

greetsgreen

COMMUNITY MAGAZINE

AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 2007



'DOWN YOUR STREET' SUCCESS

Disabled parking bays in place



Family Fun Day
& StreetGames
photo gallery
see inside

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COMING SOON to a street near YOU

Greets Green Partnership's 'Down Your Street' surgeries have proved such a success they are continuing and the range of what they cover is being expanded.

Proposed Timetable

The 'Down Your Street' surgeries take place weekly, usually on a Wednesday evening between 5.00 and 7.00pm. The team plans to be available in different neighbourhoods each month as follows:

- August** West Bromwich Central / Hamblett's North
- September** Oak House North
- October** Oak House South
- November** Swan Village / Hamblett's South
- December** Hamblett's South

i For more information, call Bob Lloyd at Greets Green Partnership on freephone 0800 953 0215.

Last Summer, Community Services Workers started delivering leaflets to neighbourhoods in Greets Green, inviting residents to display the 'GGP Ask Me' sign in their window if they had a concern or query they wanted to raise. The next day the workers returned and visited everyone displaying the signs.

More than 150 people took up the offer, and the information gained was either passed to a relevant team to deal with, or the individuals were given help and advice, or told who would be better able to help them.

Bob Lloyd, Community Services Officer (pictured below with Abdul Monim Khan, Simon Ware and Community Services Theme Leader, Rohit Mistry), said: "It means some people who can't get to us for mobility, child care or a million other reasons, can still have their say on specific issues around the area. People think their problems might be too small to mention, but these things annoy people and we can do something about them."

Now the street surgeries are continuing, but they are also being used to pass on positive information to residents. Extra information about activities taking place in Greets Green, such as drugs awareness events or adult learning, will also be included.

Bob said: "If residents raise any other problems, we'll point them in the right direction of someone who can solve them. If there's a problem with anti-social behaviour or petty crime for example, we'd encourage them to form a Neighbourhood Watch group. We really can help."

"Our aim is to raise awareness of issues right on people's doorsteps."



Street Surgery Success For Gwen

Life has been made a bit easier for some residents in Harwood Street with the introduction of two disabled parking bays outside their homes.

Last summer Gwen Gardner, husband George and their neighbours took advantage of the 'Down Your Street' initiative to tell Simon Ware, Community Services Worker, about the problems they had parking in their road.

Spaces outside their homes were sometimes taken by people visiting the nearby housing office. Simon got on the case and in May two disabled parking spaces were painted on the road.

Gwen, who has lived there for 30 years, said: "It was difficult to park because we are disabled and there are three homes here with people who are disabled. Simon's got us two disabled parking bays, which is really good and I'm very pleased about it. It makes life easier."

Gwen was also full of praise for the 'Down Your Street' surgeries. She said: "If you've got queries about anything, or if you want to ask something, they're very good. I know there are meetings we could go to but it isn't always convenient. It's been nice to get to know the people from Greets Green Partnership."



Neighbourhood Forums – here to help!

If you've got a problem, get it sorted! Come along to one of the Neighbourhood Forums held regularly in Greets Green, and put any worries you may have directly to the services which can help.

Likewise, if you have any questions, or would just like to know more about what's happening locally, the Forums will provide the answers. Greets Green Partnership organises the meetings with

the aim of giving local residents a chance to have their say or find out more about issues which concern them – whether it's crime or community safety, housing or health, litter or environmental issues.

Various service providers attend the meetings to talk to residents, including Police officers from the Greets Green Crime Fighting Team, Sandwell Homes staff, Groundcare staff from Greets Green Environment Team, local

Councillors, Greets Green Partnership staff, and Neighbourhood Reps who sit on the Partnership Board.

Community Services Worker, Simon Ware said: "The key message is that if people have something they want to have their say on locally, or if they want something changing, the Forums are the place to be. You can talk face to face with the people who can make a difference."

So why not go along and make the most of the Neighbourhood Forums?

i For more information, call the Community Services Team on freephone 0800 953 0215, or just turn up at one of the meetings.

Forums get results!

When neighbours in Vernon Street started to have trouble with dog mess and litter on a patch of land outside their homes, they found help at their local Neighbourhood Forum.

Jim and Sally Baxter and their neighbour Jean Evans now have a new fence preventing the problems which were getting them down. They urge other residents to remember the help which is available on their doorstep through the Forums.

Sally said: "It was like having an open front garden which is all right in theory but not in practice. Now we have a green metal fence around it which stops the dogs and prevents rubbish blowing on to it. It makes us feel more secure."

The fence was made possible after the neighbours raised their concerns at a local Forum meeting. The Small Sites scheme, funded by Greets Green Partnership, was able to fund the improvements requested by residents and get the work carried out.

Sally said: "We think the Forums are a good idea. Before when we tried to sort the problem we weren't getting anywhere and were getting pushed from pillar to post. The Forum was really helpful."

"You do feel there's somebody to talk to and they listen and follow it up. I would definitely recommend going to the Forums."

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Neighbourhood Forums start at 6.30pm and the next ones will be held on:

Wednesday 12th September
South
Guns Village Primary School

Tuesday 9th October
North
West Bromwich Town Hall

Thursday 8th November
South
Wood Lane Community Centre

'Summer' fun for all the family

Lots of local people of all ages braved the elements and had a great afternoon at the Greets Green Family Fun Day on Saturday 21st July in the grounds of Oak House Museum.

Despite the rain, residents turned out to enjoy traditional entertainment with the Punch and Judy show and came face to face with some birds and reptiles thanks to the 'Animal Man'.

The arts and crafts marquee offered a chance to get creative making children's masks, face painting or making tool boxes with the Home Maintenance Project. Local community groups, charities and representatives from Greets Green Partnership, handed out information about what's going on locally and how residents can get involved.

There was a chance to tuck into some tasty African Caribbean food and get fit by taking part in yoga and martial arts sessions or having a go on the YMCA rowing machine. And if that sounded too energetic, residents could try out some new relaxing treatments and therapies instead!



i If you can spare some time to get involved in planning and organising future community events in Greets Green, please call Community Services Officer, Bob Lloyd, on freephone 0800 953 0215.

NOW'S THE TIME TO STOP SMOKING!



Now that the ban on smoking in enclosed public places has come into force across England, there have never been more opportunities to give up smoking - whether it's through the place where you work, a health centre or your local community group.

John Nicholson, Extended Schools Manager at George Salter High School (pictured above), was referred to Sandwell Stop Smoking Service by Rus Smith from the Greets Green Hat-trick Community Football project.

John said: "I've been smoking for about 20 years and had given up for 3-4 weeks when Rus suggested I contact the Lyng Health Centre. Everyone was really helpful and understood what I was going through. I was very impressed. It helped motivate me to keep going.

"I've fallen off the wagon a couple of times but I used to smoke 15-20 a day and I've pretty much cut them out now. I can run for longer, without the breathing difficulties I was having before. I've found it very difficult not to have a cigarette if I'm having a pint - that's been the biggest challenge - and I'm hoping it'll get easier now the ban has come in."

The Hat-trick project has referred a number of people to the stop smoking service and put an article in a West Bromwich Albion match day programme to help football fans to quit smoking. In return for referrals, the project can earn cash towards its own work but, as Rus puts it, the main aim is to contribute towards the wider health of the community.

i Sandwell Stop Smoking Service is based on the High Street in West Bromwich. Call free on 0800 073 1388 for more details or log on to www.stopsmokingsandwell.co.uk

Helping firms go smoke free

Smokers might be finding the new smoking ban a challenge, but local workers are being given a helping hand, thanks to Workwell the health at work programme at Sandwell PCT.

Deputy Manager, Marie Carroll explains: "We've got a whole package we can take out to companies. We can bring in any services they need - anything from information to counsellors, or even helping them to train up their own counsellors."

Two smoking cessation roadshows have already been held in the Albion Road BID area, where businesses were told what the smoking ban means to them and were given 'no smoking' signs and information CDs. Air fresheners carrying the no smoking message were also provided for company vehicles.

Local steel service centre, William King was among the first who have already opened their doors to the services offered by Workwell.

i If you want to join them, call Workwell on 0121 557 4733.

Look forward to better health and finances

When you stop smoking, your health quickly improves - and so do your finances!

Based on giving up a pack of 20 cigarettes a day...

- After just 20 minutes your blood pressure and pulse rate return to normal. Cost saving = **£8.60**
- Within two days there is no nicotine in the body, your ability to taste and smell will be improved. Cost saving = **£12.90**
- After three days your breathing is easier, your energy levels increase. Cost saving, by nine months = **£1174.00**
- As the days go by your circulation and breathing continue to improve. Total cost saving = **over £15,700**
- By 10 years - your risk of lung cancer is half that of a smoker and your risk of a heart attack is the same as someone who has never smoked.



FRIENDSHIP, FUN & LEARNING AT FARLEY PARK COMMUNITY CENTRE

An historic building, which used to be Greets Green library and a park keepers lodge, is now providing a much valued community centre for local people.

Farley Park Lodge – a grade two listed building - was left to the community as a covenant by Alderman Reuben Farley, the first Mayor of West Bromwich, and was refurbished as a community centre in 1991.

The Great Bridge Community Forum, which runs the centre, is made up of residents, volunteers and representatives from groups using the centre.

As a community centre, it is now open around 60 hours a week, and the forum is an umbrella organisation for 15 groups, providing help with fundraising, training and education.

Chair Maureen Whitehouse said: "We are particularly proud of our Parent & Carers Forum, which was highlighted by the Children's Fund as a flagship of good practice. Our parents are able to take advantage of training, such as Child Protection and First Aid, and this year we have nine members taking a short Open University course on Understanding Children."

Other activities include a holiday play scheme provided throughout the year, plus two after school clubs for 5 –13 year olds. A youth club held on Tuesdays and Thursdays has gone from

strength to strength since opening in October and some of its teenagers have been trained in circus skills and are now putting on shows at Tipton Carnival, Victoria Park Community Day, and Farley Park Fun Day on Sunday 19th August.

Farley Park Lodge is also now recognised as an Information and Access Centre to help the community with queries about Lifelong Learning, health and other issues.

The centre serves all members of the community aged

from 0-90, providing various activities. A key strength is its volunteers, who can be called on for numerous skills, whether helping with carpentry, costumes or carnival floats.

Maureen added: "The best thing about Farley Park Lodge is its open and friendly atmosphere. It's thanks to the people who work here, both volunteers and staff, that we are able to maintain this."

i For more information, visit Farley Park Community Centre at Farley Park Lodge, Whitehall Road, West Bromwich, call 0121 557 4957, or email gbcf@btconnect.com





SUCCESS

The first-ever West Midlands StreetGames Tournament took place at George Salter High School on Saturday 14th July.

“The tournament gave young people a taste for competitive sport that will remain with them through to adulthood.”

Congratulations to the Greets Green teams who won the boys football (15-16 year olds) and the dance.

The fun and games kicked off at 10.30am and continued through the day, with young people from across the Midlands showing off their skills in football, cricket, basketball, urban dance and netball.

Sandwell PCT and West Bromwich Albion FC’s Community Programme.

“It was all about getting our young people into active lifestyles,” explained Rus Smith from the Greets Green Hat-trick project.

StreetGames is a new national charity which is working to develop communities through sport. Its aim is to get more than 75,000 young people involved in sport over the next few years – and this tournament saw literally hundreds of youngsters getting stuck in!

“The tournament gave young people a taste for competitive sport that will remain with them through to adulthood. The message of street games is that there are plenty of places and spaces to have a game of football, shoot a few hoops or whatever it is you want to do.”

The event also marked the official launch of the Co-operative StreetGames Volunteer Programme. The day was organised by George Salter High School, Greets Green Partnership,

i To find out how you can get more active, call Rus Smith on 08700 662 840 or Nathan Moore on 07817 009062.



PHARMACISTS HERE TO HELP



“We’re experts, we’re accessible and you don’t have to make an appointment.”

Community groups in Greet Green have been benefiting from a project designed to raise awareness about how to care for minor illnesses and ailments.

The aim is to provide information which gives people the confidence to know when they can treat a problem without needing to visit their GP or a hospital.

Pharmacists, Ciaran McSorley and Kim Bron from Ingrams in High Street, West Bromwich, have been visiting community groups to run sessions for the Minor Ailments Awareness and Self Care Project, which is funded by Greet Green Partnership and run by Sandwell PCT.

So far around 10 groups have benefited and other sessions are now being planned.

Mr McSorley said: “The sessions so far have been well received with good turnouts and good feedback. People are finding it very useful in terms of gaining information and learning new things.

“A lot of people will go to their GP first, but more and more are coming to a pharmacist for advice – we’re an untapped health resource.

“We’re experts, we’re accessible and you don’t have to make an appointment. Most pharmacists will see you straight away and you will have a free consultation. Your pharmacist can also signpost you to other more appropriate health care professionals if we’re not able to resolve the issue for you.”

Minor ailments are conditions which require ‘little or no medical intervention’ and include athlete’s foot, conjunctivitis, hayfever, headaches, earache, indigestion and mouth ulcers.

i If your community group would like to host a minor ailments or information session, call Health Theme Leader Sally Sandel on 0121 612 1957.

Did you know? National data shows that:

- Minor illnesses and injuries account for around 75% of A&E attendances
- 10% of A&E patients could have got self-care advice from pharmacists
- 40% of GP time is spent dealing with patients with minor, self-treatable illnesses
- Almost two-thirds of GP consultations result in a prescription which could have been treated by over-the-counter medicines from pharmacists or even no medicine at all

Tackling drugs issues

Residents were given a host of information about drugs awareness as part of National Tackling Drugs Day in May and, in return, shared details of any problems in their area.

Phil Hartley, Crime & Community Safety Theme Leader, said: “We supported the Drug and Alcohol Action Team through our ‘Down Your Street’ initiative in the Lodge Road area.

“Residents were able to display a leaflet in their window if they wanted someone to call round with more information about local drugs and alcohol services, plus details of how to report anti-social behaviour caused by substance misuse.”

Greet Green’s PCSOs also helped out with an event at the Queen’s Square Shopping Centre over two days in May.

People were invited to fill in a leaflet asking if there were any drug issues in their neighbourhood, and what could be done to address them. Everyone who filled in the card was entered into a free prize draw to win tickets to a West Bromwich Albion home match and a child’s place on a West Bromwich Albion soccer school Summer holiday camp.

i For more details of further work being carried out by the Drug and Alcohol Action Team, call 0845 002 0037.



LOOKING FOR A JOB? HELP IS AT HAND!

Two projects funded by Greets Green Partnership which help people get into work have been reshaped to provide an even better service for local people.

The Become and Business Support projects have been reviewed and are now being re-launched so that more local residents are able to access job opportunities.



Business Support

People who are thinking about starting their own business will be able to get help from the revised Business Support project, run by The Black Country Small Business Service.

One-to-one support will be provided which could include help with business planning, financial profiling and market testing. There's also information about local training opportunities and other support available through the Small Business Service.

A new element of this project will involve working with existing businesses in the area to see if there is any potential to increase their workforces, and, therefore, create new job opportunities that can then be made available to local residents.

A grant fund will still be available through the Business Support project for Greets Green residents who are interested in setting up a business, along with existing businesses operating in the area.

i For further details about the Business Support project, contact Judith Bayliss on 01386 552619

A new Jobs & Skills Theme has been created by Greets Green Partnership to ensure attention is focused on the two key areas of employment and adult education. The Theme's main aim for the next two years will be to increase the number of Greets Green residents who are in employment. The Become and Business Support projects will be working with as many local residents as possible to achieve this.

i If you'd like to know more about the work which is underway within the new Jobs & Skills Theme, contact Theme Leader, Katherine Hewitt on freephone 0800 953 0215.



The revised Become project will consist of two key parts. The first is client support, which will continue to be managed by A4E (Action for Employment).

The organisation will work with people who are long-term unemployed. Case workers will give one-to-one support and point clients to the second part of the project which offers more intensive job search support. Residents who need extra help to overcome barriers to employment will be signposted to other services and agencies.

The case workers will also be available to support clients when they have started work and will be offering help with any teething problems which may occur in the early days of a new job.

The second part of the project will continue to be managed by Steps to Work, part of the West Bromwich African Caribbean Resource Centre. This organisation will concentrate on ensuring clients are able to apply for work effectively by offering individual tuition in areas such as completing applications, writing CVs and interview techniques.



Chantel Ebanks (left) and Lindsey Osborne (right) with Katherine Hewitt, who has taken over as the new Jobs & Skills Theme Leader.

Help will also be offered in researching vacancies. Each client will have an initial induction where the amount of support they need can be assessed and agreed. Both parts of the project will work closely together, cross-referring clients so that everyone gets the complete package of support they need to help them into work. The project will also work closely with mainstream providers, referring people to services such as Jobcentre Plus, Citizens Advice Bureau and community support.

i For further information about the Become project, contact Chantel Ebanks on 07841 271608 or Lindsey Osborne on 0121 580 4162, or call into the Steps to Work Office, Central House, 312 -314 High Street, West Bromwich (above Allied Carpets).

Adults enjoy learning again

Local residents took on the challenge of returning to learning for a day or two during Adult Learners' Week in May – and loved it! More than 150 residents attended a number of events, where the subjects on offer included using a computer, yoga, pilates, alternative therapy, confidence building workshops and a careers development drop-in morning.

The events were all co-ordinated, promoted and, in some cases funded by the Greets Green Adult & Community Learning Project. The aim was to promote the idea of learning a new skill – for work or leisure reasons – to as many people as possible, and to get them interested in taking up more training by registering for adult education courses in the Autumn.

Every child attending a Greets Green school received a leaflet to take home

to their families outlining the event, and every health centre, dentist and doctors' surgery also received promotional material.

Wendy Beddall, Manager of the Greets Green Adult & Community Learning Project, said: "All the events that took place during Adult Learners Week showed the variety of opportunities that are out there for Greets Green adults who want to return to learning.

"We will keep in touch with all those who attended during the week and provide information about future learning events and the learning opportunities available at local colleges and learning centres."

If you would like to discuss anything about learning in Greets Green and the funding that is available, call the Greets Green Adult Learning Team on 0121 525 6457 or 0121 525 6671.

Plumbing course was a big hit

The Greets Green Home Maintenance Project ran a two-day plumbing course during Adult Learners Week and staff were delighted with the positive feedback.

All those who attended gave the course top marks for enjoyment, its location, the length of the course and the materials used, and praised the 'knowledgeable and friendly tutor.'

Richard Payton, a father of three young daughters from Whitehall Road, Greets Green, attended the plumbing course because he wanted to learn more about the basics of home maintenance.

He said: "I've just been made redundant and am looking for another job and I thought I'd do something useful. Plumbing is a good skill to have for the future. I really enjoyed the course. We learnt soldering, how to do radiator valves and repairs –

and what to do if you put a hole through a pipe, which is quite handy!"

Raman Patel, who's retired, also completed the plumbing course, along with his 26-year-old son Hemant. He said: "It was lovely. I just wanted to learn a bit more about plumbing so when there's any problem I know what to do. And my son needs to put a shower in his home!

"We did some pressure tests to make sure everything worked right, but on my first attempt one of the joints leaked, so I had to do it again!"

Greets Green Partnership is funding the Home Maintenance project until November 2007. If you'd like to attend one of their courses get in touch now. Call Mark O'Nions on 0121 520 4448.





New skills and new friends

A Handikraft course on beauty and textiles was run as part of Adult Learners' Week by the Confederation of Bangladeshi Organisations (CBO).

The course was run at their building on the High Street, attracting 20 local residents who gave it top marks for enjoyment. Everyone said how friendly it was and that they would definitely use the skills they had learnt.

One local resident who attended the course was Ruby Begum (pictured right). Ruby, who lives at home in Greets Green with her mum and dad, said: "I thought it was really good. We tried mendhi on each other and we all got on well.

"I also tried to make a beaded flower, but it took ages to do just one petal!"

"It was a really good chance to socialise with the community and I had a great day."

To contact the CBO call 0121 500 5441.



BUILD A NEW FUTURE WITH thinklocal CONSTRUCTION

If you're looking for a job or for training in the building trade, Think Local is here to help.

The scheme aims to match local people with local opportunities when it comes to construction jobs, traineeships and apprenticeships. As the GG area and West Bromwich as a whole is benefiting from major investment and regeneration, more opportunities will arise.

Think Local is a Sandwell Partnership programme, which operates throughout Sandwell and works with a wide range of public, private and voluntary sector organisations, including Greets Green Partnership.

Katherine Hewitt, Jobs & Skills Theme Leader for Greets Green Partnership, said: "In the last issue of the Greets Green magazine we included a Think Local leaflet and reply envelope asking local people to register their interest. We've had a really good response to the campaign so far with more than 100 people getting in touch and we're expecting more. It's not too late to get in touch, even if you don't have a form."

thinklocal CONSTRUCTION

LOOKING FOR WORK IN CONSTRUCTION?
If so register your interest by filling out this form

There are forthcoming construction opportunities within the GG area and other developments within the Sandwell area. Register your interest in these and other developments within the Sandwell area with us so that we can contact you if you are interested in a job, a traineeship or an apprenticeship. It is important to reply to us if you are not interested. Other job and training places will be advertised in our magazine and on our website. Other job and training places will be advertised in our magazine and on our website. Other job and training places will be advertised in our magazine and on our website.

How we will use your information

We will use your information to contact you about job opportunities, traineeships and apprenticeships. We will also use your information to contact you about other opportunities within the Sandwell area. We will also use your information to contact you about other opportunities within the Sandwell area. We will also use your information to contact you about other opportunities within the Sandwell area.

Are you available for work?
I have no other work at present and I am available for work. Please indicate the dates you are available for work.

Are you ready to start?
I am ready to start work as soon as I have a suitable contract. YES NO

Under the Equality Commission Act 1995, a disability is defined as a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on your ability to carry out normal day to day activities.

Please tick one of the boxes below which best describes your ethnic group. (Please tick only one box)

White	Black African	Other
Black Caribbean	Asian	Other
Other	Other	Other

If you'd like to make the most of the job opportunities resulting from the regeneration work taking place in Greets Green, and want further information, call 0121 569 2157 and ask for Think Local.

Allison joins the team

Greets Green Community Enterprises (GGCE) is expanding and taking more steps to make its presence felt in the community.



The organisation has been set up to carry on some of the work started by Greets Green Partnership and playing a key part in that will be Allison Franks, the newly-appointed Business Development Manager.

Allison, who will be familiar to many in her former role as a Neighbourhood Support Worker with Greets Green Partnership, will be seeking your ideas for businesses which can be developed and will be looking for spaces where new businesses can start operating.

Summer fun for youngsters

A kids' club will be running at Wood Lane Community Centre until 24th August, with a variety of activities on offer.

i Want to know more? Call the Community Centre on 0121 525 2662.



Fuel research

GGCE is also looking into bio-diesel production. The organisation can acquire the technology and have the space in which to start production, but wants to know what the demand would be like.

The fuel would be 'top quality' with minimal recycled cooking oil content. It will retail at approximately 80p per litre including VAT and duty.

On the move!

Since November, GGCE has been talking with agents and vendors about buying permanent premises in the area and now an offer has been accepted.

There are complications however because the premises are owned by a company based in Milan. So GGCE has not been able to move in yet, but watch this space for more details soon!

Offer to businesses

In its new premises, GGCE will be able to offer office or workspace on an 'easy-

in and easy-out' basis - so if you're looking for a new base too, get in touch!

Linked with the new premises, GGCE can also offer one **free** office to a 24 hour taxi company.

All that the occupier will have to pay for is electricity, telephone and business rates. There is no catch - if the place is used 24 hours a day, the likelihood of theft and damage at the property is greatly reduced, so everyone benefits.

i If you operate a 24 hour taxi company and want to talk further or you're interested in running your vehicle on bio-diesel fuel, please contact Andrew Rainsford on 07764 963 998 or email ggce@btconnect.com

PARTNERSHIP NEWS Housing & Urban Form

High Street homes on the way

New affordable homes for Greets Green residents are being built on a prime site in the area.

One and two bedroom apartments and three and four bedroom houses are going up on the site of the former Hartwell's car



showroom in Dartmouth Street, fronting the High Street in Greets Green.

And although it's a private development, Greets Green Partnership has played a part in the plans. Sandwell Council and Greets Green Partnership had identified the site for residential use some time ago and the Partnership was consulted about the planning application made by the developer, Laing Homes.

The Partnership made recommendations about the layout, design and quality of the buildings, and was also involved in negotiations about the

type and number of affordable properties.

As a result, the site will see:

- 10 two bedroom apartments for shared ownership
- 10 two bedroom apartments at discounted sale
- 3 three bedroom houses being rented by housing associations

Greets Green Partnership and Sandwell Council have also agreed with Laing Homes that the affordable properties will be offered first to residents affected by compulsory purchase, then to other Greets Green residents, before being available to people within Sandwell.

i If you have questions about housing in Greets Green, call the Housing Team on freephone 0800 073 0798.

Remembering our colleague and friend, **Sam Watts**

As many of our readers will know, Samantha Watts – or Sam – as everyone knew her, passed away suddenly in June. Sam’s passing was completely unexpected and came as a great shock to everyone who knew her.

So many people have used the phrase ‘full of life’ when remembering Sam and that’s no surprise at all. As soon as you met Sam you knew she was your friend – infectious, enthusiastic and always completely sincere.

Sam had a talent for immediately putting people at their ease and getting people involved, which, combined with her infectious good nature, made her a natural at her job – a job she cared about passionately. While the job title may have changed periodically, she was essentially a community activist – not because she’d learned to, but because it was instinctive.

Sam was responsible for organising numerous community events. She had a real flair for getting people roped in to do a variety of jobs – and not just her colleagues. Family members would also be co-opted if the event called for it!

Sam’s ability to organise didn’t stop there. She was always the driving force behind the office celebrations at Christmas; organising the works ‘do’ and the ‘Secret Santa’ gift exchange.

Of course, through Sam’s work she was a well-known figure in Greets Green, but her personality meant it wasn’t just about the job. Sam cared for the people she met and always wanted to help, believing that the way to start was to put a smile on people’s faces.

Whether it was playing bingo with the pensioners group at Farley Park or driving round the area tooting her horn and waving at everyone she knew, Sam was always ‘on duty’ because she was a natural at her job.

There are so many stories about Sam and her boundless enthusiasm – everyone who met her has a ‘Sam story’ or two – and without exception these stories are being retold with love and affection for our friend, because that’s what Sam was – a friend to everyone she met.

Social Swimmers Project

More recently Sam’s job had been to encourage the involvement of people from minority groups, a role she clearly loved.

Sam set up the Social Swimmers Project – to encourage women who for a variety of social and cultural reasons did not feel able to attend normal

public swimming sessions. On the morning of the first session such a varied group of ladies turned up that some people wondered how they would all get on when so many different languages were being spoken.

But typically Sam soon got the ladies communicating, and by the time their bus reached the pool new friendships had been forged. Sam developed great affection for these ladies or ‘her mermaids’ as she christened them. It became obvious that they felt the same, appreciating her no nonsense approach, typically choosing to get in the pool too.

Over 80 women have taken part, many of them learning to swim as a result and some of the group are now embarking on other activities too. (With such success that the project was recently the subject of an article in The Guardian newspaper.)



HOME TRUTHS IN HOUSEHOLD SURVEY

A big thank you to everyone who took part in the Household Survey conducted by Greets Green Partnership.



Hundreds of you took the time to respond to the door-to-door survey – sharing valuable information which will now help to forge an even brighter future for the local area.

Members of the Community Services Team knocked on every single door in Greets Green in the months between last November and May this year, and almost 900 household questionnaires were completed.

The comprehensive survey included questions about Greets Green Partnership, family, employment, disabilities, religion, health, leisure activities, crime and community safety, community involvement, education and housing, and satisfaction levels with services such as the NHS, Police and Council. Literally thousands of answers are now being analysed.

Community Services Theme Leader, Rohit Mistry said: "The survey was well received by residents and we want to

thank everyone who took part for their contribution.

"It's been a valuable exercise to get people's views and perceptions about the area and we will be using that information to help us shape what we do in the final few years of Greets Green Partnership."

The results of the survey are still being collated but findings so far include:

- More than 92 per cent of local people have heard of Greets Green Partnership
- Nearly three quarters always or often read the Greets Green Magazine
- Around 50 per cent of you feel part of the community either a great deal or a fair amount
- Nearly one in five Greets Green people take part in community or voluntary activities

Watch this space for the full report!

Community hero Imran sets an example

A Greets Green resident who tirelessly helps others in need, despite having difficulties and disabilities of his own, is this issue's Community Hero.

Imran Miah, of Guns Lane, works in the caring field and has been described by those who know him as a role model to others. He suffers from learning difficulties himself, but has refused to let anything hold him back.

Imran is in full time employment, has recently got married, and aims high. He is involved with the Bangladeshi community in West Bromwich and also helps others through various community and voluntary activities. Imran is constantly trying to better himself and, in addition, is now looking to study part-time.

Abdul Monim Khan, Community Services Worker for Greets Green Partnership, who nominated Imran, said: "Imran Miah is an extremely tenacious and hard working individual, who is a role model not just to the Bangladeshi community, but also to the wider local community.

"Imran always has a good word to say about others. Members of the community who know Imran, and know how much work he has contributed to the Bangladeshi community over the years, would definitely agree with this.



"Imran is an example to us all. His good nature and ability to not let anything hold him back has so far proved successful and should hopefully help him achieve a great deal more. Imran has proved that with hard work and dedication, anything is achievable."



i If you know someone who you think is a Community Hero and deserves to be recognised, call Communications & PR Manager, Brian McKinstrie, at Greets Green Partnership on freephone 0800 953 0215.

New Community Reps

Greets Green Partnership has recently welcomed two new Community Representatives to its decision-making Board - Madhuben Ramanlal Patel and Reverend Rolston Deson. We caught up with them to find out more about their home and work lives.

Madhuben Ramanlal Patel

Represents: Hindu Community

Occupation: Administration Assistant

What are you involved in locally?

Various voluntary work for Shree Krishna Mandir

Who is at home? My husband and son

How do you relax? Gardening

Your favourite sport? Football

Describe yourself in three words: Energetic, enthusiastic and bubbly

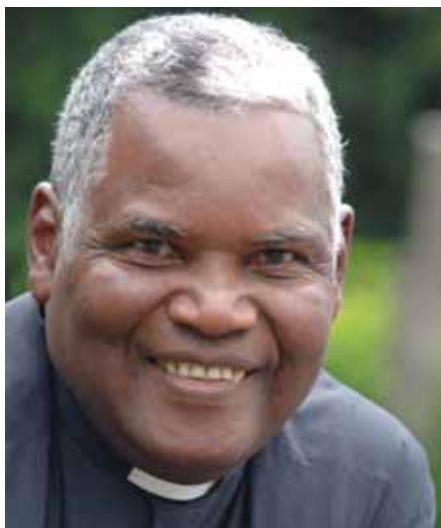
Your favourite TV show? Gardeners World

Your favourite dinner? Predictably - veggie curry

Why did you decide to become a Board Rep? I like a challenge

What would you like to help Greets Green achieve? I would like to see all communities working together

Who would you most like to meet in Greets Green - the Queen or the Prime Minister? The Queen - who I would take to my house and offer a cup of tea - served in a china cup of course!



Reverend Rolston Deson

Represents: Voluntary Sector

Occupation: Minister of Religion

Who is at home? My wife

How do you relax? Reading, walking, meditation

Your favourite sport? Cricket

Describe yourself in three words: Tolerant, understanding, enthusiastic

Your favourite TV show? Richard Attenborough / Wildlife

Your favourite dinner? Steak, rice and peas

Why did you decide to become a Board Rep? To effect positive change / to be a voice

What would you like to help Greets Green achieve? Retention of youths, a proud place to live, safer/cleaner streets, improved houses

Who would you most like to meet in Greets Green - the Queen or the Prime Minister? The Prime Minister. I would take him round Greets Green

It could be you!

Election time is approaching once again – giving local residents a chance to choose their Neighbourhood Reps for the board of Greets Green Partnership – or become Reps themselves.

Local people elected as Reps sit on the Board of Greets Green Partnership to help make crucial decisions about spending in key areas such as health, education, housing, crime, employment and community management.

September will see the Electoral Reform Society writing to residents about the election and inviting them to stand and to register to vote. Election candidates will then be announced and a postal ballot will take place during October. The results will be confirmed at a Board meeting of Greets Green Partnership at the end of October.

Why don't you consider becoming a Neighbourhood Rep?

Community Services Worker, Bob Lloyd, said: "I would really encourage people to stand for election. Residents often have views and comments about what happens locally and this is your opportunity to play a part in it.

"As a Neighbourhood Representative, you can play a vital role in changing Greets Green for the future. If you want to be an active citizen, this is your chance to sit on the Board of Greets Green Partnership and make a difference to the place where you live."

There are nine neighbourhoods that make up Greets Green and each elects a Neighbourhood Representative every two years. There are five wards this year with vacancies or which are up for re-election: **Oak House South, Oak House North, Greets Green, Hamblets North and Lodge Road area.**

If you live in one of these areas, look out in the post for details of the elections. A package of support is available for Neighbourhood Reps, including training and expenses.

i To find out more, call Bob Lloyd at Greets Green Partnership on freephone 0800 953 0215.

If you have any news get in touch.
Call Barbryn on T: 01564 741847,
E: susan@barbryn.co.uk or the Greets
Green Partnership on T: 0800 953 0215,
E: brian_mckinstrie@sandwell.gov.uk

Get on your dancing shoes and glad rags

Ready for a Tea Dance? The last Thursday of selected months has become a social event that the residents of Greets Green need to put on their calendars.

West Bromwich Town Hall is the venue for the Active Lifestyles tea dances which are funded by Greets Green Partnership. With live music, raffles, hot drinks, biscuits and food provided at 'special' events, this is a great way to meet people and socialise – and all for £1.50!

Dates have been confirmed for the rest of 2007:

- Thursday 27th September - 1.00pm till 3.30pm
- Thursday 13th December - 1.00pm till 3.30pm - Christmas Special (food provided)

i For more details contact Nathan Moore, Active Lifestyles Co-ordinator on 07817 009062.

WALK YOUR WAY TO HEALTH

If you're looking for a way of keeping fit and making friends, why not try one of Greets Green's health walks?

The free walk takes place every Monday at 11.00am, leaving from West Bromwich Central Library, and follows a gentle route around the local area which is suitable for beginners. It's organised by Sandwell Stride and West Bromwich Central Library. The walk lasts around 45 minutes and coincides with a coffee morning at the library, enabling walkers to meet up and have a chat before or after the walk.

Andrew Wood, Sandwell Stride Health Walks Co-ordinator, said: "As well as improving health, health walks are a great way to meet new people and enjoy the scenery and wildlife. Walkers also benefit from the safety of walking in a group and, best of all, unlike gyms, the walk is free and you don't need special equipment."

i For more information, call Andrew on 07814 540853.

IN THE PRESS

Greets Green Partnership has gained national recognition for its Social Swimmers project, which has been highlighted in a 'Caring Communities' supplement in The Guardian.

The half page feature is part of a four page special report on the impact of the New Deal for Communities programme. Greets Green Partnership's Executive Director Ally Allerson said: "I'm very pleased to see our work recognised. It's important to remind people that changes are being made and are having a positive impact.



"But it's also good to see the work of our staff recognised – in particular this project as it was so successful due to the drive and enthusiasm of our late colleague Samantha 'Sam' Watts."

The Social Swimmers project gave women who were not comfortable using a public swimming pool an opportunity to swim or learn to swim in an all-female environment. It has been a huge success, bringing women from different communities together.

Football scores with the girls!

Girls in Greets Green can now enjoy top quality football coaching following the launch of a new scheme at George Salter High School.

The coaching class has been set up thanks to West Bromwich Albion ladies' team, who train at the school, and the Greets Green Hat-trick project.

It provides a pathway for girls aged 7-11 to join other teams – or even have a trial for the WBA ladies - but most importantly to enjoy and take part in football.



The session is run by coach Siobhan Hodgetts, who is from Greets Green and plays for the WBA ladies, providing a great role model for those taking part. She says: "There has been no opportunity for girls' football in Greets Green in the past, but with this session we are hoping to develop new players at all levels."

i The class runs on Wednesday evenings at George Salter High School's Astro turf facility and costs £1 to attend. For more information, call Siobhan on 08700 662 840 or email siobhan.hodgetts@wbacp.co.uk

Diversity role for Abdul Monim

Greets Green Partnership has appointed one of its key multi-lingual workers to a role which promotes diversity, with the aim of breaking down barriers.

Abdul Monim Khan has now joined the Community Services team and his responsibilities



include working with the Diversity Advisory Group and with Greets Green's various community groups. He will also be liaising with local organisations to create a vibrant and sustainable voluntary sector for the future. Abdul brings lots of skills to the job. In addition to English he speaks a number of languages, including his mother tongue Sylheti/Bengali, plus Urdu and Hindi.

He says: "The aim of the Diversity role is to look at how we all live and work together, and how, in practical terms, we can ensure we break down barriers and promote inclusion."

i If you'd like to speak to Abdul Monim, call him at Greets Green Partnership on freephone 0800 953 0215.



MBE HONOUR

Geoff Fisher, the independent Chair of Greets Green Partnership, has been awarded an MBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours List for his services to Regeneration in Sandwell.

Geoff says: "I'm delighted to receive the MBE but I am very aware that this honour is in recognition of the success of Greets Green Partnership over the past seven years and I dedicate this award to those members of the community and the Partnership Team."

Geoff has been involved with Greets Green Partnership on a voluntary basis since 1999 and has worked in Greets Green at Robinson Brothers for over 50 years.

Ally Allerson, Executive Director of Greets Green Partnership added: "Geoff's contribution and commitment has been enormous.

"The success Greets Green Partnership has enjoyed is in no small measure due to his time, dedication and honesty. We are all delighted for him."

Space for art?

Greets Green artist, Punam Singh is looking for somewhere in the area so she can expand the Saturday morning art classes she runs for children.

Punam worked as an artist for 10 years in India before coming to the UK two years ago. She is currently teaching three children on Saturdays in her home but wants space she can use to expand her teaching to adults.

She said: "I teach the basics, from how to do sketching and how to use colours, then crayon and pencil shading. For older children there's oil painting."

i If you can help, contact Punam on 0121 525 0168 or 07726 608909.

New Deal visit

Representatives from Marsh Farm New Deal for Communities programme in Luton enjoyed visiting Greets Green and finding out more about the Extended Schools services in the area.

The day included visits to Newtown Primary School's CAP building and to George Salter High School where they learnt how the school is working with other organisations to offer extra clubs, sports sessions and activities outside of school hours.



Fundraising dinner dance

If you fancy dressing up in your best dress or smart suit, OSCAR Sandwell is holding its annual fundraising dinner dance on Saturday 29th September.

The event is taking place at the Centennial Centre, Icknield Port Road in Edgbaston, Birmingham. There will be a three-course dinner, guest speakers, a DJ and live music from some of the acts who performed at the music evening hosted by OSCAR at West Bromwich Town Hall last Autumn.

i All money raised will help OSCAR fund services for people with sickle cell and thalassaemia. Tickets, costing £35 or £30 for those with sickle cell or thalassaemia, can be obtained from OSCAR on 0121 525 0556.



Flip magazine for 'Young Greets Green'

young greets green

AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 2007

UGLY BUG BALL

After school club fashion fun



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

An after-school arts club is proving popular with youngsters at Newtown Primary School.

UGLY BUG BALL FOR KIDS

More than a dozen youngsters have been enjoying the Ugly Bug arts project, which is one of a number of activities taking place as part of the extended schools scheme in Greets Green.

Pupils have been working towards improving their skills and putting their ideas into practice with help from a fashion designer and visual artist. The creative fun has included designing and making T-shirts which the pupils proudly modelled in a school assembly at the end of the Summer term.

Donna Whitehouse from the school said: "The children are loving it and the project encourages them to learn new skills through teamwork, such as confidence and self esteem."

Parents are encouraged to help with the activities, which take place after school and at weekends and are also due to run next term.



i To find out more, call Newtown Primary School on 0121 557 8504.

SUMMER OF FUN

Youngsters in Greet Green are enjoying a Summer of sporting fun thanks to a holiday programme of activities at George Salter High School.

The multi-sports scheme is catering for primary and senior school children, boys and girls, providing them with a chance to try out a whole range of activities, including football, cricket, basketball, dance, badminton, inline skating, self defence, circus tricks, trampolining and fencing.

The scheme spans weeks one, three and five of the holidays and is a partnership between the school's sports development team, the local Hat-trick football project and Greet Green's Active Lifestyles project. In between the activity weeks, work is being carried out to refurbish the school's changing rooms.

Nathan Moore, Active Lifestyles Co-ordinator for Greet Green, said: "The emphasis of this scheme is on trying new skills and activities and having lots of fun.

"We want kids to see that sport and exercise can be enjoyable in the hope that they will want to continue taking part afterwards."

i The programme follows on from the success of previous school holiday sports schemes in Greet Green. For further information call Nathan on 07817 009062 or email nathan.moore@sandwell-pct.nhs.uk

A BRIDGE TO BIG SCHOOL

Youngsters facing the daunting move up to big school this September have been given a helping hand thanks to a week of activities designed to ease any worries.

The Place 2 Place project run by the Murray Hall Community Trust gave children from the five primary schools in Greet Green a chance to meet each other and make friends before moving to the senior school.

A whole range of fun activities were held for them at George Salter High School during the first week of the Summer holidays, including creative arts, drama workshops and sports. The youngsters were able to have fun and familiarise themselves with the school.

Teachers from George Salter High School were on hand to meet and greet the youngsters and the week also provided a chance for them to talk about any concerns they might have.

Project Co-ordinator, Sean Parrin, from the Murray Hall Community Trust, said: "It's a daunting move for them and so the aim was to ease the transition between primary and senior school and allow them to become familiar with the environment they will be moving into."

i For more details, you can call the Place 2 Place project on 0121 612 1805.



Fun away with the Forum

Local young people have been getting together and having a great time at the newly-reformed Greet Green Youth Forum – but they still need more people to join them.

As well as having regular meetings, the youngsters have also enjoyed two residential weekends away which have been great fun. To help with their team building, Youth Forum members went to the Frank Chapman Centre in Bewdley in May then the Pioneer Centre in Cleobury Mortimer in June.

Among those who took part in the Cleobury Mortimer weekend were George Salter High School pupils, Jack Walton aged 14, and Youth Forum joint secretaries Hannah Pearsall aged 14 and Natasha Woolliscroft aged 15. They all agreed more people should join them in the Youth Forum to make it even better.

Hannah said: "It's fun and you get to meet new people and do different activities. We've been taking part in activities like raft building, abseiling, rock climbing and mountain rescue. At the meetings we talk about what we can arrange in the future."

At the moment they're looking at a long-term project to get funding for a climbing wall at the Frank Chapman Centre. At the Bewdley residential, Natasha said they'd also done orienteering and had discussions in classroom workshops. And Jack said there's more fun to come: "There's a camping trip in the six week holiday back at Frank Chapman."

i The Youth Forum meets on the second and fourth Wednesday of every month at Lodge Road Community Centre, Lodge Road, from 6.30-8.30pm. To get involved in the fun and also play a part in the future of the area, contact Youth Officer, Ian Clews at the Children and Young People's Services on 07810 850981.



A FUN WAY INTO SPORT

Local people aged 10 to 23 are being offered a chance to become involved in sports and get fit in a fun way.

A project based at the Guru Nanak Community Centre, and funded by Sport England, is trying to combat the risk of obesity by getting young people into sport.

Parminder Singh, who runs the project, said: "Obesity in young Asian people in particular is increasing, so we are trying to promote as much sport as we can to combat this and give young people incentives."

The project also involves training youngsters in coaching sports so they learn new skills which could lead to a job in the future. So far, the young people have had visits from the West Bromwich Albion FC Community Programme, who will be working with them to train them as football coaches.

Plus, there have been table tennis sessions, a pool tournament, gym sessions and Parminder will be introducing lots of different sports so youngsters can find one they really like.



i If you'd like to get involved, contact Parminder on 0121 525 6923.



Schoolboy becomes Albion player

A talented young footballer from Greets Green has been signed as a player for West Bromwich Albion FC to represent their academy U12's youth team next season.

Calum Jones, a pupil at Guns Village Primary School, has been taking part in sessions run by the Greets Green Hat-trick project. He was recommended to WBA's development centre in October and worked hard for a full trial. Calum also played for Bustleholme which provides

school-to-club links for Greets Green and helped Calum on his way to becoming a talented footballer.

Hat-trick coach, Jon Fryer said: "With Calum becoming a representative of WBA, it is great for the area. Hopefully if hard work continues from all we may see someone from West Bromwich playing in the first team in years to come."

i To find out more about the footballing activities being organised by the Hat-trick project, call Rus Smith on 08700 662 840 or email russel.smith@wbacp.co.uk

POLICE HEAD TO SCHOOL

Pupils at Lyng Primary School were visited by the Police, but it was nothing to worry about!

Local Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) Nicki Yates, brought some Police friends along to the school to help pupils with their project on anti-social behaviour.

The youngsters, who have been looking into the subject and recording their findings on a blog, were treated to a special visit by Nicki and two Police dogs! She explained more about anti-social behaviour and how Police officers have to deal with it.



Now the pupils have made comics with a special computer programme to record their own thoughts. Youngsters from Ryders Green, Guns Village and Newtown Primary Schools have also taken part in the project, writing blogs, raps and plays about anti-social behaviour and how it affects them.

The youngsters' blog can be visited and commented on at www.greetsgreen.theclc.net

COMPETITION CORNER

Simply send your entry by 21st September 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 **Callum O'Conner, Jarnail Singh and Rayhan Ahmed Choudhury** who each won a **£10 voucher from the June/July competition.**

It's back to school in September, so have a look for these school related words in the grid opposite to be in with a chance of winning one of this month's three £10 shopping vouchers.

- BOOKS**
- DESK**
- PENCIL**
- UNIFORM**
- CLASSROOM CHAIRS**
- LEARNING PENS**
- SCHOOL TEACHER**

Please fill in your details using **BLOCK CAPITALS**.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Tel No. _____

Age: _____

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

This competition is open to all ages