Hall Green Community Update

July 2020 Edition 1

Welcome to the Hall Green Community Update

We hope that all our readers are keeping safe and well during these trying times. Since our last 'Community Update' there have been some big changes to lockdown measures across the United Kingdom with many non-essential shops and business opening again. To reflect this change we have changed the layout of our newsletter to focus more on the brilliant community work taking place across our constituency.

However the Coronavirus pandemic remains as serious today as it was in March which is why you will still be able to find key COVID-19 information in your community update, as well as community news from across our constituency and the wider city. This edition you will be able to read about our new Hall Green Communities website, find out about some of the work Gospel Oak have been completing with children and families and read our 'Spotlight On…' with Jo from Women & Theatre! We hope enjoy!

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Who We Are

Accord is the lead partner for NNS and Early Help for families in the Hall Green Constituency. Our community teams are working across **Moseley, Kings Heath & Brandwood Sparkhill, Sparkbrook, Balsall Heath and Hall Green** to support people of all ages in diverse communities. More details about this citywide partnership can be found here and here

- Neighbourhood Network Scheme (NNS)
- Children & Families Early Help Network

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Hall Green Community News

Hall Green Communities Website

We are delighted to announce that our Hall Green Communities website is now live! The website brings together the work of the Hall Green Neighbourhood Network Scheme (NNS) and the Hall Green Early Help team. On our new website you will be able to find updated information on both projects as well as a wealth of resources on city-wide and national support. Visit the new Hall Green Communities website HERE to take a look!

Early Help Case Study – Gospel Oak Community Centre

The Hall Green Families and Early Help team have been working with a number of brilliant organisations across Hall Green to ensure that children, families and those who may be vulnerable are supported through the COVID-19 pandemic. Gospel Oak Community Centre are one such organisation who have been providing invaluable support to children and families during this trying time.

Centre Manager David Crathorne provided the team with the below case-study which highlights some of the work that he and colleagues have been undertaking as well as how a Early Intervention grant has been utilised:

The impact of the Early intervention grant from the Birmingham Childrens trust managed by Accord in Hall Green has been amazing. The funds have enabled the centre to continue to operate through this difficult period caused by the Covid-19 Pandemic. Since the closure of practically every building and face to face support service in the local area, we have worked tirelessly to liaise with families and maintain communication. The delivery of activity pack for children has given families activities to keep the mind and body active and also encourage quality family time to make , build or colour, expressing themselves through art and cooking.

We have had amazing feedback, one family who have been shielding the entire time due to diabetes and other high-risk disabilities. We have been able to keep in contact through social media and deliver weekly packages to keep them active and playing/making together. Their mom wrote to us and said:

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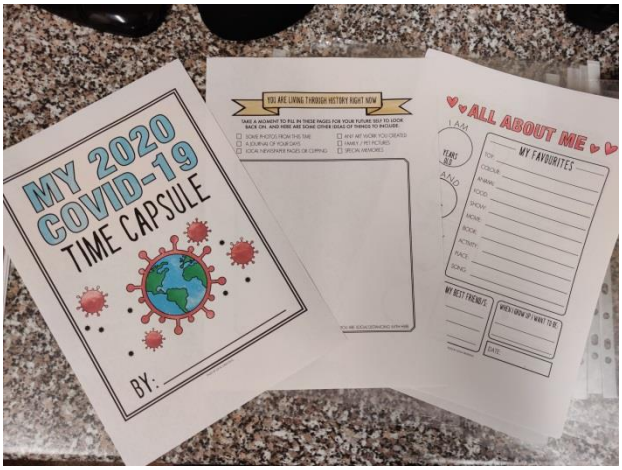
"I would like to thank Gospel Oak and the team for all they have done for us, the support they have given us has been wonderful during lockdown. I have an autistic teenager and a younger daughter with Diabetes type one. We have all appreciated the wellbeing and activity packs. They have really helped to keep them occupied and has helped with my own mental health through this difficult time".

Another family we support has a child with ADHD and a mother with a long history of metal health issues, they told us:



"Without Gospel Oak Community Centre we would have been left on our own, my son will not walk beyond our driveway for fear of catching Covid and dying, everyone was talking about illness and death, his friends, family and the media and Dave and his team were our link to positive activities and conversation during our time in lockdown. My son would rarely come to the door if we have a visitor but he will always come to door when he knows it one of these amazing activity packs being delivered, thanks you".

Our work with families has helped to support children and young and keep them busy with wellbeing journals, art, cooking and crafts, we have also seen an improvement in parents mental wellbeing through their time spent with the children making and doing and the referrals we have been able to make to the adult wellbeing services.

- Dave Carthorne, Centre Manager, Gospel Oak Community Centre

Volunteer with the Muath

Volunteering can be a great way to meet new people and learn new skills, as well as get involved in a cause that means a lot to you. There are a number of great volunteering opportunities across Hall Green constituency including a number of roles with one of our Hall Green Community Hubs the Muath Foundation. We spoke to Mumtaz Shah who is the Connect Sparkbrook Ageing Better coordinator about some of the volunteer role the Trust currently have available.

"The Muath Trust was established in 1990 and over time has built a strong reputation and trust with stakeholders, communities and people. The Muath Trust delivers a range of services and activities,

some of the activities include: Day opportunities for over 50's, A Day Nursery, Supplementary Arabic Schools, Adult Education and Vocational Training Centre, Youth activities and Domiciliary Care Services.

The Muath Trust, in partnership with Hall Green Neighbourhood Network Scheme, is offering support for people over 50, in particular vulnerable Over 50'swho are in isolation or need to remain indoors, living in Sparkhill, Balsall Heath and Sparkbrook.

Whether you need help getting shopping or prescriptions, a hot meal, if you require a food parcel, financial advice or just someone to talk to, the service is there for you. Help is available in a number of languages, including Arabic, Urdu, Punjabi and Bengali. Support is available 7 days a week Monday to Friday 9am to 4pm and Saturdays and Sundays 10am to 1pm.

Volunteers are required to help support this initiative, If you are able to help deliver items to residents, befriend people who are lonely and isolated over the phone or help promote the service to others we'd love to hear from you. Volunteers who are able to speak Arabic, Urdu, Punjabi, Bengali, Somali or other community languages are particularly welcome.

In particular we are looking for volunteers who have a full valid driving licence and have access to a vehicle and available on Wednesday afternoons 12.00pm to 2.00pm to deliver hot meals to local residents of Sparkhill, Balsall Heath and Sparkbrook.

Some of the Muath Trusts current volunteers took the time to tell us why they enjoy volunteering fro the trust:

"I am volunteering as I wish to give back to the community and help individuals and families who are vulnerable, in need and who are suffering from financial hardship. Am act of kindness and good deeds can make the world feel like a better place."

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"Originally I agreed to help and volunteer in order to pass some spare time. However whilst actually doing the food deliveries and seeing the smile and appreciation on peoples faces I fell in love with helping people! I do this not just to help others but to also get a personal satisfaction that I honestly would recommend to everyone out there. It is addictive!"

If you would like to volunteer with the Muath please get in touch with the Trust on 07547 249 659 or e-mail support@muathtrust.org.

COVID-19 Impact Survey

The Coronavirus pandemic has had an adverse impact on the community, voluntary and third sector up and down the country, and we are only just beginning to see that start of some of the worst impact. We want to work with community groups across Hall Green to find out what impact that pandemic has had on your services, as well as to find out what you need in order to recover from this. The Hall Green NNS team have created a short survey to help collect the views of organisations up and down the constituency in order to help us know where we should focus our work.

The Hall Green NNS team have a small pot of funding available to provide training and capacity building support to groups supporting older adults across Hall Green constituency, taking this survey will also give the team a better understanding of what development needs groups require to kick-start activities again.

Visit our website to take the SURVEY and tell us how we can best support you and your organisation in the aftermath of the pandemic.

Spotlight On… Women & Theatre

There are a number of brilliant projects that are being ran across Hall Green helping children, families and older adults in our constituency. This edition of the Hall Green Community Newsletter we are shining a spotlight on the work of Women and Theatre who are currently running their virtual Community Comedy Club for over 50s and Carers in Kings Heath and Brandwood and surrounding areas.

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We spoke to Jo Gleave who is the Lead Artist Practitioner with Women & Theatre; Jo gave us a background on the charity who have been running for over 35 years, founded by current Artistic Director Janice Connolly. Since their start Women & Theatre have diversified in staff and their work however they remain a women-lead organisation.

One of the goals of Women & Theatre is to create work about "things that matter" and through this they have worked with a number of diverse groups of people across Birmingham including bereaved young people, older adults, carers and those in probation. Much of the art that the charity performs is based on the lived experiences of the participants of their workshops, and a lot of time is spent researching specific subject matter, conducting interviews and getting to know the people whose stories they tell.

An example of this is 'Phyllis', a show written and performed by Women and Theatre that presents the story of a woman and her family navigating the complex system of older peoples care. To develop the show Janice and colleagues undertook a series of interviews and meetings with Health and Social Care workers as well as older adults who had experience with Adult Social Care and Health Services to paint an accurate picture of what the experience is like.

The venues that Women and Theatre deliver their workshops and stage performances at are just as diverse as the content of their work, having even used a swimming pool previously as a performance space. People living in Birmingham can get involved with the charity in a variety of ways, often they will approach or be approached by existing groups to deliver sessions or put on performances, otherwise the group put call-outs for participants for their projects. Participants in Women & Theatres performances vary from trained actors to amateurs who have never performed in front of an audience before.

In the middle of June the charity began their virtual Community Comedy Club for over 50s and Carer's in South Birmingham, a project which has been funded by Birmingham City Councils Prevention and Communities team. I asked Jo what it is like working with older adults through the Community Comedy Club: "It's been great, they have all been really open and engaged. Many of them have never tried anything like this before; some have never performed before and just wanted to try something new." When asked how often sensitive subject matter is explored through comedy Jo told me that "comedy can always be used to try and find the humour in tough situations" and there are plans to explore isolation in lockdown and the wider impact that the Coronavirus pandemic has had on participant's lives at an upcoming workshop session.

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Like almost all charities the Coronavirus pandemic has changed the way in which Women and Theatre work. Unfortunately some planned projects have been postponed but the charity have been creative in ensuring that some planned projects can still go ahead. Like many they have took their work online and have enlisted the help of local digital skills charity DigiKick to help support participants that might not be confident with using the internet to get involved. Another barrier that can impact people's ability to take part in online projects is digital poverty and lack of access to tablets laptops and smart phones, Women & Theatre plan on working on ways that they can get this technology to would be participants. But while this period has been challenging there have also been some positives, "I think when we return to some normality we will continue elements of our online work as it has been beneficial for people who cannot leave their homes to attend in-person sessions".

Jo has worked with Women and Theatre since 2018 having held a number of Arts and Theatre roles in Birmingham and the wider West Midlands. One of the highlights of working for Women and Theatre for Jo is working with new people: "It is great to meet new people, find out what they can do creatively and watch a person's confidence grow through the duration of a workshop. When People start they are quite nervous but over time come into a new confidence."

Jo is an "adopted Brummie", having moved to the city to study Theatre at University. Jo was impressed by the arts and culture scene in Birmingham and decided to make the city her home, "the arts environment in Birmingham is so supportive, everyone wants to help each other out, it's not competitive." When asked how the theatre and culture scene in Birmingham compares to that of

other cities such as London and Manchester Jo tells me that it is Brummies can do attitude that sets us apart, “I think in Birmingham we don’t shout about our creativity we just get on with it!” Theatre is just as big a part of Jo’s life outside of work as it is in, in her downtime she enjoys watching theatre performances and going to the cinema.

Women & Theatre have recently started a podcast called ‘Women and Work’ which features three different women’s stories in relation to work; one woman who has worked for 30 years, another who is just staring out in her career and a woman who is retired. The podcast is part of a listening club hosted through Facebook with online discussion, further demonstrating the charities commitment in engaging with their audience creatively through lockdown.

We would like to say a big thank you to Jo for taking the time to speak to us. To learn more about Women and Theatres projects visit their website HERE

COVID-19 Information

This week the UK reached the milestone of 100 days of social distancing measures. Lockdown measures continue to change and in some cases ease, but it is still so important that we all keep up date with latest news to keep ourselves and others safe.

We continue to work with our partners in the community, voluntary and faith sectors, health, family support, social work, police, education, social care, early year’s providers and GPs to provide local help. Birmingham City Council and BVSC are leading efforts to make it easier for people to get the support they need in the neighbourhoods where they live through.

Update from West Midlands Fire Service

West Midlands Fire Service (WMFS) have provided an update to their partners and the wider community in regards to how they are working to support vulnerable people through the coronavirus pandemic.

WMFS have introduced “extensive” measures to ensure that their frontline staff and community members are kept as safe as possible throughout the pandemic. WMFS are continuing to deliver limited support to the most vulnerable and at risk members of our community, and our providing prevention activities to those most at risk of being injured or dying in a fire. Whilst doing this work WMFS are keeping non-essential contact to a minimum.

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West Midlands Fire Service are still taking referrals from people who may have concerns about someone at risk of fire. For more information on how to refer someone for support from WMFS please visit their website using this LINK

Travel Exemption Guidance

To ensure that passengers are kept safe it was announced by the Government that from the 15th June 2020 onwards all adults using public transport should wear a face mask or covering.

West Midlands Network have announced a new face covering exemption card for those who are unable to wear face covering due to health or disability. Those who are exempt can show their card to West Midlands Network staff upon boarding a public transport.

You can apply for an exemption badge online HERE online. If you are unable to apply for a badge yourself get in touch with a member of the Hall Green Communities team via **HallGreenNNSTeam@accordgroup.org.uk** and a member of our team will signpost you to a local organisation who will be able to provide support.

Trusted Information

It is so important to only follow trusted guidance around the COVID-19 pandemic from legitimate sources. If you are struggling to get the right help or advice you can contact a member of the Hall Green Communities team who will link you in with trusted support on your doorstep.

For details of *Covid-19 Support Services in*

Sparkbrook, Balsall Heath, Sparkhill, Hall Green, Moseley, Kings Heath & Brandwood please visit our WEBSITE or see our **directory attached**

Accord

Hall Green Families
07570 953519
@Hallgreenfamilies
Hallgreen.Families@accordgroup.org.uk

Please keep connecting
mobile/text/whatsapp
Facebook/twitter
email

Hall Green NNS
07584 500595
@HallGreenNNS/@HallgreenN
HallGreenNNSTeam@accordgroup.org.uk

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City-wide Help and Support

Age UK Birmingham Home from Hospital Service

Age UK Birmingham have announced a new 'Home from Hospital' scheme being ran in partnership with the NHS. The scheme will provide rapid patient transport to help patients in Birmingham get back home from hospital within 2 hours of discharge.

The scheme is working with City Hospital, Heartlands Hospital and Queen Elizabeth Hospital to provide the service. Age UK's staff and volunteers "will adhere to strict Covid-19* policies and procedures" ensuring that patients are comfortable, safe and secure.

* Age UK are unable to transport patients with suspected or confirmed cases of Covid-19*

Birmingham age UK

Home from Hospital

0121 437 0033

Homefromhospital@ageukbirmingham.org.uk

Registered Charity Number 1138240

Wear and Share Clothing Support

The Active Wellbeing Society have teamed up with the Aston Villa Foundation, #BrumTogether and the Foundation to provide free clothing to individuals and families who may have been financially impacted due to the coronavirus pandemic.

To request clothing support contact programme lead Stacey on 07595 914 685 or email wearandshare@theaws.org

Accord

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Get Involved

We want the many unique voices who make Hall Green great to be involved in our Hall Green Communities newsletter. Do you know of a brilliant community project we should be featuring? Or do you want to shine a spotlight on a neighbour who has been supporting people through the pandemic? Perhaps you have an idea for how the Newsletter should look or what we should feature? Regardless of what your suggestion might be we want to hear from you!

Please contact Natalie Tichareva at Natalie.Tichareva@accordgroup.org.uk to make a suggestion or find out more ways you can get involved with the newsletter.

Thank you for reading our Hall Green Communities Newsletter
Please stay safe, share this information and encourage others to join our mailing list.