

Tiggy Winkles Full of Fun and Festive Parties!

Wow...what a busy couple of months children at Tiggy Winkles have had! As well as their learning and development, they have just about managed to squeeze a few fun filled festive parties into their busy schedules!



It was fun all around on October 31st at both Tiggy Winkles Chivenor and Pegasus! With spooky spider drawings and gruesome ghost paintings it was a horrifically great afternoon! The children tucked into the typical Halloween menu of blood filled legs (jam swiss rolls) and children's fingers (mini sausages)! Children enjoyed the afternoon with plenty of scary stories, apple bobbing and games such as pass the parcel and musical chairs!

Children at Pegasus had a wonderful afternoon on the 5th of November with their 'Stay Safe and Play Safe' themed afternoon. With health and safety regulations stopping the nursery putting on a real firework display, Tiggy's didn't want their children to miss out so transformed a room into a fire work filled bonanza! Children enjoyed a display of their own personal fireworks which they made out of toilet rolls and coloured paper, got to see other children's wishes on the wish star wall and enjoyed the sounds and food of a REAL bonfire night. Children even got to enjoy a special visit from Erdington's very own Blue Watch Fire fighters! With a talk on health and safety and even a look inside the big red engine...it was fun!

Tiggy Winkles are already preparing for the Christmas trips and parties including a special visit from Santa!



For more information on Tiggy Winkles Day Care Nurseries call Gemma on 0121 776 8880.

Castle Vale Business Group

Following September's successful 15 year anniversary meeting, by the time you read this newsletter the Castle Vale Business Group will have held its latest breakfast meeting on Wednesday 21st November. The education themed meeting, being held at Castle Vale School with speakers from the Bullring, Cadbury-Schweppes and Education Business Link, is the latest in an exciting series of meetings for local businesses. So, if you are a local business, join CVBG now. Membership is currently free of charge and open to any local businesses. Contact John Lewis on **0121 747 2200** for more information on CVBG and future meetings. Future Meetings (venues are to be confirmed):
Jan 23rd 08 **Health and Safety**
Mar 19th 08 **Marketing**



Warm your skin up for winter with Castle Vale Business Group's latest member Spray Tans at Home by Body Candy.

As the name suggests, mobile spray tan therapist Beth Lewis is mobile and travels to your home to provide you with a luxurious spray tan. With the latest pop up tanning cubicle, your house will stay tan free whilst you glow!

Prices are £15 for half body and only £23 for a full body! Brilliant discounts are available for groups including the following amazing offer:

Get 4 or more friends together for a spray tan and receive yours absolutely FREE!

Call Beth on **0121 779 3779** or **07976563436** for more information.

Beth is currently working with John Lewis for business support. If you would like more info, call John today on **0121 747 2200**.

Fare's Fair

Despite what you may have read, Valley Travel is still only £1 to travel around Castle Vale and £2 for a daysaver!

Rumours are that the Valley Travel 696 have recently doubled their fare when in actual fact, we have just reverted to the original fare following the special offer that ran through August!

The Community Bus put on a special half price daysaver for £1 whereby users could use the bus as many times as they wish in a day for just £1.

We would like to thank all of our passengers for their continued support. Call the transport team on **0121 776 8880** for more information on operating times.



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**

www: www.merlinventure.co.uk

JOB OF THE MONTH

An experienced Book Keeper/Administrator is required to provide accounts and administration support to an established security and surveillance company. The company is based in Birmingham City Centre but is relocating to Longbridge in the New Year. You will be responsible for: dealing with all purchase and sales ledger duties, processing bank reconciliations, chasing outstanding invoices, collating monthly expenses, answering incoming calls, assisting with travel arrangements for management, organising meetings (researching venues and planning events). You will need to have previous purchase and sales ledger and admin experience, a good understanding of Sage Line Accounts, payroll and Sage Line 50 and be accustomed to working to deadlines. Working a 37.5 hour week Monday to Friday. £18,000. Free car parking.
Lynette: 0121 747 2200

If you have any issues regarding this newsletter, please call Gemma Donnelly on 0121 776 8880.



MERLIN NEWS

The Merlin Venture Newsletter



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



Electrical tutor Jay Jarvis and some of the trainees

Success as Training Centre Opens!

Merlin Training is now open in Sutton Coldfield, providing practical trade training for 16-24 yr olds. Just a short walk from the town centre and running courses covering Electrics, Painting & Decorating, and Plumbing with Merlin's unique courses covering 2 week tasters in each trade.

All students are also put through their CSCS Training as well as First Aid.

There is also a team of employment and training advisers on site to help students find an apprenticeship, further training or work at the end of the course.

This is a fantastic opportunity for many young adults to take their first steps towards learning a viable trade in a practical and exciting environment.

These courses are all free of charge with funding being provided by the Birmingham City Council and the European Social fund through the Co-financing scheme.

Contact Lynette Douglas on **07957 911 196** for more information or to register your interest in the course.

Special Offer



HALF PRICE CHILDCARE FEES FOR A LIMITED TIME ONLY!

- * Is your child aged 3 years or over?
- * Do you need them to get used to a school environment quickly?

For a limited period only, you can start your children at Tiggy Winkles Day Care Nurseries for 50% less than the normal fees. Any child aged 3 or over who starts between the 1st November and the 31st December 2007 will be eligible for 3 months worth of nursery fees at 1/2 price!

Save up to £700!

Places are limited for this offer so if you want outstanding childcare at a low cost, call Gemma today on

0121 776 8880

Merlin Stars



Christopher Preston

Christopher Preston is this month's Star Employee.

Nominated by Employment and Training Advisor Jackie Elston, Christopher is described by her as 'the most hardworking person' she has ever met and has 'never met anybody like him.'

He is very flexible with his working hours and is always happy.'

Chris, who has just turned 18 was working as a Trainee Chef at a large hotel based in Birmingham through Merlin's Intermediate Labour Market programme but has learnt new skills and progressed to an Assistant Chef position at a BUPA care home based in Edgbaston. Good luck Chris!

Congratulations to Buster Werkenbak staff Adrian Dovey and Steve Clarke who have won the Team Award.



Steve Clarke and Adrian Dovey

Their combined efforts in driving the different routes at unsociable hours in order to look after a new client opening up in Birch Coppice has won them this month's award. "All of the Buster team have worked extremely well but I feel as though both Adrian and Steve have gone above and beyond their normal duties and they both deserve the team award." Kevin Huggins—Transport Manager.

If you would like to nominate any members of the Merlin workforce who have provided you with excellent service, call Ian Gilbert on: **0121 776 8880** or email ian@merlinventure.co.uk

See inside for the latest news from the **Community Advisory Group**





Community Advisory Group

Bringing Castle Vale residents the latest news



The Community Advisory Group (CAG) section of Merlin's newsletter will be published in a special edition every 3 months giving you all of the latest updates from CAG meetings. The first CAG meeting was held back in October 2002 and has since being held regularly every month. It gives residents and local organisations such as Castle Vale Police and staff from the Astral Centre a chance to meet and discuss issues they may have, as well as discussing issues of community concern.



Hot Topic!

Since it was built, there has been plenty of controversy regarding Castle Vale High Street.

Below are some of the latest issues being mentioned in CAG.

Castle Vale resident and CAG attendee Eric Shaw asked about the reinstatement of Wagtail Walk. Eric explained that residents of Watton Green on the estate have been fighting for access to Castle Vale High Street for a while now. Eric asked John Lewis, Business Development Manager for Merlin Venture to bring the issue up at the next meeting for the High Street Forum. This was agreed.

Bob Brueton, Manager of the Astral Centre asked about the parking in the High Street. He explained that due to the shortage of spaces, some of the cars park half on and half off the road.

Inspector Tom Hadley explained that under the current terms of parking and the Road Traffic Act, it is authorised to do so as long as it doesn't cause a barrier for road users or pedestrians.

Sergeant Mick Wilkinson reported on the parking situation in Locking Croft. He explained that penalties will be issued if it is found people are parking illegally here.

Pound Stretcher Success

During August, Merlin Venture offered Castle Vale residents the chance to use the Valley Travel 696 more than normal at a lower price.

The special £1 day saver fare has come to an end, and although income fell during the offer period, the increased use made of the bus by our regular passengers and the associated goodwill have made the offer worth while.



The Community Bus

Thank you!

The Merlin Venture Ltd would like to say a huge thank you to Castle Vale residents.

Due to the brilliant support that the Valley Travel Community Bus has received from residents and users of the bus, Merlin have been awarded the full amount of funding that was bid for from the Endowment Trust Fund.

So thanks to everyone who supports the 696 Community Bus.

Activities, Courses and Events Update

Bob Brueton, Manager of The Astral Centre informed and updated the CAG group on activities, courses and events. Below are some of the mentioned.

Trace Your Ancestors

This course has started at Castle Vale Library, Spitfire House. Bob thanked Mandy Neary and all of the library staff for their help.

Youngsters from Castle Vale School went along to the library to help the older people look up ancestors on the computer.

Summer Activities

The Summer Activities Programme has been a huge success with around 2000 people enjoying activities put on such as day trips.



Working Together in the Community

A meeting was held between Merlin Enterprise and Bob Jones, Training Manager at Jaguar Cars exploring how they can work together in the future.

Jaguar have offered to take students from Merlin Venture's new training programmes for a one day course involving a training workshop, helping programming robots, a tour and a viewing of the latest models.

Outcomes for Outreach



The Tyburn Jet

As a result of some vigorous outreach activity, including taking the Jobs Bus to the GCSE results day at Stockland Green School, Merlin Recruitment and Enterprise have registered several more youngsters onto the job and training programme. The youngsters registered are very keen and seem to be extremely motivated by the outreach, wanting to gain work experience and relevant qualifications.

Success for Farmers Market

Councillor Lynda Clinton reported that the farmers market was a great success. Praise was given to Sallyann Rose for all of her hard work in organising the event. Bob Brueton agreed and said that the next one will be even better with things such as a bus service and better publicity being looked into.



Housing Developments

Steve Clayton of Castle Vale Neighbourhood Management Partnership explained that Mercian Housing will be building flats on the piece of land opposite Castle Vale Police Station. Access to the site has been a problem hence the development has not started yet.

The Fort Centre Update

Bob Brueton informed the CAG group on the demolition of the Fort Centre on Castle Vale. Exercise equipment that was used by the fitness club was the last item to be removed before demolition could take place.

Congratulations



Congratulations to Valescapes who have successfully renewed their contract with

Waterloo Housing and are tendering for a number of new sites. Keep up the good work lads!



CCTV Update

The total number of incidents during August dropped from 295 in July to only 237. However, mini bike incidents were up from 12 in August to 22 in September.

Anti social incidents were also lower in August with only 63 compared to a high 113 in July.

This comprises:

- 12 mini bike incidents
- 4 ball/stone throwing incidents
- 5 alcohol related incidents
- 9 graffiti issues
- 33 nuisance incidents

All figures match the Police statistics suggesting the combined initiatives of all community safety partners are having a positive impact.

Having bushes cut from around residents' gardens has helped CCTV gain extra footage of areas around Insworth Drive such as Sumburgh Croft.

Inspector Tom Hadley explained that the CCTV system operating in Castle Vale is the envy of everyone in the West Midlands with statistics mirroring the police's. With a significant drop in criminal damage, it is going extremely well. WPC Ruth Kelly who regularly visits the control room states that the information she gains is 'invaluable'.

Stornoway Road Update

Councillor Lynda Clinton stated that a notification to demolish the Stornoway Road garages and increase garden sizes has been received. The garages have been condemned under the building regulations. Approximately five residents have expressed that they would like new garages and CVCHA have agreed to build them.

Parish Council Update

Regarding the outcome of the resident consultation around the Parish Council election, the result was as follows:

- * 17% of Castle Vale residents voted
- * 89% said no to the Parish Council
- * 11% said yes to the Parish Council

Sion Simon, MP will be writing to the Minister around the strong feeling on the estate. Councillor Lynda Clinton reported that she would speak to Hazel Blears.

Make A Difference To Your Community, Join CAG!

- * Want to make a difference to your community?
- * Help develop local opportunities?
- * Ensure that jobs and training receives the attention it needs?

Join Merlin's Community Advisory Group and / or the NEW Steering Group for our exciting employment and training projects.

To find out more simply call Jennie on:

0121 776 8880

