





CASTLE VALE TALKS COMMUNITY SAFETY

Find the article on page 12



ELECTED MAYOR LAUNCHES ENVIRONMENTAL CAMPAIGN

Find the article on page 12

This local newsletter has been created with input from the community to discuss what is important to our readers. We would really like to hear from you about what you think of our first edition. If you have any comments or suggestions please call/text Becki Winkless

on **07956 007 696**

WORKING ** TOGETHER!



Spitfire Services in partnership with Castle Vale Community Housing deliver an innovative support package that puts the client at the centre of the journey. Not only do we provide welfare benefits and debt advice, we also provide holistic support to take the client on a tailored journey in which enables people to avoid or get out of poverty and financial exclusion.

Community Safety is a top priority for partners who work in Castle Vale, such as West Midlands Police, CVCH, City Council, Schools and most importantly residents. The Annual Tenants Survey conducted in 2017 said that that in general 95% of tenants felt safe during the day and 83% at night, however there is still a need to keep on top of Crime & ASB. Over the next 12 months partners will work together with residents on keeping safe on the Vale.

Our Pledge to make this happens includes:

- Ongoing Neighbourhood Police presence on the vale.
- Effective use of our CCTV network.
- Working with Schools and WMP on Anti Social Behaviour.

CASTLE VALE FUNDING BOOST

- The Pioneer Group has a new
- Neighbourhood Fundraiser Alan
- Crawford. Alan brings a wealth of fundraising experience having
- spent the last 7 years
- supporting voluntary sector
- groups across Solihull to generate funding.
- Alan is able to provide fundraising support and advice to existing groups in the area as well as supporting individuals
- who have project ideas but are not currently part of any organisation.
 - For further information please contact Alan on
 - 07580 949556

MEET SIMON WILSON, THE NEW CHIEF EXECUTIVE THE NEW CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF THE PIONEER GROUP



"As of the 25th May 2018 I was incredibly privileged to start my role as Chief Executive of The Pioneer Group. The Group is an alliance of organisations all about housing, people and communities. Castle Vale is and will remain for the foreseeable future our largest community.

Although the work we do through the Group is now stretching beyond the Vale and into other communities we remain committed to keeping the Vale an attractive, safe and pleasant place to live and work. We have some big challenges as an organisation, some born of national pressures such as welfare reform, the well-

publicised shortage of affordable housing and the ongoing pressure of two more years of rent cuts for our tenants and the impact that has or our income and ability to continue to invest in services that keep the Vale great.

However I have a real determination of not leaving anyone behind and will continue to ensure we deliver community driven solutions with strong values and led by the voices of our tenants and the residents of the Vale and partners we work with. This community is incredibly resilient and should be proud of what it achieves by pulling together and working in partnership."



I moved to Castle Vale just over eight years ago from Water Orton, where I served as a parish councillor for several years. I didn't know the area, other than from its past reputation, so I pledged to give it two years before I made a decision to either settle here, or move on.

As you can see, I'm still here

After a number of years as an active volunteer in my past community I also pledged that in my new community I would not get involved. Well that went a bit wrong, because I now find myself as Chair of Castle Vale Community Housing (CVCH).

How did this happen

The first thing that I noticed living in Castle Vale is how friendly and welcoming everyone was to me. That has not always been my experience in other places that I have lived in. Then I started to notice that as a community there was always something happening, and generally there is a pride amongst fellow residents that Castle Vale is a good place to live. I started to get drawn into volunteering and get involved with various activities, and to cut a long story short, I am where I am now, and very content with it! The CVCH board has a resident majority, so no changes or policies can be made without agreement from resident board members. As Chair I am proud to say that I have been instrumental in strengthening this, and ensuring that our voices are heard.

WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE A VALUED MEMBER OF YOUR LOCAL HOUSING ASSOCIATION? DO YOU WANT TO HELP THE PEOPLE IN YOUR STREET, YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD, YOUR COMMUNITY?

We are seeking to recruit new Board Members who have a real desire and interest in helping we are seeking to recruit new Board Members who have a real desire and interest in helping our ambitious organisation achieve its aims and objectives and contribute towards business growth and service excellence. As a voluntary position it will not be paid, but travel and other expenses for attendance at meetings can be claimed.



We welcome interest from candidates from a wide range of backgrounds but for these board positions,

We are committed to equality ϵ diversity and welcome approaches from all sections of the community.

Some of the up and coming topics and policies that are up for review that you could be party to the approval of are: • Repairs and Maintenance Policy • Home Improvement Policy
• Major Investment Works Policy • Allocations Please call **0121748 8121** by the 15th of September Do you want free advertising in the next edition??? Contact Becki on **07956 007696** or email your content to **rebecca.winkless@cvch.org.uk**

CHRISTIANS AGAINST POVERTY (CAP), MONEY COURSE

budget, save, spend,

WOULD YOU LIKE TO KNOW HOW TO MANAGE YOUR MONEY MORE EFFECTIVELY?

Courses are being run by Castle Vale Chaplaincy Service from Spitfire House, 10 High Street, B35 7PR. Tuesdays, 12.00 – 2.30pm over 3 weeks. The next course starts 18th September 2018. For further information contact Sharon on **07476 938587**



CRISIS FUND

The Crisis fund has been launched to help those most at need on Castle Vale. CVCH recognise that the current economic climate and changes to the benefits system have caused a lot of problems for residents who are now living very near to or below the poverty line.

Food and warmth are things that are a necessity but are becoming very hard to afford. Benefit sanctions, debt problems and mental ill health all contribute to the problem.

What can the Crisis Fund help with?

- Fuel (pre-paid cards only)
 White Goods
- Beds Essential furniture Essentials

What we will NOT help with.

- Rent or bedroom tax Council tax
- Luxury items such as computers TVs etc
- Property repairs

On no occasion is cash given out of the fund to any applicant.



We at CVCH are committed to ensure that residents within Castle Vale have access to the right support when mangaging their finances. This is why our Customer 1st team, the face of our reception and front line phone service, are on hand to help or get you in touch with the right sevice.

Monday - Thursday - 9am - 5pm Friday - 9am - 4pm

11 High Street, Castle Vale, B35 7PR 0121 748 8100 If you would like to apply for some funding from the Pledge Pot or you would like to find out more, please email rebecca.winkless@cvch.org.uk or call Becki on 01217488134.

COMMUNITY PLEDGE POT

A small amount of money has been put aside for social/capacity building activities for residents of Castle Vale. We receive applications for our Pledge Pot grants to help residents from Castle Vale either set up new projects or get involved in new activities. The aim of the Pledge Pot is to provide opportunities for one off activities to take place that are organised by residents, for residents of Castle Vale.

We have some supported some great activities through our Pledge Pot. Phoenix Court residents held a Community BBO to celebrate the Royal Wedding where residents from across the estate were invited to come together and enjoy the sunshine and celebrate with Harry & Megan.





Most recently Castle Vale Community Environmental Trust took a group of 23 children on an outdoor residential trip. During the stay the children were encouraged to explore the vast outdoor area; they participated in looking for deer during nature walks (early morning and late evening), discovering new habitats to play and learn in, sharing meals at a 'Harry Potter' style dining table, completing new challenges such as archery, slack line & fun fair and not to mention the highlight of toasting marshmallows and singing around our campfire.

Feedback from the children and parents/guardians has been full of positivity and support towards CET's youth provision.

Thank you for everything you do to keep our children active and out and about. Keep up the good work you guys



SUCCESS IN THE JAGUAR SCHOOL CHALLENGE!

For the second year running Topcliffe have taken part in the Jaguar Formula One Challenge. The teams had to become entrepreneurs, through designing, promoting and marketing a formula one car. Last year we won, not only the regional competition, but were crowned national winners!

This year we put two teams forward - Motor Minions and Rapid Racers. We again have had great success with both teams winning and coming second in the regional competition.

Therefore, both were taken forward to the National competition. Our two amazing teams had to compete against 36 other teams from around the country.

During the day, they were interviewed, did a presentation and raced their cars. We are proud to say the teams came 2nd (Motor Minions) and 3rd (Rapid Racers). Due to the amazing work the Motor Minions did they were given the opportunity to share the winner's prize and go to Silverstone for the day. We are so proud of the commitment of the children and dedication of the staff involved.



TiggyWinkles operates two daycare nurseries.

TiggyWinkles have been providing childcare since 1999, delivering a high quality service to our parents and children and our latest Ofsted inspections returned a 'Good' rating for both of our sites. They have funded places available so please contact Emma Stroud, our Nursery Manager on **0121747 3669** for further information.



OUTSTANDING AGAIN!!!!

Castle Vale Nursery School was visited again by Ofsted. As we receive the same rigorous school Ofsted inspection as any other school, we were thrilled to be judged as Outstanding for the 4th time in a row. We think this is partly because of our ethos which is 'Making a difference. All of our children, all of the time." and partly because of the amazing children and families of Castle Vale. We assess all of our children continuously and plan for their individual learning needs, sharing the learning with the family through online learning journeys. In addition to that, we want to give the children as many different and exciting experiences as we can.

We are a school that loves the outdoors. We partner with Community Environmental Trust

- on the estate to provide every
- child with Forest School every week. We provide waterproofs
- and wellies, hats and sun cream
- so the children can enjoy their
- learning outdoors in all weather conditions.

Castle Vale Nursery School is a local authority school, same as any other school except that we have children from 2 to 4 years old but there are other Early Years settings you can access too. See our website for more information

www.castlevalenursery.co.uk or contact CASS on 01213031888 for information about other Early Years Providers.



Greenwood Academy were delighted to be able to officially open our fantastic new building on March 13th 2018. Despite being in the new building since September 2017, we had always intended to mark the momentous occasion with a ribbon cutting and official opening, but were keen to allow the new space to establish itself first with art work by the wonderful students there.

We made a big thing of the fact that our move from the old building coincided with our 50th anniversary which we celebrated for an entire year across the Castle Vale community and beyond and so our launch event was very much about setting the tone for the next 50 years! We were delighted to be joined by colleagues from AET including Julian Drinkall the CEO and Beverley Perin our Chair of Governors, along with local MP Jack Dromey and various other local dignitaries.

We were particularly pleased to have members of our Parent and Community Advisory Board in attendance, but our guests of honour were of course the young people that joined us from local primary schools Minworth, Chivenor and Pegasus.

Guests were treated to a performance from 35 students across all year groups, speeches from Head Boy Reece and Head Girl Kelsey, along with Headteacher Mr Bird and Julian Drinkall from AET. The ribbon cutting itself was underscored by an acapella vocal performance from a group of 6th Form performing arts students which set the scene perfectly for our Head Boy and Head Girl to make the cut and unveil the commemorative plaque which will take pride of place in our reception area – a fantastic honour for the two pupils involved!

Demolition of the old Greenwood school is now complete and subject to planning, work will begin on site in spring 2019. More info will be in the next edition when we will be able to share plans for the site. Please contact Birmingham City Council for more details on **0121 303 1115**.

Talent Fever

Talent fever continued into the summer with more than 1000 local primary school children getting a nice surprise over various lunch times during June. Our Year 12 Performing Arts group put a 30 minute show together which 'Popped Up' unannounced (well the headteacher knew!) at Gunter, Minworth and Topcliffe. Not only did the excited audience of 4 to 11 year olds get to see talent but they also got to show theirs with many primary pupils bravely stepping onto the stage to sing or dance in front of their classmates. The shows were really well received and as ever our Performing Arts group proved themselves to be a real asset to Greenwood. We're very much looking forward to next year and keeping our fingers crossed we can up the stakes and do an international stadium tour!

BATTLEFIELDS TOUR

From the 26th-28th of May this year, the Humanities department took 38 pupils and 5 members of staff on an incredibly eye opening and moving tour of the battlefields of WWI. With our base being in Ypres, Belgium, we were able to spend 3 days touring some key sites in the surrounding countryside as well as travelling to the Somme in Northern France to look at the site of one of Britain's bloodiest WWI battles.

The trip gave students an insight into the different ways in which we remember those who fought, visiting sites such as the largest Commonwealth cemetery in the world at Tyne Cot, Langemark - a German cemetery and Vimy Ridge, the Canadian memorial to those lost.



We had a fantastic day in August celebrating our Universal Credit Roadshow. Crowds of you came down to find out all about the new benefit scheme and have a family fun day in the sun too!

Here are some of our favourite snaps from the day and more can be found on our website on: www.cvch.org.uk/uc-roadshow



WHAT IS UNIVERSAL CREDIT?

Universal credit is a new benefit for people of working age who need help with living and housing costs. With one monthly payment, you will be in control of managing your own finances including paying your rent, budgeting your income, and supporting your household. It's important that you are prepared so you don't get into debt which is why we have a number of organisations in Castle Vale who are here to help.

HOW DO I APPLY?

If you currently recieve these benefits for income, housing, child tax or working tax benefits then the process will automatically be rolled over, however new claims should be made submitted to the government website www.gov.uk/apply-universal-credit



HOW WILL THIS AFFECT ME?

If you're currently claiming Housing Benefits, then the change to Universal Credit will impact how your rent is paid as this will no longer go directly to your housing provider. This means that your benefits will be paid directly to you and you will have to make arrangements to pay your rent. There are a number of ways to do this and to ensure your account does not go into arrears you will need to get in contact with your landlord to get this arranged. If you are a CVCH tenant we would recommend an automatic bank payment (either Direct Debit or standing order). If you would like to set this up, or for any further questions on Universal Credit please call 0121 748 8100.

If you are a resident looking for advice to do with claiming benefits, online access and budgeting support you can contact Spitfire Services at www.spitfireservices.org.uk



The Pioneer Group has just celebrated it's 3rd birthday, but some people still aren't to sure who we are and what it is we offer, so allow us to introduce ourselves!

The Pioneer Group is an alliance of people and organisations based in Castle Vale providing community-driven housing solutions to meet the needs and aspirations of local people and the communities they live in. By offering access to youth, family, health and employment support services we hope to provide the services to enable people to reach their true potential.

Our overall mission is to deliver great housing in Castle Vale and other neighbourhoods in North & East Birmingham while building successful communities for those areas.

We're sure you've spotted some of our group's brands within the community already but to get to know the Pioneer family a bit better, below is a quick summary of who we are and what we do:



CVCH is a community-led organisation for Castle Vale-based services.

The customer and community is at the heart of everything we do and we have a strong resident majority board who are held to account by the Castle Vale community.



Compass Support is the charitable arm of The Pioneer Group, offering experise to communities across Birmingham.

We provide support services designed for young people, families, vulnerable groups and older people based from The Sanctuary in Castle Vale.



Stockland Green Opportunity Housing & Training is a new provider of afforable housing and training opportunities.

Our aim is to tackle the issue of poor quality rental homes and lack of employment opportunities in North Birmingham.



Pioneer Places are providers of quality new-build and refurbished homes for rent and sale.

Offering market rented homes with certainty around rent levels, length of tenancy and quality of service.



The Merlin Venture is the main provider of TiggyWinkles community nurseries in Castle Vale.

As a non-profit company we support the local community through affordable child care services to help parents in work.





We're proud to announce the launch of our new website. Now featuring a more modern and user-friendly design, visitors can find out all about The Pioneer Group's services.

www.pioneergroup.org.uk



Helping Hands

Garden & Home Maintenance

- Grass cutting Weeding Leaf Clearing Pruning •
- Minor Repairs Picture Hanging Flat Pack Furniture Painting •
 & more!

Helping Hands is a locally based home improvement and gardening service, delivered by Castle Vale Community Housing. We aim to provide a high quality, trustworthy service for a reasonable price.

Just ask! We will be happy to provide you with more information.



To arrange a quote call:

0121 748 8100

contactus@cvch.org.uk

Castle Male Castle Malks munity—Community—Consoler Safety—

60 residents attended a community safety summit to discuss rising concerns around crime and anti-social behaviour (ASB) on Castle Vale.

On 14 July a community safety summit was held at the Greenwood Academy, chaired by Jack Dromey M.P. with reps from West Midlands Police, Castle Vale Community Housing and Spitfire Services. Residents were given the opportunity to raise their concerns around community safety within Castle Vale.

Four key points emerged in the discussions including:

- Road safety and speeding
- Police presence on the estate.
- 3 CCTV
- 4. Their experiences of reporting crime on 101.

A factsheet was distributed to all with information on crime numbers over the last 12 months on Castle Vale - this had reduced overall on the previous year though there had been an increase in violent crime. The factsheet also included a comparison between Castle Vale and the remainder of Erdington which showed the position overall as being more positive in Castle Vale.

RESIDENTS WERE ASSURED:

- CCTV system are operational within Castle Vale.
 77 of the 79 cameras are in full working order and feeding into the monitoring suite 24/7 365 and the police and CVCH actively and routinely use information produced in ongoing live crime and ASB investigations.
- The neighbourhood police team are based on Castle Vale - 13 officers in total with a new Sergeant who started in July - Sqt Richard Edkins.

The meeting was concluded with a promise to arrange a follow on meeting to update residents on the progress made against the issues of concern identified.



TO SUPPORT CVCH CAMPAIGN TO CLEAN UP CASTLE VALE

Andy Street, West Midlands elected Mayor visited Castle Vale on the 18th July to hear about how our neighbourhood was turned around by the regeneration undertaken in the 1990s and sustained thereafter.

We were delighted to have been visited by both Andy Street West Midlands Mayor and Cllr Suzanne Webb who joined us in support of the launch of our environment campaign "SEE IT REPORT IT" which is aimed at encouraging the community to get involved and to help us tackle and reduce litter and fly tipping on our estate.

To report fly tipping on our land please call us on **01217488100**







NEW PLAN FOR CASTLE VALE

Launching on 14th September at Greenwood Academy, the new Castle Vale Neighbourhood Plan has a clear vision to create stronger, healthier and happier communities with opportunities for residents to access learning and skills, to improve their employment prospects and to have a quality home in a safe and green neighbourhood.

This is a genuine community plan shaped by engagement of residents over the last 18 months. It has been produced by the Castle Vale Neighbourhood Partnership Board (NPB) with a long term commitment from a number of partners working in Castle Vale to work together to deliver its vision and priorities.

It will be published on the NPB's website (cvnpb.org.uk) with copies available at the library. If you want to get involved in any of the actions listed in the first year you can contact **Ifor.jones@pioneergroup.org.uk**.



ON YOUR BIKE - WAGTAIL RIDE

15th September from 11.30 to 13.30

To celebrate the new cycle pathway, installed in the spring along Cadbury Drive running along the bund near Spitfire Island, we have a fun ride starting at the cycle path running along Wagtail Walk, through Bear Walk and on to Farnborough Fields ending with a picnic.

Bring your bike - you can have advice on riding and fixing your bike from 11.00 onwards with the ride proper starting at 12.00.

Contact for detail:

Mashkura.begum@pioneergroup.org.uk

Moung Jeaders

Castle Vale young leaders are a group of 32 young people within Castle Vale between the ages of 11-19. Working with Compass Support based at the Sanctuary, this group have involvement and lead on social action projects that aim tackle issues within The Vale. One campaign this group are taking the lead on is the 'No one without' campaign where the aim is to ensure that there are no isolated residents on Castle Vale.

Earlier this year, when the UK was struck by 'The beast from the east' aka 'Storm Emma' the young leaders took it upon themselves to grab essential supplies and brave the snow to deliver on sledges bread, milk and tinned food to vulnerable residents who were in need. This group of young people are well and truly flying the flag for community spirit and setting a great example for others.

If you would like to know more about the young leaders or the youth work that is available on Castle Vale, please visit:

www.compass-support.org.uk or call 0121 748 8111.





Nolunteers

On the 26th July 2018 a Volunteer day was hosted at the Sanctuary on Castle Vale. The aim of this event was to share information about opportunities for volunteering in the local and wider area, raise awareness about the different types of roles, provide a space for potential volunteers to ask questions, support potential volunteers with completing application forms, share information on coaching support available and help attendees make a start on their volunteer journey. Broadcasting live from the event was Switch Radio where representatives from a number of organisations gave information about what involvement opportunities were out there and how they can benefit the volunteer and the community. As the event was such a success, there will be another event held within the next six months. If you would like more information about what volunteering opportunities there are or would like to understand how they can benefit you, please contact Becki on, 07956 007 696.



Lots of people work on The Vale to ensure the estate remains a great place to live and the properties which CVCH own are maintained to a good standard.

PLEASE LET US INTRODUCE...



Castle Vale Community Housing are currently in year 4 of their kitchen replacement programme, which was awarded to CLC. The Pioneer Group would like to thank all their customers for working with CLC through the installation process.

"There is nothing that could have been done better. The workman were excellent, hardworking and polite. My new kitchen is wonderful. Thank you"

Greenfingers

Castle Vale Community Housing were pleased to announce that Greenfingers were appointed as their new contractor for grounds maintenance services in April 2018. CVCH are delighted to be working in partnership with Greenfingers to ensure that CVCH tenants recieve a quality grounds maintenance service. A great partnership to deliver great services!



lan Williams are currently working across the Castle Vale estate working on the external and internal redecoration of properties and blocks owned by CVCH to ensure that Castle Vale remains a pleasant place to live.

"Excellent, very satisfied"



L Daniels are contracted on Castle Vale to manage the repairs and maintenance on all CVCH owned properties and blocks. L Daniels Property Maintenance Limited has over 60 years' experience in the building industry and is still run today as a family business with strong values that are as important today as they were then.



In April 2018 Ideal Cleaning Services Ltd were appointed as the new contractor with regards to cleaning of communal areas owned by CVCH. During contract talks Ideal Cleaning Services Ltd showed enthusiasm, flexibility and great values and demonstrated their commitment to providing a customer focused and friendly service.



CVCH are pleased to announce again that with the support of Renuvo and tenants, 100% of gas installations in our properties have a current Landlord Gas Safety Certificate. The Pioneer Group and Renuvo would like to thank all tenants for allowing access in to your home, which enable us to undertake critical checks ensuring the safety of yourself and family members as well as your adjoining neighbours is maintained.



☐ I agree to receive notifications about future publications from CVCH.