

Summer
2017

WYRLEY WHISPERS

Something To Shout About



Welcome

Welcome to the new look Wyrley Whispers Newsletter. You may have seen the Perry Common Matters Newsletter, which focuses on the news, events and activities taking place in Perry Common. And we thought, Wyrley Birch may like the same.

So here it is. In this edition we have included a mixture of interesting stories, about the exciting events that have been taking place and what will be coming up.

There's also a quick introduction from the different organisations that are working in the estate - and for your chance to get involved and make a big difference too!

So sit back and enjoy - and let us know if you have any suggestions for the next edition.

Friends Of Wyrley Birch



Saving the Lakeside Centre

As you may have heard, the Lakeside Children's Centre is one of 26 across the city which Birmingham City Council has proposed to close. As the only community facility in the area, we have all been doing our very best to save it.

Thank You to everyone who signed the petition to save Lakeside, with over 900 signatures collected in 4 days. This really made a big impact when staff from the Lakeside Centre, residents and local organisations presented the petition at Downing Street.

Local representatives met with Erdington MP Jack Dromey, who has given his full support and is doing everything he possibly can to help keep Lakeside open.

The delegation also met with Labour's Shadow Education Secretary Angela Rayner and Tim Roache, General Secretary of the GMB Trade Union.

We will keep you updated.



What's In This Edition



Say Hello To Wyrley McBear Face Page 2



Introducing The Team Who Are Working Hard In Wyrley Birch Page 4



What's On In Wyrley Birch Page 8





Say Hello To WYRLEY McBEAR FACE

It's great to welcome our newest local resident - and he's already been making a big impact.

'Wyrley McBEAR Face' named after Wyrley Birch, is getting lots of attention outside St Barnabas Church in Erdington High Street.

He is a mixture of designs by local people from Wyrley Birch, Perry Common and Kingstanding - and is one of 100 bears forming a trail around the city as part of the Big Sleuth Project.

'Wyrley' is holidaying in Erdington for 10 weeks throughout the summer and early autumn before moving to his permanent home at the Velvet Community Orchard in Witton Lakes.

Witton Lodge Community Association has purchased Wyrley McBEAR Face, so that we can all enjoy him for years to come (as with 'Perry' - the big owl outside Perry Common Community Hall on Witton Lodge Road).

The money raised from the sale of the bears will go to Birmingham Children's Hospital.



Dave Billingham with his canoe (above)
Some of the Community Champion Volunteers hard at work (below)

The Big Summer Clean-Up At Witton Lakes

Not so much a Spring Clean but a big Summer Clean.

37 'Community Champion' volunteers from Severn Trent Water got their hands dirty and collected 55 bag-fulls of rubbish and other interesting items from Witton Lakes.

They were joined by Keep Britain Tidy 'Waterside Care' who helped clear the whole area and also planted 1000 Yellow Rattle Wildflowers with the Friends Of Witton Lakes, all helping to improve the area for wildlife and also bringing even more colour to the park - enhancing the array of existing wildflowers on show.

Not even the bottom of the lakes were left untouched - as keen canoeist, Dave Billingham, spent the day on the water.

Dave's fantastic voluntary project 'Birmingham Lakes; Litter Picks and Trips' is seeing him travel across the city, to clean up lakes and waterways, removing all manner of rubbish using his trusty canoe.

As a reward for all their hard work, the volunteers partied the evening away in the park in a giant marquee. They were all very careful not to drop any litter!



You can find Wyrley McBEAR Face outside St Barnabas Church, Erdington High Street, B23 6SY - and why not follow the full trail. Collect a free leaflet from the Lakeside Centre, the Orchard Tearoom at Witton Lakes, Perry Common Library and Perry Common Community Hall.

What Young People Say

You may have seen Dawn working in Wyrley Birch. It's great that the young people she is working with at the Youth Club have asked us to include a few of their thoughts about using the Lakeside Centre.

"I have been coming here since 2013 and it is a part of my family"

GIRL, AGE 16

"This club takes us out on the road and gives us something to look forward to!"

BRANDON, AGE 15

"I would have nowhere to express myself and make friends. Nowhere to get good advice and be together with friends"

COLIN, AGE 16



A Bear-illient Time At Witton Lakes

Bears were the theme of the day at the Teddy Bears Picnic in July. With everything from having a picnic (with your teddy bear of course), designing your own teddy, prize raffles to win a teddy bear; and if this was not enough, there were also real life teddy bears roaming around - keeping an eye on those picnic baskets!

A big Thank You to the enthusiastic team of volunteers from The Challenge Network (and Birmingham South and City College), the Friends of Witton Lakes and everyone who came along to help on the day.

To add to all this fun, the park was given over to a wide variety of activities, with a bouncy castle, hook a duck, an events field full of activities, ice cream, fun eco crafts and lots more.

The Velvet Community Orchard was open for everyone to have a look around and the Tearoom did a roaring trade; refreshing all those thirsty children and parents. And for those who wanted a drink of a different kind, we had our very own stocks - where you could throw wet sponges at brave volunteers.

Afternoon Tea & More At The Orchard Tearoom

If you're in Witton Lakes and fancy a sit down, cup of tea and slice of cake, then the new Orchard Tearoom is the place to go.

There's a 'natural' play area for the children and outdoor seating to enjoy the warm weather - when we have any! And being within the Velvet Community Orchard (a real life Orchard here in Wyrley Birch); there is a great opportunity to have a look around, see what's growing and learn about nature.

The Tearoom is located at the Velvet Community Orchard in Witton Lakes, by the dividing path between the two lakes.

It's open every
Monday: 12 - 4pm
Friday: 9am - 12 midday.
Keep checking the notice boards and www.wittonlodge.org.uk for the latest events taking place at The Orchard Tearoom, including Dawn's fantastic Afternoon Teas.

Big Plans Ahead For The Orchard

What you see today at the orchard is only the start of exciting plans to transform it into an impressive Eco Hub (Environmentally Friendly Community Space).

Witton Lodge Community Association is working to secure funding to create the Eco Hub; transforming the former park-keepers cottage into a brand new community space with cafe, play area, office space - all powered by renewable energy.

If we are successful, this amazing space will sit within mature gardens and linked to the flourishing Velvet Community Orchard.

We will keep you updated!



The Friends of Wyrley Birch

Meet the Team

Here's a few words from the organisations who are working in Wyrley Birch, delivering projects and helping make Wyrley Birch an even better place to live.



Kingstanding Neighbourhood Police Team are working with our partners across Birmingham to help and support our Wyrley Birch community.

Although our service is going through a particularly challenging time at the moment, we are committed to working alongside our community and partners to continue to increase community spirit through events and anything else that the community wants.

We are also dealing more effectively with residents who do not abide by their Tenancy Agreements or the law and disrupt other members of our community.

We always look forward to taking part in and being involved with the organisations, who deliver local events and enjoy being a key member of the Friends Of Wyrley Birch.

If you would like to know more about our work within Wyrley Birch and want to get involved, please contact us at kingstanding@west-midlands.pnn.police.uk
Follow us on Twitter @KingstandingNHT
Please join our two way messaging system. Here you can message us and we will message you with crime info, prevention advice, event info and lots more.

Please join up at www.wmnow.co.uk

Sergeant Helen Carver
Kingstanding Neighbourhood Police Team

WEST MIDLANDS POLICE

We are an enthusiastic group of local people who are passionate about our local area. We were formed in 2009 to help look after Witton Lakes. We have a wonderful park right here on our doorstep, with 2 freshwater lakes, a lovely Community Orchard and Tearoom, beautiful wildflowers and wonderful open space with fascinating wildlife.

We originally set up the group because our local park was simply not getting the attention it deserved. Through our hard work and enthusiasm, we are really making a big difference. You may have also been to one of the many events we hold in the park throughout the year.

To help make a difference and find out more, check out our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/FriendsofWittonLakes or speak to Linda Hines, Chair Of FOWL on 07960 386252.

Linda Hines
Chair Of Friends Of Witton Lakes

FRIENDS OF WITTON LAKES (FOWL)



As the largest landlord in Wyrley Birch, BCC's Housing Department is committed to the continuous improvement of the area.

Wyrley Birch has recently benefited from being one of the few parts of the city to have new social housing built, which is helping to transform the area.

We have also made efforts to improve the environment; organising rubbish and litter collections and working with partner agencies to tackle fly tipping. But we need your help to build on this positive work. Please do not leave your rubbish to build-up and report any concerns regarding fly tipping or illegal dumping to us.

As you may know, the number of estate based staff has fallen in recent years and unfortunately the T Blocks no longer have a Concierge Scheme.

This means that we can no longer do a lot of things we have done historically. The staff that are left are working flat-out to provide a service and I know that the majority of residents appreciate their efforts. You can play your part by helping keep Wyrley Birch clean and green.

You can contact us by calling 0121 303 1111 or by visiting our website: www.birmingham.gov.uk

Rob Spencer, BCC Housing Officer

BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL



Witton Lodge Community Association run lots of projects locally - from our Jobs and Skills work (including the Job Club at Lakeside), a wide array of community events, Living Well (healthy living) and environmental projects (including our plans to transform the Velvet Community Orchard into a new Environmentally Friendly Community Space).

You may have also seen us at Perry Common Library, where we have been able to open it for an extra day a week, on Friday's, where we run a number of helpful services.

We own 187 properties for rent, in Perry Common, where we have steered the transformation of the area over the past 23 years and really want to use our experience to improve the facilities in the estate.

To find out more see our website at www.wittonlodge.org.uk, call 0121 382 1930 or come into our office at Perry Common Community Hall, 87 Witton Lodge Road, B23 5JD, between 9am-5pm Monday to Friday.

WITTON LODGE COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION



We are made up of a wide variety of nationalities and backgrounds, currently based at three locations in North Birmingham; in Kingstanding (Warren Road), Pheasey and Wyrley Birch (at the Lakeside Centre). We do a wide variety of work and run a number of projects including:

'Elevate Youth Café' - School Years 7 - 11, every Monday 6pm-7.30pm (during term time) at Lakeside Children's Centre: There's a mixture of chill out time with tuck, activities; including music and food, board games, games console and fun, trips out and lots more. We explore life, faith, teach new skills and make new friends.

We have a good number of young people who come every week. Whether we are rock climbing in the Peak District or running a crazy game, Its all FREE!

Oasis Express Lunch Club, Friday's 12 - 1:30pm at Lakeside Children's Centre: is an opportunity to have a light lunch at a reasonable price and enjoy a lovely atmosphere. You can come along with friends or come and make new friends. It's run by a great team of volunteers who love to welcome people and provide fantastic food!

For more about us call 0121 350 9650 or see www.elimlifechurch.co.uk.

Pastor John Skelton

ELIM LIFE CHURCH



At UDB we love Wyrley Birch! Whether we're delivering activities alongside the lake (occasionally even 'in' the lake!), helping out at the Orchard, running Girls Group at the Orchard Café, holding our drop in clubs at Lakeside or just walking the streets - for us it's all about the people we've got to know.

We are a resident-led charity based in Perry Common and we spend most of our time working with children and young people in community and school settings. Over the years we have frequently popped over to Wyrley Birch, but for the past few years we have had more of an active presence here. A bunch of our team - Dawn, Ryan, Liam, Izzy, Emma and others - are really committed to doing what we can to support your amazing community.

This then is an invitation to you. We work with children and young people but also with families, so if you have thoughts, ideas or suggestions about how we can do this better we would really love to hear from you!

The best way to keep in touch with what we do is to like us on Facebook - [facebook.com/urbandevotion](https://www.facebook.com/urbandevotion) - or have a chat with our team when we're around on Wednesday afternoons.

The UDB Team

URBAN DEVOTION BIRMINGHAM (UDB)



Help With Jobs And Skills

Job Club At The Lakeside Children's Centre

If you're looking for free jobs and skills advice, right here in Wyrley Birch, then look no further than the Lakeside Centre.

Every Wednesday morning between 10am - 1pm, Paul or a member of

Witton Lodge Community Association's Jobs & Skills Team, will be available for all sorts of useful advice about anything employment related, including:

- CV advice
 - Interview Skills
 - Jobsearch
 - Applying for training courses
 - Confidence Building
 - And much more
- No appointment is needed, just drop in.**



Youth Promise Plus

Are you aged 16-29 and not in work, education or training? Living in Birmingham or Solihull? Want to get a job? Gain new skills in a friendly environment? If yes, then we can help.

- Meet with our experienced advisors in a 1-2-1 session to discuss your support needs.
- Opportunities to take part in a wide variety of activities to boost your confidence, skills and gain practical experience.
- Work experience opportunities.

Employment focused sessions to help you search and apply for suitable vacancies.

But don't take our word for it, here are a few words from young people who have taken part already:



Ifrah

"It has been really good. I have come out of my comfort zone. I have gained new confidence and learnt how to communicate with new people."



Peter

"Before I came, I was really nervous. By coming to these sessions, I really feel I boosted my confidence. It's been good to meet new people and I've learnt a lot of job skills."

For more information about any of these sessions, please contact the Job & Skills Team on 0121 382 1930, email employment@wittonlodge.org.uk or come into our office at Perry Common Community Hall 9am-5pm Monday to Friday.



And We're Bringing Our Housing Advice To A Venue Near You

As with Job Club, Witton Lodge's FREE Housing Advice sessions have been really popular.

The 1-2-1 sessions are an excellent opportunity to speak with a housing specialist about any questions and issues you have relating to housing: the bidding process, application form and much more.

The sessions take place at the following times:

The last Friday of the month 2pm-4:30pm at Perry Common Library, College Road (at The Crossways), B44 0HH. (This is a drop-in session: no need to book).

Every Friday 1pm-3pm at Perry Common Community Hall, 87 Witton Lodge Road, B23 5JD.

To book an appointment please contact: Alisha (our Homes & Property Officer) on 0121 382 1930, email Alisha.Vale@wittonlodge.org.uk or come into our office at Perry Common Community Hall, between 9am-5pm, Mon-Fri

Health Works

Andrew, age 49, who is now a Forklift Truck Driver at Jaguar Land Rover says:

"I'm very happy to get back into work again and making new friends. The employment advice from Health Works has been brilliant. The sessions are relaxed; there's no pressure like there is at the Job Centre and you get to learn about the different ways of learning things. I would recommend this to everyone."

Witton Lodge really does have something for everyone. Our Health Works is a great way of getting back into employment if you have additional health needs or want to get back into employment after a career break.

- We start with 1-2-1 sessions to discuss your needs.
- Group sessions to meet with other people and develop employability skills.
- Work experience and volunteering opportunities.
- Access to local employment and development opportunities.
- Employment focused activities to help you search and apply for suitable jobs.



Perry Common Library Now Open On Fridays



Witton Lodge Community Association is delighted to say that, thanks to the support of local councillors and partnership working with Birmingham City Council Library Services, we have been able to open Perry Common Library for an extra day every week.

With help from the Witton Lodge staff and an enthusiastic team of volunteers, the library is open for everyone to use and enjoy, all day on Friday's.



This 1930s art-deco library really is a magnificent building and offers a great selection of books, computers (please pre-book) and other services and activities throughout the week.

Come in and say hello. We are always looking for volunteers to help us at the library too!

To find out more call Lauren on 0121 382 1930, email lauren.fridlington@wittonlodge.org.uk, or come into the library on Friday's.



A WONDERFUL NEW NURSERY RIGHT ON OUR DOORSTEP

From September, there will be a brand new nursery, right on our doorstep. The 'Blue Sky Nursery' is due to open at Wilson Stuart School, Perry Common Road - and is just a short walk through Witton Lakes.

This beautiful, brand new venue will cater for 2, 3 and 4 year olds and will offer up to 30 hours of free childcare per week!

They're just waiting on the toys to be delivered.

The nursery will be open from 8am to 6pm, Monday to Friday.

Contact Gisela Costa (Nursery Manager) on 0121 373 4475 or visit the blueskynursery.co.uk, to find out more.



Helping You To Live Well

It's not only Jobs & Skills that Witton Lodge can help with. Our Living Well Team can offer advice and support in many areas that can make a big difference to your life - and if we can't help, we can point you in the direction of someone who can.

We can offer ways of improving your health without medication in a friendly and relaxed environment.

Call our Team on 0121 384 2702 or email Sarah.Blackstock@wittonlodge.org.uk. You can also ask about the service at your local GP surgery.



Do You Have Any Old Photos Of Wyrley Birch?

Have you ever wondered what Wyrley Birch was like 50, 30, 20 or even 10 years ago? We have too!

That's why we're asking if you have any old and interesting photos of Wyrley Birch and the surrounding area. It would be great to see and be able to share them in the next newsletter.

Please contact James Carless on 0121 382 1930 or email James.Carless@wittonlodge.org.uk if you have any and to find out more.

LAKESIDE CHILDREN'S CENTRE
Lakes Road
Wyrley Birch
B23 7UH
Tel: 0121 386 6150
www.perrybarrchildrenscentres.org.uk



MONDAY

Elevate Youth Café (School Years 7-11)
6pm-7:30pm (Term Time Only)

TUESDAY

Little Chatterboxes
9.30am - 11am (By Referral Only)

Coffee Afternoon + Crèche
1pm - 2:30pm

WEDNESDAY

Job Club
10am - 1pm

After School Club (Key Stage 2)
4pm - 6pm

Baby Massage
Times Variable (By Referral Only)

FRIDAY

Oasis Express - over 55s Lunch Club
12 midday - 1:30pm

Under 5's Stay & Play
9.30am - 11am

Please contact us about the other services we offer throughout the week, including:

- United Support Group - monthly for parents of children with ADHD and Autism
- Adoption and Fostering
- Foundation Years Parenting Support - Incredible Years Parenting Programme

Please be aware that due to the ongoing consultation about the future of the Lakeside Centre, we are only able to announce a schedule of activities until 31st October 2017.

PERRY COMMON LIBRARY
College Road (at The Crossways)
Perry Common
B44 0HH
Tel: 0121 464 0481
www.libraryofbirmingham.com



Opening Times
Mon: 9am - 1pm & 2pm - 5pm
Thurs: 10am - 1pm & 2pm - 6pm
Fri: 9am - 1pm & 2pm - 5pm
Sat: 9am - 1pm & 2pm - 5pm

MONDAY

Knit 'n' Natter
1pm - 3pm

THURSDAY

Ancestry Group
11am - 12 midday

Reading Group
3:30pm - 4:30pm
(3rd Thursday of every month)

FRIDAY

Jobs & Skills Support
9am - 1pm

Living Well Support
2pm - 5pm

Housing Advice Surgery
2pm - 4:30pm
(Last Friday of the month)

SATURDAY

Young People's Tuition
2:45pm - 4:45pm

ORCHARD TEA ROOM
At The Velvet Community Orchard
(through the green gates by the dividing path between the two lakes)
Witton Lakes, B23 7XX
Tel: 0121 382 1930
www.wittonlodge.org.uk



The Orchard Tearoom is open
Monday's 12pm - 4pm
Friday's 9am - 12pm

URBAN DEVOTION BIRMINGHAM
Hope House, 148 Witton Lodge Road
Perry Common, B23 5AP
Tel: 0121 350 9370
www.urbandevotion.org



MONDAY

The Underground - School Years 4-6
3:30pm - 4:45pm
The Underground, St Martin's Church Centre,
140 Perry Common Rd, B23 5AP

The Underground - School Years 7-11
5pm - 6:15pm
The Underground, St Martin's Church Centre,
140 Witton Lodge Road, B23 5AP

UDB Café - ages 16-19
6:30pm - 7:30pm
Hope House, 148 Witton Lodge Rd, B23 5AP

TUESDAY

Girls Group - School Years 4-6
4:30pm - 5:30pm
Velvet Community Orchard, Witton Lakes,
B23 7XX

Girls Group - School Years 7-9
6pm - 7pm
Velvet Community Orchard, Witton Lakes,
B23 7XX

WEDNESDAY

Junior Club - School Years 4-6
4pm - 4:45pm
Lakeside Children's Centre

Senior Club - School Years 7-8
5pm - 5:45pm

HOPE Kids - Reception - Year 6
5:15pm - 6:30pm
Every month at The Net, 159 Witton
Lodge Road, B23 5AR

Session take place on the following dates:
• 6th September
• 4th October
• 1st November
• 6th December

THURSDAY

67 Boys - Boys In School Year 6
4pm - 5pm
The Underground, St Martin's Church Centre,
140 Witton Lodge Rd, B23 5AP

Football - School Year's 7-11
5:30pm - 6:30pm
Witton Lakes, by Perry Common Road, B23 7AS

ELIM LIFE CHURCH
120 Warren Road
Kingstanding, B44 8QD
Tel: 0121 350 9650
www.elimlifechurch.co.uk



MONDAY

Oasis Express Lunch Club (over 55s)
12 midday

Needles & Pins
1pm

Elevate Youth Group (Age 11 - 16)
6pm (Term Time Only)
(at Lakeside Children's Centre)

TUESDAY

Luncheon Club (over 55s)
11am

Elim Foodbank
12 midday

WEDNESDAY

English Language Class
9:30am (Term Time Only)

THURSDAY

Little Seeds Toddler Group
Morning Session: 10am
Afternoon Session: 12:45pm

Elim Foodbank
12 midday

FRIDAY

Oasis Express Lunch Club (Over 55s)
12 midday
(at Lakeside Children's Centre)

Elevate Youth Club (Age 11 - 16)
7:30pm (Term Time Only)

SYCAMORE COURT
46 Buxton Road
Perry Common
B23 5GA
Tel: 0121 386 4724
www.wittonlodge.org.uk



MONDAY

Monday Wellbeing
2pm - 4pm

TUESDAY

Age Concern Day Centre
10am - 2pm

Bingo
6pm - 8pm

Ring Of Sound Choir
7pm - 8pm
Please call 07960 386 252 or
email linda.hines@wittonlodge.org.uk

WEDNESDAY

Knitting Group
10:30am - 12 midday

Film Club
1:30pm - 3:30pm

THURSDAY

Extend Exercise Class
10am - 11am

Men's Club
10am - 1pm

Fifty Shades Of Green Gardening Club
1:30pm - 3pm

FRIDAY

Age Concern Day Centre
10am - 2pm

Avon Bingo
6pm - 8pm (every two weeks)

Please note that all activities at
Sycamore Court should be pre-booked.
Please call 0121 386 4724 to find out more.

PERRY COMMON COMMUNITY HALL
87 Witton Lodge Road
Perry Common
B23 5JD
Tel: 0121 382 1930
www.wittonlodge.org.uk



MONDAY

Red Hot Chilli Steppers Walking Group
11am

TUESDAY

Slimming World
7pm

WEDNESDAY

Aikido
7:30pm

Councillor Surgery
(Labour Councillor Des Hughes)
7pm - 8pm
2nd Wednesday of the month

THURSDAY

Pain Clinic
9:30am - 1pm
(by GP appointment only)

Job Club
1pm - 4pm

Slimming World
5pm (1st Session)
7pm (2nd Session)

FRIDAY

Slimming World
10am

Councillor Surgery
(Conservative Councillors
Gary Sambrook / Ron Storer)
6:30pm - 7:30pm
2nd Friday of the month

Quiz Night
7pm on the following dates:

- Friday 15th September
- Friday 20th October
- Friday 17th November
- Friday 15th December
(The Big Christmas Quiz)

Help Us Make Wyrley Birch An Even Better Place To Live

You may have noticed different local organisations working together to make Wyrley Birch an even better place to be. But we cannot do this alone.

The Friends Of Wyrley Birch, has been set up, so that residents and organisations can work together going forward.

To make a real impact, we need your help. As a resident of Wyrley Birch, we need to know your thoughts about the area and what you would like to see.

If you would like more information please call Linda Hines on 07960 386252 or email Linda.Hines@wittonlodge.org.uk.

You won't need any qualifications or experience, just a passion for your community.

The Wyrley Festival Of Fun

SATURDAY 9TH SEPTEMBER
12 - 3pm At Witton Lakes

Come along for an afternoon of fun for all the family. There will be fun activities at Witton Lakes and The Velvet Community Orchard, with:

- A Giant Car Boot Sale • Inflatable Mega Slide • Donkey Rides •
- Kayaking On The Lake • The Owl Man (with his beautiful birds of prey) •
- Climbing Wall • Fun Games Activities at The Velvet Community Orchard • Hog Roast •

And lots more...

You can book a place at the Giant Car Boot Sale. It's £10 for a car and £15 per van. Call Linda on 07960 386252 or email Linda.Hines@wittonlodge.org.uk.



Produced by Witton Lodge Community Association
Perry Common Community Hall, 87 Witton Lodge Road, Perry Common, B23 5JD
www.wittonlodge.org.uk

If you have any suggestions and articles for the next edition, please contact James Carless on 0121 382 1930 or email: James.Carless@wittonlodge.org.uk

WittonLodgeCommunityAssociation
 wittonlodge