

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



EXCITING NEW FUTURE FOR HISTORIC LANDMARK

The people of Bursledon are celebrating another success in their quest to secure the future of Greyladyes Chapel and establish a new arts centre.

On April 5 Greyladyes Arts Foundation, a charity set up by locals to run the project, purchased the building from the Catholic Diocese. With the help and generosity of their supporters, GAF raised £90,000 to buy the building in less than 10 months. Both Bursledon Parish Council and Eastleigh Borough Council donated £6,000 and the remaining £78,000 was raised through donations from the public.

Chairman of Bursledon Parish Council, Diana Sneezum, welcomes the news: "I'm delighted that the Greyladyes Arts Foundation is underway and congratulate all those who have worked so hard to achieve this. Our village will be privileged to have such a resource and the Parish Council was pleased to be able to contribute towards the funding. I look forward to spending many happy hours attending events to be held there."

Preserving Bursledon's Heritage

The Foundation's next task is to restore the building and preserve its unique character and charm. The chapel itself is hidden behind an old oak door and although visitors to Bursledon will be very familiar with its ornate gothic bellcote few people have ever been inside. GAF's aim is to give everyone the opportunity to appreciate this intriguing and atmospheric building and to safeguard its future for the benefit of the community.

A Vision for a Contemporary Arts Centre

The restoration project is due for completion in the autumn of 2007. The arts centre will host an exciting programme of exhibitions and events covering a wide range of arts related activities. These will include visual art, music, film, photography and local history. There will also be a diverse selection of classes, seminars and lectures for all ages and abilities. Many activities for children will be provided, including Saturday morning art clubs and a programme of events planned for the school holidays. These will provide a stimulating atmosphere in which children can learn new skills and find out about art and artists.

An exciting exhibition to launch the restoration project

GAF is proud to present an installation by artists Katie Barton and Lucy Renshaw, which will open to the public on 9 April - just days after the acquisition. Taking inspiration from the building's current state, Barton and Renshaw create a celebration of old and new in their one-off exhibition. GAF spokesperson Jo Bowler says: "It's great to be able to celebrate this new beginning and thank our supporters with an exhibition from two young artists. We look forward to welcoming visitors to see the show and hear about our plans for the new arts centre."

BartonRenshaw is sponsored by the Southampton office of Rok Development, the most active commercial property developer on the south coast. The Southampton office currently has live projects reaching from Sittingbourne to Portland. Rok Development is part of the Rok Group which operates from a network of offices across the UK using dedicated teams based in their local communities to provide development, building and maintenance services. This makes Rok's sponsorship of this exhibition a natural choice.

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www.gaf.org.uk

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BartonRenshaw will be open to the public from 9 April - 7 May 2006

Opening hours: Wednesday to Sunday 11am - 5pm (closed on Mondays and Tuesdays, but open on Easter Monday, 17 April)

Admission: FREE

Location: Greyladyes Chapel, School Road, Bursledon SO31 8BX

Artists' talk: 9 April at 3pm (Admission FREE)

For further
information about
GAF and the
exhibition visit:

www.gaf.org.uk

Notes to Editors

1. Bursledon is a picturesque village in Hampshire on the river Hamble with a long history of boatbuilding. Nelson's flagship at the battle of Copenhagen, "The Elephant" was built there in 1786. More recently the village became famous for its starring role in the television series "Howard's Way".
2. Greyladyes chapel was originally built as a ballroom for the main house (which, at that time was called Elm Lodge). Later it was used as a meeting place for the Parish Council and other local bodies.
3. In 1906, the then owner of the house, Mrs Shawe-Storey, who had renamed it Greyladyes after a ghost that was said to haunt her childhood home in Northumberland, converted the ballroom into a Roman Catholic chapel.
4. During World War II Greyladyes was requisitioned by the armed services and, after a visit to the local hostelry, some enthusiastic soldiers climbed the bell tower and requisitioned one of the bells.
5. After the war the chapel (with its one remaining bell) was sold to the Diocese of Portsmouth and served the Catholic community of Bursledon until May 2004, when it became redundant and was duly deconsecrated.
6. Greyladyes Arts Foundation is a charitable company set up in 2005 to preserve the building for the community and establish a contemporary arts centre.
7. Rok Development is part of the Rok Group. The company has set out to be mould-breaking in its industry by focusing relentlessly on its customers' needs and the service it provides when it develops, builds and maintains properties in its local communities. Rok Development develops industrial, retail and leisure premises. For more information see www.rokgroup.co.uk.

Greyladyes Arts Foundation is a charitable company. Charity no. 1112007 Company no. 5514689