

News Release



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BISHOP OF BARKING VISITS WEST SILVERTOWN URBAN VILLAGE

The Bishop of Barking, the Rt Revd Roger Sainsbury, visited West Silvertown Urban Village, in London Docklands, yesterday (22 May 1997) to find out at first hand how the concept of an urban village can be put into practice successfully. He also met with the newly appointed Church Development Officer for the area, Graham Routley.

Working on behalf of the Barking Episcopal area of the Diocese of Chelmsford, the Church Development Officer's will help to build a Christian community among the new residents of Britannia Village, which is estimated to be 3,000 by 1999. Appointed on 1 March, 1997 for an initial period of three years, Mr Routley will be accountable to a Project Support Group comprising Roman Catholic, Methodist and Anglican representatives. Mr Routley is a Baptist Minister and will be combining this part time post with the Free Ministry at St Mark's Ecumenical Congregation in near by Beckton.

The Revd Roger Sainsbury, Bishop of Barking, said: "Liaising with all the churches in the Royal Docks and providing a valuable information resource for the local Christian churches, Graham Routley will provide essential social and spiritual support for this new and emerging community."

West Silvertown Urban Village, the first of its kind in London, will eventually contain 1,500 homes on a 78 acre site. A design concept supported and encouraged by HRH Prince Charles, the aim is to develop integrated communities which have a mix of housing, shops, recreational facilities and work places all in one area. Construction of Britannia Village, the first housing led phase of the Urban Village began in July 1995.

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"A new village common is committed, a site has been reserved for a new primary school, which is expected to open in 1999, and both Peabody Trust and Wimpey Homes will provide local shopping facilities which are likely to open within the year. Work is about to start on a community centre, where the Church Development Officer will be based, and completion is scheduled for early 1998," said Andrew Grainger, Head of Land Disposal and Property Marketing, London Docklands Development Corporation.

Mike Southcombe, Wimpey Home's Project Manager, Britannia Village, comments: "We are delighted with current progress, over 100 Wimpey homes have already been completed and occupied and another 100 have been sold, which is indicative of the residential resurgence in the whole of Docklands."

George Barlow, Chief Executive, Peabody Trust, said: "The West Silvertown Urban Village is already flourishing. Peabody tenants have moved into 85 new homes on Fort Street and another 140 flats and houses are currently under construction to provide the very highest quality social housing for people in need. Peabody is working with its partners to ensure there will be wide ranging community facilities for everyone living in the village. "

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