

Charity merger aims to help local people through the recession

Radford-based charities, the Partnership Council and Castle Cavendish Foundation (formerly NDC) have agreed to discuss the possibility of joining forces to create a strong, unified neighbourhood charity for the area.

If the merger goes ahead, the new charity would continue to deliver the Partnership Council's current projects, and ensure that Castle Cavendish's Neighbourhood Investment Fund, which provides grants to local community schemes, goes forward into the future. Staff from both organisations would combine together, and it is likely that there will be no changes for staff working on projects.

The new charity would probably continue to be based at the Partnership Council's current premises at Tennyson (formerly Tennyson Hall) on Forest Road West, which is actually owned by Castle Cavendish.

In terms of management, the new charity would be run by a newly elected Board. This is likely to include the current Chairperson of the Partnership Council, Mick Stringer.

Ruth Greenberg, Chief Officer for the Partnership Council explains:

"The Partnership Council has been running for over ten years now and we provide a wide range of services designed to help local people. For example, we offer a huge choice of volunteering opportunities, many of which are focused on helping individuals back to work. Plus, we help residents to set up their own neighbourhood projects and events, including activities for children and young people and street clean-ups.

As a charity, we have always been dependent on short-term funding however, especially at present, with the recession and planned Government cuts in full swing. Joining forces with Castle Cavendish would give us greater financial stability, enabling us to provide long-term services to local people - at a time when the community really needs our help."

Castle Cavendish currently holds £3.8 million worth of assets funded through the previous Government's New Deal for Communities initiative, including the Castle Cavendish Business Centre, Waverley Health Centre, Tennyson and All Saints Centre on Raleigh Street, close to the Arboretum, which is currently being used by the YMCA as a wellness and family centre. The Foundation also owns a number of retail properties along Alfreton Road and the industrial units at Hartley Court.

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These assets generate a rental return that would be used by the new charity to support and help local people, via the Partnership Council's existing services, and through the Neighbourhood Investment Fund. In addition, the new charity would be likely to introduce new services developed with the assistance of local people. None of the tenants of Castle Cavendish's properties would be affected by a merger and there are no plans to change how the buildings are being used at present.

Dave Brennan, Chief Advisor & Company Secretary of Castle Cavendish says:

"Historically, the organisation has been through many changes - from New Deal for Communities through to the Neighbourhood Development Company and Castle Cavendish Foundation. Now, we want to draw a line under the past and move forward positively.

Joining forces with the Partnership Council, who are already very well known in the area, would be the ideal way to make sure we can best help local people. The Partnership Council is doing some great charitable work and we want to support and help develop that.

What this area needs is a strong, active, passionate charity that is truly in touch with the needs of local people. I think joining forces with the Partnership Council would make that happen and I really hope the talks are successful."

The Partnership Council runs several citywide projects but mainly provides services to people living in Radford, Hyson Green, Forest Fields, New Basford, Sherwood Rise and the Arboretum area of the city. This would continue as normal should the planned merger go ahead.

Further details will be announced very shortly.

**To find out more please call Ruth Greenberg on 0115 970 8200
or email ruth@partnershipcouncil.co.uk**

Notes for editors:

The Partnership Council's current services include:

- Providing over 500 volunteer placements a year many of which include training, mentoring and support.
- A Skills Exchange with over 200 members, offering people free help with jobs such as decorating, gardening and childcare to help people beat the recession.
- Activities for young people including funding and support for 16-25 year olds who want to start their own environmental projects.
- Support and help for community groups and projects, including local residents and tenants groups.
- Giving local people a voice - via a number of forums including one for older people and another for those living with disabilities.
- For example, the Partnership Council is currently leading a project to improve the Forest Recreation Ground on Gregory Boulevard.

The Neighbourhood Investment Fund is funded by the Castle Cavendish Foundation. It is run by Nottinghamshire Community Foundation on behalf of Castle Cavendish and supports a range of local community schemes: with small groups receiving up to £5,000; and larger organisations receiving up to £25,000.

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