

April/May 2009



## PARTNERS' BRIEFING



**renew**  
North Staffordshire

changing places: transforming lives

## GREAT NEW COMMUNITY FACILITY FOR MEIR RESIDENTS OPENS

A pair of ordinary semi-detached houses have been transformed by RENEW North Staffordshire and Great Places Housing Group into a fantastic new community resource centre for the people of Meir.

The two local authority homes have been opened up, using an internal steel structure, to provide large meeting spaces, kitchen and offices.

RENEW funded the project – called The Square, which is situated in the heart of the neighbourhood. It was officially opened at a party attended by Stoke City soccer legend, Denis Smith, and Stoke MP, Rob Ffello.

Guy Cresswell, director of housing at Great Places, which led the facility development, said: “The houses have been totally transformed into a really impressive space.

“We’ve be working with a committed group of local people who have formed a community committee to run the centre, and steer what it will be used for. We hope it will be a place that will offer something for everyone.” Coffee mornings, film shows, arts and craft sessions, adult learning courses, health advice and employment skills training could all soon be taking place.

Great Places will continue to work with local people to establish the community committee and will cover its first year’s running costs. And along with RENEW, will also jointly fund a new community link officer to support local people for the next two years.

Other organisations such as the Citizens Advice Bureau and the North Staffordshire Police will also make use of the new centre for meetings and office space.

RENEW has received overwhelming public support for the regeneration plans for Meir and the opening of the community centre underlines the programme’s aim to create a positive, sustainable future for the area. The long-term plan is to provide better housing and amenities, more choice of places to live for rent and to buy, and open spaces that families will love to spend time in.

Building work has begun on the first homes for sale in the area. Around 20 three-bedroom family homes on Woodville Road will be refurbished over the next two years, and planning permission has been granted for a further 46 new homes on Lyme Road, which will be available for shared ownership at affordable prices.



Stoke City soccer legend, Denis Smith, and Stoke MP, Rob Ffello, at the event.

## NEW CANAL BRIDGE OPENS

A new pedestrian bridge across the Caldon Canal in Stoke-on-Trent's City Waterside development has been opened to the public.

The City Waterside development is next to the successful Emma Bridgewater Pottery. Founder Emma Bridgewater helped local children perform the opening ceremony at a City Waterside event that also included the launch of a new prospectus to attract developers for the next phase of construction on the 'flagship' scheme, and the re-naming of the City Waterside Community Centre.

Talking about her confidence in the future of the area, Emma said: "I'm very excited at the prospect of having a brand new factory next to my present site. Bridgewater Pottery is completely committed to Stoke-on-Trent and we wouldn't dream of being anywhere else. This offers us the chance to modernise and introduce new technology to the production of our range of locally made ceramics."

The new bridge links the developing residential areas of City Waterside to the city centre. Development in the area is led by the City Waterside Partnership, which includes RENEW North Staffordshire, the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA), the North Staffordshire Regeneration Partnership, Stoke-on-Trent City Council, British Waterways and Beth Johnson Housing Association.

The £177m regeneration scheme is being developed on 67 hectares of land immediately south of Stoke-on-Trent city centre alongside the canal. Since redevelopment started in 2006, around 1,300 new homes have received planning consent and 220 of these have now been completed and sold.

When fully developed, City Waterside will have a total of 2,400 new properties and 540 improved homes in historic terraces, together with a small amount of housing dating mainly from the 1960s and 1970s. Environmental improvements have been undertaken throughout City Waterside, including new street furniture, traffic calming and face-lifts for the Victorian terraced houses that are being retained.

Before redevelopment, the land comprised poor quality terraced housing and old industrial buildings, many of them former pottery factories.

**Front page picture: Children from the City Waterside Primary School stand on the new bridge.**

## THE NEW 'FLOATING' BRIDGE

The new bridge over the Caldon Canal is an innovative design that makes it appear cantilevered from the northern end and floating above the water. A lattice structure below deck and a top surface deck formed in a patterned block pavement are inspired by ceramic designs used by Thomas Minton in the late 19th century - giving strong links with the history of the local community.

The bridge is part of the emerging masterplan for the area around the Bridgewater Pottery. Developed by NORD Architecture, the masterplan helps create a new neighbourhood to transform the canalside and the existing Bridgewater Pottery buildings into a mixed use development for residential, manufacturing, retail and leisure.

Family housing will be introduced nearby - and the new link was needed across the canal to give a pedestrian route to the local school and to Stoke-on-Trent city centre. The bridge has been designed with shallow ramps to make it easy to use by everyone.



**Youngsters from the City Waterside Primary School at the new bridge.**

## RENEW REGENERATION PROGRAMME PRAISED IN PARLIAMENT

Weston Heights was cited as an example of best practice during a debate in Parliament on housing investment in Stoke-on-Trent.

Joan Walley, MP for Stoke-on-Trent North, kicked off the debate by stressing that housing investment is fundamental to the entire regeneration of the city and is also integral to wider government efforts to stimulate growth in West Midlands.

In response, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, Iain Wright, said he had been to Stoke-on-Trent several times to examine for himself the issues of housing and regeneration in the area. He said he 'greatly enjoyed' his time at Weston Heights, in the Coalville area.

He added: " Weston Heights is a landmark regeneration scheme in the city, demonstrating great partnership working, led by RENEW North Staffordshire, which has produced something like £55 million worth of investment, providing 300 modern, good-quality houses for the people of Colville and beyond. This development very vividly shows what can be achieved in Stoke-on-Trent.

"I have mentioned partnership working...and the importance of such working between RENEW North Staffordshire, the Homes and Communities Agency, Advantage West Midlands and Stoke-on-Trent City Council in producing co-ordinated and complementary outcomes at both regional and local level, which are also led by the community. The relationship between the regional Homes and Communities Agency, the regional development agency and the local authority is the vital key to securing ...the triumvirate of housing, jobs and skills."

Mr Wright, whose responsibilities include housing policy and housing-related regeneration, toured the area last year. Weston Heights is a five-year regeneration programme being carried out by the Compendium Group - a joint venture between Riverside and Lovell - with funding from RENEW at Coalville, a former mining estate.

In addition to new homes for rent, shared ownership and outright sale for existing and new residents, the development will also feature new public open space including a play area and sports field, and a new community centre. The programme is in its second phase and the entire scheme is expected to be complete in 2012.

## RESIDENTS TO HAVE THEIR SAY ON THE FUTURE OF NORTHWOOD

People in Northwood have been asked for their views on plans to regenerate their neighbourhood.

A team of consultants has worked with the local community to draw up the Northwood Neighbourhood Plan, which aims address key issues within the area and make Northwood a better place to live and work.

At two drop-in sessions held early in May, local residents were asked for feedback on the plans, which include:

- improvements to the layout and mix of land uses within the area
- ways to improve public areas and movement throughout the neighbourhood
- the development of West Northwood
- ways of providing a better quality and choice of housing.

The Northwood Neighbourhood Plan was launched in September last year by RENEW North Staffordshire and Moorland Housing, through the North Staffordshire Regeneration Partnership (NSRP). It will be used to shape future development and environmental improvements in the area, making Northwood a more attractive and desirable place.

A team of consultants has been working with Northwood residents and local businesses to identify problems within the neighbourhood. A major survey of community opinion was carried out in February 2009, after which a series of ways to address the key issues were drawn up.

## CHILDREN BURY TIME CAPSULE AT SHOWCASE DEVELOPMENT

Pupils from Knutton St Mary's Primary CE School helped future residents of Mill Rise Village to bury a time capsule on the site of Newcastle-under-Lyme's first extra-care development.

Year 3 pupils first visited the site in the summer last year, and since then, have produced a number of items that were placed in the capsule, including photographs, a book and items of the school's uniform.

Suzie King, Project Manager at Aspire Housing, said: "It is really wonderful for the pupils from St Mary's to be involved in this exciting project from start to finish. They have seen the development grow over the last year and came up with some fantastic ideas for the contents of the time capsule."

The Mill Rise development is part of RENEW North Staffordshire's programme in the Knutton and Cross Heath area of major intervention (AMI). It has been built to high design and environmental standards and is part of the wider regeneration of the Knutton and Cross Heath area.

Mill Rise will provide the over 55s with the opportunity to continue living independently in their own homes. It will host a number of other services, including the use of a lounge, bar, restaurant, coffee shop and more. A show home is currently open.

NHS North Staffordshire will provide a state-of-the-art health centre on site at the village that will host a pharmacy and act as a base for the three local GP practices in the area. In addition, the new centre will provide physiotherapy, chiropody and podiatry services together with a range of community nursing services.

**Pupils from Knutton St Mary's Primary CE School helped bury a time capsule on the site of Newcastle-under-Lyme's first extra-care development.**



## PUSHING THE BOUNDARIES

Staffordshire Housing Association is working with local social enterprise, PM Training, on a scheme to improve the appearance and security at homes in Fegg Hayes Village.

Seven young recruits have been involved in a scheme to replace boundary walls and coping stones to 40 terraced properties in the village. Funded by RENEW North Staffordshire and delivered by Staffordshire Housing Association, the £100,000 project has provided new walls in West Terrace and East Terrace.

Stoke-based PM Training is working in partnership with RENEW and Staffordshire Housing Association to deliver new training initiatives for local people. The partnership will help regenerate the wider community by helping jobseekers into employment, and creating neighbourhoods where young people choose to settle.

Diane Lea, chief executive of Staffordshire Housing Association, said, "We're delighted to be working with PM Training to benefit the young people of North Staffordshire. Developing the right skills is especially important in today's economic climate, and we know that working on these types of projects has helped many young people go on to find real jobs."

## CELEBRATING A MUCH-LOVED COMMUNITY CHAMPION

Residents fondly remembered a former neighbour when they took part in a bulb planting event at a new community garden in Chamberlain Street, Shelton.

Established in memory of Arthur Garside, a much-loved resident and former member of the Upper Shelton Residents' Association before he died just over a year ago, the garden has been created by RENEW North Staffordshire in partnership with Beth Johnson Housing Association, Stoke-on-Trent City Council and local residents.

The former clearance area has been transformed into a space that people can enjoy. Residents were asked to pick their favourite design for the garden from three concept ideas and work started on site in December.

Around 90 residents have formed a group to help take care of 'Arthur's Garden'. The bulb planting event aimed to encourage as many people as possible to get involved in the project.

Local artist Philip Hardacre designed and built a mosaic tile bench for the garden, and children from St Mark's Primary School joined with residents to design and paint tiles for the seat.

The project has created a space for the local community to work in and enjoy together - and fitting memorial to Arthur Garside, who was a well known character and a dedicated community champion. The garden will be officially opened in July, around the time of Arthur's birthday.



## RESIDENTS INVITED TO HELP PLAN THE FUTURE OF CITY WATERSIDE EAST

A series of community consultation events designed to engage local residents in the regeneration of the City Waterside East area are to be held in the coming months.

As part of the programme to transform the area into a thriving community where people will want to live, work and invest, RENEW North Staffordshire has appointed consultants Taylor Young to lead the development of a masterplan to revitalise City Waterside East.

The events are designed to find out what residents think of plans to regenerate the neighbourhood as they progress. Residents will be encouraged to share their thoughts on how they would like to see the area developed – from the types and sizes of new homes to be built, to the design and use of the surrounding environment, and access to jobs, transport and health facilities.

The aim is to involve local people at the early stages of masterplanning for the area, so that they feel part of the regeneration process.

At the first of the community events held early in May, representatives from RENEW North Staffordshire, the city council's Neighbourhood Renewal Team and consultants Taylor Young were on hand to explain the masterplanning process, answer any questions and gather information and ideas that will be used to develop a series of options for the area over the coming months. The team will also give brief tours of the development sites.

## SKIP COLLECTION DAY AT GALLEYS BANK

Residents at Galleys Bank in Kidsgrove took full advantage of a free refuse collection day on the estate recently. Skips placed around the estate allowed residents to leave unwanted bulky items for disposal, free of charge. A collection service was also arranged for residents who were not able to move large items themselves.

Alex Phillips, of Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council, said: "Feedback from residents has been extremely positive and less refuse is visible in resident's gardens as a result of the scheme. This scheme aims to compliment other ongoing work on the estate and similar events will be arranged later in the year."

A Community Steering Group has been set up to act as a 'watchdog' and advisory body between residents, RENEW North Staffordshire and Newcastle Borough Council.

**Jane Hitchman Dean, RENEW North Staffordshire-funded CAB Residents' Friend for Galleys Bank helped out during the free refuse collection day recently.**



## ECO HOMES ON SHOW

A series of public open days showcased the latest eco terraced homes in Chesterton.

Four terraced homes have been remodelled in a partnership project between Newcastle Borough Council, Staffordshire Housing Association and RENEW North Staffordshire with Axis Design Architects.

Two 'eco terraces' were completed in May last year. Officially 'opened' by TV presenter and environmental campaigner, David Bellamy, they are now rented out by Staffordshire Housing Association. The new eco homes are for sale on the open housing market and interest in the properties is high.

Emma Roberts, Regeneration Programme Manager at Staffordshire Housing Association said: "The open days provided an opportunity for local residents to look at the features that make these homes so economically efficient, such as high efficiency gas boilers, glazed sun-spaces and solar panels."

Statistics on the energy saving properties of the homes that have been occupied for a year are being collated. The project outcome will hopefully demonstrate alternative solutions to demolishing older terraced homes.

## ALLEY-GATING MAKING LIFE SAFER AND QUIETER FOR RESIDENTS IN CITY WATERSIDE

RENEW North Staffordshire has been working in partnership with Beth Johnson Housing Association, its housing partner in the City Waterside area, and Stoke-on-Trent City Council on an 'alley gating' scheme that will help tackle crime in the area.

Only residents hold keys to the gates adjoining their homes and the new gates will increase the security around their streets.

The project has received lots of support from the residents, ward members and the local police. The gates will not only provide the extra security around the homes but will help reduce incidents of antisocial behaviour in the area.

A local artist has also been working on artwork for the gates, which will include a metalwork feature of a bottle kiln, representing the heritage of the local area. There will also be planters placed in the alleys, which will make them look more attractive.

## ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS UNDERWAY IN ELLGREAVE STREET

A safer environment is on the cards for hundreds of Middleport residents after contractors moved on site to start highways works in Ellgreave Street.

The project involves:

- realigning the junction of Ellgreave Street with Newcastle Street
- implementing traffic calming measures by reducing the width of Ellgreave Street around the Church Square area and installing a speed-hump on Lyndhurst Street
- installing an island crossing point for the scores of children and parents crossing Ellgreave Street when walking to and from John Baskeyfield VC Primary School.

RENEW North Staffordshire has funded Midland Heart - its housing association partners in the Middleport Burslem area - to develop and deliver a £1.1 million environmental programme in the area, which also includes facelifts to 91 terrace properties in Ellgreave Street and a major landscaping improvement in St Paul's Street.

The highways element of the programme should be completed later in the Spring.

## RESIDENTS DONATE MEMORIES TO KNUTTON ARTS PROJECT



A display of nostalgic items and stories was on display at Knutton Community Centre recently.

The exhibition, entitled 2400 Square Yards and 73 Houses is part of the Space, Place and Identity 2 - a RENEW North Staffordshire-funded project that uses the arts to convey the changes that are taking place during the North Staffordshire regeneration programme.

A ceramic house created by Louise Wood and Kate Lynch, containing images of photos of the Knutton Heritage facelift scheme and old photos from local residents, was the centre piece of the display. Residents who contributed memories and artefacts were each given a small piece of the ceramic house at the end of the event.

The exhibition was well attended by local residents of all ages, from school children taking a close look at the contents of the ceramic house, to elderly residents who had donated their 'memories'.

## GETTING BACK TO NATURE

The Beth Johnson Housing Association has used funding from RENEW North Staffordshire to commission Groundwork Stoke-on-Trent to carry out a range of sessions involving children from Etruscan Primary School, on the theme of gardening and sustainable living.

The sessions, which involved pupils from the school's gardening club, included artwork activities, such as painting plant pots and arranging hanging baskets. The hanging baskets have been hung up at the site of the North Shelton Community Centre to brighten up the grounds.

Beth Johnson - RENEW North Staffordshire's partner housing association in the North Shelton area - is hoping to work Groundwork to deliver further activities in the area throughout the summer.

## 'GATEWAY' IMPROVEMENTS IN KNUTTON

Plans are being developed to make environmental improvements to areas of Newcastle-under-Lyme that are not affected by the clearance programme.

RENEW North Staffordshire's housing association partner in the Knutton and Cross Heath Area of Major Intervention (AMI), Aspire Housing, has drawn up a schedule of improvements to 67 properties in and around Knutton Lane. RENEW is joint-funding the £442,000 scheme, which will act as a 'gateway' improvement to Newcastle town centre and compliment the new college development.

The scheme, which includes parking and boundary enhancements and the installation of low-maintenance gardens, was launched at a community open day in March. The work is expected to be completed by the end of the year.

## STANDING THE TEST OF TIME

The Beth Johnson Housing Association has completed the external refurbishment of 89 Seymour Street in North Shelton - the birthplace of Stoke-on-Trent's great footballing hero, Sir Stanley Matthews.

The refurbishment was fully funded by RENEW North Staffordshire and the work carried out by Lovell Partnerships Ltd.

After taking advice from heritage experts, the property has been refurbished to its former 1920's appearance. This has included heritage features such as colour scheme, gate and railings, door, windows and canopy.

The property was one of the main features of the recent event to celebrate the opening of the new bridge at City Waterside



## HAVE YOUR SAY

Please contact the RENEW North Staffordshire team on 01782 232024 if you have any comments or questions, or see [www.renewnorthstaffs.gov.uk](http://www.renewnorthstaffs.gov.uk)

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