

Trust Talk

September/October 2011

Welcome to Trust Talk, the bi-monthly newsletter which keeps you in touch with what's going on at Trust Thamesmead and in our community.

'Cultivating Communities' in Thamesmead

The Trust received some exciting funding news during the summer, having secured support from the Home Office Integration Programme to deliver a range of initiatives in Thamesmead that will benefit local people.



The Trust is already working on a community garden project with community group Moorings Action Together (MAT), Gallions Housing Association and The Wildlife Trust. MAT member Janna Savage is pictured above at a recent community engagement event promoting the project in Birchmere Park.

Through the programme, called 'Cultivating Communities', we'll receive £258,000 a year for three years for a programme which will be delivered in partnership with Groundwork London and will be used to complement much of our community development work.

Together with resources from the Trust and Groundwork this equates to more than £1m over the three years.

The programme is targeted towards what the Home Office describes as 'third country nationals' who include most people from outside the European Union who have been resident in Thamesmead for fewer than 10 years.

In particular the funds will aim to deliver the following outputs:

- 50 people engaged in gardening/food growing activities and workshops
- 100 people engaged in events
- 50 people engaged in seminars
- 50 ESOL accredited qualifications
- 50 Basic Skills Qualifications Level Two
- 10 people given technical support in considering micro-business possibilities
- 100 people volunteering/participating in activities to benefit the community
- 50 people to progress onto formal intervention/employment support
- 10 people taking part in Green Team training and gaining horticultural qualifications
- 10 people acting as peer mentor volunteers

The Trust's Head of Community Development is David Stone who said: "Whilst this is fantastic news and a very welcome boost for our local communities the real work starts now!

"The project will require all of us to 'up our game' to ensure that after three years we have made a significant difference in the life chances of the people of Thamesmead who have not traditionally benefited from this kind of programme.

The 'ideal type' model of implementing the programme will see a seamless development of individuals who may progress from English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) training into volunteering and then into community-based groups who will be working on specific projects such as community gardens and allotments.

"It's telling that our original bid was for 50% match funding but we have been awarded 75% because of the innovative nature of our approach. The programme officially started on 1 July 2011 and we need to pull out all the stops to ensure that we fully exploit this exciting but challenging new opportunity".

Joint Approach to Area Based Projects

Also in July the Trust and Gallions Housing Association agreed an Action Plan that could signal a new way of working between the two organisations.

A range of projects have been identified where, by working together, we may be able to add considerable benefits to projects that would otherwise have a limited impact.

The guiding principle behind this approach is to identify areas where our interests and planned programmes overlap so that we are able to align our work areas to achieve better outcomes.

Examples include the Moorings Estate where the Trust has been working with Moorings Action Together (MAT) to bring back into use the former social club and consider other ways of improving the environment and general conditions on the estate including Birchmere Park, part of which is being developed as a community garden.

At the same time Gallions has embarked on a major three year improvement programme for the area which, although focussed on mainly internal works to the flats and houses, also includes an element of external works.

As a result Gallions is now looking at how to support the Birchmere Project, while we are looking at how we could support Gallions to deliver an environmental scheme at Bryon's Close, which is also part of the Moorings Estate, lying close to Birchmere Park.

This joint approach also has potential at Broadwater Green, Owen Close, Harrow Manor Way, and Alsike Road and at Limestone Community Centre and The Link Thamesmead.

While it is still very early into the process, this new approach marks a significant advance in how the Trust aims to work with and influence the impact and outcomes of its key partnerships.

Thamesmead Youth Show Their Positive Side

The Trust worked in partnership with Thamesmead Youth Voice to deliver an event celebrating International Youth Day on 12 August. The day, which had been months in the planning stage, was threatened with cancellation at the last minute due to the London-wide disturbances which caused so much damage and distress just days before.

However on the advice of the Metropolitan Police the event, which attracted more than 120 young people, went ahead as planned.

Held at Woolwich Polytechnic Secondary School the event was officially opened by the Mayor of Greenwich, Councillor Jim Gillman and offered a range of free activities including skateboarding, basketball, bike polo, Zumba, football, DJ workshops, table-tennis and a Total Wipe Out-style eliminator game. Most of the planning for the day was done by Thamesmead youngsters.

The Mayor said: “Today’s event has been good fun and shows the other side of young people. Thamesmead Youth Voice together with Trust Thamesmead has put in a lot of time, effort and enthusiasm to make this happen.

“Looking around at the different activities on offer today, many of which aren’t usually available, is confirmation that there should be a lot more facilities for young people in the community.”



Members of Thamesmead Youth Voice meet Greenwich Mayor Councillor Jim Gillman

Janice Jones is the Trust’s Community Development Manager with special responsibility for our work with young people. She said: “Despite the disturbances which made the headlines earlier in the week and which threatened our event International Youth Day proved a great success.

“More than 120 young people took part; many of whom enjoyed new challenges and experiences never before available in Thamesmead.

“Because of the disturbances some parents kept their young people away, but the day went without incident and it was good to see young people getting involved with positive activities and not being deterred by the negativity of others.”

Thamesmead Youth Voice member Tahlia Williamson (16), said “Putting together our International Youth Day celebration was good fun and really interesting. We came up with so many ideas and got to make decisions about what was going to be here. The day was a huge success and gave young people the opportunity to not only connect with others but try new activities too.”

Thamesmead resident Saynab Sufi (15) took the opportunity to learn to ride a bike. She said: "I've never seemed to find the time to learn but the cycle school took time out to show me how. It wasn't hard, I literally learnt within 10 minutes! All my friends cycle to school and I will ask if I can have a bike so I can do it too - it's the healthiest way to travel."

Youth Views Sought Over Disturbances

Meanwhile Tahlia, Paige and Coral from Thamesmead Youth Voice were among a number of young people who were invited by the Met Police's Bexley Borough Commander Chief Superintendent Dave Stringer to give their thoughts and views on the disorder that took place across the capital.

The young people were asked how they felt about the action taken by the police and Bexley Council and what could be done to make them feel safe.

They all said they felt shocked and disgusted at what had happened and were generally supportive of the action taken by the police, including the use of Section 60 powers (Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994) which gives the police powers to Stop and Search people for weapons in a geographically defined area for a period of time if it is believed that there is a risk of serious violence.

One area for improvement arising from the discussion was that of 'communication' as many of the young people voiced concern about the rumours that had spread which made people feel more fearful. The results of the discussion will be fed back by the Borough Commander to senior police colleagues.

Bexley Councillors and Staff Visit

Earlier this week the Trust hosted a tour of The Link and Sporting Club Thamesmead for senior Councillors and officers from Bexley Council, including the Leader Teresa O'Neill and Chief Executive Will Tuckley. Bexley have been long-standing supporters of both projects and this was a great opportunity to update them on the progress on site and talk about the future delivery of services and activities.

The tour kicked off at the Archway Project, where our Centre Managers Mark Blundell and Simon Jones gave updates on each project and fielded a number of questions from the group. Director John Milton went on to outline the work of the Archway Project and the numerous benefits that The Link will bring to the project. The Trust's Head of Social Enterprise Richard Fishlock then took the party on a tour of The Link, before guiding the group over the Ridgeway and on to Sporting Club Thamesmead, where Simon conducted a tour of the site.

“The forecast rain held off and the morning was a great success, leaving us with a real sense that Bexley share our excitement at the potential of these two major centres”, explained Richard.

“Some of those present have been working with us for years, but it was great to show off the projects for the first time to Cllr John Fuller (Bexley Cabinet Member for Education) and Cllr Linda Bailey (Cabinet Member for Regeneration), both of whom were really impressed with the scale and scope of each project.

“Both ourselves and Bexley Council realise that the really hard work is yet to be done, but the strength and depth of Bexley’s support means we are well placed to deliver a popular and sustainable offer from both developments.”

Will Tuckley added: “We’ve been really impressed today with the progress that has been made at each site, but we are even more excited by the potential that the future holds. Both Sporting Club Thamesmead and The Link will significantly enhance the opportunities available to Bexley residents in this part of the borough, and we’re greatly looking forward to when they open for business next year”.

Sporting Club Thamesmead

As work continues to progress at Sporting Club Thamesmead there has been another addition to the team which will be based at the complex in Bayliss Avenue when it opens.

Dan Wells, who is joining the team as the Sports Development Officer, comes to the Trust with a wealth of knowledge in community partnership working and the delivery of activities. The post is joint-funded by the Trust, Charlton Athletic Community Trust (CACT) and the Football Foundation

CACT’s Head of Sport & Football Development, Sean Daly, said “Exciting times are ahead with the development of this facility and the benefits it will bring to the community.



Sporting Club Thamesmead takes shape with the multi-use games area (left), main pitch (centre) and the new pavilion under

“CACT has worked with many Thamesmead schools and various estates programmes and the appointment of the Sports Development Officer in partnership with Trust Thamesmead will help the Trust develop more programmes and activities in the area.”

Centre Manager Simon Jones said: “It’s fantastic to have Dan on board at such an early stage. His appointment will allow us to start working with the community to maximise usage of our new state of the art facilities from day one.

Party Time at The Link

It was party time at The Link last month when more than 250 people joined in the fun at a street party designed to show off the new development.

Centre Manager Mark Blundell took on the role of tour guide for the day to take groups of residents around the site and promote the wonderful range of facilities that will be available to Thamesmead’s young people and the wider community when it opens.

He said: “The day brought the community together and the young people took part in the various activities, some of which will be available at The Link when it opens. It gave a great insight of what it will be like when The Link is fully operational.”

Trust Marketing Officer Julia Hickson added: “There was a great atmosphere at the party. Thanks to extensive engagement by the Trust and Thamesmead Youth Voice, who regularly speak to the local residents living in and around the area, lots of people turned up.

“The behind the scenes tours were really popular and not only gave residents the chance to see for themselves the sheer size of the build but also hear about what will be on offer once it opens fully next year.”

Picnics in the Park

The Trust has been involved in a number of community activities throughout the summer including the two picnics in Birchmere Park that were jointly organised by the Trust and Gallions Residents Group.

The Trust’s Janice Jones said: “In all around 900 people attended the two events, which were a great opportunity for our Community Development team to engage with residents and find out from them where their interests lie, what their aspirations are and how they would like to be involved with shaping Thamesmead.

“Major successes from our point of view were that we were able to engage with hundreds of residents. More than 200 people signed up to receive information from the Trust and another 20% registered an interest in volunteering and/or training opportunities.”

The Trust’s capital projects team also took the opportunity to promote The Link and Sporting Club Thamesmead, with 148 people signing up to receive more information about both projects.



Good fun was had by all at the summer picnics

As well as the usual free massages, face painting and inflatables, feedback demonstrated a high demand for arts and crafts and activities for children under six, as the activities put on for that age group were extremely busy throughout the event and the community performance space again proved popular.

Several community groups and organisations also manned stalls, advising residents about a range of services and activities including local Scouts and Rainbows, My Shepherd House, Thamesmead Food Bank, IMPACT Youth, CADZ Productions, Thamesmead School of Dance and outreach workers from Greenwich Children’s Centre.

Discovery Summer Play Scheme

A pirate ship, soft play area, dance workshop and arts and crafts were just some of the activities on offer at Discovery Primary School during the summer holidays.

“The new park in northern West Thamesmead was due to be finished and ready for use this summer for the Greenwich Council summer play days but due to delays the Council had to make alternative arrangements,” said Trust Community Development Officer Romel Holmes-Lewis.

“Discovery was identified as an ideal substitute location and the recent approval of the lettings policy meant that the school was able to work with Greenwich Council to bring the summer play scheme to the area.”

Spaces were limited to 60 per day and operated on a first come first serve basis and for a total of 10 days the school was alive with children and parents taking part in circus skill workshops and trying their hand at arts and crafts and climbing the pirate ship's mast.

Trust Volunteers Rewarded and Recognised

The Trust recently held a Volunteer Reward and Recognition dinner at Dashwood Social Club to thank all those who have given up their free time to help at our projects and events over the past year.

The volunteers who came along represented a wide range of groups including Thamesmead Youth Voice, Thamesmead Youth Action Link, the Fruit and Veg stalls at Arnott and Discovery, IMPACT Youth, Birchmere Garden Project, Thamesmead Community Forum, Moorings Action Together and Parent Forums from both Arnott pre-school and Discovery primary school.

Community Development team member Sarah Feleppa, who organised the event, said: "I am really pleased with the amount of people who came to meet other volunteers and Trust staff; it allowed our volunteers to see the impressive range of work happening across Thamesmead through finding out about each other's volunteering roles.

"Events such as this really highlight the importance of making our volunteers feel valued and appreciated. Everyone was really grateful that they were being thanked for their efforts. It has also helped us to form an even stronger relationship with the Dashwood Social Club, which I think we shouldn't lose sight of as we can build on this for future events and community engagement projects."

And finally ...

We hope you have found this issue of Trust Talk interesting. If you'd like to comment on any of the stories featured in this issue or would like to know more about our work please contact the Editor Elaine Johnson.

If you know of anyone who would like to be added to our circulation list please email: ejohnson@trust-thamesmead.co.uk

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