

# PRESS RELEASE

Immediate release

12th October 2009

## Winning team makes Mill magic!

### Pictures available

The team responsible for transforming a converted mill has won a top prize at the Social Landlords Crime and Nuisance Group's 'Delivering results' Awards 2009.

New Charter bought Cavendish Mill, a troubled canalside apartment block in Ashton-under-Lyne in June 2008. Intensive management, a determination to tackle anti-social behaviour and engaging with residents has transformed it into a quieter, safer and more desirable place to live.

The seven-storey Grade II listed building was rescued from dereliction in 1992, and converted to residential use. But by 2008 the building was badly neglected and in need of major improvements. Disheartened residents of the 159 apartments saw no point in reporting problems as they felt nothing would be done. Abuse of security staff, drunkenness, criminal damage and drug taking were rife, and vulnerable residents were being exploited.

The surrounding community also suffered. Police frequently dealt with incidents of assaults and serious crime in the Mill's vicinity.

New Charter formed a multidisciplinary team with complementary skills to tackle the root causes of the problems. This team was given responsibility and authority to do whatever was needed to rejuvenate the Mill and make it a safe place for residents. The team included cleaners, caretakers, neighbourhood management, enforcement staff, and dedicated legal support.

The team believed residents were the key to transform the Mill. It used various involvement activities to get residents engaged and contributing, such as coffee mornings. Importantly, it also increased the use of a Resource Centre in the Mill. There was always someone available for residents to talk to.



In the first year, around 20 residents were referred to a support agency funded by New Charter which made a positive impact on their lives.

Managing Director of New Charter Homes, Tony Powell said: “The team included some of our anti-social behaviour specialists but also worked closely with Greater Manchester Police to address criminal issues. Police held surgeries at the Resource Centre so residents could speak in confidence to them.

“We used injunctions, possession actions, warnings and support to those whose behaviour was related to particular needs, especially mental illness.”

The effect of the work has been remarkable. Police and Fire services report a dramatic decline in incidents, and New Charter took firm action on tenancy breaches including nine evictions. Security alerts and incidents have fallen from an average of 35 a week to just 2.

Resident Kevin Kissane has lived in Cavendish Mill throughout the transformation. He said: “It is a different place now from just over a year ago. There’s a sense of community – residents get involved and talk to one another. We don’t see Cavendish Mill as a home of last resort any more. It’s better and safer, and I’m proud to live here.”

The award, sponsored by ReAct was presented to the team at the Social Landlords Crime and Nuisance Group conference in Telford.

Investment in the Mill continues this month with the start of work to replace all 333 windows.

## **NOTES FOR EDITORS**

1. New Charter formed in 1999 as the new landlords to own and manage homes transferred from Tameside council in Greater Manchester. With a turnover of £70million a year and a workforce of 840, New Charter is one of the region’s largest registered providers of social housing, and is regulated by the Tenant Services Authority, a Government watchdog. By incorporating Gedling Homes, the Group owns 18,600 homes. It was named in the Sunday Times best 100 companies to work for in 2009.
2. The Social Landlords Crime and Nuisance Group (SLCNG) is the UK’s leading housing-based organisation specialising in delivering effective solutions to anti-social behaviour. It is member-led, supporting those involved in tackling anti-social behaviour. SLCNG began in 1995 and now represents over 3 million tenancies throughout the UK.
3. Cavendish Mill adjoins the Ashton Canal in Ashton-under-Lyne. It was built in 1884 and is a grade II\* listed building. Its listed status is principally because of the floor construction which was designed to soften the vibration from the cotton spinning machinery. One of the area’s largest spinning mills, parachutes were made there during the second world war.



4. Police statistics for 12 months ending in May 2009 compared with the 12 months previous showed:

- Disputes between adults down by 11%
- Criminal damage down by 25%
- Burglaries down by 50%
- Public Order incidents down by 87.5%

Greater Manchester Fire Service also reported an improvement in call-outs to Cavendish Mill for the same periods:

- Fire alarms activated by something other than a fire down by 17.6%
- Call-outs needing special fire services, ie lifts, down by 33.4%
- Secondary fires about rubbish down by 50%
- Fires causing damage to tenants property or belongings down by 66.6%

For the year from June 2008, New Charter:

- improved and extended the CCTV throughout the building by adding 16 cameras to the existing 48 internal cameras. Five new cameras were fitted externally
- issued over 100 warnings to tenants responsible for causing anti-social behaviour and nuisance
- issued 25 tenancy cautions to tenants responsible for continually causing anti-social behaviour or nuisance and breaching their tenancy agreement
- evicted nine tenants for anti-social behaviour.

4. **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.

**CONTACT:**

**David Rigby - New Charter 0161 331 2000**

[www.newcharter.co.uk](http://www.newcharter.co.uk)

**ENDS**



**business for neighbourhoods**