



PRESS RELEASE

6th June 2003

NEW BROOM AT BRUSHES!



**Photo opportunity - 10 Poplars Road, Stalybridge
1pm Monday 9th June 2003**

It's not quite a new broom sweeping clean, but residents of Brushes Estate in Stalybridge are taking over!

An historic agreement will be signed on Monday 9th June between the Brushes Estate Management Organisation and New Charter Housing Trust Group who own most of homes on the estate. The agreement legally transfers managing most parts of the estate services to the residents themselves.

The agreement is a culmination of several years of hard work. Residents served a "Right to Manage" Notice on the former landlord, Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council. On transfer of the housing assets, New Charter agreed to honour the arrangement. A ballot of all tenants on the estates took place in March 2001 where the majority of residents voted in favour of the estate being managed by the residents' company.

Like New Charter, the Brushes Estate Management Organisation is a not for profit company. New Charter will continue to provide services including repairs, but Brushes will manage the estate budget and monitor the performance of the services.

One of the residents, June Humphreys of Tudor Avenue, was especially pleased as she founded the residents association almost twenty years ago. “At that time,” she recalled, “you would have been laughed at for suggesting tenants could take control. But I have never doubted that people who live in the area can make the best decisions for that area. Now we have the best possible start to showing what we can do.”

Residents, staff and Board Members of New Charter and guests from across the country were there to witness signing the Agreement. It is the first in the country to be based on a bespoke agreement. Previous agreements have been based on the Government’s Modular Management Agreement.

Ian Munro, Group Chief Executive of New Charter commented “The signing is a milestone for us and Brushes residents. It has taken longer than either of us thought, principally because the usual modular agreements suited neither the residents nor ourselves. We’ve had to draw up a special Agreement that fitted both our needs. I am delighted yet another innovation in tenant involvement has been chalked up by New Charter”.

ENDS

Notes for Editors

1. New Charter formed in 1999. Until September 2000, it was Britain's biggest Large-Scale Voluntary Transfer (LSVT). With a turnover of £49 million a year and a workforce of 800, New Charter is one of the twenty largest Registered Social Landlords (RSL's), and is regulated by The Housing Corporation, a Government watchdog.
2. The Brushes estate comprises 241 rented homes. Additionally, around 25 homes have been purchased under the Right to Buy/Preserved Right to Buy.
3. The Modular Management Agreement (MMA) has been used since 1994 to form the basis for Tenant Management Organisations. While this MMA is now being revised by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, New Charter has produced one suitable for Brushes with the help of Katherine Hand, a respected housing lawyer based in London.
4. There are only a handful of Tenant Management Organisations in RSL's created by transfer. Many more start on the process but fail to get to the agreement stage.
5. The Right to Manage is usually one of the very few rights lost as tenants transfer from Local Authority to Registered Social Landlords. Honouring the Brushes notice was enshrined in the Big Switch – the Offer to tenants made in 1999.

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