

NEWS RELEASE

Work starts on new leisure centre

For immediate release

The chief executive of Gillchester Borough Council, Basil Goldsmith, helped to dig the first foundation for the borough's new state of the art leisure centre this morning.

The £40m Gillchester Leisure Complex is being built on the site vacated by St Thomas' Primary School, in Halifax Road, which closed earlier this year and reopened as an academy on a new site half a mile away.

It will include an Olympic sized swimming pool, a leisure pool with three water slides, a fully equipped gym and two sports halls that can be used for a wide variety of activities.

It is being built in partnership with the Learning Federation, which now runs St Thomas' Academy and will use the facilities for its pupils. and Seagate Leisure, which runs 10 leisure centres across the country.

Year six pupils at St Thomas' Academy will visit the site tomorrow for a special visit to learn about the centre and how it will be built.

Among the visitors will be Peaches Appleton, 10, who won a competition to design a logo for the leisure centre, which will be displayed on the front of the building.

Mr Goldsmith said: "Gillchester has had to wait a long time for a new leisure centre that offers a full range of sporting activities. I was very proud to dig the first hole in this wonderful project, which will transform our town.

"The council could not deliver this project without the support of the Learning Federation and Seagate Leisure. We all look forward to the centre opening its doors in late 2014."

Barbara Blackberry, headteacher at St Thomas' Academy, said: "Our first rate academy needs first rate sporting facilities. We are proud to be giving our support to this project, which will be a great asset to our pupils and to the whole town."

The town's current leisure centre, in Bramley Way, will close in December 2014. The land has been earmarked in the Town Plan for a development of about 200 homes.

The Gillchester Leisure Complex is being half-funded from the sale of the former leisure centre site, with the other half from the Learning Federation.

Picture supplied:

(l-r) Fiona Waterman, chief executive of Seagate Leisure; Basil Goldsmith, chief executive of Gillchester Borough Council; Barbara Blackberry, headteacher, St Thomas' Academy; Mark Learning, chief executive of the Learning Federation; Cllr Martin D'Aguiar, leader of Gillchester Borough Council.