

THE BIRCHFIELD BUGLE

Birchfields' Community News & Views

Winter 2015

Issue 13

ALLOTMENTS RUMPUS

Not only are rents going up annually, but Allotments Associations are under pressure due to new ways of working required by Birmingham City Council as a result of 'The Cuts'. All Allotment groups now have to organise their own finances under "devolution" of services from the City Centre. So water bills need paying by the Association and this year over £700 needs to be found. Once rents are collected from the plot holders for the Council only a small portion(10%) of the £4K collected is returned for managing their own affairs.

At a recent emergency meeting of the Livingstone Road Allotments Association, held to bring this amount to plot holders attention, Treasurer Rupert May made it clear that "we are all this together and need to get it sorted". He explained that a vast amount of water is used by some plot holders by directly using a hose pipe on their crops which is against Council Rules and Common Sense in the our current days of Cut Backs. The stand pipes will be turned off for the winter period and controlled more carefully next season. Gone will be the days of watering crops for hours in the early morning, watering cans filled from water tubs will be encouraged.

The other increasing problem is the amount of Garden Waste and Food Surplus brought onto the site for composting. Great idea but other items such as clothing, furniture and even mattresses find their way past the locked gates, which in theory, can only be opened by plot holders. It seems that "spare" keys are in use by "unauthorised" visitors to the site. Our local Neighbourhood Policing Team are on top of problems caused by Young People and Drunks using the quite areas of the site, and will be increasing their vigilance against "fly tippers". The Association also has to pay for repairs to Fencing and Stand pipes, together with Rat Poison as a result of surplus food on site.

Burning of the extra rubbish is also a problem, plastic bags and other plastic items great toxic and smelly smoke which has been upsetting local residents and plot holders wanting a quiet relaxing weekend. "It seems that one problem leads to another", explained, chairman Warren Thomas, some plot holders become threatening and abusive when asked to abide by the rules. He has promised firmer action next season against those who do not respect the rights of others. Other irritations are the weed filled plots left by folk who come along for a few weeks then give up leaving the plot to become more overgrown, with weeds spreading to neighbours. Advice on more effective ways of governing and controlling the situation is being sought from other Allotment Associations who have had similar problems in the past. The days of Scarecrows are over, it will be Electronic Surveillance from now on, pigeons are not the only pests needing control.



Chairman (left) with a plotholder at Livingstone Road Allotments

SCHOOL KEEP CLEAR CAMPAIGN

As parents walking their children arrived at Birchfield Community School after November's Road Safety Week, they were greeted by a bright banner and posters informing them of the need to keep the school entrance clear at all times. Later at an assembly Melanie Braybrook, a Road Safety Officer from the Birmingham City Council Road Safety Team, presented prizes to the winners of the best poetry and poster artwork about the need to make our roads safer by parking well away from the school gates and never on the zig-zag School Keep Clear markings. The same group of children and staff as well as police, parents and governors were outside the school at home time to repeat their message. After one week the police will return to issue £100 tickets (which also get you 3 points on your licence), to drivers found parking in the wrong place, or offer an alternative driver training course to educate them of the dangers. There have been a number of incidences where drivers have made "U" turns directly in front of the school gates, blocking the emergency exits/entrances and causing obstruction to public paths. Also parents continue to park on the Zig Zag yellow lines, blocking the views of parents and children entering and leaving the school grounds. The head teacher, Ms Foster-Brown, explained, "this as you can appreciate is becoming a safeguarding issue, the school is trying to work hard with the local community to educate and resolve. Keeping school entrances clear of road vehicles is vital for the safety of pedestrians, particularly children, who are put in danger when drivers park inconsiderately or illegally outside our school gates". Some children were chosen by Mr R. Hills to explain to parents the dangers of selfish parking, they were also interviewed by the West Midlands local Big Central TV channel for their News Magazine, which is on Channel 8 Freeview. Birchfield Community School certainly cares for the welfare of its children both inside and outside school and urges parents that have to drive to school to do their bit to make our roads safer. The most sensible way is to walk to school, "it has so many benefits, not only making the streets safer, but also improving health and saving you money".



Above- staff and children get ready to launch the campaign



Above Left-Melanie Braybrook with parent governor look at the law on parking on the Zig-Zags

BIRCHFIELD BIG LOCAL



Gavin Orton with Santosh Rai

We had hoped to feature an article on BBL by Inside Handsworth but, after some initial work, they have decided not to proceed. However, The Bugle was invited to meet an interesting couple at the BBL base in Grosvenor Road. Oldbury based architect, Gavin Orton, and Santosh Rai, of Halesowen based Wellside Business Limited have been commissioned to do An Asset Survey by the present Partnership. Gavin has been associated with the impressive Dartmouth Park Pavilion in Sandwell, as well as being chair of Birmingham Civic Society. At a time when Birmingham City Centre is so often in the limelight for development and investment, it's an exciting time for Gavin to be involved with Birchfield. Jimoh Folarin, chair of Birchfield Neighbourhood Forum, who is on the Partnership together with 2 other Forum colleagues said, "we would be pleased to offer any collaboration in future plans and investment that the Big Local partnership may want to make". Gavin has promised to be at the Chat Back Social Sharing event that the Forum are holding in the New Year as they compile a Community Plan with Birchfields' residents. After a long search to find a suitable venue where everyone would feel happy to be at, Westminster School have opened their doors to the Forum for the Food Sharing and Ideas Day. **Now BBL have submitted an article by their Community Development Worker, Andrew Simons, which gives an account of their activities and plans for the future on Page 11.**



Winner Isma Chowdhury

REMEMBRANCE SERVICE AT HOLY TRINITY CHURCH

"THEY WILL REMEMBER THAT WE WERE SOLD, BUT NOT THAT WE WERE STRONG, THEY WILL REMEMBER THAT WE WERE BOUGHT, BUT NOT THAT WE WERE BRAVE."

VOICE reporter Poppy Brady attended a remembrance service at Holy Trinity Church, Birchfield we are grateful to her for allowing us to reproduce her article and photo.



Poignant words from a former slave – however, at a packed church service in Birmingham, people did remember those millions of heroic Africans who were stripped of their human dignity and forced from their homeland to labour and die among the sugar plantations of the Caribbean. Reverend Canon Eve Pitts, the Anglican vicar of Holy Trinity Church in Birchfield, Birmingham, has had a long-held dream to hold such a service. She worried that only a handful of people would come – yet there was standing room only with queues in the dark of the evening outside her inner-city church. To cheers of applause, she said she hoped this would be the first of many annual services to honour and remember our enslaved ancestors, while reclaiming the history of the African and Caribbean people. The service was indeed something never seen before within the walls of a Church of England building – there was both sorrow and joy, dancing and toasts to remember those whose lives had been sacrificed for the greed of the sugar industry. There was dignity and prayer – with some prayers in Swahili – and also sheer exuberance as Rev Pitts danced in the aisle of her church, urging everyone to party for those ancestors who never could. At one point the church was plunged into darkness to remember the millions of unknown ancestors who had died terrible deaths, yet kept their dignity in the face of unimaginable evil. With just the dim lights of the altar, people called out names of their heroes – Jamaica's seven national heroes, along with others – Bob Marley, Bernie Grant, Harriet Tubman, and Birmingham's own Isaiah Youngsam, stabbed to death in riots ten years ago because of the colour of his skin. "Will someone pinch me and say I am in a dream. Are you real?" Rev Pitts said to cheers from her church. "It has been a long time coming, but today is the day when we hold our heads high and reclaim our history. "Ours is a complex history which has been ignored by us and others for too long. We have been told to draw a line under our past – told we have chips on our shoulders, yet this country could not be the country it is without the blood, sweat and tears of our ancestors. "That is why we need to look back, like the African Sanfoka bird, so we can be renewed and look forward. As a people we have been held back emotionally and spiritually; we have not been able to hold our rightful place in this world." Rev Pitts, who also spoke in patois, and has been called a British Maya Angelou, after the famous African American poet and civil rights activist, said: "Our ancestors' hearts were crucified by the

torture of slavery." Byron Jackson had a standing ovation for his beautiful delivery of three spirituals: Steal Away, Take My Hand Precious Lord, and Down by the Riverside. Claude Mackay's famous poem If We Must Die was read by Nicholas Bailey, and Maya Angelou's Arise by Barbara Hamilton. In a thought-provoking sermon, professor Robert Beckford, one of Britain's leading theologians, criticised Prime Minister David Cameron's lack of 'emotional intelligence' for revealing plans to build a £25million prison in Jamaica during his recent visit to the island. "I hear emotional intelligence is now to be taught at Eton," said prof Beckford, to much laughter. "We must not stay silent on slavery. We have to 'out' the slavery deniers. We have to remember the past rightly. We do not want a payback, we do not want revenge; this must be a healing process." He said he felt Britain had much to learn from the way the US had developed more permanent memorials to slavery. While Camille Ade-John, a Birmingham-based former lecturer, spoke movingly of her visit to the Elmina slave castle on Ghana's Gold Coast. "When I saw the room where the women went through the door of no return and were starved before they were herded through a hole to go down to the ships I felt a terrible pain that I could not explain," she said. "We are all told we must move on from this history, yet I opened a paper recently and there was a big article about the 600th anniversary of the Battle of Agincourt – slavery's history is so much more recent." The service was attended by Yvonne Mosquito, deputy police & crime commissioner for the West Midlands; Khalid Mahmood, Labour MP for Birmingham Perry Barr, and Clare Short, who was Labour MP Birmingham Ladywood for 27 years until she stood down in 2010.



SHELANU WOMEN'S CRAFT COLLECTIVE

Shelanu Women's Craft Collective is a developing craft social enterprise of migrant, refugee and newly-arrived women, supported by Craftspace. Based in Birmingham, and meaning 'belonging to us' in Hebrew, Shelanu has the thematic focuses of migration, place, and identity within all of their work. The Collective have designed and produced a range of enamelled jewellery called Migrating Birds, and also work on different community projects and commissions.



Jacynth Francis, above, tells of her experience with Shelanu into the Community Craftspace.



I joined a Shelanu Women's craft Collective group earlier this year at The Birmingham Settlement in Aston; just to see whether I would enjoy it. I found it was a unique and interesting way to make jewellery. I had never done any form of jewellery making before. This was my first attempt.

When the tutors asked us to think of something that might remind us of home etc., I thought of the colours of the St Kitts and Nevis flag. That is how and why I created my pendant.



I enjoyed my classes and I would recommend it to anyone. It can bring out the creative side of you which you may think you never had. It is therapeutic and helps to motivate you and also gives self-satisfaction. You also get to meet some very interesting people and stories along the way.

The Federation of Saint Kitts and Nevis, also known as the Federation of Saint Christopher and Nevis is a two-island country in the West Indies. Located in the Leeward Islands chain of the Lesser Antilles, it is the smallest sovereign state in the Americas, in both area and population.

The country is a Commonwealth realm, with the British Monarch (currently, Elizabeth II) as its head of state.

St Kitts and Nevis were once a laid back fun loving little islands which has had a rude awakening with the attractions which come with the development and an influx of other nationalities. Two sweet little islands with picturesque villages or parishes and charming sceneries very therapeutic and breathtaking, it does not lacklustre. We are on the map and well worth visiting. Each island has its unique attractions.

SHARE WITH CARE

CYCLISTS ON PAVEMENTS CAMPAIGN

2 years ago we started our BEWARE CYCLISTS ON YOUR FOOTPATH campaign, but it has had little impact as our recent photos, below right, still show inconsiderate \anti-social cyclists coming up behind pedestrians without giving any warning. This is a reckless and dangerous way to cycle and can lead to be being fined if caught by the Police. Constables Hodson and Hudson told the Bugle, "we are out to promote Safer Cycling by both road and pavement cyclists, especially if they are not familiar with The Highway Code. Those found disobeying the rules will be offered a choice; take a Bikeability training course or expect to be fined!" The narrow footpath on Wellington Road and the even narrower footpath that leads past the Perry Barr station to the One Stop Shopping Centre is especially hazardous. The excellent cartoon at the centre of our page, by local artist Hunt Emerson, captures the chaos that often happens by the bus stop opposite St Teresa's Church, as cyclists attempt to plough through the waiters and walkers regardless. One kind young boy cyclist even thanked me as I stopped to hold out my hands in horror as he weaved around the crowd. Joking apart this is serious, and that is why the Grassroots Action Support (GAS) Fund, a joint initiative between the **Esmée Fairbairn Foundation (EFF)** and the **Sheila McKechnie Foundation (SMK)**,

designed to 'provide fuel for emerging voices and influencers' and support eligible SMK campaigners with small grants towards their campaigns and campaigning activities, has agreed to help us. We will offer bells or hooters to these anti-social, disrespectful cyclists (AsDiCs) and encourage them to respect the pavement space, especially for the more vulnerable users, like the Elderly and Mothers with Young children. Our approach must be to **SHARE with CARE** our limited pavement space. As we reported in our Spring issue, The Council are promoting, with Government funding, the Birmingham Cycling Revolution. Safe Routes into and out of the City Centre are being sorted out, as well as cycles being made available to lucky lottery winners as well as hire bikes at Well Being Centres. There is cash for proper signage and markings, as well as dedicated cycle lanes. We hope our Ward councillors will be encouraged to ask for pavement markings which separate pedestrians and cyclists properly, otherwise encouraging them to "WALK THEIR WHEELS".



Cartoon by Hunt Emerson
www.largecow.com



B20 winners, Ammaarah left, with Yusuf right, of Councils free bike post code lottery

Yusuf says, "I do use my bike on a regular basis and it is very good for me as I see it as a way to get around more quickly and efficiently especially in the mornings during rush hour. I have taken it to college on a couple of occasions at it does genuinely get me there in less then half the time it takes by commuting using the bus. I also do weekly bike rides around Birmingham canals and parks, the bike seems to be perfectly fine and has had no problems at all although I have used it quite a lot"

WHAT'S THE LAW ON CYCLING ON THE PAVEMENT?

Question on Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents website

Answer "It is illegal to cycle on the pavement, unless there is a shared pedestrian/cycle path. Where there is a shared path, cyclists and pedestrians can share it without too many problems, especially if they stick to their side of the path. However, where there is not a cyclist/pedestrian path, pavement cycling causes anxiety and risk to many pedestrians, particularly for elderly and disabled people who are unable to dodge a cyclist" Councillors please note. "Where pavements are unsuitable for shared use, measures to enable cyclists to use the road safely are needed, so that they are not tempted to ride on the pavement instead."

OZZY ZIG, THE WITCH & THE WARPIG



Rob Horrocks, pictured above, a Birchfield Local resident for over 20 years gives us a personal reflection on his latest Musical Heritage Enterprise.

The Black Sabbath vinyl playback event in a room where the band once rehearsed took place on Sunday 20th September.

Newtown Community Centre first opened in 1968 and the four young men who would go on to define a global music culture were among the first people to use the facilities it offered.

45+ years later the anniversary of the release of their first number one album Paranoid seemed like a good excuse to try and draw this fact to the attention of the heavy metal community.

Black Sabbath inspire an unrivaled level of respect within heavy metal culture as the undisputed originators of the genre. So it is entirely appropriate that the 40 or so members of the audience included people who had travelled from Germany. There was even one visitor from Caracas, Venezuela who was delighted to find that his trip to Birmingham coincided with the event.

The show comprised selections of music from the years before the band got together, followed by the first two albums. There were some historical re enactments from the story, such as the time Ozzy sprayed the words IRON VOID on the Six Ways underpass just up the road from the community centre. The show closed with the four members of the production crew being presented with taps on chains (Ozzy famously used a tap as a piece of improvised jewelry) before leaving the room and going for a drink in The Bartons Arms. An exhibition included items loaned by Edwin Lowe Ltd (still trading in metal products today and



Left-Right Ike Cartwright, Tim Dunstall, Tony Appleby, Rob Horrocks.

Image Credit Julian Knab

celebrating the centenary of their incorporation) who once had a factory a short distance from where the community centre now stands.

Music tourism can be big business.

One only needs to consider the way Pricilla Presley risked all by investing in the tourism potential of her home. Now Graceland occupies a central role in the tourist economy of Memphis. More relevant for the Black Sabbath story is what happens in Clarksdale, Mississippi where a nondescript crossroads is now a centre of tourist activity. The road junction that music fans visit is said to be the place where Robert Johnson (whose records influenced the early 1960s British blues movement) sold his soul to the devil in exchange for enhanced musical abilities. The businesses in this deprived area now benefit from these visits. Closer to home, Kirriemuir in Angus has been hosting a Bon Scott celebration every spring for 10 years that attracts fans from all over the world to the childhood home of ACDCs original singer.

The problem of music tourism is that often the locations of pilgrimage opportunities are long since demolished, inaccessible or privately owned. Newtown Community Centre is the most accessible location in which it can be said that an important musical moment took place. Tony Iommi reports in his autobiography that the song Black Sabbath was written at the centre. And, the story of how the band got their name after considering the popularity of horror films is also based around their rehearsals at Newtown Community Centre.

And anyone, whether they be from Birmingham UK, or Birmingham Alabama can visit a building that is largely unchanged and still fulfills the role in the community that it did when music history was made there.





Councillor Waseem Zaffar MBE, Lozells & East Handsworth Ward

ASPIRE & SUCCEED

Local people have started to have their say on how they want to make Lozells an even better place to live

Lozells-based social enterprise Aspire & Succeed secured funding of more than £320,000 over the next three years from People's Health Trust with money raised by HealthBright through The Health Lottery.

The investment has been awarded through the Trust's LocaWI Conversation programme, which involves supporting residents to develop a shared vision for their neighbourhood. Residents have been working hard to identify common concerns, strengths and opportunities within the neighbourhood and have formed a steering group which has listened to and brought together the views of the wider community.

So far, around 200 residents have been involved with the engagement process through conversations, house meetings, workshops, steering groups and neighbourhood walks. After residents spent time identifying the key issues that affect them, they decided on three initial neighbourhood priorities; jobs and money, children and young people and environment and safety.

Their hard work was recently celebrated when residents showcased the progress they have made in shaping the future of their community at the official launch of the Local Conversation.

Shale Ahmed, Project Manager at Aspire & Succeed, said: "The residents of Lozells have been working really hard to bring this project to life.

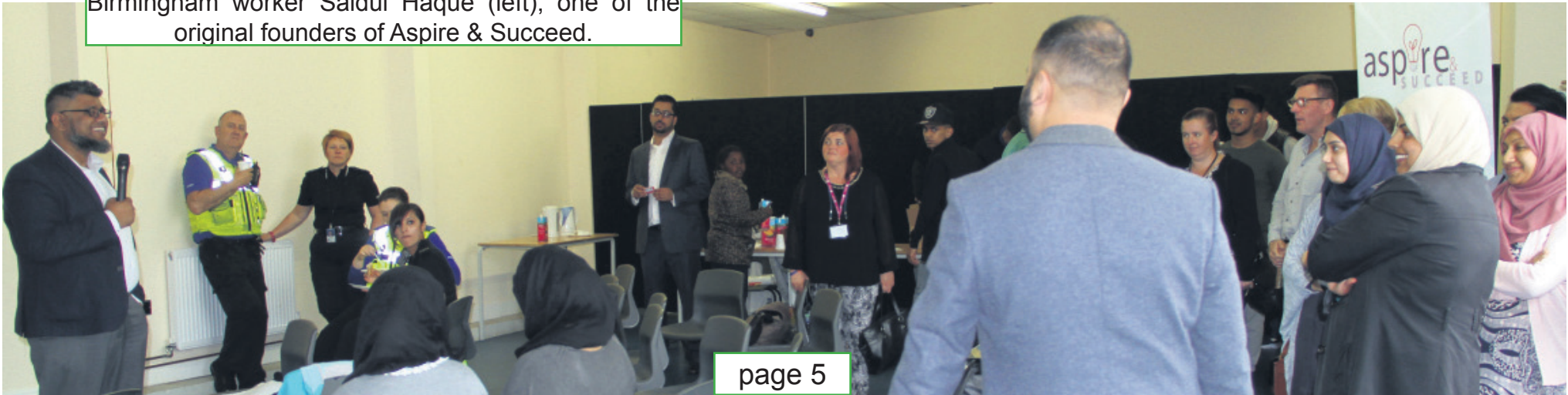
"By bringing people of different ages, faiths and backgrounds together we are able to connect residents that often have similar concerns but may not yet know one another.

"Through their involvement in this project, we hope residents will become increasingly confident in playing a more active role in public life.

"There is a real buzz around Lozells right now and people can see the area as a progressive place to live where people feel happier about being in control of their own lives through taking action together with their neighbours."

If you live in Lozells and want to get involved in the Local Conversation then contact Shale Ahmed by email or by calling 07876672997.

The launch of the People's Health Trust funded project with guests being addressed by Citizens Uk Birmingham worker Saidul Haque (left), one of the original founders of Aspire & Succeed.



Kehinde Andrews' Guardian article states,

"10 years on from the Lozells riots, nothing has changed for those in poverty"

"<http://www.theguardian.com/profile/kehinde-andrews>" shares some provocative sociological insights:

"While the centre booms with development, areas of deprivation have been plastered with colourful billboards, with slogans such as "Be a star in Perry Barr", and smiling pictures of local community figures. The boards are now falling down and it is clear that their main purpose was to hide the dilapidation that lay behind them. The ruins of the billboards stand as testament to a failed development plan that envisaged the benefits of the booming centre to magically trickle down to the poorer parts of the city. The impact of this neglect will be felt by future generations."

"The root cause of the Lozells riots was poverty and the desperate competition this created for scarce resources. Particularly in the age of austerity, investment in cities is centred on private profit rather than public benefit, which has led to further neglect of disadvantaged neighbourhoods. Unfortunately, if there is no serious investment in areas like Lozells it's only a matter of time before a spark ignites simmering community tensions."

Councillor Waseem Zaffar MBE, Lozells & East Handsworth Ward responds

In recent days, some "experts" in National Papers have shared their views about Lozells – ten years since the race related disturbances in which Isaiah Young Sam was tragically murdered. These people pontificating from afar know nothing of the real Lozells. Whereas having been born, schooled, lived and worked all my life in Lozells, I think I've earned the right to speak.

Yes, the inequalities facing Lozells remain stark, and we should never try to paper over the cracks. But while things have been hard as public resources have declined to the absolute minimum, Lozells has seen lots of positive change over the past 10 years. In the 2011 disturbances which swept the country, there were significant issues in all of the surrounding neighbourhoods, but not one report of public disorder in Lozells. Outside critics deride our businesses – but the real story of the Lozells economy is that today it's rare to find a unit along the entire Lozells Road not trading, whereas 10 years ago many were empty. And the other major difference has been the leadership of community organisers; not the traditional Citizen Khan type self-appointed leaders, but individuals who really engage their neighbours, congregations and the community at large. Some old hands are still here, while others like Bishop Derek Webley, Sister Helen Ryan, Sgt. Az Ahmed and Kate Foley, have moved on. Their legacies are the vibrant, warm diversity of their successors. Who would have thought ten years ago, Tsegahzi, a judge in Eritrea, would end up in Lozells along with a growing number of his countrymen and women? Today, while working in the day as a translator, he spends evening hours in a café helping the newly arrived to integrate. One has to also admire the sheer commitment of Saeed Saidul Haque, a son of an imam who, like me, has spent most of his working life in the neighbourhood that has given us so much. Saeed is the bad cop, constantly challenging residents and agencies to do more. Through his work at Citizens UK Birmingham, he has united faith groups, local schools and businesses like never before to create a safer neighbourhood for all our young people. And then there's Lincoln Moses MBE, a gentle giant, who had a vision to create a state-of-the-art sports facility enabling thousands of young people to enjoy a wide range of sports. Holford Drive Sports Hub, a community asset transfer from Birmingham City Council to the community worth over £3 million, attracts hundreds of young people from Lozells and surrounding neighbourhoods every week. There are many other such individuals who have stood up in the face adversity for the betterment of the whole community. The new Holte, Mayfield and Lozells Schools site, the Finch Road Health Centre, the New Testament Church of God, the Lighthouse Youth Centre and the Lozells Mosque are together £30 million plus investments from a wide range of sources that have been delivered since 2005. And we've also attracted blue chip corporates, including KPMG and RBS amongst many others. So here's an open invitation to any "expert" who's interested: come and visit us over a cuppa and we'd be more than happy to show you round our neighbourhood, discuss our challenges and proudly share our success stories. But don't patronise us please. We don't deserve it.

"10 YEARS ON FROM THE LOZELLS RIOTS, NOTHING HAS CHANGED FOR THOSE IN POVERTY"

BUILDING BIRCHFIELD



Dean Lewis 'saves' old lady, apart from his traffic control duties when she tripped coming off a bus



Jordan one of the local apprentices



Local lady stops to admire the new houses



Street works with Grand Square in background



Site manager Gary with newly occupied houses in background

THE OLD TOWER BLOCKS NOW THE FOUNDERS SITE



Birchfield Road's new look



Founders site from Aston side



Gary & apprentice Jordan outside an occupied newly built house



Work in progress on the Birchfield Road Founders site



Young worker who started as an Apprentice

Westminster/ Wellington Road Development by Boss Homes

This company have explained the long delay in making progress with the site as caused by lack of services being provided by the Utility companies, who have only been working at weekends to connect services.

The closure of Westminster Road junction is also planned but work on completion may be expected to last well into next year. Some houses were ready for occupation but the lack of services has meant postponement of the sales. The developers hope for some occupation in the new year.

The layout of the pathways and road surface is progressing well, and it is beginning to look more like the architects plan. Maybe the children who used to play on the Temporary Play Area that the Council allowed several years ago, before selling off the site, will be thankful that The Birchfield Big Local are setting aside money for the “Secret Garden” (see page 11 story) play area further down Westminster Road, in a safer location.

The site of the old petrol station next to this one has been sold and we can look forward to more houses and apartments in the future.



Impressive corner properties



Boss Homes partners



Landscaping the site

ALL CHANGE AT LIVINGSTONE HOUSE

The London based development company has started on the refurbishment of the old Livingstone House to turn it into a “Multimillion Luxury Development” called the GRAND SQUARE.”

The project is divided into 3 phases. Phase 1 anticipated January 2016, with luxury apartments.

Phase 2 anticipated April 2016” (this is one with room for Community events, where “Birchfield Neighbourhood Forum will benefit by using community hall at minimal charge hire and can conduct meetings/seminars, etc. We will offer you a special discounted deal)”, explained Mr Malik, pictured below.

“Phase 3 to be confirmed, We have used many locals/companies in many sectors and are continuing in increase in demand of local businesses.”

“Birchfield neighbourhood will benefit by using community hall at minimal charge hire and can conduct meetings/seminars, etc. (We will offer you a special discounted deal)”



Mr Malik of Aronex Developments shows the plans to residents at a ward meeting



Autumn shades at Grand Square



HANDSWORTH HELPING HANDS

We asked HANDSWORTH HELPING HANDS secretary, Simon Baddeley to describe the group's work in the area, as we are aware that they were commended by last year's Lord Mayor for their Community Voluntary work, after he invited them to attend his parlour in the Council House without their boots and gloves.

"I think HHH has (with a very small number of mostly pension age volunteers) established a reputation for 'working', 'getting things done', even 'settling disputes through tactful conversations with neighbours' (educational work re collection dates and how to fill recycling bins etc). We have I believe always been polite and shown good will in even frustrating situations (in other words we are Handsworth street-wise', plus we seem to have done well in partnerships with Midland Heart, Fleet and Waste, Community Foundation, and BRAG, and of course many residents in streets we've worked over the last 3 years. Our gratitude must go to the many people who have helped us and for those generous donations to HHH, some of which if not cash donations include gifts we've passed on to Birmingham Charities - SIFA Fireside, Red Cross, City Mission, and the Birmingham Dogs' Home, also the pensioners' buffet at The Stork last Christmas."

He goes on to explain how, "HHH has managed to draw attention to vacant properties whose owners are supposed to pay extra on top of council tax for leaving them continuously empty and unmaintained. We have also dealt with the gating of alleys, cul-de-sacs and vulnerable green spaces where security has been lax, identifying who is responsible for maintenance and replacement. In this way HHH have ensured that a number of 'grot spots' in the area have been removed, and are no longer attracting casual litter and fly-tipping, with 13 Tonnes taken to the Tip in our van over the year during our 'scavenging' runs. Our SKIP IT DON'T TIP Days in local streets have proved very popular. More than 20 vulnerable individuals were helped with clearance, furniture moving, gift recycling, gardening, and specific assistance with phoning and contacting people needing help they couldn't get themselves from the Council and/or Midland Heart."

And now we face the prospect of further challenges. We have already lost Community Chest funding. The Council wants to save £20million of public money by privatising waste collection, so HHH could lose its Charity Tipping Licence issued at BCC discretion. Midland Heart, has axed all but 2 of its Community Liaison officers in the city. This threatens or even ends our work on shared local improvement and, more immediately significant, their contributions to the hire of skips for HHH Skip-it Don't Tip it days. These circumstances make an even stronger case for the value and usefulness of HHH, but they can also contribute to us feeling we are more on our own - more beleaguered."

But there is hope

"HHH has just won over £3700 in grants. We have held together now despite our varying and often clashing personalities for over three years having made a significant achievement in turning round a deeply insolvent predecessor organisation. I recall the complexity of negotiating and legitimating that transfer from CHPCP to HHH in a transparent, civilised and acceptable way. We have detached ourselves from the local political party and its councillors without losing their interest and respect. We are - I repeat - transparent, in stark contrast to some other bodies in receipt of far more money than HHH in this neighbourhood. We struggle with the challenge of identifying truly vulnerable people in an environment where we have to be shrewd in our dealings with opportunistic demands on our services - individuals who seek, while being quite able to pay for official waste services - public or private - to get charity from us. In the centre of Handsworth, famously an area of poverty and deprivation, HHH offers services to the vulnerable, but we have had to identify those for whom we should really work, discriminating wisely without being intrusive."



The Glutton Street Vacuum proves popular with these young residents



Cllr Quinnen at Stamford Grove's Glutton Street Vacuum Clean-Up by HHH and residents.



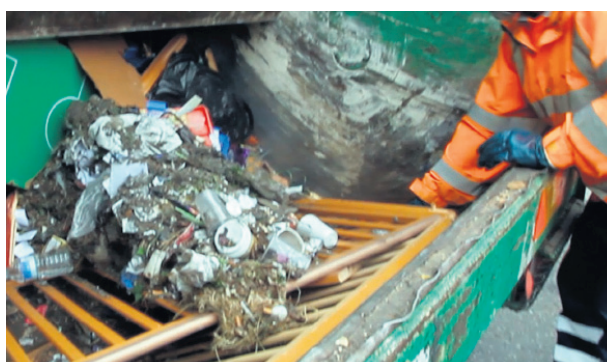
Councillors Hussain and Quinnen listen with Council officers to residents complaints about lack of services to keep streets tidy



Fleet & Waste Management Assistant Director



Ward meeting with Councillors and Officers. Assistant Director of Fleet & Waste Management (right) deals with many problems. It was the only item on the agenda and lasted nearly 2 hours



Rubbish picked up by The Glutton after Stamford Grove Clean-up



Mr Arnold wonders why Birchfield in Bloom never came to see his Floral display



Long term resident Mr Arnold likes to keep his frontage tidy.

ARTS TRAIL 2015

An exciting new initiative took place in Handsworth Park, where The Friends Association has championed the views of local residents for many years and organised a wide range of activities in the park, but this is the first time a community group such as this has put on a major public art event. The idea for the Arts Trail came from two local residents, Pauline Bailey and Jan Kimber who have organised and curated the exhibition.

Handsworth Park Arts Trail was an exhibition of public art centred around the Boating Lake in Handsworth Park. It includes sculptures and installations from artists: Pauline Bailey, Graham Jones, Scylla Magda, Katie Surridge, Julie Edwards and Ron Thompson.

The creation of the art work followed the theme of 'making use of local resources'. The Arts Trail has also been actively supported by officers from Birmingham City Council's Parks Service and the Culture and Commissioning Team. It links with the development of a new Public Art Strategy in Birmingham, The Big Hoot Project and The Active Parks Programme.

Their Facebook page www.facebook.com/HandsworthPark.Arts.Trail shows all the activity and the organisers welcome comments and feedback about the Arts Trail and suggestions for the future as they hope to run a second Arts Trail in 2016 via Handsworth.Park.Arts.Trail@hotmail.com

Throughout June, lead artist Pauline Bailey delivered workshops at Broadway Academy in partnership with Natasha Griffith of The Feast - a youth work charity specialised in interfaith encounters for 11-18 year olds. Jan Kimber had redundant dingy sails brought in for the project from Edgbaston sailing Club. The workshops had year 7 & 8 pupils discuss what is important about their faith to them; exploring multi-culture, multi-faith and community cohesion, all in keeping with the academy's manifesto. Odd that they did not want to tell Bugle about this, when we phoned up to ask if they had any news to share!

Artists, Julie Edwards and Ron Thompson had been busy working with local children from St Mary's Primary School and Handsworth Wood Girls Academy to design and build a wonderful collection of Executive Bird Boxes, which together with the other exhibits remained until the late autumn.



"I AM SURE GOD DOESN'T MIND" THE REDEVELOPMENT OF ST MARY'S PARISH CHURCH, HANDSWORTH by Fr Bob Stephen, Rector of Handsworth



It is a simple fact that each generation has taken seriously the responsibility to ensure that the building that is the Parish Church is adapted for the particular needs of its own time. St Mary's has certainly experienced this. The original building was Saxon and almost certainly wooden. The tower is built on a foundation of around 800 and the first two levels of the tower date from 1170. The current Church building is the 1875 rebuild of the 1820 rebuild, and so the story goes on.

The key factor in our thinking about what we should do is motivated by a need to make the building more useable by and for the Parish: it is, after all, the largest building in the Parish and has a key role to play in community cohesion. There are some things that we do not want to change (and would never get permission to change) from the chancel screen forwards and thereby including the memorials to Watt, Boulton and Murdoch. However, we are looking to replace the very inefficient heating with ground-sources, heat-exchange, under-floor heating. That will mean that the pews will be replaced with moveable pews, allowing us the opportunity to put something more fitting into the building (the Victorian efforts we have are very much bargain-basement examples). For the worshipping community we are looking to create a new focus in creating a stage and space for a Nave Altar. However, if we have a level floor and a heated building, which will maintain the building at 15 degrees, the possibilities for community use are endless. We have already hosted a hustings in the run-up to the General Election and have had a concert facilitated by the CBSO for the Perry Barr Community Choir. Who knows what will come next!

Alongside this we are looking to create a community cafe space and to enhance the toilet provision. There will also be a semi-permanent display highlighting the historical significance of the Church of St Mary and its Churchyard.

We have yet to determine the final plans or to secure the necessary permissions and raise the funding so, realistically, this is something we aim to have the work done for during the summer of 2017.

I am very glad to have any thoughts or suggestions on the re-ordering or ideas for how the building could be used. In Medieval times the Nave belonged to the people and, in

inclement weather, would have hosted any number of markets and social events. I am sure God doesn't mind. Please do let me know: rector@handsworthstmary.org.





TESCO NATIONAL FOODBANK COLLECTION 2015

Aston and Nechells Foodbank are very grateful for the support offered by Tesco at Aston Lane. We are very fortunate that most months we get to collect food for our clients in the store. Twice a year, we have a big food collection over three days - the last one was in July. This required about 80 volunteers over the three days, each giving a couple of hours of their time. During the sessions, we hand out food lists to the shoppers as they come into the store, and collect food from them on the way out! We were grateful in July that we had the help and support from Broadway school. 16 helpers from year 7 and 8 came with their teacher which was a fantastic help. We also had help from Jenny,

Linda and Sandi at the TSB in LongAcre and Saltley! Another local Muslim organisation - the Ummah welfare Trust - blessed us with some helpers on the Friday evening, even though it was Ramadan! We collected over a tonne and a half across the three days which helped to stock up our shelves and represents a great team effort. We are grateful to Amanda Thompson, customer experience manager and Mark Van Beeumen, community champion, for their help and support. The next Big Collection in Tesco at Aston Lane will be on Thursday 3rd, Friday 4th and Saturday 5th of December 2015. If anyone wants to volunteer to help collect food on these days contact the Office at info@astonnechells.foodbank.org.uk or by phone on 0121 3590801. More information about the Aston and Nechells Foodbank can be found on our website: <http://astonnechells.foodbank.org.uk/>.



PRIEST KNOWN AS 'COMMUNITY CHAMPION' SEEKS NEW MEMBERS FOR HIS INNER CITY COMMUNITY

A pioneering Catholic religious community is appealing for new members so that it can continue its work in a multicultural area of the inner city of Birmingham. The Cordate Community has over the past seven years developed its presence in Aston by working with local people to explore what can be done to improve their lives as well as the neighbourhood. However numbers in the

Community have dwindled, and now one of its founders, Fr Mark finds himself living a solitary life in the community house in Aston, and he is inviting anyone interested to come and see for themselves what his work involves – either consecrated religious or lay people, male or female.

Fr Mark is clear about what he sees as his vocation – witnessing to his faith in an impoverished area and living in the heart of the community that he strives to help. He is employed in the local Tesco Store and has won recognition as a Community Champion for the area. In his outreach to the neighbourhood he works regularly with a number of local organisations and charities.

Fr Mark has been involved in outreach work to try to bring different groups within the area together; we drop into a local Mosque where he receives a warm welcome. Next we visit Birmingham Settlement – He has strong ties with the workers here. Next, we bump into the local police officers on the beat who know Fr Mark well and join him as he chats to an elderly local Irish couple.



Saeed, (pictured left), from Citizens UK Birmingham also values the work of the Community. He says: 'Citizens UK Birmingham is an alliance of civil society groups acting together for the common good of our city via community organising. The Cordate Community has been working alongside Citizens UK Birmingham from the beginning. Over the past 15 years there have been consecutive regeneration programmes in Aston which have failed to build the capacity of local people to come together to take action. The Cordate Community's work in this neighbourhood offers a new hope to the area. They have been effective in building 1-2-1 relationships between different sections of the local area. This careful and relational approach is the ideal start for long term impact.'

There have been significant changes in the Aston area in the last thirty years as it has changed from a white, predominantly Irish area to a very multicultural, multi-religious neighbourhood. This has brought fresh challenges and has also had a significant impact on the existing Catholic community. In response to all of this, Fr Mark explains that the Cordate Community has developed a threefold approach — around believing, befriending and bridging: 1. Believing (the Spiritual/Faith-sharing aspect): believing in God and believing in the people of Aston; looking for dialogue and shared interaction with the diverse range of people in the locality, open to the questions, doubts and anxieties that people raise as they seek deeper meaning amid the struggles of daily life. 2. Befriending (the social aspect): As the Cordate Community began to understand the personal and social needs of the area and tried to understand the struggles of a disadvantaged neighbourhood, together with the people, the Community members began to



Tesco Community Champion Mark

explore the sense of solidarity that would strengthen neighbourliness, while exploring the resources needed to build stronger community cohesion. 3. Bridging (the interfaith/inter-Ethnic aspect): Aston is home to a variety of faith groups and great ethnic diversity. Much needs to be done to create a climate of trust and mutual respect which the Community strives to foster through conversation, inter-faith dialogue and bridge-building activities. As Pope Francis emphasises: 'The Church must be a place of mercy freely given, where everyone can feel loved, welcomed, forgiven and encouraged to live the good life of the Gospel'.

1. Do you aspire for a more just and peaceful world and want to share your dream with others in a small community (over two years)?
2. Are you prepared to share with the other members the common living costs?
3. Are you age 22 or above?
4. Do you want to share and reflect with other members issues of community building?
5. To find out more, contact: Fr Mark Van Beeumen: Cordatecommunity@yahoo.co.uk or tel: 0121 328 3748.

SCHOOL KEEP CLEAR CAMPAIGN

A campaign highlighting the daily risks young children face from motorists who park dangerously or illegally near their schools has been launched by Birmingham City Council. In the last 3 years in Birmingham there were 106 child pedestrian accidents of which 24 were serious with 82 slight injuries being recorded. The aim of the campaign is for drivers to understand that the yellow "School Keep Clear" markings are there for a reason - to make it safer for children getting to and from school. The council working in partnership with West Midlands Police will target schools across the city and will start with Birchfield Community School whose entrance is on busy Trinity Road. Further schools are set to take part in 2016. The campaign will start with driver education from council road safety officers, Police Community Support Officers, governors, school staff and children, who will be outside the schools to explain to drivers the dangers of parking too near to the school. Artwork, produced by the children themselves, warning about the dangers of parking too close to schools will be displayed and handed to drivers. The dangers that drivers, often the parents and carers themselves, cause outside schools will be highlighted using banners on the school gates promoting the message that 'Cars and kids don't mix'. The message is designed to be polite but direct and appeal to every parent or carer's concern for their child's safety. Enforcement by West Midlands Police and the council's Civil Enforcement Officers who will take appropriate action for anyone continuing to break the law by parking dangerously. These schools will then continue to be monitored by the council and further action taken as required. PC Mark Hodson from West Midlands Police said: "Children and those accompanying them going to and from school are some of the most vulnerable road users we have, and as such deserve the utmost respect and consideration. Drivers who endanger them through dangerous or inconsiderate parking, speeding, seatbelt offences or distracted driving offences such as mobile phone use or driving without due care type offences, will be dealt with in the fullness of the law by our officers." A fundamental part of the solution to the problem of school gate parking is many more children walking to school. Not only would this ease congestion - it would make the streets safer and create a more pleasant environment. Cllr Shafique Shah, Cabinet Member for Inclusion and Community Safety at Birmingham City Council, whose portfolio covers road safety said "Problems caused by inconsiderate or illegal parking are a constant cause of complaints to the majority of schools in Birmingham. "I am very supportive of this campaign and would ask parents and drivers to park a little further away from schools or alternatively, and better still, chose the healthy option and walk or cycle." This campaign is one element of a package of measures that the council can offer to schools in response to specific road safety issues, and complements the forthcoming roll-out of 20mph speed limits. This targeted approach is also set out in the new Birmingham Road Safety Strategy which was recently out to consultation. For more information about how the council can support schools and parents in addressing school travel issues, including Travel/Action plans through schemes called ModeShift STARS, 'Park and Stride' and 'Walk once a Week' (Wow), please contact roadsafetyteam@birmingham.gov.uk



Proud parent with Prize Winner
Isma Chowdhury outside Birchfield
Community School entrance at the launch of
the School Keep Clear campaign

BIRCHFIELD BIG LOCAL

by Andrew Simons, Community
Development Worker, Birchfield Big Local

We are coming to the end of the first two years of Birchfield Big Local (BBL) – a ten year resident-led initiative with the aim of making Birchfield an even better place to live and work. This is therefore an appropriate time to reflect on what has been achieved and how the Birchfield Big Local partnership is working. It is also a good time to look ahead to Year 3. Big Local is different from some past approaches to regeneration or community development. It is a long-term approach with funding available over a ten year period. It is led by the community itself, represented by the Big Local partnership -made up mostly of local residents, who give their time as volunteers. The focus is on community building from the inside out; starting with the gifts, passions, aspirations, skills and energy of local people.

To access the funds the partnership had to work with other local residents and partners to develop a community plan that reflects the priorities for the area. The plan isn't fixed, but will change over time as the priorities change. The partnership will also evolve over time. The plan for the first two years was ambitious and inevitably it has taken longer to set up some projects than others. However, most of what was planned is now underway and there have been many achievements all of which have been highlighted in the regular Newsletters that residents receive. For example, one of the first projects to get going was the Enterprise Hub which provides support and business skills training for residents interested in self-employment or social enterprise. We now have six Star People Award winners.

Another project led by Birchfield Residents Action Group (BRAG) has been working with local residents and partners including the City Council and Midland Heart to encourage a greater sense of pride in the local environment. This collaboration has led to the development of an environment strategy for the area, starting with a pilot that will include Hutton, Putney, Crompton and Stamford Roads as well as the original In Bloom area of Livingstone, Westminster and Havelock Roads. A draft action plan is being developed that will hopefully result in significant improvements.

In September 2014 the partnership appointed Suki Sohi as Volunteer Coordinator. Volunteering is important in many ways: it is an opportunity for people to gain new skills and experiences, and also for people to contribute their existing knowledge, skills and energy to the local community. During the past year more than thirty volunteers have been recruited and many now regularly volunteer on projects either run or supported by BBL. For example, the volunteers are key to helping run the Stepping Forward project which aims to support local people looking to develop skills that will enable them to find employment. Volunteers are also being mentored by staff at Nishkam Centre so that they will be able to provide benefits advice to residents in the local area. Volunteers played a big part in helping organise the Play Streets event on Haughton Road in June. Bringing people together, young and old, and from different backgrounds, is also important. With the help of volunteers BBL has been able to organise or support a number of community events over the past two years.

The BBL partnership recently appointed Santosh Rai and Gavin Orton to carry out a survey of the community assets in the Birchfield area. Many local residents have expressed the view that Birchfield needs a community centre or hub – "a common space for building common ground". Another priority is provision for children's play. Santosh and Gavin have been consulting with local people about how such a community centre or play space might be used and the facilities required so that they can match needs and expectations to what might be available in the area. The final report is due in February next year. One site that has already been identified for community use is the former community garden and children's play known as the Grosvenor and Westminster Road Garden Project, pictured right. With support from local residents, BBL plans to refurbish the site so that it can once again be used for community events and children's play. Starting around Easter 2016 we are planning regular play sessions on the site linked to opportunities for play training for local residents.



Another addition to the plans for Year 3 is the introduction of a small grants scheme. This is to encourage individuals and groups with good ideas for projects that will benefit local people to put those ideas into practice. The proposed projects will need to demonstrate that they meet priorities within the Birchfield area, for example, activities for children or young people, or helping to meet the needs of older residents in the area. The details of the scheme including the criteria and application process will be publicised early next year. For the latest news on this and other Big Local projects please see the website: www.birchfieldbiglocal.org

If you would like further information about Birchfield Big Local or would like to volunteer or find out more about joining the partnership then please do contact us on 0121 448 5594 (Mobile: 07421 994752 – Andrew

Email: andrew@birchfieldbiglocal.org

or 07421 994753 -Suki- suki@birchfieldbiglocal.org

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Our Nora (St Teresa's, Perry Barr) in Zambia



Ellie Collins and I had the wonderful privilege of being invited by the Provincial Leadership team to visit Presentation Sisters in their ministries in Mongu and Kaoma in the Western Province of Zambia. We also met the sisters in Lusaka and took the opportunity to visit Sister Josephine and her community in Livingstone. It was a life changing experience for me; deeply moving, disturbing and profoundly spiritual. I am still there in spirit!

On our arrival at Lusaka airport at 6:20am we were met by Sister Sheila Sheehy and taken to the novitiate where we received an overwhelming welcome from all the sisters in the capital city. We were treated like VIPs and given a celebratory lunch. Next day, we were put on a bus (only way to get there!) to begin our nine hour journey to Mongu the main town in the Western Province. This was the most amazing experience. The bus picked up and dropped off passengers en route. At each stop Zambian women were quietly and anxiously trying to sell bundles of cassava and eggs through the window of the bus. The bus was always full to over-flowing with people and bundles! Five hours in to our journey we had the dubious joy of a comfort stop using a communal latrine/toilet! We had a free safari as we drove through Kafue game park. After six hours we passed through the small town of Kaoma; a vital fuel stop for our driver.

At Mongu we again experienced 'presentation hospitality', from Sister Cathy Crawford at the Cheshire Home for disabled children. We were welcomed and invited to be part of their lives for a week. What an enormous privilege! I was totally overwhelmed by the love, joy and generosity of the disabled children. Their courage, determination and thanksgiving to God in prayers, songs and smiles of joy are always with me. Sister Cathy is a mother in every sense of the word to all these children, her warmth and love expressed so freely to all was so inspiring. She ministers to the local community too on an hourly

basis: giving food, clothing, medication and money. Sustainability projects for the whole community are at the forefront of her ministry. She established a cement block-making factory giving employment to the local men. These blocks are used to build small houses to replace the straw huts. She has provided a vital water supply by sinking twelve wells.

We met Sister Molly Maloney when she arrived to take us to Kaoma. She is the most amazing woman! The pandemic of Aids has left at least a million orphans in its wake. She runs not only an orphanage but a whole town/ community to provide for them. Her enterprise knows no bounds. She cares for at least 140 children aged from birth to sixteen and upwards, there are few boundaries with Sister Molly! Like Sister Cathy she is a loving, even a doting mother to all. She can and does everything to support the local community. Boy's town cares for 29 boys and they showed us their own gardens growing an abundance of vegetables and fruit, this is amazing as the terrain is deep sand. Sister also runs a farm, piggery, dairy, butchery and rental accommodation. She and the other two sisters in her community are fully involved with home-based programmes for people with AIDS, the hospital and the prison. All the sisters we met work from dawn to dusk. The day always starts with Mass and ends with the 'Prayer of the Church'.

In Livingstone I was so impressed by the work that Sister Josephine has pioneered with vulnerable teenagers. It is now a thriving training centre in vocational subjects: bricklaying, carpentry, farming, tailoring, gardening, ITC and catering. Approximately 80% of the trainees find work afterwards.

Sister Moira Creed states that "when the poor hear the word 'presentation' they can say we can still hope". I certainly saw this clearly exemplified throughout Zambia in the way all the sisters I met ministered compassionately

and lovingly to the poorest and most vulnerable in society. They are beacons of light and hope, inspired by and completely trusting in God. They, like Nano, are single-minded in their quest for God and in bringing others to Him. Through them I saw every day Nano's dream being fulfilled.... "If I could be of service in saving souls in any part of the globe I would willingly do all in my power". She is there with her lantern shining it into the darkness of Central Africa. Our sisters need our help. We can keep oil in their lamps by sending our donations through Sister Mary Collins in Swindon. Please help! I am so grateful to the Leadership Team and to the Missionary Sisters who ministered to us in Zambia. May God bless them!

Nora Warnaby, Associate



Saint John Wall Catholic School

A Catholic School for All

Governor Vacancies We Need You - Please

If you are interested in your child's education or education in a secondary school and how the school runs then this should interest you. We have several vacancies on our Governing Body;

A Parent Governor(Your child needs to be attending this school) **2 x Foundation Governor** (Which means you are interested in education but don't need to have a child in the school but you must be Catholic)

If you would like more information then please speak to Ms Hancox – Clerk to the Governors on 0121 554 1825.
Please think about it. We really need you.

Round-up of Birchfield Residents' Activities 2015

Community groups enjoy Canal Trips

For the second year running Birchfield Community groups were invited to take a day out on the Grand Union canal at Braunston as guests of the **London Narrow Boat Project** based in the heart of the countryside. These lucky invitees were thrilled to be spending a relaxing day away from the stress of Brum.



1st STEPS Community Plan Award



Helen Fairweather, left, who oversees the Birchfield Neighbourhood Forum's Community Plan project for the Community Development Foundation's Award, with chair, Jimoh Folarin, (centre) and a Forum committee member.



Helen Fairweather listens to the views of a Birchfield Resident on the street during the Walk-About organised by the Forum.



Another long standing Birchfield Resident offers his ideas for the Community Plan. Behind this fence on Grosvenor Road, is a piece of land belonging to the Council which has remained derelict for over 20 years. The Forum would like to see this piece of land dedicated to Community use as a site to build a Community Centre.

Faiths for Fun Scouting Event

Enthusiastic youngsters and Adult helpers at the annual event held to bring together all the Faiths in the area, that are interested in Scouting, organised by Dr Peter and Jean Rookes, County Commissioners.



The Scouting Family, pictured below, keen to promote their Faith & Activity at this year's Vasakhi celebration in Handsworth Park

