

# Birchfield Big Local News

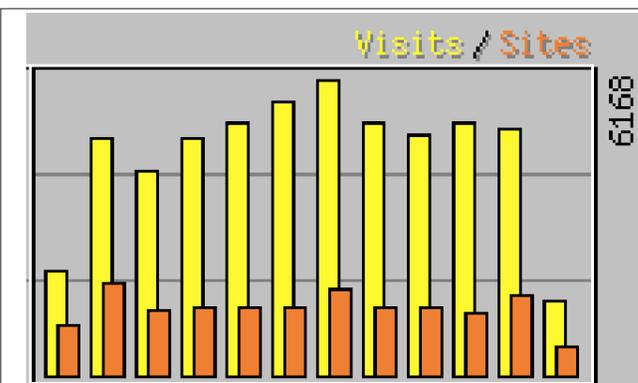
SPRING 2016/ NUMBER 7

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

## Christmas Choir Concert

**Birchfield Big Local held its first Christmas Choir Concert** on 16th December at Grosvenor Road Studios. Reverend Dr Bob Stephen, Rector at St Mary's Handsworth, acted as Master of Ceremonies, introducing the singers who included the choir from the United Reformed Church on Wilton Road and a group of singers made up of Big Local volunteers and guests. The event was recorded by studio manager Paul Snook and local resident Carmen Brown provided a superb buffet lunch. We were also joined by Angus McCabe and a colleague from Birmingham University who were interviewing people for the Our Bigger Story project. Thanks to Claudette Holmes for taking photographs and to Suki Sohi and volunteers for organising the event. We plan to repeat the event in December this year, so if you would like to join in or know of a local choir that would like to contribute, please contact us.

*United Reformed Church Choir*



## Website success

**Have you visited the Birchfield Big Local website lately?** In September there were over 6,000 visits, with almost 200 visits daily. The website includes latest news and events, and also a directory of local services provided by local businesses, groups and organisations. If you would like to be listed in the directory, please send us details – or if you prefer you can submit

details directly via the website. You can also submit up-and-coming events on the website; send us comments; or make a contribution via Twitter or Facebook. See the section on **Contributing to Birchfield Big Local**. We would also be delighted to hear from anyone interested in contributing local stories, photographs or information about projects to the website or newsletter. Please see— [www.birchfieldbiglocal.org](http://www.birchfieldbiglocal.org)

## Public Speaking Competition 2015

**Westminster Primary School** held their public speaking awards on Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> December. The awards were presented by David Campbell, publisher of the Everyman Library of Books.

The participants spoke on different topics. For example: “Inside the cupboard”; “What they want to be in the future”; “Views about how to make the world a better place or change the world in terms of equality, fairness, environment”; and “Best and worst sports”.

All participants received a medal. Four junior students, Raza Khan, Chelsey George 3P, Mohammed Yusuf Sajjad 4F, Zakaria Ali 4M received a prize, and Maryam Islam 4M received a trophy for excellent public speaking.

Senior students, Tania Khan 5C, Sanaa Azhar 5S, Hasib Miah and Amna Rahman 6Y received a prize. Saliha Mahmood 5C was honoured by a fabulous trophy.

*Thanks to Mehnaz Fatma for the article and Patrick Groll for the photographs.*



**See inside for .....**

- Partnership News**
- Volunteer Opportunities**
- Launch of Small Grants Scheme**
- Latest on Community Assets Survey**
- Play Sessions at the Secret Garden**
- Street League & Street Step**
- Allotment Spring Event & Launch of “In Bloom”**
- Birchfield Children’s Centre**
- Events Calendar**

**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](mailto:info@birchfieldbiglocal.org)

**Community Development Worker:** [andrew@birchfieldbiglocal.org](mailto:andrew@birchfieldbiglocal.org)

**Volunteer Co-ordinator:** [suki@birchfieldbiglocal.org](mailto:suki@birchfieldbiglocal.org)

**Website:** [www.birchfieldbiglocal.org](http://www.birchfieldbiglocal.org)

**Twitter:** @BirchfieldBigL



**Dorrette Hanson—Editor**

I would like firstly to welcome all the new residents to the Birchfield area. I do hope you will make yourself known and get involved in activities and also enjoy living in the area.

I strongly believe that this year we will notice the changes in the Birchfield area as new things begin happening and residents become more involved. This will enable us to grow as a strong and active community.

I am especially looking forward to more activities being delivered to the residents. The back page calendar shows our regular and new activities.

Last year it was such a joy to meet new residents and to contribute in

different ways to Birchfield Big Local events as choirmaster, quizmaster and compere.

It was good at the Elders' Christmas meal and Christmas Choir Concert to meet new residents. I especially enjoyed the feedback from the guests such as: "Will you be doing this on a weekly basis?" and "I enjoyed it— when will you be doing it again?" Transport was provided to the Elders' Christmas meal, which made it possible for many to attend.

Volunteering not only benefits the volunteer but also those who participate in the activities. We must continue to be diverse in the activities we put on in the community—meeting the needs of all age groups.

As the lighter day's roll in I look forward to meeting more residents and participating in future events over the coming year.

There has been a lot of progress on the community garden project and with the assets survey. We will be publishing the findings shortly.

I hope you will all support the campaign we are working on with residents, Midland Heart, the City Council and others to reduce fly – tipping and waste and increase recycling in Birchfield.

Warmest regards to you all.

**Dorrette**

**Partnership News**

The partnership members held an "away day" in September to review the past year and also elect the key honorary officer posts. Baljeet Singh Ghataora was elected as Vice-Chair; Tina Brown-Love continues as Treasurer and Annette McConnell is the new Secretary. The BBL partnership is keen to recruit new members—especially if you are a local resident.

**Baljeet Singh Ghataora—Vice Chair**

Baljeet Singh Ghataora CIOH, AIIIM, AIPC was born in Tanzania (East Africa) and came to England at the age of 10. Baljeet is a local resident and first joined the BBL partnership in 2014. He has many years experience in housing management and currently works for Trident Reach. Baljeet has also served as a school governor and is on the board of the mental health charity Mind.



**Annette McConnell—Secretary**

Hello everyone, I'm Annette McConnell and have recently been appointed as Secretary. I have been involved with Birchfield Big Local since the beginning and I was delighted to be nominated as Secretary. I am a Community Engagement Worker at Birchfield Children's Centre and have worked within the local area for 10 years. I'm very pleased to be part of Birchfield Big Local as it continues on its journey. I'm also looking forward to developing the role of secretary.



**Community Assets Survey—Latest News**

Many thanks to everyone who completed the Community Survey included with the last edition of the newsletter. The results will give us valuable information about what local residents require from a community centre and children's play space.

Santosh Rai and Gavin Orton who are carrying out the survey on behalf of Big Local are now in the final stages of the study. They met with the BBL partnership before Christmas to agree a short list of potential buildings and land and are now investigating these in more detail. Santosh and Gavin will be reporting shortly on their findings.



Gavin Orton and Santosh Rai

**Volunteer Opportunities**

**Stepping Forward Volunteer**

Stepping Forward helps people who are interested in looking for work, training and education. We need volunteers to support people coming to Stepping Forward sessions. For example, helping them to complete CV's and develop their skills and knowledge. Volunteers should be experienced in computers and internet and have good listening/ communication skills.

**English Conversation Volunteer**

Volunteers needed to help out at English Conversation Classes with people who want to learn to speak English more confidently. The classes are very friendly and informal and are run by a team of volunteers.

**Senior Citizen Club Volunteer**

Volunteers needed to help set up and run a club for senior citizens in the local community. The club is a new initiative aimed at engaging older people who are isolated and want to socialise with others.

**Pocket Park Volunteer**

Volunteers needed to help maintain a community garden; to ensure that the garden is tidy, safe and secure for children and the community to use. There will also be opportunities to help run activities for local families in the area at the garden.

**Basic IT / Computer Skills Tutor**

Volunteers needed to help people who have very little or no experience of using a computer to develop their IT skills and knowledge. You will be helping people one to one or in small groups.

**Reception Volunteer**

Reception Volunteer at Grosvenor Road Studios. You will be the first point of contact and will be required to greet and welcome all visitors and direct them to the correct person. You may also be asked to help with administrative tasks e.g. typing a letter, answering the phone, passing messages on, adding information to a database or helping prepare for a community event.

**Do you have a skill/ knowledge or talent that you would like to share with the local community? We need volunteers to lead sessions at our Women's Group and other activities that we run for the community. Give your time and have fun meeting new people!**



Jewellery making workshop with Anaisa Monteiro

## Handsworth

### Historical Society

Handsworth Historical Society was formed in 1952 and since 1978 has occupied half of the building known as 'Handsworth Old Town Hall'. The society runs a community museum about Handsworth from this Grade 2 listed cruck cottage built about 1460. The museum contains many exhibits and displays and also hosts local records which are accessible to the public. The building is open from 6.30 to 8.00pm on the first Tuesday of each month (excluding January) for people to look around the building or at the photographs, maps and other artefacts in the archives. The society will also help with family history and other enquiries about the area's past and welcomes visitors/groups at other times by appointment.



Regular coffee mornings are held at

the Old Town Hall, corner of Slack Lane/College Road, Handsworth B20 2JL, 10.00am to 1.00pm. Admission free. **The next two coffee mornings are on Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> March and Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> April.**

The society also hosts regular speaker meetings at New Church Centre, Winleigh Road (off Church Lane), Handsworth Wood B20 2HN. The next two speaker meetings are:

**Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> March at 7.30pm** – James Watt's

contribution to the modern world – illustrated talk by member Simon Westacott.

**Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> April at 7.30pm**—

The feud between the Smallbroke and Colmore families—illustrated talk by Marie Fogg, who also has book sales.

Members £2.00, visitors £3.00, including refreshments.

For more details please contact: [secretary@handsworth-historical-society.co.uk](mailto:secretary@handsworth-historical-society.co.uk) (0121 554 6762)

## Small Grants Scheme Launched

Do you have an idea for a project that will benefit people in the Birchfield Big Local area and help make a real difference to the community? Birchfield Big Local are offering small grants from £50 to £2000 for individuals or groups that have project ideas to help tackle local priorities. The project should meet one or more of the priorities for the area in the Birchfield Big Local Plan, for example: celebrating the cultural heritage of the area or bringing people together; engaging local people in improving the environment; providing activities for the young, elderly or people with disabilities; improving health and wellbeing; or promoting the local economy and helping people develop new skills.

The small grants will be awarded in three rounds spread over the year, with £5000 available in each round. There is a straight-forward application form and Guidance notes which are available from: **Birchfield Big Local office—16 Grosvenor Road, Birchfield B20 3NP or email [andrew@birchfieldbiglocal.org](mailto:andrew@birchfieldbiglocal.org)**



Groundwork West Midlands are running a programme of activities called Active Birchfield, looking at getting all ages outdoors and enjoying being active. As part of

this programme Birchfield Big Local, Groundwork West Midlands and Birmingham Playcare Network (BPCN) are providing **FREE** outdoor play activities in School Holidays and weekends between March and August for children aged 5+ in the Secret Garden, off Hutton Rd/Grosvenor Ave/Westminster Rd. The play sessions will include fun games and messy play sessions amongst other exciting things that everyone can get involved in.

Each session will include 2 play workers and children will be fully supervised and there is no need to book, but sessions are on a first come first served basis so get there on time to avoid disappointment.

*"We are so excited about delivering play sessions for the children and play training for volunteers to encourage the use of the space for children's play and to build on the community sense of wellbeing."*

*Rebecca Coley, Projects Manager for Birmingham PlayCare Network*

BPCN will deliver a great range of playful activities and games for local children and their families. Sessions will give the children the opportunity to make dens, play team games and engage in messy play. We look forward to seeing you all, please come and join us!

#### Dates for your Diary:

##### Easter Holidays

29<sup>th</sup> & 31<sup>st</sup> March 13:00 – 16:30  
5<sup>th</sup> & 7<sup>th</sup> April 13:00 – 16:30

##### Term time sessions

**Every Other Saturday 12:00 – 15:30**  
16<sup>th</sup> & 30<sup>th</sup> April, 14<sup>th</sup> & 28<sup>th</sup> May  
11<sup>th</sup> & 25<sup>th</sup> June, 9<sup>th</sup> & 23<sup>rd</sup> July

##### Summer Holidays

9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> August 13:00 – 16:30



## Street League and Street Step Academy

**Street League** is a national charity which uses football to engage with unemployed young people aged 16 – 24 years. It runs a two stage programme that helps young people overcome the barriers to work; develops key skills that lead to nationally-recognised qualifications; and offers work placements with employers that are backing Street League. For further information see [www.streetleague.co.uk](http://www.streetleague.co.uk)

**Street Step Academy** is a similar initiative aimed at girls only that involves a 14-week programme including employability skills, qualifications and dance fitness. For more information text or call Amie on 07795 058265 or email: [amie.harris@streetstep.co.uk](mailto:amie.harris@streetstep.co.uk). Also see the Street Step website: [www.streetstep.co.uk](http://www.streetstep.co.uk)

## Bloom in Birchfield 2016 Launch

The Livingstone Rd Community Allotment Spring Event will be on **Saturday 2nd April 1-4pm** at the Pavilion building, off Livingstone Road. Everyone's welcome. There will be free arts and craft activities for all ages, tasty homemade food and a friendly space to meet and chat. We'll also be launching the

Bloom in Birchfield 2016 campaign. Hope to see you there!



## Elders' Christmas Meal

Birchfield Big Local organised a Christmas meal at the Sons of Rest building, Handsworth Park, for local elders. There was a choice of Chicken, Turkey or Nut Roast with all the Christmas trimmings provided by Andrea Walker from the Boat House Café. Entertainment was provided by poet and musician Milton Godfrey, assisted by sound engineer Mikey Godfrey. Dorrette Hanson compered the bingo – based on the streets of Birchfield – and a quiz. Thanks to Volunteer Coordinator Suki Sohi and the volunteers, including Mehnaz, Israt, Koli and Sharon, for planning and organising the event. Thanks also to Shaana, Asda Community Life Champion, for

supporting the event in many ways, including Christmas decorations and gifts.



Photos: Mike Tye



# 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: [info@birchfieldbiglocal.org](mailto: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](http://www.birchfieldbiglocal.org).**

## MONDAY

**Grosvenor and Westminster Community Garden Volunteer Sessions**—Would you like to get involved and help create a community garden for all to enjoy. Meet at Hutton Road entrance every Monday 12noon—3pm. **For further details contact either The Conservation Volunteers on 0121 771 4339 or Birchfield Big Local on 0121 448 5594**

## TUESDAY

**English Conversation Classes**—Every Tuesday 10.30—12noon at Grosvenor Road Studios, 16 Grosvenor Road . **Contact 0121 448 5595 for further details. Please note: Due to popular demand there is now a waiting list.**

**Stepping Forward**—Every Tuesday 12noon—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](mailto:steppingforward@birchfieldbiglocal.org)**

**Ward Committee Meeting**—12th April, Venue tbc. An opportunity for local residents to express their views on issues of concern.

**Contact: Kay Thomas, Community Governance Manager, Tel: 0121 675 5664 E-mail: [kay.thomas@birmingham.gov.uk](mailto:kay.thomas@birmingham.gov.uk)**

## WEDNESDAY

**BRAG Community Allotment Project**—Meets every Wednesday morning 10—12 noon (followed by tea and biscuits) at Livingstone Community Allotments, Livingstone Road. **Contact Rob Hewitt for further details on 07528 575344**

**Bloom in Birchfield/Livingstone Community Allotment Spring Event**—Saturday 2nd April, 1—4pm at the Pavilion, Livingstone Allotment, Off Livingstone Road, Birchfield. **Contact Rob Hewitt for further details on 07528 575344**

## THURSDAY

**Hope Community Acupuncture Project**—A low cost, multi-bed clinic set up with the aim of supporting local residents with chronic illness.

Every Thursday at the United Reformed 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 is on Thursday 10th March at 12—2.30pm. **Contact Suki Sohi on 0121 448 5594 or email: [suki@birchfieldbiglocal.org](mailto:suki@birchfieldbiglocal.org) for further details.**

## FRIDAY

**Youth Enterprise Session**—Open to children and young people 5 years upwards with disabilities or those interested in art and design. 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**

## SATURDAY

**Children and young people sensory sessions**—creative sessions for children 4—18years with disabilities and their siblings. Saturday 10-12pm at St Peters Nursery, St Peters Road B20 3RR. Next sessions 12th & 26th March & 9th April. **Contact Carol Reid to book a place: 07977 880132**

**Creative sessions for children age 4—12years**—Creative sessions for children with disabilities or those interested in art. Opportunities for youth volunteering. Saturday 1 –3pm at St Peters Nursery, St Peters Road B20 3RR. Next sessions 12th & 26th March, 9th & 23rd April, 14th & 28th May. **Contact Carol Reid to book a place: 07977 880132**

### Early Years Services at Birchfield Children's Centre

- Stay and plays Every Monday and Thursday 1.00 – 2.30pm and Friday am 9.30 – 11.00am
- Stay and play/Terrific Twos Mondays 9.30 – 11.00
- Baby group 1.00 -2.00pm every Tuesdays
- Stay and play at Birchfield Library Every Tuesday at 10.30 – 11.30
- Westminster school stay and play Every Thursday (Term time only) 9.15-10.45am

### Early Years Services at Lime Tree and Lozells Methodist Church

- Stay and play at Lime tree Monday and Tuesday am 9.30 – 11.00 and Thursday and Friday 1.00 – 2.30pm
- Talking tips at Lime Tree (promoting speech and language) Every Tuesday 1.00 – 2.30pm
- Lozells Church stay and play every Monday and Tuesday pm 1.00 – 2.30pm (Term Time Only)

**Please contact the Early Years Outreach team at Birchfield (675 0967) for further information**

### Volunteering in the Children's Centre

Do you have a child under 5 years and would like to volunteer in the children's centre? Please come along to an Information Session on Monday 7 March (9.30 – 11.30) at Birchfield Children's Centre, Haughton Road. You will need to complete Volunteer Preparation Training before you volunteer in the Children's Centre.

The training consists of 5 sessions (9.30 – 11.30) which will take place on:

- Monday 14 March
- Wednesday 23 March
- Monday 11 April
- Monday 19 April
- Monday 25 April

The training will look at: Role of the Volunteer, Safeguarding and Confidentiality etc. You will also need to have a DBS Certificate before you begin volunteering, which will be applied for during training sessions. **If you would like more information, please contact Annette (675 2530).**

### Cherry Tree Nursery, Graham Street, Lozells

Cherry Tree Nursery currently has places for 3 and 4 year olds. If you would like more information, **please contact Dawn Clifford, Nursery Manager at Cherry Tree (675 5865)**