

**Media invite: Andy Burnham to open refurbished Newton-le-Willows youth club**

**Retired telecoms executive led project to refurbish the club he loved as a youngster**

Greater Manchester Mayor Andy Burnham is to officially re-open a once run-down young club which has been transformed into a first-class facility thanks to a former member who attended in the 1960s.

**Mr Burnham will reopen Newton le Willows Boys and Girls Club (NB&GC), 19 Haydock St, Newton-le-Willows WA12 9AB from 6:30pm – 7:30pm on 6 September.**

The new centre is a state-of-the art facility with amenities such as a cinema room and recording studio. Salford charity Hamilton Davies Trust (HDT) have funded the £250,000 refurbishment.

It was refurbished after a founder HDT trustee and donor Graham Chisnall returned to his old boys’ club 50 years after he left. The retired Talk Talk executive attended NB&GC as a Newton-le-Willows youngster.

Inspired by fond memories of the club, he persuaded colleagues at HDT to back the centre. He then project-managed the scheme and has since become a trustee of the club.

Mr Chisnall worked closely with club manager Victoria Musk and volunteers to make the project happen.

NB&GC is a registered charity, offering sports, music, culture and diverse activities, open to young people between the ages of 8-18.

There has been no significant investment in NB&GC since 1962, when it was opened by Frankie Vaughan.

The club is mainly run by volunteers and relies on donations and fundraising activities to keep going. Before now, there was never enough money to modernise the structure.

Young people helped design the refurbished NB&GC, which has top quality facilities including:

* A cinema room with a 65" HDTV smart screen for film nights, presentations and awareness projects.
* A fully equipped kitchen, where young people will be trained in cookery skills.
* A recording studio with modern recording, composing and mixing facilities, mics, stands, speakers, guitars, drum kit, keyboard and and DJing equipment
* A gaming room with the latest games consoles and HD TV screens featuring surround sound.
* A sports hall for a wide range of games and sports.
* An online community radio station, WA12 Radio, with presenters of all ages running their own shows including members as young as ten-years-old.
* A hair and beauty salon.

All activities will help club members develop a wide range of personal and practical skills and provide the opportunity to explore and help identify their talents and interests.

The club was very different when Mr Chisnall first attended back in 1964. He went on to participate for five years and credits a reference from the then club leader as helping him get his first job.

Mr Chisnall, now aged 62, said: “I had very happy times at NB&GC. It was a big support to me in my youth and helped me develop the confidence to succeed in my later life.

“When I walked in again for the first time in years, it was a little down-at-heel, being run by a team of excellent volunteers with little financial backing. I decided I had to put it back on its feet. I wanted the younger generation to have the support I had and enjoy first-class facilities.

“I feel privileged and very happy to have been able to help the club that once helped me.  It’s a great feeling.”

Peter Dugan, Chairman of NG&GC, said: “The transformation has been amazing. This is a great club, with this new investment and the addition of WA12 Radio we can now offer first class facilities for the youth of the district.”

Mr Burnham said: “Thank you to Graham, Victoria and all the volunteers for giving the youth club a well needed refurbishment. The wide range of activities now available is fantastic and I hope the young people who come here enjoy them for years to come.”

**Notes for editors**

**The Hamilton Davies Trust**

HDT was founded by Neil and Anne McArthur in 2004 with the aim of supporting the local communities of Irlam and Cadishead in Salford, with additional support given to Rixton-with-Glazebrook (Warrington). Neil is a founder of the Talk Talk group.

With a strong leadership with local roots and working closely with local people, it has invested £7m of private funds to date into the area.

This includes distributing over 550 grants to local organisations and projects and, with partners, funding a number of major, high-quality infrastructure projects such as the building of a new sixth form college, the refurbishment of the local leisure centre and the transformation of Irlam Railway Station.

A key partner is NC Developments Ltd (NCD**)**, a property company owned by Neil McArthur which delivers building and public realm projects part - or full funded by HDT to improve life in Irlam and Cadishead.

According to a 2014 report by Commission for the New Economy, the work of the HDT and partners is supporting significant social and economic improvements in the area, and local people identify the charity as the key driver of regeneration.

<http://neweconomymanchester.com/media/1468/irlam-cadishead-report.pdf>

**NB&GC**

The NB&GC team provides a range of activities in a safe environment to help members along their journey to becoming caring and responsible citizens

It offers fun, exciting activities within a safe and caring environment as well as informal educational programmes including drug and alcohol awareness, personal relationship guidance, career support and financial awareness.

The club promotes key areas of safeguarding children and young people, internet safety, personal safety, and equality.

Newton Boys and Girls Club is affiliated to Lancashire Association of Boys and Girls Clubs, the National Association of Boys and Girls Clubs and proud members of UK Youth.

In 2016 NBGC was accredited with Ambition Quality Bronze Award

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Well-wishers can support the club the club via various means including becoming a member, being a sponsor or patron, helping out with sessions by volunteering and/or donating directly to NB&GC via Paypal.