

Chapel Court officially opened

Mathew Taylor, MP for Truro and St Austell, officially opened Ocean's £ 2.5 million housing development in the village of Penwithick, close to St Austell, on Friday 21st November.



The focal point of Chapel Court is the previously derelict 19th century Methodist chapel, which has been sympathetically restored and converted into four homes. The other 16 homes have been built on the surrounding in-fill site, providing much needed affordable housing for local people.

Commenting, Matthew Taylor MP said: "Cornwall has a long standing problem with a lack of affordable housing – indeed Restormel is one of the most unaffordable areas in the country. Although house prices are falling now, the credit crunch hasn't made housing needs go away. So I am delighted to open the affordable development at Penwithick, providing desperately needed homes for local people in a way which is in keeping with the local surroundings and has made such a positive difference to the village. This development is not just about bricks and mortar, most importantly it is about the improving lives of the local people who will make these houses their homes."

Ocean Group Chief Executive, David Renwick, said Chapel Court is part of Ocean's development programme to channel significant investment into Cornwall's 'clay villages': "Penwithick expanded rapidly in response to the massive international demand for china clay, but a century later, parts of the village looked worn and became targets for anti social behaviour. The Chapel was derelict and unused, but an important part of the community's heritage and a focal point for the village. We are thrilled that we have not only restored it to its former glory, retaining most of its architectural features, but that it now provides homes for local people. "

Restormel Borough Council allocated £ 100,000 of grant funding to the development to ensure that the iconic building was refurbished for the community. Local Restormel councillor for the Treverbyn Ward, Chris Rowe, said: "It is absolutely wonderful to have these affordable homes in Penwithick, enabling local people to live in such a beautiful setting in the heart of the village. I am very proud of what has been achieved for this community. There is still a great need for affordable homes in the area, and of course we would really like to have more!"

Four of the properties are part of Ocean's new build HomeBuy scheme. This enables local people to get on the first step of the property ladder by buying a share of a new property and renting the remaining share, with the opportunity to increase their ownership at a later stage. The other 16 properties, including the four in the converted chapel, are for rent, and are allocated to residents on the Homefinder Register, which identifies people's requirements and preferred location.

Chapel Court residents joined Matthew Taylor MP, Ocean and its partners to mark the official opening. Chapel Court was designed, developed and constructed by three companies all within a five mile radius of Penwithick: Ocean being the developers, Alan Leather Associates of Charlestown, the architects, and Gilbert & Goode, Ocean's in-house constructors.

David Renwick is proud that it successfully combines traditional building techniques in the refurbishment of the chapel, alongside modern sustainable timber panel construction: "The end result is a high quality affordable housing scheme that has contributed to much needed regeneration and breathed life back into the heart of the village."