

greetsgreen

COMMUNITY MAGAZINE

OCTOBER/NOVEMBER 2005

**We love our
new school!**

**GUNS VILLAGE PRIMARY
SCHOOL OPENS ITS DOORS**

**DON'T GET IN DEBT
FOR CHRISTMAS**

Financial help & support is
available on your doorstep



Issue 20

Front cover: Guns Village Primary School Head Teacher, Barry Samuel, and pupils are thrilled with the new school which now has both junior and infant children on one site on Hanbury Road.

The Greets Green magazine is distributed to every household in the New Deal for Communities area, and to other NDCs nationally. If you live in the Greets Green NDC area and do not receive a copy then please call us on **freephone 0800 953 0215**.

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এ তথ্যাদি অনুবাদে আপনার সাহায্যের প্রয়োজন হলে,
দয়া করে ইথেরজী জানেন এমন একজন বন্ধু বা
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الأسرة ممن يتحدثون اللغة الإنجليزية الاتصال بنا علی
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welcome

Welcome to issue 20 of the Greets Green Magazine.

Although Summer is only just behind us, the shops are already gearing up for the festive season ahead. Turn to our 'Don't get into debt for Christmas' feature to find out how you can avoid getting swept along with it all and ending up in financial trouble. Lots of help and advice is available here in Greets Green and we've some top tips for avoiding Christmas debt traps.

Many local children couldn't wait to get back to the classroom this Autumn to check out the brand new Guns Village Primary School. See centre pages to hear what local youngsters think of their new school.

Also inside are several regular features, including the Community Page which this issue introduces OSCAR (the Organisation for Sickle Cell Anaemia Research), plus updates on the Community Health Forums and the Have Your Say workshops, which are both running each month at different venues throughout Greets Green. Don't forget to go along and share your views.

And have a look in Young Greets Green to find out about the new night out planned for local under 18s.

Happy reading!

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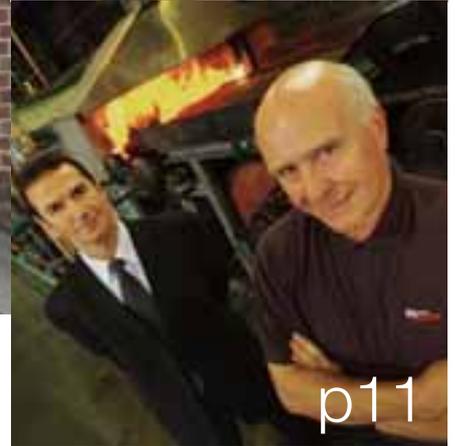
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Supermarkets are stocking up with chocolate treats and the first Christmas tunes are hitting the airwaves but you don't have to get into debt to make the festive season a time to remember. There are lots of projects and services on the doorstep in Greets Green to help you manage your money and have a very happy Christmas.

DON'T GET IN DEBT FOR CHRISTMAS



Financial help and support is available right on the High Street in Greets Green. Just over a year ago, three community-based, non-profit making organisations opened their doors at 382 High Street, offering financial services for the financially excluded. Call in and find out how they can help you.

Save & Borrow with the Credit Union

The 6 Towns Credit Union is looking for new members to enjoy easily accessible savings and loans.

The full credit union will be launched in November, but the loan bank is already up and running, offering affordable loans to members who've saved regularly and have

the ability to pay a loan back. To prepare for the credit union, a 6 Towns Savings Club was introduced last year so that a bank of savings could be built up. This money is now available as loans to members and the Savings Club is being turned into the full credit union.

"Anyone who lives or works in Greets Green can join the credit union now," says Manager, Mary Mooney. "A credit union is owned and managed by the members themselves.

Members can withdraw their savings or apply for a loan.

There's no charge for paying off a loan early and no arrangement fee."

Members can save money by setting up a standing order from their bank account or by making deposits at the community access points across Sandwell or the 382 High Street office. Pennies can be saved as well as pounds and the more money that's saved by members overall, the more that's available to lend.

To join the credit union, call 553 3110 or visit www.sixtowns.co.uk



Did you know...

More than 350 members, including 57 junior members, have been saving regularly with the 6 Towns Savings Club.

A cheaper alternative to loans

Based on a £500 loan paid back over one year:

The average high street bank charges	20.7%
The average store card charge charges	27.0%
The average door step lender charges	177.0% APR

The credit union charges 12.7% APR

* information correct as at 12th August 2005

IT'S TIME **2** TRADE

Paying for services such as painting and decorating, gardening and mending the car can add up to a lot of money, so why not trade services for free?

Time 2 Trade is a very simple idea which is proving a big success in Greets Green. Residents simply say what skills they can offer and each time they provide a service for someone else in the community, they gain a time credit. These time credits can be 'cashed in' for services they need themselves – or given as gifts to others.

The skills offered by residents vary hugely from escorting people to appointments, letter writing, teaching reading and delivering leaflets to dog walking, visiting and listening to people and storytelling – the list is endless. Time 2 Trade also offers

training to members and runs fun social events so that members get to know each other.

"It really is up to the individual how involved they get in Time 2 Trade," explains Manager, Dan Grainger (pictured right). "It doesn't matter how much or how little time you have. Everyone's time is worth the same whatever skills you have. You just gain credits and use them up as and when you like."

"We do an initial skills audit to see what each member can offer and when they're available," adds Dan. "When someone asks



for a service, we can search our database and find someone who has those skills and can help.

"We've also got our own dedicated team of time bank gardeners because that's one of the services we get asked for most often."

To find out more, call in to see Dan at 382 High Street or ring 553 3110.

CASE STUDY

When a neighbour's daughter had an accident this Summer, Time 2 Trade member, Jessica Ferguson was quick to volunteer to help look after the other children.



"While Jody was in hospital, I helped her grandmother look after her brothers and sisters, preparing some meals and being there when her grandmother needed me. The beauty of Time 2 Trade is that if you can't do something yourself, someone will come and do it for you. I think it's a brilliant idea."

Jessica donates her time credits to the elderly and the needy but did use some recently to enjoy a Time 2 Trade trip out to Weston where she met lots of new friends.

CASE STUDY



Julie Vaughan has been involved in Time 2 Trade since its launch because she likes the whole idea behind it.

"I think it's a good way of building up the community," she says. "I had time on my hands so offered to do some shopping for elderly people and just be there for a chat. When an elderly man's wife died recently, I cooked his tea for him for the first few nights and prepared the food for the funeral."

"I've used some of my time credits to get my garden done and have donated others to a local community pot where others can use them. Time 2 Trade is a great way to get people to talk to each other in the community."

CAN YOU DO GARDENING OR SIMPLE DIY?

Time 2 Trade time bank is looking for new members who can offer gardening or basic DIY and decorating for other Greets Green residents.

Earn time credits which you can 'cash in' for other services.

Call Dan Grainger on 553 3110 for more details.

Did you know...

- By the end of August 2005, Sandwell Advice & Moneylink (SAM) had given financial help to 400 local residents.
- SAM has helped 30 residents to secure loans totalling more than £30,000.

When you're on a low income, haven't got a bank account and can't access low cost loans, it's easy to see why loan sharks charging extortionate interest rates may seem like the only option.

That's why Sandwell Advice & Moneylink (SAM) was launched to provide trustworthy finance options to residents, along with peace of mind. SAM is a community owned and community run finance organisation for people living in Sandwell who cannot access finance from high street banks and building societies.

Tony Wood, Manager, explains: "We aim to provide affordable loans and access to help and advice services, as well as helping clients manage their money. The help we



SAM OFFERS FINANCIAL HELP

offer is flexible, depending on each individual's needs. It may be as simple as explaining what APR means, helping someone open a savings account with the credit union or referring them to the Citizens Advice Bureau for debt guidance."

To find out more about the range of financial services offered by SAM, you can call Tony Wood (pictured above) on 553 3110.

In the Community

The Greets Green CAB advisers are available Monday to Friday at a number of local venues. There's no need to book, just call in to any of the following:-

MONDAY

- 10am-12pm: **YMCA**, Carters Green
- 10am-1pm: **Sandwell Advice & Moneylink**, 382 High Street
- 10am-1pm (monthly): **Greets Green Access Centre**, Tildasley Street
- 1.30-4.30pm: **Wood Lane Community Centre**

TUESDAY

- 9.30am-1pm: **Steps 2 Work**, 312-314 High Street
- 9.30am-1pm: **SWAN**, Phoenix Street

WEDNESDAY

- 9.30am-1.30pm: **Guru Nanak Community Centre**, Victoria Street

THURSDAY

- 9.30am-1pm: **Guru Nanak Community Centre**, Victoria Street
- 9.30am-1.30pm (fortnightly): **CBO**, 8-10 Carters Green
- 10am-12pm (fortnightly): **Great Bridge Community Forum**, Farley Park

FRIDAY

- 9.30am-12.30pm: **OSCAR**, Lodge Road
- 10am-1pm (fortnightly): **Jammia Pakistani Mosque**, Dartmouth Street

For more information call the Greets Green Citizens Advice Bureau advisers on 580 2783.

Just ask the

Sandwell Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) is helping residents in the Greets Green area get a better grip on their purse strings with a project dedicated to advising people on managing their money.



Greets Green Partnership funds the CAB Maximising Household Incomes Project to provide outreach advice sessions at venues throughout the Greets Green area. The project also advises residents which benefits they're entitled to and last year helped local people claim an additional £600,000 in benefit. The Greets Green CAB advisers, Ruby Somal and Christine Notice, offer a range of support, such as providing general advice or negotiating with creditors on your behalf if necessary.

"Consumers are faced with many tempting credit offers in the run-up to Christmas such as 'buy now, pay later', 'interest free credit' and 'nothing to pay until next year,'" says CAB Projects Manager, Harpal Bath.

"All too often we see how this high cost credit turns into serious debt. With the pressure on to buy more and spend more, it's easy to miss the small print and sign up to deals that you wouldn't normally consider. We don't want people to be counting the cost of Christmas 2005 for years to come."

Did you know...

During the first year of the CAB's Maximising Household Incomes project, the team dealt with 300 enquiries from Greets Green residents.



Greets Green adviser, Christine Notice with Administrative Support Officer, Genna Yaffai.

Q&A YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED...

We answer your questions about money issues.

Q My debts are getting out of control and I can't pay them all. What can I do?

A Talk to the people or organisations you owe money to and let them know you're having problems. Most organisations will be more helpful if you approach them first. Then work out which debts are priority debts. These are ones that could have serious results if you don't pay them, such as not paying your rent or mortgage which would leave you homeless.

Work out how much you can realistically afford to pay back. Check your income and see if there are any benefits or tax credits you're entitled to. Look carefully at your spending and see if there's anything you're able to cut down on. Look at ways of reducing your outgoings, such as shopping around for a cheaper gas or electricity provider. If you need free advice, speak to Sandwell Citizens Advice Bureau.

Q How can I find out why I've been refused credit to buy a washing machine?

A If you've been refused credit, you can re-apply to the same company or try somewhere else. If you're still refused, it may be because you have a low credit score. Don't panic! Remember this may be a result of you simply not having a track history of taking out credit. The shop selling the washing machine will have used a credit reference agency to look at your credit rating. Ask the shop which credit reference

agency it has used and write to them and ask for a copy of the file they hold on you. You will have to pay a fee for this, but it is usually quite low. If you think your record has incorrect information, ask the credit reference agency to correct it. You might also want to look into other methods of paying for your washing machine.

Q I owe a lot of money and have been threatened with the bailiffs. What will happen?

A Try to negotiate with the company you owe money to. Even if you can't pay the debt in full, you could try to agree a set amount to pay weekly or monthly. If you cannot come to an agreement with the company, they'll need to get a warrant of execution from the courts before they can send the bailiffs to remove property from your home to pay for your debt.

If they already have the warrant, you should apply to the court to have it suspended. If the bailiffs arrive, you don't have to let them in and they cannot force their way in.

They can gain entry to your home 'peaceably', for example through an open window, or a closed but unlocked door. Once they have gained access to your property, they can break in legally the next time to remove property. Bailiffs are not allowed to take basic clothing, bedding, furniture or household goods and any goods they do take will be sold at auction

in order to pay off your debt. The rules about bailiffs are complicated. For more advice contact the Greets Green Citizens Advice Bureau advisers on 580 2783.

Q I think someone may have got my bank details because a bank has written to me about a debt I know nothing about. Is this possible?

A Identity theft is a type of fraud when someone you don't know gets hold of your personal details and uses them to apply for credit or to open an account in your name.

If you've been a victim of identity theft, you won't usually have to pay for any money you've lost unless it can be shown that you've acted fraudulently or without reasonable care, such as by keeping your PIN number written down with your card. Contact the bank straight away and keep a record of all conversations you have with them, and copies of any letters sent or received.

Report the matter to the police and get a crime reference number. If you think someone has got hold of your details by stealing your mail, call the Royal Mail on 08457 740740. You can also contact CIFAS, the UK's Fraud Prevention Service at www.cifas.org.uk For a small fee, they'll make sure that anyone applying for credit in your name is automatically double-checked.

Q My friend told me I can get a basic bank account so I can't go overdrawn but what are they?

A Most high street banks now offer basic accounts where you can pay money in, set up standing orders and direct debits and get money out using a cash card. You won't get a cheque book and banks don't usually let you go overdrawn by more than £10. It's free to open one but you could be charged if you don't have enough money in your account to pay any direct debits you have. You can usually check your balance through the cash machine and you'll be sent regular statements showing what you've paid in and taken out.

This information has been compiled from a number of sources and is intended to be used as guidance only. Greets Green Partnership cannot be held responsible for the outcome of anyone acting on this information.

Top tips for avoiding Christmas debt traps

- If you do need to use credit, shop around for the lowest rate and compare terms. You may find it cheaper elsewhere.
- Ask what the total amount payable over the term of the loan will be, bearing in mind that with some loans you may be paying a variable interest rate. Make sure the monthly payments are within your budget.
- Don't be tempted, unless necessary, to buy toys from catalogues as they usually work out more expensive.
- Interest free credit deals can work to your advantage as long as you pay off the remaining balance by the time the interest free period expires. If you fail to do this, you'll probably pay very high interest on the full purchase price of the item.
- Many store cards charge high interest rates so make sure you're able to pay the account in full at the end of the month.

INTRODUCING OSCAR

– the Organisation for Sickle Cell & Anaemia Research



OSCAR Sandwell is already working with many individuals and carers in Greets Green affected by the Sickle Cell or Thalassaemia blood disorders. Now a brand new three year project, funded by Greets Green Partnership, will see even more people benefiting.

Sickle Cell and Thalassaemia are inherited blood disorders which mainly affect people of African, African-Caribbean, Asian and Mediterranean origin. OSCAR helps people learn more about the disorders, how they can be screened for the conditions and what they need to do to stay healthy.

Sonia Lindsay, Chief Officer of OSCAR Sandwell, will spearhead the new project which will build on the success of OSCAR's self-help group pilot. The new project will extend the work of this group and will focus on community research, improving the availability and take-up of screening services and increasing awareness training and education about Sickle Cell and other life-limiting illnesses.

'One Blood' Campaign

As part of the project, OSCAR will also be working with the National Blood Service to promote the 'One Blood' campaign in Greets Green to encourage people to give blood, especially those from black and minority ethnic groups.

"The aim of the whole project is to give local people sound and accurate information about their conditions so that their confidence is raised and they're empowered to take action about their own health and support others," says Sonia.

"We want to address the barriers that prevent people from accessing services and will work with local professionals and agencies to increase awareness of the needs of people affected by Sickle Cell and Thalassaemia."

OSCAR Sandwell is a community based voluntary organisation which represents all communities, providing an important resource centre for Greets Green residents. It's



The OSCAR team (l to r); Sharon Wilson, Development Officer, Lorna Patterson, Administrator and Sonia Lindsay, Chief Officer.

developed many partnerships with local services including the Child Home Safety Project, the Citizens Advice Bureau and African Caribbean Central Point.

To find out more about OSCAR and its work, please call 525 0556, or pop in to their premises on Lodge Road.

A 'home from home'

OSCAR enjoys a close working relationship with Greets Green Partnership, which Kate Massey, Health Theme Leader, was invited to talk about at OSCAR's 7th Annual Fund Raising Dinner & Dance in July.

"OSCAR is almost like a 'home from home' for the Health Theme because it has links with so many of the health projects and it supports lots of people in the local community on all sorts of issues," says Kate.





TOP RESULTS!

Congratulations to students and staff at George Salter High School!

Students achieved the School's best ever GCSE results with 56 per cent of pupils in year 11 gaining A* – C grades, an increase of more than 30 per cent on last year. The number of pupils gaining higher grades has also increased. George Salter has now become the joint second highest achieving school in Sandwell, a position it shares with Shireland Language College. A fantastic achievement!

Ruth Kelly, Secretary of State for Education even commented on the remarkable achievement of George Salter High School in her speech to the Specialist Schools Trust in September. The School has enjoyed substantial investment during the past year, with new initiatives being introduced and a successful study support programme in place which includes the highly popular Saturday School.

Head Teacher, Mick Green, said: "I'm very proud of all the students and staff who've helped us achieve these excellent results. I'm now looking forward to everyone working together to consolidate our position and address even more ambitious targets in the coming year."



Another happy student... Craig Gibbs was pleased with his results.

PARLIAMENT GOES GREEN

Two Year 6 children from Lodge Primary School made their voices heard on environmental issues and won a free 'green inspection' for their school in a Sandwell-wide Children's Parliament debating competition.

Judges awarded Aretha Johnson and Humayra Kamal 'highly commended' for their debating skills last term after they gave a five minute presentation in the Council Chamber about consumption and waste issues which concern them and their classmates. Pupils from nine other schools across the Borough also took part in the debate which was recorded on digital video and shown to the Council.

Councillor Bob Badham, Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Transport, who presented all the pupils with certificates of achievement, said: "This event gives us the opportunity to gather the opinions of young people and helps them appreciate their future roles as citizens in the community."

Children Have Their Say

Pupils at Lodge Primary School have made a video about Greets Green to record how they'd like to see the area changed.

With new technology supplied by Greets Green Learning Network, the children created the 'Where I Live' video to share their ideas on how the area should be regenerated, before presenting it to Sandwell's Mayor, Councillor Bill Archer at a special assembly.

The video has also been exchanged with the Hobbitburch School in Alphen annden Rijn so that pupils can compare the Greets

Green environment with that of a small town in Holland. Mr Ian Procter, teacher for class 4P, said: "The video is a brilliant way of getting children to talk about what matters to them."

Nurjahan Akhtar aged 10 said: "This project has been something we have all enjoyed doing and we have been able to use many of the skills we have learnt in school to produce the video."





WHAT A CHAMPION!

Linda Paskin is a true community hero! As well as being the Chair of Governors at Newtown Primary School, Linda is also a very active volunteer at Farley Park Lodge.

Her friend, Siobhan Harley, who nominated her to become a Greets Green Community Hero, says: "Linda is the work engine at Farley Park Lodge. She led the team organising their Community Fun Day in August and was responsible for getting lottery funding on behalf of Great Bridge Community Forum for a children's playground at Farley Park Lodge.

"She's also managed to get parking improvements made on Elizabeth Road for Newtown Tenants' and Residents' Association, is the founder of Great Bridge Community Forum and was involved in creating the first



Local Hero, Linda Paskin (right) with her friend Siobhan Harley who nominated her.

ever Parents' Forum in Great Bridge which involved Greets Green residents. Linda works for the community with an open approach and loves to get children involved."

And if that's not enough, this year Linda has also celebrated her 60th birthday, her 40th

wedding anniversary and welcomed her first great grandchild into the world.

☐ If you know someone who deserves to be recognised as a Greets Green Local Hero, call Simon Ware on 0800 953 0215 or 07810 850851.

we need you!

The Greets Green New Deal for Communities programme will finish in 2010. What will happen to the projects we fund?

Greets Green Partnership has been working with Tara Consultancy to explore how we will continue our work and is setting up the Greets Green Community Development Trust.

Are you interested in joining the Steering Group to help shape the early development of the Trust?

☐ Call Mike Swain or Iftikar Karim at Tara Consultancy on 01902 556680 or email mike.s@asan.org.uk or iftikar.k@asan.org.uk

NEW OUTREACH WORKER

Alison Franks, a well known figure on the Lyng, will now be seen out and about throughout Greets Green, helping local people have their say on local issues.

Alison has joined the team of Neighbourhood Support Workers who make it as easy as possible for residents to get involved in their communities in many different ways.



For the past decade, Alison has been helping to transform the Lyng estate, being one of the tenant directors on the Lyng Community Association. The Association has recently received registered social landlord status, making it a local housing association run by the residents themselves.

"I live on the Lyng estate and have really enjoyed working with others to see the area change," Alison explains. "We've knocked down the old style flats and houses and are building new properties which meet people's needs better.

"It's really exciting to now be working for Greets Green Partnership, who are committed to transforming Greets Green in the same way."

☐ To contact Greets Green's Neighbourhood Support Team, call freephone 0800 953 0215.



Ready for Take Off!

Paul Handley (right), Managing Director of Heat Treatment 2000 with Steve Pearcey from Groundwork who helped launch Albion Business Forum.

Local companies, Heat Treatment 2000 Limited and West Bromwich Tool and Engineering, have recently been awarded the new Quality Standard ISO/TS 16949:2002, ensuring the companies maintain their place at the forefront of industry.

Members of Albion Business Forum, Heat Treatment 2000 Limited and West Bromwich

Tool and Engineering have become two of the few companies in the UK which are authorised to perform cutting edge heat treatments for the aeronautics industry.

Since gaining the Quality Standard, Heat Treatment 2000 has already seen the number and quality of enquiries increase and the company remains confident that new business will develop.

Managing Director, Paul Handley, said: "This Quality Standard is a positive driver for our business as it focuses attention on quality, productivity, continuous improvement and customer satisfaction, which all benefit the bottom line result."

As a 100 per cent automotive supplier, gaining the Quality Standard was vital for West Bromwich Tool and Engineering to enable the company to continue to quote for that business. Ian Collis, Managing Director, said: "Achieving the Quality Standard is a significant step in the continued growth of West Bromwich Tool and Engineering."

Steve Fox, Chair of Albion Business Forum, added: "There is a wealth of quality manufacturing and industry in Greets Green and we're pleased that two local firms are amongst the first companies nationally to achieve this new Quality Standard."



Simon Bullows, West Bromwich Tool and Engineering.

To find out more about Albion Business Forum, call 525 9734.



Since the start of the **become** project we have...

- Supported 146 residents looking for work
- Helped 45 residents into work
- Given 34 residents support in changing career
- Helped 15 residents start new careers of their choice
- Provided an ongoing intensive support programme for 10 residents
- Given additional services to 59 residents

Get in touch... and find out what you can become

Call us on 532 4997 or drop in to see us at Steps to Work, 312-314 High Street.

BEE HIVES and CUSTARD

As part of the revitalisation of Carters Green, which is now underway, the architects have unearthed some little known facts and figures about the area.

To find out what bee hives and custard have to do with Carters Green, read the next issue of the Greets Green Magazine!

If you have any interesting stories about bygone Carters Green, call Greets Green's Communications Officer, Brian McKinstrie, on 532 6835.

WE LOVE OUR SCHOOL

**The brand new
Guns Village
Primary School
opened its doors
at the start of the
new school year
in September.**

A school for the 21st century, Guns Village Primary now has both Junior and Infant school children on one site on Hanbury Road. It's a lively, state of the art school for the whole community.

There's a new nursery, modern dance studio, parents / community room, two IT suites, a Community Learning Centre, two school libraries, plus lots of new indoor and outdoor facilities.

"It's a dream come true," said Head Teacher, Barry Samuel. "Staff, parents and children are all delighted with the new school and its facilities."

Work is also underway at other schools in Greets Green. Watch out for more details in the next issue.



What we think....

Greets Green Magazine met with a group of pupils in Years 5 and 6 to hear what they thought of their new school.

“Our new IT suite has got more computers.”

**SHARNDEEP SODHI,
YEAR 5**

“The outside of the school looks better now with all the glass on the top and wood on the side. It’s nice that the huts have gone.”

PARMDEEP CHIMA, YEAR 5

“I didn’t think my classroom was going to be this good.”

NATALIE DELL, YEAR 5

“The smart boards and the technology are good. I was really shocked when I came back to school because it was so different.”

CHELSEA MOUNTAIN, YEAR 6

“I like the colours the school is painted inside – they match our uniform. And I like the new dance studio. I had a trumpet lesson in there.”

HAYLEY TURNER, YEAR 6

“I like everything! The playground’s bigger now. The younger children can’t get lost because they can look out for the different paintings on the walls and know where they are.”

ADAM BIDA, YEAR 5

“There are lots of lovely things in the nursery for the children to play with.”

GARI HARDIMAN, YEAR 6

“Our new tables with trays are really good. Instead of getting up and going to the cupboard, I can put my pens and pencils in my own tray. The school all feels different in a good way.”

ZAK ROBERTS, YEAR 6

Down the Garden Path

Local resident, Linda Meade’s son has just moved up to the new Guns Village Primary School. When she read about the history of the School in our June/July issue, she realised what the blue bricks were which she kept digging up in her garden!

Our feature said that the School is built on the site of a disused clay quarry which was used to make Hamblets blue bricks. “I didn’t know what the bricks were until I read the story in the magazine, which was really interesting,” Linda says. “I thought, if I’ve got all these bricks buried in the back garden, I wonder who else has? We moved to Wood Lane when the flats were demolished at the Lyng and started work on the garden. We kept digging up these bricks which were too beautiful to throw away so we kept them and built a border all around the grass.”

Have you found any Hamblets bricks in your garden? If so, call Katherine Handley from Greets Green Magazine on 01827 373871 and tell us what you’ve used them for.



PARENTS NEEDED!

Many parents have already started getting involved in the new Children & Families Programme and the brand new Children's Centre being built at Ryders Green Primary School, but more are still needed.

A successful event in July saw the launch of the Programme when parents and representatives from local organisations discussed how the Programme should be developed. Then, at the Greets Green Summer Fun Day, many residents gave their ideas for what types of activities could take place in each room at the Children's Centre.

"We're still looking for many more local parents to step forward and share their views about how we can develop the new Children's Centre and the Programme as a whole," said Children & Families Programme Manager, Jenny Mahimbo.

If you'd like to get involved, call Jenny on 07970 749826.

Planning for Healthy Minds

More than 50 representatives from community organisations, services, agencies and service users, came together to find out more about local mental health services and identify where there are gaps in service at the Greets Green Healthy Minds event.

Held in partnership with SWAN, the event enabled a host of useful information to be gathered which will be used to develop the new Healthy Minds Programme.

A range of guest speakers explained more about the services they offer before delegates split into workshops to look at how mental health affects different sectors of the community such as older people, black and minority ethnic groups and children and young people. Discussion then took place about how these issues should be addressed in the future.

To find out more contact Sally Sandel on 500 2193 or 07779 337145.

FOOD FOR HEALTH

New Food for Health Co-ordinator, Peter Turvey is really tucking into his new role and creating a recipe for success.

Peter has joined the Greets Green Partnership team as part of the New Deal for Healthier Food project to create a programme of activity to enable local people to make healthy food choices.

Working with other projects such as the Eatwell project and George Salter High School's Fit For Life programme, Peter will focus on initiatives to bring about long term change and he's looking to involve as many local people as possible.

Peter introduced lots of innovative food initiatives in his previous role as the

5 A DAY Co-ordinator in East Sussex including creating the first ever Stir Fry Day, introducing Kids Corners in local greengrocers and inventing the fruit shy rather than coconut shy!

"My aim is to bring new ways of thinking into the healthy eating agenda to make healthy eating choices achievable and desirable," says Peter.

If you would like to talk to Peter about any of his planned activities in Greets Green, call 07814 262055 or e-mail Peter.Turvey@rrt-pct.nhs.uk



Watch out for...

- New Food Interest Groups (FIGs) where you can taste and talk about food in an informal and fun way.
- A Food Interest Fund which will offer grants to local groups to develop community food initiatives.
- Business support for local retailers to encourage them to sell fresh produce.
- Courses to enable local people to train to become cookery leaders and help others learn basic cooking skills.
- **The Greets Green Year of Food in 2007!**



Peter is looking for volunteers for a weight loss challenge called 'Downsize Me'!

Participants will be challenged to lose weight without changing from their favourite 'junk' meals. If you're interested in volunteering, call Peter on 07814 262055.

AN UPLIFTING EVENT!

What a fantastic event the Greets Green Summer Fun Day was!

Thirty times Guinness World Record holder, John Evans, staged an uplifting display by balancing a Mini on his head and there were loads of other great games, activities, stalls, displays and entertainment for all the family.

A big thank you to the Greets Green Events Steering Group, a team of local volunteers, who worked with Greets Green Partnership to organise this fantastic event.



WINTER FESTIVAL
This year's Winter Festival will take place on **Saturday 3 December** in the Memorial Gardens – watch out for details!



Neighbourhood Watch takes off

Residents are being given a helping hand to get new Neighbourhood Watch schemes off the ground so that their homes and communities become more safe and secure.



The Neighbourhood Wardens have helped Kate Guest, Community Partnerships Officer at West Bromwich Police Station, identify a number of residents who are interested in setting up schemes and they're now receiving help and support to make them a success.

Neighbourhood Watch schemes are run by their members through a volunteer co-ordinator who liaises with the Police and shares information with other residents. They are an important way for local people to help make their communities safer.

"There were a number of Neighbourhood Watch schemes in Greets Green which have folded over time and we're keen to get them re-launched," said Kate.

If you're interested in setting up a scheme, call Kate on 0845 113 5000 or email kate.guest@west-midlands.pnn.police.uk



PATROLLING TIGHTENS SECURITY

The round the clock security patrolling of the Claypit Lane, Wattle Road and Coppice Street areas proved so successful throughout the summer that the patrols have been continuing.

As part of a package of new security measures, the Neighbourhood Wardens and a private security firm have been creating a visible security presence in the area since the start of the school holidays to deter crime and anti-social behaviour while the clearance work is underway.

While there have been no reports of any major incidents, as a direct result of the additional patrols, two burglars were prevented from stealing copper piping from an empty property in August and anti-social behaviour has decreased. The patrols are continuing until a plan for the future security of the area is agreed.

NEW SERGEANT GETS RESULTS

Greets Green Crime Fighting Team has welcomed a new Sergeant who's already taking a co-ordinated approach to tackling local issues head on.

Sergeant Nathan Grix has more than 20 years' policing experience. He joined West Midlands Police in 1996 and has worked in CID and the plain clothes and response teams, as well as spending four years as a community police officer. He moved to West Bromwich in 2004, working in the Performance Review Department before heading up Greets Green Crime Fighting Team.

"I'm keen to build on the good work others have already done in the area and will be working with residents and local organisations, such as Greets Green Partnership, to tackle the issues," he says.

"We've already conducted Operation THALIA during June and July which saw two Officers in high visibility uniform

patrolling areas which had been identified as requiring a greater police presence.

"This patrolling was in addition to the Officers' normal duties, providing additional patrolling time. Each week the patrolling was reviewed to make sure it met the community's policing needs."

As a result...

- The Officers arrested 10 people.
- 38 people were stopped and searched.
- 50 intelligence reports for crime were submitted in the Greets Green area.
- Weekly crime figures for the area dropped from around 40 to an average of just 15.

The Operation was so successful that there are plans to repeat it in the future.



To contact Greets Green Crime Fighting Team, or to report a crime, call 0845 113 5000. Dial 999 in an emergency.

WARDEN WEEK

Greets Green Neighbourhood Wardens were out in force tackling a whole host of issues throughout the area to mark national Warden Week from 12 – 16 September.

The team focused on a different issue each day, with Monday being abandoned vehicles day when any vehicles found were reported to the Council's Enforcement Team. On Tuesday, the Wardens completed a clear up of the cycle paths around the Ryders Green area, while on Wednesday they looked at environmental issues. Residents were given a range of information leaflets, such as how to report fly tipping, and the Wardens patrolled the area, highlighting places which need to be improved.

The week ended with a fundraising quiz night at Oakdale Social Club in aid of Help the Aged. SWAN laid on a special buffet, while many local businesses donated raffle prizes.

Senior Warden, Neil Woodfield, said: "Our aim was to raise local awareness of the Wardens and tackle various issues, while sharing information about how residents can help improve their environment."



To contact the Neighbourhood Wardens call 580 4481.

Don't Become a Fly Tipper

Getting rid of bulky items need not be a problem for local residents.

Large items can be taken to the Civic Amenities Site (Council rubbish tip) at Shidas Lane or residents can arrange for the Council to make one collection per month of up to 10 bags of rubbish or four bulky items, with the exception of some items that cannot be collected. Both services are free, which means there's no excuse for fly tipping.

Fly tipping is not only unsightly and ruins the area, but it's also a very serious offence. Fines can reach £20,000 and/or six months' imprisonment and if the case goes to Crown Court, the fines are unlimited and offenders could be facing up to two years' imprisonment or up to five years' for dumping hazardous waste.

For further help with disposing of bulky items, or if you suspect someone is fly tipping, call the Environmental Litter Section Line on 569 6625.

Don't accept anti-social behaviour. Use a phone to beat them. Call to report in confidence. 0845 359 7500

NEW VOICE ON THE PHONE



Anyone calling Greets Green Partnership will have noticed there's now a new voice on the end of the phone.

Alex Monk is the Partnership's new Receptionist and is enjoying meeting lots of different people and chatting about what's happening in the area.

Greets Green born and bred, Alex was brought up on Claypit Lane where his grand parents still lived until they were re-housed recently as part of the major development of the area.

"I think the changes that are happening in Greets Green are good for the area," Alex says. "I'm interested in the Partnership because the improvements it's making are affecting me and my family. As a local lad, I want to get involved in improving Greets Green in the future."

☏ Don't forget you can call Greets Green Partnership FREE on freephone 0800 953 0215.

Have YOUR say

The August Have Your Say workshop proved popular with residents coming along to discuss several more proposed Greets Green Partnership projects.

A major Communications Project was looked at to develop how the Partnership promotes its work throughout Greets Green. Residents also discussed a Burglary Reduction Project to improve external security to at least 600 local homes and a Home Protection Scheme to install burglar alarms for vulnerable residents.

To reduce the harm that alcohol causes, a new Community Alcohol Project was talked about, along with a new Valuing Volunteers Policy to more effectively recognise the contribution which resident Board Members make.

Make sure you 'Have Your Say', the next workshops are on:

Saturday 22nd October
at 10.30am at Wood Lane Community Centre

Wednesday 23rd November at 6pm – venue to be confirmed

Wednesday 14th December at 6pm – venue to be confirmed

☏ Call Community Empowerment Theme Leader, Katherine Hewitt, on freephone 0800 953 0215 for more details.

COMMUNITY HEALTH FORUMS

The latest Community Health Forum, where residents can discuss the types of health services needed locally, was held on 14th September at SWAN.

Many residents have said that there are so many health projects in Greets Green that they're not certain what they all do and how you can access them. Representatives from all projects were, therefore, invited to come to the Forum to talk about their projects and answer questions.

Residents found it very useful, as did the project representatives who were able to find out how they can work together with other projects.

☏ The next Community Health Forums will be held on Wednesday 9th November and 7th December. Call Health Development Facilitator, Sally Sandel, on 500 2193 for more details.

NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUMS DATES

Want to make a difference on your doorstep? Go along to your local Neighbourhood Forum and find out what's happening in your area and make your views known.

Lodge Road Neighbourhood Forum. All meetings are at 6pm at OSCAR
Thursday 20th October, Thursday 24th November & Wednesday 4th January 2006

Carters Green & West Bromwich Central Neighbourhood Forum
All meetings are at 6pm at West Bromwich Town Hall
Monday 7th November & Monday 9th January 2006

Hamblett's Neighbourhood Forum
All meetings are at 6.30pm at Wood Lane Community Centre
Monday 10th October, Monday 14th November & Monday 16th January

Greets Green Neighbourhood Forum. All meetings are at 6.30pm
Monday 24th October at Farley Park Lodge, Whitehall Road
Monday 28th November at Ryders Green Day Centre, Greets Green Road
Monday 30th January – venue to be confirmed

☏ Call the Neighbourhood Support Team on freephone 0800 953 0215 to find out more.

PRIZE WINNER!

Well done to local resident Shirley Graham, one of the winners in the Greets Green Magazine survey prize draw, who's pictured with her shopping voucher at the Summer Fun Day.



PROJECTS UPDATE

Here are the latest projects which Greets Green Partnership has funded. If you're interested in finding out more about any of them or how to get involved, just give us a call.

JOBS & ENTERPRISE THEME: Call Pat Parkes on 0800 953 0215, or the contact listed, for more information.

BE70	Allocated support for local businesses.	Pat Parkes on 0800 953 0215
"BE70" Business Directory	To create a business book as a result of an Economic Development survey.	Pat Parkes on 0800 953 0215
High Street Improvements Phase 3	Leading on from phase 2 to fund physical improvements.	Pat Parkes on 0800 953 0215

HOUSING & URBAN FORM THEME: Call Rohit Mistry on 0800 953 0215, or the contact listed, for more information.

Bridge Street Consultation	The project proposes that an independent, in-depth, door to door consultation exercise is undertaken with regards to environmental improvements in Bridge Street.	Jim Hall on 0121 569 4010
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HEALTH THEME: Call Kate Massey on 0121 500 2175, or the contact listed, for more information.

YMCA Healthy Living Centre	To enhance and extend the YMCA Centre for Healthy Living services for Greets Green residents over a three year period, achieving a sustainable service for the future.	Steve Clay on 0121 524 1950
Promoting Sickle Cell and Thalassaemia through Expert Patients	Promoting Sickle Cell and Thalassaemia in the Greets Green area.	Sonia Lindsay on 0121 525 0556
Hat Trick Community Football Project	A project linked to West Bromwich Albion to assist in improving educational attainment, fitness and health in Greets Green.	Fraser Foster on 08700 662 840

EDUCATION & LIFELONG LEARNING THEME: Call Roger Cunningham on 0800 953 0215, or the contact listed, for more information.

Community Access Points Phase 2 & 3	To create community learning facilities at Lyng, Newtown and Lodge Primary Schools.	Stinder Johl on 0121 532 6933
E-Learning and Learn Direct Facilitator	To fund a facilitator for library and YMCA Community Access Points.	Steve Clay on 0121 524 1950
Vocal Skills - Young Voices	A choir project as part of the extended schools programme.	Keith Watts on 0121 569 8502

COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT THEME: Call Katherine Hewitt on 0800 953 0215, or the contact listed, for more information.

YCA Gap Funding	This project is a continuation of the Yemeni Community Association's Step Up Project.	Katherine Hewitt on 0800 953 0215
Continuation Support for Guru Nanak Community Centre	Bridging the gap between existing funding and securing long term funding for a project manager and other members for 6 months.	Katherine Hewitt on 0800 953 0215

CRIME & COMMUNITY SAFETY THEME: Phil Hartley on 0800 953 0215, or the contact listed, for more information.

St. Michael's Court Security Improvement	The project is to create a cleaner, safer environment for the local businesses operating in St Michael's Court.	Teresa Timms on 0121 500 5564
Security for Claypit Lane and Wattle Road	Master planning/design budget to be managed through the Council.	Alan Martin on 0121 569 5349
Albion Road Improvements	Improving security standards for business premises.	Paul Brookes on 0121 525 8450
Albion Business Wardens	Extension of current Business Warden Project at Albion Road.	Stephen Pearcey on 0121 525 8450
Oldbury Road Industrial Estate	CCTV security at Oldbury Road Industrial Estate	Matthew Jones on 0121 530 5500

If you have any news get in touch.
Call Barbryn on T: 01564 741847,
E: susan@barbryn.co.uk or the Greets Green Partnership on T: 0800 953 0215,
E: brian_mckinstrie@sandwell.gov.uk

Fun at the Library

There's something for everyone in the latest series of events being held at Sandwell Central Library.

During October half term, there'll be plenty of Library Explorer Events for all the family with the Belly Busters lifestyle game on Monday 24th October where the team with the healthiest lifestyle wins!

On Wednesday 26th October, hear Kusumika Chatergee from the Imagination Café Storytellers tell traditional Indian tales in the mother tongue and English. And on Friday 28th October, don't miss the Reading Voyage party.

The storytelling café returns on Tuesday 15th November when Peter and Gorg Chand will be telling tales of the world with Punjabi drumming, as well as revealing the secrets behind Bhangra dancing. Plus, festive fun is guaranteed in December when some of the Black Country Poets will be appearing on Tuesday 13th December.

To book your tickets, drop into the library or call 569 4911.



COMMUNITY CLEARS UP

Volunteers of all ages were talking rubbish during the summer when they took part in local litter picks!

Neighbourhood Support Worker, Harshad Patel, organised the clear ups around the Dartmouth Street, Lodge Road and Grange Road area and local children, members of Lodge Road Neighbourhood Forum and Community Representative, Fajli Bibi, all took part.

"It was great to see local people working together to make a difference to their neighbourhood," said Harshad.

HELP SHAPE YOUR COMMUNITY CENTRE

Hamblets Community Association, which runs Wood Lane Community Centre, is looking for more local people to join their organisation.

"We want to get as many members as possible from throughout the whole of the area so that Wood Lane Community Centre becomes fully representative of Greets Green," says Julie Stockin, Chair of the Association. "The Centre isn't just for local residents, it's for everyone."

Hamblets Community Association enables local people to have a say in deciding what happens at the Community Centre. No previous experience is necessary to join the Association - you just need to be a Greets Green resident aged 18 or over and have an interest in the needs of local people.

Anyone interested should contact Allen Sallis at Wood Lane Community Centre on 525 2662 / 2772.



Animals Drop In

An innovative animal drop-in surgery has been introduced at Sandwell Women's Agency Network (SWAN) at Sandwell Trading Association on Phoenix Street.



Animal Behaviour and Welfare Consultant, Gill Shilton, is offering a free service to Greets Green residents with pets on a trial basis. The service includes claw clipping, behaviour advice, de-fleaing, dental care, coat management, ear cleaning and much, much more. Surgeries are currently running every other Wednesday from 2pm until 4pm to see how popular this new service is.

"For many people, a pet is their only friend," explained Gill. "If their pet is healthy and happy, this will contribute to their own well-being."



25TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATED

Stokes Opticians is certainly keeping it in the family while celebrating 25 years of trading on the High Street in Carters Green.

Robert Stokes, his wife, Mal and three sons, Richard, Nick and Tim, all help run the family business which first opened its doors at 4-6 High Street on 15th September 1980. Since then, the opticians has expanded into the premises upstairs, as well as taking over the shop next door when the butchers moved out about 10 years ago.



"I'm very pleased to have reached our 25th anniversary because this is a real family business," said Robert. "We've celebrated with a special open day to say thank you to all our past and present patients."

Wonderland Visit

Four coaches full of tiny tots from Lyng, Lodge and Ryders Green Primary Schools, parents, carers and staff enjoyed a visit to Telford's Town Park on a sizzling hot day in June.



Sam Berry from the Early Steps crèche and Greet's Green Partnership's Community Learning Workers accompanied the excited toddlers as they discovered favourite fairy tale folk in their enchanting woodland homes and had fun in Dribble the Dragons play area and on twisting tea party plates! Even the 'grown ups' lost themselves in the wonderland maze.

Everyone had a great action packed trip. "We thoroughly enjoyed the day!" said one parent.

Greet's Green Girls go Irish

Six young girls put on their dancing shoes during a Summer play scheme to take part in a new project which Sandwell Irish Society hopes to extend throughout the area.

Charlie, her twin sisters Dina and Kita, Dinah, Jaycie and Sophie worked with world Irish dancing champion, Kim Benton, who choreographed a dance routine to the music of Riverdance. After just four practice sessions, the girls wowed the crowds with a stunning stage performance at the August Bank Holiday Weekend Sandwell Show. Members of the public even got up on stage and were shown by the girls how to do the steps.

Anyone interested in learning Irish dancing, should call Siobhan Gorman at Sandwell Irish Society on 525 0567.

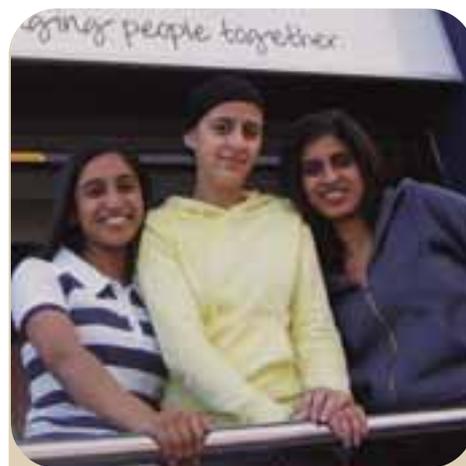


LEAGUE WINNERS

Congratulations to Greet's Green 8 Locks FC who have won the District 2 Sandwell League and the District 2 cup for the second year running.

The team of players aged 16 and above train at George Salter High School and their home pitch is Farley Park. Supported by Greet's Green Partnership, the team sports the Partnership logo at every match. "This is the third year the team has entered the League," said Manager, Goff Rowe. "The first year we came third and the last two years, we've won it, which is a big achievement. The team has done really well."

Thanks go to Goff's second in command, Lee Clarke and Club Secretary, Mick Fisher, for all their hard work.



NEW GIRLS' GROUP

A brand new Young Female Forum has been launched at the Guru Nanak Community Centre. The group meets every Thursday from 4.00 - 6.00pm and welcomes all young women aged 14 and over. With badminton, table tennis, a dance mat, games consoles and full use of the IT suite, there's plenty to do and lots of new friends to meet.

Amy and Sandy Bahat and Jasmeet Kaur are the group's volunteers who wanted to create an afternoon just for girls at the Centre. The group is already growing quickly and is looking for new ideas for activities all the time.

Just come along on the day or call the Guru Nanak Community Centre on 525 6923 for more details.

**Flip
magazine
for 'Young
Greet's
Green'**

young greet's green

OCTOBER/NOVEMBER 2005

SCHOOLS' BACK ...& SO'S THE FUN IN GREET'S GREEN

mondays

Coming soon!
Brand new
under 18s night

wednesdays

Wood Lane Youth Club
5.00 – 7.00pm for 7-12 year olds
7.15 – 9.00pm for 13-19 year olds
Have a go at dance mats,
X-Box, pool, table football
and much more.



Plus... Street Games
Football & Cricket
Call the Neighbourhood Support
Team on freephone 0800 953 0215
for details.

saturdays

Sk8 Park
at George Salter High School
Come along between 1.00 – 5.00pm
and join in the fun.

NEW UNDER 18s NIGHT

A brand new under 18s night is gearing up to get going... but it needs a name. Can you help?

There's a prize for the best one – and you get to tell all your friends that you came up with the name for the best night around. Greets Green Youth Forum is joining forces with the Neighbourhood Wardens, West Midlands Police, Sandwell Drug & Alcohol Team, George Salter High School and lots of other agencies to launch the Monday night event for 11-17 year olds.

"We know this is going to become a great night with DJs, parties, live music and cultural theme nights," says Paul Arrowsmith, Youth Forum Manager. "We'll also be offering drop-in workshops, advice sessions and counselling so that young people can come along and chat about any issues they like."

☐ If you've got any ideas for names, contact Greets Green Youth Forum on ☐ 525 9509 or speak to any of the sessional workers by 15th November.

RU AGED 5-18?

Need 2 talk? Not feeling OK? Call Head 2 Head

Head 2 Head is a professional counselling service developed to meet the individual needs of local young people. It's available to children and young adults, their parents and carers.

The service is completely free and confidential and offers you the space to talk, discuss and think about yourself and how you can manage your feelings and things that are important to you.

During the last three and a half years, more than 1,200 young people in Sandwell have received support from Head 2 Head.

If you're having problems dealing with something in your life, why not talk to a professional listener?

☐ If you live in Sandwell or attend ☐ a school or college in Sandwell, call Head 2 Head on 607 3519 to find out more.

Greets Green Partnership is looking to set up a range of extra services with Head 2 Head specifically for Greets Green later this year. **Watch out for details.**



SUMMER FUN

There was non-stop fun during the summer holidays when young people from across Greets Green rushed to join in the free Youth Forum summer programme.

Every single activity was full and around 300 young people were able to have a go at different activities such as canoeing, bowling, archery, ice skating and day trips.

"Young people from lots of different backgrounds met new friends and had a really good time," said Youth Forum Project Manager, Paul Arrowsmith.

A big thank you to all the sessional workers for making it a summer to remember. The team ran the whole programme on their own for the first time, organised all the activities and made sure they went smoothly each day. You were great!

GOODBYE and *thank you!*

Greets Green Youth Forum bids farewell to sessional workers, Amanda and Jasmin and wishes them lots of luck for the future.

Amanda has just started her first year at the University of Western England where she's studying Film Studies & English, while Jasmin is concentrating on her final year of college studies before heading off to university.

"Both Amanda and Jasmin have worked so hard and been so enthusiastic during their time as sessional workers and the team will miss them." said Youth Forum Manager, Paul Arrowsmith.

Watch out in the next issue to meet your new sessional workers.



New Games Area

Have you seen the new colourful cage which has appeared at Newtown Primary? It's the latest MUGA or multi-use games area.

The massive metal structure encloses a football or basketball pitch – and if you do manage to kick the ball way over the top of the fencing, there are useful gaps at each end so you can run and get it!

There's no excuse for not getting fit!



PUPPETS ON TOUR

A group of puppets have been enjoying stardom by heading on tour. Members of The Zone youth group at Bethel Christian Fellowship operate the puppets to spread the message of Christianity to other young people. The puppets are already well known at Bethel but have now appeared at various other churches around the area.

The youth group rehearses each week and the puppets perform songs and drama productions written by members of Bethel.

"Puppets have been used as a way of communicating for thousands of years," explained Graham Field, Senior Minister. "They grab people's attention and say things that a real person would find difficult. They can also make a serious point in a funny way."



The puppets can be seen most Friday nights at Kidzone, Bethel's pre teen programme from 6.00 - 7.00pm. Call 525 8434 to find out more.



Greets Green Youth Forum is funded by Greets Green Partnership