

Riley Squaretalk



How are WE Doing?

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

- Callers to reception 2991
- Telephone calls dealt with 7494
- Home visits by Estate Officers and Rents Services Officer 1447
- Bulk rubbish removal 146
- Graffiti removed 22

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.

Young people in Wyken will benefit from summer workshops, in the community

run adventure centre, and undertake a community cleanup to smarten up the area.

Residents of John of Gaunt House were concerned about the state of the communal garden, and got together to submit a bid to turn it into an attractive child friendly space.

Fun and games for all in Bell Green, Wood End and

Deedmore Road area have been supported through a contribution to community fun days.

And a project run out of Aldermans Green school to support residents with access to services, has benefitted from a grant to decorate the space. Funding from other sources will equip the room with a computer and furniture.

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Local Events

Community cleanup

On Saturday 12th June 2010 residents, Whitefriars, local stakeholders and West Midlands Police joined forces on a Community Clean Up Day in the Westmorland Road area of Wyken.

The event was very well attended by local residents who along with local stakeholders took to the streets and removed a large amount of rubbish and litter.

A local resident commented 'The day has been a big success, it is nice to see the community coming together to clean up the area'.

If you are interested in arranging a litter pick in your area, please contact Kelly Lewis at the Riley Square office.

The staff at the Bell Green office are always looking for events to attend **to help and get involved in the community in order to improve peoples lives.** If you know of any events that we can attend and help out in please let us know at the Riley Square office and see if we can **help make a difference.**

Cleaner and Greener

On Friday 9 April 2010 a successful litter picking and tree planting event at Almond Avenue was held in partnership with Whitefriars, Neighbourhood Management (Coventry City Council), Street Champions and residents from within the Wood End and Bell Green area.



The purpose of this event was to encourage local people to take part in litter picking and tree planting in the area and to build on the community spirit already shown through past events.

18 refuse bags of garbage were removed from the area surrounding the River Sowe. The Street Champions and residents worked hard together planting trees and learning how this event will impact long term on preserving the River Sowe.

The trees will act as a barrier and establish themselves over time to allow wildlife to increase along the river.

There has been a vast improvement of this area over a very short period of time. This has given residents a sense of pride and should have an impact on the community by making the estates cleaner and greener.

Junior Street Champions taking a part in a community clean up event organised by Whitefriars and Neighbourhood Management.

Bell Green in Bloom

Engaging with customers to improve the appearance of our estates.

Residents along with Junior Street Champions and nursery children from Bell Green Children's Centre, came together to plant hanging baskets for residents to display on their balconies.

There were a large amount of flowers and balcony pots issued out to residents.

The Junior street champions enjoyed their time with the residents and some of them felt very

proud to have put together a balcony pot for residents in the locality.

Feedback from customers was very positive with some asking for further events of this type.

Everyone enjoyed the day as a whole and looks forward to the next event arranged.



Green fingered residents and junior street champions at an event held by Whitefriars Housing Group in Bell Green for people to create colourful window boxes free of charge to help Coventry in its bid for the 2010 Britain in Bloom awards.

Decreasing ASB

Recent complaints about increasing anti social behaviour has prompted action by Whitefriars and the Local Police.

The residents of Chingford Road, Kegworth Close and Kendrick Close have reported to Whitefriars, that they have been experiencing an increase in Anti Social Behaviour in their neighbourhood.

Whitefriars takes all reports of anti social behaviour seriously, and following these complaints we contacted the Local Police. On Friday 14 May 2010 the Police and Estate Officer for Whitefriars carried out a door knocking exercise to reassure residents that both the Police and Whitefriars are dealing with the issues. Estate Officers will be contacting all residents who took part in this exercise to provide them with an update.

Since our visits several involved have been identified and dealt with accordingly. According to tenants this has had a positive effect and incidents of ASB have decreased. Whilst there is a now a lower level of Anti Social Behaviour, we will be continuing to monitor the situation.

Finally we are in the process of arranging an event such as a BBQ to take place over the coming months. The event will be aimed at increasing community spirit, and working with our residents. If you are interested in joining this event, and would like to share your ideas with us, please contact your Estate Officer Sarah Hollingsworth.

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.

Refugee centre celebrates 10th Anniversary

This promised to be an interesting celebration of the diversity of our city. Hundreds of people turned up from all backgrounds in order to gain a better understanding of the vast number of cultures we have within the City.

A number of Whitefriars staff turned up to support the event from the Riley Square office in order to promote the services that Whitefriars provide to diverse communities. We were able to provide leaflets, help and advice, and also handed out goody bags that included kites for the children. We received feedback in order to improve our service and see how we can help further.



Staff from Riley Square Area Office taking part in the Refugee Centre anniversary celebrations.

From your Rent Team

Kit for Kids was launched in June, with a prize draw in July. This fantastic prize draw gave parents the chance to win prizes towards the expense of sending kids back to school. Prize draw forms were sent through the post to eligible families. There were great prizes on offer from clothing and shoe vouchers to stationary. Donations were kindly made by WH Smith, Andy Blair Sportswear, Charles Ager Shoes, Mrs T Clothes shop, and many others.

The rents team supported the **BATRA SUMMER FETE** on the 31st July. Our staff were available on the day to offer advice about Credit Unions, and the services offered by the Employment Support Officer and the Debt Advice Worker. Staff were also able to provide more information on the services offered by the **WOOD END ADVICE CENTRE**, following their recent visit there to meet the team.

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 پنیوستت 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 29-31 Riley Square, Bell Green. We are open from 9am - 4.30pm every day except Thursday, when we open later, at 11am.

Call: 024 7670 8400 Email: info@whitefriarshousing.co.uk www.whitefriarshousing.co.uk

