

PRESS RELEASE

Immediate release

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Floods fail to foil friendships!

A day out to cement friendships in one of England's beauty spots was almost thwarted by the rain.

Rather than hold an official opening of our latest housing development, we planned to take the new tenants of Hawkshead Close in Stalybridge for a day out in...Hawkshead in the Lake District.

Our aim was the day would help turn our 39 homes in to a great neighbourhood. Staff introduced new neighbours to one another with the hope that new friendships are forged.

Stalybridge and the Lake District are no strangers to rainfall, so the adults and children first travelled up to Rheged near Penrith, a well-known wet weather tourist attraction. But the rain on Saturday (October 4th) had a plan of its own. Flooding on the roads around Hawkshead village thwarted attempts to get there; although those on the coach had a great view of expensive 4x4 vehicles being rescued.

One of the tenants Mrs Mary Walker said: "It was an unexpected twist, but didn't take away from a fantastic day. The staff treated us like royalty and we'll be talking about it for weeks."

The delays and forced change of itinerary meant a later arrival back in Stalybridge. But the adversity of the weather complemented the efforts of staff to bring these neighbours together.

Another tenant, Mrs Ivy Stansfield said: "It didn't bother me that it rained. This trip was a great chance to mix and let neighbours become friends. I think it's a really good idea - it's the first time I've ever had a free ride from my landlord!"

This is the first time we have tried such an approach, but the warm response from the residents suggest it won't be the last.



NOTES FOR EDITORS

1. New Charter formed in 1999 as the new landlords to own and manage homes transferred from Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council in Greater Manchester. With a turnover of £57million a year and a workforce of almost 800, New Charter is one of the region's largest Registered Social Landlords, and is regulated by The Housing Corporation, a Government watchdog. By incorporating Aksa Housing Association, the Group owns 15,000 homes.
2. Hawkshead Close off Lake Road in Stalybridge comprises 35 apartments and 4 houses. The £3.5m investment is built by Rowlinson Construction Ltd of Poynton in Stockport.
3. **iN business for neighbourhoods** is a long-term project highlighting housing associations' performance. As social businesses, housing associations do not make profit. They offer homes for rent and sale at prices local people can afford. Housing associations provide more than homes - they help create places where people want to live. Wherever you see the **iN business for neighbourhoods** sign, something great is happening in the area. Housing Associations who display this logo are committed to their customers, the neighbourhoods they work in and strive for excellence in everything they do.

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