

# The bishop's blessing for Matson centre

STAFF and volunteers at Matson Neighbourhood Project chatted to their patron when he called in to see their plans and thank them for their efforts.

The Bishop of Tewkesbury, the Rt Rev John Went, visited the Matson Avenue one stop shop and the Trinity Centre in Norbury Avenue where he viewed development plans for refurbishing the main buildings in Matson Lane and the opening of neighbouring Taylor House.

## Interest

The bishop said: "I have taken a keen interest in the project since coming to the area and am very happy to be involved."

"I believe it is vitally important to be concerned with human problems."

"In the last 20 years the gap between sections of our society

has widened greatly.

"This project is building a community and improving the quality of people's lives."

Andy Jarrett, project co-ordinator, said: "It is great for the bishop to be involved and for him to come along to meet the workers."

"We have 26 paid staff but without a similar number of volunteers the success we have achieved so far would not have been possible."

It is hoped that the refurbishment scheme will be finished in September.

It will cost £300,000 in total.

The existing buildings and grounds will be improved and there will be more car parking

by Marc Stretton



■ Above: The bishop meets Becky Hirst (front) and Sarah Payne of Matson Neighbourhood project. Right: He chats to project co-ordinator Andy Jarrett.

Photos: Paul Nicholls.

spaces available.

Taylor House's first floor is already used as accommodation and the ground floor refurbishment will give scope for the project's future plans to be put in to action.

Much of the money needed has been raised from the Single Regeneration Budget, the Gloucestershire Environmental

Trust, English Partnership, LloydsTSB, Marks and Spencer and the Monument Trust.

However, this will only cover the capital costs.

Andy is hoping for donations of office furniture and kitchen equipment to kit out the new building. Anyone who may be able to help can call him on 01452 521 545.

