

Barclaycard volunteers lend a hand at Larchfield Community

A very big thank you to our friends at Barclaycard for all their hard work on their latest visit to Larchfield Community recently.

The team got stuck into weeding, putting in new fence posts and giving the famous Larchfield cow a fresh new look. Mark, one of the Barclaycard team, explains why he's glad to get involved:

'This is the third or fourth year I've been back here, and I absolutely love it. Larchfield Community and Camphill Village Trust is all about giving people opportunities who might not otherwise have them – so anything we can do to help is great!'

Corporate volunteering days like this are a great way for employees to take time away from their desks – but we're



especially grateful that our friends from Barclaycard stayed in touch even during lockdown.

'When we couldn't get here to do maintenance work I still wanted to help,' says Mark. 'We did some fun quizzes about finances, using Zoom, helping people how to be safe with their debit card and avoid fraud. That was really fun.'



The Barclaycard volunteers getting stuck into some much-needed maintenance at Larchfield.

Thanks Mark and everyone at the Barclaycard team for all your support – and we're looking forward to your next visit!



Embrace the Wild and Wonderful: Join our Nature Project!



If you are a birdwatcher, an insect enthusiast, or simply have a deep love for animals, you could help support this project.

We aim to discover hidden stories about the diverse wildlife that thrives, often unseen, in the areas where we live and work. From identifying bird species to documenting the presence of animals, your contributions will help us build a comprehensive picture of the biodiversity in our midst.

Nick, who will be running our exciting new project alongside Robin, says: 'Wild and Wonderful will document and share the Trust's journey towards enhancing and enriching our environment.'

Please follow us on our social media channels to stay updated on the progress of our exciting new wildlife project, and watch this space for further updates.

Feeling connected with nature is great for our wellbeing. That's why we're launching a new nature project, Wild & Wonderful, and we're calling on community members and friends of the Trust to get involved!



Just some of the wildlife already captured in our beautiful surroundings.

camphill
village
trust

family life

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Going green in the Black Country

As official sponsors of this year's Growing Up Green week in Dudley, our Stourbridge community members have been going green this summer! We've enjoyed lots of opportunities to raise climate awareness and do our bit for the environment.

Hosting the first planning meeting was an opportunity to connect with the many other local groups taking part. Next, community members had an exhibition stand at the launch event in a local park, where they enjoyed chatting to people. Later during the week, some of the people who attend Ashfield Gardens were also invited to attend a crafty Mindful Mums Hub to make butterfly feeders.



Everyone enjoyed getting involved with all the green-making activities.

'We've all enjoyed Growing up Green week' says Ashfield Gardens Manager Jenny. 'There have been some lovely events on throughout the area that we've been able to join in with. We've met so many positive people spreading important environmental messages.'

Green fingers win gold at Gardeners' World!

Our talented gardeners have seen their efforts win a gold award at this year's Gardeners' World Live show, with an exhibition stand featuring pollinating plants to encourage bees, moths and butterflies.



A highlight was getting to meet Gardeners' World star Adam Frost!

Stourbridge horticultural company Hortulani invited the team from Ashfield Gardens to get involved in growing the plants for their exhibition stand. Entitled 'A shared chrysalis', the exhibition featured habitats for each stage of development including plants, water and resting areas for these important garden pollinators.

Seeing the results of our hard work

Having grown a range of plants including borage and scabious from seed, and

A greenhouse with a difference!

Three ton bags of single-use plastic which might have ended up in landfill sites have found a new lease of life. Thanks to some hard work and imagination, they've been transformed into an unusual 'pop bottle greenhouse' at Ashfield Gardens!

We asked people from our community and in the wider Dudley Borough to collect empty 2 litre pop bottles for us, and we were amazed by people's generosity and support!' says Jenny.

The next step was to host a greenhouse-building workshop as part of Growing Up Green week. Over 30 people came along to Ashfield Gardens on a beautiful sunny day, and set to work constructing the side and back panels.

'We stacked pop bottles on to bamboo canes and then gave them to our volunteer Keith, who attached them to a disused frame that we already had,' continues Jenny. 'We were blessed with glorious sunshine, we had a lovely bring and share lunch, and everyone worked really hard all day.'

From unwanted waste to a new resource

'I am looking forward to seeing the greenhouse being used now, and to see things growing in there,' says Jenny. 'I hope we inspire others to do something similar with their recycled waste.'



Hard work pays off. From a waste product to a space to grow fresh food!

Grange Village Pottery Studio provides a warm welcome

The Pottery Studio at Grange Village has been open to visitors as part of this year's Far Open Art Trail in the Forest of Dean and Wye Valley.

Over nine days in July our Pottery Studio and Crow's Nest Café welcomed a steady flow of arts and crafts lovers who were touring the 73 local studios and galleries making up this year's Art Trail.

It was business as usual for the Pottery Studio's regular team, so visitors could see the different stages of the pottery process. Our range of handmade pottery was on sale, along with a selection of items from the wood and crafts studio at nearby Oaklands Park. Most visitors went away having made a purchase!

George, James and Richard who regularly attend the Pottery Studio are always happy to chat about what they're working on. 'I look forward to coming to pottery,' says James. 'I've learned to make cappuccino mugs on my own.'

Welcoming visitors on the Art Trail is a great way for people to learn more about what we do. At least one new person will be joining our day opportunities after they found out about the workshop following the Art Trail. George would definitely recommend joining the pottery workshops. He says: 'I like pottery because it's fun!'



'I enjoy making good and useful things on the potting wheel,' says Richard



Festover fun despite the rain

Quick thinking saved the day at this year's Delrow Festover. Our annual summer festival had been blessed with sunshine since our first gathering in 2019, but this year was the first time we've had to worry about the weather.

The Festover first came about after community members discussed how many of them had never been camping or to a music festival - and decided that they should create their own accessible festival experience.

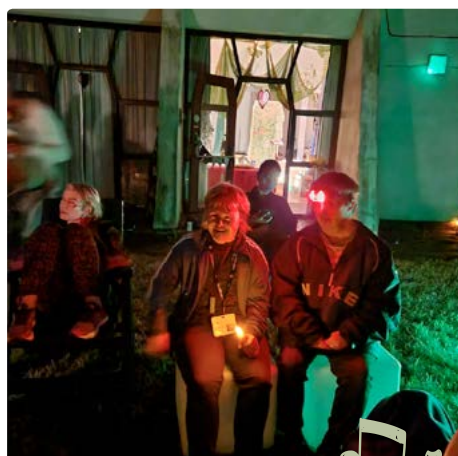
'This year we had rain and strong winds, so with the help of our stage company we made the quick decision to turn Karl König Hall into a massive tent with saris and other materials,' says Kat, our Day Opportunities Manager at Delrow Community'. The stage company gave us lights, beanbags and Day-Glo stools, as well as a giant light-up D and F to set the scene!

With the hall transformed, the live music

went ahead despite the 'Great British Summertime' outside. 'Luckily the rain stopped in time to get the campfire lit and the marshmallows toasted,' continues Kat.

The last stragglers wandered back to their tents after 2am and the early risers were up just a few hours later for bacon and egg butties before the rain swept in again!

Thanks to everyone who made this year's Festover possible - it was another truly magical event, with lots of laughter, music and friendship!



It takes more than rain to put a dampener on the fun and spirit in Delrow!

Botton Village is Blooming Beautiful!

Summer is a time to enjoy the beautiful farms and gardens across all our communities, in all weathers! Like our friends in Stourbridge, the team at Botton Village have been busy planting, weeding and digging. Our annual Botton in Bloom competition celebrates some of their amazing achievements. Judges Robin and Chris had the difficult task of choosing a winner from over 25 entries, from houses and workshops around the community.

More than just flowers

Robin and Chris praised all aspects of our outdoor spaces. From tomatoes

ripening in the greenhouses and rows of potatoes in our allotments, to well-kept lawns, bird feeder's and ponds for wildlife - the whole community has played a part in keeping Botton not just blooming, but beautiful.

Winners with a wildlife theme

Choosing a champion was no easy task, but the in the end Robin and Chris decided that the worthy winners should be the team at the Creative Studio. In the last year they've worked hard to transform an area of hard standing into a beautiful wildlife area which has so far attracted birds, voles, bees and lots of insects.

Announcing the winners, Chris said: 'Wow! A year ago this was just a pile of soil - but now we have planters, ant houses, bird feeders and wild flowers! It just looks amazing.'

'I'm really proud the Creative Studio won, as I'm here all the time,' says Rosalyn, who helped create the wildlife area. 'Great to see that all our hard work paid off!'



Some of the top entries and their beautiful outdoor spaces -including worthy winners the Creative Studio team. (Pictured bottom left.)

Creative Corner: introducing Owen

Talented writer Owen who lives at Croft Community has always enjoyed expressing himself through writing. We love the message behind his simple but powerful poem titled 'I'm as good as' and we're delighted to share it with you here.

'My writing is an escape, I like to put my feelings into words,' says Owen. 'Writing makes me feel happy. It has done since I first put pen to paper at school. I don't plan my writing, it just comes along, but I get a lot of inspiration from nature and the people around me.'

The confidence Owen gains from writing recently inspired him to present his poem at a meeting of senior Trust managers. 'I couldn't believe how many people there were,' he said afterwards. 'But I enjoyed it. I felt like I was part of something bigger than me.'

Thank you for sharing your poem with us Owen!



I'm as good as

I'm as good as:

- those in employment
- as good as recognised and independent.

I'm as good as:

- having responsibilities
- having a family commitment.

I'm as good as:

- those who serve the customer
- being on the till or being out front.

I'm as good as:

- being awarded
- having merit to what I can do.