

# Regenerating North Solihull

Spring 2011

Your News, Your North Solihull

## Park **life**

Get your skates on at  
Lanchester Park



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# Welcome from Ian Cox

– Programme Director of  
North Solihull Regeneration Partnership



“ Welcome to the spring 2011 edition of the North Solihull Newsletter. I have been looking back on the last 12 months and all that has been achieved by North Solihull Partnership in that time.

There has been some real progress made. We've built more than 120 new homes, rehoused over 100 residents and completed work on Lanchester Park.

As always, we have put you, the people of North Solihull, at the heart of all our projects.

We have talked to more than 600 residents and carried out seven consultations to make sure that the schemes we deliver are what the community needs. Events such as the Cole Valley Vision community planning weekend help make sure you have a say in everything we do.

Looking to the future, we realise that there are some tough challenges ahead. The economic climate is a very different one to when we first outlined our regeneration plans in 2004.

Like many other regeneration schemes across the country, we have been affected by the Government's Comprehensive Spending Review, which has cut the amount of funding available to us. For example, over the last five years the Partnership has received around £8 million per year of public funding, and it

is this funding which has now stopped. Therefore we have had to make some difficult decisions on how we can deliver our rehousing and acquisition programme.

However, North Solihull Partnership has put together plans to ensure the holistic regeneration programme can move forward. That business plan will be put to our board in March.

We will be completing work in Craig Croft and North Arran Way on the village centres, building the new Bishop Wilson C of E School and finalising our masterplan for Cole Valley.

North Solihull Partnership will continue to provide investment in projects to support training, health, employment and community development wherever possible.

I hope you enjoy reading about what we have been doing to improve your area. Please contact us with your questions, ideas and suggestions and together we can make North Solihull a better place to live. ”

## Home is where the art is

**The creative community has found a new home in Kingshurst.**

In January, a new community art space opened in the former Pound Shop, in Kingshurst Parade.

Kingshurst Arts Space project boasts a range of free arts and crafts activities including photography, creative floristry and mural making.

The sessions cater for all ages and abilities and run until April.

To find out more about the project, email [artsparade@solihull.gov.uk](mailto:artsparade@solihull.gov.uk), call 0121 704 8349 or visit the Kingshurst Library for a lit of activities and events.



Youngsters can enjoy the Kingshurst Arts Space project

## Top marks for St Anne's

**Hundreds of children have given top marks to their new school building in Fordbridge.**

St Anne's RC Primary School, which has more than 400 students, opened the doors to its new site in October.

The school which was part funded by the Homes and Communities Agency, is the third to be completed as part of the regeneration programme following the opening of Kingshurst Primary School and Smith's Wood Community Primary School.

St Anne's now boasts state-of-the-art facilities for both students and staff.

Features include a new dining area, open plan resource centre, early years play area and more spacious learning areas. New ICT equipment has also been installed throughout the school.

The next phase of the development will be to provide the school with playing fields.



The new school is now open



St Anne's under construction

## Vision for the Valley

**Residents have come together to have their say on the future of Cole Valley.**

North Solihull Partnership has been working on a masterplan for investment and regeneration in the areas known as Gateway North and South Clusters.

The Cole Valley Vision community planning weekend was held in June for people to put forward their ideas



Residents gather at the planning weekend

for the area. Initial feedback from the event has been shared through a community forum meeting.

Protecting and improving open spaces and parkland was a key priority for residents, along with the providing new housing to meet the rising demand for accommodation in the area. There was also a call to improve bus, cycle and walking links to the town centre and employment areas.

A draft proposal of the Cole Valley masterplan has now been prepared.

Two community feedback sessions are being held on Saturday, March 12 from 10am to 12noon and 1pm to 3pm, at the Kingshurst and Fordbridge Labour Club.

This will be followed by two weeks of exhibitions where people will be able to view the proposals and give their comments to the Consultation Team.

# Building your **North Solihull**

The regeneration of North Solihull goes beyond bricks and mortar. Local groups are being set up to give communities a voice in how to tackle the big issues in their areas. Here we take a look at some of the groups already established.

## SWANN - The Smith's Wood Area Neighbourhood Network



SWANN came together from a combined desire to improve community involvement.

It currently has eight members but that number is expected to grow in the coming months.

"We set up SWANN to try and get everyone in the area to give us their views about what they would like to see in their area and to take part in helping to make it happen," said Malcolm Cullen (pictured), Chair of SWANN.

One of SWANN's first achievements has been to introduce a community centre, after being given the use of a vacant shop in Arran Way.

Malcolm said: "In the shop window we have a notice saying 'let us know what you want', and that's the main point, we really want people to tell us what they want to have in the shop."

If you want to get involved in SWANN contact Malcolm Cullen on 07878 039 118.

## CAFÉ - Community Action in Fordbridge Events



CAFÉ's work in improving the area is already visible for all to see.

In October, the group held a week of events aimed at making Fordbridge a better place to live.

Activities included litter picks, a skip day and providing new planters at Crabtree Hall and at the shops on Bosworth Drive. This was followed by a celebration at the Fordbridge Centre.

Alwyn Doyle (pictured), a project coordinator for the group, said: "I was one of the first people on the estate in 1967 and the group has made the community come together just like it used to do.

"People have told us it's a very good idea. Shop keepers were very pleased with the litter pick and planters – and even donated prizes for our celebration evening. It's really improved the area."

For more information on CAFÉ contact Kieran Dooley on 0121 604 4530 or Alwyn Doyle on 0121 603 7893.

## North Solihull Partnership is supporting the following projects:

### LinK – Locals in Kingshurst

LinK was set up in September 2010 and already has 21 active members. The group meets every Tuesday at the Community Shop on Kingshurst Parade between 9am and 11am.

For more information contact Becky Froggart on 07876 145682, or Kim Coleman on 07917 474 687.

### Residents in Chelmsley Wood

Plans are in place to set up a new residents group in Chelmsley Wood. A listening event is being held on Saturday, March 19, between 10:30am and 12:30pm in Colehill Health Primary School in Marlene Croft.

For more information on how to get involved, contact Sarah Barnes on 0121 704 8347.

### Capacity Building Training

A training programme has been established to help community groups become more effective.

SUSTAiN, which supports charities and community groups in Solihull, is arranging for group members to attend courses in a wide range of skills including chairmanship, minute taking, financing community groups, negotiation and leadership.

If you are a member of a community group and would like to find out more about the courses available email [enquiries@solihull-sustain.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@solihull-sustain.org.uk)

# Getting **involved**

Resident Implementation Groups (RIGs) are another great way of shaping the future of your community.

RIGs are already established in North Arran Way, Kingshurst and Craig Croft and work closely with North Solihull Partnership on specific regeneration projects.

### Where to meet:

North Arran Way RIG meets bi-monthly at St. John the Baptist RC School, on the first Wednesday of the month at 6.30pm. The next meeting is on Wednesday, April 6.

Craig Croft RIG meets on the third Thursday of each month at the Craig Croft Baptist Centre at 6.30pm. The next meeting is on Thursday, March 31.



*Chairs of the RIG groups*

Kingshurst RIG meets on the second Wednesday of each month at Kingshurst Community Primary School at 6.30pm. The next meeting is on Wednesday, March 16 followed by Wednesday, April 27.

# Design for life

Regeneration projects in North Solihull are to be given a personal touch by people living in the area.

The Community Design Group gives people the chance to become involved in designing schemes at a very early stage.

"Now residents can have a real say not only in what we build but how we build it and what it looks like," said Wayne Pittam, from the North Solihull Partnership.

"We already consult with local people and RIGs on how homes, schools and shops are designed.

"This group will give people more of a say on specific design features."

A two day training course was held in September to give residents a better understanding of urban design.

The course was run by The Glass-House Community Led Design charity, which works with local people and regeneration specialists to build communities, and urban design specialist URBED.

One local resident who attended the course said: "It taught me to understand the minds of design artists and architects as to why they decide to build housing and so on in certain areas.



*Residents at the design training course*

"I also learnt that it would benefit the local community to try to express their views formally and productively to the people it concerns and, by showing their understanding, it would show how serious they are in expressing their ideas and beliefs."

The Community Design Group's first meeting took place in October.

The group has already been involved in the development of the new Bluebell Public House.

"They came up with some really good comments on how to improve the scheme," added Wayne.

# Centres of attention

North Solihull Partnership has been working hard to transform village centres across our area. Here's an update of the work we are doing.



Proposals for the Bishop Wilson C of E School

## Craig Croft Village Centre

Since obtaining outline planning consent in 2009, work has been carried out to find the floor-space needed for different parts of the new centre, including shops, health, offices and enterprise accommodation.

This year, North Solihull Partnership will be looking at where the different buildings will go in the centre, how the scheme can be developed in phases, as well as seeking funding opportunities for each phase.

The community and RIGs will be consulted about the detailed plans for the scheme before any planning applications are submitted.

The new Bishop Wilson C of E School will provide a focus for the village centre and an opportunity to create a landmark building with services for the wider community.

A planning application has been submitted for the new school on the site of the former St Patrick's Primary School.

The school will be a two form level entry primary school with integrated community facilities including a church, cafe, Council community projects and office accommodation for a health partner.

If planning permissions is granted work will start on site later this year with the school opening its doors to children in spring 2013.



Plans for Phase One of the North Arran Way scheme

## North Arran Way Village Centre

Smith's Wood Community Primary School, which is at the heart of the new village centre, has now been open for more than 12 months.

A new road has been built which forms the basis of the High Street and links Windward Way to the proposed centre and new development at Burton's Farm.

Consultation on Phase One of the new village centre – which includes new shops and offices – was carried out in February 2011.

A planning application is due to be submitted in the spring with work getting under way in autumn.

## Kingshurst Village Centre

A mini-masterplan for Kingshurst Village Centre will be developed throughout 2011.

The plan will be focused around what can be done to improve the appearance of the existing centre to make it more attractive for visitors and for businesses on the parade.

The local community, businesses, service providers and other agencies will be consulted later this year.



Artist's impression of the Bishop Wilson C of E School

# ROLL UP, ROLL UP

Skateboard, BMX and rollerblading enthusiasts from across North Solihull have been rolling up to show off their tricks at a new skate park.

The skating area is part of the £600,000 makeover of Lanchester Park, which has seen the basic playground and open space transformed into a modern facility.

The new park includes two sports pitches, improved playgrounds and an activity zone for older children. Improvements have also been made to the paths, entrance and car park.

"When we were putting together the plans for the park, one of the main things young people told us was they wanted a concrete skate park," said Andy Hunters, a youth worker at Solihull Council.



Lewis Lawton shows off his skills

"It's already proved very popular and we have had some really positive feedback.

"Throughout the winter we have been organising days out for young people at an indoor skate park in Birmingham so they can hone their skills for when the weather improves."

The park's play areas have been designed with help from over 300 local children and young people, to ensure it had equipment which was attractive and fun to play on.

Andy added: "Part of our role was to encourage young people to talk to the contractors about what they wanted from the park.

"A Facebook group was set up where people could view the proposals for the park and have their say. It proved to be a great way of getting people involved in the project."

The park was completed in November, with funding coming from the Homes and Communities Agency and North Solihull Partnership.

Lanchester Park was one of a number of play spaces that opened last year including Burtons Farm Park, at North Arran Way, and Scholars Walk, at Craig Croft.

## GET HELP GETTING HEALTHY

Shedding the winter weight and getting fit for summer is being made easier thanks to a team of health trainers.

North Solihull's new Health Trainer Service works with people across the area to make lifestyle changes to improve health and wellbeing.

The team, which is based at the YOU+ shop in Chelmsley Wood Shopping Centre, offers a one-to-one service and covers areas including weight management, quitting smoking, healthy eating and increasing exercise.

The trainers also provide the service one day per week from SWANN's shop in Smith's Wood and Kingshurst Arts Space.

The service is a partnership between SUSTAiN, which supports charities and community groups in Solihull, and Solihull Care Trust, with the trainers recruited from the local area.



Get advice on keeping healthy

Health Trainer Service Manager, Harpreet Sohal, said: "You can see we are making a big difference. People come to us and you can see them change and how their confidence improves as they use the service."

The service is available to anyone over the age of 18 living in North Solihull, or who is registered to a North Solihull GP.

For more information please contact Health Trainer Service Manager Harpreet Sohal on 0121 712 7787 or email harpreets@solihull-sustain.org.uk.

# Just the job

**Residents are being urged to sign up to a scheme that will see them boost their career prospects while rebuilding their own communities.**

The Employer Engagement Project has helped secure 12 apprenticeships with companies involved in the regeneration of North Solihull.

Daniel Hodgkinson, 18, was completing a furniture making course at Solihull College's Construction Centre in Griffin Park when he was offered a carpentry apprenticeship at Bellway Homes – Regenerating North Solihull's construction partner.

He said: "I didn't do well at school – only socially. This has given me the chance to get my qualifications and build a career."

Apprentice bricklayer Calvin Skeffington, 20, has used the project to take his career to the next level.

Calvin had completed his NVQ Level One and Two with a former employer, but was told he would not be able to try for his Level Three qualification.

"I knew I needed this if I wanted to become a site manager," he said. "I read about the project in the Regenerating North Solihull newsletter so I signed up. I got a job with Bellway and I've now completed my Level Three qualification."

Reece Lynch, 16, started his apprenticeship with Bellway as a bricklayer in August.

He said: "It's given me the chance to get a job and some qualifications, which is great news. I want to be site agent in the future."

Yvonne Platts, project manager of the initiative, said: "It is really important that local people who want to work in the construction sector register their interest and contact details with the project, then, when local employment opportunities become available, we can make sure that all those on the register are made aware of the opportunity."



*Daniel, Reece and Calvin have all benefited from the scheme*

The Employer Engagement Project aims to get local people and businesses employed through the regeneration of North Solihull.

The project has helped 61 people find jobs on regeneration sites.

Around 50% of employees working on the regeneration scheme have a Solihull postcode – with almost a quarter coming from the North Solihull area.

The project also links local contractors with the Council's Solihull For Success programme – which offers business support.

To find out more about the Employer Engagement Project contact Yvonne Platts on 0121 717 1675.

## Communication group

**Good communications is a major part of making the Regenerating North Solihull project work.**

To help improve communications, North Solihull Partnership has set up a group made up of local residents.

The group will make sure that information on the projects is readily available to local residents. One of the first roles of the group has been to oversee the publication of this newsletter.

**If you have any questions, comments or are concerned about a rumour you have heard please call the team on FREEPHONE 0800 389 7997 or speak to your local RIG. Visit us at [www.northsolihull.co.uk](http://www.northsolihull.co.uk)**