

## Castle Vale Business Groups Latest Meeting

May 21st saw the latest breakfast meeting from Castle Vale Business Group. Facilitated by Merlin Venture, the groups topic of 'Marketing' turned out to be very successful.

The meeting was held at the head office of the Automotive Distribution Federation based near to Castle Vale and welcomed guest speakers from Boxer Creative, Cadbury Bournville and Merlin Venture.

"Marketing is an essential tool for any business to operate effectively. It doesn't need to be expensive or time consuming and a little effort can reap substantial rewards" Ian Gilbert, Marketing Manager, The Merlin Venture Ltd.

The next business group meeting will be held in July 2008. Venues and speakers are still to be confirmed. All meetings will start at 8.00am (breakfast will be provided at 7.30am) although you are welcome to stay and network afterwards.

For more information, call **John Lewis on 0121 747 2200.**



## Student Success With CVBG

Many great things have come from Castle Vale Business Group meetings including strong working relationships between local organisations and the promotion of small businesses. The latest success to come from the group facilitated by Merlin Venture is that of two young students from Castle Vale School.

Shuk Yi, a year 10 student from the Performing Arts College was nominated for an award after an excellent few weeks of work experience with The Merlin Venture Ltd. Staff felt as though Shuk did so well during her time with them that she should be nominated for the Education Business Links Student of the Year Award which covers the Birmingham and Solihull areas (with an approximate 50,000 students on work experience.) Shuk Yi wasn't the overall winner, but Education Business Link felt that she'd contributed and gained in her time spent with Merlin so much that she received a letter praising her.

Year 10 student Sloan Egan, on a work experience placement with the Bullring following a Castle Vale Business Group meeting, has already made an excellent impression. Ian Crumpton, Bullring Manager has told the school that they have continued to be impressed with Sloan as he goes into his second week with them.

"We would be only too happy to recommend Sloan for employment within the Bullring when he is ready to work full time." Ian Crumpton.

Gary Flatres, Work Experience Co-ordinator at Castle Vale School has said that this would not have happened if Ian and Sloan were not at the CVBG meeting that was held at the school last year and the excellent networking that took place between students and large organisations such as the Bullring.

## Merlin Says Goodbye and Good Luck

Merlin would like to offer our congratulations to two of our staff who are leaving us to take up opportunities elsewhere.



Lynette Turner who is currently our Recruitment Consultant and has overseen the development of Merlin Recruitment during the last two years is leaving to work in the permanent division at Blue Arrow in Birmingham, one of the UK's largest recruitment agencies.



At the same time Laura Needham who has been with us on a part time basis since December 2007 and has developed the Erdington Community Interest Group with great success will be leaving us. Laura was working with Merlin on a temporary basis, and will join Ground Work UK as Programmes Officer.

Both have worked extremely hard during their time at Merlin and we would like to wish them both all the best in their new roles.

If you have any queries or issues regarding this newsletter, please don't hesitate to contact Gemma Donnelly on 0121 776 8880.

Terms and conditions apply to all offers.

## Time To Celebrate At Tiggys!

It was celebrations all around on the 18th and 19th June when over 20 toddlers and pre-schoolers at each nursery were recognised for their successes throughout 2007 and 2008.

For the second year running, Achievement Day at Tiggy Winkles saw happy children receive personalised awards for their achievements with proud parents glowing with pride at how well their child has been doing at nursery.

Children who are leaving for Primary School in September were also presented with albums full of their work and photos throughout their time at the nursery. A nice keepsake to look back on in years to come.



"Here at Tiggy Winkles, we enjoy getting the parents involved and encouraging them to come into the nursery to see how well their child is doing. We make nursery time a special time for children and like to show them how proud we are of them by creating memorable events such as the Achievement Day." Emma Ridley, Tiggy Winkles Chivenor Nursery Manager.



Also this month, Tiggy Winkles Pegasus celebrated their 15th birthday! The nursery opened in 1993 and has since expanded so much that Tiggy Winkles Chivenor opened, providing a second excellent childcare service in Castle Vale.

For more information on Tiggy Winkles, please call Gemma on 0121 776 8880.

## Contact Information

If you would like any more information about Merlin Venture and any of the services we have to offer please contact us via:

Email:  
jennie@merlinventure.co.uk  
Tel:  
0121 776 8880  
Fax:  
0121 776 6141  
Website:  
www.merlinventure.co.uk



# MERLIN NEWS

## The Merlin Venture Ltd. Newsletter

August  
2008  
Issue 18

The Merlin Venture hope you enjoy our newsletter, bringing you all of the latest news and information on Merlin Venture and our businesses.

## Successful Endings and New Beginnings For The JETS Team

Merlin Venture held a celebratory lunch on the 26th June at Castle Vale Campus for staff who had been involved in the co-financing projects.

The celebration of the success of the Merlin JETS (Jobs, Employment and Training Support) co-financing projects comes as the projects are coming to an end. The day was very beneficial with all team members

reflecting on how together they have made an enormous difference to so many people's lives. Birmingham City Council Contract Manager Paul Tse and Councillor Lynda Clinton, representing the major funders, were welcome guests at the event.

"On behalf of Councillor Mike Sharpe and I, we would like to congratulate all staff that have been involved with the JETS programme, you have achieved all that was asked and more! The programme was always time restricted and so along with our congratulations is an element of sadness that the programme is now at an end. We both thank everyone involved in the success on behalf of the people and businesses you have supported during the scheme." Councillor Lynda Clinton.

The team is now concentrating on a number of smaller contracts all aimed at helping local people access jobs and training.

"It has been a fantastic year for Merlin JETS—each month we exceeded our targets and the quality of our work was recognised by achieving the Matrix accreditation at the end of 2007. The team have helped hundreds of local people, driving worklessness levels down." Robert Brown, Chief Executive.

There will be a bigger celebration later this year to coincide with Merlin's 10th anniversary. Beneficiaries, employers, local councillors and funders will be invited to this event to celebrate Merlin Ventures many successes. Details have yet to be confirmed.

For more information call Gemma on 0121 776 8880.



## Merlin Stars

Congratulations to Laura Needham who is this month's star employee. Nominated by both Chief Executive Robert Brown and colleague Ian Gilbert, Laura was nominated for her hard work with community engagement.



"She has successfully created a new community interest group which has become a regular and well attended event." Ian Gilbert, Marketing Manager.

"The group Laura has created is providing a vital link between Merlin and our Partners and members of the wider Erdington community." Robert Brown, Chief Executive.

Well done to this month's Star Award Team, Jai Jarvis and Robin Jones from Merlin Training.



"They have taken on the task of setting up the new training centre and have had to overcome some difficult barriers and have initiated some excellent new ideas which will help trainees using our centre. They have worked exceptionally hard and I feel very proud of them both." Lynette Douglas, Client Manager.

See inside for

# Community News

If you would like to enquire about a FREE article in the next edition of Community News, please call Gemma Donnelly on 0121 776 8880.





# Community News

The latest news about your local area



## Community Advisory Group

Established since 2002, CAG gives residents and local organisations a chance to meet and discuss issues they may have, as well as discussing issues of community concern.

### Community and Neighbourhood Partnership Issues

Health Improvement Forum: The first meeting under new format (Police Tasking approach) worked very well but they are still keen to get more resident involvement.

### Events and Trips

Wow, Bob Brueton has been busy! Organising events such as the Health and Environment Day and the Party In The Park, as well as:

**29th July**  
Trip to Blackpool (£8.00)

**7th August**  
Trip to Weston-Super-Mare (£8.00)

**21st August**  
Trip to Wickstead Park (£5.00)

**24th August**  
Family Fun Day and Giant Car Boot Sale

**Anyone interested should contact Bob Brueton.**

### New Library Courses

In Stitches! Fun and Fabrics started on Friday June 20th from 10am to 12pm.

Easy Card Creations started on Saturday June 28th from 2pm to 4pm.

**Enquire at the Library on 0121 464 7335.**

### The Lord Mayors Show

Despite terrible weather, the Lord Mayors Show went swimmingly with fantastic entertainment including performers from Castle Vale!

### Community Awards Evening

The Astral are arranging another community awards evening for the later part of 2008. If you would like to suggest any categories for the awards you should contact Bob Brueton.

### Make A Difference To Your Community, Join The CAG!

Join Merlin's Community Advisory Group and you can help make a difference to your community. You can help develop local opportunities and speak to people who can make a difference. Call Jennie today on:

**0121 776 8880**



### CCTV

Sergeant Sarah Tambling explained to the CAG that the figures for May 2008 were very positive with a 16% drop in anti social behaviour.

Agreeing with Joan Lawrie, these low figures were achieved with the help of Castle Vales CCTV system.

As reported by Merlin's CCTV Team, Castle Vale Retail Park was responsible for 20% of the incidents recorded throughout the month.

The Merlin Security team should also be congratulated again for their excellent work in helping catch two bag snatchers on the estate.

CCTV footage will be used in evidence and the operators did well in guiding the Police to the culprits.

Sergeant Sarah Tambling echoed the voice of the Merlin Security Manager by agreeing that the CCTV always carry out excellent work and were vital in apprehending the bag snatchers.

### Police Update

PC Colin Evans has taken over from PC Dave Roberts since his retirement.

## Community Mike and Laura

Bringing local residents the latest news with changes affecting you from groups such as Erdington's Over 50's Forum, Community Interest Group, Tyburn Ward Committees and Caste Vale Neighbourhood Partnership.

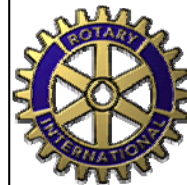
### Local News!

#### Castle Vale Winners At Swimming Gala

Stechford Swimming Baths held a Junior School Swimming Gala on Saturday 7th June. The overall winner was Chivenor School with The Abbey coming second and Birches Green School in third place.

#### Merlin Go Out Into The Community

Merlin Venture were at the Youth Offenders Centre in Pipe Hayes on the 11th June where they met several young people who were interested in finding employment and training opportunities. If you too are interested in accessing employment or training, call 0121 747 2200.



### The Rotary Club

Merlin Ventures' Mike Overton is to be the Club President of the Rotary Club of Erdington as of the 3rd July 08, well done Mike! The Rotary held yet another successful fundraising weekend at a Youth Football Tournament where over £2,000 was raised!

### Up and Coming Events

Ickneild Choir will be performing in aid of the John Taylor Hospice at St Marys' Church, Pipe Hayes on Saturday 19th July. There will be a mix of sings old and new, humorous and monologues. **Tickets are only £4 each!**



This event is supported by Community Arts (Birmingham City Council).

### The Community Interest Group

The Community Interest Group had a planning and development meeting that brought together the community and stakeholders from the four wards in the Erdington Constituency (Kingstanding, Tyburn, Erdington and Stockland Green) which stimulated a very open and honest debate amongst the core members of the sustainability of the group and the way forward.

The meeting gathered comments, suggestions and ideas from all stakeholders on the Community Interest Group's aims. The key point was to continue the worklessness theme through the meetings and to develop a working group to take forward the structure of a community interest company.

**The next meeting will be at Castle Vale Community Campus on the 15th July from 4pm until 6pm.**

For more information, call either John Lewis or Nicol Wagstaff on 0121 747 2200 who will be taking over responsibility for the group from Laura Needham who has found alternative work after fulfilling her temporary contract at Merlin. Good Luck Laura and thank you for all your hard work!

### Contact Details.

Contact Community Mike or Laura today on:

Office: 0121 776 8880

Mike: 07930 735556

Laura: 07795 448460

## Community Business

Join Castle Vale Business Group today with FREE membership and a chance to network with other local businesses. Call John on 0121 747 2200.

### In Stitches

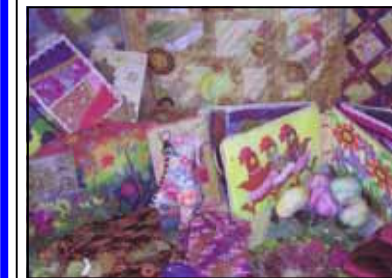
Castle Vale resident Sheila Arthurs started running a small stitching course within Castle Vale Library in June.

The course, which will run for five weeks at £2.00 per session is for people who love to 'make things out of nothing'.

Making postcards, bags, bobbles and more out of fabrics, buttons and beads, Sheila's creations are amazing and she is interested in meeting people who share her enthusiasm.

**Places are limited.**

**If you are interested call Sheila on 0121 747 0160 or pop into the library.**



### Filling A Niche In The Market...

Castle Vale Business Group welcome Sapphire as one of their latest members. Sapphire Meeting and Training facilities are a unique facility based on 200 acre parkland.

This newly established company is set to carve out a niche in the meetings and training facilities sector from its newly opened conference suite set in the magnificent parkland of Coleshill Manor Office Campus.

Founder Directors Jas Purewal and Deborah Sowry, two entrepreneurial executives are bringing a combination of meeting and conference facilities to a central point in the region.

**"Our aim is to provide a first class venue combined with essential business drivers at affordable prices." Jas Purewal.**

For more information contact Jas or Deborah at Sapphire Business on:



01675 464322

enquiries@sapphirebusiness.co.uk

www.sapphirebusiness.co.uk

If you are a local business and would like to advertise your business here for FREE, call Gemma today on 0121 776 8880.

For help with starting up your own business or for help with your Small to Medium Enterprise, call John on 0121 747 2200.