

THE BIG CLEAN UP BEGINS

FUNDED BY: The Cleaner Environment project was launched in April 2006 and Greets Green Partnership is funding the project up to December 2008. Work is carried out and managed by Groundcare at Sandwell Council and the Council has made a commitment to continue with the new way of working that this project introduces.

PROJECT BACKGROUND: Surveys of Greets Green residents revealed that cleaning up the area and getting rid of litter and rubbish, are a top priority for local people of all ages. There are already long term problems with a build-up of rubbish in the area and the redevelopment work currently underway has meant that more fly-tippers have come into Greets Green to dump rubbish. This can at times be mistaken for debris from building and demolition work.

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The Cleaner Environment Project is cleaning-up Greets Green, tackling litter, rubbish and graffiti.



So, the Cleaner Environment Project was, therefore, created to re-shape and pilot a new way of providing the services that tackles the problems of rubbish and fly-tipping above and beyond normal ground maintenance work. A dedicated, locally focused multi-skilled team has been set-up, based on good practice from a project first developed in Bristol.

PROJECT IN ACTION: Although the project was only launched in April, Greets Green residents are already getting used to seeing the four-strong Cleaner Environment Project team out and about around the area. The team comprises Steve Alford, Gary Pate, Mark Ward and Martin Jones, and one of their big strengths is their local knowledge.



Out and about ... the Greets Green Cleaner Environment team.

Mark Mason, Senior Operations Manager for Groundcare, said: “There are several avenues through which we hear of local environmental problems that need tackling. Steve Alford has worked in the area for three to four years now and knows a lot of people who contact him to tell him about various issues. With the redevelopment work underway, we also get reports from the Council’s Housing department.

“We’ve also got Andy Harthill who oversees the team and his background is in enforcement. His role is to build links with local people through groups, forums and schools, so we get as much information as possible about where action is needed and, at the same time, promote a greater awareness and understanding of the problems through a programme of Waste Education.”

While the Cleaner Environment Project team knows a lot about what is needed in the area, the people playing the greatest role in the success of the



project will be the public. The best way for the team to hear about areas which need special attention is through local residents who already know what needs doing.

The team has been employed on a full-time basis to work throughout the Greets Green area and to support what the Council's Grounds Maintenance team is already doing. Currently, the team is concentrating on clearing areas of debris and fly-tipping, as well as responding to residents' requests and concerns.

As the project was developed to meet residents' concerns, it's important that local people are fully involved in shaping it over the coming months and years. A steering group of local people is currently being set up to guide the work of the team and ensure it gets results where they're needed.

Rohit Mistry, Neighbourhood Manager at Greets Green Partnership, said: "We've already got a number of residents who've offered to join the steering group, so it should be set up very soon."

ACHIEVEMENTS: Although it's still early days, Rohit, says: "People are starting to see a change already and the project has only just begun."

The aim is that residents will get used to seeing the same four men on their streets and estates, day in, day out, and know that action is being taken to clean up Greets Green.

"Part of the group's role will be to tip off the Groundcare team about litter problems, but we're also envisaging that they'll be given training to monitor standards in terms of environmental cleanliness, so that Greets Green will become as clean and tidy as other areas UK-wide."

Rohit Mistry, Neighbourhood Manager
at Greets Green Partnership



In the first two weeks of the project alone, a staggering 44 tonnes of rubbish were taken out of the area and targeted clean-ups of rubbish and litter have taken place in areas including Wattle Road, Claypit Lane and around the Rec.

Fly-tipping gets sorted

Pay Roll Administrator, Pat Radford, who lives with her son, had problems with fly-tipping in an access way at the back of her home which provides a way through to two other properties. She said: "Somebody dumped three divans, a settee, three fridges, a cabinet and more rubbish at the back of our houses."

Having reported the problem in the access way between Dartmouth Street and Duke Street to Greets Green Neighbourhood Wardens, it was passed to the Council's Environmental Health department. But she was told that because it was private land, she'd have to pay to have the rubbish taken away.

Pat even wrote to her local MP and raised the issue at her local neighbourhood forum, where through support from Greets Green staff and their links with the Cleaner Environment Project the problem is being resolved.

She said: "Support from Greets Green Partnership via the Neighbourhood Forum was very proactive and got the situation sorted. The Cleaner Environment Project has agreed to move the rubbish as a one off and Greets Green Partnership is also going to get a gate put on the access way to stop it happening again. We're just waiting for the work to be done and it should hopefully cure the problem. "I can't fault the team with the help they've given us in sorting it out."

For more information about the Cleaner Environment Project, call Rohit Mistry, Neighbourhood Manager at Greets Green Partnership, on freephone 0800 953 0215.

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 more than 100 projects throughout the area, covering community empowerment, crime & community safety, education & lifelong learning, health, housing & urban form, jobs & enterprise and neighbourhood management. The Partnership area, which is adjacent to West Bromwich Town Centre, is home to just over 12,400 residents living in 4,900 households.

To find out more, call Greets Green Partnership on freephone 0800 953 0215.



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