

organised and delivered – and there is certainly lots going on.

This edition of your newsletter has lots of interesting stories and photos, including the new properties being built, jobs created and wonderful work going on locally - you must all have been good girls and boys!

As this is Witton Lodge Community Association's 20th anniversary, there's lots about all the impressive community events and the healthy and happy activities enjoyed throughout 2014 – you have all been very busy!

The new homes look very impressive and it's good to see that there are many activities that bring the community together in Perry Common.

In the New Year, I, like many of you, will be making fresh plans. For all our New Year's resolutions, I can see there is plenty of help and support in Perry Common to help you make all of your dreams come true.

So to everyone reading, have a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Santa

Hundreds of people came to the Christmas Lights Switch On, on Thursday 27th November. There were wonderful performances from the Story Wood School Choir and the Ring Of Sound Choir; just before Santa arrived to greet the enormous crowd.

The big Switch On took place at 6:00pm with 13 year old Rehana Khanom of Wilson Stuart School winning this year's prize for the best Christmas Card Design. Bike North Birmingham were here with their electricity generating bike; there were lots of children's activities, a very busy Craft Fayre at St Martin's Church and lots more.

Thank you to everyone who helped out and to everyone who came along to make it a very special and festive evening.



New Year New Homes in Perry Common

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# NEW YEAR, NEW HOMES IN PERRY COMMON



# GRAND OPENING OF BIRMINGHAM'S NEWEST PARK



Saturday 20th September marked an exciting day with the Grand Opening of Birmingham's newest park, Enderby Park, right here in Perry Common.

At 11am the 1 hectare (2.44 acre) park was formerly opened by Councillor Tahir Ali, Birmingham City Council Member for Development, Transport and the Economy, with a community event organised by the Friends of Perry Common and supported by Witton Lodge Community Association.



Despite the wet weather, the event was enjoyed by local people who came to see the park's formal opening, enjoy the refreshments, have a go on the bouncy castle and enjoy the atmosphere.

For even more excitement, there were activities to help everyone stay fit and healthy, with demonstrations on how to use the park's outdoor gym equipment. Healthy and tasty food was provided by the Kingstanding Food Community, while The Net Church gave out free gifts. Exercise classes were provided by the Extend Exercise Group with stalls by St Martin's Church and Witton Lodge Community Association.

"I really like the park and the gym equipment helps us all to stay healthy" said Sam McPake, age 8. These thoughts were also echoed by Jayden Hayton, age 6, who commented "It's really cool here. I've been on all the outdoor gym equipment".



Alongside the popular outdoor gym equipment, that is free for everyone to use 24 hours a day; the new park also hosts seating areas and pathways linking to different parts of Perry Common.

Teresa Compton, Chair of Friends of Perry Common, said "I would like to thank everyone who has helped support the park. It is really good for the local area and we hope that lots of people, of all ages, come out and make the most of the equipment and open space."

The Friends of Perry Common meet every 2nd Tuesday of the month, 1:00pm at St Martin's Church in Perry Common. For more information about the group, or to join, please call Teresa Compton on 07913 323 645.

# EXCITING

# ENVIRONMENT CENTRE AND HYDRO-ELECTRIC

# PROJECT PLANNED



Witton Lakes is set to become a pioneer in green technology, with exciting plans for a new Environment Centre powered by hydro-electricity; the first scheme of its kind in Birmingham. This will incorporate the existing Community Orchard that has grown from strength to strength – with the help of an enthusiastic band of volunteers - and the former park-keepers cottage; that is currently hidden away.

To gain the support and hear the views of the local community about these exciting plans, Witton Lodge Community Association together with the Friends Of Witton Lakes held a Community Fun Day to discuss the proposals and for everyone locally to come out and enjoy the park.

The event on Saturday 27th September was a huge success with well over 300 local people coming along to hear about the exciting plans and discuss opinions and ideas, whilst enjoying the fun activities. The event had everything from a bouncy castle and mega-slide, face painting, bike rides and an interesting military manoeuvres display by the local Maritime Youth Group.

There were also guided tours around the lake and the Velvet Community Orchard – a wonderful walled garden within the park that was opened in 2009 with funding from Velvet Toilet Tissue. There was lots to see and lots of healthy 'orchard grown' food to buy – with the large pumpkins being very popular. Every visitor to the orchard was also given a plant to take away with them.

The orchard will form the outdoor part of the Environment & Enterprise Centre, while the former park-keepers cottage, a very attractive and often overlooked building, will gain a new lease of life as part of the proposals.

Linda Hines MBE, Chair of Witton Lodge Community Association says "The Environment Centre is a really exciting project. There will be something for everyone here, from cutting-edge renewable energy to traditional gardening methods. We're really pleased with the harvest of tasty fruit & veg and beautiful flowers that have been grown. Thank you to all our enthusiastic volunteers who have made this possible."



# ENERGY SAVING BREAKTHROUGH COMING SOON

Witton Lodge Community Association (WLCA) is working with British Gas to help make all of our homes in Perry Common more energy efficient and save tenants money on their fuel bills.

While all of the new WLCA properties being built as part of the newest phase of redevelopment have solar panels, we will be assessing the feasibility of installing energy saving solar panels on the roofs of our existing properties, which could lead to £300 savings on annual household electricity bills.

This is an excellent opportunity to save money on energy and help the environment at the same time.



## Witton Lodge Community Association's 20th Anniversary

To start off the year of celebration; Wednesday 19th March saw us celebrate with a very enjoyable event held at Perry Common Community Hall. This was a wonderful opportunity to look back at the last 20 years and all the exciting developments that have taken place – whilst also looking ahead to the future.

To help us celebrate, the very talented Fitzbert and Hadassah of North Birmingham Academy gave an excellent vocal performance while the Tin Whistle Band from St Margaret Mary Primary School, were a joy to listen to.

The Story Wood School Choir serenaded us with a medley of excellent tunes, while Stephen Hughes, Head Teacher of Wilson Stuart School, told his inspirational story of growing up in the area. Last but certainly not least, Professor Anne Power from the London School of Economics gave a very enlightening speech.

It was a very special day, with a wonderful atmosphere, great food and a celebration of the past 20 years. We're looking forward to the next 20!



lide, face painting, martial arts displays, gladiator duals, cushion naking and much more.



Despite the torrential rain – and running around to retrieve the furniture we put out on The Ring; the Teddy Bears Picnic on Saturday 19th July went really well. The Hall was full to bursting, with loads of fun activities including stalls, face painting, live entertainment, a pampering area – and when the rain finally stopped - the bouncy castle, gladiator duel and other inflatables on The Ring provided even more fun.

Molly Sleet, age 11, said "I have really enjoyed the day. I'm having fun even though it has rained". Georgie Coley, age 14 commented that: "I've enjoyed being with lots of local people and helping out. Even with the bad weather, it has been a great event".

Crowds flooded into Perry Common Community Hall throughout the afternoon, with the stalls and attractions being really popular. In no time at all, the cake stall had completely sold out of goodies – with the chocolate concrete selling in minutes. The Teddy Bears really enjoyed their day too!

# Perry Common Bake Off

Cake, cake and more cake was the order of the day on Saturday 6th September. The tasty event included a cake sale, and for those feeling confident, there was the opportunity to enter their cake to be judged and be crowned 'the best baker in Perry Common'.

Over 10 contestants entered their cakes into the very competitive 'Bake Off' to be judged by a panel of five local judges; Surrinder Bains from John Taylor Hospice, Anita Jesic from Betty's Café, Del Kaur from Ringside Fish Bar, Andy Watson from Lakeside Childrens Centre and Chris Williams head chef at Kingstanding Food Community. Deciding the winner was a difficult task, but the winning cake was a delicious jam sponge covered in bright pink icing, made by 16 year old Suzie Catchpowle.

Other cakes entered into the competition included: a raspberry and almond sponge, apple and cinnamon cupcakes, rock cakes, fruit pies and a lemon drizzle cake. For those with a less sweet tooth, homemade cheese scones received very positive feedback, while the dairy-free carrot, courgette and orange cake was a very interesting, and tasty, addition to the competition.



To provide a focus on healthy eating, the Birmingham Eat 4 Life group -part of the UpRising programme- were also on hand to provide healthy food and advice on having a healthy diet and

The Bake Off was hosted by the Challenge Network alongside Witton Lodge Community Association. In total 9 volunteers from the Challenge Network came along to support the event, helping to set-up the hall but also provided superb live music, as did the Ring Of Sound Choir; Perry Common's very own community choir.

# Witton Lakes Community Fun Day

Hundreds of people came along on Saturday 27th September for a Community Fun Day to discuss plans for the planned Environment & Enterprise Centre, powered by hydro-electricity at Witton Lakes.

The dry and warm weather brought out the crowds to enjoy the bouncy castle and mega-slide, face painting, bike rides and an interesting military manoeuvres display by the Maritime Youth Group. The ice-cream man did a roaring trade too!

There were guided tours of Witton Lakes and the thriving Community Orchard, where there were refreshments and lots of tasty orchard grown fruit and vegetables for sale. The orchard is a walled-garden within the park and will form the outdoor part of the proposed Environment Centre.

"I really like this secret garden and have walked through the woods to get here" explained Jake Tyndall, age 4. These positive views were echoed by older brother Alfie, age 7, who added "it is a really great place here, the pumpkins are really big. There are lots of really good things to see and lots to eat."

Thank you to everyone who came along, provided really helpful feedback about the proposals and made the day a great success.



# THANKING OUR VOLUNTEERS AND PARTNERS THIS

# We are pleased to announce that in the past year, we have

A°YEAR OF

CELEBRATION

Being our 20th anniversary year, we had planned a year of

celebration and fun activities - and that is exactly what we've had!

We would not be where we are today and achieved what we have,

without the support of the local community and our partner

organisations, so hosting all these exciting activities for everyone to

enjoy and celebrate with us has been very special indeed.

essential so that they can continue to help local people. It has really been fun helping to raise this money with donation



# **OVER £1000**

raised over £1,000 for John Taylor Hospice – who have been our 'Charity of The Year'.

The hospice, based in Grange Road Erdington, has provided palliative care and support for many people in Perry Common. The hospice is a Social Enterprise, and as such, raising money is

buckets out at all our events we have hosted this year and knowing that the generosity of local people will help others.



Christmas is a time to share with others and to give something back. That's why it was a pleasure to host a very enjoyable Christmas Party for volunteers and partners who have given their time and enthusiasm - often free of charge - to help Witton Lodge Community worthwhile activity. Association (WLCA) deliver services for local residents over the past year.

Without our volunteers and partners, we would not have achieved all the good things we have this year and would certainly not have been able to host all the community events and raise over £1,000 for John Taylor Hospice. Community Hall.

We learn a lot from our volunteers, who bring their skills and knowledge to the team and local community, while at the same time we can provide our experience and skills to make volunteering a really enjoyable and

If you would like to volunteer with WLCA in the New Year, no matter what your skills and however much or little experience you have, please contact Haleema on 0121 382 1930, email Haleema.Khathoon@wittonlodge.org. uk or pop into our office at Perry Common

# Perry Common a Healthier and Happier place

'Variety is the spice of life' and throughout 2014 This year really has been non-stop and here we have hosted a wide range of activities to help are a few of the highlights. As always, we ask 'spice up' Perry Common and make the area a more interesting and enjoyable place to live and socialise. Being healthy physically can make you happier and being happier can help you be more active.

that if you have any ideas about setting-up an activity for 2015, please contact us on 0121 382 1930, or pop into our office at Perry Common Community Hall.

## ACTIVITIES FOR OLDER RESIDENTS



in Perry Common. Quiz Nights at Sycamore Court have been & Clark Pub was also really enjoyed.

October, the **residents worked with the Birmingham** Repertory Theatre Company to give suggestions on producing a play called Solomon and Marion. The residents ave advice about the dress, lifestyle and life in the 1940s (th

Stuart School. The Residents Christmas Meal at the Parson

# KEEPING CHILDREN **ENTERTAINED**

Throughout the summer we hosted **Perry Fun**, a fantastic opportunity for families with young children to enjoy themselves throughout the summer holidays and during the October half term. There was lots of music, dance, creative arts, kite making and much more. From the noise and the excitement of the children, it sounded as though everyone had a great time!

Of course, the Perry Common Christmas Lights and seeing Santa was enjoyed by crowds of excited youngsters, and parents, at the festive annual event. Santa will be very busy coming up to Christmas

#### A CREATIVE **GETTING FIT** AND HEALTHY

Every Monday, the **Walking Group** have been keeping active – in all weathers - with their walks around Witton Lakes, Brookvale Park and Perry Common. Earlier in the year **Cook and Taste** sessions, hosted by Kingstanding Food Community, provided free advice and demonstrations of how to cook healthy food.

The summer sunshine helped the **Story Wood Cycling Hub** become very popular. Family Bike Rides and cycle awareness sessions have encouraged local people of all ages to have confidence cycling and in some cases – to get on a bike for the first time. Thinking about the great outdoors, the 20th September saw the **Grand Opening of Enderby** Park. With pathways, grassland, play and outdoor gym equipment, the 1 hectare (2.44 acre) park means that getting fit and healthy, without paying for an expensive gym, has never been easier.

Creativity has really flourished this year. The Creative Moments Craft Group has been busy all year preparing for the centenary of the First World War. The group, who meet at Perry Common Community Hall every Monday, knitted and hand felted over 1000 poppies, (an appropriate 1914 in total), to create an artwork of a soldier standing next to an unmarked grave, which was displayed at the NEC for Gardener's World Live in June, St Philips Cathedral in Birmingham and many other venues. The creative ladies also knitted poppies that were attached to trees around The Ring at the time of Remembrance Sunday and 11th November.

Marking 100 years since the start of the First World War, resident from Sycamore Court also used their creative skills to make poppies and put the name of family and loved ones as a very moving token of remembrance. In a very kind and moving gesture, local youth group Urban Devotion gave flowers to the residents of Sycamore Court on Remembrance Sunday.

## **GETTING GREEN FINGERED**

For those out there that are green fingered, 2014 saw a bumper harvest from the **Velvet Community Orchard.** The thriving orchard is located right at the heart of Witton Lakes and proved to be a very popular attraction at the Witton Lakes Community Fun Day. Volunteers with the Friends of Witton Lakes have put in a lot of hard work to grow an impressive crop of fruit and vegetables. This was donated to the Elim and George Road Food Banks and also sold at the Witton Lakes Community Fun Day.

The **Gardening Club** which meets every Thursday at 1:00pm at Perry Common Community Hall have been busy planting and maintaining the greenery around Perry Common, enjoying different tasty foods, swapping advice and tips and visiting local attractions. The group also helped plant the colourful planters that were placed all around Perry Common during the summer.

In May, over 60 students from St Margaret Mary School sowed wildflower and poppy seeds at The Bund in Witton Lakes just off Perry Common Road. The 200m length of topsoil was donated by Lovell, who are building the new homes near the Dove Medical Centre. There was a wonderful colourful display over the summer, with red poppies to mark the centenary of the First World War. In October, Sixth Form students from North Birmingham Academy came out on a damp morning to collect the seeds – so that the colourful display can be repeated next year.



## **GAINING NEW SKILLS** AND EXPERIENCE

This year 16 volunteers have gained lots of experience and new skills whilst volunteering with Witton Lodge Community Association with many volunteers going on to gain employment. The **Jobs Club** held every Tuesday (10am – 1pm) has been very popular and helped local people with a wide range of free jobs skills and advice, from CV writing to jobs searches and interview techniques.

We have been very pleased with the success of Erdington Works, which has created opportunities for nearly 30 young people locally and the success of this has helped us secure funding for **Destination** Works, which will allow Witton Lodge Community Association, with the help of partners, to provide local young people, (aged between 18 and 24 not currently in education, employment or training) with the skills, advice and mentoring to get them onto the 'jobs ladder'



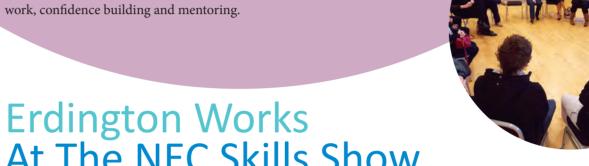
# Destination Works: A Giant Boost For Young People's Skills And **Employment Prospects**

great news that Witton Lodge Community Association along with the other Erdington Works partners (Castle Vale Community Regeneration Services, Castle Vale Tenants and Residents Alliance, John Taylor Hospice and Merlin Venture) have been awarded a contract by Birmingham City Council to provide Destination Works.

Destination Works will provide young people, who are NEETS (between the ages of 18 – 24 not in employment, education or training) with a wide range of employment advice and workplace skills, work based activities, group work, confidence building and mentoring.

With the success of the Erdington Works initiative, it is It is a partnership between all of the existing Erdington Works partners, alongside A4e, Greater Health Care and Job Centre Plus.

> We are looking forward to working with the young people and equipping them with the skills and ambition to succeed and have a vibrant future



# At The NEC Skills Show



Six inspirational young people, including Witton Lodge Community Association's very own Haleema Khathoon and Jessica Blenkiron, gave very inspiring speeches at the NEC Skills Show on Thursday 13th November. As we have reported in the last edition of Perry Common Matters, the employment initiative was very successful and led to 29 young people being helped with employment advice and skills training, with a total of 21 jobs being created.

The NEC Skills Show was the ideal place to showcase the success of the initiative and for the young people to put their skills learned into practice – getting up on stage in front of a large audience to speak about the benefits of being involved in Erdington Works.

Delegates including Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg, businessman Theo Paphitis and footballer Robbie Savage were there to support the event, alongside an impressive range of employers and skills providers offering training and employment opportunities.

The event was also an ideal opportunity to launch Birmingham City Council's 'Youth Promise'. This is due to be operational by 2015 and is proposed to provide every young person in our city access to employment, education and training within four months of them leaving school or college.

We have seen the benefits of helping young people into work and the enthusiasm and potential they can bring to the workplace – as we know from firsthand experience at Witton Lodge Community Association.

Congratulations to everyone who took part in Erdington Works and the six young people who gave such inspirational

# A Well Deserved Award For Blu Rocket Design

Congratulations to local creative designer Steve Abbott of Blu Rocket Design for winning a special award from Social Enterprise West Midlands, the organisation that supports community groups and businesses in the West Midlands. Steve was awarded 'Social Enterprise Partner' for his work supporting local organisations, including: Witton Lodge Community Association and many other local charities and good causes.

Steve set up his business last year and has since taken on his son Daniel as an apprentice – so that he can benefit from Steve's 30 years of design and branding skills.

Afzal Hussain, Chief Officer at Witton Lodge Community Association, who was at the awards ceremony said "we are thrilled for Steve, who is a talented designer and a thoroughly nice guy. He has worked with us for nearly two years now and we look forward to continuing our wonderful relationship with Steve."

For more information contact Steve on Tel: 0121 293 8535: mobile: 075 3207 9012 or see his website at: www.blurocketdesign.co.uk



# UpRising: Helping To Develop The Leaders Of **Tomorrow**

In October we hosted a free course for young people to develop their leadership and life kills. The three day course, run by Uprising – a nationwide organisation helping young people to boost their leadership, employability and life skills was attended by 10 ambitious young people from Stockland Green School.

The enthusiastic students enjoyed developing their project management, communication and digital campaigning skills; which involved using computer technology and social media to promote themselves

The group work, presentation and wealth of other skills developed, alongside the knowledge gained over the three days, will help the students with their future careers in a very competitive jobs market – and potentially create the leaders of the future.

# Congratulations To Volunteer Declan



Congratulations to Declan McPherson, age 17, who started volunteering with Witton Lodge Community Association in April. Featured in the last edition of Perry Common Matters, Declan was a key member of the team and helped out with everything from reception duties and in the office, to helping at this year's community events and the Perry Fun sessions.

We are pleased to report that since the last edition of the newsletter, Declan has taken up a full time apprenticeship and has told us that the experience gained with Witton Lodge Community Association helped build his confidence and skills to move forward. Good luck in your future career Declan!

# WHAT'S ON IN PERRY COMMON IN THE NEW YE

Once the excitement of Christmas is over, there are loads of fun and healthy activities in Perry Common to keep you happy, healthy and make all those New Year's Resolutions a reality.

Instead of retail therapy, eating out at restaurants or taking up a really expensive hobby, these activities are right on your doorstep and cost much less - with many being free.



#### Monday

#### PAIN CLINIC

9:30 - 11:30AM

Please attend via GP referral only

#### **HEALTHY WALKS**

11:00AM - 12:00 MIDDAY

Free admission and everyone welcome

#### ARTS & CRAFTS 'CREATIVE MOMENTS'

1st and 3rd Monday of each month

11:45AM - 2:15PM

£2.00 per person for non members / £1.00 for members

#### **CUPPA & CHAT**

2nd and 4th Monday of each month

11:45AM - 2:15PM

£2.00 per person for non members / £1.00 for members

#### **PILATES**

5:15 - 6:15PM

Please attend via GP referral only

## MEET THE TEAM

Association are here to help with anything you need; whether it is booking Perry Common Community Hall, hosting an event or anything else. The members of the team are:

#### Afzal Hussain

Chief Officer

#### Jessica Blenkiron

#### **Kay Blundell**

#### **James Carless**

#### **Gareth Hopkins**

#### **Jagwant Johal**

#### **Pam Kaur**

#### Tuesday

#### **JOB SHOP**

10:00AM - 1:00PM

FREE Job Skills, CV Advice, Job Searches and much more - No appointment needed

#### KICK BOXING

6:00 - 7:00PM

Under age 16 - £4.00 per person per session

#### KICK BOXING

7:00 - 8:00PM

Over age 16 - £5.00 per person per session

#### **BOXERCISE**

8:00 - 9:00PM

£4.00 per person per session

#### **RING OF SOUND CHOIR**

7:00 - 8:00PM at Sycamore Court, 46 Buxton Road, B23 5GA £1.00 per person per session - under 16 years olds FREE

#### Wednesday

#### ZUMBA

6:00 - 7:00PM

£4.00 per person per session

#### AIKIDO

Cecil Leachman

Flourishing Community

John Smith

**Paul Tse** 

7:30 - 9:30PM

£6.00 per person, per session for persons 18 years and over

#### **Thursday**

#### **PAIN CLINIC**

9:30 - 1:00PM

Please attend via GP referral only

#### **GARDENING CLUB**

1:00 - 2:30PM

Lots of green fingered advice, food to taste and hands-on activities - all completely FREE

#### SLIMMING WORLD

First session 5:00PM / Second session 7:00PM £9.95 joining fee - then £4.95 per person per session

#### Friday

#### **SLIMMING WORLD**

10:00AM - 12:00 Midday

£9.95 joining fee - then £4.95 per person per session

#### Saturday and Sunday

#### CAIN NEW SKILLS THROUGH VOLUNTEERING

Do you want to gain new skills and experience? If yes, then why not volunteer with us. No matter what your skills are or how much experience you have, we would love to hear your ideas and for you to get involved in our work, helping the local community.

You can volunteer in the office, with one of our many clubs (from gardening to quiz nights), help out at Sycamore Court (our Extra Care Scheme) or speak to us about anything else you would like to do.

For more information please call Haleema on 0121 382 1930 or email Haleema.Khathoon@wittonlodge.org.uk.



