

Action for Market Towns

PRESS INFORMATION

28 July 2009

Old Cottage Hospital Studios in Ledbury wins top market town award in West Midlands

A Partnership who transformed a well-loved but boarded up, derelict, building into 8 Studios for local, young entrepreneurial businesses (comprising approximately 1,600 sq ft), and 6 affordable flats for local people was named winner of the West Midlands Market Town Awards.

The Ledbury and Area Development Trust (LADT) was the community organisation, operating 'on the ground' in partnership with English Partnerships (now Homes & Communities Agency), Advantage West Midlands to fulfill the transformation of the Old Cottage Hospital in Ledbury.

The overarching aim of the project was to produce an exemplar mixed use development providing affordable housing for local people, and a vibrant, collaborative environment in which young entrepreneurial businesses can flourish.

The opening of the Old Cottage Hospital Studios has enabled LADT to pass its 'credibility apprenticeship' in the town and be seen as an organisation working for the community, and making a positive difference. This has enabled LADT to turn its attention to another key building in the town – the Barrett Browning Institute – and to be seen as an organisation capable of coming up with an effective plan – based on what the community wants - for how that building can best be used in the years to come.

Old Cottage Hospital Studios, Ledbury was also named the winner of the Business & Economy category.

Other category winners were:

Social and Community category: A Healthy Future Evesham is a project that used the natural and built environment to address social, mental and physical health issues in Evesham and the rural hinterland. Including forest schools, accessible footpaths, a walking group, fully accessible petanque courts and a cardiac rehabilitation centre, the project provides a holistic approach to social and health needs.

Environment and Culture category: Avon Meadows Community Wetland Project is the creation of a 20 ha wetland on a riverside meadow within the town of Pershore, enhancing biodiversity, treating stormwater, assisting flood alleviation and providing a new community asset. The local community actively helped design the wetland and now run regular work parties to maintain and enhance its amenity.

Partnership & Strategic Working category: Stourport-on-Severn 'Celebrating our Heritage, Forging our Future' is the continued transformation of Stourport Canal Basins into a major heritage attraction through creation and lease of a café/restaurant, heritage room and office, funded by Advantage West Midlands, which will generate income helping to develop and sustain an events and activities programme with the support of volunteers and community groups

Commendation: Skillbuilders Ludlow Marches a strong and innovative project which brings together rural market town artisans wishing to encourage the next generation for business succession with education professionals to nurture the next generation of butchers, bakers, construction workers and many other trades.

The West Midlands Market Town Awards are part of the **National Market Town Awards** run by Action for Market Towns which each year celebrate the great variety of volunteer-led projects that are helping to regenerate and sustain small towns throughout the country.

The Awards were presented at the Old Cottage Hospital on Tuesday 28th July 2009.

Ends

For further press information on the market town awards, please contact: John Pole on 01430 441557 email john.pole@towns.org.uk

To contact the Old Cottage Hospital project, ring Roger Payne on 01531 636304 or email rogerpayne@ledburyadt.org