



Press Release

Date: 20 March 2017

Lord Ashdown opens new council homes for forces veterans

A unique new community in Cheltenham was honoured with a very special welcome today (Monday 20 March, 2017) when their new housing scheme was officially opened by Lord Paddy Ashdown.

At a special celebration event, held at the Homes for Veterans Swindon Road development, VIPs gathered to celebrate the new council owned homes which in a move, the first of its kind for Cheltenham, were prioritised for armed forces veterans.

Lord Ashdown, a forces veteran himself and a key advocate of the armed forces, was joined by over 50 other guests including; Cheltenham's Mayor, Councillor Chris Ryder, CBC's cabinet member for housing, Councillor Peter Jeffries, local councillors, CBH board members and representatives from CBC and CBH. Members of the local Royal British Legion, SSAFA and Cheltenham's Lord Nigel Jones also came along to welcome the new residents.

Councillor Peter Jeffries, CBC's Cabinet member for Housing, who served in the armed forces for three years and is a passionate supporter of forces veterans said: "This is a very proud day for me, as a forces veteran myself I know only too well the difficulties facing services personnel entering back into civilian life after such a disciplined and regimented lifestyle. Having taken a real personal interest in this project, I am delighted that Cheltenham is honouring and recognising these sacrifices and challenges by creating a welcoming home and community to help veterans settle back into life after serving their country."

With a mix of military backgrounds and generations, the new residents include veterans from the Army, Navy and RAF and range from the fully retired to a young family.

Based on the corner of Swindon Road, the Cheltenham Borough Council (CBC) owned development of 8 flats and 2 houses was built in collaboration with Cheltenham Borough Homes (CBH), Cheltenham's biggest landlord, who manages and maintains over 5,000 council homes on behalf of CBC.

Paul Stephenson, Chief Executive at CBH said: "We are delighted to have again partnered with Cheltenham Borough Council and make history by creating this special development which has not only transformed the landscape of this corner of Cheltenham but has also created a unique new community. At CBH we don't just provide a home, we also work closely with individuals and the local community and we will continue to make sure our newest tenants settle into their surroundings."

Located near the town centre with easy access to support networks, the new properties have been built to be adaptable, lifetime homes and have been designed to encourage a feeling of community. The scheme consists of 10 new homes; five 1 bed flats, three 2 bed flats and two 2 bed houses.

The properties were built in partnership with J Harper and Sons Limited (Leominster) and PMP Consultants.

ENDS

Notes for editors

Homes at the Swindon Road development were offered first to veterans and their families thanks to a proposal adopted by CBC on 26 April 2016 to support the Gloucestershire Armed Forces Community Covenant. This covenant aims to support the Armed Forces community living and working in Gloucestershire and help integrate veterans into civilian life.

Cheltenham Borough Homes:

- CBH is one of the top rated ALMOs (Arms Length Management Organisations) in the country. ALMOs are not for profit companies that run social housing services for their local council
- Currently CBH manage and maintain around 5,000 tenant and leasehold properties with high satisfaction and performance levels, when compared nationally with other housing providers

- CBH put their customers at the heart of what they do; working with them to shape services and ensure the company focuses on local need
- CBH deliver more than high quality core landlord services: they have an ongoing programme building new homes and regenerating communities; they support people to find work and employment; work to improve financial inclusion and develop stock to make it more energy efficient

For further information visit: www.cheltborohomes.org

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