

News

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Puppy love for new £16 million breeding centre

The Guide Dogs for the Blind Association (Guide Dogs) is moving its breeding operations to a new state-of-the-art home, after construction work was completed on its new National Breeding Centre, in Leamington Spa.

UK construction, infrastructure and design business Morgan Sindall plc has handed-over the new circa £16 million centre in Bishops Tachbrook, following a 59-week construction and fit-out project.

The last two weeks have been spent preparing the centre for staff, dogs and volunteers and the moving process began yesterday (May 3).

The new facility, which has been delivered on time and to budget, will allow the Guide Dogs to meet its target of increasing the amount of life-changing partnerships it creates annually to 900 by 2015.

Carol Warner, Guide Dogs' National Breeding Centre operations manager, says: "Guide Dogs has bred puppies in Bishops Tachbrook, from Tollgate House, since 1968 and with this fantastic new facility we're looking forward to continuing that tradition for many years to come.

"The new world-class centre will help us to meet our challenging aim of ensuring all blind and partially-sighted people can enjoy the same freedom of movement as everyone else."

Designed to complement its rural location, the centre features a series of one and two-storey pavilions, fitted-out with kennels, office space and facilities for dog breeding. A number of environmentally-friendly features have been incorporated to lower the facility's carbon footprint, including a biomass boiler and rainwater harvesting facilities.

Tony Fitzgerald, project manager from the Birmingham office of Morgan Sindall, says: "This has been a very rewarding project to work on. Throughout the construction, we've had the pleasure of experiencing first-hand the fantastic work that the Guide Dogs do and we're delighted that the finished product has been received so well."

The centre was designed by international architecture, urbanism and design practice Broadway Malyan.

Kevin Harnett, associate director at Broadway Malyan, says: "This is our fourth project for Guide Dogs over a 15-year period, reinforcing our position as a long-term project partner. We are confident that this sustainable complex will provide a stimulating and enriching environment for the canine residents, as well as a landmark facility for staff, volunteers and visitors."

There is still a lot of work to do in terms of settling in to the new centre and it will not be open to the public until the end of the year. To keep up to date with how the opening is progressing please visit www.guidedogs.org.uk/aboutus/national-breeding-centre

Pictured: L-R Carol Warner (Guide Dogs) and Tony Fitzgerald (Morgan Sindall plc) in front of the Guide Dogs for the Blind Association's new National Breeding Centre