

Anchor House 'giving hope to the homeless'

Catholic homelessness charity Caritas Anchor House held a milestone celebration event this week, where they were hailed for giving homeless people a home and the hope to rebuild their lives.

The comment was made by Mgr John Armitage, Rector of Walsingham and Chair of Trustees at the charity, at the event marking the opening of their new building, which includes 25 studio flats to ease the transition into independent living for those who have experienced homelessness.

The flats form part of the charity's Home and Hope Appeal, which has also seen the construction of facilities which will extend their ability to offer services to the local community, as well as the

residents who now call Caritas Anchor House home. Launched in 2011 with a £15.3million funding target, the appeal has so far raised £12.8million – a tremendous achievement in a difficult climate.

Mgr John Armitage charted the charity's journey since its opening in 1962 as a seafarers' mission under Mgr Denis McGuinness, giving a welcome and home to seafarers from all over the world.

When the docks closed, the transformation into a facility for homeless people was supported by Bishop Thomas McMahon and the other London bishops, and the journey from Anchor House to Caritas Anchor House had begun.

Caritas Anchor House, in the Diocese of Brentwood, is now an award winning



Rebecca Riley and Elinor Savage at the celebration opening



Mgr John Armitage, Chair of Trustees at Caritas, chats to guests



charity providing a home and wrap-around, specialist care for those escaping homelessness.

Their approach is holistic to ensure the causes of an individual's homelessness are addressed. Support with mental health and substance abuse, exploring employment opportunities and harnessing potential all fall within what's offered, and is aimed at enabling residents ultimately to lead independent, self-fulfilling lives.

He said, "Caritas Anchor House is a symbol of the commitment of the Church and other charitable bodies to address the ever-growing crisis regarding the provision of homes for ordinary people and the tragedy of homelessness that we face every day.

"To accomplish what we have, in what has been the most challenging of financial times for our country, has been nothing short of miraculous. The generosity in time and the determination of those who have supported our Home and Hope Appeal has shown us that it is possible to create new and innovative ways to address social need."

Before blessing the new move-on flats, Bishop Alan Williams addressed guests at the event, and commended the strong sense of community within Caritas Anchor House.

"About 250 people make their way through Caritas Anchor House one way or another during a year, and there is a real sense of community. This place is always welcoming, always inclusive, always accessible and that's exactly how it should be."

"There is also a wider dimension to Caritas Anchor House. Those that live here volunteer in the community, and there is a real sense that the good that goes on here spreads out to the wider world."

The charity is based in the London Borough of Newham, an area of acute deprivation, and was highlighted by Elinor Savage of the Greater London Authority (GLA), which donated £600,000 towards the appeal.

"The London Borough of Newham is the 25th most deprived borough in England, and is an identified area of high homelessness – one in 27 people in Newham have nowhere to live.

"Caritas Anchor House's project was

attractive to the Greater London Authority because it provides additional affordable homes to meet a significant local need. It's been a real collaboration to get this project off the ground and it is extremely pleasing to be here today to see the finished homes."

Guests were able to get a real feel for a resident's journey through Caritas Anchor House with an experiential tour, which showcased the moving in and induction process, personal development and their education and employment programme.

While the charity has achieved so much there is still £2.5million left to raise for the Home and Hope Appeal so that the building project can be completed.

To contribute visit www.caritasanchor-house.org.uk or call 020 7476 6062.



The project at Anchor House in Newham, London, above, still needs £2.5million