

MEDIA RELEASE**13 April 2023****Official opening of The Nest Community Building and Library**

Thamesmead residents headed to a free community fun day on 12 April to celebrate the grand opening of The Nest Community Building and Library in Cygnet Square, South Thamesmead. They were joined by the Leader of the London Borough of Bexley, Cllr Baroness O'Neill of Bexley OBE and Bexley's Mayor, Cllr Nick O'Hare, who opened the building with an official ribbon cutting ceremony.

The completion of this state-of-the-art building marks a significant milestone in Peabody's regeneration of the neighbourhood, and is a critical part of our wider plan to improve, grow and look after Thamesmead for the long term.

As well as housing a new library managed by the London Borough of Bexley, the Nest – which was constructed by Durkan – is already home to community groups and local organisations, and provides a base for Peabody's communities team to support local people to access employment support, benefits and housing advice and a range of health and well-being opportunities. The building has several rooms, including a fully-glazed events space and dance studio for up to 100 people, a first-floor terrace overlooking Southmere Lake, and high-quality kitchen facilities. These spaces are available for local people to [hire at affordable rates](#).

As part of the grand opening, visitors had the chance to visit the new library – a much-needed community facility where local people can borrow books, access services and chose from a programme of events and activities for adults, children and young people. Attendees also toured the rest of the building, where they visited stalls set up by local organisations, including Peabody, showcasing a wide range of services and activities on offer across the town.

As well as enjoying locally-sourced food (funded by Peabody and supplied by local provider Precious Healthy Food), attendees were treated to a wealth of creative activities both inside and outside the

building, including face painting, storytelling and circus skills. Local arts organisation, TACO!, hosted a popular zine workshop, while Greenwich Dance – who are based at the Nest – attracted crowds on Cygnet Square, thanks to a line-up of top quality performances.

John Lewis, Peabody’s Executive Director for Thamesmead, said: “It’s been wonderful to welcome so many people across Thamesmead to The Nest today. It’s a fantastic community space, and we look forward to residents making the most of all it has to offer. Today was a great opportunity to share more information about the many activities, events and services in the community, and to hear a bit more about our long term plans for this fantastic town. We hope that residents come away feeling inspired and informed about the great things on offer and feel an increasing sense of pride and excitement about their home town.”

Cllr Baroness O’Neill of Bexley OBE said: “It was great to be able to come along today and welcome residents to our newest library. I feel sure that many of them will be back to make the most of this fantastic new facility. It’s wonderful that we now have such an open modern space where people can read, learn and take part in community activities.”

Tim Carpenter, Managing Director of Construction at Durkan, said: “It’s great to see The Nest now open for local residents to enjoy. Creating and investing in communities is an important part of the regeneration of South Thamesmead, and is central to our work at Durkan.

“It has been a privilege to help design and build this new education and recreational space. We’re looking forward to seeing local people use and enjoy the community facility for years to come.”

The Nest Community Building and Library form part the first of Peabody’s seven-phase masterplan for South Thamesmead. This initial phase, which completed in late 2022, also includes 534 new homes (of which 55 per cent are affordable), as well as commercial space for shops, services, and food and drink at Cygnet Square. The second phase, which gained planning approval in spring 2023, will provide 329 mixed-tenure homes in South Thamesmead, 42% of which will be affordable. Construction is due to begin later this year.

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