



Mr Box at his new home on Springfield Place off Rice Lane, Egremont.

### **New era for Rice Lane, Egremont, as Edwardian terraced properties are replaced with modern, environmentally friendly homes.**

The first phase of a new affordable housing development on Springfield Place, Rice Lane in Egremont, Wirral, has completed and is now fully occupied.

Previously a street of terraced houses dating back to 1919, the new development, which has been redeveloped by Lovell in partnership with Cosmopolitan Housing Association, has created 28 new homes which include two, three and four bedroom properties for rent.

Mr Jeffrey Box was a tenant of one of the original properties. He moved into his new home at Springfield Place at the end of February after being provided with temporary accommodation by Wirral Council while the development was being built.

Speaking at the new property, Mr Box said: "The new house is a great improvement in many ways. It feels generally bigger and lighter and we have a second bedroom now.

I'm looking forward to working on the garden and I've started planting things already! The front area is a real benefit though; the old houses had no fronts so your window was right on the street and we had terrible trouble with kids throwing stones and even just looking right into your living room, it became very stressful.

Now all of the homes here are occupied, there is much less trouble because there are plenty of neighbours to look out for one another.”

Each home has its own parking space and rear garden and is equipped with solar panels to provide hot water and state-of-the-art ‘smart meters’ to measure gas and electricity. Smart meters take readings automatically and provide accurate, up-to-the-minute information for residents on energy consumption, allowing them to monitor their energy use more efficiently. The properties also benefit from automatic meter reading water meters.

This means the entire development meets Level 3 of the Code for Sustainable Homes, the system for assessing properties’ environmental performance. They also meet the Lifetime Homes standard by providing accessible, adaptable accommodation and Secured by Design standards, through the incorporation of security measures into their design and construction.

Geoff Redhead, Cosmopolitan Housing Group Chief Executive, said: “This development is a great example of agencies working together to achieve one goal and that’s exactly what we have achieved here on Rice Lane. We have created 28 new homes here that provide secure, warm, affordable accommodation for local residents, that are also environmentally sound. That’s thanks to specialists like Lovell, support from Wirral Council and funding from the Homes and Communities agency.”

“We are all thrilled to welcome tenants to their new homes on Rice Lane and to have helped ease local housing need in the Borough.”

Cllr. Chris Blakeley, Wirral Council’s Cabinet Member for Housing and Community Safety said: “Egremont has been crying out for this kind of redevelopment for years. I am delighted to see modern affordable homes replace blighted streets and pay tribute to Cosmopolitan Housing for the investment they are making in the area. Together with the money the Council will soon be investing, Egremont is now firmly on the agenda.”

Total costs of the development, which in its entirety will create 36 new homes, is approximately £3.5 million, supported by grant funding from the Homes and Community Agency (HCA).

Phase two of Rice Lane, which is due to complete in the Autumn of 2011, will provide a further eight new homes.