inviting the class from the local school to see the artwork being produced.

## Fun at Ramsey Road

Young people living in Knutton and Cross Heath have enjoyed a range of activities at Ramsey Road Community Centre. Youngsters have taken part in various art and craft activities including t-shirt printing and banner-making as well as outings to the Stoke dry ski slope and Amerton Farm.

The 'Wicked Weekends' programme continues to run on Friday evenings and is attracting young people from around the area. More activities will take place during half term in February 2010.

Picture Below: Kids from Project House enjoying a dry run on ski slope.



Picture Right:  
PM Apprentices hard at  
work creating Public Art  
destined for Chesterton  
in 2009.



This has led to Aspire Housing working with the Borough Council to commission a piece of art work to mark the main entrance to the new Neighbourhood Park on the land lying between Knutton and Cross Heath, known locally to residents as the Wammy (a name given to it by the river that used to flow through the area).

As part of the process of establishing the appearance of the artwork for the entrance, local primary schools were invited to have their children come up with possible designs.

## Community Tree Planting to help Create Woodland Edge in Knutton



Picture above: Mayor signals the start of Tree O'Clock in Knutton

Local residents and businesses were invited to join The Mayor of Newcastle Councillor Miss Marion Reddish to plant over a thousand trees on the land between Lymedale Business Park and the Cotswold Estate in Knutton, during National Tree Week. Part of the BBC's Breathing Places National Guinness World Record, the event was part of a national invitation to plant the most number of trees in multiple sites at 'Tree O'Clock' on 5 December 2009 between 11 a.m. – 12.00 noon.

New Knutton Residents' Association worked with Aspire Housing, Newcastle Countryside Project, Staffordshire Wildlife Trust, Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council and Staffordshire County Council to give local residents more countryside views in the future as they had before the development of Lymedale Business Park.

Right: Future Finest and local scouts working together



The Project was funded from donations from Newcastle Borough Council (Local Area Partnership), The Woodland Trust, Garners Garden Centre, Silverdale and Morrell's Pharmacy, Primary Care Centre, Lower Milehouse.

The Residents' Association had felt that there was a lack of mature trees in the area generally and there is a need to sustain and increase the benefits to the public by expanding the existing woodland area.

Residents' Association Chairman, Tony Eagles, was delighted with the event and said: "Although we will have to wait a few more years to see the full overall effect, this is a real achievement for this area. I was particularly impressed by the way the youngsters worked really enthusiastically with older people."



Above: Local different generations fully involved

## Area (and assistance with National World Record attempt!)

An official count of 64 volunteers turned up early for the attempt to help set the world record and finished with time to spare. They came not only from the New Knutton Residents' Association but also from Future Finest, local scout troops, workers from partner agencies of the area and their families.

Together they planted 1000 bare-rooted feathered 'whips' of broad-leaf native species including silver birch, alder, hazel, hawthorn, wild cherry, crab apple, wild roses, ash and oak. In addition one ash and two oak saplings grown from acorns in pots were donated by local residents and several small whips collected from local garden centres, donated by Breathing Spaces as well as 8 trees given by Madeleine Pottinger from Tittensor who had spotted the community event previously posted on the Woodland Trust Website (although too late by 3 minutes for Tree O'Clock), resulting in a grand total of 1019 new trees on the day.

Sinead Butters, Chief Executive of the Aspire Group, praised the organisation of the event, adding, "It was very exciting to be part of a nationwide attempt to set a new world record, but what is more, it benefits the environment and will enhance the local area."

Shaun Rimmer, from Staffordshire Wildlife Trust's Wild Steps Project, noted, "This increased community ownership of the



Picture Above: Posing for the official photo after a frantic 40 minutes of planting Laurence, Shaun and Tony.

countryside will increase the area for wildlife value, as well as encouraging individuals who took part to keep up a healthier lifestyle."

Laurence Reardon, Project Officer at Aspire Housing, conscious of building on the community tree-planting from the previous year, remarked, "We are still looking at ways of working with local communities to assist them in improving their living environment. The Tree O'Clock planting scheme has given the opportunity for young and older people to come together today to benefit future generations."

### **B||B||C Stop Press:**

"Tree O'Clock was a resounding success, with thousands of events taking place and a significant number of trees planted at sites and in gardens across the country. Unofficially our estimates suggest that overall as many as 500,000 trees could have been planted as a result of the initiative – leaving lasting benefits for native wildlife, for people and the environment for generations to come.

We are grateful to all the people who went the extra mile and also sent us their photographs so that their tree could count towards the Guinness World Record attempt. So not a Guinness World Record, but what an incredible achievement!"



Above: Mr Pottinger with the contribution from Tittensor.

## More improvements announced for Lower Milehouse

The range of regeneration projects being jointly funded by RENEW North Staffordshire and Aspire Housing in the Knutton and Cross Heath area of major intervention included clearance of housing stock at Lower Milehouse. Phase I of this programme has now been completed with the last families who had been notified under the Masterplanning exercises of 2004-06, having been re-located at the end of 2009.

Residents in the properties which remain are being informed of various refurbishment projects and improvements to public areas.

In January 2010 over 100 residents have been informed of details of the improvements scheduled to be being carried out to the outside of their homes. The scheme includes frontage improvements, boundary treatments, security measures and low maintenance gardens. Much of the work is to be carried out by PM Training, although an Aspire Surveyor contacts in the first place to go through a possible "improvements menu" with individual residents.

The work has already started on improvements to public areas, with mass bulb planting, organised jointly by Aspire's Estate Caretakers and PM Training on all the land left by the clearance programme.

*Picture Below: Trainees from PM Training helping to establish a splash of colour for the Spring on a freezing day in December 2009.*

## RENEW Website - Help needed for the Knutton and Cross Heath Community Page



RENEW North Staffordshire has recently re-launched its website, with the intention of it being easier to use and to better reflect work which is currently being undertaken in North Staffordshire.

Although the site is now up and running, some pages can still be improved. This includes strengthening its 'community pages'. There is dedicated community page for each of the Areas of Major Intervention - including Knutton and Cross Heath.

Amy Danylyk, resident of St Bernard's Road, Knutton is already a member of the New Beginnings Newsletter's Editorial Team. She has recently volunteered to help write the Knutton and Cross Heath Community Page for RENEW and will comment on the draft page before it goes live. If any other resident wishes to become involved or is simply after more information, they should contact Keith Gerrard via email [Keith.Gerrard@stoke.gov.uk](mailto:Keith.Gerrard@stoke.gov.uk) or telephone 01782 232024.



# A New Community Newsletter for Knutton and Cross Heath?



RENEW's New Beginnings Newsletter (above) for the Knutton and Cross Heath area focuses on regeneration issues only.

A survey has been sent round to local residents to find opinions of the proposal to introduce a new community newsletter produced by and for residents in the area. The idea is supported by a range of organisations but will only go ahead if it receives support and offers of involvement from local people.

Items for inclusion in the new newsletter could be local sport previews and match reports, local history, film, book and gig reviews, information on local events, a letters page, a "hatched, matched and dispatched" section, competitions and puzzles, photographs, cartoons, adverts and information from agencies as well as articles on a variety of local subjects.

If you are interested in getting involved with this project, either helping to produce editions, contributing articles or simply interested in reading it, contact Helen Wainwright at Newcastle CVS

(07791244284), Ann Spilsbury at Project House (611235) or Annemarie Jamieson of Knutton Children's Centre (269120).

## The People's Archive!

Working with The Sentinel, RENEW North Staffordshire has set up a website to chronicle the changing face of North Staffordshire. The archive illustrates the work taking place to regenerate Newcastle and Stoke-on-Trent.

Here you will find stories, images and videos showing how money is being spent to improve the lives of people living in the communities affected by renewal work.

You will be able to log on and see the work as it progresses, learn about future plans and also add your comments, images and videos from your own communities at [www.thepeoplesarchive.co.uk](http://www.thepeoplesarchive.co.uk)

For further details contact Harpreet Rayet at RENEW, [Harpreet.Rayet@stoke.gov.uk](mailto:Harpreet.Rayet@stoke.gov.uk)

## Ask the Editor

**Amy Danylyk asks what can residents do about the potholes on the road and damaged pavements which can cause injury, particularly to children, cyclists and infirm people, as well as damage to vehicles.**

Editor's Note: Upkeep of the roads is the responsibility of the County Council. Residents should report highway faults to Staffordshire County Council's CLARENCE system. You may report a fault to CLARENCE online via the LocalView website "Report It" facility. The status of reports can be checked with the CLARENCE contact centre.

The CLARENCE Contact Centre can be contacted between 8am and 6pm, Monday to Friday free of charge using freephone 0800 23 23 23 and at any time by emailing [clarence@staffordshire.gov.uk](mailto:clarence@staffordshire.gov.uk)



## Useful Contacts

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### RENEW North Staffordshire Helpline

01782 232024

**Residents' Friend** - service offers independent information and advice about the Housing Market Renewal Programme.

Emily Tomkinson, Residents' Friend Direct Dial: 01782 408787

Contact Emily or Project House (01782 611235) to make an appointment for Ramsey Road Community Centre.

Home visits are also available on request

**This newsletter can be provided in alternative formats on request.**

**Please telephone us on 01782 635200**

