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For immediate release

Jules puts the Juice into Ledbury's new-look Old Cottage Hospital

A Herefordshire mother-of-two who started up her own jewellery business from home has signed up as the first tenant at the recently renovated Old Cottage Hospital Studios in Ledbury.

Jules Schad owns and runs Juice Jewellery, offering a collection of jewellery and accessories using freshwater pearls, semi-precious stones, silver and other exotic materials from the Orient and Far East.

A total of eight business studios and six apartments were created during the £1 million refurbishment of the Old Cottage Hospital, a project led by the Ledbury & Area Development Trust (LADT), supported by Advantage West Midlands, the Homes & Communities Agency and Two Rivers Housing.

Hereford-born Jules, who moved into the studios two weeks ago, has worked in sales and marketing in the hotel industry and food and drink sector and only started designing jewellery after visiting a friend in Hong Kong two years ago.

"I spotted some beautiful pearls and gemstones whilst on a shopping trip, brought them home, held a jewellery party in my house and sold everything. I saw a business opportunity and went back to mainland China on a more organised buying trip, sourcing suppliers and quality materials.

"The business was out-growing my family home so it's exciting having a showroom in the middle of Ledbury. There's always something going on in the town and people are starting to look in the shop window – the Old Cottage Hospital is a great environment for young businesses.

"It is difficult working for yourself, particularly during the downturn, but I have a positive outlook on life and I am currently concentrating my efforts on expanding my trade client base nationally, exhibiting at more retail shows and making my collection available to local people."

Roger Payne, Chief Executive of the LADT, said: "The eight studios are designed to encourage and support the growth of young entrepreneurial businesses in our town and our aim is to provide a vibrant and collaborative environment in which businesses such as Juice Jewellery can prosper."

Philip Roberts, Partnership Director of Advantage West Midlands, said: “Developing and investing in our market towns is absolutely essential for the economic development of our region, particularly our rural areas. Market towns are vital hubs and provide crucial services and facilities for the communities they serve.

“We are very pleased to have worked with LADT to support the growth – and sustainability - of young entrepreneurial businesses in the market town of Ledbury and we wish Jules every success in her venture.”

The LADT is now based in the building and manages the eight Studios which range in size from 61 sq ft (5.7 sq m) to 382 sq ft (35.8 sq m). Discussions between LADT and potential tenants are also well advanced for four of the remaining Studios.

Picture Editor’s Notes:

Ledbury Juice 1 & 2: (left to right) Roger Payne, Ledbury & Area Development Trust, Jules Schad, Juice Jewellery, and Philip Roberts, Advantage West Midlands.

Editor’s Notes:

Advantage West Midlands is the Regional Development Agency (RDA) for the West Midlands region – one of nine RDAs in England established to transform English regions through sustainable economic development.

Advantage West Midlands takes the lead role in setting the strategy and focus for regional economic improvement; building the partnerships needed to achieve the region’s vision; and ensuring that public money is targeted to those activities and projects best placed to make a real difference.

With an annual budget of more than £300 million to invest in the economic development of the West Midlands, Advantage West Midlands is, at any one time, managing around 2,500 projects which are changing the lives of people right across our region.

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For more information

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