



Paving the way for local community

An innovative collaboration between Southampton Solent University and the city council has resulted in a focal path featuring a selection of quotes from Shirley Estate residents.

Solent University were asked to put forward community art work proposals which involved residents and would help provide a sense of identity to the area.

Designed by Solent School of Art and Design Programme Group Leader, Nick Long, the quarter-mile path features quotes obtained from residents over an 18-month period.

Quotes about the estate's past, present and future are now permanently sandblasted onto high-quality paving slabs in a typeface Nick designed based on the architectural grid used in the original 1967 estate plans.

Nick explains: "We saw the Shirley Estate focal path as a community project and wanted the resident's voice to be embedded in the artwork. I interviewed residents in their homes, on the path, in their schools, in their park and café, and the community centre. Some of them had been living in Shirley Estate since 1967, when it was built."

"The 14 quotes that make up the artwork, are now part of the residents' daily lives and they can see it from their houses and flats, and walk on it every day."

The focal path is part of an improvement project initiated by Southampton City Council's Housing Services and is a key feature of all the improvements that are being carried out at Shirley Estate by the Shirley Decent Neighbourhoods Project.

The path transverses the estate from Howards Grove to Church Street and is used by both estate residents and the wider Shirley community for walking to school, the shops, work and Southampton Common or St James Park.

Councillor Warwick Payne, Cabinet Member for Housing and Sustainability, said: "The new Shirley Estate focal path captures the life experiences and hopes of this community. Along with St James Park, which is adjacent to the estate, and improvements that our Decent Neighbourhoods team are making to the gardens and open spaces, Shirley residents have yet another beautiful addition to their area."

The path will be formally opened in a community ceremony on Saturday, 27 June at 11am.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT THE MEDIA OFFICE ON 023 8201 3040 or press.office@solent.ac.uk

About Southampton Solent University

Southampton Solent University offers more than 19,000 students over 200 qualifications ranging from HND to PhD, in subjects such as maritime education and training, fashion and design, media and television, music, health, sport and leisure, business, IT and technology. The University was awarded the 2013 Quality Assurance kitemark for quality and standards of teaching and learning. Solent was voted one of the most creative universities in the UK in a Which? University 2014 poll of students. Solent Business School has been awarded the Small Business Charter Award, which is supported by the Association of Business Schools and the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills and 'gold approval' by the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA).