

Client: Manchester City Council
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We're on right road

■ Plans to quash dated 'Gunchester' image

■ Crime rates are some of lowest in Manchester

AMY GLENDINNING

It was once one of the country's most notorious neighbourhoods, a byword for gang crime in the dark days of 'Gunchester'.

Now Moss Side is a community on the march – so much so that special ambassadors are being signed up to promote its confident new image.

The council-run scheme aims to show how much the area has improved as a place to live and work.

So far 10 Moss Side residents have volunteered to become ambassadors, with the hope more will follow.

The ambassadors will attend public events, act as spokespeople for Moss Side and work to increase pride in the area.

Phil Dodd, a member of the Cranswick Square residents' group – which transformed waste ground behind their houses into a community garden – is one of those already signed up.

Phil, 61, said: "People from outside the area still have a bad perception of Moss Side – but it actually has some of the lowest crime rates in Manchester.

"I've been here 30 years and I love it. It's so multicultural.

"We have people living here from all over the world and all seem to get on."

Thirty years ago, Moss Side

was scarred by race riots as youths clashed with police.

Then, through the 1980s and 1990s, the area became linked with gun and gang-related crime.

But recent police figures show Moss Side now has half the crime rate of the leafy suburbs of Didsbury and Withington.

And award-winning community projects and new housing have also seen the area flourish.

Kemoy Walker, who lives on Great Western Street, has also signed up as one of the area's ambassadors.

The 21-year-old community worker said: "Moss Side has changed – there's a lot of positivity here now.

"I'm working with young people here and seeing the talent, potential and things they do in the community every day."

Other ambassadors include peace campaigner Erinma Bell, Moss Side Adventure Playground manager Lee-Ann Ighon, teaching assistant Akeim Mundell and Gabrielle Cox, the former chair of the Greater Manchester Police Authority.

A spokesman for Manchester council said: "We can't thank the Moss Side ambassadors enough for being the collective voice that gives a true picture of Moss Side today. Each ambassador's story and 'can-do' attitude is representative of a big-spirited community, which is brimming with

potential and the tenacity to quash outdated stereotypes."

'There's a lot of positivity in Moss Side now'



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