

greet's green

COMMUNITY MAGAZINE

AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 2009



Beach party fun for Greet's Green

www.greetsgreen.sandwell.gov.uk



Adult and community learning expands to all ages see page 4

News from Greet's Green Community Enterprises see page 6

Environmental improvement work lifts the look of the area see page 8

Front cover: *Greets Green residents enjoyed a day at the beach on Saturday 11th July, thanks to Greets Green Community Enterprises.*

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આ માહિતીના ભાષાંતરમાં જો તમને મદદ જોઈતી હોય, તો કૃપા કરીને અંગ્રેજી બોલતા કોઈ મિત્ર કે કુટુંબીજનને કહો કે અમને 0800 953 0215 ઉપર ફોન કરો..

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إن رغبتم بالحصول على مساعدة على ترجمة هذه المعلومات يرجى أن تطلبوا من صديق أو من أحد أفراد الأسرة ممن يتحدثون اللغة الإنجليزية الاتصال بنا على الهاتف . 0800 953 0215

Dear Resident

Now we are in the final year of Greets Green Partnership, you may think that projects will be drawing to a close. But, far from it! Although Partnership funding is coming to an end, the success of our projects means that many are being taken on and funded by other organisations.

What's more, they're often being expanded so that even more residents can benefit. Don't miss our Adult & Community Learning feature on page 4 and our feature on Community Alarms on page 7. You can rest assured that there'll still be lots of opportunities in Greets Green for learning, playing, meeting new people and gaining new skills.

Greets Green Community Enterprises continues to grow and grow. Read about their latest social enterprise in our 4 page pull-out – if you're holding an event, give them a call! They also staged a fantastic beach party at the Belper headquarters in July – see if you recognise anyone.

Other news includes features on two more local residents to benefit from a Business Start Up grant, plus an update on how the environmental improvement work in Greets Green is lifting the look of the area.

Enjoy the rest of the summer.

BRIAN MCKINSTRIE

Communications & PR Manager, Greets Green Partnership



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WHAT A YOUNG HERO!

An 11 year old boy who feels strongly enough about anti-social behaviour in his neighbourhood to get up and make a speech about it, has been nominated for this issue's Community Hero award.

Billy Shepherd spoke at Greets Green Partnership's Citizenship seminar, held at the Bethel Christian Fellowship last October. He joined an impressive line-up of speakers including the then Mayor of Sandwell, Cllr Bob Price, and

"Billy shows concern for his peers and the environment."



Dr Chris Allen from Birmingham Rights and Action Partnership.

The event, one of a series of seminars, was organised by the Partnership's Community Services Worker, Abdul Monim Khan. He was so impressed by Billy's commitment that he nominated him for the Community Hero award.

Abdul said: "Billy spoke about environmental issues and anti-social behaviour and things to do with young

people. He took me on a tour of Marl Hole Park which he felt people were unable to enjoy because it's overgrown and full of rubbish. We've since cleared the area.

Although Billy says he was nervous about speaking at the seminar, he didn't find it too daunting.

"I talked about anti-social behaviour," he explains. "Like when a gang goes to the park and chucks the swings over the bar so we have to climb up to get them down."

Elaine Hill, Head Teacher of Lyng Primary School which Billy attends, said the school was proud of him: "He responded to what was close to his heart – the playground and the behaviour of people in the open shared spaces. He feels very strongly about it."

If you know someone who deserves to receive a Community Hero award, call Richard Wyatt at Greets Green Partnership on 0121 532 6978.

LOOKING FOR HEROES

House of Commons Thank You

All past and present Greets Green Partnership Board Reps from the last 10 years were invited on a special day out as a thank you for their work. Two coaches full of more than 60 people went on a day trip to London to the Houses of Parliament and the London Eye in June.

Paul Sandars, a Rep from 1999-2001, and now Labour Councillor for Hateley Heath, said: "We did a full tour of the whole palace of Westminster, the Lords and the Commons, and then we went down to the Undercroft and had an excellent lunch and a speech from Tom Watson, MP for West Bromwich East. We also got to go on the London Eye. It was a marvellous day out."

Paul, who's Chair of the Scrutiny Committee on Sandwell Council, said it had been good to see people he'd known in the past, as well as meet newer Reps.

"There were people I'd heard of and never met before, so I took time to have a nice long chat with them – **it was a good way to network.**"



LEARNING EXPA

Learning may sound like a chore to many people but hundreds have realised that adult learning can be interesting and fun, can boost your confidence and give you the qualifications needed to take a whole new direction in life.

While funding for the Greet's Green Adult & Community Learning project ends this month, its work will not only be carrying on as part of the West Bromwich Central CoOP, it'll be expanding to include under 16s too.

Launched in 2005, the project has seen a staggering 2,805 people take part. A total of 1,451 qualifications have been gained - ranging from entry level to Level 4. Of these, 499 were at Level 2 which is equivalent to an A-C pass at GCSE.

Recent surveys have shown that the number of people with Level 2 qualifications in the area, which is really the minimum needed to get on in life, has gone up.

Extended Services Adult & Community Learning Co-ordinator, Nikki Russell, says: "We've run courses on everything from literacy and numeracy, IT and football coaching, to first aid, dressmaking and a course for door supervisors.

"We've done a whole host of subjects to make people more employable or to help them progress at work. And they've all been held at local community venues."



The project has brought many community organisations together. "To do an NVQ in childcare you have to do a placement of 16 hours a week and finding this is difficult," explains Nikki. "So we ran the course at Lodge Primary School and they provided the work experience.

"A lot of the students had progressed from an ESOL course so had not only improved their English, but learned a skill to get them into work as well."

Since Nikki joined the project, she's run lots of activities to get people involved, including Christmas craft

events, Summer sports and fun days, and Fathers' Day activities, all aimed at bringing in more people to find out about what's on offer. Running courses which local people have asked for and which could lead to jobs has also been an important part of the project.

The door supervisors' course, for example, was staged because residents (some of whom are pictured above) said that this was a qualification they wanted to gain, and a lot of the food hygiene courses were as a direct result of requests from community organisations.



TONY'S ON THE BALL

Tony Edwards, of Hazelbeech Road, has been able to progress at work and follow his hobby of teaching children to play football, thanks to the Adult & Community Learning project.

He took courses in First Aid, IOSH Managing Safely, Electrical Design and Electrical Testing, when the project was known as Passport to Learning and found them a really useful stepping stone so he could advance at work. Over the last two years, with the Adult & Community Learning project's help, Tony has taken courses in Football Coaching, Psychology for Soccer and is now looking to enhance his skills through further sports courses.

He's become one of the children's coaches at Greet's Green Albion, which he really enjoys, and feels that he's been able to give something back to the community.

NDS TO ALL AGES

New lease of life

Three years ago Pauline Gibbons, a local grandmother, didn't know how to turn on a computer and says she was frightened of them.

She was talked into doing a free local taster course by a friend and they ended up doing an eight week Beginners Computing course at Wood Lane Community Centre. They enjoyed it so much that Pauline went on to find out about other courses and signed up to a CLAIT course at Ryders Green Primary School. Now she's progressed to Text Processing at Sandwell College and is enjoying a new lease of life, as well as helping others in her family with their computer skills.

Beginners Computing at Wood Lane Community Centre is still available, call 0121 525 2772 for details.

Project helps boost skills

An innovative scheme, which could lead to more people being given help with literacy and numeracy, is being researched in Greet's Green in partnership with West Midlands Police.

Nikki Russell, the Extended Services Adult & Community Learning Co-ordinator, has created a 'screening tool' which people taken into custody in the area are asked if they want to fill in.

"It's a questionnaire made into a booklet," Nikki explains. "It's adapted from a national tool but has been made much more user friendly."

"People are given the opportunity to complete the questionnaire to check the

level of their literacy and numeracy skills. We can then refer them on for additional help if they want."

The questionnaire also enables Nikki to gather data about the literacy and numeracy levels of people brought into custody. In the future, this could be used to help in the sentencing of people who've been charged and appear in court as they could agree to get extra literacy and numeracy support as part of their sentence.

And the scheme is already growing. Having started at West Bromwich Police Station, with custody staff helping with the project, it's now being rolled out to Police stations in Smethwick.



LIFE-SAVING SKILLS

Local residents gained some life-saving new skills thanks to a range of courses put on specially for Adult Learners Week.

The Adult & Community Learning project staged three Emergency First Aid sessions - one at Lyng Primary School and two at Lodge Road Community Centre - during the week. Successful learners received an Emergency Aid Certificate.

Two Level 2 Food Safety courses were also held at Lodge Road Community Centre, plus a Steps to Work course.

Among those who took the Food Safety course were Akram and his wife Hamida Sharazi, who have a meat shop and are planning another business.

Mr Sharazi said: "The course was all about hygiene and it was very good. It covered what everyone needs to know. We are opening a fish and chip shop, which is why we decided to do the course. The tutor was brilliant."

More short courses like those held in Adult Learners Week will be run in the future. Contact Nikki Russell for details.

Looking to the future

Work started as part of the Adult & Community Learning project will now continue under the West Bromwich CoOP which brings together the six schools in Greet's Green and four more in the West Bromwich area.

The CoOP - or Core Offer Operational Partnership - aims to open schools up from 8.00am-6.00pm so youngsters have access to study support, childcare and other services outside normal school hours. The project also aims to provide services for people of all ages. While the Adult & Community Learning project was restricted to courses for over 16s, now there can be more family learning projects and more work with local Children's Centres.

More information can be found online at www.westbromwichcentralcoop.com which goes live in September.

The number for Nikki Russell, Jodie Little and Maranda Jenks stays the same - 0121 525 6671 - and their new base is Newtown Primary School.



FROM IDEAS TO REALITY

Greets Green Partnership's Business Start Up project, which has given a kick-start to many local businesses, received an extra boost this summer.

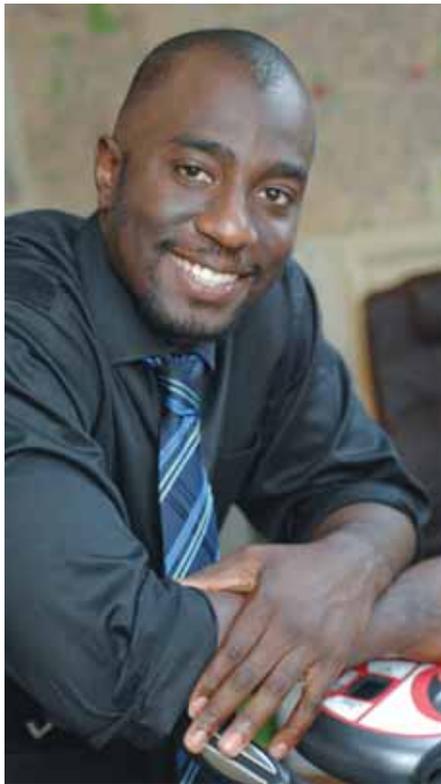
Although the project had come to an end, additional funding was secured. This meant that local people with a business

idea are able to apply for a grant of up to £1,500 until the end of August.

Budding entrepreneurs have taken this opportunity to get their businesses off the ground. Two new, very different, business ventures in Greets Green are DIMP and Mr Sparkle.

Don't forget there's still a range of help and advice available for existing businesses and new start-ups in Greets Green.

Call Katherine Hewitt on 0121 533 3185 for details of organisations which can help.



DIMP AIMS TO HELP YOUNG MEN GROW

An entrepreneur who wants to help young men succeed has successfully applied for a Business Start Up grant.

Damali Irish is launching the Damali Irish Mentoring Programme (DIMP) in the area. His £1,500 grant has been used to buy office equipment and to produce promotional flyers to spread the word about this new motivational movement.

Damali, aged 27, said: "DIMP is about supporting young men in ways which are constructive, disciplined and very thoughtful.

"A lot of them don't have many things to do. They don't have much direction

in life or the capacity to make and hold on to decisions, and be firm. I'm trying to help them become more motivated."

Through DIMP, Damali aims to run mentoring sessions in schools for boys aged 11-17 on weekdays and Saturdays. The aim is to create a disciplined environment where they can develop their confidence.

Aspirational trips are planned, along with confidence building sessions and talks on subjects including financial management and career planning.

To find out more about what DIMP, can do for you, call Damali on 07812 706822.

Mr Sparkle hopes to shine in business

Martin Howard has literally gone up in the world after his business idea became a reality. You might see Martin up a ladder around Greets Green, cleaning windows as Mr Sparkle.

He's already doing well in his new business venture, having won the contract to clean the windows for Greets Green Community Enterprises at Belper Enterprise Park and Wood Lane Community Centre.

Martin is one of many people from different walks of life who have seen their business ventures take off thanks to the Business Start Up project. And he's not had to jump straight in with both feet. As he's currently working under 16 hours a week, he can still claim benefits.

"The plan is to build up enough work so I can then make the leap to doing more than 30 hours a week which will mean I can get tax credits," he says. "Through the Business Start Up project I've received a lot of information and support so I know the best ways of going about my business and making it a success. I'm really grateful to Greets Green Partnership for helping to get me going."

Mr Sparkle is now aiming to get his own transport and purchase additional equipment so that he can take on more handyman work around the area.

If you think Mr Sparkle could do some jobs for you, give him a call on 07818 891169.



NEWS

Issue 3 August 2009

FROM GGCE

greet's green
community enterprises Ltd



Greetings from Greet's Green

Any time you head off to the seaside, you must bring back a stick of rock. Well, now it's available on your doorstep.

GGCE has launched its very own rock and the first 100 people who turned up at the beach party were given a complimentary stick.

"It's green rock which says 'Greetings from Greet's Green' and it's irresistible," says Sharon Crowley, of GGCE. "We hope everyone enjoyed it."

West Bromwich BEACH FUN!

Greet's Green residents enjoyed a day at the beach on Saturday 11th July – without having to travel far at all!

GGCE staged a fantastic beach party at its Belper headquarters, complete with plenty of sand for a sandcastle competition, donkeys, Punch and Judy, fairground rides and salsa dancing. Holiday-makers could even pedal round on a smoothie bike to blend fruit to make into their own smoothie drink!

Who says Greet's Green isn't near the beach?!



HAVING A PARTY? CALL GGCE!

If it's party time, GGCE can help!

The organisation has added another business to its already impressive list of social enterprises and is looking for anyone holding an event or party.

GGCE has acquired local marquee company, 'Bees Knees Marquees', in a bid to increase its community-run enterprises in the local area.

This means it can now hire out all the equipment you need for an event including marquees, tables, chairs, lighting and flooring, and even bouncy castles, at very competitive prices.

Bees Knees Marquees, which actually opened last year and was based in Burntwood, is now based at GGCE's headquarters at Belper Enterprise Park. It's the only marquee specialist in Greets Green, and its profits are being re-invested into the area.

Andrew Rainsford, Chief Executive of GGCE, explained: "We were actually looking to hire marquees



when we discovered this small business for sale. We negotiated a price and bought the equipment and the website of the business."

Bees Knees Marquees can cater for events ranging from school fetes and proms to shows, carnivals, weddings and parties at home when extra space is needed.

For more details call 0121 525 2772 for a quote or log onto www.beeskneesmarquees.co.uk

GGCE is also recruiting seasonal staff where NVQ training will be offered. If you are physically fit and want to apply to work for Bees Knees Marquees, please get in touch.

BOOK YOUR HOLIDAY PLACE

Residents are busy signing up for the next GGCE holiday – so make sure you don't miss out!

The holiday departs on Monday 21st September for five days and four nights full board at the South Downs Holiday Village in Bracklesham Bay, South Downs.

One person who's made sure she's booked is Marilyn Carty, who'll be going along with husband Cyril. She enjoyed the last trip to Weston-super-Mare in March, and the previous trip to Woolacombe.

She says: "I really enjoy myself on the holidays – they're a really nice social gathering. It's the friendly atmosphere that makes them so good. Everyone gets on and we all go out together and have a drink and a good laugh. It's a nice change from being in West Bromwich!

"The places we stay are always well looked after and the people who do the catering are good."

Marilyn, who's lived in Greets Green

for nearly 40 years, said she decided to give the holidays a go after reading about them in the Greets Green Magazine. Now she looks out for when the next one is coming up.

The September holiday to the South Downs costs £195 and includes excursions to Portsmouth and Bognor Regis, plus a gala dinner with wine.

For more information, or to book a place, call Sharon Crowley on 0121 525 2772.

WHAT A TEAM AT WOODY'S!

Woody's is the new name for the after-school club at Wood Lane Community Centre. It was recently saved when it was taken over by GGCE, and is continuing to provide loads of great activities for youngsters aged three to 11 from 3.30pm to 6.30pm.

We caught up with Naomi Nicholls and Amena Hussain who run the club to find out more...

How long have you worked at the after-school club?

Naomi: It'll be three years in December.

Amena: For a year.

What were you doing previously?

Naomi: I came here straight from college. This was my first professional job but I'd done various placements with children while I was at school.

Amena: I did some classroom assistant work and I was a dinner lady at a couple of other schools. I also did some community work.

What do you enjoy most?

Naomi: I get to play! I love seeing the kids having a good time and it's nice to see the bonds that grow

between them. We have a wide age range - from three to 11, but they all form a nice little group and are quite protective of each other. If new ones come along, the others invite them to join in really well.

Amena: Spending time with the kids. It's good fun to play with them. Sometimes if they don't come for a day or two, they tell us they've missed us which is really sweet.

What do you do in your free time?

Naomi: I'm a bit of a sports fanatic. If I can be playing sport, I will be! I also enjoy going out shopping when I've got the money and I help look after my dad who's disabled.

Amena: I like swimming and going to the park. I enjoy going out and visiting nice, interesting places. I'm also a Greets Green Sessional Worker so get involved in various community projects.



For full details about Woody's, call 0121 525 2662.

DID YOU KNOW...

how many businesses are based at Belper Enterprise Park?

Unit 9: Greets Green Community Enterprises Headquarters, on 0121 525 2772.

The other units house a variety of locally-run businesses. They are:

Unit 1: Motor repair and MOT services garage, Oakley Car Services run by James Oakley and John Baker on 0121 525 1566.

Unit 2: Building services firm Connaught's run by Dave Rollins on 0121 525 3901 (telephone/fax).

Unit 3: Mailing services firm Mail Fast run by Dave Harbach on 0121 525 7061.

Unit 4: Computer services firm Greets Green Community Enterprises (Environmental) Limited run by Andy Grigg on 0121 525 2772.

Unit 5: Motor sales garage, Sandwell Car Sales run by Sham and Zak on 07888 888 460.

Unit 5c: Taxi firm Andy's Cars run by Andrew Cashmore on 0121 580 4707.

MEET THE BOARD

In this issue we meet GGCE Board member, Andrew Worley, who's a Director of local steel manufacturer, William King Ltd.

How did you get involved with GGCE?

I joined the GGCE Board 12 months ago. I was invited as an employer in the community and, as a company, we feel it's important to have

involvement with local issues and projects. It's an unpaid voluntary position and my GGCE role requires similar skills to those I need as a Director of a company.



What's your role on the Board?

I need to ensure that the goals set are met in an efficient and lawful way. I personally focus on the development of successful local based businesses that will generate surpluses to feed back into the community.

What do you enjoy about your involvement with GGCE?

It's given me a much greater insight into the people and the diversity of the local community. I'm always so inspired by the

willingness people have to sacrifice their personal time in order to try and improve our area.

Why should others join the Board?

GGCE is always looking for people to join in, and I really urge people to get involved. They can find out what's happening in the area they live or work in, and get involved in the many projects we have running.

What do you do in your spare time?

I have a 16 month old daughter who's just starting walking which is fun. I can also be found walking and training my labradors in the Clent Hills and I seem to spend hours trying to stop my vintage MG car dissolving into a pile of rust! I also love to visit the Czech Republic. I lived there for five years and it's where I met my wife, Jana.

If you're interested in getting involved in GGCE, call Jackie Owen on 0121 525 2772.

JACKIE'S NEW COMMUNITY ROLE

A very familiar face has joined GGCE and is working to help residents turn their ideas into reality.

Jackie Owen, who was Greets Green Partnership's Board Representative Support Officer, is now working as a Community Development Officer for GGCE.

She says: "I'm working within the community to engage residents in the work we do. I'll be taking their ideas and looking to make them happen. It's good to still be working in the area."

The aim is to work in partnership with other development officers and enthusiastic residents in other

communities to create joint projects without duplicating effort. One of the first people Jackie's been working with is 17 year old Diego Wright who's keen to set up a youth group in the area. He attended the GGCE beach party to sound out young people about recruitment.

Jackie explains: "Now we're looking at what the different community centres offer for young people so that we can develop a community programme."

Another idea is to get local people involved in events – and this started with the GGCE beach party which residents helped to organise. "We want to set up an events group



which will take the lead in applying for funding and putting on events in the area with support from me," says Jackie.

If you have an idea for a local community project, or want to find out more about the events group, call Jackie on 0121 525 2772.

Greets Green Community Enterprises
Unit 9 Belper Enterprise Park,
Greets Green Road, West Bromwich B70 9EN
Tel: 0121 525 2772
Email: ggce@live.co.uk



Wood Lane Community Centre,
157 Wood Lane,
West Bromwich B70 9PT
Tel: 0121 525 2662
Email: woodlane@btconnect.com

COMMUNITY ALARMS PROVIDE A LIFELINE

Nearly 200 people in Greets Green have been helped to feel more secure in their homes thanks to Greets Green Partnership and Sandwell Homes' Community Alarms project.

In 2007, the Partnership invested £75,000 in the scheme which offered support to residents of all ages by linking them to a 24-hour control centre.

The project was already up and running, but funding from the Partnership enabled

the service to be offered to Greets Green residents at a much cheaper cost than those living in other parts of Sandwell. Now the funding has come to an end, and the success of the project has meant that most of the subsidised alarms have already been taken up.

However, the project is continuing to be run by Sandwell Homes and there are still a limited number available at the reduced rate of just £1.17 a week for people living in Greets Green.



Feeling secure

Widower Leonard Sandland says: "I feel more secure now in my own home. If there's a fire it sets off an alarm and if there's an intruder I've a button on the door to press. If I have a fall and I'm in the garden, I only have to press my pendant to call help – it's a wonderful thing."

Who's benefited?

During the first few months of the project in Greets Green, a total of 108 people received alarms. While the majority of people were aged over 60 – with 73 people aged over 82, the project also benefited much younger people.

Two residents were in their 30s, two were in their 40s, and 10 residents were aged between 51 and 60. The recipients were from a diverse range of ethnic backgrounds including white, African-Caribbean, Pakistani, Indian and Gujarati. Marianne Monro, who worked in the Housing Team at Greets Green

Partnership throughout the project, said: "The Community Alarms project has been so successful because of the type of people we've reached out to.

"It's provided peace of mind to different generations and has changed how community alarms are perceived by different types of people.

"What's especially good is that although the Partnership funding has now ended, people who are already on the scheme won't have to increase what they currently pay."

The package of support consists of:

- A community alarm – a pendant for the person to wear around their neck. If they need help, for example, after a fall or in a medical emergency, they can press the pendant at any time of the day or night. Someone from the 24-hour control centre will speak to them through the pendant to find what help they need.
- A bogus call alert – a button fitted to the front or back door which a resident can press if they open the door to someone they suspect is bogus. The control centre can listen in to the conversation and alert the Police if required, to catch the caller in the act.
- A smoke detector – if it goes off at any time, the control centre is automatically alerted and an operator will speak to the resident to find if there is a cause for alarm. If they can't get in touch, they'll call 999.

When someone signs up for the service they can either provide a copy of their house key, or give the control centre details of a family member or friend to contact in an emergency.

If the resident presses the community alarm pendant, the call centre operator will have access to vital information such as their medical history and what language they speak. They then ask what the problem is to get the help that's required.

If they cannot get a reply, they either send someone round immediately with the key, or contact the person named.

To find if you could benefit from the Community Alarms service, call Sandwell Homes on 0121 500 5500.

Development news...

Talks have been progressing with developers which could mean that homes are built on the clearance site in Claypit Lane sooner than many people had dared hope.

Housing development work in the area has been hit by the current recession because developers are not committing to start work on any new properties as they cannot sell existing developments.

Ian Jennings from the Housing Team said: "We're discussing making changes so that it's easier for the developer to come on board.

"They would be building under licence which means they won't own the land, but would be granted a licence to build properties and would then purchase the land in parts.

"The developer wouldn't have to borrow millions to start the work and this would reduce their risk and make the deal more likely."

In the meantime the next phase of the environmental improvements to key routes through Greet's Green will see work starting on Wood Lane before the end of the summer.

A better outlook

The outlook for people who live on, or travel along, Claypit Lane has got much better recently.

Claypit Lane is part of long-term plans for development in the area, but until work gets underway, rather than leaving the development site as derelict land, it's been made to look more attractive.

Ian Jennings from Greet's Green Partnership's Housing Team, explained: "We've levelled the ground, put top soil on and grassed it over.

"It's making the site look significantly more attractive while we're awaiting its redevelopment and it's reduced the likelihood of anti-social behaviour and fly-tipping as it's more visible and open."

... and the streets are looking better too

Environmental work to Claypit Lane and some of the surrounding streets has not only left them looking better – it's also improved facilities for residents.

People living in Claypit Lane have benefited from Greet's Green Partnership's recent environmental improvements programme. Residents have enjoyed new boundary walls and security gates, new paving, parking bays, traffic calming measures and street lights.

Plus, they now look out over an attractive grassed area on the other side of Claypit Lane instead of 6ft high fences and derelict land.

In Hilton Street and Borwick Avenue, off-street car parking has been created to make the streets safer and neater for residents and visitors.

And in Sutton Crescent, residents' front gardens have been given a whole new look! Using a mixture of materials, colour schemes and patterns, gardens have been landscaped and transformed. Each one has been made slightly different so they all stand out.

For more information about the environmental work in Greet's Green, call Ian Jennings on 0121 532 6590.





for the Claypit Lane area

PARKING BOOST for the Children's Centre

More people are finding it easier to use Greets Green Children's Centre now that a temporary car park has been created as part of work to the nearby Claypit Lane clearance site.

Ian Jennings from Greets Green Partnership's Housing Team said: "There's been an issue with people accessing the centre because of parking problems. This new car park has made it safer and easier to get to and, as a result, more families are coming along to use the excellent facilities."

The ground has also been levelled and seeded nearby and high fences and

undergrowth have been removed to really open up the area.

Children's Centre Manager, Adam Cooper, added: "The new car park is excellent as we had such limited parking previously.

"Now it feels a lot more open and has made the centre more visible to local people. It's made a big difference to the centre and to people knowing we're here."

To find out about the activities and services offered for families with children aged 0-5, call the Children's Centre on 0121 612 5127.



EXTRACARE DEVELOPMENT MOVES ON

Plans to build West Bromwich's first Extra Care housing development right in the heart of Greets Green, are moving ahead.

Now that the plans have been drawn up and have gone to the Council's Planning Department, a 20 day public consultation period has been taking place. It's hoped they could be passed in August or September, with work potentially starting on site before the end of the year.

The Extra Care development will be built on the site of the former Meadows School in Coppice Street, and will create high-quality one or two bedroom homes in a community setting. The properties will be for people aged over 55, who will be able to rent them or buy through shared ownership.

Sandaljit Bains, Housing and Social Care Partnerships Development Manager with Sandwell Council, said: "No doubt, people will have already seen the plans advertised around the area. By the end of the year there should be some activity on the site as work really gets underway."

To view the plans for the development, visit the Council's website at www.sandwell.gov.uk and search for planning applications or contact Sandaljit Bains on 0121 569 5448.

RETHINK WEST BROMWICH

Do you recognise this logo?

You'll be seeing a lot more of it in the future as it's the new logo which represents the regeneration of West Bromwich town centre.

Rethink West Bromwich is an ambitious regeneration programme which is focused on creating sustained long term growth through the creation of more jobs, a better place to live, more and better homes, a focus on learning and skills and a place where people can access top quality leisure and retail facilities.

For more information please call the West Bromwich Regeneration Programme Office on 0121 569 5331.



FAMILIES GET TOGETHER

Nearly 200 families descended on Greets Green Children's Centre recently for a special Families Together Day.

The event was staged during the first National Family Week and saw children enjoying a bouncy castle and art and craft activities.

Gaganpreet Bains, Volunteer and

Training Co-ordinator at the centre, said: "Our aim was to bring families together and we had a really good turnout.

"Some of them didn't know much about the centre and were able to learn more about the opportunities and services we offer. It was a really successful event."

For more information about the Children's Centre, call 0121 612 5127.

CHILDMINDERS' GET TOGETHER

Greets Green Children's Centre is now offering the chance of a get together for anyone who looks after children for a living.

A new Childminders' Group has been set up and meets at the centre every Wednesday from 9.30-11.30am.

Early Years Worker Nicky Wilkins said: "We've introduced this stay and play session for local childminders and the children they look after. It's about positive play and enables childminders to meet others in the area because they don't get out so much."

The sessions are also open to childminders from outside the Greets Green area. To find out more, just go along or call Nicky on 0121 612 5127.

TRIPLE P FOR PARENTS

Greets Green Children's Centre is running a special course for parents who are having problems with their youngsters.

The Triple Ps course – Positive Parenting Programme – has already run during the summer and the next course starts in September. It takes place on Thursday mornings for four weeks with parents attending the centre, then another three weeks of contact over the phone, with a final celebration session at the centre.

"It's for parents who are experiencing unwanted behaviour from their children," explained Community Family Support Worker, Sophie Perkins.

"The course is aimed at helping parenting of children aged two to 12."

For more information, contact either Sophie Perkins, Gaganpreet Bains or Dwayne Phillips at Greets Green Children's Centre on 0121 612 5127.

INFORMATION AT YOUR FINGERTIPS

To find out what's happening across West Bromwich, simply log on to www.visitwestbrom.com

The website is packed with useful information such as an events guide, details of places to visit and information on local venues to eat, drink and shop. You can also find a listing of local places of worship, along with bus and rail information.

To find out more about what's on your doorstep, have a look at the site.

ALBION EMPIRE

EXPANDS AGAIN

A Greet's Green youngsters' football club is proving it's really on the ball having gained new sponsors and expanded again.

Greet's Green Albion FC was set up by the Hat-Trick project and just keeps on growing!

Coach and Manager, Steve Richards,

is pleased that Albion were approached by another team who wanted to play in the Sunday League. So, they've come under their wing and it means the team now effectively has:

- An under-10s team playing Sunday football
- Two under-10s teams playing on Saturdays

- An under-12s team playing Saturdays
- An under-14s team playing Saturdays

Plus, they've now picked up some sponsorship from two brothers who own the News Plus and Station News shops on Claypit Lane and opposite the bus garage. Their generous £300 has paid for a new kit which will feature advertising for the shops.

Rus Smith, who used to run the Hat-Trick project, and is now Community Education and Sports Development Manager at George Salter Collegiate Academy, has continued to help Greet's Green Albion FC while it's grown into such a successful club.

Steve explains: "If we need anything, Rus still helps us out. He's been fantastic – a guardian angel for the club!"

Greet's Green Albion FC practice at Guns Village School on Thursdays from 6-7pm, and Saturdays 10-11.30am. To find out more, call Steve Richards on 07948 892501.



competition corner

The answers to all the questions below can be found in this month's issue. Simply answer them correctly for a chance to win. Send your entry by **Friday 18th September 2009** 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.

1. What is the name of the successful Greet's Green football team? _____
2. What is the name of the company GGCE has just purchased? _____
3. How old is this issue's Community Hero? _____
4. What is the after-school club at Wood Lane Community Centre now called? _____
5. What is the phone number of Greet's Green's Children's Centre? _____

Please fill in your details using BLOCK CAPITALS.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Tel No. _____

Age: _____

Congratulations

to David Parkes, Harinder Kaur and Joan Shepherdson who each won a £10 voucher from the June/July competition.

This competition is open to all ages

KEEP HAVING YOUR SAY

Although Greet's Green Partnership is drawing to a close, there are still lots of ways to have your say on local issues. Three groups will be ensuring that people's voices are heard loud and clear and that action continues to be taken.

To find out more, call Jez Hall, West Bromwich Neighbourhood Manager on 0121 569 4640, Jackie Owen at GGCE on 0121 525 2772 or Ian Carson at Sandwell Homes on 0121 569 5336.



- **Neighbourhood Forum:**

The highly successful Greet's Green Neighbourhood Forums are now being run in partnership with West Bromwich Neighbourhood Team. They will take place on a quarterly basis and will continue to bring communities together to discuss and tackle local problems.

Forthcoming dates:

October 26th, Guns Village Primary School and January 25th, West Bromwich Town Hall, from 6.00pm.

- **GGCE Community Forum:**

This is a new forum which will encourage local people to look at what the issues are in Greet's Green and how residents can help to resolve them. The first Community Forum will be held in September and will meet every three months. The aim is for residents to decide what they want to focus on so that they can lead and shape the forum.

- **Sandwell Homes Tenants and Residents Association:**

The first meeting has now been held and a committee formed. The Association should start to meet regularly from September and will concentrate on issues affecting the local area.

Come along and get involved.

