

LPS talk



How are WE Doing?

Here's an idea of what's been happening at your housing office for the period April 2010 to August 2010:

- Callers to reception 4684
- Telephone calls dealt with 9525
- Home visits by Estate Officers and Rents Services Officer 1898
- Bulk rubbish removal 386
- Graffiti removed 75

Summer Success

This year Whitefriars set aside £10,000 from its Pride in Your Street grant award scheme, to fund small projects within communities. The customer panel, who decided on the successful bids, wished they had far more money, given the exciting range of really great projects submitted.

Each project had to describe the benefits that it would bring to Whitefriars customers, their families or communities.

And it just proves how much is going on in our communities with 29 projects funded, across the city.

Examples in our area include a non contact boxing scheme in Holbrooks. This is based at the

youth centre and aims to reduce some of the anti social behaviour issues happening in the area.

The Burundian and Rwandese women's group, and the Somali Community network were founded to support Whitefriars customers, from newer communities, with advice and practical support on how to maintain home and gardens.

And, funded from a separate scheme, Hillfields residents were supported to organise a Big Lunch to help residents to get to know one another. Also supported by the FolesHillfields community project based in Paul Stacey House over 50 local residents shared a wide range of foods, and more importantly each others company.

Inside this issue...

Growing paradise	2
What's going on	3
City wide news	4-7
Green doctors	8

Growing Paradise

Growing Paradise is a new gardening project for residents in the Paradise area of Coventry.

The project was set up with funding from Marks and Spencer, working in Partnership with Groundwork, Midland Heart, Whitefriars Housing, Orbit Housing, and Coventry City Council.

Paradise Community Action Group (PCAG) is also taking a leading role in promoting the project to residents in the Paradise area.

The purpose of the project is to encourage residents to learn about gardening, and to transfer their new skills to their own neighbouring gardens.

The project was launched on 19th May 2010 with an event at St Barnabus Family Centre, Cromwell Street. The event attracted residents of all ages from the Paradise Area.

Stanton Bridge Primary School children enjoyed choosing vegetable seeds to plant in individual pots, which they took home to nurture. Residents could also take advantage of practical gardening tips from Garden Organic, which specialises in all things organic. For those who fancied some physical exercise, there was the opportunity for hard labour in the newly created growing plots in the grounds of St Barnabus Family Centre.

The event proved to be a great success. A large number of residents expressed an interest in gardening project, and a number of residents

attended the first gardening workshop on 14 June 2010. There will be further workshops on Monday's between 10 am – 2 pm.



To keep up to date with Growing Paradise log on to:
www.facebook.com/growing.paradise

Patch Talk

Following our move from Beake Avenue to Little Park Street, we have taken the opportunity to review the patches we cover, and the Estate Officer who is responsible for it.

Below are the area's we cover, and the Estate Officer responsible, including our new addition to the team, Charlene Donegan.

Hillfields	Suki Johal
Holbrooks/Keresley	Gwen Andrew
Radford/Paradise	Sarah McInerney
Radford/Coundon	Charlene Donegan
Stoke Heath	Liz Chaytors/Louise Ell

If you have any issues, please contact our office at Little Park Street on **024 7676 7111**. If your issues are estates related and cannot be dealt with by our Customer Service Team, an appointment will be booked with your Estate Officer.

If you have any repair issues, please contact **0845 850 6090**.

What's going on

Mossdale update

As you will know, we are working closely with partner agencies and residents in Mossdale Close to improve the environment for everyone that lives there.

We are now going to hold a public meeting for the residents of Mossdale Close. This meeting is to advise them of the progress we have made, and ask for their opinions about the work we have done and what more we could do from here.

The public meeting was held on
Tuesday 13th July 2010 at 5.30pm
 at the Scout Hut located in
 Mossdale Close
Updates to follow

Supporting you

During June, visitors and the Customer Service Team took part in a customer satisfaction survey. Visitors were asked to vote using chocolate footballs to say whether or not they were happy with the service they had received during their visit to the office.

On the 25th June, the theme of the day was football and the team had dressed in football tops to support the World Cup. We are pleased to say that over the 4-week period of the world cup, while the voting took place, all those visitors who voted were very pleased with the service they received from the Customer Service Team and enjoyed the chocolate. Mr Simon Russell pictured (below) with the Team was just one of our many satisfied visitors.



Sweet Success! Pictured are Carley Farrell, Mr Simon Russell, Lynda Rule and Sian Slinn

Champions choose New Street Names

Young residents have been making their mark in the area after naming the first new streets of the Spirit Quarters scheme.

Local residents, including a group of 20 Junior Street Champions, were invited by Whitefriars Housing Group and the residents' Regeneration Action Team to choose names and themes for the first five streets that will be built in the Deedmore area around the former Deedmore School and Monkswood Crescent.

Four of the street names will reflect a wildlife theme and have been carefully selected by the Junior Street Champions aged between 9 and 12.

The fifth name, Tipton Way, was chosen by the Regeneration Action Team as a tribute to former community champion and Chair of the NDC Partnership Board, Roger Tipton who sadly died last year after serving 10 years as Chair.

The Junior Street Champions got

involved in the street naming after carrying out a number of projects to help improve their community such as working with Warwickshire Wildlife Trust on a project to clean up the Sowe Valley river and planting 100 trees in Bell Green Park.

Junior Street Champion Lorraine Sietambi, age nine, said:

"It is really exciting that we got the chance to name the streets. We had been doing some creative exercises with Warwickshire Wildlife Trust which gave us the ideas for the names of the streets."

"We liked the activities we did at the river and looking at nature so that helped us to think of the names."

Vicky Scott, Chair of the Deedmore Residents' Association and member of the Regeneration Action Team, added:

"We're especially pleased to have young people involved as it reflects our hope that the regeneration will result in a community that people are happy to live in for many years to come."

Lynn Wassell, Project Director at Whitefriars

Housing Group, who is leading the housing redevelopment work on behalf of Whitefriars, Coventry City Council and Coventry New Deal for Communities (NDC), said:

"Working closely with residents has been the key to the success of the regeneration of this area – right from the planning stage. Now we're seeing the plans come to life it made perfect sense to get residents involved in the naming, as it's their area and we want them to feel proud of it."

Spirit Quarters new street names:

- Tipton Way
- Dragonfly Drive
- Butterfly Walk
- Kingfisher Close
- Crayfish Close



Members of the Junior Street Champions and Regeneration Action Team with representatives from the Council, Whitefriars and Warwickshire Wildlife Trust

Wow! what a difference

Who would have thought that a block of flats could look this good? Extensive works to windows and panelling have produced a sleek modern look for Alpha House. The transformation started late last year bringing draft free warmer living to its 97 flats.

A unique history

Standing on Barras Heath, this block has been a city landmark since its construction in 1962. When built it was the first example of 'Jackblock' construction, where each floor was raised using a hydraulic jack. This meant work could be completed under cover, and without scaffolding, during poor or cold weather. Starting with the roof, each storey took around a week to jack up once completed, and the entire building process took about 18 months.

Present Day

Experienced contractors Frank Haslam Milan, (FHM), carried out this unique project, and in just 7 months installed double-glazing; fixed insulation panels and then attached modern aluminium cladding all the way around to create its fresh modern look.

The project took a long time to plan, as lots of structural issues had to be looked at. It is hardly a simple job to replace the sides of a 17 storey block.

Residents were informed of progress through meetings and newsletters, and also visited a similar tower block in Wolverhampton, where improvement works had recently been carried out, to get a feel for what Alpha could look like.

Similar to its construction in 1962, scaffolding was not used. Instead mast climbers allowed the contractors to move easily up and down the building, whilst minimising disruption to residents. FHM provided an on site resident liaison officer, who was there to deal with residents' concerns.

Other improvements have already taken place to the block. These include installing new kitchens and bathrooms and decorating communal stairways and corridors. A satellite television system was also installed, so no need for satellite dishes to spoil the new clean look.

Improving the entrance to the block provided the final changes.



We expect high demand for any vacancies, for what is now the best-looking block in the city!

Contact Centre Extends Hours

It is not always easy for all our customers to report a repair between 8am and 6pm so we have extended our opening hours so you can **report any repair between 8am and 8pm Monday to Friday.**

Call **0845 850 6090** or use the repairs reporting tool on our website at **www.whitefriarshousing.co.uk/repairs**

Coventry Early Years & Childcare Service

Your child deserves the best start in life

Research shows that high quality early years provision significantly improves children's life chances. Through play, children learn and grow, develop social and language skills and increase in confidence.

All children are entitled to 15 hours a week of free nursery education from the term after their third birthday which is 570 hours over a year. This can be taken over a minimum of 38 weeks a year though some early years providers may be able to offer a more flexible arrangement, such as being able to take fewer hours per week and spreading the 570 hours over more weeks.

Is your child eligible for a free nursery education place?

If your child's 3rd birthday is between:

1st April - 31st August - Summer Term

1st Sept - 31st December - Autumn Term

1st January - 31st March - Spring Term

They will be entitled to a free nursery place:

Following September - Autumn Term

Following January - Spring Term

Following April - Summer Term

You can choose from the following early years settings, provided they are registered with Ofsted:

- ◆ Pre School / Playgroups
- ◆ Private Day Nurseries
- ◆ Independent Schools
- ◆ Maintained nursery classes (September admissions only)

The setting is paid directly by the local authority and you should not be charged by the nursery unless you buy other services such as lunch or extra hours.

To find out more about early years settings in your area contact:

Coventry Family Information Service
Main Floor Central Library
02476 834773



Keeping up **Appearances**

During our most recent estate inspections the Better Estates Group noted a small number of areas that were not being maintained properly. To help keep up the appearances of these areas we would like to highlight the following points:

If you are maintaining a communal area of land which you are no longer able to do please contact Whitefriars to make them aware.

If you live in a flat and want to look after the area nearest to your home please contact your Local Housing Office so they can advise you of the steps that you need to take.

If you are taking on a new tenancy that includes a garden, Whitefriars staff should talk to you about your responsibilities for maintaining the garden.

Group feedback

On our recent estates inspection we found the majority of the work has been completed to an acceptable standard.

In-depth inspections carried out during June showed us a range of results. The grass was a mixture of good and fair quality. It was also noted that the hardsurfaces required improvement on both estates.

All these results help us to maintain our services and keep us informed of necessary improvements.

The Better Estates group will be inspecting again during September.

Would you like to join us?

We still require representatives from Stoke Aldermoor, Holbrooks, Radford and Henley Green. If you are interested in how the grounds and trees are looked after, we would welcome you.

Finally, we would like to thank everyone that replied to the survey sent out by the Better Estates Group. Your response to what is happening in your area tells us where we need to look for improvements and see where we are doing well. We will announce the winner of the prize draw shortly.

Who finds a home with us?

Between April 2009 until March 2010, we successfully advertised and let 1889 properties through the Coventry Homefinder Scheme. Here are some facts about who we housed:

By Property Size and Type

976 properties let were either bedsits or 1 bed properties.

627 properties were 2 bed.

273 properties were 3 bed.

12 properties let were 4 bed.

1 property let was 5 bed.

1444 properties let were flats or maisonettes.

346 properties let were houses.

99 properties let were bungalows.

By Age Group

More of our properties went to younger groups of people - younger people setting up home for the first time or growing families moving to larger homes.

1179 properties were let to applicants aged 18 to 35

519 properties were let to applicants aged 36 to 55

191 properties were let to applicants aged 56 and over

By Priority Band

Under the Coventry Homefinder Banding Scheme we housed 270 applicants in Band 1 (very urgent housing need), 736 applicants in Band 2 (urgent housing need) and 883 applicants were in Band 3.

By Area

The areas where we let the most properties were in Willenhall Wood, Tile Hill North, Willenhall, Bell Green and Hillfields.

The areas where we let the least properties were in Whitley, Aldermans Green, Cannon Park, Longford and Foleshill.

Green Doctors to do 'Health' Checks



No, Whitefriars is not offering a scheme to check your blood pressure, but could be helping you to save money through its support of an innovative project with the Groundworks Trust.

Groundworks is a charity that works alongside local communities, public bodies, private companies, and other voluntary sector organisations to support communities.

They do a lot of work in Coventry already and they made a successful bid to our Community Pride Grant Award Scheme, for help in funding a Green Dr scheme in the city. With funding from the Futures Job fund, and other sources, Groundworks will train six, currently unemployed people in the 16 – 25 yr age group, to visit some of our tenants homes to give advice on how to save money on your bills by making small changes. Free light bulbs,

power down devices, and resource packs will accompany the advice, and each tenant visited will benefit from being left with a short check list of money savings changes they can make. As the saying goes 'every little helps'

Starting in the Stoke Heath area of the city, the scheme will also include, homes in Radford, Spon End, Courthouse Green and Wyken areas over a six month period. Homes included in the scheme will receive a letter from us before the scheme starts.

For more information on Groundworks, visit www.westmidlands.groundworks.org.uk.

If you are interested in money saving tips on home living then visit The Energy Saving Trust at energysavingtrust.org.uk.
Seven Trent at stwater.co.uk or directgov.uk.



Need help in your own language?

If you would like this leaflet in large print or audio format, please contact the Communications Team on **024 7676 7029**.

French

Vous avez besoin d'aide dans votre propre langue

Arabic

هل تحتاج إلى مساعدة بلغتك

Farsi

آیا به زبان خودتان به کمک نیاز دارید؟

Polish

Wymagają Państwo pomocy w swoim języku?

Kurdish

تایا پێویستت به یارمهتی به زمانی خۆت ههیه.

Urdu

اپنی زبان میں مدد کی ضرورت ہے۔

t: 024 7676 7000

Contact corner

Our office is based at 9 Little Park Street, City Centre, Coventry.
We are open from 9am - 4:30pm every day except Thursday, when we open later, at 11am.

Call: 024 7676 7111 Email: info@whitefriarshousing.co.uk www.whitefriarshousing.co.uk

