



PRESS RELEASE

JANUARY 27, 2006

PHOTO CALL: MONDAY, JANUARY 30, 2006, 10am

RESIDENTS CELEBRATE RENEWAL WORK

Residents are to celebrate completion of £386,000 regeneration work to their homes and neighbourhood with a visit from the city Lord Mayor.

Homes in three streets in Birches Head have been renovated with work including new roofs, windows, doors and boundary walls. The rear alleyway between the streets has been relaid with original cobblestones and, in response to residents' suggestions, a patch of wasteland alongside has been surfaced and marked out as a small car park.

The project to renovate 38 homes in Chell Street, Barthomley Road and Cromwell Street and to relay the alleyway is the first phase of a multi-million programme to renew older homes and the environment in Birches Head. The aim is to give residents better living conditions and to make Birches Head a more popular and attractive place to live.

The work has been paid for by RENEW North Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent City Council. The project has also involved Staffordshire Housing Association. The contract was let to Stoke-on-Trent City Council Cityworks department.

Lord Mayor Maurice Lewis will see the improvements and meet local residents when he visits on Monday, January 30, at 10am.

Brian Wilkinson, of Chell Street, is one of those who have benefited. His home has been improved with a new roof, front and rear windows, front and rear doors and new boundary walls at the front and rear.

He said: "I have lived here for 40 years and it did need work doing to it, but I couldn't have afforded it myself. I like the area and I wanted to stay, so I am very happy with the improvements. It's made the whole area better too."

Hardial Bhogal, director of RENEW North Staffordshire said: "It is important to improve older housing, but to renew the housing market we also have to make the area more attractive for new people to move into.

"Local people wanted the back alleyway tidied up because it was rutted and muddy. There was also a patch of wasteland at the end of the alleyway that was a mess and was used for dumping abandoned cars. It would have been an eyesore in the middle of renovated homes.

"We asked local people what they wanted done with that area and they said they wanted a car park, so that's what we did.

"We also relaid the alleyway with cobblestones so both the environment and the housing have been improved."

Ends

You are invited to send a photographer/reporter to the car park on Cromwell Street, Birches Head, on Monday, January 30, at 10am.

For further information contact or Michael Howard at Staniforth on 0161 274 0109, Michael.howard@staniforth.co.uk, or Linda Isted at Staniforth on 0161 274 0115, Linda.isted@staniforth.co.uk

Notes to editors

1. RENEW North Staffordshire is the housing market renewal pathfinder for Stoke-on-Trent, Newcastle-under-Lyme and Biddulph East. Our aim is to help make North Staffordshire a thriving, diverse conurbation where people want to live, work, invest and study. We do this by working with communities and partners to:
 - balance housing supply and demand
 - retain and attract population
 - provide quality housing that meets the aspirations of existing and new residents
 - transform the environment and make the best of our heritage and green space
 - support economic regeneration.
2. The RENEW North Staffordshire team can be contacted by the public on 01782 232024 or renew@stoke.gov.uk. Further information can be found on the website: www.renewnorthstaffs.gov.uk.