

greetsgreen

COMMUNITY MAGAZINE

APRIL/MAY 2007



**CRIME IS
DOWN**
Police get on
their bikes



Issue 29

Front cover: The Greets Green Crime Fighting Team patrols the canals on bikes.

The Greets Green magazine is distributed to every household in the New Deal for Communities area, and to other NDCs nationally. If you live in the Greets Green NDC area and do not receive a copy then please call us on **freephone 0800 953 0215**.

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এ তথ্যাদি অনুবাদে আপনার সাহায্যের প্রয়োজন হলে, দয়া করে ইংরেজী জানেন এমন একজন বন্ধু বা আত্মীয়কে আমাদেরকে 0800 953 0215 এ নাম্বারে ফোন করতে বলুন।

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

ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਸ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਦਾ ਤਰਜਮਾ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਸਹਾਇਤਾ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਕਰਨੀ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਅੰਗ੍ਰੇਜ਼ੀ ਬੋਲਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਆਪਣੇ ਕਿਸੇ ਦੋਸਤ ਜਾਂ ਆਪਣੇ ਪਰਿਵਾਰ ਦੇ ਕਿਸੇ ਮੈਂਬਰ ਨੂੰ 0800 953 0215 ਤੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਟੈਲੀਫੋਨ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਕਹੋ।

اگر ان معلومات کے ترجمے میں آپ کو مدد درکار ہو تو انگریزی بولنے والے کسی دوست یا گھر کے کسی فرد سے کہیں کہ وہ ہم سے 0800 953 0215 پر بات کرے۔

ان رغبتہم بالحصول علی مساعده علی ترجمه هذه المعلومات يرجى ان تطلبوا من صديق او من احد افراد الأسرة ممن يتحدثون اللغة الانجليزية الاتصال بنا علی الهاتف 0800 953 0215 .

welcome

to issue 29 of the Greets Green Magazine.

When there are so many opportunities on your doorstep, why not make Spring the time to learn a new skill? Read our feature on Sandwell College on page 4 and don't forget to look out for details of all the Adult Learners Week taster sessions which will be happening in May. Get the whole family involved!

Do you often wish your club or group had more money so that it could offer even more for members? The Greets Green Community Fund may be able to help. Grants are available and it's really easy to apply. See our feature on the centre pages about some of the local groups who have already benefitted from a grant, then pick up the phone and ask for your application form.

The Community Fund is just one of the many successful projects which Greets Green Partnership has funded. Turn to page 15 to remember some of the other changes the Partnership has made across the area. What a difference!

Happy reading!

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Learning for life

Do you feel your life would be improved if you could learn a new skill? It might make you happier, make your family's life easier or it could enable you to get the job you want or help you to move to a better job.

Sandwell College has many types of courses and training opportunities for all age groups on offer. And if you fancy having a go at something new in an informal setting, Adult Learners Week could be right up your street. Staff can help you if you decide to move on to proper training. Start learning today!

ADULT LEARNERS WEEK
Saturday 19th to Friday 25th May

TRY A FREE TASTER SESSION

The Greets Green Adult and Community Learning Team is organising a number of events during the week with the themes:

- Skills for Employment
- Skills for Life
- Family Learning

Community Development and Marketing Officer, Marcia Roberts-Grey, explains: "Under the Skills for Life theme, you could try out Mehndi or a short computer session where you learn how to log on to the internet and buy things on ebay.

"Skills for Employment will include learning how to write a CV or create a small business plan, and Family Learning will involve sessions such as doing cookery together, keeping fit and using a computer together."

i All taster sessions are free and will be held at a number of community and learning venues in Greets Green. Look out for details in the Library or call Marcia Roberts-Gray on 0121 525 6671.

It's never too late to learn something new and in Greetings Green there are lots of opportunities.

We've Succeeded!

June Monk (pictured right) has a message for anyone who thinks they can't go back to college: "Don't make the same mistake as I did for years. You're never too old to learn."

The 50 year old married mum of three, who lives in Greetings Green, was a cleaner with no confidence in her abilities and who felt she was too old to learn.

When her children left home, she didn't like to see the computer unused so June plucked up the courage to



enrol on a basic CLAIT course at Sandwell College's Smethwick campus. She then went on to do the advanced course at Tipton.

She said: "I thought I would be in a class of people who were much younger than me and more in tune with technology, but that was not the case. I was surprised to see the other learners were also my age and in fact there was a couple who were 70+ on the same course."

With her new-found confidence and knowledge of computers, June successfully applied for a job as a library assistant.

She says: "Gaining new skills doesn't just help you get a new job or a promotion at work, it also gives you great personal satisfaction."

Dorothy Wheeler, aged 81, was presented with the European Computer Driving Licence Level 1 certificate and has signed up for Level 2.

Her daughter bought her a computer which prompted her to enrol on an RSA word processing course at Sandwell College. She passed Levels 1 and 2, then moved to the ITNOW Centre in Oldbury to study for her EDCL certificate.

She said: "It's been fantastic. I've got so into my studies that I've decided to come back for more."

Seven students from Sandwell College successfully completed a 13 week Police Access course - a pre-recruitment course which can help them into the force.

One student, **Semina Nokes**, aged 21, said: "This certificate is my ticket to the next stage in the recruitment process - a step forward. I'm really chuffed."

College provides excellence and success

Sandwell College is at the heart of learning and training in the area for school leavers and adults looking to top up their qualifications. But many people might still be unaware of the huge range of courses and training it provides, and the facilities it has to help people improve their skills.

Sandwell College has campuses on the High Street in West Bromwich, and also at Oldbury and Smethwick, with about 10,300 students in total.

Along with its huge range of subjects for 16-18 year olds, the College also offers full time, part-time and evening courses for mature students. It has its own Workplus section, offering work-based learning support including apprenticeships and NVQs, and runs courses at many venues in the community including schools, temples, church halls and mosques.

The College's mission is to provide 'excellence and success for learners' and it is working to encourage more people from all sections of the community to return to learning, and to meet the training needs of employers in the area.

Help for students

Sandwell College has excellent support services in place to help people return to learning. There is a day nursery for students with children at the West Bromwich campus, catering for youngsters up to five years, with Summer play schemes for children up to eight.

The Welfare Service offers help for students with loans and grants, personal problems, benefits, housing, childcare, and visas for international students. There is a counselling service for students needing support and help for students with dyslexia.

Student Liaison works with the Student Union to organise recreational and social events and help improve student facilities.



OPEN DAY Sandwell College Open Day Saturday 23rd June from 10.00am to 2.00pm

There will be live shows from the performing arts students, cooking demonstrations, a chance to create your own portrait in the photography/digital imaging studios or try out manicures or nail art, and tours of the business/IT suites. You can also test your strength with the sports studies students!

i Come along on the day or call Sandwell College on 0800 622 006 to find out more.



Workers have their health checked

Around 100 workers from companies in the Albion Road Business Improvement District (BID) turned out to have their health checked on 14th and 15th March.

Local organisations have teamed up to address healthcare issues among the local workforce and the response has been overwhelming.

The March event, "Carry On Working in West Brom," included a team of health professionals from the Healthy Hearts Institute at Sandwell Medical Research Unit, screening workers for heart disease, diabetes and strokes.

It was supported by several local organisations including Greets Green Partnership, Workwell, Sandwell Primary Care Trust, Healthy Hearts Institute, M&T solutions, as well as local businesses, in particular the Albion BID Co. Ltd.

A mobile health unit was parked at different locations, and everyone who ventured inside was given a goodie bag containing a pedometer, hand warmer, stress ball and health information. Workers had their height, weight and waist measured, cholesterol blood vessels and glucose checked and blood pressure taken.

Sally Sandel, Greets Green Partnership's Health Theme Leader, said: "The team worked out people's risk of having a heart attack in the next 10 years and referred anyone with a high risk to their GP and other health professionals."

Marie Carroll, Deputy Manager at Workwell, added: "This programme has been a great way to reach out to employees near their place of work, especially among hard to reach groups such as older men in manufacturing and engineering."

i If you would like more information, call Workwell on 0121 557 4733.



'PLANNING' TO RETIRE...

One of the most influential figures in creating a brighter future for Greetings Green retired from Sandwell Council in February.

John Harden, Planning Development Manager, was a key player in getting the green light for the redevelopment work in Greetings Green, which is improving the area for residents and helping to attract new investment.

John has worked for Sandwell Council since 1975, with a focus on Greetings Green in particular over the last 7-8 years. When John first started working with Greetings Green Partnership there had only been five meaningful local planning applications in the previous 20 years – as John puts it, 'everything was just passing Greetings Green by'.

Since then, Greetings Green has been put back on the map, making it a place people want to invest their time and money in, and a place in which people take pride.

John explains: "The aim was to put the community at the heart of it all and hopefully that's how residents feel."

For John, working with the people of Greetings Green has been one of the most rewarding aspects of his work. He said: "All in all it was a very rewarding career, particularly working with the Greetings Green programme and the people here. I've enjoyed getting to know the Community Reps and some of the people in the area, and working with them to try and find things that are going to work for them."



Greetings Green Partnership's Housing Theme Leader, David Guy said: "John's been an enjoyable person to work with. Instead of being put off by problems, he just focused on getting them sorted."

"Residents know and love him and Greetings Green has been his life for the last few years. We wish him well in his retirement."

Roger declares!

When Roger Cunningham retires from Greetings Green Partnership at the end of April he will leave behind a legacy of improved learning opportunities for all ages.

In his role as Education and Lifelong Learning Theme Leader, Roger brought with him a wealth of experience after 18 years working as a Head Teacher in Birmingham. He came to Sandwell as a School Improvement Advisor in 2000, before moving to Greetings Green Partnership in 2003.

Roger said: "I soon discovered working in Sandwell was very different from Birmingham. I've certainly enjoyed working with the people, the schools and the different organisations. My background had always been in schools, so I've had a real widening of my horizons in Greetings Green, dealing with everything from early learning to adult education and beyond."

Roger is proud to leave behind a number of achievements – all of Greetings Green's primary schools have improved and George Salter High School is now the best performing secondary school of any regeneration area in the country. A project to build community learning centres for all ages has also been completed.

He is now planning to work as a part time advisor to nine schools in Somerset and devote more time to his love of cricket and



classical music. Combining both hobbies, he commentates on cricket matches and concerts for hospital radio.

Phil Watts, Head of Extended and Inclusive Learning, at Sandwell Council, said: "Roger has made a significant contribution to Sandwell. His skills and knowledge across not just education, but in other related fields, have enabled great changes and improvements to take place."

"Roger's skills are wonderfully supplemented by an almost mischievous sense of humour and supply of anecdotes. These he uses to great effect in order to motivate, resolve difficulties and develop creative solutions with individuals, groups and organisations. We will sorely miss him as both a friend and colleague. His unique combination of wit, wisdom and creativity will not be easily replaced."



AWARDS SHORTLIST

Greetings Green Partnership's Executive Director, Ally Allerson has been short listed in the Local Government Personality of the Year category of the Dods & Scottish Widows Woman of the Year Awards 2007.

"I'm very honoured even to be nominated," says Ally. "But I would never have been considered without the first class team at Greetings Green Partnership who are working with our residents to make real changes that have a daily impact."

The Woman of the Year Awards recognise and stimulate the engagement of women in politics, the civil service and community leadership.

If you would like your community group to be featured on this page, contact Communications Officer, Brian McKinstry, at Greets Green Partnership on Freephone 0800 953 0215 or email brian_mckinstry@sandwell.gov.uk



A century of lending ce

Sandwell Central Library in West Bromwich High Street is celebrating 100 years of providing a valuable service to local people this year. A range of special events are planned to mark the milestone, which falls on Sunday 10th June.



The library was built on the site of an old market hall, and the first librarian in 1907 was called David Dickinson.

Lending Services Manager, Robert Hazel, said: "The library has served generations of customers throughout the last 100 years and past customers have included Led Zeppelin singer Robert Plant.

"Services are always being added and improved, and DVDs and free computer access are just two of the new services popular with customers."

The library has been holding events and promotions since last April to mark the approaching centenary.

Special guests so far have included TV journalist and writer Rageh Omar and MP Ann Widdecombe. Events still to come this Summer include historian

Services available at the library include:

- Free access to newspapers, magazines and other sources of information
- Books free to borrow
- CDs, DVDs and videos available to borrow
- Free use of computers
- Story sessions for children
- First Monday of the month writing group
- Displays and information about local events
- Regular guest visitors



A display area in the library is dedicated to Hollywood actress and war heroine Madeleine Carroll.

Madeleine was born at 32 Herbert Street, West Bromwich (now 44 Herbert Street) in 1906, and starred in films including Hitchcock's "The 39 Steps" and "The Prisoner of Zenda". In World War II her only sister was killed in the Blitz and Madeleine became an American Red Cross voluntary worker. She was later awarded the Legion d'Honneur for bravery in France, plus the American Medal of Freedom, the highest US civilian honour.

Local historian and writer Terry Price (pictured below) learned about Madeleine Carroll when researching one of his local history books, and discovered after she died in 1987 her medals had been left to her cousin, but had gone missing. He said: "I got replacement medals properly mounted and presented them to the library for permanent display."

A special memorial to Madeleine has recently been unveiled outside The Public building – a fitting tribute to our very own movie star.



and radio personality Carl Chinn visiting the library, a literary walk around the local area and local author Terry Price coming in to talk about West Bromwich-born Hollywood star Madeleine Carroll.

Robert added: "The library has been working with the local community and schools have helped mark the occasion by taking part in poetry slams and creating work for a time capsule, which will be kept for future generations.

"Pat Arnett, the local artist who painted the murals in the Lending Library, will be judging a special art competition later in the year."

For more information on the library and the centenary events, contact Information Services on 0121 569 4911.

NEW COACHES PUSH SPORT FOR ALL

Residents in Greets Green are being encouraged to get active with the help of a new team of workers who are showing them the benefits of exercise.

Active Lifestyles Co-ordinator, Nathan Moore, has recruited two community coaches who are already working with young children in schools and at community venues. There are also two community champions taking the benefits of exercise out into the wider community.

The Healthy Lifestyles programme was officially launched at the Greets Green Christmas Festival and, since then, there's been a big push to set up activities.

Nathan said: "The two community coaches are already working with primary school children in schools and community venues, mainly delivering sport. The community champions are working with older people in the Black and Minority Ethnic communities, doing fitness-based activities like health walks and exercise to music."

The community coaches are Scott Lloyd and Nicola Craig and Nathan is hoping to

get them onto some more coaching courses to expand the services they are able to provide. Scott is mainly working with youngsters on football projects at the moment, and Nicola is doing sessions in trampolining, basketball and dancing.

The community champions are Vasu Patel and Rashmi Patel. Vasu is working with a group aged 50 plus at the Guru Nanak Community Centre. One of her activities there is Extend, which is very gentle chair-based exercises older people can do while sitting down.

Rashmi works at George Salter High School and is already well known locally. A qualified cricket coach, he is keen to set-up a cricket club in the area as well as working to improve the general levels of physical activity undertaken by local older men.

ITo find out about activities you can join in with, contact Nathan Moore on 07817 009062 or email nathan.moore@sandwell-pct.nhs.uk Or write to: Nathan Moore, Active Lifestyles Co-ordinator, George Salter High School, Claypit Lane, West Bromwich B70 9UW.

Familiar Face

Youngsters who take part in football projects in Greets Green will know community coach, Scott Lloyd.

Scott, who lives in Greets Green, has been involved in the Hat-Trick project as a volunteer and has gained two coaching qualifications and is working all the time to get more.

UEFA Hat-Trick Officer, Rus Smith, said: "With Scott volunteering for a year, he has put in a lot of hard work and gained qualifications which have now led to paid work. This will help to sustain football and sport for the area. All age groups can benefit from Scott's appointment in Greets Green."



Police get on their bikes

Police in Greet's Green have some two-wheeled aids to help their fight against crime.

Officers in the neighbourhood policing teams are using five bicycles to help them patrol the area, including some parts that are hard to reach, such as the canal banks.

It means police can now be seen out and about in the area on foot, on their bikes and in their high-profile police cars. They carry the Greet's Green Partnership logo as part of a £500,000 investment from the Greet's Green Crime Fighting Team.

Police Admin Officer, Cassie Taylor, said: "It's more high-visibility policing – you can't miss them on their bikes.

"If the sun's out they enjoy it, but when it was snowing there were quite a few moans!"

The use of bikes has already had results because they enable police officers to get about fast where cars don't have access.

"We've already caught a few offenders around the canal area as a result," Cassie added.

i You can contact the Greet's Green Crime Fighting team on 0845 113 5000 Ext: 7912 6391.



Making a difference...



HELPING RESIDENTS FEEL SAFER

Last issue we featured the street lighting scheme, funded by Greet's Green Partnership, to replace or install more than 400 lampposts. Some were up to 30 years old, and the new ones are easier to look after and provide brighter light which helps residents feel safer.

Greet's Green Crime and Community Safety Theme Leader, Phil Hartley, said: "This project has made a difference because the fear of crime has gone down significantly since the new street lights were erected. Between 2002 – 2004 surveys showed the fear of crime remained pretty steady, but it's now taken a dramatic drop and we suspect that's because of the street lighting project."

Funding from the Partnership has now come to an end but Sandwell Council will continue the scheme which has had such an obvious and dramatic effect on people's lives.

"Street lighting has been much improved. It does make you feel safer."

i For more information, call Phil Hartley on freephone 0800 953 0215.

GET A HELPING HAND FROM THE COMMUNITY

Local groups are being urged to make the most of the Greets Green Community Fund which is providing grants to local organisations and helping people of all ages.

The scheme is funded by Greets Green Partnership and is designed to help groups with their existing activities or give them a hand to get new projects off the ground.

Grants of up to £1,000 are available to groups working in Greets Green and a specially trained panel of local residents decides which applications are successful.

If applications are rejected the aim is to try and put applicants in touch with other sources of funding, or see if there is anything else the Community Fund

may be able to help with. "We would encourage every group to apply," said Greets Green Partnership's Neighbourhood Support Officer, Bob Lloyd. "Get an application pack, have a look at it, and if you're not quite sure, give us a call and find out more."

For more information about the Community Fund, and an application pack, call Neighbourhood Support Officer, Bob Lloyd on freephone 0800 953 0215.

Groups find out about funding

Community groups in Greets Green were able to find out about ways of accessing grants and funding at a special event organised by Greets Green Partnership.

The event took place at Wood Lane Community Centre in March and enabled community groups to meet representatives from various funding organisations face to face. There were also workshops covering topics such as how to put together a grant application.

Event co-ordinator, Allison Franks said funding organisations attending the event included representatives from the Lloyds TSB Foundation and the Partnership's own Community Fund.

If your community group missed the event but would like to know more about sources of funding which may help your activities, call the Community Support Team at Greets Green Partnership on 0800 953 0215.

Kicking off in style

A team of young footballers in Greets Green are now arriving at matches in style thanks to the Greets Green Community Fund.

Lyng Falcons Under-15s, who are in the Premier Division of the Bilston League, were presented with a £990 grant to pay for new tracksuits and help towards pitch hire costs for training.

The team's 18 youngsters train twice a week on Wednesday evenings and Saturdays, using the Lyng pitch on Horton Street, and in the winter months hold their midweek session on the Astro turf at George Salter High School.

Team Treasurer, Ruth Riman, said: "We were desperate for tracksuits and without this money, we wouldn't have been able to afford them. Now they look like a team when they turn up to a match all dressed the same in their new tracksuits. They look the part and they love their football."

To find out more about playing for Lyng Falcons, call Manager, Mark Garrity on 0121 557 4728. If you can help with sponsorship, call Ruth Riman on 07952 530051.



FUND

Expanding horizons

A group which provides opportunities for older people to enjoy sharing their leisure time has benefited from a Greets Green Community Fund grant.

Sandwell University of the Third Age enables local older people who are no longer in employment to share creative, educational and social activities – and make new friends at the same time.

Meetings are held on the second Monday of every month at 2.00pm at the Wesley Church on the High Street in West Bromwich. There's an invited guest speaker, with topics ranging from antiques to tortoises and patient choice.

There are also smaller groups for Italian, criminology, literature, Latin, computing, outings/strolls, music, local history, Scrabble, and attending tea dances. The grant helped towards the costs of providing activities, covering teaching supplies such as white boards, paper, CDs and print cartridges.



Bob Tidmarsh, Business Secretary, pictured above receiving a cheque from Neighbourhood Support Officer, Bob Lloyd, said: "We've 83 members at the moment and this figure is growing all the time. We're helping people to feel fulfilled, whilst having fun in the process."

i Come along to one of the monthly meetings, visit the website at www.sandwellu3a.org.uk, or call Bob on 079 3922 6193 for more details.



Hitting the right note

The Greets Green Community Fund has enabled local people with learning difficulties to write and record their own song.

Sandwell People First received a grant of just under £1,000 for its Say It Through Art group. As a result, members have been able to take part in a project giving them a chance to express themselves through music.

A musician worked with the group to help them produce their own song. Eight group members - calling themselves the All Friends Band - each played an instrument and, for the lyrics, came up with key words which were important to them. They were then able to go into a recording studio to record their song, Sticking Up For Our Rights, onto CD.

Another group which operates under the umbrella of Sandwell People First – the Our Rights group for people with learning disabilities – was also successful in gaining a Greets Green Community Fund grant. This enabled them to conduct a survey of leisure facilities and contribute to a report highlighting how services can be improved to meet their needs - ranging from physical access to communication.

i If you'd like to find out more about Sandwell People First, you can contact them on 0121 520 0813.



GOING TO GREAT HEIGHTS

You may have noticed lots of scaffolding going up around Greets Green recently – but it's all for a good reason.

These homes surrounded by scaffolding in Phoenix Street are not only looking better, they are also better protected from the elements. They're being spruced up by Sandwell Homes, which is carrying out lots of work in the area to bring properties up to the Government's Decent Homes Standard by 2010.

As well as internal works to bathrooms and kitchens, much of the improvement work involves replacing roofs, which is why there is a forest of scaffolding in the area!

For more details, call Sandwell Homes on 0121 569 6500.



CLEARANCE TO GO AHEAD

The clearance of the Housing Assessment Area (the area surrounding Edith Street and Chapman Street) has been given the go-ahead after a public inquiry was successful in supporting the provision of compulsory purchase orders for the area where needed.

David Guy, Housing Theme Leader, said: "The Secretary of State has given the green light to our plans which means that the Council can move forward with clearing the area.

"Many people have already been moved out of the clearance area, but we can now talk to the remaining residents and give them all the help they need in moving to a new home."

When the area has been cleared, new homes, which better meet local people's needs, will be built on the site.

For more information on the Greets Green Housing Plan, call freephone 0800 073 0798.

Vision for park mapped out

Greets Green residents got together with expert advisors recently for a Visioning Workshop to look at ideas for the future of the 'Rec'.

The plan is to turn the Rec into Greets Green Park, a place lots of local people can enjoy and be proud of. Greets Green Partnership sponsored the event at Lodge Road Community Centre, which was attended by local community representatives, plus professionals in planning, housing and environmental design.

Jessica Ferguson, who's lived in the area for 39 years, and is now a seven minute walk from the park, said: "We enjoyed the event tremendously. The outcome is that we have got some idea of what we would like to do with the Rec, but it will take time.

"There was talk of putting a small café there to encourage people to use the Rec more as a family place. We want to see some decent walkways and lighting so it's nice at night. We'd also like some shrubs and flowers."

Recommendations from the day will be put to the Greets Green Park Steering Committee, who will then consider the next stage of the process to turn the Rec into a park to be proud of.

To find out more, call Greets Green's Housing Team on freephone 0800 073 0798.



Making a difference

It's so easy to forget the changes that have been made across Greets Green over the past few years.

When you walk past the Memorial Gardens on the High Street, can you remember what the site looked like before it was cleared? When you enjoy taking part in activities at Lyng and Newtown Community Access Points, can you remember what you did before these community facilities were on your doorstep?

There are lots of examples of the difference Greets Green Partnership has made since its launch in 2000. In each issue of the magazine, we'll be highlighting some of the work which has been undertaken and the difference it's made to the lives of local people.

FROM THIS...



The picture above shows how overgrown the Memorial Gardens were before Greets Green Partnership paid for the area to be cleared and landscaped back in 2002. Working in partnership with Sandwell Council, the main aim at the time was to thin out the trees and open up the gardens in general to prevent the area being used as a crime hot-spot for muggings and bag snatches. Since then further work has been carried out to tidy and landscape the gardens, and as you can see below, the area has been re-claimed as a place for local people of all ages to enjoy and a scenic spot for wedding photography.



...TO THIS

PROJECT BECOMES A CHARITY

A health screening project, which started as a pilot in Greets Green, has grown into a charity which was recently launched at the House of Commons.

A series of 10 events organised by the Community Health Screening Project was held between September 2005 and July 2006 as part of the Healthy Hearts Project, funded by Greets Green Partnership.

The aim was to reach communities such as the African-Caribbean, Bangladeshi, Indian, Gujarati, Pakistani, Sikh and Yemeni communities and involve them in health screening. It revealed previously undetected high levels of diabetes, high blood pressure and raised cholesterol, with the levels significantly higher than among the general population.

The Healthy Hearts Institute, based at Sandwell General Hospital, has now set up the Cardiovascular & Diabetes Health Screening Charities, covering Leicester, Sandwell and West Birmingham, to try to widen the access of local communities to healthcare, and tackle health inequality.

Dr Jeetesh Patel said: "The project which Greets Green Partnership began has moved to mainstream funding now with its own purpose-built centre, which is wonderful news."

i To find out more about the Healthy Hearts Institute call Dr Jeetesh Patel on 0121 607 3324.

NEWS FROM GGCE

Greets Green Community Enterprises (GGCE), is looking for ideas and venues for a whole range of community ventures and it needs your help!

GET INVOLVED!

If you want to really influence what GGCE does in the future, put yourself forward to become a Board member.

The organisation's first Annual General Meeting is being held on Thursday 10th May at the Guru Nanak Community Centre from 6.30pm. All residents and employees of Greets Green businesses are welcome.

There are 15 places on the Board and five have been filled so far. A mixture of residents and business people are needed, especially people with expertise in property management, finance or accountancy. **Come and get involved.**

I For more information, contact Chief Executive Andrew Rainsford on 0121 525 5810 or email ggce@btconnect.com

Andrew Rainsford, Chief Executive of GGCE, explains: "We've already got lots of ideas for community enterprises in the pipeline but want to hear what types of enterprises local residents would like to see in their area.

"We're encouraging everyone to come forward with their suggestions so that we can look into which ideas can become a reality."

As well as suggestions for community enterprises, GGCE is also looking for premises they can be based from.

"Lots of littles make a lot!" says Andrew. "We want to start a lot of little ventures which don't all necessarily make a lot of money on their own, but between them are profitable. We'll be employing and training local people to run the community enterprises, and providing valuable services for the community."

Community enterprises are businesses with a social purpose. They have a long term commitment to create jobs or provide a service for members of the community. Like any business, they aim to generate profit, but this is reinvested back into the business or into the community.

Do you know someone who is a Community Hero?

Someone who really makes a difference in your community?

If so, please get in touch. We're looking to recognise their contribution in the Greets Green magazine.

LOOKING FOR HEROES



I Call Brian McKinstrie at Greets Green Partnership on freephone 0800 953 0215.



Getting to know you...



Andrew Rainsford is the new Chief Executive of Greets Green Community Enterprises. Here, we find out a bit more about the man in charge.

What is your greatest achievement?

I obtained funding for the restoration of more churches in Wales than anyone else in the history of the Church in Wales. I have a firm belief that a place of faith is a key part of any community and being able to keep churches open across rural and deprived areas of North East Wales remains a source of great satisfaction. They will be there for several decades.

Describe yourself in three words

Tall, fat, bald.

What do you hope to achieve?

I see my role as developing enterprise to resource community. Without the enterprise there cannot be the community resource. Enterprise can also involve obtaining contracts to deliver services in Greets Green, which gives the community control over services.

In the short term, I would like to see more community representation on our Board. In the medium term, I would like to see increased participation in Greets Green Community Enterprises and in the long term, I would like other areas to come and see what we've done because it is so successful.

Where were you born?

Solihull, West Midlands and I have a birthday ending in a zero this year.

What is your hope for the future of Greets Green?

The removal of barriers to opportunity so that the potential of everyone can be released. From there the sky is the limit.

What is your motto in life? Anything is possible.

Which book are you reading at the moment?

The Benn Diaries 1991 - 2001.

Where is your favourite place?

Tai Newyddion, Horseshoe Pass, North Wales. It is where I lived before I moved back to the Midlands. It is 2½ miles from the nearest village and 6 miles from the nearest town and is a terrace of nine cottages with a strong sense of community. New Year's Eve parties were something else! I spent time doing it up as it hadn't been lived in for 22 years.

It was bought by "Mad Baz" of Shrewsbury who has a guitar shop and is famous for mending guitars on ironing boards in his shop. He, like me, has found living there rather special. I still go back to the pub as the local male voice choir rehearse there and the after rehearsal singing in the bar is what Wales is all about.

Name three things you would take to a desert island

My collection of model buses, my chesterfield sofa and some means of cooking.

How do you relax?

I have two sons aged 14 and 19 who live with their mother in Norwich. I have commuted to see them every other weekend since 1995. My partner, Lesley, lives near Stansted Airport so I see her on weekends. When I am at her place she does the domestic stuff and when she is at mine I wow her with my cooking. I enjoy cooking, reading and listening to music. We have recently discovered Mad O'Rourke's in Tipton!

If there are any radio stations looking for part-time presenters, this is something I used to do in the past - overnights on community radio stations in North Wales.



ALEX LEADS THE BAGGIES

Greets Green resident, Alex Deakin realised his dream when he lead out West Bromwich Albion as official team mascot.

When Alex took part in the Hat-Trick Christmas Football day, he won the prize for showing a great attitude and putting in lots of effort. A pupil at Newtown Primary, Alex is a lifelong Baggies fan and hopes to play in the first team in the future.

On the day, he met all the players before the game and got tips on his football from his favourite player WBA captain Curtis Davies.

UEFA Hat-Trick Officer, Rus Smith, said: "Alex has shown that with hard work and effort you can be rewarded. He is a great example of the pride Hat-Trick is providing to the Greets Green area and the impact it is having with residents."

i For more information about the Hat-Trick programme, call Rus Smith on 08700 662 840.

HELP FOR OLDER PEOPLE

The Healthier & Safer Older Age Project (HSOA), which was run from Wood Lane Community Centre, came to an end on 31st March.

The project had been funded by Greets Green Partnership since 2002 and has helped to improve the lives of many people aged over 50 in the area.

A range of help and support is still available in Greets Green:

- For help with mobility problems including risk of falls, home equipment and adaptations, talk to the Primary Care Rehabilitation Team on 0121 607 7997.
- For social services and carers' issues, call West Bromwich Adults Services on 0121 533 4822.
- The Home Accident Prevention Service (HAPS) can be contacted on 0121 607 3511.
- For Age Concern, call 0121 500 1860.



Children's Centre launch

Greets Green Children's Centre, in the grounds of Ryders Green Primary School, is being officially launched on Saturday 21st April.

The theme for the event will be children's stories and all local families with children aged under five are being encouraged to come along.

The Children's Centre now offers a whole range of sessions including stay and play sessions on Mondays and

Wednesdays, baby clinics from 12 noon - 3.00pm on Thursdays and Citizen's Advice Bureau sessions from 10.00am - 12.00pm on Wednesdays. The day nursery is now also open.

A community artist will be running a series of projects in the coming months including a multi-cultural story book project.

i Call the Children's Centre on 0121 612 5131 for more details.

Women link up

Women-only activity classes are taking place in Greets Green and are already proving very popular.

A 10-week course of swimming lessons, four weeks of self defence and six weeks of badminton have attracted about 25 women who have enjoyed the chance to try something new. Sam Watts, Greets Green Partnership's Diversity Officer,

said the sessions were particularly popular with women who, for cultural reasons, would not be able to swim or take part in other sports in a mixed environment.

i The current courses are due to end soon, but if you are interested in signing up for future courses, or finding out more, contact Sam on 0121 532 6978.

STUDENTS TOUR THE AREA

Birmingham University students recently enjoyed a tour of Greets Green to hear from residents themselves how a successful regeneration project is making an impact.

For the second year running, Greets Green Partnership invited 30 students to visit the area as part of their Masters degree in Environmental Health.

A variety of speakers explained how different organisations are working together to regenerate the area, before the students met with residents to find out how the improvements to the area have made a difference to their lives.

John Downie, visiting lecturer at Birmingham University said: "This has been a positive learning experience for our students as they've been able to see first hand the regeneration process.

"Greets Green is a good local example of a regeneration project and it is great that everybody involved is so positive."

Writers in print

Sandwell Central Library writing group has been getting creative in putting together an anthology of their works.

"Many Many Mondays" will shortly be available from all Sandwell libraries.

The group meets on the first Monday of each month at the Central Library from 7.00 – 9.00pm. If you're interested in joining, just turn up or call 0121 569 4911 for more details.

On course for a healthier lifestyle

The team at OSCAR Sandwell has been busy running lots of courses for people affected by Sickle Cell or Thalassaemia blood disorders in Greets Green.

The voluntary group recently held a four week 'Health and Life' course aimed at encouraging people to adopt a happier and healthier lifestyle. Sharon Wilson, Deputy Chief Officer at OSCAR, explains: "Thirty local residents and OSCAR clients learnt about preparing and cooking healthy food, keeping fit and even got to try out aromatherapy! Everyone was also given an 'MOT' to check their blood sugar levels and blood pressure."

Another recent success was OSCAR's 'Skills for Life' training which was attended by local residents and OSCAR clients who are currently unemployed.

All OSCAR courses are free and crèche facilities, transport and lunch are provided. For more information about future courses and events, contact Sharon on 0121 525 0556.



A new slimming class has been launched by Sandwell Primary Care Trust, so why not shed a few pounds for Summer?

Slimwell is run every Monday from 1.00pm to 2.30pm at the YMCA and costs only 50p. For more details, call 0121 612 2962.

COMMUNITY GROUPS WIN CASH PRIZES

Three community groups in Greets Green have won cash prizes after filling in a questionnaire as part of a project to raise their profile.

Greets Green Partnership is compiling a directory of community groups to help raise awareness about local activities, and offered a prize draw incentive to encourage groups to provide their details.

The winners drawn out of the hat were:

- 1st Prize** Swan Village Action Group £100
- 2nd Prize** Yemeni Community Association £50
- 3rd Prize** Monday Club for the Elderly £25

If your community group would like to be included in the directory, there is still time to submit your details. Simply call Jackie Owen, Partnership Board Representative Support Officer at Greets Green Partnership, on freephone 0800 953 0215 or 0121 533 3191.

**Flip
magazine
for 'Young
Greets
Green'**

young greets green

APRIL/MAY 2007



ONE WORLD

School brings continents together



Have a go at our prize competition, open to all ages see page 23

One world in One school

With pupils from 33 countries, half from minority ethnic backgrounds and more than a third whose first language is not English, 'One World in One School' is the perfect new motto at George Salter High School.

Mr Green explains: "Three years ago, the school only had a 16 per cent pass rate at GCSE but we now have a pass rate of 66 per cent - above the national average. A lot of hard work has gone in and it is showing."

The school has recently recruited more staff to help students to learn English and interpret for them where necessary.

i To contact George Salter High School, call 0121 553 4665.

Head Teacher Mr Green explains: "Some of our students can already speak English but that is not always the case, so we have to teach them to speak English before we can educate them."

Angelika, aged 15 years, is one of several Polish students at George Salter. She started a few months ago when her family moved to England, and says: "Sometimes it is difficult but it is good that I have Polish friends to help me."

Another Polish student, Sylvester, aged 15, has settled well into the school over the last 18 months. "I am hoping to stay at the sixth form to do A levels and become a manager one day," he explains.

Zenata is also 15 and has attended the school for the last three years. She says: "I like the school but it is very different to Poland. I don't like having to wear a uniform!"

Staff and students are celebrating after Government figures revealed the school is now the second most improved school in the country.



SPREADING THE WORD

Well done to a group of young people from the Guru Nanak Community Centre who have qualified to help raise drugs awareness among other youngsters.

The 10 strong group took the Drugs Youth Peer Educator programme with DECCA, the Drug Education, Counselling and Confidential Advice team in Greets Green. It means they can now go out and help spread information about how drugs affect people within the Sikh community.

The Guru Nanak Community Centre has also become The Duke of Edinburgh award provider in the local area and the young people have received their first bronze award certificates.



i For more details about DECCA, call Holly Bailey on 0845 838 5317.

LEARN TO PLAY HOCKEY FOR FREE!

Thanks to support from the Greets Green Active Lifestyles project, West Bromwich Hockey Club will be running a series of hockey coaching and training sessions for local young people to promote good health, fitness and teamwork.



The sessions will run from 10.30am to 12.00 noon every Saturday morning, starting on 14th April, on the new Astro turf pitch at George Salter High School.

Sessions are aimed at all boys and girls aged 10-19 years and are open to all abilities. All sessions are run by fully qualified coaches, equipment is provided and parents are welcome to come along and watch. And it's all completely free!

Youth Development Officer, Keith Hunter, said: "This is a fantastic opportunity for one of the oldest clubs in the country to help young people in Greets Green learn a new sport or develop existing skills they already have. "

I For further details, call Keith on 07854 335003 or visit www.westbromhc.co.uk

Did you know...

Hockey in the Midlands began to be played in its modern form in the 1870s.

The first official records for West Bromwich Hockey Club date back to 1885.

The club was formed by employees of 'George Salters' - as was West Bromwich Albion!

Our new home base is George Salter High School.

Hockey can be enjoyed by everyone at any age.

Youth Forum is back in business!

The Youth Forum has previously been very active in the area, but it declined as young people moved on. After a meeting last Autumn, it's now up and running again and keen to recruit more members. Representatives from George Salter High School are already on the team but more young people are needed.

The group have enjoyed a couple of activities including bowling and going out for a meal as part of team and relationship building exercises. They have also been active in getting involved in decision making by working on how funding will be used, with help from the Greets Green Youth Support Fund.

To help continue their team building, a weekend residential is now being planned at the Frank Chapman Centre in Bewdley.

The Youth Forum meets every second and fourth Wednesday of the month at Lodge Road Community Centre, Lodge Road, from 6.30-8.30pm. The next meeting is 24th April.

I To get involved with the Forum and have a say in what happens in your neighbourhood, contact Youth Officer, Ian Clews at the Children and Young People's Services on 07810 850981.

HEALTHY EATING IN THE CLASSROOM

Since Jamie Oliver's campaign to improve school meals, schools across the country have been opting for healthier school meals.

But at George Salter High School, they have taken things a step further – not only are students enjoying a new healthy lunch menu, they are also learning about healthy food in the classroom.

In Maths, for example, mathematical techniques are used to highlight healthy eating, including data collection, analysis, presentation and evaluation.

In English, students are working on a creative writing project based on healthy eating, and in Science, students are studying many aspects of food, as well as the digestive system and the effect of exercise on health.

A trip to Birmingham's fruit and vegetable markets proved an eye-opener for students who were impressed with the range, availability and cost of fresh produce.

As a result of the visit they enjoyed making their own fresh fruit smoothies! Students are now spoilt for choice by the different food available at the school.

There's the main school dining room which offers traditional meals, a snack bar that sells pizzas and jacket potatoes and a sandwich bar offering a selection of hot and cold sandwiches.

The School is also keen to involve parents in their new healthy eating plan by inviting them to join students for lunch, sending them copies of the menus and encouraging feedback.



TASTY TREAT FOR ATTENDANCE

Youngsters at Newtown Primary school who attended every single day between September and Christmas were treated to a tasty lesson with a difference.

The group of 25 children from all age groups who had 100 per cent attendance, took part in a healthy eating workshop where they made a healthy pizza, salad and cheesecake – then tucked into the results!

Fit for Life project worker, Julie Nichols, said: “We wanted to reward the children with something different so we asked YUM, a company which runs healthy workshops, to do a two hour session. The children thoroughly enjoyed it.”



COME FOR BREAKFAST!

Children at Newtown Primary school are enjoying a healthy breakfast and extra time with their mates.

The school in Anne Close has set up a breakfast club which operates every weekday morning in term time - and more youngsters are invited to get in early to join it.

The club is open from 7.40am-8.50am when children are provided with a healthy breakfast in a fun and safe environment. They are kept entertained with different activities each day - and if they have forgotten to do their homework, they have time to finish it before school starts!

It also means it's easier for parents to get out of the house in the morning as they don't have to prepare breakfast for their children, or clear up afterwards, and the youngsters are never late for lessons.

The school also makes sure children clean their teeth after breakfast, setting them up for a busy day in class.

i For more details, call the school on 0121 557 8504.



i To find out about other Fit For Life projects, call the team on 0121 612 1554.



and everyone enjoyed the tasting...

'HAPPY' school is praised

Pupils at Ryders Green Primary School should be buzzing with pride after a report gave them lots of praise.

Staff were also paid a lot of compliments for their hard work in the report by the Government's inspection agency, Ofsted. Senior school leaders are described as 'bubbling over with enthusiasm' with ideas on how to improve the school.

The report says it is a happy school, with a 'warm and supportive ethos'. Other

comments in the report include:

- ❖ Pupils 'really enjoy school and have a thorough understanding of how to stay healthy and keep safe.'
- ❖ Achievements 'improved massively in 2006'.
- ❖ There is a sense of 'enjoyment and enthusiasm' in the school, where pupils celebrate each other's success.

- ❖ There is little bullying because pupils are taught well to help and care for each other.

Acting Head Teacher, Ian Wright, who is seconded from Newtown Primary, said one of the school's big strengths is its links with George Salter High School, Shireland Language College and the recently-opened Children's Centre which is in its grounds.

Mr Wright said: "It's an age three to 18 learning community. If you have a mum and dad doing parenting skills at the Children's Centre, you might have their daughter in one of our classes and her brother at George Salter."

Possible plans for the future include having teachers who work in the top years of Ryders Green and the lowest years of George Salter to further ease the move to secondary school for pupils.

For more information you can contact the school on 0121 553 0658.



COMPETITION CORNER

Simply send your entry by 18th May 2007 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.

Congratulations

to Miss Joan Kenny, B Colledge and Mrs R Rogers who each won a £10 voucher from the February/March competition.

It's the Easter bunny season again so why not find all the Easter related words in the grid opposite to be in with a chance of winning one of this month's three £10 shopping vouchers. The words can appear up, down, across, diagonal or backwards.

- | | | |
|------------------|-----------------|---------------|
| APRIL | BUNNY | EASTER |
| CHOCOLATE | DAFFODIL | CHICK |
| SPRING | EGG | SUNDAY |
| BONNET | | |

Please fill in your details using BLOCK CAPITALS.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Tel No. _____

Age: _____

E	Q	D	A	F	F	O	D	I	L
G	W	E	R	T	U	S	N	W	C
G	B	S	P	R	I	N	G	D	H
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B	O	N	N	E	T	J	C	Q	C
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N	D	A	R	S	K	L	I	O	L
N	F	Y	H	T	J	C	C	M	A
Y	X	Y	T	E	U	M	K	D	T
Z	H	A	P	R	I	L	I	P	E

This competition is open to all ages