



PRESS RELEASE

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Brushes best in bloomin' show

Pictures available

A Stalybridge neighbourhood has been judged Best Large Neighbourhood at this year's RHS North West Neighbourhood Awards.

The Brushes estate showed how it had engaged the community to show off its floral skills. It was marked as "outstanding" by the Royal Horticultural Society judges who visited in July. But a greater plaudit was to come as the Awards ceremony at Southport selected Brushes as the winner in a hotly-contested category.

The estate is already notable as it one of just a few housing association areas in Britain managed by a tenant-led Estate Management Board. And committee members were understandably elated at this latest recognition.

"We knew we had shown the judges great community spirit and a lot of hard work," said Elaine Rawlings, one of the "Brushes in Bloom" champions. "This category is very competitive – we would have been pleased just to be voted the best entry by a New Charter estate. But we are all overjoyed to get this award."

Brushes had entered the contest twice before, and each year the judges noted improvement. Despite the challenging and often unseasonal weather in 2009, the whole neighbourhood got involved. Children contributed an excellent display around their games area at Bailey's Back, which won another Green Pennant award for the residents earlier this year.

But residents agree the real benefit was not the outstanding displays, but getting to know neighbours as they worked alongside each other.

Managing Director of New Charter Homes Tony Powell said: "Across many of our neighbourhoods, tenants have worked hard to show why they live in great places. Brushes has improved itself by commitment and community leadership, and this award is



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richly deserved. I hope the success of our winners inspires other areas – not just social housing estates – to use Britain in Bloom as a way of getting to know their neighbours.”

Around 150 neighbourhoods were at the RHS awards, and eight other New Charter neighbourhoods were successful, including best small neighbourhood category for Dixon Road Community Garden in Denton

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 880, 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. Brushes Estate Management Board (EMB) was a product of tenants and landlord New Charter working together to set up the first tenant management organisation from a transfer housing association. Since 2003, tenants and residents have undertaken some of the housing management responsibilities for the 266 homes on the estate, and have also developed social life in the neighbourhood.
3. Additional winners locally were:
 - Large Neighbourhoods**
 - Crowswood, Stalybridge – Merit
 - Broadoak, Ashton – Merit
 - Central, Dukinfield – Outstanding
 - Brushes Estate, Stalybridge – Outstanding and Best in Category
 - (Medium) Neighbourhoods**
 - Harbour Farm, Newton – Improvement
 - The Larches, Micklehurst – Merit
 - Small Neighbourhoods**
 - Yew Tree, Denton – Improvement
 - East Audenshaw – Improvement
 - Dixon Road/Forrest Road Community Garden, Denton – Outstanding and Best in Category
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.

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