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BRADFORD NURSERY REDEVELOPS THE KNOLL AND CREATES 30 NEW JOBS

The derelict Knoll Nursing Home, which has become a haven for anti-social behaviour since closing in 2008, is being brought back to life by Yorkshire entrepreneurs Heather Baker & Jonathan Thornton, who are developing a new and exclusive children's Day Nursery on the site, creating up to 30 new jobs.

Heather will open the Woodlands Park Day Nursery at the Apperley Bridge, Bradford site, in May following a complete redevelopment of the site, undertaken by Jonathan and his team. The nursery will have capacity for 80 children up to the age of five, as well as a school holiday club for children aged between four and eight.

The company has secured a £350,000 funding package from HSBC's West Yorkshire Commercial Centre to support the acquisition of the site and redevelopment costs, in a deal led by Senior Commercial Manager Tom Sikora and Commercial Manager Phil Briggs. The finance has been provided from HSBC's £500 million SME Fund to specifically support businesses in Yorkshire and the Humber.

The nursery is the first move into childcare for the couple, who have focused on property development for the past 10 years after selling their sunbed business in 2004. Heather has recruited Rachel Finan, who recently won the Nursery World Awards: Early Years Professional of the Year 2013, as Nursery Manager. Rachel is a visionary and inspirational leader and shares her passion for the early years with everyone she comes into contact with.

Heather Baker said: "We are very excited about the nursery launch and we have received so many positive comments from the local community for redeveloping the Knoll. It is a beautiful building but had really become an eyesore after the nursing

home closed, attracting all sorts of anti-social behaviour. We have created a great environment for the children to play and learn and we are extremely passionate about benchmarking our high standards and we aim to become a leading childcare provider.”

She added: “HSBC has been very supportive and easy to deal with. The bank was the only one that could see what we were trying to do with the project and had the vision to support it.”

HSBC West Yorkshire Area Commercial Director Mike Hemingway said: “It is great to see the Knoll being brought back from its derelict state, it really had become a blight in the community and had been targeted by arsonists a couple of times. We worked with the business to understand their requirements and their vision for the business, and have been delighted to support the project.”

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