

MEDIA RELEASE**15 December 2023****Thamesmead basketball court undergoes colourful transformation**

L-R Joseph Ijoyemi and Cieron Peel

Local artists have transformed the entire floor and walls of the multi-use games area on Thamesmead's Wolvercote Road – known locally as the Cage – into striking works of art.

Joseph Ijoyemi won a £12,000 art commission funded by Peabody in 2021 to breathe new life into the space by covering the entire floor with an artwork. He was supported by a series of local graffiti artists, led by Cieron Peel. This additional mural commission, worth £6,000, saw the existing artworks on the brick walls of the games area undergo a refresh.

Joseph's eye-catching design, 'Believe and Achieve', was chosen by the wider community and The Cage TM group, which is made up of local residents who were involved in the entire commissioning process. To create the artwork Joseph hosted a series of sports workshops at the Cage with support from The Cage TM group. He then used photographs from the sessions to create the silhouettes in the final design.

The floor mural took six days to complete with the help of professional painters Gavin McPhail and Gabriel Pitcher from creative consultancy Wood Street Walls. The walls of the Cage have also been covered with a series of new artworks thanks to a project titled 'Made In The Manor'. This involved some of the Cage's original graffiti artists who returned to recreate their artworks which are a welcome addition to a series of new murals that make up Thamesmead's growing street art trail.

Joseph said: "The Cage is a place where I've been, it's where I grew up," he said. "Now after many years I'm back here trying to rebuild something positive for young people and give back to the community, which is very important to me.

"The artwork is called 'Believe and Achieve'. My aim for when you go into that colourful space is that you feel positive — like you can become a leader for tomorrow. That's what the workshops prior to the design were about — bringing young people together, getting them to really enjoy themselves and stay away from negativity."

Cieron said: “The ‘Made In The Manor’ mural means a lot to us, especially since it’s right here in the heart of Thamesmead, our hometown, the place that shaped us. This piece, crafted by genuine local graffiti artists well-known for their authenticity, is like a living history of Thamesmead’s graffiti scene. It’s a tribute to the art we live and breathe, representing our community’s passion, determination, resilience, and raw talent.”

Adriana Marques, Peabody’s Head of Cultural Strategy for Thamesmead, said: “This project is an incredible example of a community group taking the lead. The Cage TM Group has worked so hard and done a fantastic job in selecting Joseph and Cieron to bring bold and authentic artworks back to a much-loved community space. It’s an inspiring way of merging art and sport, and supporting local people’s aspirations for their neighbourhood.”

Dominika Kieruzel, one of The Cage TM group members who judged the commission entries, said: “Based on my conversations with local kids, they’re really excited about the Cage. I think that part of the reason is the space feels much safer, all of the colours are really cheerful and the facilities are better.”

The artworks were carried out as part of Peabody’s £4.48m South Thamesmead Garden Estate (STGE) programme which is a collaboration between designers muf architecture/art, Peabody, The Mayor of London, Groundwork and a dedicated group of residents – the Community Design Collective (CDC).

Now that the Cage refurbishment is complete, the resident group is planning a programme of sports events and activities that will allow the space to be used in different ways. They also plan to screen Joseph’s documentary, which chronicles the project from inception to completion, at a location in Thamesmead next year.

Find out more about Joseph’s work [here](#) and Cieron’s work [here](#). Find out more about the South Thamesmead Garden Estate [here](#).

You can read more about Thamesmead’s range of cultural activities, spaces, community groups and artists in the [Thamesmead Culture Guide and Directory](#).

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About Thamesmead

Thamesmead is a town in South-East London and is the same size as central London with a population of 45,000 people. Its rich landscape includes 240 hectares of parks and green space; 7km of canals; five lakes; 5km of river frontage and 30,000 trees.

Peabody has been leading the regeneration of the town since 2014, after becoming the town’s main landholder. Our mission is to grow, improve and look after Thamesmead for the long term. We aim to bring about thousands of homes and jobs, alongside new leisure, cultural and commercial facilities over the next two decades. The area’s green spaces, waterways and lakes will be at the

heart of everyday life, while the West End is just 25 minutes away thanks to the opening of the Elizabeth Line.

We're committed to making culture a part of everyday life in Thamesmead. We partner with excellent organisations and work with local creatives and community groups to develop and deliver a diverse cultural programme for the town.

About Peabody

More than 160 years after it was established, Peabody is one of the oldest not-for-profit housing associations in the UK.

The Peabody Group is responsible for more than 107,000 homes, with around 220,000 residents across London and the Home Counties. We also have around 17,000 care and support customers. Our purpose is to help people flourish, and we are getting closer to residents by taking a local approach.

We are committed to delivering a responsive and easily accessible repairs service and investing in our existing homes so they are safe and well maintained. Our retrofit projects will make thousands of our homes more energy efficient.

We work with councils and communities to promote economic inclusion, tackle inequality and poverty, and prioritise wellbeing.

Our rents were £621m lower than the market in 2022/23. With an average rent of £127 per week in London and the south-east, we offer significant value for residents and communities.

We are also committed to building much-needed affordable homes.

About the South Thamesmead Garden Estate

The South Thamesmead Garden Estate (STGE) programme is all about investing in the open spaces around South Thamesmead to make them more welcome, accessible and useful for the local community. We've worked with local people who have designed and created these spaces with us, and we're investing £4.48million so that we can bring more nature to our streets while improving biodiversity and adjusting to the effects of climate change.

This was a collaborative process with designers muf architecture/art, Peabody, The Mayor of London, Groundwork and a diverse and dedicated group of specially recruited, trained and paid residents – the self-named Community Design Collective (CDC).

Thanks to the programme, the Cage has benefited from:

- new seating
- bike racks
- pumps and tools
- a water fountain
- a clock
- new goal posts
- improved lighting

The programme contributed to a European-funded research project called [CLEVER Cities](#), which looked at how nature-based solutions can help address the effects of the climate crisis, increase biodiversity, and help tackle social and economic inequalities.