

PRESS RELEASE

Immediate release

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West End lights switched on

Modern-day housing providers have shed light on an Ashton-under-Lyne philanthropist who saw housing as important as profit.

Hugh Mason (1817-1886) was a cotton manufacturer and reformer. He built many of the best terraces of homes for his workers and managers around Oxford Mills in Ashton's West End. And a statue of him, originally provided by public subscription, is prominent in Trafalgar Square close by.

When West End Residents Association appealed for help to illuminate the local landmark, modern not-for-profit housing associations with homes in the area were quick to respond.

Aksa Housing Association, part of the New Charter Group offers homes for rent in the West End of Ashton. Together with fellow association The Regenda Group, it donated the money to install the floodlighting.

Steve Hodson, Head of Operations at Aksa said: "The significance of Hugh Mason to Ashton wasn't lost on us, but you could miss his statue after dark! We were happy to help and shine some light on this far-sighted father of the West End."

Amanda Lennox, Neighbourhood Officer for The Regenda Group said: "We felt that the statue of Hugh Mason, such an important historical Ashton character, should be able to be seen in the best light. Along with the recent refurbishment of Trafalgar Square gardens, the floodlighting will be a welcome addition for our West End residents."

Greenscape, a social business employing local residents and managed by the charity St. Peter's Partnerships, carried out the improvements to Trafalgar Square.



Mick Brickell, Operations Manager for Greenscape said: "Our team worked closely with West End residents and Tameside Council through the District Assembly and they did a superb job. We're proud to have been involved in preparing and landscaping the public area in which the statue now stands and the new lighting is the cherry on top; it shows it off to its best!"

The lights are now in place and partners gathered this week to officially throw the switch.

NOTES FOR EDITORS

1. Aksa Housing Association has operated since 1990 and owns over 670 homes in Oldham, Tameside, Bury and North Manchester. Its offices are in Oldham town centre. In November 2005, it joined the New Charter Housing Trust Group based in Ashton-under-Lyne. The Group was recently named in the Sunday Times 100 best companies to work for.
2. Hugh Mason's statue is at Trafalgar Square, Stockport Road, Ashton-under-Lyne, OL7 0LL. The lights were officially launched by partners on Monday 6th April 2009.
3. The Regenda Group was formed in 2002 as a partnership between Liverpool-based Maritime and Templar Housing in Macclesfield. Oldham-based West Pennine Housing Association joined the Group in 2003. In 2005, Wyre Housing Association (originally an LSVT) also joined the Group. West Pennine also has a registered subsidiary – the Limehurst Village Trust. The Group now owns and manages over 13,000 units. Over 10% of these homes are in sheltered housing schemes or for wheelchair users and a similar percentage are occupied by people buying them.
4. St Peter's Partnerships is a registered charity which provides support and services within the St Peter's ward of Ashton-under-Lyne in Greater Manchester. In addition to its charitable activities, it operates a trading arm which comprises a number of not-for profit businesses. Not only do the trading activities link into the aims and objectives of the charitable projects, but all profits are either reinvested in the business or donated to the charity to support further community-based activities.
5. **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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