

BRIGHT IDEA FOR BUSINESSES

FUNDED BY: Greets Green Partnership who work with Business Link to provide vital support and information for people setting out in business.

PROJECT BACKGROUND: Many people might have a bright idea for a new business but struggle to get it off the ground due to a lack of confidence, vision/focus and persuasive credibility resulting in an initial inability to raise the necessary finance. Others may already have a fledgling firm but need a helping hand to develop or expand it.

Since September 2005, Greets Green Partnership has been helping people turn their business plans into a success story by offering business Start Up Grants. The project is contributing towards developing a thriving local business environment and creating job opportunities for local people. One of the Partnership's key aims is to help Greets Green become a place where people choose to live and work by 2010.

PROJECT IN ACTION: The Business Start Up scheme provides Start Up Grants of up to £1,500 to Greets Green residents who are looking to launch their own business, or who have done so in the last 12 months. The project also comprises Business Development Grants of up to £2,000 which are available for established Greets Green firms more than a year old to help with areas such as equipment, reaching quality standards and training.

In addition to a financial helping hand, each business also receives ongoing business support from a Business Link advisor

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**Judith Bayliss, Business Link
Business Advisor**



based at Greets Green Partnership. They help people to identify their markets, look at cash flow forecasts, provide guidance on relevant business issues and business training. Free membership of the Black Country Chamber of Commerce is also available for a year through the project so that local businesses can network and share best practice ideas.

Business Link Business Advisor, Judith Bayliss, says: "It's not just a case of giving out the money, the project is about enabling local businesses to become sustainable by helping them to access a wide range of business help and advice.

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The Business Start Up project will run until August 2008.

For more information about Business Start Up or Development Grants, call Greets Green Partnership on freephone 0800 953 0215.

Passing The Test

Phil Turburfield from Margaret Street is enjoying complete freedom having just set up his own driving instructor franchise.

"I worked for the prison service for 18 years but in the end I didn't want to be managed anymore," he says. "I thought about all the things I liked and was good at and decided to begin an 18 month course with LDC, a nationally recognised driving school.

Achievements:

Although the project was only launched in September 2005, by the start of 2006...

- More than 50 local businesses had already benefited from the project.
- A total of 13 new businesses had received pre-start up support and Business Start Up Grants.
- A further 10 local business people are about to start receiving support to turn their business ideas into reality.
- 21 established businesses are receiving business support and Business Development Grants.
- A further 10 businesses are set to receive support.



“Business Link were excellent. They guided me through the whole process from start to finish and made me realise that I could do it. I also received a Business Start Up Grant which covered part of the cost of the course.

“I’m now fully qualified and already have about eight pupils and I’m ready to take on more. I’ve driven for 32 years and was a category A driver / navigator for the prison service so I’ve got quite a lot of experience.

“I’m absolutely loving it. It’s completely flexible and it’s nice to say ‘I think I’ll have Tuesday off this week’ and not have to ask anybody!”

Mailing Firm Expands

When Dave Harbach’s fledgling mailing business took off, he and his staff found themselves facing the task of sealing thousands of envelopes by hand.

He turned to Greets Green Partnership for a Business Start Up Grant and now has a sealing machine to help his company, Midland Mailing, continue to grow.

He explains: “I set the business up with my wife, Heather. Myself, and most of the people who work for us used to be employed by Kenrick and Jefferson on the High Street. When they closed down, I worked for a printer and he asked me for advice on mailings. He said he hadn’t got space to do them, so I said if I got the premises, would he use me to do the mailings? When he said yes, it was all systems go!

“We successfully applied for a Business Start Up Grant from Greets Green Partnership to buy an envelope sealing machine. We used to have to seal mailings by hand but now we can use the machine.

“The grant has enabled us to take on more work – and more staff. Most are local Greets Green residents who were long term unemployed. We’ve been very successful.”



Cash Boost For Caterer

Local mum, Ruth Riman, decided it was “now or never” and turned her dream of running a catering business into a reality with help from a £1,500 Business Start Up Grant.

Ruth originally started out by providing buffets at George Salter High School, offering the catering for teacher training days, breakfast and other meetings.

She now runs a café at George Salter High School called Snax 4 U which provides an alternative to the school canteen for staff and pupils. She also has her own outside catering business called Buffets by Ruth, for events such as weddings and business meetings.



Ruth says: “I’d already had a lot of meetings with Business Link to learn the ins and outs of business. I then decided to apply for a Business Start Up Grant for different equipment. I needed prep tables, chiller units, cookers - it all mounts up. Being a new business there’s money going out all the time, so it was really helpful to get the grant.

“This is something I’ve always wanted to do.”

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 is currently funding more than 100 projects throughout the area, covering community empowerment, crime and community safety, education and lifelong learning, health, housing and urban form, and jobs and enterprise. 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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