

7th April 2006

Foundation reveals £4m completion of Nechells Baths

A vibrant new multi purpose community centre heralds a brighter future for hundreds of local residents as the dramatic £4m transformation of Nechells Baths officially completes promises The Birmingham Foundation charity, project managers for the four-year imaginative refurbishment scheme.

These former baths are now a state of the art centre of communal activity providing training, crèche and offices for social enterprises. The Foundation has already welcomed Pertemps Employment Alliance as first tenants to the Grade II listed landmark. The employment specialists are delivering a range of Government Welfare to Work initiatives aimed at those unemployed for more than 18 months.

Funding for the regeneration work was provided by European Funding (£2.2m), the Heritage Lottery Fund (£1m) and Advantage West Midlands (£400k). The construction work was carried out by Linford Bridgeman Construction.

David Bucknall, Chairman of the Birmingham Foundation said: "It is marvellous to see that our vision of five years ago has become a reality. We have transformed a disused civic liability into a multi-use community asset. This would not have been possible but for the support of AWM and our other funders: Government Office West Midlands, the Heritage Lottery Fund and Pertemps. We are grateful for the huge support we received from the Birmingham Foundation Trustees and all the people involved in the project."

Closed in 1995, the elegant building was built in 1910 as part of a general provision of public baths and wash-houses across Birmingham and was also the home of a Social Institute and Winter Assembly Rooms.

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Derek Inman, Chief Executive of Nechells Baths added: "Four years ago the possibility of refurbishing Nechells Swimming Baths into a community facility for everyone was simply a dream. Through the hard work and dedication of many people the centre will, without doubt, change the lives of many people, helping them to find jobs, update skills and even retrain for a totally different career in a new direction.

The crèche facilities are already proving huge asset to those retraining and we are having serious talks with number of community organisations who are keen to make their home here too. This powerful ingredient mix will boost the regeneration of this area both in terms of morale and practical assistance.

Work began in late 2002 and has included retaining the pool area but covering it with a floor to create office space, converting the former viewing gallery into mezzanine-style offices and converting the men's changing rooms into more offices. Orniate ironwork and other period features throughout the Victorian building have been retained.

Tim Watts, President of the Birmingham Foundation and added: This impressive landmark building is being brought back into productive use for the community.

"Although the days of the building hosting a swimming baths are long gone, it will have a future as a facility which is going to have a huge impact on the Nechells and the surrounding communities.

"The way Birmingham Foundation has driven this scheme forward is very impressive, as is the way the original features of the baths have been incorporated into the fabric of the new building."

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Notes to the editor

- The Birmingham Foundation is a charitable trust set up in 1995 raising funds from businesses and individuals to promote and support local voluntary / community groups and projects within the area of Greater Birmingham.
- It serves as a conduit between the region's donors and do-ers and provides support through a programme of constructive grant making for people living within deprived and disadvantaged areas of Birmingham and the Black Country, reaching individuals through small grass-roots groups.
- During the last 12 months we have awarded more than £2.6 million in grants to 796 local voluntary and community projects. The average grant was about £3,500 and the quickest award was made in 24 hours from one of our donor advised funds.
- The new address for the Birmingham Foundation is Suite 2A, St Georges Court, 1 Albion Street, Birmingham B1 3AH 0121 214 2080 team@bhamfoundation.co.uk www.bhamfoundation.co.uk