

Ledbury & Area Development Trust

Press Release

31st March 2008

From Cottage Hospital to managed workspace for local people, and affordable accommodation

Ledbury & Area Development Trust (LADT) is pleased to confirm that the refurbishment of the old Cottage Hospital in Ledbury into 1,600 square feet of managed workspace for local, young entrepreneurs, and 6 affordable accommodation units for local people, and is now underway.

“Planning Permission and full Building Regulation Approval has been obtained, around £200,000 of funding from Advantage West Midlands has been received, and the legal agreements have been signed and contracts exchanged between all parties,” commented LADT’s Chief Executive, Roger A. Payne.

“We will now begin to implement our plans for marketing the workspace to local young entrepreneurs, organising open days, and encouraging the local community and local businesses to support young entrepreneurs as they set-out to establish their enterprises.”

“We will be contacting key local businesses to discuss how they might be able to help the young local entrepreneurs – for example by subsidising their rent for the first year or perhaps by agreeing to becoming a ‘named sponsor’ of an individual office or even the entire workspace”.

“The refurbishment work is focused on the inside of the building – the external façade will remain as it is today. The work is likely to take 40 weeks and we plan to hold an official opening of the managed workspace around the beginning of 2009,” added Mr Payne.

Commenting on the project, Cllr Kay Swinburne, Mayor of Ledbury said “we are very pleased that this building - which has stood empty since 2002 - is being brought back into effective use for the benefit of the local community. We are particularly pleased that this project will encourage local, young entrepreneurs to set up and run vibrant businesses in the heart of our town.”

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LADT will receive the income from the tenants of the workspace - which is likely to be made up of 6 self-contained units and one more flexible, open-plan space. LADT will also have a base in the building.

Two Rivers Housing - an affordable housing provider based in Mitcheldean, Gloucestershire - is responsible for the refurbishment of the whole building. On completion of the refurbishment, the current owners, English Partnerships, will finalise the sale of the property to Two Rivers Housing who will market the 6 affordable accommodation units to local people.

[Release ends – ref: 009]

Contact

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Note to Editors

Ledbury & Area Development Trust Ltd

The Ledbury & Area Development Trust Ltd (LADT) supports continuing regeneration in and around the Herefordshire market town of Ledbury.

It is an independent, entrepreneurial organisation and any profits it makes are used for the benefit of the community. It was incorporated as a Company Limited by Guarantee on 5 January 2005 and accepted as a member of the Development Trusts Association in February 2005. In October 2007 it completed a £25,000 consultancy project on the Master's House in Ledbury outlining 9 key recommendations for its future use – based on extensive local consultation.

English Partnerships

English Partnerships is the Government's national regeneration agency delivering high quality, sustainable growth in England. It helps create communities where people can afford to live and want to live. Information on projects and programmes can be found at www.englishpartnerships.co.uk and www.englishpartnerships.co.uk/hospitalsites

Advantage West Midlands

Advantage West Midlands is one of nine Regional Development Agencies in England whose role is to provide leadership and action to create more, better jobs and an improved quality of life for all in the West Midlands.

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Brief summary of Cottage Hospital's history

On 29 December 1891 a purpose-built cottage hospital was officially opened in Ledbury by Lady Elizabeth Biddulph. It was funded by her husband, Mr Michael Biddulph MP, to mark the coming of age of his eldest son, Mr John Michael Biddulph. The total cost of land and buildings was around £3,000.

Accommodation included three wards, rooms for the Matron, an operating theatre, a mortuary, laundry and a separate apartment for a parish nurse. By 1899, annual expenditure was £247 with the average cost per patient stay of 3s 7d per day. Income was made up of subscriptions, donations, income from investments, charity boxes, church offertories and patient payments.

The building was extended in the 1920s and again in the 1930s. On 27 March 1948 the 74th and final Report was presented by the Hospital's Chairman, Mr Charles Masefield, at the Annual Meeting. From 1948 the Hospital continued to operate under the NHS before closing in 2002 when a new facility was opened in the Town.