



## Eco homes with a community impact

**An eco-friendly development of affordable homes is set to help families on lower incomes save energy and reduce living costs.**

Amber Valley Housing is nearing completion of a £780,000 development of six three-bedroom homes for affordable rent called Pottery Cottages at Codnor Park, near Ironville.

The homes, supported by funding from the Homes and Communities Agency, include a range of energy-saving measures including solar panels with special temperature sensors. These sensors drain water away from the panels when the temperature nears freezing point and pumps it back when the sun rises to warm the roof. The equipment avoids using chemicals and is virtually maintenance free.

Pottery Cottages was started earlier this year by a private developer, with the homes earmarked for private sale. But after the recession forced building work to stop, Amber Valley Housing joined forces with the developer to complete the homes and offer them for affordable rent, to help those in housing need.

The move meant the original developer, Thomas Griffiths, was also able to create new employment at the site by taking on a young apprentice.

Mr Griffiths said: "I started asking around in the village if anyone was looking for employment, which is when I heard about Mark Pryor, who was living in an Amber Valley Housing property."

Mark, 18, had been unemployed since leaving school and was looking for a job in the construction industry. He said: "I was really pleased when Thomas got in touch and offered me a job. I wanted to go into the construction industry but there weren't many jobs around. He has given me the chance to try different things like plumbing, carpentry and building."

Nick Willder, development manager at Futures Housing Group of which Amber Valley Housing is a part of, added: "Mark has been so dedicated that he has now been offered a full-time position and he is looking to start an NVQ to further his training.

"Pottery Cottages is a unique development in terms of the impact it is having on the local community in so many different ways. I am delighted that we were able to support the local developer, indirectly create a new job opportunity and that the homes will now help to meet the area's housing needs by getting people off the waiting list and into good quality housing."

All the homes at Pottery Cottages exceed level 3 of the Code for Sustainable Homes, a rating scheme set by the Government as a challenge to house builders to ensure that new homes are highly sustainable across a range of energy, environmental and ecological indicators. The build programme has significantly exceeded all targets set by the team for sustainability. For example Griffiths has so far achieved the maximum possible score of 100% for recycling and bio-mass energy from site waste, meaning that nothing whatsoever from the building site has gone to landfill.

The homes are set to be ready in January 2010.

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