

SMALL SITES PROJECT MAKES A BIG DIFFERENCE

FUNDED BY: Greets Green Partnership, with work undertaken by Sandwell Council and private contractors.

PROJECT BACKGROUND: In any community residents can become irritated by relatively small issues, such as broken fencing or unsightly areas of land – things they notice every day which make their community unattractive or unsafe. If these small issues aren't tackled, they can turn into big problems for local people.

Before the Small Sites project was launched, residents had no way of ensuring that problem areas in their neighbourhood would be addressed. A decision was taken by Greets Green Partnership to provide a mechanism and funding for small scale environmental and community safety improvements specifically requested by residents, to be carried out.

The project started in April 2006, with funding of £100,000 to run until March 2007. It proved so successful that the project was re-run for another year to

December 2008



Before and after images showing work undertaken to the rear driveway of properties in Cambridge Street.





Before and after images of the work undertaken to clear the embankments on Hamblett's Road.

March 2008. A further round of funding has also been agreed for this financial year ending in March 2009.

PROJECT DETAILS: In 2006-07 nearly 20 different schemes were completed to improve the environment and community safety in Greets Green, from pruning trees to clearing fly-tipping. In 2007-08 a further 15 schemes were completed, ranging from installing new fences and carrying out tidy-ups and resurfacing, to creating a school nature garden.

Simon Ware, Community Services Worker for Greets Green Partnership, said: "It doesn't sound a lot in the grand scheme of things, but the project has enabled us to complete nearly 35 projects which have all made a difference to residents. It's sorted out some long standing problems for people."

In each case, an organisation or individual is now responsible for maintaining the improvements, whether it be residents themselves or specific council departments such as environmental, transport or housing services.

All of the ideas for the projects came from local people and most were raised through the Neighbourhood Forum meetings. These monthly meetings, organised by Greets Green Partnership, give residents a chance to share their views on neighbourhood issues direct with the people who can take action. Representatives from key organisations such as the council, Police and housing services all attend the Forum meetings.

In addition to sorting out long standing issues for residents, the Small Sites project has had the added benefit of demonstrating to them the effectiveness of the local Neighbourhood Forum meetings. Simon said: "People have seen from the Small Sites project that the Forum meetings provide an opportunity



to get things done. They also enable residents to meet the people who can help them in the future. It gives them confidence that things can be sorted and can be improved.”

ACHIEVEMENTS: These are the improvements completed as part of the Small Sites project during 2007-08:

Railway Street - Fencing - Cost: £9,940 (£3k from West Bromwich Town Team): There had been problems with youths throwing stones from the Metro line below and remaining unseen due to the wooden fencing. This has been replaced with mesh fencing so residents can now see people hanging about on the path alongside the Metro track. There have been no reports of stones being thrown since.

Mason Street – Fencing - £4,024: Steel vertical bar fencing installed to provide additional security to a resident living at the end of Mason Street and to tackle anti-social behaviour.

Coyne Road - Fencing - £3,317: Fencing installed on top of a wall opposite the off-licence on Bromford Lane and at the rear of properties on Coyne Road. The site was frequented by all ages, drinking, littering, and damaging the brick work. The fencing deters people from sitting in the area and provides a feeling that the land there is for the residents of the properties.

Irvan Avenue - Bollards - £2,416: This work improves the look of the area and deters cars from illegal driving and also anti-social behaviour. Previous bollards were damaged, were convenient for people to sit on, and were of varying styles. The new bollards are called Lincoln bollards, stand one metre high, and look much better.

John Street Triangle - Tidy-Up - £5,000: Included cutting back trees and bushes, strimming back overgrown grass and removing weeds.

Beechwood Road - Driveway Clearance - £4,244: Clearance of overgrowth, which made the rear driveways of both sides of Beechwood Road unsightly and partially unusable. The work means residents can maintain the alleyways in future with minimum effort.

Hamblets Road - Environmental Improvements - £4,414: Overgrown foliage was brushing against cars and looking unsightly. The embankment has now been cleared, re-soiled, levelled off for mowing and re-seeded where necessary.



Greets Green Road – Delta Pools Improvement - £14,932: Phase 1 of a longer-term piece of work to eventually return the Delta Pools to their former glory with running water and attractive landscaping. Pools were drained, silt removed, the bottom of the pools cleaned up, drainage pipes unblocked, woodland areas cleaned and grass replaced.

Cordley Street – Fencing - £3,340: Galvanised fencing was installed at the boundary of a home in Cordley Street next to the bridge over the Metro line, following instances of suspected criminals and people causing anti-social behaviour hiding there. A number of other homes back on to the property's garden and are also gaining from this work.

Hayes Street – fencing - £3,205: Galvanised fencing has been installed at the back of the street, on the Metro side. This was a follow on from the Cordley Street fencing and means that fencing to the rear of properties on Cordley Street, Hayes Street and Butler Street, along one side of the Metro embankment from Cordley Street to Dudley Street, is now complete.

Whitehall Road allotments - earth removal and fencing - £6,145: Work has improved security at the Whitehall Road allotments site, where there has been the occasional theft from sheds. Earth has been removed to create a flat surface to install a 50m fence. There is also a 20m fence next to the church grounds alongside the Post Office.

Dudley Street - Environmental Improvements - £9,107: Overgrown hedges were obstructing the footway and trapping litter. A bush has been removed to improve tidiness and allow regular mowing and easier litter picking.

Guns Lane - Tarmac accessway – £11,300: The access to the rear of Guns Lane properties and garages has been improved by filling in potholes and adding fresh Tarmac.

Cambridge Street - Tarmac driveway – £15,100: The rear driveway to properties on Cambridge Street was a dirt track, and the work saw soil and grass removed, the surface prepared and Tarmac put down.

PROJECT IN ACTION:

Wasteland transformed into school garden

Children at Lodge Primary School are looking forward to having their very own nature garden thanks to the Small Sites project in Greets Green. It follows requests from residents to tidy up a piece of overgrown land, which had been



a magnet for rubbish and fly tipping. Urban Heart, who owned the land, cleared rubble and undergrowth, and the Small Sites project then provided £5,938 to complete the work.

This has included removing earth and lowering the school wall so children can access the garden from the playground, as well as installing new fencing, pathways and a gate. The school will now have full responsibility for the garden.

Community Services Worker Simon Ware, of Greets Green Partnership, said: “Not only have we done the tidy-up for residents, we’ve also created a sustainable solution for the future which is providing a benefit to the school as well.”

Stan Simms, who lives in Lodge Road and is a neighbour and governor of Lodge Primary School, as well as a representative on the Board of Greets Green Partnership, had been complaining about the site for a number of years and finally got action taken by attending his local Neighbourhood Forum and raising the issue there.



Children at Lodge Primary School are delighted with their new nature garden thanks to the Small Sites project.

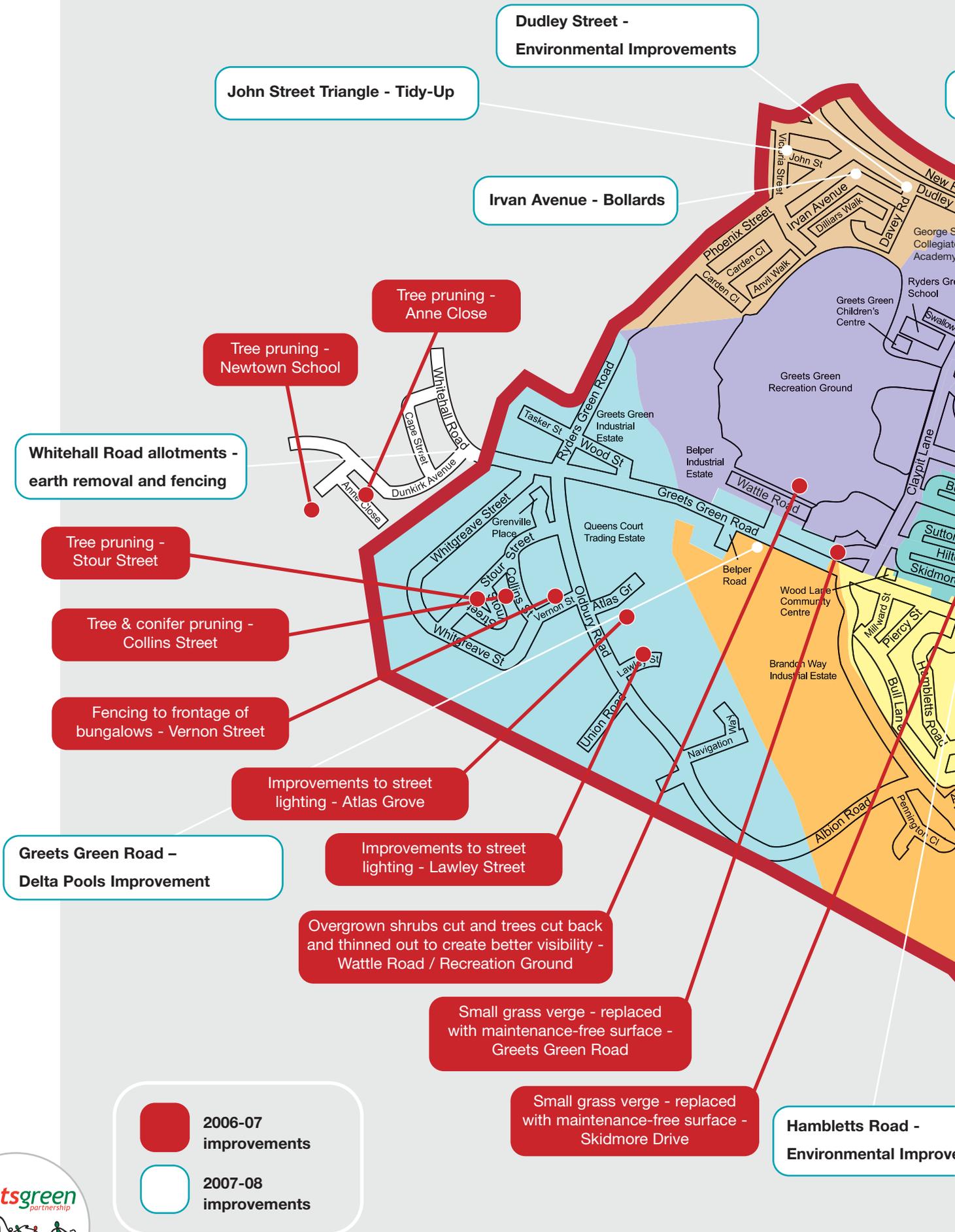
Stan said: “We’ve always had problems with that patch of land. For one reason or another people used to dump all kinds of things on there – at one time there was even asbestos, and we’ve had rats as well. The school is nearby and it’s not healthy for the kids. I’m really pleased something has finally been done, and they’ve done it lovely really.”

Children from nursery and reception age upwards are looking forward to growing plants in the garden and using it for activities such as science projects.

Head Teacher James Pearce said: “It’s the only non-Tarmac area we’ve got on the site which the children can use, so it’s a great added bonus for the school. We’ve got a greenhouse in the play ground and can use the two together for all sorts of things.”



Small Sites improvements



Hayes Street – fencing

Clearing and pruning of bushes and shrubbery - Mason Street Walkway

Cordley Street – Fencing

Mason Street – Fencing

Clearing and pruning of bushes and shrubbery - Guns Lane Walkway to Mason Street (rear of Turner Street)

Small grass verge replaced with maintenance-free surface - Richard Street

Railway Street - Fencing

Tree pruning and planting - Grange Road

Guns Lane - Tarmac accessway

Nature Garden for Lodge Primary School

Small grass verge - replaced with maintenance-free surface - Izens Road and Victoria Street junction

Beechwood Road - Driveway Clearance

Small grass verge - replaced with maintenance-free surface

Cambridge Street - Tarmac driveway

Renewing of surface to access way leading to garages at rear of properties on Oak Road

Coyne Road - Fencing

ements



FACTS & FIGURES:

- The original Small Sites project saw 20 projects completed during 2006-07.
- The work undertaken through the project has ranged from tree pruning that cost just £51 to tarmacing a dirt track at the rear of properties in Cambridge Street, which cost around £15,000.
- 15 environmental and community improvement schemes were completed when the Small Sites project was re-launched during 2007-08.
- By April 2008, £200,000 had been invested in tackling improvements through the project.
- A further round of funding has been agreed to continue the project for this financial year, ending in March 2009.

Contact: For further information about the Small Sites project, contact Simon Ware, Community Services Worker at Greets Green Partnership, on 0121 532 1985.

Greets Green Partnership was awarded £56 million in 2000 to deliver a 10 year regeneration programme under the Government's New Deal for Communities (NDC) initiative. It has funded over 340 projects throughout the area, covering community services, crime & community safety, health, housing & urban form and jobs & skills. The Partnership area, which is adjacent to West Bromwich Town Centre, is home to just over 12,400 residents living in 4,900 households.

For permission to publish this case study and to request photographs, please call Brian McKinstrie, Greets Green Partnership's Communications & PR Manager on freephone 0800 953 0215 or email brian_mckinstrie@sandwell.gov.uk

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