

GETTING ACTIVE IN GREET'S GREEN

FUNDED BY: The Active Lifestyles project, launched in July 2006, is funded by Greet's Green Partnership and sponsored by Sandwell Primary Care Trust (PCT). The project has been such a success that when Partnership funding comes to an end in September 2009, the work will be mainstreamed and entirely funded by Sandwell PCT, ensuring it can continue into the future and be rolled out to other areas.

PROJECT BACKGROUND: The Active Lifestyles project was launched in Greet's Green to develop, implement and evaluate physical activity projects across the area. The overall aim is to encourage residents to take the active choice and enjoy physical activity.

Since Nathan Moore was appointed Active Lifestyles Co-ordinator, his work in the community has made such a difference to the lifestyles of local people that the PCT has agreed to continue the work of the project into the future and roll it out across Sandwell.

Nathan says: "This is great news as 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."

December 2008



Active Lifestyles Co-ordinator, Nathan Moore (centre) with his team of Community Coaches and Champions.





Children's holiday activity programmes at George Salter Collegiate Academy, offer a wide range of sports from football and cricket to fencing and trampolining.

PROJECT DETAILS: National figures revealed only 40% of men and 25% of women do enough physical activity to benefit their health. In Greet's Green, these figures were even lower and, bearing in mind the benefits of physical activity for health, the need for the project was clear.

By increasing physical activity levels, the Active Lifestyles Programme contributes to local and national government and NHS strategies and targets for improving health and tackling health inequalities.

This includes the 'Tackling Major Killers' priority within the Health Theme at Greet's Green Partnership to:

- Reduce the death rate from cancer in people under 75 by 20% by 2010
- Reduce the death rate from heart disease in people under 75 by 40% by 2010

Prior to the Active Lifestyles project, Greet's Green had benefited from an Active Communities Officer funded by Sport England. However, this project was too tightly focused on young people and sport rather than the community as a whole.

In April 2005, an Active Lifestyles Advisory Group was formed to take on and broaden this work by looking at physical activity for all ages. The group included local residents and representatives from community centres, Sandwell Council, Sandwell Leisure Trust, Sandwell PCT, Greet's Green Partnership and West Bromwich Albion Football Club.

They commissioned a mapping exercise to evaluate existing provision and identify any gaps and barriers which prevented people from being active. They also developed a Strategic Active Lifestyles framework and the Active Lifestyles project was born.

Since July 2006, the Active Lifestyles project has been working with local people to develop activities suitable for their needs, and to raise awareness about opportunities for exercise and the importance of it on our health.

The project involves local residents, community organisations, schools, voluntary and statutory organisations. A key strand of work has been to train and employ local people as 'community champions / trainers' to promote and deliver physical activity in Greet's Green.



There has also been an Active Lifestyles Community Fund to give financial support to small projects and local activities for all ages, for example to assist with providing a football kit or gym equipment.

The Active Lifestyles programme has had four key areas of work:

- 1 Young people (school-based activities, after school, non-school, and family)
- 2 Communities (family, men’s health, women’s health and healthy workplaces)
- 3 BME communities (culturally sensitive work)
- 4 Older people (Active Sandwell programme and the former Healthier and Safer Older Age project)

Nathan’s post will be funded by the PCT from 2009, but before then his role in Greets Green is changing as he’ll be concentrating more on promoting active and healthy living among adults rather than all age groups. The work he started with young people has now been taken on by the Community Education and Sports Development department at George Salter Collegiate Academy, which will work with its own pupils and those in the area’s five primary schools. This is a good example of successful partnership working.

ACHIEVEMENTS: The Active Lifestyles project is achieving many successes as it actively works to deliver its key aims to:

- Increase access to physical activity in Greets Green
- Increase participation in physical activity
- Increase the number of local physical activity projects
- Increase the number of people who can deliver physical activity sessions at a local level
- Improve levels of health and fitness
- Increase uptake of mainstream services



West Bromwich Albion’s ‘Baggy Bird’ helped launch the Active Lifestyles project at the Greets Green Christmas Festival in December 2006.

The project was officially launched at the Greets Green Christmas Festival in December 2006. It took over two marquees and included Badminton England demonstrations and West Bromwich Albion penalty shoot outs. The launch was a huge success with good attendance and participation from residents.

Since its launch, the project has become well established in Greets Green. Awareness of the project was successfully raised via leaflets, promotional materials such as kit bags, water bottles, pens, children’s puzzles and frisbees, and attendance at local events.





Older residents are enjoying their 'Get moving on Mondays' exercise class at the YMCA. Activities include indoor bowls, table tennis, badminton, short indoor cricket and mini circuits.



Ladies only sports at the Guru Nanak Community Centre, including aerobics, gym, badminton and stretch and tone sessions.

The mapping exercise proved useful in highlighting where there were gaps in activities and barriers such as transport and cultural issues. This led to targeted action in the following key areas:

- Young people – work has been ongoing to develop culturally sensitive physical activity sessions and team sports which would appeal to young girls from all BME groups. Health promotion materials have been produced which appeal to young people in Greets Green
- BME communities – the project has helped to create more single sex classes for specific BME communities to cater for culturally sensitive requirements, and to incorporate the use of interpreters in physical activity projects on a voluntary basis
- Older people – there has been a widening of the range of activities on offer in Greets Green that appeal to older men. Activities at local community centres, church groups and other existing groups have been promoted

In addition to the Co-ordinator, the Active Lifestyles project employs two community champions to focus on the delivery of sessions for people aged 50 and over, plus two community coaches employed through George Salter Collegiate Academy.

Between the five members of staff, 21 hours of physical activity is now being delivered every week in Greets Green in addition to other services. The project also calls upon continued support from volunteers or other project co-ordinators / workers to deliver events or sessions. Active Lifestyles has three regular volunteers who support the EXTEND classes, tea dances and Active Lifestyles Advisory

Group. Active Sandwell and Agewell community champions also offer valued time to Active Lifestyles services.

The project is also successfully working in partnership with a number of key organisations in the community, including:

- George Salter Collegiate Academy
- West Bromwich & District YMCA



- West Bromwich Albion Football Club
- Newtown Primary School
- Wood Lane Community Centre
- Sandwell PCT's Physical Activity Team

Nathan Moore, Active Lifestyles Co-ordinator, says: "I think the project has been so successful because of the partnership links within the area. The schools have played a huge part in the success of the project, as have the links with other community organisations like the YMCA, the Yemeni Community Association and the African Caribbean community."

Nathan believes the project illustrates that many people want to be fitter, they just need an opportunity: "People in the area have really embraced the different activities. Once people have been given access to services, whether it's ladies' only groups, tea dances or walks, they have really made the most of them."

PROJECT IN ACTION: The Active Lifestyles project supports numerous activities and opportunities to enable people in Greets Green to lead healthier lifestyles. Activities cater for all ages and include:

- Tea dances at the Town Hall
- The Social Swimmers scheme which enables women from Greets Green to attend weekly 'Ladies Only' swimming sessions at Tipton pool
- Children's holiday activity programmes at George Salter Collegiate Academy, offering a wide range of sports, from football and cricket to fencing and trampolining
- Community coaches delivering sports in schools – whose work is now being mainstreamed by George Salter Collegiate Academy and Ryders Green Primary School
- Ladies only sports at the Guru Nanak Community Centre, including aerobics, gym, badminton and stretch and tone sessions
- Sessions at the YMCA for older residents
- EXTEND classes at Lodge Road and Wood Lane Community Centres for older people or people who are less mobile

Plus, more than 21 local groups have benefited from the Active Lifestyles Community Fund, which has just been re-launched in Greets Green for a third year, making available grants of up to £250 during 2008-09. Any group can apply provided it promotes physical activity in some way. The latest funding follows previous grants of £1,000 made available by the Active Lifestyles Fund



Local women of all ages and cultural backgrounds are enjoying swimming in a 'women only' environment.



in its first year, and the £500 grants made available last year. The money can be used by groups to pay a coach or instructor, to hire rooms, for the purchase of equipment, or to promote a club or activity. Activities supported have covered all kinds of sports and age groups, from ladies' aerobics to local football teams and older people's clubs and many are still continuing as a result of the funding.

'Green gym' gets grant boost

Swan Village Social Club is among the groups in Greets Green to have benefited from the Active Lifestyles Fund. The club secured a £500 grant

for its Gardening Club last year which went towards a greenhouse, propagators, pots and tools.

Roy Jackson from the club said: "Everyone participates in growing produce and whatever we grow, the group eats or takes home, and some of it goes to our Breakfast Club or Bingo evening.

"It gives them something to participate in and a few members are really keen and knowledgeable. It's been really good and a very welcome recreation for them."

Produce has included tomatoes, leeks, beans, peas, beetroots, cabbages, radishes, strawberries and raspberries. Research shows that gardening can be a great way of keeping fit – it provides moderate exercise in the fresh air and can help to improve both physical and mental health.

Yemeni community gain mini gym

The Yemeni Community Association has launched its very own mini gym to help make healthier lifestyles more accessible to its members. The gym includes treadmills, bicycles, steppers and weights and opened in Spring 2008.

It was funded through a £5,000 grant from a charitable trust and extra pieces of equipment such as hand weights were bought thanks to the Active Lifestyles Fund.

The fund provided a £1,000 grant in its first year to boost activities for men and then £500 in its second year for activities for women, including extend



Swan Village Social Club secured a £500 grant for its Gardening Club which went towards a greenhouse, propagators, pots and tools.



classes for elderly ladies and circuit training for young women.

YCA Health Development Officer, Afrah Muflihi, who is part of Sandwell PCT's Community Health Network, says: "It's more of a culturally sensitive gym which the community can access.

"The equipment is the same but this gym, because it helps to overcome language and cultural barriers, enables elderly people and women in particular to use it. It's sensitive to their language needs and we've got women only and men only slots. It's really proving popular."



The new gym at the YCA in Greets Green includes extra pieces of equipment such as hand weights thanks to the Active Lifestyles fund.

She says none of the elderly members of the community would have accessed a mainstream gym because of the language barriers. The gym also caters for young people aged over 14. The charges are minimal for YCA members and about 50 people use it on a regular basis.

FACT FILE

The Department of Health recommends that adults should participate in moderate physical activity for at least a total of 30 minutes five days a week. It also recommends that children under the age of 16 should be participating in at least one hour of moderate physical activity every day.

Increasing activity levels contributes towards the prevention and management of over 20 conditions and diseases and:

- It increases life expectancy and quality of life in these extra years
- It is estimated that 33% of coronary heart disease, 25% of strokes and type 2 diabetes could be avoided with regular physical activity
- It is estimated that 50% of hip fractures could be avoided with physical activity. Of 14 people who attend a gentle exercise class, one fall will be prevented
- Regular physical activity at an appropriate intensity has been associated with approximately a 20% reduction in mortality following a heart attack
- It also reduces the risk of colon cancer by 50% and breast cancer by 30%
- Physical activity can reduce blood pressure in approximately 75% of those suffering from hypertension and can prevent people developing hypertension
- Currently 1 in 5 people are obese and 1 in 3 are overweight. Physical activity has a massive impact on weight management



- Physical activity has a positive effect on mental health and it has been documented to have as much effect as medication on mild depression
- Physical activity is a key tool to decrease social isolation and exclusion

Baseline data in 2002 revealed that 14% of Greets Green residents felt so down in the dumps that nothing could cheer them up. By 2006, this figure had reduced dramatically to 4%. Again in 2002, 12% of residents did not do any sort of physical activity for 20 minutes at a time. By 2006, this had reduced to 9%. Both these figures show that the Active Lifestyles project is a 'big win' with regards to improving residents' quality of life and getting people active.

If you would like to know more about the Active Lifestyles project, contact:

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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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