[For release ASAP]

**Support and Independence at Harpenden Mencap’s New Development**

A new era of support has begun, as Harpenden Mencap officially opened its purpose-built Support Pod at its latest development. The milestone was celebrated on Saturday 13th September with a vibrant Street Party and ceremony, where Lord-Lieutenant Robert Voss CBE met with tenants and support workers before cutting a cake to honour the occasion.

Lord-Lieutenant Robert Voss CBE said, “I was delighted to officially open The Support Pod which is an excellent example of Harpenden Mencap’s values in practice. It is responsive to the needs and aspirations of adults with learning disabilities in the community. And it is empowering: providing them with opportunities to live the way they choose and with greater independence.”

The Support Pod is a garden room with bathroom and kitchenette. It will provide a space for staff to take their breaks, complete administrative tasks and training courses; and showering facilities for sleep-in or waking night workers outside of the tenants’ properties. This will enable the charity to offer responsive, person-centred support while increasing the potential for independent living and respecting the privacy and individual wishes of tenants.

Angela Duce, CEO of Harpenden Mencap said, “We are grateful for the support of St Albans City and District Council and Hertfordshire County Council for allowing the use of this site and building the Support Pod. We’re excited to see the Pod completed and furnished with the generous support of the Harpenden Trust.”

The ceremony led into an afternoon Street Party and lunch for residents and the wider Harpenden Mencap community, with excellent entertainment provided by St Albans City Band.

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