

The Bushbury Arms Development



38 homes
Affordable rented

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The Bushbury Arms pub was built by Springfield Brewery in 1928 to serve the then newly built Low Hill council estate. A prominent local landmark, it was listed locally in 2001. After the pub closed in 2013 the local community feared that it would either become a blight on the area or suffer the same fate as many former local pubs - the target of arsonists and demolition.

Tenant Management Organisation Bushbury Hill Estate Management Board (BHEMB) decided to take the lead in ensuring this didn't happen. Based in the heart of Bushbury Hill estate in Low Hill, Wolverhampton, BHEMB has responsibility for about 840 City of Wolverhampton council homes. BHEMB's aim is to provide a tenant led and tenant focussed excellent service, which it has done since it was formed in 1998. Its tenants can become BHEMB members and those that do elect BHEMB's volunteer Board who decide what BHEMB does and its policies, and who employ BHEMB's staff to run the organisation day-to-day.

BHEMB asked housing association The Wrekin Housing Trust (WHT), with whom it has a long standing relationship to allocate their new homes in Wolverhampton, to buy the Bushbury Arms site and to work with BHEMB to shape the development as an affordable rented scheme. With the lack of stock diversity in Bushbury Hill homes making it hard for people to downsize to smaller homes and remain on the estate (most of Bushbury's current homes being three bedroomed), WHT designed the new development with a total of 38 homes including 14 one bedroomed apartments (10 in the converted pub), 22 two bedroomed and 2 four bedroomed houses. Ground floor apartments were

designed with level access and shower rooms to make them suitable for older tenants or those with mobility problems.

It was agreed with the Council that half of the new homes would be let through their housing register, whilst the other half would be let through BHEMB's Bushbury Choose Your Home lettings scheme. For these homes, preference is given first to existing BHEMB tenants, thus freeing up another BHEMB family home, and then to Bushbury Hill residents with a local connection.

As the future owner of the homes, WHT led the planning and development process. With local support for the scheme through BHEMB, getting planning permission was straightforward. BHEMB staff attended monthly site meetings and made changes on the basis of issues raised by tenants and their knowledge of what would make scheme management work, such as installing French back door windows and moving footpaths away from ground floor windows. BHEMB held a local competition to name the new road in the scheme, resulting in it being called Sewell Gardens after one of the seven ancient manors of the Bushbury parish. The BHEMB board also pushed for the pub building to be officially named Bushbury Arms House.

Once developed it is intended that the homes will be managed through BHEMB with a management agreement between BHEMB and WHT. For tenants, this means that they get the benefits of tenant led management of their homes and a local office on their doorstep. It is hoped that this arrangement may be extended to other WHT properties in Wolverhampton.



It's exciting that Bushbury Hill have been able to initiate Wrekin Housing Trust making such a great development that will help some of our tenants stay on the estate and house others who need it – another positive step in the development of our community.

Ken Spilsbury – Chair Bushbury Hill Estate Management Board



My little boy and I are so excited to move in; it's a fresh start for us. The houses are great; spacious and homely. We can't wait to get in the garden too.

Kim Campbell, who has been living in Bushbury with her parents and two year old son

I'm so happy to have got one of these properties and be able to move back to my home. Everyone has been really helpful and it's great to now start getting settled.

Shellbie Simmons, moving back to Bushbury after having to move to Tettenhall