

Birchfield Big Local News

AUTUMN 2015 / NUMBER 6

Bringing together the gifts, passions, aspirations, skills and energy of local people to make Birchfield an even better place to live and work

Birchfield Heritage Trail

To celebrate Birmingham Heritage Week (10—17th September) BBL organised its first Heritage Trail. The walk started at Grosvenor Road Studios, one of the oldest operational recording studios in the UK. The studio has been visited by many famous musicians over its 70 year history.

Built in 1872 the building was originally the home of James Henry Stone JP, brother of photographer and MP Benjamin Stone. James was one of the people behind the scheme to create what is now Handsworth Park, opened in 1887 to celebrate Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee.

From here we went to Calthorpe Arms, which along with the Crown and Cushion was one of the original meeting places for the Birchfield Harriers. The next stop was Lea Hall Institute, a three storey neo-classical brick house built for the wealthy Muntz family in the 1790's. George Frederick Muntz was an industrialist, MP and political reformer.

The last visit was to St Mary's Church where the new rector Reverend Dr Bob Stephen gave us an excellent introduction to the history of the church which dates from 1160. Sometimes called 'The Westminster Abbey of the Industrial Revolution', St Mary's is the resting place of; Matthew Boulton, James Watt and William Murdoch. The walk finished with refreshments at the Boat House Cafe in Handsworth Park.

We are planning further heritage walks around the area. If you would like to share interesting stories about Birchfield or have any old photographs of the area then please contact us.



Top to bottom—Lea Hall, St Mary's Church and Grosvenor Road Studios



Rob Hewitt, Lurlyn Salmon, Barbara Petris and Zaheda Vaid

Birchfield is Thriving!

Congratulations to Birchfield Residents Action Group (BRAG) on achieving a Level 4 – Thriving Award in this year's "It's Your Neighbourhood Awards" organised by the Royal Horticultural Society. The Bloom in Birchfield campaign led by BRAG has gone from Level 2 to Level 4 in just one year!

The award is the culmination of the efforts of local residents to improve the environment over the entire year and is assessed on community participation, environmental sustainability and gardening achievement. The initiative is supported by Birchfield Big Local together with Midland Heart and Birmingham City Council.

Family Fun Day

Thanks to all who braved the weather to come to the Family Fun Day at the Boat House Café, Handsworth Park on Sunday 26th July.

Thanks to all who provided stalls and activities on the day including ATHAC CIC, Nishkam Centre, Shaana (Asda Community Life Champion), Active Parks. Also Penny for face painting, Claudette Holmes for the arts workshop and Richard and staff at Golden events for the sports activities. Andrea and Tony provided food and refreshments at the Boat House Café and Mikey Godfrey organised the PA system.

Thanks also to Indalo Marquees without whose help we would have been very wet!



Salim Ali, Saira Akhter and Anjuma Begum



Community Survey

Community centre?
Children's outdoor play area?

Make yourself heard!

Return your completed survey by
Friday 6th November

Thank you

(see page 3 for further details)

Big Local
Birchfield

How to contact Birchfield Big Local

Tel: 0121 448 5594 or Mobile: 07421 994752 (Andrew) - 07421 994753 (Suki)

Email (General enquiries): info@birchfieldbiglocal.org

Community Development Worker: andrew@birchfieldbiglocal.org

Volunteer Co-ordinator: suki@birchfieldbiglocal.org

Website: www.birchfieldbiglocal.org

Twitter: @BirchfieldBigL

Address: Grosvenor Road Studios, 16 Grosvenor Road B20 3NP



Dorrette Hanson—Editor

Welcome again to another edition of the Birchfield Big Local newsletter. We have revamped it a little bit but most importantly this issue is full of exciting information that I hope shows some of the progress made this year.

The fun day back in July was a wash out but surprisingly some people did turn out, and although very wet, a good day was had by all.

Moving forward we need more people from the community to get involved. Now is your chance. We would especially like to plan a holiday playscheme, activities to celebrate Black History Month, play days and a fun day. Of course we need you to share with us what the priorities are, and only then can the partnership progress as a community-led initiative.

A big Thank you to our departing Chair, Rhonda Lee and Vice Chair, Claudette Dawson, for their extremely hard work in the turbulent year we have had.

I look forward to your comments.

Dorrette



Rhonda, Baljeet and Andrew at the Fun Day



Koli, Israt, Suki, Dorrette, Andrew and Ian planning for the Family Fun Day in Handsworth Park

Big Local Partnership

The partnership held an annual Away Day for members on Sunday, September 20th, to review what has been achieved over the past year and to begin making plans for Years 3 and 4.

There were also elections for the key honorary officer posts. Baljeet Singh Ghataora has been elected as Vice-Chair. Tina Brown-Love is to continue as Treasurer. Dorrette Hanson is stepping down as Secretary but will continue as editor of the newsletter. Annette McConnell has been elected as the new Secretary.

The partnership also thanked Rhonda Lee and Claudette Dawson for their outstanding commitment to Birchfield Big Local over the past year. It has been a challenging year but as a result of Rhonda's and Claudette's efforts we are now in a much more established position.

Would you like to join the Birchfield Big Local partnership?

To qualify you simply have to be a resident of the Birchfield Big Local area or have significant interests in the area through work or family. **To find out more please contact Andrew on 0121 448 5594 or email: andrew@birchfieldbiglocal.org**

Other ways to get involved

There are many other ways to get involved with Birchfield Big Local.

- Is there something that you are passionate about and would like to help make happen?
- Are there things that concern you that you would like to take action on?

Then please get in touch.

There are also opportunities for volunteering with Birchfield Big Local and other organisations locally. **For further details please contact Suki Sohi, Volunteer Coordinator on 0121 448 5594.**

There are many other ways of contributing too:

- Submit a blog to the website about an issue that concerns you in the local area
- Tell us about an event that you are organising so that we can help publicise it
- Respond to the survey on the idea of a community hub or children's play area

Volunteering—Suki Sohi, Volunteer Coordinator

Why should you volunteer?

These are some of the many reasons given for wanting to volunteer:

- To help the local community
- Use existing skills or learn new skills
- Help get references and real work experience
- Meet new people and have fun!

Take a look at our current Volunteer Opportunities:

Stepping Forward Volunteers – Volunteers are needed to support people who want to develop new skills and explore their options in a supportive and friendly atmosphere. Volunteers should enjoy working with people and have good communication skills and a caring nature. The Stepping Forward sessions currently run on Tuesday 12pm to 3pm with 8 allocated slots. Volunteers will be required to assist people for a 90 minute session and provide any support they need such as CV writing, searching for jobs, training etc.

Heritage Trail Volunteers – Birchfield Big Local launched their Heritage Trail this September and are keen to promote the trail to local schools and organisations/groups. The trail is a fact-filled tour of local heritage sites that put Birchfield on the map. Volunteers should have an interest in local history and heritage and be keen to promote it to people of all ages and backgrounds. You will be making links with local schools and faith groups so good communication skills and enthusiasm would be a great start. Days/ times flexible.

IT Volunteer – Birchfield Big Local have an IT Suite that will be available for local people to use for internet and IT purposes. We have laptops that need to be updated and regularly checked to ensure that they are running correctly and efficiently. We need someone who can check that the printer is working so people are able to print documents and information. Knowledge of internet and wifi would also be useful. Volunteer should be available for a few hours on a Monday.

Yoga Session Volunteer – Do you have experience/ knowledge of yoga and would you be willing to share this with the local community? We would like to run sessions for people to come and practice yoga together to improve their health, fitness and well-being. If you think you can help us by leading community yoga sessions please get in touch – even if you haven't done sessions before. We welcome anyone with passion and who wants to share their knowledge of yoga with others.

Birchfield Big Local Community Volunteers – Do you have skills/ ideas that you can share with Birchfield Big Local – then give your time to us and help the local community at the same time! We are always looking for new and exciting ways to help the local community and get people to develop their skills, knowledge and opportunities.

Please contact Suki on 0121 448 5594 or email: suki@birchfieldbiglocal.org



Salema, Andrew and Suki at Play Streets

Welcome to the Birchfield Big Local Community Survey

We are delighted to announce that Gavin Orton and Santosh Rai have been appointed carry out the Birchfield Big Local Community Assets Survey. Work has now begun in earnest to identify potential land and buildings that might be used for community benefit as a community centre/hub or children's outdoor play area.

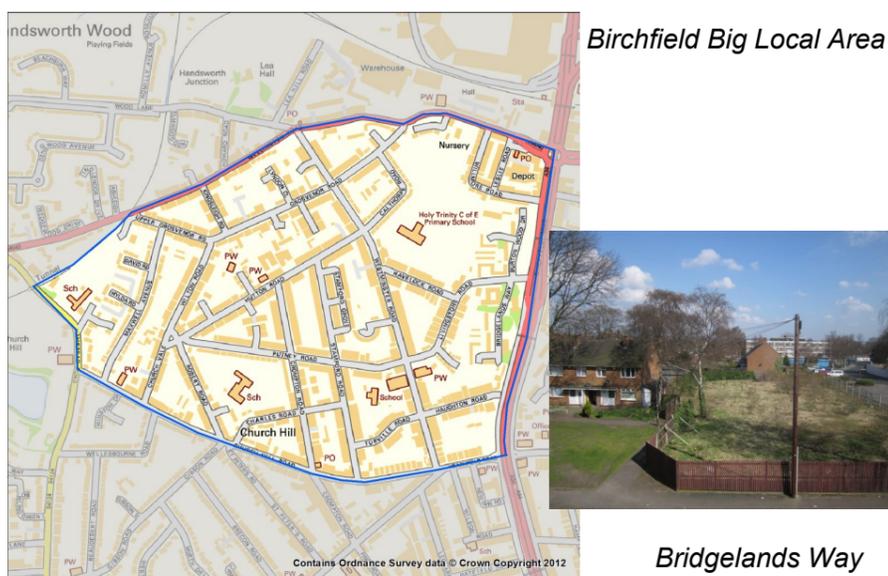
To ensure that we get the best out of this project, we invite you to take part in the Birchfield Big Local Community Survey. This survey has been designed to gather the views of local residents about what you need from a community centre and/or children's play area. The findings from this survey will give us valuable information and help us to better understand the type of space that will be required. We believe it is vital to get this right!

A copy of the survey is enclosed in this edition of Birchfield Big Local News. Further copies can be obtained by contacting Andrew Simons from Birchfield Big Local on 0121 448 5594 or 07421 994752. The survey can also be completed on-line using link: <http://goo.gl/forms/Q5TUdAij99> or please visit our website: www.birchfieldbiglocal.org.

Make sure you return your completed survey to us by Friday 6th November 2015. Thank you for your co-operation and we look forward to hearing your views!

If you have any ideas about land or buildings that might be suitable, please contact Gavin Orton on gavin@gavinorton.com

To discuss the Birchfield Big Local Community Survey, please contact Santosh Rai on santosh@wellsidebusiness.co.uk



Stepping Forward Project

Do you live in the Birchfield area and want help to:

- Improve your prospects for the future
- Gain new skills
- Access employment, training, enterprise and education opportunities
- Write CV's
- Improve confidence



Stepping Forward Project can offer:

- One to one support
- IT suite/ internet access
- Help with completing applications, letters etc.
- Signposting to other organisations
- Friendly and relaxed environment
- Support tailored to your needs

The Stepping Forward Project launched on 22nd September at Grosvenor Road Studios and sessions will be **every Tuesday 12pm to 3pm** starting on 6th October 2015. We have a team of friendly and supportive volunteers who can support you and help you develop your skills, knowledge and confidence. **To book a place call 0121 448 5594 or email: steppingforward@birchfieldbiglocal.org**



Citysave Champions

Together with the other three Big Local areas in Birmingham, BBL has been talking with Birmingham's largest Credit Union, Citysave, about how to help local people access loans at a fair and reasonable rate of interest. With increasing pressure on households to go to Pay Day lenders for loans, Credit Unions offer a better option. Credit Unions are not-for-profit organisations owned and controlled by the members. Any surplus profits are returned to the members as a dividend.

Credit Unions encourage regular saving and can also offer loans that are fair and affordable. Volunteers from Big Local areas recently attended a training course at Citysave to look at how we can improve access for Big Local residents to the financial services offered by Credit Unions. **For more information about Citysave see – www.citysave.org.uk**

The Secret Garden

Tucked away behind Grosvenor Avenue, Westminster Road and Hutton Road is an open space that was once a community garden and children's play area. Called the Grosvenor and Westminster Garden Project it was started in 1986 by two young mothers Judith Hancock and Jane White. The site was transformed into a grassed area with a play space and basketball court adjacent to the electricity substation located on the site. Over time a willow bower and raised beds were added and a junior slide installed.

In 2002 the project received a Green Pennant award from the Civic Trust. Many community events were held on site. The site continued to be looked after by local residents till about 2006 but by then many of the original members of the management committee had moved out of the area. The site gradually fell into disuse and fly tipping and anti social behaviour became a problem.

However, the site has not been forgotten and the majority of local residents would like to see the site restored to its former use. Over the last few months we have organised three clean up days to tidy up the grassed area and remove fly tipping. On Thursday 20th August we held a play day and invited local children and parents to attend. Play equipment was provided by ATHAC CIC for children to enjoy free play and parents were able to talk about how the site could be developed in the future. We would like to hear from local residents interested in being involved in restoring the site. **Please contact Andrew on 0121 448 5594 or email: andrew@birchfieldbiglocal.org**





Events Calendar

If you are planning an event in the Birchfield area and would like to publicise it in the Events Calendar please contact us on 0121 448 5594 or email details to: info@birchfieldbiglocal.org. The newsletter is produced four times a year. Events can also be submitted at any time to the Events page on the Birchfield Big Local website: www.birchfieldbiglocal.org.

Boat House Cafe— Open every Tuesday to Sunday from 9am onwards

Stepping Forward—Every Tuesday 12pm to 3pm. We have a team of friendly and supportive volunteers who can support you and help you develop your skills, knowledge and confidence. To book a place call 0121 448 5594 or email: steppingforward@birchfieldbiglocal.org

Birchfield Enterprise Awards—Can you help transform your community through an exciting social enterprise? There is still time to apply for the Birchfield Enterprise Awards 2015. To apply complete the online form at www.unltd.org.uk/starpeople. If you have an idea and would like to talk it through, please contact us on: 0121 448 5594 (mobile: 07421 994752) or email: andrew@birchfieldbiglocal.org

BRAG Community Allotment Project—Meets every Wednesday morning at Livingstone Community Allotments, Livingstone Road. Next session on Wednesday 28th October. Please contact Rob Hewitt for further details on 07528 575344

Hope Community Acupuncture Clinic—A low cost, multi-bed clinic set up with the aim of supporting local residents with chronic illness. Every Thursday at the United Reform Church, 13 Wilton Road B20 3RX. Contact Dr Rhonda Lee on 07810 024687

Women's Group— Meets every month at Grosvenor Road Studios, 16 Grosvenor Road B20 3NP. Next session on Wednesday 18th November. For further details please contact Suki at suki@birchfieldbiglocal.org Tel: 0121 448 5594

Youth Enterprise Session— Open to children and young people 5years and upwards with disabilities or those interested in art. Opportunities for youth volunteering. Friday 5.30—7.30pm at Grosvenor Road Studios, 16 Grosvenor Road B20 3NP. For further details contact Carol Reid, ATHAC CIC on 07977 880132

Creative sessions for children age 4—12 years— aimed at children with disabilities or those interested in art. Opportunities for youth volunteering. Every Saturday at St Peter's Nursery, St Peter's Road B20 3RR on the following dates: 24th October, 14th & 28th November, 12th December. Contact Carol Reid, ATHAC CIC on 07977 880132

Livingstone Road Community Allotment Project

BRAG invites current & future volunteers & helpers to a:
**Volunteers Lunch at the Pavilion,
Livingstone Road Allotments B20 3LN
On Wednesday 4th November 2—4pm for
vegetarian food and friendly chat!**

Playscheme call out!

Birchfield Big Local would be interested to hear from anyone in the Birchfield Big Local area that would be interested in helping to organise or help run a holiday playscheme in either the Easter or Summer Holidays. Play training will be provided. Please contact Andrew or Suki on 0121 448 5594



Birchfield Children's Centre

- **Welcome group** – Mondays, 9.30 – 11.00am
- **Read and Play** – Tuesdays, 10.30 – 11.30am at Birchfield Library
- **Baby group**— Tuesdays, 1.00 – 2.00pm and Friday, 1.00 – 2.00pm
- **Stay and Play**— Thursdays, 1.30 – 3.00pm and Fridays, 9.15 – 11.00pm (There is a booking system, so please ring Birchfield Children's Centre to book a place)

My bump and me

“Are you a first time mom or young mom to be? Are you soon to be a Dad? Do you need help with

- What to pack in your hospital bag
- Shopping for the new baby
- Nappy Changing, Bathing a new born, Sterilising, Feeding?

If you are interested in coming along or for more information please contact Kam or Shirley on 675 0967”

Please contact Birchfield Children's Centre for more information on 0121 675 0967. All the activities are at Birchfield Children's Centre, 1 Houghton Road B20 3LE except for Read and Play which is at Birchfield Library, Trinity Road B6 6AH.

Photographs from the summer playscheme at Holy Trinity Academy which included a coach trip to Twinlakes Park funded by Birchfield Big Local. Many thanks to Dorothy Dixon for the photographs.

