JOY OVER NEW HOMES

A double amputee from Hereford said he is 'over the moon' with a new home - being built on the site of a former swimming pool - which is being specifically adapted for his needs, reports The Hereford Times. Peter Virgo, a father-of-two, has moved into a flat at the newly built Lea Terrace development in Hollybush Walk. The complex of eight flats, all for affordable rent, has been built on the site of the disused LEA Swimming Pool by Midlands housing provider WM Housing Group.

Mr Virgo’s flat is being specially adapted - with wet room, low kitchen work surfaces, grabrails and a slabbed garden - to cater for his needs, which include spending a lot of time in his wheelchair. The 46-year-old had to have his legs amputated after corrective surgery failed to repair tendons and ligaments damaged during his 20 years as a window cleaner. Peter also suffers from a neurological condition which means he cannot wear his prosthetic legs for long periods, so needs to use a wheelchair as much as possible. He said: "I have been in temporary accommodation for the last 10 months which wasn't wheelchair friendly so, whenever I had to take off my prosthetic legs, I was basically bedbound. "I was desperate to find somewhere more suitable but nothing was available until now. It is a massive relief - I can settle and relax in a permanent home at last. "I really am over the moon with this flat. It is very roomy so there's lots of space for me to get around in my wheelchair and plenty of places for storage too - its ideal".

Mr Virgo joined his neighbours and VIPs to celebrate completion of the new housing scheme at a ceremony held at nearby Hinton Community Centre. Representatives of WM Housing Group, Leominster-based construction contractor J Harper & Sons and Herefordshire County Council. Work started on the development in August last year after demolition of the swimming pool, which the council closed in 2009 due to the building’s long-term structural defects.

The local authority reluctantly decided to dispose of the site in July 2015 after it was estimated that bringing the pool back into use would cost around £5 million. Redevelopment has cost £763,000 supported by funding from the Homes and Communities Agency. The new homes are being managed by West Mercia Homes, part of the WM Housing Group.