



Dig out your undies for charity! Innovative bra recycling scheme

www.greetsgreen.sandwell.gov.uk



People power wins back bus see page 4

News from Greetsgreen Community Enterprises see page 11

Business grants supporting entrepreneurs see page 18

Front cover: *Local family business, BCR Global Textiles, has started an innovative bra recycling scheme and is asking local women to donate their unwanted bras for women in Africa.*

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Issue 42, covering June/July 2009,
will be published in June 2009.

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**.



Creative Marketing Solutions

The Greets Green magazine is produced on behalf of Greets Green Partnership by Barbryn Ltd www.barbryn.co.uk

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

આ માહિતીના ભાષાંતરમાં જો તમને મદદ
જોઈતી હોય, તો કૃપા કરીને અંગ્રેજી બોલતા
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صديق او من احد افراد الأسرة ممن يتحدثون
اللغة الإنجليزية الاتصال بنا على الهاتف
0800 953 0215

Dear Resident

Spring is here and with it comes lots of opportunities to get out and about and meet new people – and there are certainly some very interesting people right here in Greets Green. Take a look on page 10 at our International Women's Day feature to learn about some of the truly inspirational women living in our community. Don't forget to pick up your copy of the souvenir brochure from the Greets Green Partnership offices.

Residents on the Hamblett's estate have proved just how much you can achieve if you set your mind to it. They worked together to get their bus service reinstated – and it worked! Turn to page 4 to find out more.

Our Community Page this issue features the Goldies Club for the over 50s. There are lots of other groups for older people in the area – call us for details. And if it's time you got to know your neighbours better, call round and see if they're interested in starting an initiative for the Fitter for Walking project – see page 17.

Here's to new friends!

BRIAN MCKINSTRIE

Communications & PR Manager, Greets Green Partnership

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DORCAS' DEVOTION MAKES HER A HERO



Working tirelessly to improve a community centre and raise funds for its future have earned Dorcas Marshall a Greets Green Partnership Community Hero award.

Dorcas was nominated by Community Rep, Stan Simms, for her devotion to the Shiloh Community Centre, behind the Pentecostal Church in Lodge Road. Stan says: "I don't know where she gets her energy from but she does so

much work for the centre and I'm so impressed with her."

The Shiloh Community Centre is an old building which needs work carried out to improve it. The work is ongoing and Dorcas volunteers lots of her time to ensure that it can welcome as many people as possible.

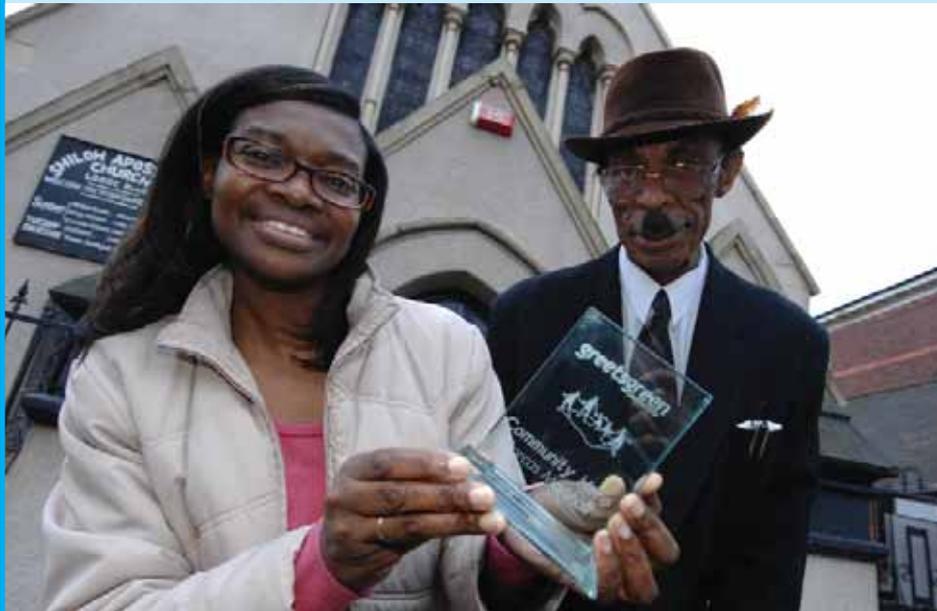
Dorcas was surprised and touched that Stan had nominated her and praised her

work. She said: "There's always lots to be done at the centre. It's all voluntary and I do it after work and at weekends – whenever I can. We still need a lot of work done on the building."

The centre has received some funding from Sandwell Primary Care Trust for Extend exercise classes and, before Christmas, Dorcas helped to organise a healthy meal for people who use the centre.

Other activities are mainly church-related and youth groups. Improvements have been made to the building, including disabled access to the toilets, and Dorcas is also involved in fundraising and is busy applying for money to make more improvements.

She said: "I enjoy what I do. I like seeing the outcome of our hard work. The centre is looking a lot better."



If you know someone who deserves to receive a Community Hero award, call Richard Wyatt at Greets Green Partnership on freephone 0800 953 0215.

Meet your Reps...



In this issue we find out more about Ann Coll, Neighbourhood Rep for Oak House North.

How did you become a Rep?

Jobs & Skills Theme Leader, Katherine Hewitt, asked me if I'd like to get involved. I went to an open meeting at the Scouts Hut and she asked my husband first, but I ended up standing instead!

What else are you involved in?

I moved to Greets Green in 1971 and have been involved with so many things on and off. I'm a governor at Guns Village Primary School, on the Board of Greets Green Community Enterprises, the legacy body for Greets Green Partnership, I'm on the Board of Sandwell Leisure Trust. I used to be involved with Oak House too and with a local dance group at Wood Lane, so I'm pretty busy.

What are you most proud of achieving?

The thing I've enjoyed most has been helping to decide which

projects get funding from the Partnership. It's been good to support the Young Builders project and the YMCA which are making such a difference to local people.

How have you benefited from being a Rep?

I would never have stood up and spoken before. I remember going to one of the conferences at Luton with Greets Green Partnership. It was brilliant - it was in an old factory building they'd taken over and I stood up and spoke there for the first time. As soon as you get involved and you get a bit of knowledge, it really increases your confidence.

How do you spend your spare time?

I used to be in a few theatre groups but my work with Greets Green has sort of taken over. I go swimming occasionally to relax.



PEOPLE POWER WINS

All aboard - the Hamblets bus has returned!

After a successful campaign by local residents, supported and helped by Greets Green Partnership, a bus covering the Hamblets estate is to be provided again.

Community Services Worker Simon Ware explained: "This has come about through residents campaigning. They have attended meetings, written letters and spoken with Centro, local councillors, the media and others.

"We also completed a survey of residents to give Centro as much information as possible about the need for transport in the area."

Local people were dismayed when West Midlands Travel dropped the National Express West Midlands 630/1 route in the area in January 2008. A new service, the 430, subsidised by Centro, continued to serve parts of Greets Green and the Oak House areas, but not the Hamblets estate.

Local residents and Partnership Board members decided they would not simply accept this loss. Instead they met Centro, Ring & Ride and Community Transport to look at what could be done to bring back a service to the estate. They also attended several Transport User Forums and a bus conference.

It was decided to carry out a survey to look at the transport needs of people in the area. Greets Green Partnership sessional staff and Sandwell Young Advisors carried out a doorstep survey in the area, and out of 800 questionnaires distributed, they got 263 responses. They discovered that nearly all those who replied had used the 630/1.

About a third said they could no longer make all the journeys they wanted to by alternative buses or the Metro, mainly because they had walking difficulties. And half of those who replied didn't have a car so relied on

the bus service. Following the survey, Simon Ware, Hamblets South Neighbourhood Rep, Jessica Ferguson, and residents Olive Bedworth and Pauline Robinson, met with Centro and Community Transport to look at other possible ways of funding a bus.

Soon after, Centro announced that it was creating a 431 service, which will again cover the Hamblets estate.

Andrew Page from Centro said the residents' campaign had led to the reintroduction of the service. The operator is Diamond Bus, and the contract runs for three years from 26th April 2009 until 21st April 2012.

Passenger use will be monitored during this time and will be looked at when the contract comes up for renewal.

So, make sure you hop on the bus!

The route

The 430 West Bromwich to Greets Green service runs on a route from West Bromwich bus station around Dawes Avenue, Albion Road, Whitgreave Street, and back again.

The first bus leaves the bus station at 07.25 Monday to Friday and 08.58 on Saturdays, and the last is back in the bus station at 17.50 each day.

The 431 West Bromwich circular runs from the bus station around Dawes Avenue, Claypit Lane, Turner Street,

High Street and back to the bus station. The first bus starts at 08.32, or 09.32 on Saturdays, and the last one returns to the bus station at 15.52 each day.

It was all worth it!

Campaigners are delighted that they've managed to get a service back to the Hamblets estate.

They simply refused to give up their fight - taking the campaign to the radio, the Express & Star and to Centro meetings around the area

including its Annual General Meeting.

Jessica Ferguson, Hamblets South Neighbourhood Rep says a lot of other people gave their support, including MP Tom Watson and local councillors, local shops and Community Transport.

"It was a real group effort," she says. "We're

"We feel happy now because we've got a bus every hour until 3.30pm at least. People can get off on the estate again which is great news."



BACK THE BUS

so pleased for the pensioners as it's going to make their lives a lot easier."

Olive Bedworth, who lives in Turner Street and worked alongside Jessica to get the service returned, added: "I'm over the moon. When the Express & Star said they wanted to cover our story, it made my day - not for me as I can get out and about, but there's people who are disabled and can't walk far and they need the bus.

"These are the people we tried to get the bus back for."

As soon as the bus service was taken off, Olive started campaigning - first by ringing radio presenter, Ed Doolan, who arranged for her to speak to Phil Bateman from Centro on his show.

Olive added: "I think everybody's worked really hard to get the bus back."

Another local resident, who also campaigned for the service, was Pauline Robinson. She explains: "The whole estate was behind me when I gave the petition in to the Town Committee."

**For more information
contact Centro's
Customer Relations
on 0121 214 7214.**



WE'RE OLDIES AND GOLDIES!

Older people in Greets Green certainly have no reason to stay at home. There are lots of groups and activities for the over 50s - whether you're wanting to get fit, try out a new activity or just have a chat. We caught up with the Goldies group which meets at the YMCA in Carters Green, every other Monday between 2.00pm and 4.00pm.

Ask anyone at the Goldies what they like about the group and they'll all say the same thing - 'everyone is so friendly.'

This large group of both men and women gather and enjoy a mixture of socialising, guest speakers, dances, music and trips out. The group has proven to be such a success, that those interested in joining in will have to go on a waiting list!

Chair of the group is Olive Bedworth who's delighted that so many local people are joining in with the fun. "We've got a good core of members and the more people we have, the more we can do as a group which is great for everyone," she says.

"We had a lovely Christmas party and a New Year's meal and we're hoping to get out and about in the spring. I'm so proud to be the chair of the group. It is full of so many lovely people who make it a pleasure each time we get together."



Ena Barr, who lives in Bromford Lane, loves going along to the Goldies. "I like the friendliness there," she says. "I get to meet new people and enjoy the different activities. We have some very interesting speakers. It's good company."

Lucy Stone finds the Goldies "a good way to spend an afternoon." She goes along with her friend from keep fit and likes meeting new people there. She says: "It's intellectual as there are speakers, you find out what's going on and you have a game of bingo - what more could you want in life!"

While some residents have been going along to the Goldies for years, others are new recruits.

Carol Spittle has only been to the Goldies a couple of times but already says how welcoming they all are at the group. "My friend Joyce and I had been after a pensioners' club for a while," she explains.

"When we phoned up about this one Olive said to come along and we could sit where we want as everyone is so friendly.

"We're really enjoying it, especially the Indian dancers that came to perform for the group."

Moreen Walsgrove regularly goes along with husband, Harry. "My husband knows a lot of the people at the Goldies as he's from the area, but I only knew a couple when we started going about eight months ago," she says. "I'll talk to anybody though and I found that everyone gets on really well. It's nice to be all friends together and to just have a chat."

Although the group is currently full, anyone interested in joining in the future should call Olive on 0121 580 1143 to be put on the waiting list.



WHAT A DIFFERENCE!



DARTMOUTH STREET

West Bromwich B70



After



Before

Dartmouth Street is looking so much brighter now that some of the old, uneven, dark tarmac has been removed and replaced with much lighter slab work.

The work is part of the range of environmental improvements which are giving the street a face-lift. New front walls are being erected which are being specially designed to be in keeping with the age of the properties, and improved kerb edging is being completed, along with resurfacing work around Dartmouth Street Metro station. All the work is being done following consultation with local residents by Greets Green Partnership.

Development site **update**



CLAYPIT LANE

West Bromwich B70

A whole new green area is being created on the Claypit Lane development site, transforming the area into a much more attractive space.

The site where houses once stood is being landscaped to improve the look of the area. The fencing has been removed, along with the rubbish and rubble, new top soil has been put over the site and the planted grass seed is now growing.

“We want people to be able to enjoy a new green space while the site is awaiting development in the future,” explained Ian Jennings from Greets Green Partnership’s Housing Team.

“We’re talking to potential developers on a regular basis and the plan is still to build houses on the site. However, in the current economic climate, developers are building new homes at a slower rate. Rather than leaving the site looking ugly and unused, we’ve made it look nicer for local residents.”

For more information, call the Housing Team on freephone 0800 953 0215.

SUCCESS OF HEALTHY MINDS LIVES ON...

Need to relax your mind and body more?

Make the most of what's on offer in Greet's Green.

The Healthy Minds project was launched to help individuals, families and communities in Greet's Green to become mentally healthier.

One of the most successful aspects of the programme has been the delivery of complementary therapies and many people have benefitted from a whole range of activities, including taster sessions of yoga, tai chi, relaxation and massage.

Even though the Healthy Minds project itself has now come to a close, that's not the end of the story. There are still lots of ways people of all ages can access complementary therapies and a whole host of other healthy activities in the Greet's Green area.

Julie Davies, Co-ordinator for the Healthy Minds project in Greet's Green, said: "We want residents to know where they can continue to access many of the activities which have proved so popular.

"We've had some really positive feedback about the complementary therapies. The taster sessions gave people an opportunity to experience how complementary therapies can

promote physical and mental wellbeing and we know many of them will continue to be interested in these in the future."

Although the funding from Greet's Green Partnership has ended, funding from a number of other sources will be enabling many aspects of the Healthy Minds project, including the complementary therapies, to continue. Sandwell Primary Care Trust will also be looking at the services provided throughout

Sandwell to identify any gaps. At the YMCA Wellbeing and Fitness Centre in Carters Green, funding from the Big Lottery means that complementary and healthy activities including tai chi, yoga and aromatherapy can take place.

The YMCA also provides a healthy eating café and light boxes to help people who suffer from SAD (Seasonal Affective Disorder).

Head of Projects, Mike Rossington, said: "We've a whole programme of activities at the YMCA designed to promote people's mental health and physical wellbeing.

"We'd encourage people of all ages to come along and give them a try."

Complementary therapist Sonia Cooper, of In 2 Balance, has been heavily involved with providing alternative therapies through the Healthy Minds project. Details of many of the therapies available in Greet's Green are listed opposite, but to find out more, call Sonia on 07985 670 758.

Support Still Available

Two other successes of the Healthy Minds project are also set to continue.

The **Self-help Bereavement Group** runs on the second Monday of every month at Swan Community Care Link at Wood Lane Community Centre.

It takes place from 1.00pm – 3.00pm and is open to anyone who's suffered a bereavement and feels it would be beneficial to meet others who've had similar experiences.

To find out more, call Wendy James on 0121 553 7074.

The **'Drop-in' service** will also continue to take place every fortnight at Lodge Road Community Centre on Mondays, from 2.00pm – 4.00pm. These sessions are open to anyone who wants to call in for a chat. People can get information on local support services and refreshments are free.

For more information, call Debbie Roberts at Aquarius on 0121 525 9292.



Why Don't You Try...

YMCA Wellbeing and Fitness Centre

38 Carters Green
West Bromwich
B70 9LG

Tel: **0121 524 1950** www.wbymca.org.uk

The YMCA provides a Healthy Eating Café, Light Boxes (free with a cup of tea), Tai Chi, Yoga Fit (£1 per session) and Aromatherapy (£5 per session). Special offers are available when multiple sessions are booked. An extensive programme of other physical activities is also available.

Dorcas Housing and Community Support Association

393a High Street
West Bromwich
B70 9QW

Tel: **0121 553 7737**

Offers a wide range of health support to the African Caribbean Community, including health information, physical activities and wellbeing opportunities.

West Bromwich Library

High Street
West Bromwich
B70 8DZ

Tel: **0121 565 2788**

Spirituality Group (Sandwell Mind)
Mondays 3.00pm – 6.00pm

Farley Park Community Centre

Whitehall Road
West Bromwich
B70 OHF

Tel: **0121 520 4712**

Holistic Therapy sessions, Karate classes and gentle exercise for older people.

Guru Nanak Community Centre

21 Victoria Street
West Bromwich
B70 8ET

Tel: **0121 525 6923**

Offers a range of health and fitness activities as well as spiritual advice and guidance.

The Krishna Community Hall

81 Old Meeting Street
West Bromwich
B70 9SZ

Tel: **07779 706530**

Offers gentle exercise classes, healthy eating, yoga classes and religious and spiritual advice.

Lodge Road Community Centre

Lodge Road
West Bromwich
B70 8PJ

Tel: **0121 553 2013**

Yoga - Thursdays 6.00pm – 7.00pm

Other activities and classes are also available.



WHAT AN INSPIRATION!

Local women enjoyed taking part in a host of celebratory events to mark International Women's Day - and were given inspiring ideas for their future by other Greets Green women.

The annual event was held at West Bromwich Town Hall on Tuesday 10th March and featured lots of stalls, entertainment and workshops. Its theme was 'inspirational women' and the event certainly featured lots of them! Local businesswomen shared their ideas on how to get ahead and be successful in a chosen field, while women who are active in the community explained how anyone can make a difference locally. There were also keep fit demonstrations, pampering sessions and craft workshops and demonstrations including glass painting, oil on canvas work, card making, and how to make flowers in Japanese clay. Information stalls enabled women to find out where advice and support is available in the community and how to access it. A raffle on the day raised £25 for Breast Cancer.

For more details and information about future events in Greets Green, call Brian McKinstrie, Communications & PR Manager on freephone 0800 953 0215.

Here's a taster of some of our inspirational women...

Joan Gregory-Bartosch

Joan is one of the many artists based in Greets Green. In 2007, she used her initiative and ingenuity to set up 'ARTIST', a networking group which has become incredibly successful, attracting many artists from the area to meet regularly and support each other.

Joan is Chair of the group and arranges for the members to meet up every two months at Wood Lane Community Centre, taking it in turns to teach each other their own individual art discipline.

With over 14 regular members, all with different skills, there's plenty to learn! Skills range from jewellery making and ceramics to candle making, glass painting, card making and painting on canvas.

Amy Bahat

Amy was still at college when she first got involved in her local community, proving you're never too young to start making a difference.

Amy started going to Greets Green Youth Forum meetings because her sister was involved, and before she knew it, she was Vice Chair! She had a seat on the Greets Green Partnership Board and enjoyed it so much that when a vacancy arose for the Neighbourhood Rep for Carters Green, she stood for election at the age of just 21.



Liz Mabley

Liz has been involved with communities across Sandwell for many years and currently works for Sandwell Partnership, which aims to create a healthier, safer and better skilled Sandwell. She's very well known throughout the area and helps to ensure local people's voices are heard so that change happens for the good.

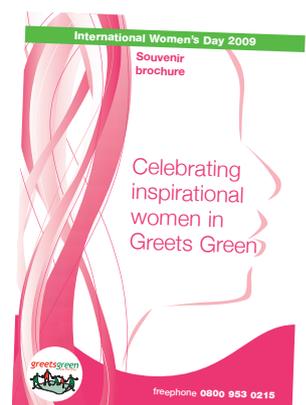
Liz works with nine others at Sandwell Partnership, all of whom are trying to achieve Sandwell's mission of 'great people, great place and great prospects'. She's passionate about her role and makes sure the many different groups and individuals in the community are listened to.



Souvenir brochure available

A souvenir brochure is available which features a number of Greets Green's inspirational women. While they are all of different ages and from different backgrounds, all of them have one thing in common - they're an inspiration to us all.

If you'd like a copy of the brochure, call into the Greets Green Partnership offices on the High Street and pick one up. You won't be able to put it down!



NEWS

FROM GGCE

greet's green
community enterprises Ltd



What is Greet's Green Community Enterprises?

Greet's Green Community Enterprises is the legacy body for Greet's Green Partnership. It has been set up to ensure that some of the work started by the Partnership continues beyond 2010.

Its aim is to develop local enterprise to create resources for the community. The organisation is already starting to employ and train local people to run its new ventures, such as its computer hardware recycling company.

Community enterprises are businesses which aim to generate profit and this profit is either reinvested back in to the business or the community.

GGCE has both a commercial and a community focus, with both aspects working together to provide the best possible work, training and leisure opportunities.

The GGCE Board is made up of a mixture of local residents, local business people and public sector representatives. The organisation is looking for more members and application forms are available.

To find out how you can get involved in the future of the organisation, call Chief Executive, Andrew Rainsford on 0121 525 2772.

NEW LOGO LAUNCHED

Greet's Green Community Enterprises has launched a vibrant new logo which is set to become a familiar image across Greet's Green.

The logo features the red and green of the Greet's Green Partnership logo, to remind local people and businesses how GGCE has evolved from the Partnership and is continuing its valuable work.

It also uses two stylised people, holding hands, illustrating that people are at the heart of the organisation and symbolising the joining together of local enterprise and the local community.

The organisation's new strapline, 'promoting enterprise and the community', reinforces this message. Watch out for the new logo.



Promoting enterprise and the community

BRING IN YOUR OLD COMPUTERS!

Need to get rid of any unwanted computers?

We will dispose of, and recycle, any old computer hardware.



- computers broken up and components recycled
- data wiped to American defence standards
- free service for local residents
- competitive charges for businesses

Enable your business to comply with the WEEE Directive and get your unwanted computer equipment disposed of responsibly.

Call GGCE on 0121 525 2772



ANDY JOINS THE TEAM

Andy Grigg has joined the Greets Green Community Enterprises team as Business Development Executive and is based at Belper Enterprise Park.

He's busy looking for ways to develop the organisation and launch new commercial enterprises in the future. With a strong commercial background and a real desire to see the new organisation succeed, Andy is certainly the right man for the job.

"I was previously a Director of a packaging company in Tividale and was Business Development Director of a company prior to that," Andy explains. "I've also worked as a Senior Auditor at a chartered accountants so have the financial, as well as business, knowledge and experience.

"I'm looking forward to helping GGCE move forward and develop, providing support to the community as well as meeting local business needs."

Andy, who lives in Bilston, describes himself as committed and trustworthy – two strengths which he's sure will be key in helping GGCE to succeed.

To contact Andy, call GGCE on 0121 525 2772.

IT services available

A wide range of IT services are now being offered by GGCE – benefitting local businesses and providing valuable work experience for local people.

Volunteers with specialist computer skills are working with GGCE to enable a whole host of IT services to be provided to local businesses.

While the volunteers gain work experience through GGCE, businesses can take advantage of IT services including web page design, database creation, first line IT support for small and medium sized businesses, Portable Appliance Testing (PAT), computer maintenance and repair, and secure data destruction.

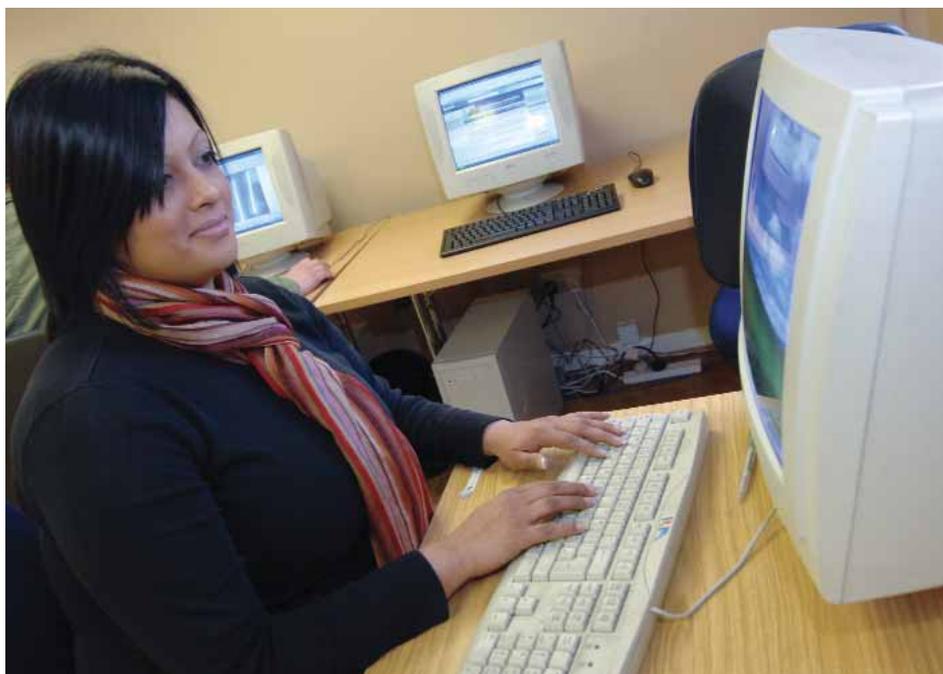
The volunteers are being recruited through organisations including Pertemps, SCVO and Jobcentre Plus, and are really enjoying being in a work environment and using their computer skills.

Any business interested in learning more about the full range of computer services available, should get in touch. And if you are a volunteer and want to gain work experience in computer services, contact GGCE to find out more.



CRAFT SALE

The Wood Lane ARTIST Network is holding a sale of crafts made by local residents - from pottery, jewellery and greeting cards to paintings, clay flowers and glass work. With a wide range of reasonably priced craft items on sale, there'll be lots of ideas for presents for friends and family. Tea and cakes will also be available.



COMPUTER SUITE FOR HIRE

Local businesses looking for a brand new training room or computer suite to hire should speak to GGCE!

The new computer suite at Belper Enterprise Park is already proving popular with businesses and organisations for a range of training purposes. It can accommodate 10 people for computer training or up to 20 people using it as a general training room. All the computers are networked and a range of other training equipment, such as a projector and flip chart, are also available.

The Training Foundation, based at the University of Warwick Science Park, was one of the first organisations to hire the new facility. Training Consultant, Frances Day said: "I held a three-day course called Fast-track Training Delivery Skills for IT trainers from Sandwell Primary Care Trust, in the new computer suite.

"The course helps trainers to develop their skills in training and focuses on planning training sessions that are structured, participative and enjoyable.

"I was very impressed with the facilities. All the computers and projection equipment was recycled - and it worked perfectly. I was also impressed with the staff who were very friendly, welcoming and helpful."

For more information about the computer suite, or for booking enquiries, call GGCE on 0121 525 2772.

Wood Lane
Community Centre
Saturday 9th May
1.00pm - 4.00pm

For more details
call 0121 525 2662



Introducing Sharon

Anyone calling GGCE is likely to hear the voice of Sharon Crowley, Business Administration Support Officer, on the end of the phone.

Sharon has recently moved from Wood Lane to the GGCE offices at Belper Enterprise Park to undertake all the administration for the whole team.

"I'm dealing with 101 different things, such as job application packs, booking the new training room/computer suite, carrying out administration for the volunteers, and providing all the support that the team needs," she says.

Sharon is no stranger to organisations with a strong community focus as she's previously worked at St Albans Community Association in Smethwick for four years.

"I had a lot of roles during my time at St Albans including being Finance Officer and setting up a friendship group," she explains. "It was good experience for my position here."

Having spent her first few weeks getting to grips with GGCE, Sharon is now enjoying working with a new organisation which is just getting off the ground, and helping to shape its future.

ORGANISATIONS SEEK YOUNG ADVISORS' **HELP**

The Sandwell Young Advisors have got off to a flying start this year, working with a number of local businesses and organisations to help them engage with, and involve, young people.

Following their official launch last December, which helped to raise their profile, the team has been busy dealing with enquiries from a range of organisations who are keen to make full use of their services.

One of the first challenges for the Young Advisors was to work alongside the local Police to help design a new website called 'pub watch'.

The site contains information about the different pubs in the area, sharing information on the troublemakers who threaten other people's enjoyment of the bars.

A youth perspective on the service was required, and so the Police went straight to the experts – the Sandwell Young Advisors.

Rohan, aged 19, said: "I really enjoy being a Young Advisor and doing projects which are a big help to the community. Every week brings something different at the moment.

"As we generate our own jobs, it's a great incentive to work really hard and achieve great results for the projects we work on."

The Young Advisors have also been working with George Salter Collegiate Academy, helping to understand what

young people really want from the school. George Salter is considering opening on a Sunday and needed guidance on whether this would be worthwhile and what young people would like to do.

The team researched which activities would be most popular with local youngsters and football and basketball came out top, followed by some more arts based activities. These are now being considered in the school's activity plans.

RegenCo has also used the skills of the Young Advisors to understand how West Bromwich should be improved. Plans are underway to

transform the Town Centre with a range of new facilities, so the Young Advisors have been surveying what youngsters want from the area.

Andy Grigg, who co-ordinates the Young Advisors, said: "It has been a great start for the Young Advisors who've already managed to generate several community projects this year.

"Due to the amount of work we're getting, we will be expanding the team. Watch this space for details!"

For more information on the Sandwell Young Advisors, contact Andy Grigg at GGCE on 0121 525 2772 or email ggce@live.co.uk



Greets Green Community Enterprises
Unit 9 Belper Enterprise Park,
Greets Green Road, West Bromwich B70 9EN
Tel: 0121 525 2772
Email: ggce@live.co.uk



Wood Lane Community Centre,
157 Wood Lane,
West Bromwich B70 9PT
Tel: 0121 525 2662
Email: woodlane@btconnect.com



DIG OUT YOUR UNDIES FOR CHARITY!

Bra-vo! Local family business, BCR Global Textiles, has started an innovative bra recycling scheme and it needs your undies.

The company is now the UK's leading textile re-use and recycling specialist. It's estimated that more than one million tonnes of textiles are thrown away globally each year. BCR can re-use and recycle almost any type of wearable textile including t-shirts, shoes and belts.

And the company is especially keen to get its hands on your bras! Despite being such an everyday item in this country, bras are expensive to manufacture and this means that there's a shortage of affordable bras for women in the third world.

BCR, which is based on Greets Green Industrial Estate, is asking women to donate their unwanted bras, which will then be sent on to women in Africa.

And this unusual project is also helping the UK as well as making a difference to women in developing countries.

Managing Director, Maxine Sault, explains: "Encouraging women to recycle their bras also reduces local landfill."

The company has nearly 600 bra-banks nationwide, where women can donate their unwanted bras.

Local women wanting to help the cause can either bring their bras along to the company's headquarters on Greets Green Road, place them in a pink bra bank at their recycling centre or maybe even ask for a bra bank at their workplace or local gym.

To find out more, contact BCR Global Textiles on 0121 520 7586.



Did you know...

- Textile recycling is where unwanted clothes, shoes and textiles are collected and sorted for re-use.
- Re-useable textiles and shoes are sent abroad where they can provide clothing for those who either don't have access to, or are unable to afford new garments.
- Textiles unsuitable for re-use are recycled.
- Cottons and linen are cut down to be re-used as industrial wipes.
- Materials such as wool are 'pulled' and made into fresh yarn, or re-used as felt for stuffing upholstery.
- People are encouraged to put wearable clothes, shoes and other textiles into plastic bags and take them to the textile bank at their local recycling centre.

Returning to work?

If you've been unemployed but are now returning to work, help with transport costs is now on offer.

Last issue we ran a story on what's available. Lots of you called for information. Here's the most up-to-date details.

WorkWise Sandwell is jointly funded by Sandwell Council and Centro to provide an extra incentive to help local people get back into work. The project provides:

- a personalised journey planning service for travelling to interviews and new jobs
- free day tickets for attendance at interviews
- monthly travel passes (for bus, rail or metro) for 1-3 months to those starting new jobs

To be eligible for the WorkWise project, you must have been unemployed for a period of time and be returning to work for at least 16 hours a week, live in Sandwell, and be able to confirm details of your job.

Katherine Hewitt, Jobs & Skills Theme Leader for Greets Green Partnership said: "As transport costs are often a barrier to people returning to work, the travel grants provided through the WorkWise project will certainly be a great help."

To find out more, contact Shanara Begum on 0121 569 2146.

GET IN SHAPE FOR SPRING!

Mums and dads are being given a helping hand to shape up for spring at Greets Green Children's Centre.

A whole host of initiatives are underway at the centre in Wattle Road to encourage parents to think about their own health and wellbeing, as well as that of their children.

Deputy Manager, Flo Reynolds, explained: "Often parents don't give as much thought to their own health as they ought to and it can be very easy for them to forget to focus on keeping themselves healthy. Because they've got so much else to think

about, they can keep putting any health concerns to one side.

"Our aim is to enhance the health programme at the Children's Centre so that parents who are coming into the centre anyway can take advantage of what's on offer while they're here. That way, they aren't having to make a special journey or find time they don't have."

The new health programme kicked off with the delivery of a BMI machine, which is already proving a hit with parents. Users simply have to stand on the machine to

find out their height, weight, body mass index and blood pressure, and the whole service is completely free of charge.

"Everyone who's used it so far thinks it's fantastic," said Flo. "There's certainly been no shortage of parents queuing up to try it out."

The plan is to use the BMI machine as part of a whole new health programme. Anyone who signs up will be given a print out of their readings and a copy will also be kept on file at the centre so users can keep an eye on their progress.

Plus, the Children's Centre aims to offer a range of health-related activities, including healthy eating advice and exercise sessions. Flo said: "We've bought some yoga mats and are set to develop the exercise element of what we offer here.

"We're also looking to get various health professionals and other organisations on board so we can offer a broader healthy living programme for parents.

"Parents seem to be really interested – it's time for them to think of themselves as well as their children."

To find out more, call Flo at the Children's Centre on 0121 612 5131.



PREGNANT? STOP SMOKING!

The NHS Smokefree team has launched a powerful new campaign to raise awareness of the dangers of smoking for pregnant women and their babies.

Its aim is to make more women aware of why smoking is harmful to them and their baby. It also hopes to show that stopping smoking - no matter how far along the pregnancy is - will benefit the mother and her baby immediately.

Every cigarette smoked restricts the essential oxygen supply to an unborn baby, so that their tiny heart has to beat harder every time.

The NHS Pregnancy Smoking **Helpline** - **0800 169 9 169** - offers a free and friendly service with practical advice about stopping

smoking. Pregnant women can sign-up to receive regular phone calls which provide flexible ongoing support and encouragement.

Plus, Sandwell Stop Smoking Service offers a range of support services for pregnant women.

As part of the new campaign, midwives have also been provided with new information to help pregnant women stop smoking. These include a new leaflet and a Smoking in Pregnancy Support DVD.

If you'd like to find out more, you can contact the Sandwell Stop Smoking Service on 0800 073 1388.



Sandwell **NHS**
Primary Care Trust

SMOKEFREE

Is your street fit for walking?

LIVING STREETS
PUTTING PEOPLE FIRST

The Fitter for Walking project aims to improve the streets in your neighbourhood and encourage more people to walk for short journeys. We asked Hema Kasi-Patel, Regional Co-ordinator for the project, to tell us more...

Q. Who's behind the Fitter for Walking project?

A. Living Streets is a national charity which stands up for pedestrians. Last year, we were part of a successful consortium which won £20 million of Big Lottery funding to run projects across the country to get people physically active in their daily lives. One of these, run by us, is a brand new Fitter For Walking project.

Q. So, what's it all about?

A. The Fitter for Walking project aims to get people walking more as part of their daily routine. In order to do this we need our streets to feel safe, look attractive and be looked after with people in mind.

Q. What sort of things might help?

A. Often it's simple things that can make a huge difference to how we view our streets - whether it's clearing up a particularly useful walking route, starting up street parties or running campaigns to get parents walking the school run.

Q. How can I get involved?

A. Nobody knows your local area better than you and if you have an idea of how to improve your streets, no matter how big or small, I would love to hear from you.

For more information, get in touch with Hema on 07595 781 875 or email hema.kasi-patel@livingstreets.org.uk If you would like to know more about other walking initiatives in Sandwell, please contact Andrew Wood, Walks Programme Co-ordinator on 0121 612 1400 or email andrew.wood@sandwell-pct.nhs.uk

Any ideas for seminars?

The series of three community cohesion seminars, organised by Greets Green Partnership, has been a huge success, bringing together many different people to learn about key issues which affect people today.

Community Services Worker, Abdul Monim Khan, has been the leading force behind the 2008/09 programme which kicked off last June with a free Equality & Human Rights seminar.

More than 75 residents and representatives from local groups and agencies, came along to Greets Green Access Centre to learn more about the new Equality & Human Rights Commission and how it may affect them.

Then in October at the Citizenship seminar at the Bethel Church, around 60 people discussed how to make our communities fairer and better.

People from different communities and faith groups, and voluntary and statutory organisations such as Sandwell Council, the Police and Sandwell Primary Care Trust, all learnt more about the issue of citizenship in multi-cultural Britain.

The final seminar in the series took place in January and focused on Equality & Access to Services. Its aim was to raise awareness of the legislation surrounding equality in relation to access to services.

Delegates were able to work together to look at how to achieve a greater



uptake of the services provided by different organisations.

All three seminars featured a diverse line-up of speakers including councillors, academics and leading figures from statutory and voluntary organisations.

"They were fantastic events," said Community Services Worker, Abdul Monim Khan. "They promoted excellent partnership working, enabling people to discuss important issues and think of solutions."

The Partnership is now talking to other organisations in Sandwell in the hope that they will take on this model to run similar events in the future. If you can think of any issues which would make a good theme for a seminar, we will pass on your ideas. Call Abdul Monim Khan at Greets Green Partnership on freephone 0800 953 0215.



BUSINESS GRANTS

supporting entrepreneurs

From fitness centres and soft furnishing companies to cake bakers and sign makers – a wide range of new businesses have got off the ground, while existing companies have been given a helping hand. And it's all down to the Business Support project.

Since September 2005, local entrepreneurs with a bright idea and a burning ambition to succeed have been supported with business start-up grants, while existing businesses wishing to expand or re-locate to the area have been supported financially to make the move.

The Business Support project, which is funded by Greets Green Partnership, and delivered by the Black Country Small Business Service Ltd (Business Link), is now drawing to a close, but it leaves more than 270 businesses better off.

A total of 181 business ideas have been turned into reality thanks to start-up grants and more than 90 existing businesses are now bigger and stronger following financial help from the project.

Businesses have been supported in a wide variety of ways, with the grants allowing them to increase their staff numbers, purchase new equipment, relocate to new premises or enable staff to gain new qualifications.

Judith Bayliss, the Business Link Business Advisor who's been in charge of the project over the past three years, explains: "The Business Support project was not just about giving out money. It enabled local businesses to become sustainable by helping them to access a wide range of business help and advice.

"Along with the grants, we offered a whole package of business support such as developing a business plan and accessing marketing and IT support, because money on its own doesn't guarantee business success. I'm glad we've managed to help so many local businesses in this way."

Although the project will end shortly, there may be other organisations who can offer help. Call Katherine Hewitt, Jobs & Skills Theme Leader at Greets Green Partnership on freephone 0800 953 0215.

Sign of the times

One of the last businesses to benefit from the Business Support project was Impact Signs & Solutions, a local sign making business, run by James and Jan Aldridge.

James had been in the sign design and installation business since he left school but became unemployed last year. The couple took the leap of faith and set up their own sign making business in January, and were successful in securing one of the last grants on offer from the Business Support project.

Jan said: "I read about the project in the Greets Green magazine. I applied for a grant the first week we started the company and supplied them with a copy of our business plan."

The company impressed the project team and was awarded a grant to pay for a plotter, allowing them to bring production of their signs in-house, a lap top and driving lessons for James. This meant that both the business partners could be on the road, bringing in business at the same time.

"We've been so pleased with the result," adds Jan. "The grant has already made a big difference to the way we do business and has given us the chance to be more cost effective and efficient.

"We were competitive at the start, but we've used the grant in such a way that we've lowered our overheads. It gives us more of a competitive edge and allows us to win more business."

If you'd like to contact Impact Signs & Solutions, call Jan on 07905 098 981.



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

BEATING THE CREDIT CRUNCH

As the credit crunch bites, money worries are all too common, especially for those on benefits. But help is at hand!

Every penny really does count and Sandwell Council can help people make sure they're getting everything they're entitled to.

Nearly eight out of 10 people who contact the Council's Welfare Rights Unit aren't claiming all the benefits they should be. In fact, over the last year, the unit saw more than 9,000 people and helped them to access £21 million of unclaimed benefits.

Whether you're an older person, a carer, someone with health problems, mental health problems or learning difficulties, are in low paid work or have children, there's help and support available. The Council's Welfare Rights Unit can help you look at what you should be claiming, complete the forms you need and even help you appeal if a claim has failed. Plus, they guarantee they'll never make you financially worse off. Get in touch and see if you could be better off.

To find out more, call the Welfare Rights Unit advice line on 0121 569 3158 9.30am – 4.00pm Monday to Thursday, 9.30am – 12.30pm Friday. Or ask to see one of their advisers at your local Neighbourhood office.



NEW CENTRE MANAGER

OSCAR Sandwell has welcomed a new Centre Manager, who's already a familiar face around the organisation.

Rachel McFee has taken on the role following the departure of Chief Executive, Sonia Lindsay who has moved to become Chief Executive of OSCAR Birmingham.

OSCAR (the Organisation for Sickle Cell Anaemia Research and Thalassaemia Support) works to improve the quality of life for people affected by Sickle Cell and Thalassaemia blood disorders. It offers a range of advice and information, training, counselling, screening and support.

Rachel was previously Community Engagement Worker for Greets Green Community Enterprises, but has been involved in OSCAR for the past 12 years. She's already a Board member of the organisation and has been a regular volunteer, as well as supporting all their events and initiatives.

"I'm keen to get the organisation back on track and become even more involved in their work," Rachel says.

To contact OSCAR Sandwell, call 0121 525 0556.



Come & dance

If it's Tuesday, it's time to dance. That's the message from West Bromwich YMCA which is encouraging everyone in the community to get on their feet.

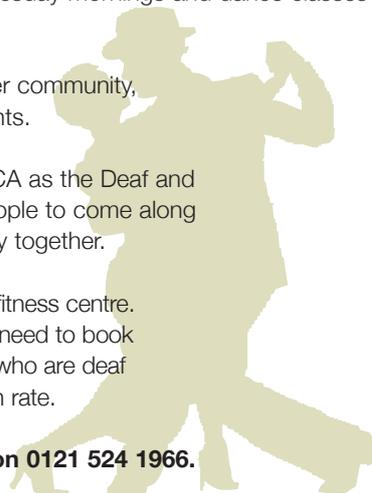
For the past year, the YMCA has run popular street-dance classes on Tuesday evenings. Their popularity has led to the centre increasing its programme to other types of dance classes including dancercise on Tuesday mornings and dance classes for the over 50s on Tuesday afternoons.

The classes have recently been attracting the wider community, including some deaf and hard of hearing participants.

Rebecca Ann Withey, who recently joined the YMCA as the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Co-ordinator, is keen for more people to come along and join in so that the classes bring the community together.

The hour-long dance classes are held at the YMCA fitness centre. Non-members are welcome to come along, but will need to book in advance and pay a small fee at reception. Those who are deaf or hard of hearing will only need to pay a concession rate.

To find out more, call the YMCA fitness club on 0121 524 1966.





Marathon effort from all at George Salters

www.greetsgreen.sandwell.gov.uk



Sign up to a new course from the Prince's Trust see page 21

Young people get set for the future see page 22

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

Marathon effort from all at George Salters

young greets green



Students and staff at George Salter Collegiate Academy certainly put their new gym equipment through its paces – and raised lots of cash at the same time.

To celebrate the arrival of the new equipment, the School's Community Education and Sports Development Manager, Rus Smith, decided to organise a 24 hour marathon in the gym.



A total of 40 staff members and sixth formers took part, with Head Teacher, Mick Green, putting his back into starting it all off. Local hero and marathon supremo Dave Heeley (aka Blind Dave) also came along to lend his support.



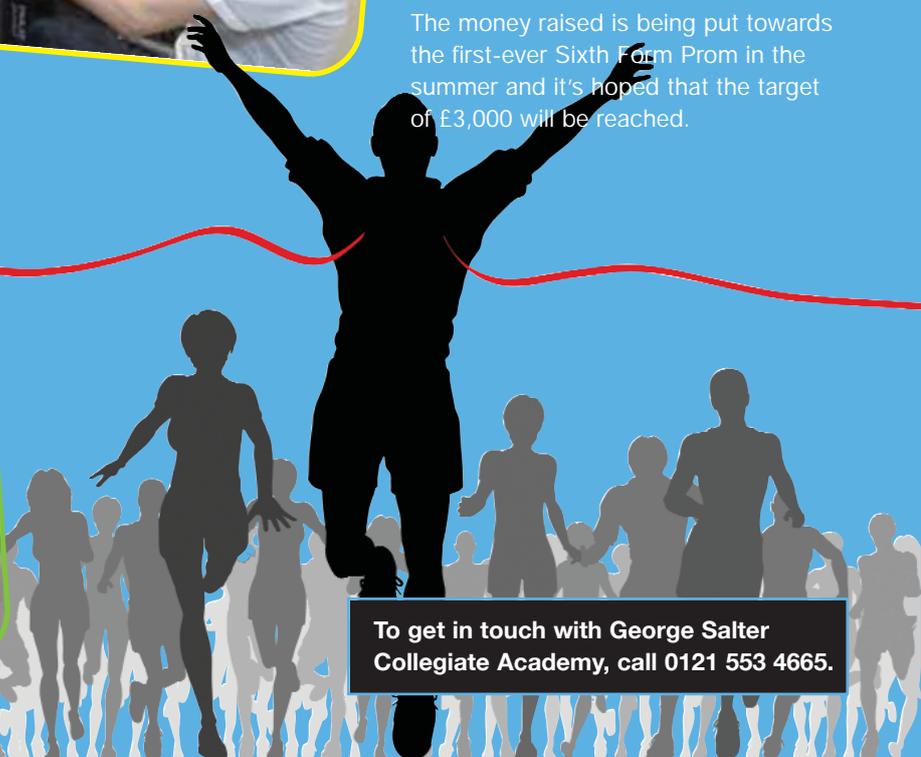
Rus said: "The atmosphere was excellent and the challenge was what people wanted. We planned it so people turned up at different times – some did a couple of hours and went, and some stopped right through the night. There were new faces coming in all the time, which was great to see."



The new gym equipment consists of two running machines, two bikes, two cross trainers, two step machines and weight machines. For the 24 hour challenge, staff and students worked up a sweat on the running machines and bikes.

Altogether, the team covered a staggering 22 marathon distances in the full 24 hours, with Rus alone doing a whole marathon on the bike!

The money raised is being put towards the first-ever Sixth Form Prom in the summer and it's hoped that the target of £3,000 will be reached.



To get in touch with George Salter Collegiate Academy, call 0121 553 4665.

Sign up!

Having made a real difference to young people in Greets Green, PC Lou Carter has moved to a new role which sees her working with even more youngsters across a much wider area. And she needs you!

A well known member of the Greets Green Neighbourhood Policing Team for the past four years, PC Lou Carter has been heavily involved in keeping young people in Greets Green out of trouble.

She introduced a number of schemes and courses in the evenings for children and their families, in the hope that this will reduce trouble making and improve the lives of young people. Now she's been seconded to work for the Prince's Trust where she's running a new programme. And she's keen to get local young people to sign up to the course.

The course is run over 12 weeks and is open to 16-25 year olds who are out of education. The course covers an induction week, a residential week in Wales or Derbyshire, as well as involvement in a community project where students are encouraged to go out and fundraise for their chosen project. There is also a two week work placement.

It's been designed to help build life skills and confidence, and to provide opportunities for the students to work together as a team on some great projects. Students also gain qualifications at the end of the course, including first aid and food hygiene training.



Joining the Prince's Trust Programme will not affect any benefits young people may be receiving, and it's a great opportunity to meet new people and gain new experience.

Spaces are limited, but anyone interested in finding out more about the course should contact PC Lou Carter on 07771 388 596.

KIDS GET CREATIVE

Creative youngsters in Greets Green have helped to design a brand new logo for West Bromwich Central CoOP.

Newtown Primary is the lead school for the CoOP which brings together Greets Green Primary Schools, Ryders Green, Guns Village, Lodge and Lyng, along with George Salter Collegiate Academy and the four other West Bromwich Primary Schools.

The aim is undertake a range of joint activities, such as fun days, inter-school sports activities and holiday clubs, which enable youngsters from different schools to mix and make new friends.

More than 140 logo competition entries were whittled down to a shortlist of nine winners and their designs were incorporated into the final version by a graphic designer.

Extended Schools Co-ordinator, Julie Nichols, who is based at Newtown Primary, has been delighted by the response to the inter-school competition. All nine winners, who come from three schools - George Salter Collegiate

Academy, Newtown Primary and Ryders Green Primary, will receive a gift voucher and a certificate.

The new logo will feature on notice-boards outside all 10 schools which are part of the CoOP and will also appear on publications such as the CoOP's regular bulletin.

To find out more about the CoOP, contact Julie Nichols, on 0121 557 8504.



GROWING TOGETHER
West Bromwich Central CoOP

SET FOR THE FUTURE

Two Greet Green youngsters have returned to education and are well on their way to achieving their goals thanks to a great local project.



“The work experience was really nice and I enjoyed it. I’m now hoping to do a course in the summer working with nursery school children.”

Anyone who leaves school with nothing to move on to is called a ‘NEET’ – not in education, employment or training.

One of Greet Green Partnership’s aims is to make sure that pupils don’t end up as NEETs and instead can get a job, continue with their studies or start some training. Last year, the Partnership started working with St Albans Community Association in Smethwick to encourage young people to start an Employability Award course.

Atiya and her brother Ozair signed up and became the first two young people from Greet Green to complete the course last September.

Katherine Hewitt, Jobs & Skills Theme Leader, explains: “We decided to go out and talk to people in the local community and see whether they knew of any suitable young people. Our Pakistani Rep knew Atiya and Ozair, who were keen to start the course.”

The Employability Award course is a 12 week programme which saw Atiya and Ozair attending St Albans Community Association one day a week.

They started by looking at their personal targets and then discussed their long term goals and how to achieve them. The course covers a range of different modules to give the

young people the skills, knowledge and confidence needed to take the next step in life.

Atiya explains: “I recently came from Pakistan to England so I’d not been at school here and wasn’t involved in anything, so the course was good.”

Her brother wasn’t sure what he wanted to do in life and the course was able to help him find a direction in which to head.

Atiya and Ozair had to do eight days of work experience and Atiya chose to work at the pre-school at St Albans Community Association, plus its summer play scheme.

Ozair has always been interested in graphics but through his placement at The Public, he got interested in IT and is now set on a career in that industry.

Having completed a portfolio of work and meeting certain standards during the course – such as attending every week, arriving on time and being willing to learn – Atiya and Ozair gained an Entry 3 ASDAN Employability Award at the end of the course. They also received something extremely valuable – a reference from their work placement employer.

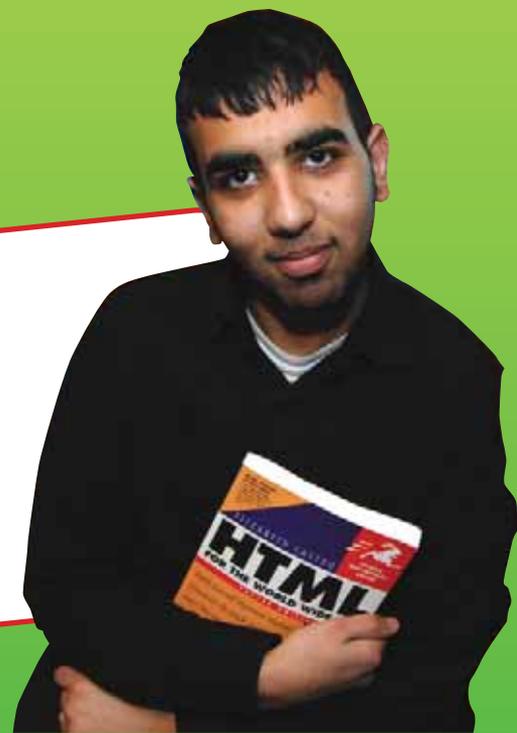
“Many young people find it hard getting their first job. They are unable to provide a reference as they’ve not worked before,” says Katherine Hewitt. “The whole point of the course is to move them on a step, which is what we’ve done.”

Atiya has now gone into full-time education. “I attend Sandwell College in Smethwick full-time to study English, maths, computers and art and I’m really liking it,” she says.

Ozair adds: “I’m in the sixth form at George Salter Collegiate Academy doing A levels in English, maths and science. After that I want to do some courses in IT so I can start a career.”

If you want to find out more about opportunities like this, call Katherine Hewitt on freephone 0800 953 0215. For details of other courses available at St Albans Community Association, call Tonia Flannigan on 0121 558 0018.

“They helped me a lot on the course. They helped me to make a CV and to look at personal strengths and decide which course to do. They then showed me how to find a course.”



SCHOOLS UNITE TO BEAT ASB

An innovative new on-line project has brought school children together to learn about the increasing problem of anti-social behaviour.

Pupils from Lyng Primary joined with those from other primary schools in West Bromwich to watch an on-line video about the Police and how they deal with anti-social behaviour. They

then 'blogged' their questions and ideas on-line to their local Police Community Support Officer.

Having learnt more about anti-social behaviour, they created animations and comics to depict the main issues, coming up with some great ideas on how to reduce crime. The pupils' masterpieces were proudly displayed at The Public.

All those taking part in the project were presented with certificates to recognise their efforts by the Deputy Mayor of Sandwell, Councillor Iris Boucher.

Cllr Boucher said: "The work the children did on the computer was very innovative and interesting. It's wonderful that they're learning about such issues so young."

Inspector Mark Cooper of West Bromwich Police added: "I was astounded by the quality and delivery of the presentations from the children. They've learned a lot about this important issue, and we will be continuing to support the local schools in the future."

The project, which was organised to help build a safer Sandwell, was supported by West Midlands Police, Sandwell Housing Partnerships, Menzies City Learning Centre, Urban Living and Broadband Sandwell.

To find out details of future projects call Mollie McPherson on 0121 569 3441.



competition corner

Simply send your entry by 15th May 2009 to: Magazine Competition, FREEPOST GREET'S GREEN PARTNERSHIP (no stamp required). The first three correct entries out of the hat will each win a £10 voucher.

Simply answer the clues below to find six types of fruit. Once you've found all the answers, a seventh fruit will appear in the boxes vertically.

1. One of the fruits which the bells of St Clements says?
2. A small orange?
3. Eaten in two's?
4. Monkeys like eating these?
5. Eat these when you're ill?
6. One a day keeps the doctor away?

Congratulations
to Leena Al-Muflahi, Isha Brady and Mrs S Turley who each won a £10 voucher from the February/March competition.

Please fill in your details using BLOCK CAPITALS.

Name: _____
 Address: _____

 Tel No. _____ Age: _____

This competition is open to all ages