

greetsgreen

COMMUNITY MAGAZINE

APRIL/MAY 2008



Residents go solar! Solar heating comes to Greetsgreen

www.greetsgreen.sandwell.gov.uk



Special Crime &
Community Safety
feature
see page 5

Women celebrate
International
Women's Day
see page 17



**FREE drink and drugs
DVD and booklet with
this month's magazine**

Front cover: *Looking forward to sunny days and cheaper bills! Bryan and Susan Wright are the first couple in Greets Green to have solar panels installed, thanks to the Sustainable Warmth project.*

Magazine Contact Details:

Greets Green Partnership, Ground Floor,
Court House, 335-337 High Street,
West Bromwich B70 8LU
Freephone 0800 953 0215
Tel (Main Reception): 0121 533 3188

Brian McKinstrie,
Communications & PR Manager,
T: 0121 532 6835
E: brian_mckinstrie@sandwell.gov.uk
W: www.greetsgreen.sandwell.gov.uk

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پڑاؤ کی تلاش میں ہیں۔ اگر آپ کو
اس میں مدد کرنے کی ضرورت ہے تو
ہمیں بلا کسی خرچہ کے 0800 953 0215 پر
مکالمہ کرنا یا ہمیں لکھنا۔

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Dear Resident

This issue has a real Crime & Community Safety feel. The really good news is that crime rates are continuing to decrease across the Greets Green area. Turn to page 8 to find out more and meet the officers who are part of our neighbourhood policing team.

You'll also read about your free drugs awareness DVD and UK drugzone booklet, which have been delivered with this issue of the magazine. They're full of useful information and advice and lots of local people have worked together to produce them. Find out more on page 5.

Have you ever thought about having solar panels installed? Many people think about last year's 'summer' and the lack of sunshine and remain sceptical about how it could ever take off in the UK. But it can – and it's being installed for free in some houses in Greets Green! Don't miss our special feature on the centre pages and learn how solar power really can save you money on your heating bills. Residents are already reaping the benefits in Greets Green, so why not find out if it's for you?

BRIAN MCKINSTRIE

Communications & PR Manager, Greets Green Partnership

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Active Lifestyles will continue...

Nathan Moore has certainly made his mark on Greets Green with his enthusiasm to help everyone to lead a more active life – and now his hard work has been recognised as his position has been made permanent.

Sandwell Primary Care Trust (PCT) has agreed to mainstream the Active Lifestyles project once funding from Greets Green Partnership comes to an end. This means the work he's so visibly started in Greets Green will be continued after the life of the Partnership, and will



be rolled out to help residents in other areas of Sandwell.

Nathan says: "The PCT has recognised that the Active Lifestyles neighbourhood approach to physical activity works. Now we'll be highlighting other areas in the borough that may need an injection of support, so it's really good."

Nathan will move over to the PCT in 2009, but before then his role is changing as he'll be concentrating more on promoting active and healthy living among adults rather than all age groups.

"George Salter Collegiate Academy is hoping to work with local primary schools to provide community coaches who will run playground, lunchtime and after school coaching," explained Nathan. "This means I can focus on helping adults to lead a healthier lifestyle."

Russel Smith, Community Education and Sports Development Manager at George Salter, will be managing the project for young people at the school, supported by Sports Development Officer, Lisa Rashid.



Get Moving on a Monday

One of Nathan's latest projects is a 'Get Moving on a Monday' over 50s exercise class at the YMCA from 10.30am-12.30pm.

A few people have already been attending, but Nathan is encouraging more people to go along and enjoy getting fit in a gentle way. Activities to choose from include indoor bowls, table tennis, badminton, short indoor cricket and mini circuits.

Interested? There's no need to book, just turn up or call Nathan on 07817 009 062 to find out more.

Meet your Reps...



Each issue we will be meeting a different Rep on the Greets Green Partnership Board. Here we find out more about Munir Hussein, the Pakistani Community Rep.

Munir has lived in Greets Green all his life. He's a Police Officer and has children at Guns Village Primary School.

Q. How long have you been on the Partnership Board?

A. Three years.

Q. How did you first get involved?

A. It was through the Pakistani Steering Group. We asked for some funding for the mosque on Dartmouth Street and I was then put forward by the Pakistani community.

Q. What do you like about being on the Board?

A. It's really enjoyable having a say. When the projects happen you can see how much they benefit people and you know you had some part to play in improving the area and people's lives.

Q. What are the best improvements the Partnership has made?

A. Lighting, security and making people feel safer. It's all good stuff that's been done. I know George Salter Collegiate Academy has improved greatly since the Partnership began.

Q. What do you want to achieve in the last years of the Partnership?

A. When the Partnership finishes I want to make sure it doesn't just come to a full stop and that its work does continue afterwards. Everything now should be focusing on what the Partnership Board leaves behind and how its work is sustainable.

If you'd like to contact any of the Community or Neighbourhood Reps on the Partnership Board, call Jackie Owen on 0121 533 3191.



Families welcome at Greets Green Children's Centre

Parents, babies and children are spoilt for choice with everything that's on offer at Greets Green Children's Centre.

The Centre which is next to Ryders Green Primary School, with its main entrance on Wattle Road, brings together childcare and family support for the under 5s in one building.

Free 'Play and Stay' sessions for parents and babies up to five years old are held at the Children's Centre, along with other venues throughout Greets Green including Lyng, Lodge and Guns Village Primary Schools.

On Saturdays at the Children's Centre fathers can enjoy a special play session with their children, and once a month

local childminders can get together and discuss issues at the Childminder's Forum. One class which has really taken off at the Children's Centre is the new Baby Massage sessions. Run by Early Years workers Karen and Nicky, the sessions are held from 1.30pm to 2.30pm on Mondays.

Glynis Webb, Acting Deputy at the Centre, said: "We've had such a positive response to our Baby Massage class that it shows there's a real need for alternative therapies in Greets Green. Parents love it as much as the babies! We're hoping to offer Baby Yoga sessions later this year."

The Children's Centre also has a nursery which is run by West Bromwich YMCA



and offers quality, affordable childcare for children aged 0 – 5.

To find out more about any of the sessions held at the Children's Centre, call 0121 612 5127. For details of the nursery, call 0121 533 1764.

Don't miss out on the excellent children's services that are here for you in your community!

"Parents love it as much as the babies!"



Raising the issue of

DRINK - DRUGS AND SMOKING

Your free DVD and UK drugzone booklet were delivered with this magazine. They've been produced by a whole range of local people of all ages working together and provide lots of information and advice on drink, drugs & smoking.

People from Greet's Green have contributed towards the DVD by giving their experiences of drug and alcohol issues in the area, while schools, community groups, young people and adults have shared their ideas for the booklet and helped to make it a reality.

The project has been a real partnership effort with the Crime & Community Safety and Health themes at Greet's Green Partnership coming together. As well as addressing the health problems experienced by people who use drugs and alcohol, the project aims to stamp out the crime which often accompanies people's need to find cash to fund their habits.

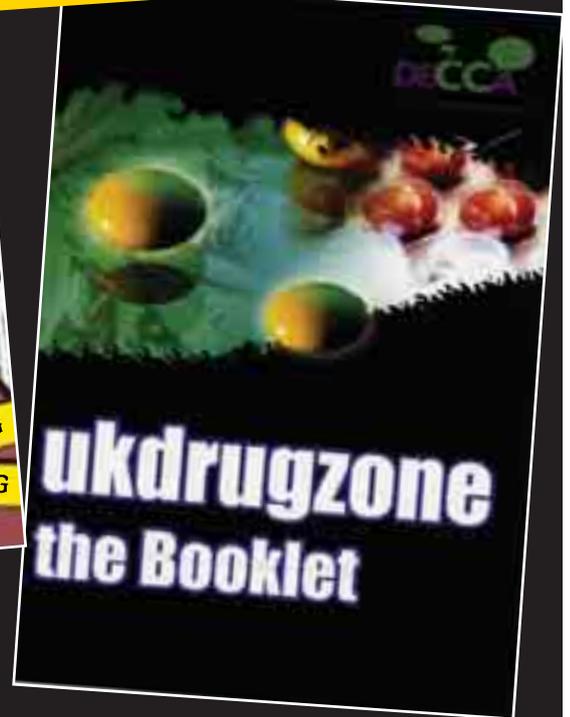
Creating the project

Sally Sandel, Greet's Green Partnership's Health Theme Leader, explains: "There's no point in tackling the issue of drugs and alcohol from just one angle so we've created a



joint action plan to raise awareness of drugs and how services can be accessed. That's why we've produced this DVD and booklet. We're also looking at the effect of drugs on the local community and the effect of crime."

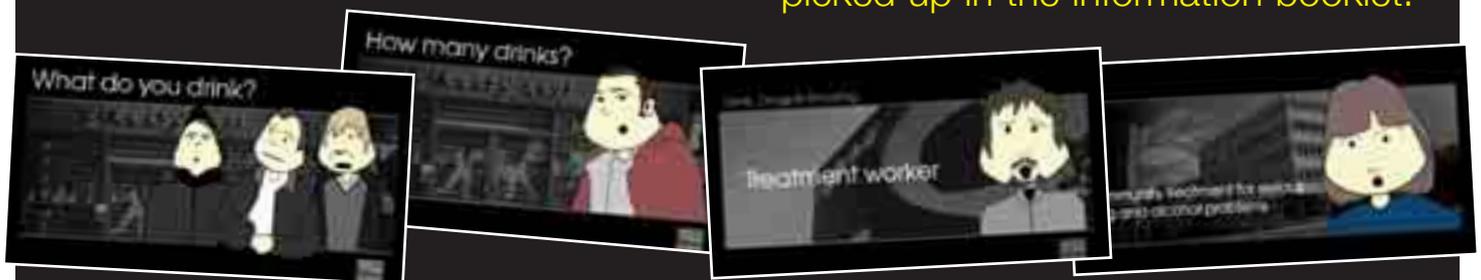
Plus, the booklet also contains contact details of agencies who can help with drugs and alcohol issues such as DECCA, Anchor, Aquarius and Sandwell Mind so that people know where to turn for help and advice.



Jon Bull, DECCA Team Co-ordinator, added: "We wanted to make local people aware of drug related issues and the services that are available.

"We've involved people from a broad spectrum of age ranges and ethnicities in this project to reflect the diverse community of Greet's Green."

"The DVD features local people talking about the impact of drugs on the local area and this is also picked up in the information booklet."



What do you think?

The DVD has been well received by those who've taken part in it and we hope that readers will find it useful, along with the booklet, in answering any questions about drugs and alcohol.

Jon says: "Everyone's really happy with the end result and says that the DVD is very accessible

and easy to understand. They feel many of the issues experienced by themselves and other people in their area are highlighted."

If you have any feedback on the DVD and booklet, contact DECCA on 0845 838 5317 or Phil Hartley on freephone 0800 953 0215.



Neighbourhood Watch – could you make a difference?

The first Neighbourhood Watch scheme in Greetings Green has been launched in Mason Street and others are now also starting to be set up.

Supporting the schemes is a key priority for the local Police. Sgt Tim Donovan said: "We're paying special attention to Neighbourhood Watch areas to give them more reassurance and show them they can make a difference.

"A lot of residents are already doing 90 per cent of what Neighbourhood Watch involves, working in little community groups and keeping an eye out for each other. We're asking them to go the next step and set up a scheme.

"We've found that Neighbourhood Watch schemes discourage anti-social and criminal behaviour because residents report it and we're able to do something about it.

"Residents are given help to secure their property as well as their neighbours' and a direct line to the Police Station so when they ring, they will get someone who knows the area.

"You also get peace of mind knowing that while you're away there's someone looking out for your property. With Neighbourhood Watch you come together as a group and there's strength in numbers."

If you would like to know more about Neighbourhood Watch, contact Helene Elder, Community Partnerships Officer at West Midlands Police on 0845 113 5000 ext 7911 6879.



Conference success

More than 100 people attended a conference in Greetings Green which looked at the impact of drugs and alcohol on individuals, families and the community.

The majority of people invited to the Community Development Sandwell's 21st conference were health workers from Sandwell, but some residents and Greetings Green Partnership Board members also went along.

Phil Hartley, Crime & Community Safety Theme Leader, said: "The conference was designed to inform staff about the innovative work being done in the Greetings Green area around substance misuse and to let them know about the services being delivered in Sandwell.

"The aim was to enable those attending to be better able to direct clients with drugs and alcohol issues to the appropriate services."

Delegates heard speakers from Sandwell Primary Care Trust, Workwell and West Midlands Police, and gained a sneak preview of the Greetings Green drugs and alcohol DVD. They also heard poetry which addressed substance misuse, saw a theatre production which explored alcohol misuse and were able to try complementary therapies used in drugs and alcohol treatment.

Phil added: "The conference was well delivered and well received. All the feedback has been very positive."

The conference was funded by Greetings Green Partnership and was a joint venture between the Health and Community Safety themes. It formed part of the Greetings Green Drugs and Alcohol Action Plan 2005 – 2010.

To find out more call Phil Hartley at Greetings Green Partnership on freephone 0800 953 0215.



help and advice

SECURE YOUR PROPERTY

Burglary is rare in the area but you should never be complacent. Here are a few tips to help you beat the burglar...

- 1 Make sure all your doors and windows have adequate locks – and use them!
- 2 Fit a chain on your door, a spyhole and house alarm.
- 3 Never leave a key hidden outside your home.
- 4 Make sure you put ladders, bins and tools away – they could be used by intruders.
- 5 Always lock garages and sheds.
- 6 Don't leave packaging for new appliances outside your home.
- 7 Leave a light on when you go out in the evening.
- 8 Get a timer switch for your lights if you're going away.
- 9 Ask a friend or neighbour to keep an eye on your home when you go away.



DID YOU KNOW?

The Greets Green Burglary Reduction Initiative project finished in March. In total, 1,636 properties have had additional security measures installed free of charge, thanks to the project, which was delivered by Midland Heart. It has made a significant contribution towards reducing burglaries in the Greets Green area.

KEEP YOUR MOBILE SAFE

It's often young people who are the victims of mobile phone theft, so make sure your children take some simple steps to stop them becoming a target...

- Keep your mobile in a hidden place and try not to use it while walking along the street. If you answer a call, do it inside.
- Put your mobile on 'silent' when you're out and about so potential thieves are not aware you are carrying one.
- If a stranger asks you the time, look at your watch not your mobile.
- Mark your mobile with your postcode using a security pen.
- Each phone has a unique IMEI number. Keep this number safe so your mobile can be traced if it's stolen.
- If your mobile is stolen, contact your phone company immediately so they can block any calls.



NEW FACE FOR PROJECT

Debbie Roberts is ready for her next challenge – taking over as the new face of the Greets Green Community Alcohol project following the departure of Wendy Hooker.

Formerly one of the project's community champions, Debbie has already helped lots of people to become more aware about alcohol and safer drinking. "My new role includes meeting as many people as possible, delivering talks and workshops on alcohol and helping those with drinking problems to access the right services," says Debbie.

"Alcohol misuse can have a big impact on our community and can affect all ages, backgrounds and ethnic groups. By tackling the problem we aim to help make Greets Green a healthier and safer place to live. I look forward to meeting many residents over the coming months."



Debbie can be contacted at Aquarius on 0121 525 9292.

Free Fire Advice

West Midlands Fire Service also offers a free home fire safety check. Make an appointment for firefighters to come and look at areas of accident and fire risk in your home. They will also give you advice on installing and maintaining smoke alarms, and how to avoid fires.

**Call 0800 389 5525
to find out more.**

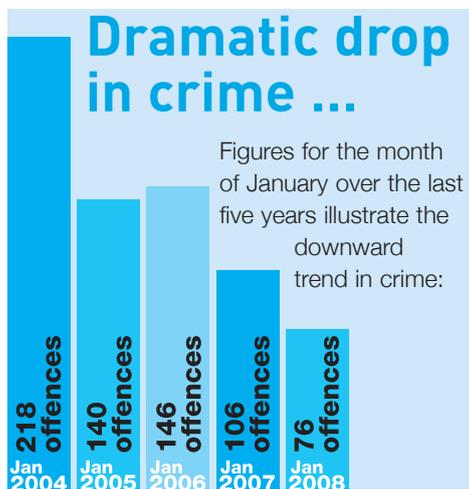
YOUR LOCAL CRIME FIGHTING TEAM!

The neighbourhood policing team in Greets Green is going from strength to strength. Since it was launched in November 2005 as the Greets Green Crime Fighting Team, the number of offences committed locally has fallen dramatically. Now it's become the Greets Green Neighbourhood Policing Team and crime is continuing to drop.

Sgt Tim Donovan said: "Crime-wise it's never been better. We're experiencing the lowest crime rate now that I've ever known. For example, in January 2004 there was a total of 218 offences, whereas in January this year there were 76. It gives you an idea of the difference we're making. It's easy to forget how bad things were in the past. In 2005/06 we cut crime by half and it's continued to come down."

He said the bigger drops earlier on followed the launch of the Greets Green Crime Fighting Team, which dedicated half a dozen officers to the one area with the support of Greets Green Partnership. "The consequence is that people realize you can't get away with certain things in Greets Green now."

The strategy of dedicated neighbourhood policing is now being rolled out across the region and is the model being pushed by the Home Office.



With a mix of familiar and new faces, the Greets Green Neighbourhood Policing Team now includes:

Sgt Tim Donovan (7) had 13 years' service in the South of Birmingham including work within CID, before being promoted to sergeant in July 2005 at West Bromwich. He has supervised the Greets Green Neighbourhood Team since November 2005.

PC Dave Bradley (6) has been policing the West Bromwich area since 1991 and has been on the dedicated team for four years.

PC Louise Carter (1) has policed West Bromwich for seven years and has been part of the dedicated team for three years.

PC Lynn Lopes (2) has three years' service, all in West Bromwich and one year on the team.

PC Jim Swingler (5) has nine years' service throughout the West Midlands including one year on the team.

PC Steve Turner (10) has three years' service in West Bromwich including one year on the neighbourhood team.

PC Andy Ward (8) has spent three months on the team.

PC Andy Lawton (9) is new to the team.

Also part of the team are two PCSO (Police Community Support Officers) – **Ilyas Jeewa (4)** and **Laura Jones (3)**.

The Greets Green Neighbourhood Policing Team can be contacted on 0845 113 5000 ext 7911 6316.

Young advisors get going

Greets Green has appointed its first four Young Advisors, who are currently undergoing their training. They are due to begin work in May.

The four are Rohim Mohammed and Hannah Pearsall, both aged 15, Natasha Wooliscroft, aged 16, and Meharpreet Singh, aged 20.

Being a Young Advisor is a paid role for people aged 15-21. It's a national scheme which already has successful projects in other parts of the country. All of our Young Advisors had to have previous experience of voluntary work and knowledge of the Greets Green area. Rohim, Natasha and Hannah are members of the Greets Green Youth Forum. Meharpreet volunteers at the Guru Nanak Community Centre. They all live locally.

The Young Advisors will help community leaders and decision makers engage with young people. They'll be getting young people involved in consultation, helping solve problems experienced by their peers and assisting in the production of booklets and documents to make them more accessible to other people their age.



Hannah says: "We've been trained on Young Advisor tasks, debates and how you deal with problems that may occur. When we do our couple of hours work a week we'll be doing lots of different things like helping the Police advise young people on a local issue.

"I think it's good to help out young people because you always get different views from people of different ages. It helps if you have young people advising other young people because they're more likely to listen. They trust you and feel more comfortable."

Meharpreet Singh added: "I thought being a Young Advisor would help my career in youth work. The training has been good. It's a different way of approaching young people and finding out how to work with them."

In the past two weeks two more Young Advisors have been recruited, so the full team of six is now in place.

If you would like to find out more about the Young Advisors, contact Jobs & Skills Theme Leader Katherine Hewitt on freephone 0800 953 0215.



ASIA'S HERE TO HELP

The Become project, which supports people in finding employment and accessing training, has welcomed new project worker Asia Khatun.

Asia, who lives in Greets Green, was formerly the Child Home Safety Community Champion in the area. She's already launched outreach

sessions at local community venues, which are proving popular.

She says: "I'm going out to community centres to meet local people who may want to be referred to the Become project. If people need help with CVs, job searching or accessing courses I'm there on site to help them."

Outreach sessions at the Confederation of Bangladeshi Organisations and the Yemeni Community Association have been the most successful so far, but Asia has also visited OSCAR Sandwell, the Central Library and the Guru Nanak Community Centre.

Having met someone looking for help, Asia will arrange a time they can visit the Become office at Steps to Work, 312-314 High Street (above Allied Carpets) so that she can chat more about their needs.

If you would like to run an outreach session at your community venue, or want to find out more about how Become can help, contact Asia on 0121 580 4162.

OPEN FOR BU

A pioneering website is generating millions of pounds worth of opportunities for businesses across Greets Green and Sandwell.

The Borough of Sandwell expects an estimated £3 billion worth of investment in the next five to seven years, and the business potential is huge.

www.finditinsandwell.co.uk – was launched in April 2007 by Sandwell Council to provide a free online business network and businesses in the Greets Green area are among those being urged to make the most of it. The website aims to:

- keep the local business community in touch with the latest business news from in and around the borough
- provide a network and forum for local people to showcase what their businesses are all about
- keep businesses in touch with the latest tender opportunities

HEALTHY MINDS CELEBRATES

The first year of the Healthy Minds project has proved such a success that a new volunteer, Joanna Tweed, has been recruited to help Co-ordinator, Julie Davies run the project.

Joanna said: "I'm really enjoying helping Julie out a few hours a week. I offer support to people at bereavement meetings, deliver leaflets, help with meetings and visit community groups to let everyone know about the project which aims to bring wellbeing to Greets Green residents."

Thanks to the project, lots of people across Greets Green have already benefited from stress awareness, complementary therapy and massage sessions.

A wellbeing directory and various self-help booklets have also been produced. Plus, a ladies' self-help bereavement group has been set up and the local community is

now more aware of mental health issues which may affect them.

Various community groups have also been awarded grants of up to £500 from the Greets Green Healthy Minds Community Fund to help with wellbeing projects. These include:

- **George Salter Collegiate Academy** – a 'Ladz to Ladiez' class helps female pupils' self confidence and self esteem by teaching them everything from cooking to hair and beauty and self-defence.
- **Sandwell Mind** – a new wellbeing course at Wood Lane Community Centre has been set up along with a Food and Mood workshop which

looks at how food, additives and nutrition can affect our wellbeing.

- **The Yemeni Community Association** - Egyptian dancing and yoga sessions have been set up to improve the health, wellbeing and confidence of its female members.
- **'Paintbox'** - new art equipment has been purchased by a group for older people to socialise and enjoy art at Lodge Road Community Centre.

To find out more about the Healthy Minds project and any of these wellbeing projects, contact Julie on 07884 202799 or email healthyminds@hotmail.co.uk

SINESS!

- provide access to cost effective and eco-friendly supplies and services
- host monthly networking events to enable businesses to meet like-minded business people, make new contacts and find new business leads

Steve Massey from Sandwell Council said: "Since the site's launch, we've had over 2,500 local businesses register as members and it's generated over £90m worth of business opportunities.

"The website homepage averages over 14,000 hits per month and is starting to attract hits on a global scale."

The aim is to build a bigger, brighter and greener local economy by sharing information on local businesses.

Registering with [finditinsandwell](http://finditinsandwell.com) is free, and further information is available by visiting the website or calling Steve Massey at Sandwell Council on 0121 569 2105 or email stephen_massey@sandwell.gov.uk

MINOR AILMENTS PROJECT PAYS OFF

More and more people in Greets Green have learned to turn to their pharmacist for help and advice thanks to the work of the Minor Ailments project.

The project, which began in 2006, has just come to an end, but has left residents much better informed.

It has been very successful in raising awareness that pharmacists can give you information. You don't need to take up a doctor's time which another patient could benefit from because they have a more urgent need.

The project ran alongside the Pharmacy First campaign, run by Sandwell Primary Care Trust, where local chemists put up leaflets and posters listing the ailments which pharmacists could give advice and treatment for.

These include colds, cold sores, conjunctivitis and child problems such as nappy rash and headlice. Minor ailments sessions have been run at local

community venues including the Greets Green Children's Centre so that parents could learn more about what pharmacists can help with.

There have also been 26 health information sessions held giving residents information about ailments they may already have, or be at risk from, such as diabetes or heart disease.

Community Health Development Worker, Gursharan Kaur, explained: "Some people have already got these conditions so we've been focusing on sharing information about how to manage them better.

"For people who might be at risk, we've been letting them know how they can manage their own lifestyle better. The project has been a real success."



Residents go solar

Fuel prices are soaring, but what can you do about it?

Seven households in Greet's Green are already making the most of an alternative way of heating their hot water for less. Why not join them in saving money and the environment?



Sandwell Warm Zone was awarded £900,000 by Greet's Green Partnership to provide free central heating, solar panels and insulation for people who own their properties but have an annual income of under £15,000.

Seven homeowners have said they're interested in solar panels so far and Greet's Green has already seen its first property have the cutting edge work completed.

Cathy Kirby from Sandwell Warm Zone says: "What we want more than anything is for people to come and talk to us. Sometimes people are put off if the offer seems too good, but we can genuinely help. Watch out in Gads

Lane, Oak Avenue, Oak Road, Sutton Crescent and Greet's Green Road as it's likely that solar panels will be appearing on several roofs in the very near future!"



To find out if you qualify for free solar panels, call Sandwell Warm Zone on 0121 569 5015. The panels are being fitted on a first come, first served basis, so give them a call!

Looking forward to sunny days and cheaper bills!

Bryan and Susan Wright of Caroline Street were the first couple in Greet's Green to have solar panels fitted for free – plus a complete central heating system, cavity wall insulation and loft insulation.

Susan Wright explained: "With three daughters we never had money to spend on central heating but when you get older you feel the cold a bit more.

"I knew about solar heat and I asked people what they thought. My daughter said to grab it with both hands - we'll have hot water for nothing."

The couple, who are both retired and have lived in the same house for 32 years, first phoned Sandwell Warm Zone after they'd received a letter outlining what they may be eligible for. The next step was for surveyor, Dave Edwards to visit the Wrights to see if their house was suitable for solar panels. Thankfully it was as it faces South and it was also agreed to install a complete central heating system. The two solar panels took just 45 minutes to be put flat on the roof.

Susan says: "The solar warmed up and we had enough hot water to wash up and have a bath. We don't have to touch it - it just goes along merrily on its own. The sun comes out and it warms up. I'm really proud of my panels!"

The house was also made more energy efficient by installing loft insulation to stop heat being lost through the roof. Cavity wall insulation was also added in a 30 year old bathroom and kitchen extension to stop heat escaping so easily.

It's estimated that each year the Wrights will save 45 per cent of their current water heating cost which will reduce from approximately £80 to £47. Plus, they're already feeling the benefits in other ways.

"To tell you the truth we've noticed a difference already. The whole fabric of the house is warmer. Even when the central heating is switched off it still feels warmer. My bed's not so cold and my carpets and walls feel warmer," she said.

Marianne Monro, who manages the Sustainable Warmth project for Greet's Green Partnership, added: "We're delighted to be able to help Mr and Mrs Wright to have modern efficient heating. They were not sure if they could apply under the Warm Zone scheme, but decided to ask anyway. Now I hope other people in Greet's Green will follow their lead."

ADDING VALUE

Another long-time Greet's Green resident who's benefitted from the Sustainable Warmth project is John Willetts.

The self-employed decorator has lived in his semi-detached home in Claypit Lane for 50 years and his grandmother lived there before him.

Now his home has been brought bang up to date with the latest technology as he's had solar panels fitted, along with new central heating and loft insulation.

It was so long since the attic had been disturbed that workmen even found a newspaper from 1933 up there!

John said: "I've been told that the free work to install the solar panels at my home is worth about £6,000. It then saves you between 30-40 per cent on your bills. The solar panels will certainly put value on my property."



"To tell you the truth we've noticed a difference already. The whole fabric of the house is warmer."

SOLAR POWER YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED

What is a solar hot water system?

Basically it means heating up your water direct from sunlight. Solar panels are fitted to your roof and fluid circulates through them. The fluid is heated by the sunlight and this is then used to heat the hot water cylinder.

What if there's no sun?

You are likely to have hot water from the day before in your hot water cylinder. When you have no solar heated water left, your boiler will automatically cut in to heat your water.

In the Spring and Summer, most of your water will be heated by solar power and be completely free. During other months, at least some of your water will be heated by solar power.

How much will I save with solar panels?

How much you save on your heating bills will depend on how much hot water you use and the size of your home.

Do I still need central heating?

Yes, as you will want to heat your radiators in the Winter when there is least sunlight.



Warmer homes

As well as offering residents free solar panels, the Sustainable Warmth project also provides free central heating, loft and cavity wall insulation.

Twenty five per cent of heat can be lost through the roof, so having your loft insulated maintains the heat within your home, cuts your heating bills and keeps it cosier.

Walls can lose up to 35 per cent of the heat generated within the home so wall insulation cuts down this heat loss. Walls are insulated from the outside and the holes created in the process are filled afterwards so it doesn't leave a mess.

The project is now also offering super insulation which provides a very strong insulation by covering the external wall of the house in four inches of insulation.

If you're unsure whether you qualify for this free work, get in touch with the team and find out. Don't miss out!

5 STEPS TO THE SOLAR SYSTEM

Once you've called Sandwell Warm Zone about getting solar panels fitted, Surveyor Dave Edwards will visit your home to check you qualify. Here are Dave's 5 steps to the solar system....

- 1** First, I'll visit your home to see if you qualify for the scheme. I'll answer any questions and do an energy rating on the house.
- 2** Our consultant will visit you to check the suitability of your property for solar panels. It's got to face South and have enough room in the loft.
- 3** A technical surveyor from the solar panel installation company will visit you to do a survey. The work is then scheduled to be done.
- 4** It takes two days to put solar equipment in.
- 5** You begin to enjoy the benefits of your solar hot water system.

To find out if you qualify for free solar panels, call Sandwell Warm Zone on 0121 569 5015. The panels are being fitted on a first come, first served basis, so give them a call!



New club for kids

GGCE is gearing up to launch a brand new Out of School Club at its premises at Wood Lane Community Centre.

Local residents will be able to use the facility for their children, aged 5 to 11 years, after school and during school holidays.

Allison Franks explains: "After some very successful taster sessions last year, our new Out of School Club will open as soon as we get approval from OFSTED. Providing this facility will enable more local people to get involved in GGCE and attend meetings at the centre knowing that their children are being looked after."

Would you like a say on how GGCE is run? Then why not become a member?

GGCE is looking for as many local people as possible to become members. It doesn't matter how old you are, you just have to be a resident or work in the Greets Green area.

As a member you'll be able to attend the organisation's Annual General Meeting in June where you'll have the opportunity to comment on how GGCE is run and share your ideas on the future of the organisation.

SEASIDE HOLIDAY FUN!

39 local residents have recently enjoyed a trip organised by Greets Green Community Enterprises (GGCE) to the Isle of Wight.

Costing only £135 per person, which included the coach, the ferry crossing, half board accommodation and evening entertainment, the trip was excellent value for money.

"It was absolutely fantastic," says local resident, Gill Cotterill. "We did everything from dancing to walking on the sea front, quizzes and bingo – there really was something for everyone. I'm already looking forward to the next trip."

GGCE is now hoping to organise another trip to Devon later this year. **Watch this space!**

For more details on any of the above, call Allison Franks on 0121 525 2772.

ON THE MOVE

Crowns Hairdressers has moved from the corner of Oak Lane and Chapman Street to Wood Lane Community Centre and is hoping residents will find it even easier to call in to get their hair done.

Hairdresser Christine says: "I'm really pleased with our new premises which have undergone a complete re-fit. I'm looking forward to seeing our regulars, as well as welcoming new customers here."

Christine has worked as a hairdresser in the Greets Green area for 27 years and will be a familiar face to many as she used to work in Carters Green.

Crowns is open from 10.00am to 4.00pm on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays. Call 0121 553 1466 for an appointment or just drop in.



Women from Greets Green are being invited to splash out at a fun new morning of exercise. The Social Swimmers project, which proved so successful when it was first launched in 2005, has now started again.

Sessions take place at Tipton Swimming Pool for women of any age who want to go swimming, but for cultural reasons do not want to go to a mixed open pool session. Or it could be that they just feel more confident swimming in a 'women only' environment. Transport to the pool is also provided for those who need it.

The sessions are being run by Community Coach, Vasu Patel and cater for all women – whether they're confident swimmers or they've never been in a pool before.

Active Lifestyles Co-ordinator, Nathan Moore, explained that the aim is to make the Social Swimmers sessions more viable so they will continue when Partnership funding comes to an end. They are initially running for 12 weeks, finishing in May. He said: "The women enjoy swimming and the exercise this gives them. They also enjoy mixing with other women they may not normally meet."

To find out more, contact Nathan on 07817 009 062. Calls can be transferred to a female member of staff if preferred.



IN THE SWIM

"We have an hour's swimming session booked and then there's an hour's exercise class. It only costs £2 so it's great value for money."

A little extra help

A new team of local people is working with Greets Green Partnership to provide support when projects need a little extra help with staffing.

The sessional staff have been recruited to work with the Partnership via the Sandwell Templink employment agency and have so far been helping out with a range of activities as and when required.

Those recruited so far include former African Caribbean Outreach Worker, Rachel McFee, who said: "I've worked in Greets Green for the last two years and it was a good opportunity to stay involved in the work that is taking place locally."

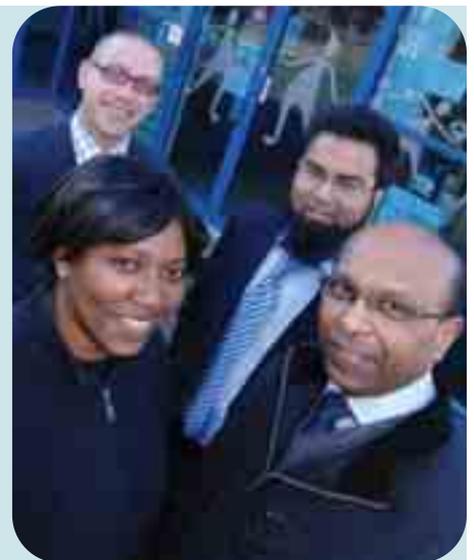
Fellow sessional worker Bhiku Patel, a former BT manager, said: "I took early retirement and thought this was a good chance to work in the community." Rachel has so far helped out with a

women's event and both have been involved with community consultation work relating to housing developments in Greets Green.

They're now looking forward to taking part in further work as it becomes available.

Other sessional staff include Aatur Rahman, who has a background in sales and is a former restaurant owner; Lee Fletcher, who has previously worked in recruitment; and Syeda Nessa, who has experience in community involvement and translation work.

The team of sessional staff come from all backgrounds and help out in a whole variety of ways, including providing support with language skills, events and surveys. It's a great opportunity to try your hand at different types of community work while earning cash at the same time.



Community Services Manager, Rohit Mistry said: "We've recruited half a dozen people so far and are looking for more, so there are still opportunities for local people to sign up."

If you would like to find out more, call Rohit at Greets Green Partnership on freephone 0800 953 0215.

Women celebrate their day

Women from Greet's Green got together for a fun day at their own International Food and Fashion Festival, held to celebrate International Women's Day.

The event, staged at the Town Hall and organised by Navida Bukhari, Greet's Green Partnership's Community Services Worker (Events and Publicity), brought together elements from different cultures.

Lots of different activities were organised for women to have a go at, including a Bollywood dance workshop, herb growing workshop, a Punjabi drum class, henna, massage, an Extend gentle exercise session and reflexology. The fashion element of the event included a display of 1950s English dresses and African fabrics, plus the chance to try on different cultural outfits.

Navida explained that the varied food stalls were kept busy, and offered a wide choice of dishes from different cultures including Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Yemeni, Polish, English and African Caribbean.

"It was a fantastic event," said Navida. "There was a good buzz throughout the whole of the day and people were queuing before the event even opened. One of the best things about it was the diversity of people who turned up - it was really great."



Stalls supported by:

Sandwell Women's Aid
Community Health Network
Ideal for All (Independent Living Centre)

Fashion displays supported by:

Sarah's Boutique (High St, West Brom)
Purewal (High St, West Bromwich)
Harkiran's (High St, Smethwick)
Shine Clothing (Queen's Square, West Bromwich)

And a big thank you to Shockwave Dance Academy (West Bromwich) for their performance.



LEARNING & HAVING FUN

At another International Women's Day event organised by the Greet's Green Adult and Community Learning Project, women had a fun day learning new skills - from belly dancing to speaking French.

Held at Wood Land Community Centre, the event aimed to be fun, free and friendly!

Women from across Greet's Green took part in lots of activities which all

involved an element of learning something new. They had a go at making a flower arrangement, learnt a few French words and designed their own mug and coaster.

They were also able to try their hand at creative card making, and relax by getting their hair, make-up or nails done. Confidence building and assertiveness workshops were held, and visitors found out about all the local learning opportunities available.

For information about the activities run by the Greet's Green Adult and Community Learning Project, call Nikki Russell on 0121 525 6671.





Greets Green is Blooming Marvellous



If you take pride in your plants, love your allotment or have beautiful borders, then we want to hear from you!

At the end of the summer we're holding a special event called 'Greets Green is Blooming Marvellous' that will recognise and celebrate all of your green-fingered efforts.

And you don't necessarily need a beautiful garden to join in with the fun. We're looking for everything from balcony displays to hanging baskets, herb gardens and greenhouses.

All we need is for you to contact us with the details of your great gardening work. You can also nominate friends and neighbours. We will then take professional photographs which will be featured in future editions of this magazine.

One example of a Greets Green resident taking great pride in the appearance of her garden is Olive Bedworth.

Both the front and back gardens of Olive's Turner Street home are packed full of plants including Rue flowers, potted Camellias, Heather, Geraniums, Hyacinths and Rose of Sharon to name but a few.

Olive first fell in love with gardening many years ago and said her enthusiasm for it stems from her father.

"I have gardened ever since I was a child but would not call myself a gardener because I'm still learning," she said. "I love gardening. It's the only really relaxing thing that I do but it's still hard

"I love gardening. It's the only really relaxing thing that I do but it's still hard work! It helps me forget any troubles I might have."



work! It helps me forget any troubles I might have," she added.

Olive's garden also includes a range of birdbaths and birdhouses that attract a host of winged-friends including Robins, Blue Tits, Collard Doves and Sparrows. She also recently spotted a squirrel running along the top of her fence!

"In the summer I spend as much time as I can in the garden. I will start early in the morning, have a break for lunch, and keep working into the evening. There's always a lot to be done."

The special event to showcase your gardening skills will take place in September and everyone who takes part will be invited to attend.

Greets Green Partnership Events Co-ordinator Navida Bukhari said: "This is all about taking pride in your homes and gardens. We want to make a big deal out of your efforts which help make Greets Green an attractive and great place to live."

To take part in the 'Greets Green is Blooming Marvellous' event send us your details and, if possible, a photograph to: FREEPOST GREETS GREEN PARTNERSHIP (no stamp required).

Or you can email a picture to naivda_bukhari@sandwell.gov.uk or call on 0121 533 3183.



Looking for Community Heroes

Included in the last issue of the Greetings Green magazine was our Community Hero nomination form (see below). We've had some forms returned, thank you, and are now finding out more about the people you've nominated.

There's no closing date, so if you'd like to make us aware of someone who you feel deserves to be recognised for the work they do on a voluntary basis, please get in touch.

In the last few issues of the magazine, we've featured local residents Paul Green, Imran Miah, Peter Jones, Dave Heeley and the crossing patrol staff of Greetings Green.

They all had their picture taken professionally and were awarded a special trophy in recognition of the effort they put in to go that extra mile to make life better for others.

We know there are lots more people out there who deserve to be recognised. They can be individuals or groups – please get in touch!

Return your form to us or call Richard Wyatt at Greetings Green Partnership on freephone 0800 953 0215. You can also email your nomination to richard_wyatt@sandwell.gov.uk



More ways to keep in touch

Following the successful launch of the new look Greetings Green Magazine, Greetings Green Partnership has also decided to revamp its Green Pages newsletter.

The newly named Greetings Green Community Newsletter is produced every two weeks. It features all the latest news from the Partnership as well as details of what's going on in your neighbourhood.

You can pick up a copy from the Partnership offices in the High Street as well as from a number of local venues including Wood Lane Community Centre, the YCA, the Guru Nanak Community Centre, Lodge Road Community Centre and the Greetings Green Children's Centre.

You can also learn more about Greetings Green Partnership online. By visiting www.greetsgreen.sandwell.gov.uk you'll be able to find important information about the Partnership, view its Business Plans and Annual Reviews and read the latest Greetings Green Magazine and Newsletter. There's also a list of contact details should you need to get in touch. Happy surfing!

To find out more call Richard Wyatt at Greetings Green Partnership on freephone 0800 953 0215 or email richard_wyatt@sandwell.gov.uk



Greetings Green is launching its very own search for a star!

Could you shine on stage?

Look out in the coming weeks for posters, leaflets and flyers inviting local people of all ages to enter a talent competition.

Organised by Greetings Green Partnership in association with local organisations, the competition aims to seek out anyone who's an entertainer at heart – whether they want to be under the spotlight for singing, dancing, juggling or standing on one leg!

Auditions will be held with the aim of holding a grand final to showcase Greetings Green's most talented citizens.

Event co-ordinator, Navida Bukhari, said: "The Greetings Green Star Search will be open to all ages and will be similar to TV's Britain's Got Talent contest. We thought it would be a bit of fun and give people a chance to display their talents."



For more details about the competition, call Navida at Greetings Green Partnership on freephone 0800 953 0215.

OPERATION TEACAKES!

Police work in Greets Green has included taking part in Operation Teacakes to tackle commercial crime affecting local businesses.

During the Christmas period around half of all crimes were affecting businesses, including offences involving petrol stations, shoplifting, and metal thefts of copper pipes and lead.

The operation was launched in January and ran through February and March, providing high visibility policing, such as in industrial areas and along the canal networks. It also focused on increasing communication with businesses and developing links with the Albion Business Improvement District.



TOP SPORTS AWARD

Well done to George Salter Collegiate Academy which has received the StreetMark award for its work with the national StreetGames initiative.

young people. Kerry McDonald from StreetGames said: "The school's commitment to providing sport for local young people is tremendous."

West Bromwich East MP, Tom Watson, who was on hand to see the academy receive its certificate, said the StreetMark Award was recognition of the staff's hard work. Last Summer the school hosted a Midlands-wide StreetGames event and has been given the quality assurance award for its work in delivering safe and fun sports such as football, cricket, dance and basketball for local

Don't forget that the top quality sporting facilities aren't just available to pupils. Both during the week and at weekends local residents are welcome to go to the school and try their hand at a number of sports.

To find out all the latest sports and community activities at the Academy, visit www.georgesalter.com

A very fond farewell

In March, Greets Green Partnership said farewell to one its most popular and valued members of staff when Jubada Akhtar, moved on after seven years.



"Ever since Jubada came to us, it was clear that we had found a very special addition to the team, who has made a real contribution to the Greets Green area," said Partnership Deputy Director John Paddock.

"She has much to be proud of, earning a reputation for being eager to excel at all she did. Obviously we are sad to lose her but we all share in her happiness as she starts her new life."

A Greets Green resident herself, Jubada held many roles at the Partnership including receptionist, admin assistant and acting PA to the Deputy and Executive Directors. Her enthusiasm, confidence and above all her professionalism will be missed by everyone.

Dates for your diary

Tea Dances

If you want to step out for a relaxing afternoon of dancing and meeting people, make a date to attend one of the tea dances in the next few months.

The dates are: 24th April, 29th May, 26th June, 31st July and 28th August.

The tea dances are all held on Thursdays, from 1.00 – 3.00pm at West Bromwich Town Hall. Entry is £2 which includes a raffle ticket, and refreshments are available.

For more details, call Nathan Moore on 07817 009 062.

Neighbourhood Forums

If you've an idea for improving your area, why not go along to your local Neighbourhood Forum meeting?

The next dates are:
 Wednesday 9th April (South),
 Guns Village Primary School
 Wednesday 7th May (North),
 West Bromwich Town Hall
 Wednesday 4th June (South),
 Wood Lane Community Centre

All meetings start at 6.30pm, transport is available if booked in advance with Greets Green Partnership on freephone 0800 953 0215.

NEW HIGH-TECH LIBRARY

Pupils at George Salter Collegiate Academy are getting stuck into books.

The school library has been given a £200,000 facelift which has included new talking books, computers and improved media equipment such as pod-casting kits.

Librarian, Janet Westwood, said: "It's great news for everyone at George Salter. Thanks to all the new technology, we have a 21st century library for a 21st century academy. The students will benefit from all the new equipment, which they'll be able to use with their various projects and schoolwork."

To find out more you can contact the Academy on 0121 553 4665 or visit www.georgesalter.com



Crafty goes on

The first of the Saturday craft fairs at Wood Lane Community Centre was formally opened by local MP Tom Watson, and a second one was held at the end of March.

The events were run by Wood Lane Artists Network and saw stallholders selling crafts including jewellery, hand made cards, paintings and pottery. Allison Franks, Business Development Manager at Wood Lane Community Centre, said: "We want to establish the Artists Network as a way of bringing together members of the community who have an interest in the arts to share ideas and learn new skills."

The network aims to offer opportunities to local craftspeople to sell work through craft fairs, to organise exhibitions and gain business support and advice.

For more information call Allison Franks on 0121 525 2772.



ON THE ROAD AT LAST...

They're off! After 10 years of hard work the Ryders Green Methodist Day Centre has bought a new specially-adapted minibus.

It's been paid for partly through fundraising by Day Centre staff, management committee members and volunteers, together with one third funding from Greets Green Partnership.

Centre Manager, Pat Briscoe said: "The minibus is going to be a big help to us. To have reliable and comfortable transport is fantastic. People can see our minibus out and about around the area and we hope that it will remind them that we're here to offer support to carers too.

If you'd like to know more about Ryders Green Day Centre, call manager Pat Briscoe on 0121 520 5367.

"As soon as we got the last bus we started fundraising for this one. We now have better wheelchair access. The vehicle also has air conditioning, which is important in the Summer when it can get very hot."

Ryders Green Methodist Day Centre is the only day-care centre in Greets Green which offers specialist care for severely disabled people. It provides day care to the over 60s from across the borough, offering a meal and the chance to socialise, to many who would otherwise be quite isolated.

The Day Centre also offers regular entertainment as well as an important break for full-time carers.

YOUNG

greetsgreen

APRIL/MAY 2008



**Children learn
some new tricks
thanks to the
Hat-Trick project**

www.greetsgreen.sandwell.gov.uk



**Meeting the Mayor
of Sandwell
see page 22**

**Schools in Greetsgreen
prove they're
healthy
see page 23**

**Have a go at our
prize competition,
open to all ages
see page 23**

TRICKS & FLICKS FOR HAT-TRICK KIDS



Soccer mad kids from Greets Green had a chance to show off their tricks – and learn a few more - thanks to a special Hat-Trick event.

The 'Tricks and Flicks' event took place during spring half term at the West Bromwich Albion T-Mobile Indoor Facility, known as the Dome.

Around 30 youngsters from Greets Green had the chance to attend the event through the local Hat-Trick community football project and meet the specialists who've appeared in TV adverts for sports giants like Nike.

Dave Lawrence, Hat-Trick Co-ordinator for Greets Green, said: "The aim was to offer the kids something different. We run a lot of normal coaching sessions and some of the youngsters see these guys doing these tricks on TV. The Tricks and Flicks event was a way of them learning how to do tricks better and a chance to see what other kids can do."

The youngsters who attended the event from Greets Green also took part in a half term four-day soccer camp at George Salter Collegiate Academy, which included a trip to Old Trafford.

The Hat-Trick project aims to provide footballing opportunities for all ages across Greets Green. It is backed locally by the FA, West Bromwich Albion FC community programme, and Greets Green Partnership.



To find out more, call Dave on 07904 588 095, or at West Bromwich Albion on 0871 271 9840, or email dave.lawrence@wbacp.co.uk

Meeting the Mayor

Young people in Greets Green Youth Forum are looking forward to welcoming the Mayor to one of their meetings, after being introduced to him earlier this year.



They met the Mayor, Cllr Gurcharan Singh Sidhu, when they were helping out at a recent West Bromwich Family History event. Chair of the Youth Forum, Rohim said: "The Mayor was really interested in our Forum and accepted an offer to attend one of our meetings.

"We're hoping to give a presentation about the various projects we've been involved in. The Youth Forum is opening a lot of doors and providing opportunities for all our members."

Recent events and activities include coming up with designs for the future of Dartmouth Park. These will be printed on postcards and advertised across the area. They're also busy organising events for the Summer, so watch this space!

If you're interested in getting involved in the Greets Green Youth Forum, call Youth Officer Ian Clews on 07810 850 981 or email ian_clews@sandwell.gov.uk

SCHOOLS PROVE THEY'RE HEALTHY

Schools in Greets Green have proved how committed they are to promoting a good way of life by gaining National Healthy Schools status.

To be declared a Healthy School they must have met the national criteria across four key themes of personal, social and health education, healthy eating, physical activity and emotional health and wellbeing.



The Schools started work on becoming healthy schools through a project funded by Greets Green Partnership, but when this came to an end, the schools decided to continue themselves.

By the Summer of 2006 all five primary schools in the area – Ryders Green, Lodge, Newtown, Lyng and Guns Village, along with George Salter Collegiate Academy had gained bronze status, their first step on the way, and now all but one have full National Healthy Schools status.

The programme is a national long-term initiative which helps young people to be healthy. But it's not just about physical health - it's about emotional health and happiness too. The scheme involves the whole school, including parents, governors and staff.

Raji Takhar, Healthy Schools Worker for West Bromwich, said: "The award is only for three years and we do an annual review with each school. After three years they need to see if they are still keeping the standards up to that level."

Schools can choose to concentrate on certain aspects of the programme. This is what the different schools in Greets Green have been concentrating on:

- George Salter has done lots of work on healthy eating and improving where the food is served. A video on healthy eating was made recently.
- Ryders Green Primary School has done a lot of work on emotional health and wellbeing.
- Lodge Primary School has focused on personal, social and health education and has involved parents in many things. They have a large playground so have done a lot of outdoor work too.
- Lyng Primary School has had a lot of involvement with outside agencies including the Fire Service, Police and the Road Safety Team. They have focused on the module of sex and relationships.
- Newtown Primary School has studied healthy eating and also done a lot of outside work with groups such as DECCA (drugs awareness) and the school nurse.
- Guns Village Primary School is still working towards national Healthy School status and is doing work on emotional health and wellbeing, and personal, social and health education, as well as healthy eating.

competition corner

Simply send your entry by 16th May 2008 to: Magazine Competition, **FREEPOST GREETS GREEN PARTNERSHIP** (no stamp required). The first three correct entries out of the hat will each win a £10 voucher.

With Spring now in full swing, Greets Green is really starting to bloom. Can you find the following Spring flowers and shrubs in the word search? Find all 10 to be in with a chance of winning one of this month's £10 shopping vouchers.

- | | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| CROCUS | SNOWDROP | TULIP |
| DAFFODIL | PANSY | MAGNOLIA |
| AUBRETIA | SLOE | LILAC |
| LILY | | |



K	S	I	O	P	S	T	S	L	M
A	N	J	L	S	A	U	I	M	O
I	P	B	L	Z	C	L	Q	A	R
T	F	O	J	O	Y	I	L	G	C
E	E	C	R	E	A	P	R	N	A
R	M	C	Y	D	S	I	W	O	L
B	K	D	X	B	W	L	F	L	I
U	J	D	A	F	F	O	D	I	L
A	F	B	N	E	A	Q	N	A	R
N	L	U	I	X	P	A	N	S	Y

Congratulations

to Liam C Judge, Mrs Brenda Chambers and Mohammed Safyan who each won a £10 voucher from the February/March competition.

Please fill in your details using BLOCK CAPITALS.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Tel No. _____ Age: _____

This competition is open to all ages