

Birchfield Big Local News

Spring 2019 / Number 14

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

Creative Civic Change

Together with Welsh House Farm Big Local we are one of sixteen areas selected to take part in the Creative Civic Change project. The project aims to support communities in using arts and creativity to make a positive change in their areas.



Visiting Battersea Arts Centre for a Creative Civic Change Learning Event

Creative Civic Change is about resident-led change and responding to issues and opportunities raised by local people. The idea is that these priorities should be approached in creative ways – from art, design and architecture, to theatre, music, craft, storytelling and more. Through taking part, residents will gain skills, confidence and make connections that will result in lasting change.

The project is in the development phase. We are talking to as many local people as possible about what matters to them. We are being supported by artist-facilitator, Heather Peak. Heather is interested in promoting civic life and bringing meaning, beauty and change into everyday life. For more information about her work see - <http://www.morison.info/>

Photographer and artist, Vanley Burke, is helping to document the project and provide a photographic response to the process involved.

Birchfield and Welsh House Farm were chosen because of the work that has been done by residents in both areas around arts and creativity.

For Birchfield this has included the Jazz Festival, now in its third year, and a partnership with Birmingham REP to create "Our Feast" – a production written and performed by local women. The performance included a feast of stories about the women's childhoods and adulthoods, families, motherhood, and experiences of discrimination, bravery and recovery.

Creative Civic Change will be launched during the week 13–19th May.

The Birchfield Jazz Festival will once again take place on the last weekend of July. This year the event will be held at Holy Trinity Church, Birchfield Road, as St Mary's Church is closed for building work.

Performing "Our Feast" at Grosvenor Road Studios



Photos from the Christmas Meal: The guests arrive; preparing the meal; Winston Harris entertains; the English Class with their certificates.

Christmas Meal and Student Awards

This year Birchfield Big Local celebrated the end of the year with a Christmas meal that took place at St Mary's Church Hall, Handsworth. The event was open to all staff, volunteers, partnership members and friends of Birchfield Big Local.

We were grateful for the voluntary input of Adlin Shorter, Nasreen Reshma and Dean Richards on the day, which helped the whole event to go smoothly. Catering was provided by Lynda McFarlane and entertainment by Winston Harris.

All those in attendance had a great time, enjoying a Christmas meal with all the trimmings, good company, entertainment and a raffle.

Andrew Simons (BBL community development worker) said: "This is the first time we have held the Christmas meal at St Mary's and

were well impressed with the facilities – especially the kitchen!

Thanks to Lynda (Vegan Vybes) for providing a fabulous Christmas meal and to Winston Harris for the music and entertainment.

The meal was attended by the Elders group and English Class participants and was an opportunity to celebrate the students' achievements in attending 14 weeks of conversational English classes planned and led by volunteer tutors – Mehnaz, Salema and Cherrelle.

Well done to all. Many thanks to Tipapa for organising the event and to all the volunteers who helped on the day."

We are working with St Mary's Church and others to set up weekly Meet and Eat sessions at the church hall. This will include a hot meal and activities including access to advice and support.

Volunteer Coordinator – Birchfield Big Local

Interested in helping people contribute their gifts and skills within the local community?

Birchfield Big Local is looking for an enthusiastic person to take on the role of Volunteer Coordinator. The post is part time, initially for 12 months. This key role involves recruiting, encouraging and supporting people to ensure that volunteering is a positive and empowering experience, open to everyone.

For further details and how to apply please see the job listing on the BVSC website—www.bvsc.org or contact Andrew at Birchfield Big Local. Closing date—Monday 29th April.

Big Local
Birchfield

How to contact Birchfield Big Local

Grosvenor Road Studios, 16 Grosvenor Road B20 3NP Tel: 0121 448 5594

Community Development Worker: Andrew Simons—andrew@birchfieldbiglocal.org (07421 994752)

Youth Worker: Russell Green—russell@birchfieldbiglocal.org (07419 213430)

Website: www.birchfieldbiglocal.org Twitter: @BirchfieldBigL



Dorrette Hanson—Editor

Welcome to the first edition of the newsletter for 2019.

I thoroughly enjoyed taking part in the play "Our Feast" which was written and performed by women from the local community working alongside Birmingham REP. Stories about women's experiences and the connection with Birchfield was the basis of the storyline. There were about 11 of us taking part and we worked alongside another Big Local group from the Dolphin Centre. One great incentive for taking part was the offer to attend free shows for a year at Birmingham REP.

While at Grosvenor Road Studios for the 'Our Feast' project I was able to go into the World War 2 bunker that is in the garden there.



Inside the WW2 bunker at Grosvenor Road Studios

In June I was able to attend a course to enable me to provide advice and guidance as part of a team running a job club. This was very rewarding but sadly due to health reasons I am unable to fulfil this obligation and have also had to give up running the elder's activities. I do hope in the future to resume them.

I look forward to another year of Big Local activities. We need more partnership members to help deliver the Birchfield Big Local Plan. If you are interested, please contact the office for further details.

Birchfield Ward Forum

The next Ward Forum Meeting will be 7—9pm on Wednesday 22 May at Grosvenor Road Studios, 16 Grosvenor Road B20 3NP.

This is a public meeting attended by Councillor Mahmood Hussain and Council Officers and is an opportunity for residents to raise matters of local concern.

Please join us and make your voice heard.

"5 Palm Summer Play Scheme"

Birchfield Big Local youth team ran a summer scheme programme called 5 PALM - with core themes and workshops to Educate, Empower, Engage, Enterprise and Energise for ages 8 to 13.

"He who conquers others is strong; He who conquers himself is mighty"

The scheme ran from Monday 23rd of July to the Friday 3rd of August, starting from 10 till 3 pm each day, every Monday, Wednesday and Friday with added extras of a fun day at Handsworth Park and the excellent Birchfield Jazz Festival at St Mary's Church on the weekend of 28 – 29th July.

The programme used various activities, workshops and agencies to support young people in developing skills and knowledge to deal with some of the pressing issues that impact on youth and the wider communities of Birchfield, such as the anti-gangs, Caribbean Legacy, aspirations and simple self-defence abilities. The theme was delivered to support life-long learning and had opportunities for the group to share their thoughts and issues with staff.

The group engaged in workshops that explored their heritage with the Legacy group and local connections to each other and the issues of building stronger confidence and esteem with the youth group both individually and collectively.

The sessions were well attended and introduced the group to an anti-gangs' workshop, where the group discussed bullying and issues of peer pressure even at their early age.

Many of the group enjoyed the self-defence session delivered by Paul Snook, learning basic skills of martial arts and the underpinning of positive values. Also, one of the more educational sessions delivered by Subtain Khan from

My ENDZ Project

Following a successful bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund, Birchfield Big Local in partnership with Ifa Yoruba Contemporary Arts Trust will be developing the "MY ENDZ" heritage project starting soon.

We will be engaging community group's and youth, to develop wider learning and recognition of Birchfield's rich history with its inventors, arts, diversity and historical buildings and re-creating a vision of the area by using the arts to empower the next generation.

As part of this long-term project, BBL will be seeking to create a new mural which reflects the passions and history of this diverse community, which will celebrate and make a lasting impact on the social environment of the area and enhance the secret garden space



Performing at the Birchfield Jazz Festival in St Mary's Church

Bloom Tuition - explored the youth groups' "dreams". This workshop helped the group to plan their educational dreams and explored their soft and hard skills, regards making their aspirations real with hard work and study habits.

Feedback from the youth group was positive and evaluation returns rated the programme an 8/10 by most of the youth that participated. And yes... smile ... many continued to ask to extend the programme plus with more away day activities.

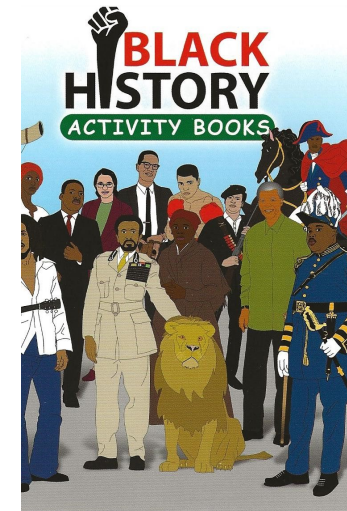
One of the day trips was to the Birmingham Museum to visit "Dippy the Dinosaur", where the group enjoyed learning about the range of dinosaurs and enjoyed a day in the city. The staff enjoyed meeting new individuals and parents and will be seeking to widen the engagement from parents in future planning.

Russell Green, BBL youth worker said "the sessions were really good and engaged the youth in exploring areas of their developing lives which some had not considered or not really been pushed to consider, yet many were able to articulate experiences that they had faced in real social contexts around bullying, schooling and building friendships that support positive behaviour"

Black History Activity Books

Thanks to Vado Hamilton for donating 60 Black History Activity Books to the summer scheme. The books are designed to educate children on positive role models whilst stimulating their minds with fun puzzles and activities.

For more information and to purchase the books please contact: rowstyle.b@gmail.com



for the community to reflect on Birchfield's past, present and future heritage.

We welcome your participation in this project and would like to hear your thoughts.

If you want to be part of this project, please contact Russell Green at Birchfield Big Local - russell@birchfieldbiglocal.org Mobile: 07419 213430



Some photos from the Autumn half-term scheme.



Volunteer Opportunities at Birchfield Big Local

Would you like to make a difference to people living in the local area and add to your experience, skills and knowledge? Birchfield Big Local is seeking volunteers for two of our projects: The Elders group, providing activities for people over 50 years of age; and Job Club Assistants, helping job seekers within the Birchfield Big Local area.

Role: Stepping Forward Job Club Volunteer Assistants

Birchfield Big Local (BBL) is developing the Stepping Forward Job Club and is seeking enthusiastic people with a commitment to providing a friendly and relaxed environment in which local people living in the BBL area can improve their employment prospects for the future and explore the opportunities available to them.

The volunteer assistants will be offered training in how to deliver practical job search support and guidance, providing job seekers with the knowledge, skills, practical support and encouragement to help them search for work effectively.



Volunteer Coordinator, Tippa Naphtali with volunteers at the annual celebrations for Volunteers Week.

Role: Elders Group Volunteer Assistants

Birchfield Big Local is developing its activities for older people and are seeking enthusiastic people with a commitment to providing activities for people aged 50 and over from a range of backgrounds and cultures, living in the Birchfield Big Local area.

Along with relevant experience, skills and knowledge to undertake the role, volunteer assistants will be offered training as part of the induction process. Other training will be made available that is appropriate to the role.

Please join us and help make a difference!

For more information please contact: 0121 448 5594 or email: andrew@birchfieldbiglocal.org

Congratulations!

Congratulations to Mehnaz Fatma and Salema Bibi for completing the course in Teaching English as a Foreign Language.

Mehnaz and Salema have supported many Birchfield Big Local projects over the past four years, most recently as tutors on the very popular Conversational English Classes which run every Tuesday and Wednesday at Grosvenor Road Studios.

Our huge thanks to Mehnaz and Salema for their commitment and dedication—and to all our volunteers for their continued contribution to Birchfield Big Local and the local community. Thank you!



Photos from the workshop to launch the Social Enterprise Hub and a graphic record of the event by Anna Geyer from New Possibilities.

Birchfield Social Enterprise Hub

Birchfield Big Local is working together with UnLtd and ATHAC CIC to run monthly Social Enterprise Hub sessions at Grosvenor Road Studios as part of an ongoing business development programme.

A workshop was held on Thursday 13th December looking at social enterprise in the area and how we can continue to nurture and support it in the future in partnership with UnLtd. There were presentations by Zoe Miller (Community Catalysts), Andrew Simons (Birchfield Big Local), Lynda McFarlane (Vegan Vybes) and Aminah Michelle. Anna Geyer from New Possibilities created a graphic record of the event.

One of the outcomes was the idea of creating a regular forum to provide support to local entrepreneurs living in the Birchfield Big Local area or people wanting to develop an enterprise idea or micro business that will benefit Birchfield residents.

Grant funding is available through UnLtd with anything from £500 to £5000 in support of good ideas for ventures that will benefit the community. UnLtd Award Manager, Victor Shaw will be available on Thursdays to provide advice and support.

For more information please contact:

Andrew Simons (Birchfield Big Local) - 07421 994752

Carol Reid (ATHAC) - 07977 880132

Victor Shaw (UnLtd) - 07841 779981

Partnership News

In June 2018, Birchfield Big Local ran an event for residents at Holy Trinity Primary Academy. Organised with the help of Angus McCabe and colleagues from the Third Sector Research Centre, Birmingham University, the aim was to look at the strengths and assets in the area and the priorities for action in the coming year or years.

The event coincided with the creation of the new Birchfield Ward and the outcomes were also used to inform the latest Big Local Community Plan. The plan was approved by Local Trust at the beginning of the year and is available at – www.birchfieldbiglocal.org.

A key part of the plan and legacy for Birchfield Big Local is the creation of a Community Hub. BBL is proposing to refurbish and extend the former caretakers house at Westminster Primary School in partnership with the school.

Architect Gavin Orton has produced concept designs for the building based on the ideas and expectations of residents and potential hub users. The next stages are to produce more detailed designs and to apply for planning permission prior to appointing a contractor to carry out the work.

Additional fundraising will also be needed to meet everyone's aspirations for this ambitious project.

There will be further opportunities to comment on the plans for the Community Hub as the project develops.

Interested in joining the partnership?

Birchfield Big Local partnership is looking for new members. The partnership usually meets every 6 weeks.

The partnership is there to represent the views of the whole community and make the overall decisions about how Big Local will work in the area and that the Big Local plan is carried out.

The partnership ensure that Big Local is a genuine local, resident and volunteer-led programme.

If you would like more information please contact Andrew on 0121 448 5594 (Mobile: 07421 994752).

Illustration of the Community Hub





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. The newsletter is produced four times a year.

All classes and activities will take place at Grosvenor Road Studios, 16 Grosvenor Road B20 3NP unless otherwise stated.

For further details about these events, please phone or message Andrew on 0121 448 5594

(Mobile: 07421 994752) or email: andrew@birchfieldbiglocal.org

MONDAY

- **Practical volunteer session** (10am—12noon) every Monday at the Secret Garden behind Grosvenor Avenue, Westminster Road and Hutton Road. Please help us develop and maintain this community garden and play area. Meet 10am at Grosvenor Avenue entrance—off Grosvenor Road. **For further details please contact Andrew on 0121 448 5594 (Mobile: 07421 994752) or email: andrew@birchfieldbiglocal.org**

TUESDAY

- **English Conversation Class**—Every Tuesday 10am—12noon. **To register please contact 0121 448 5594**

WEDNESDAY

- **English Conversation Class**—Every Wednesday 10am—12noon. **To register please contact 0121 448 5594**
- **Elders' Club**—Every Wednesday 12.30—4.30pm. Aged 55 and over, please come along and socialise in a relaxed and friendly atmosphere, everyone is welcome.
- **BRAG Community Allotment Project**—Meets every Wednesday morning 10—12noon at Livingstone Community Allotment, off Livingstone Road, Birchfield. **For further details please contact: 0121 448 5594 (Mobile: 07421 994752)**

THURSDAY

- **Women's Group**—Every month on a Thursday 12—2.30pm. Lunch, information and networking session for local women. Next session: 2nd May (If you are a local woman who would like to share your skills and knowledge with the group by running a workshop please contact: 0121 448 5594)
- **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 Reformed Church, 13 Wilton Road B20 3RX. **Contact Dr Rhonda Lee on 07810 024687**
- **Birchfield Social Enterprise Hub**—Once a month from 10am—12.30pm on the following dates: 11th April | 2nd May | 6th June. Venue: Grosvenor Road Studios, 16 Grosvenor Road, Handsworth B20 3NP.

SATURDAY

- **Creative sessions indoors and outdoors for children age 4—12 years.** Inclusive creative sessions aimed at children with disabilities or any child interested in art. Opportunities for youth volunteering. Saturday 1.30—3.30pm: 13th April | 27th April | 11th May | 25th May | 8th June | 22nd June. **Venue: Victoria Jubilee Allotments, Nursery Drive, Handsworth B20 2SW. Contact Carol Reid, ATHAC CIC for further details on 07977 880132.**

Affordable Acupuncture: The Natural Remedy for Pain, Anxiety and PMT

Acupuncture is powerful, and has strong scientific evidence to back it up. For over 5000 years acupuncture has helped alleviate a range of physical and mental conditions.

Having needles stuck into your skin is probably the last thing you want to think about when you are in pain, stressed or tired and moody. However, you may find that it may be worth your while to have this relatively pain free treatment, comfortably lying down in a relaxing environment.

Birchfield Big Local (BBL) has been supporting the Hope Acupuncture Clinic, a community based project to deliver low-cost acupuncture treatments to residents of BBL and the surrounding areas. Each year the clinic offers hundreds of treatments. Over 90% of residents use the service to manage chronic pain symptoms. Other conditions include; anxiety, depression, IBS, digestive disorders, PMT and menopause.

Regular acupuncture treatments have been life changing for many

residents, some of who have been able to return to work or continue their employment and avoid taking sick days.

The Clinic is run by Dr Rhonda Lee an experienced Acupuncture and Holistic medicine practitioner. Depending on personal circumstances treatment cost is £8 - £17 per session. The clinic is open every Thursday 9.30am to 12.30pm at the URC Church, 13 Wilton Road, Handsworth B20 3RX.



Inside the clinic at Wilton Road

To find out if acupuncture could help you, or to make an appointment contact Dr Rhonda Lee, Tel: 07810024687 or email: info@inthehealthclinic.com.

Athac Allotment Project

Here Natalia Shakeel aged 13 describes her experience of the allotment project at Victoria Jubilee Allotments.

It's been about two years since me and my family started to use the allotments. It's a place we go to take a break and to relax, play and enjoy after a hard and stressful week of school.

To me I think the allotment has helped me by allowing me to socialise with children and people. I love going to it because the sessions are child friendly and so fun. It is a place where there are no rules and it gives us the freedom to do whatever we want.

I think the allotment is a great place to go. The place is amazing for all ages and it helps everyone in different ways and that's why I love it. There are different activities to do and you can do whatever you want.

In our area we don't have a place where young people can go or a safe place where families can spend time with other families. The allotment has now become our safe place. It allows us to experience

free play and interact with so many people that maybe otherwise we would never get an opportunity to meet.

Finally one of the biggest things that is clear to me and everyone who comes to the allotment is that it is a happy place to be and everyone looks after each other. The openness and freedom means that regardless of who you are and what your background is, even what your ability level may be, everyone can access the free allotment.

I hope in the future that maybe the government starts to put money into areas where it's needed the most and I look forward to more safe places where we can enjoy growing up and making memories.

