

Team Brief

Social enterprise is launched

The Board of Trustees has given the green light to the launch of a new social enterprise company this month, providing an opportunity for apprentices to gain vital experience in the property maintenance industry.

Given the name 'Renew Maintenance Limited', the company is wholly owned by YMCA Derbyshire and will undertake all types of property maintenance work from smaller projects to full scale renovations.

Experienced maintenance staff will be complemented by a group of apprentices who will be studying for an NVQ Level Two Award in Property Maintenance. The apprentices will develop the skills they need to build a successful career and a secure future for themselves and their families. All profits made by the company will be ploughed back into YMCA Derbyshire.

The company has been launched with the help of a grant from Spark, a pioneering development and investment programme. It aims to inspire organisations to build social enterprises that will prevent and

tackle homelessness using sustainable business models. Working with BT, PricewaterhouseCoopers and Places for People, alongside the TREES group – which has been instrumental in pulling the other parties together and hosting the events – the fund has helped to launch a number of innovative social enterprises around the country since 2007.



Steve Ball is now the Business Manager for Renew Maintenance, although he will also continue his role as Project Manager for YMCA Derbyshire. He was among the delegates at a Spark networking event held recently in Leicester, during which he gave a presentation on our plans.

Steve said: "It is very exciting to get our new social enterprise off the ground, and I'm sure that we can make a real difference to the prospects and aspirations of our apprentices in line with YMCA Derbyshire's broader mission and values.

"I saw at first hand at the Spark networking event just what can be achieved in just a short space of time with support and the will to succeed."

Progress in Amber Valley & Erewash



There has been further growth in our Amber Valley & Erewash locality after the first training course for external adult paying customers was held at the centre in Ilkeston – in food safety. Hopefully this will be the first of many.

The existing programmes in Ilkeston are also proving a success. Learner members enrolled on the Retail & Leisure and Employability Foundation Learning programmes have been successfully carrying out work placements (see photos above). Lasting four weeks in all, the learners have organised the placements themselves after writing to local companies.

Photos: Learner Kerry Anne on her placement in a charity shop (top), and Nicola working in a sweet shop.



Steve Ball explains the new venture to Spark delegates in Leicester and (right) the first publicity leaflet.



A message from the Chief Executive

In these financially challenging times, it is more important than ever to be clear about who we are as an organisation and why we do what we do. Our four key values certainly underpin everything we do, as well as the way in which we interact with each other, but our identity goes beyond these.

We are not simply a commercial company whose bottom line is the profits we make or our share price. Neither are we a service run by a public authority or a government 'quango'. We are not even an isolated charity working on its own to address a specific need.

Fundamentally we are part of a worldwide movement, with a Christian ethos, founded in the mid-nineteenth century with a vision and a mission. We exist to break down the barriers that impede true human flourishing, especially among young people. We affirm that each of us should be regarded as a whole person – body, mind and spirit – and that only by recognising and respecting this can we unlock the potential of those whom we serve. I believe that it is this holistic approach that has always set our movement apart.

Knowing who we are and why we do it is obviously very important as we embark on a new fundraising drive so that we can inspire others to share in our work by supporting it financially. Yet we should be confident in this because we do have a great story to tell. It has often been said that the YMCA is "more than just a song", and we are proving this to be true every day in so many different ways across each of our services and localities.

I believe we should all feel proud to belong to a dynamic movement which remains true to its unchanging principles yet applies them afresh to new challenges and new opportunities as they arise. Times may be hard, but we are well placed to weather the storm if we all pull together and remain true to our unique identity.

Gillian Sewell

Catering partnership serves up a tasty lunch for elderly residents



Steve Finch had his work cut out at the end of March as he helped to prepare and serve delicious cooked lunches to residents and visitors at three care homes operated by Derby Homes on successive days.

The meals were prepared at Handyside Court and cooked in the kitchen of each care home, with the assistance of learner members, the catering team and, at one home, our Project Manager Steve Ball (see photo above).

The initiative was a first trial week ahead of a longer trial scheme to provide one hot lunch a week at Whitecross House, Kestrel House and Rebecca House starting later this month.

It is hoped that the scheme will be successful and strengthen our important partnership with Derby Homes, while giving valuable experience to our learners and a delicious lunch to the residents.

Crashpads turning lives around



The Crashpads in Devonshire House, on the Campus site, have now housed 81 young people aged 16 and 17 since they opened in November 2009.

Coordinator Carol Morton is happy with what the team has achieved. Reflecting on the last 16 months, she says, "Often young people have come to us because of big problems in their relationships with their parents, and these problems go both ways. A little time away from each other gives them the space to work out their problems. Afterwards, the relationship between the young person and the parents can be much stronger."

Carol continues, "One thing I've noticed is that the young people coming to us over the last six months have had increasingly chaotic backgrounds. Being here, where it is usually quiet and peaceful, is like being on a retreat away from all the chaos that usually surrounds them. One resident told me that here she could be still, think and reflect on her life for the first time.

"The best thing about my role is seeing lives turned around, and I know this goes for all the Crashpads staff. We are all committed to what we do, and enjoy our work. I like to think that we are making a big difference to the lives of young people in our local community, and many of our residents have told us that."

Marketing and Communications

It has been a busy time, as ever, with requests being made for a range of marketing materials as well as updates to the website among other things.

All visits to the website are now being logged and analysed – and it has been interesting to note that in the last two weeks alone there have been nearly 700 unique visitors. This fact underscores how important the website has become as a 'shop window' for our organisation.

In addition to my normal role, I am now spearheading a new fundraising drive. Part of this will involve what will be known as 'Project 165' to mark our 165th anniversary next year. More on this will follow in subsequent editions of *Team Brief* so watch this space!

Dominic Baster

Cash boost for Chesterfield



The team at IT company Steria in Chesterfield has presented CEO Gillian Sewell and Locality Manager Mark Love with a most welcome cheque for £2,149 after making us one of its charities of the year.

The money was raised at a number of events through the year and will go towards the new Chesterfield Members' Fund.

YMCA of Japan asks for prayers

Tomoko Negishi, who is in charge of international affairs and advocacy at the YMCA of Japan, has requested prayers for all those affected by the recent disasters in his country caused by the earthquake and tsunami.

In a message to Daniel Flynn, CEO of North Staffs YMCA, a fortnight after the earthquake struck, Tomoko wrote: "We have somehow handled the first two weeks' initial work which was to ship basic food and sanitary goods for the survivors taking refuge, and now we are at the point of moving to the next step.

"There are times we feel hopeless but we have never felt helpless as we know there are friends around the world who are with us. Please continue to keep us in your prayer."

Youth Governance Group brings YMCAs together



Some of our residential members take part in an exercise to prepare the message for the next YMCA Regional Relay event in June.

Seven of our residential members attended this month's Youth Governance Group meeting in Coventry. The meeting was the busiest to date, with over 40 residents from 13 out of the 16 YMCAs in the Midlands attending.

The Youth Governance Group (YGG) runs on a bi-monthly basis and is open to anyone involved in the YMCA. Our own residents, learners and staff regularly attend all of these meetings and have been involved in organising and running several regional and national events such as the annual regional YMCA celebration.

The YGG helps YMCAs from across the region to network on an informal basis, providing help and support in all areas of youth participation. It provides accredited training,



YMCA members, including Marc Stevens (centre) take part in an HIV/AIDS awareness workshop (Y-AIDS) on the day of the meeting.

international opportunities and an active voice for YMCA residents and learners.

The YGG's annual residential conference takes place in June, coinciding with the annual meeting of YMCA chief executives, so young people get the chance to be involved in decision making at the highest level within the movement.

Being part of the YGG has also provided numerous work experience and volunteering opportunities for our service users. This year, two of our residents are working with the light and sound engineers at the National Conference over three days, while another resident is involved in delivering a workshop on raising awareness of HIV/AIDS.

Marc Stevens

Tenancy Sustainment in Amber Valley & Erewash



Left to right: Linda Fern, Karen Clark and Tina Roberts in Ilkeston

The Tenancy Sustainment Service has been operating in Amber Valley and Erewash since August last year. Based in Ilkeston, the team of Linda Fern, Karen Clark and Tina Roberts supports up to 35 young people aged between 16 and 24 to continue living independently in their own homes and build a brighter future.

The team supports service users experiencing a range of problems, such as unsuitable accommodation or serious mental health issues, and young single mothers lacking any support or confidence.

They are able to advise young people how to access the right benefits, support them with budgeting, help them to access appropriate medication and support them to avoid alcohol and drug abuse. They have also provided emergency furniture packs from the Furniture Project in Chesterfield.

Linda reflects, “Just knowing that you’re helping the young people to reach their goals and grow in confidence makes the job worthwhile. It’s often about the little things

that might not seem like much to us but which make a big difference to the lives of the vulnerable people we support.”

Linda says that the biggest surprise for her has been the dreadful living conditions endured by many of the young people, some of whom have absolutely no support from their families.

Tina explains that a key element of their role is to “open doors for those who have never had any support or encouragement and to give them confidence”. She agrees that the living conditions of many service users are awful. “Many of these vulnerable people are housed close together and find it hard to avoid being drawn into drugs and alcohol abuse. They also get bored and depressed. We try to break this cycle by getting them involved in other things and helping them get to know new people.

“It’s all about broadening horizons and opening doors to an alternative way of life that they may never have thought possible given their difficult backgrounds.”

Children’s Services

We are busy preparing for our ‘egg-citing’ Easter Playscheme. Activities include daytrips as well as Easter arts and crafts.



We are also continuing to work within several schools in Derby, such as at Bishop Lonsdale Primary School where Michael Leake has been helping the children to construct a maze.

Reflection of the month

Other refuge have I none—
Hangs my helpless soul on Thee.
Leave, ah, leave me not alone;
Still support and comfort me!
All my trust on Thee is stayed—
All my help from Thee I bring.
Cover my defenceless head
With the shadow of Thy wing.

Charles Wesley
(1707–1788)

‘Spring Sizzlers’ at the Campus Café



We are offering some great deals at the Campus Café this spring. Smoothies are just £1 and you can choose from a wide variety of flavours. What’s more, a delicious Shaker Salad is only £2.25 and you can choose from pasta, salad, vegetables, toppings, sauces and extras. We look forward to serving you!

