

## Full steam ahead for 500th new home

Ocean Group Chairman, Mark Clare, arrived on a steam engine to open Ocean's 500th new affordable home in Cornwall.



The local school and parish council named the new development Miners Way in recognition of St Agnes' mining history and its status as a Mining World Heritage Site. The £5.3 million housing scheme was constructed by Gilbert & Goode, the construction arm of the Ocean Group, and provides 20 homes for affordable rent and 16 homes for shared ownership.

"I am immensely proud to be here today to celebrate this important milestone for Ocean with the people of St Agnes and many of those involved in this project," said Mark Clare. "In the last six years we have spent in excess of £50 million constructing 500 quality, energy efficient, affordable homes in areas that have suffered from acute housing shortage. It always gives me great pleasure to meet our new residents and to see at first hand what these new homes mean to them and how they can change lives."

John Sneddon moved into the 500th home last week with his partner Christine. "I've lived in St Agnes since I was five and my family ran businesses in the village for over 35 years. It was very important for Christine and myself to live in the village – it's our Home. Our families live here and we both work locally in health care. The properties for rent are often seasonal and the rent is at unaffordable levels. Now we have a home to call our own and proper roots in our village. We have invested not just in a property but also in the community."

The scheme was awarded £967,500 grant funding from the Homes & Communities Agency and received high level support from both Cornwall Council and St Agnes Parish Council. "We appreciate the commitment of our partners who have worked very hard with us to ensure this project is a success," said David Renwick, Chief Executive of the Ocean Group. "The result is a development that is a credit to the village, providing homes for local people that are in keeping with the surrounding architecture. Ocean also owns the field adjoining the site and we are looking at the possibility of building an additional 24 affordable houses which would be built to the same high standard and help to meet the local need for affordable homes."

Cornwall Councillor Les Donnithorne, who was also a District Councillor representing St Agnes Ward during the development, welcomed the new homes: "I must praise the innovative manner in which Ocean Housing, the Architects and the builders approached this development and for the high standards in its completion. "Both the shared ownership and tenanted properties are a positive blend of different house styles, a combination of materials, colours and features. This design and the excellent young people's play area have all contributed to an outstanding and exciting development which any community would be proud to have as part of its village infrastructure. I look forward, eagerly, to being involved in similar developments in the area that can only complement Miners Way." He further added: "I wish all of the new key-holders happiness and security in their new homes".

Pupils from St Agnes Primary School have been involved with the development during the last year, making many site visits and designing posters warning of the dangers on building sites. The pupils had great fun at the opening, with an interactive presentation from the St Agnes museum, during which they dressed up in traditional mining clothes.

Simon Caklais, Gilbert & Goode Construction Director, said that his project team have really enjoyed being involved with the local community, and especially the local school and museum: "We are genuinely committed to making a positive contribution to village life and the pupils have been incredibly enthusiastic. We are very grateful to Headteacher, Carol Wint, for wholeheartedly supporting the school's involvement and to members of the Museum for making today such an interactive event for the pupils."

St Agnes Headteacher Carol Wint is pleased that the school has been involved in the project from the beginning right through to the opening ceremony: "Gilbert & Goode has been kind enough to welcome our children on site at various stages of construction, giving the pupils a valuable opportunity to learn about how homes and streets are built in our community."

Roger Radcliffe, Chairman at the St Agnes Museum, said they were always pleased to work with local schools: "And especially with St. Agnes School at the opening of 'Miners Way', where we told the story of mining in St. Agnes using our education and outreach miner and bal maiden costumes. Mining was once such an integral part of life in St. Agnes and each generation needs to discover this for themselves. Our work at the museum will hopefully serve as part of this journey of discovery for the many children who visit us or experience our outreach work."