

NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release

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**Ground-breaking officially marks the start of a new affordable development in Letchworth**

Chalkdene Developments has broken ground on a new housing project in Letchworth to build 30 new two-bedroom affordable homes for rent. On completion, all the homes will be purchased by settle to be provided as homes for affordable rent.

The new development will be called John Stoddard Court and is named after the D-Day veteran, fundraiser and former magistrate who made a huge contribution to the local community during his lifetime in the town.

John Stoddard, who was known as ‘Mr Letchworth’ due to his overwhelming impact on the town, passed away at the age of 93 in 2015 and this has been considered a fitting tribute to his impact on the town.

Chalkdene Developments is a joint venture between Morgan Sindall Group and HLL, with Lovell, the contractors, on site. Chalkdene Developments was set up in 2018 to build homes on surplus and underutilised land across the county made available by Hertfordshire County Council.

The site, at Jackman’s Estate, was bought from Hertfordshire County Council and Chalkdene Developments was able to make sure it was possible to build homes safely on the land.

Richard Roberts, Leader of Hertfordshire County Council, was joined by settle Chief Executive Gavin Cansfield, Steve Faber, Managing Director of HLL and Stuart Gibbons, Lovell Managing Director, London and Southern, to officially mark the start of construction.

Justine Fancy, Programme Director, Chalkdene Developments, said: “This is a great example of partnership working and how, through the Chalkdene Developments joint venture with HLL, we can continue to support Hertfordshire County Council’s strategic objectives whilst also delivering much needed, high quality new homes.”

Settle Chief Executive, Gavin Cansfield, added: “We are delighted to be working with Chalkdene Developments to provide these affordable homes. Our commitment at settle is to invest in our neighbourhoods and provide good quality homes. This development on the Jackman’s Estate will do just that, providing good quality affordable homes in one of our biggest neighbourhoods.”

Richard Roberts, Leader of Hertfordshire County Council commented: “I am delighted that such a significant and important milestone has been reached on this exciting development in Letchworth. We’re committed to ensuring the demand for a variety of high-quality new homes across Hertfordshire is met, including affordable and shared-ownership housing such as these.

“District and borough councils have been set ambitious housing targets by Government to deliver on our housing needs over the next 15 years, and we’re expecting a number of urban extensions in the county.

“Where we are the landowner, we want to help shape those places, to help create thriving, well-connected communities where people want to live. To do this, we formed Herts Living Ltd, which is wholly-owned by Hertfordshire County Council. Revenue from the sale of properties will also provide an additional income source for the County Council to help us meet the rising costs of the vital services we provide for our residents.”

Caption left to right:

Justine Fancy – Chalkdene (Programme Director)

Elizabeth Dennis-Harburg – NHDC (Leader)

Steve Faber – HLL (MD)

Stuart Gibbons – Lovell Partnerships (Regional MD)

Richard Roberts – HCC (Leader)

Sally Veitch – Settle (Chair)

Oliver Heald – MP

**Notes to editors:**

About John Stoddard: John fought in the D-Day landings during the Second World War and after marrying wife Sheila in 1950 set up successful dental product business Stoddard Manufacturing Ltd in his beloved garden city.

John served on the local bench as a magistrate for 25 years and was also chairman of the Lister Hospital Appeal for that time, helping to raise more than £2 million for vital equipment.

He helped found the Letchworth Garden City Corporation in 1978 and became a founder governor of Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation which replaced the public sector corporation in 1995. He was also a regular member of the congregation of the Free Church, Letchworth.

For more information on this development go to [www.chalkdenedevelopments.co.uk](http://www.chalkdenedevelopments.co.uk)

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