

THE CENTRE FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

ANDREW SELOUS MP SETS ASIDE WESTMINSTER TO WORK WITH THE HOMELESS

The Shadow Minister for Work and Pensions will spend two days volunteering with the Watford New Hope Trust.

The MP for South Bedfordshire will undertake the 'Inner City Challenge' and swap Westminster for Watford during a two day placement. From the 23rd September until the 25th September, Andrew Selous will work at the day centre and night shelter of the Watford New Hope Trust. The Trust provides homeless people in and around Watford with a range of welfare and accommodation services such as practical support such as food, shelter, clothing, healthcare and training.

The Conservative MP, having previously participated in sponsored sleepouts and raising money for local homeless charities, will contribute to the successful efforts of the Watford New Hope Trust to help over 600 people every year. Whilst working at the Trust, no task will be considered too small; from serving meals and hot drinks -up to 70 lunches and 250 cups of tea and coffee are served daily- to cleaning.

The Trust was started in 1990 by two local housewives and now consists of a rehabilitation hostel, a longer stay hostel and a night shelter, whilst also offering a variety of services from training workshops in computers to CV writing sessions.

Andrew will experience first hand these facilities and the people they serve by working in the Trust's wood and furniture recycling shop. This is a unique business enterprise scheme that restores self-esteem to homeless or recently resettled people by providing a useful occupation and sense of community.

"The Inner City Challenge is something of a bootcamp for MPs," says former Conservative Party Leader Iain Duncan Smith MP, initiator behind the placement programme, "It takes MPs out of the comfortable Westminster village and places them up front with the most broken parts of Britain. They can see the extent of damage first hand but also that renewal is possible and that people in the voluntary sector turns lives around."

NOTES

Andrew Selous is the MP for South West Bedfordshire and Shadow Minister for Work and Pensions. He was elected in June 2001.

The Centre for Social Justice is an independent think tank putting social justice at the heart of British Politics. Established by Rt Hon Iain Duncan Smith MP in 2004.

The placement is from Tuesday 23rd September 8:15 am – Wednesday 24th September 5pm at Watford New Hope Trust, The Haven day centre, 4 Whippendell Road, Watford, WD18 7LU.

Press inquiries for the Centre for Social Justice can be directed to Nick Wood or Media Intelligence Partners on 07889 617003 or 0203 008 8146 or Alistair Thompson of MIP on 07970 162 225.

The Watford New Hope Trust is a charity working to restore the homeless to full and productive lives through 10 separate residential projects and outreach programmes. Registered charity No. 1080784