

OPENING OF NEW ASHTON PARK GARDEN CENTRE
The sixth garden centre in NWF's portfolio opens to the public

NWF Group plc ("NWF"), the diversified sales and distribution group, is pleased to announce the opening of its new garden centre in Ashton Under Lyne - Ashton Park.

Ashton Park is situated in the Ashton Moss area of Tameside within Snipe Retail Park, with access and exposure to the whole of the Ashton and Manchester area via the adjacent M60. It is a large garden centre with a substantial outdoor plant area, a 150-seater restaurant plus a coffee shop. It currently employs 80 people from the area, including qualified horticulturists. The centre offers a range of plants, furniture, gifts and locally sourced produce.

Back in July last year NWF acquired Arthur A Gent and Sons Ltd, a garden centre company, just outside Manchester for £0.25 million. The business was located in a new seven acre site in Ashton with the benefit of planning permission for a new garden centre, held on a 50 year lease. Once the acquisition was completed NWF set in progress the building of the new garden centre, which comprises 30,000 square foot of heated retail space and parking for 170 cars. The centre cost £3.5 million to build and has been furnished with £0.5 million of stock.

Graham Scott, Chief Executive of NWF, commented: "I am delighted that we have now opened Ashton Park. It has from the start been a very exciting project for NWF's Garden Centre division. We acquired a prime location within a fast growing retail area, and through an entirely new build we have constructed the most complete garden centre facility in the locality."

"This is NWF's sixth garden centre and it is pleasing to be implementing our strategy for growth in this part of our business. We have broadened our reach in the North West and created a leading centre for all green fingered enthusiasts."

For further information please contact:

Graham Scott, Chief Executive
NWF Group plc
Tel: 01829 260 260

John West / Clemmie Carr
Tavistock Communications
Tel: 020 7920 3150
ccarr@tavistock.co.uk