

: Additional Training For Job Seekers

Merlin JETS are now offering even more training for people looking to get back into work with sessions covering Interview Techniques, Cold Calling and CV preparation for clients on the Flexible New Deal and Working Neighbourhoods Fund programmes. This training runs alongside existing courses in Health and safety, CSCS card training and Full Fork Lift Truck Driving Licenses.

“Being able to train people in-house definitely makes the service we give to our clients a lot stronger. Taking people through practical and theory based skills has already helped a number of clients into work.” Lynette Gauntlett



If you are looking for work, contact the Jobs, Employment and Training Support team on 0121 384 5614.

: Heartlands Training

Merlin Training welcomed its first group of students from Heartlands Academy, with twelve year 9 students starting our mixed trades course spread across Mechanics, Electrics and Plumbing. The students currently join us every Friday and spend their time learning practical skills that offer a great stepping stone towards further qualifications.

This is the first time we have provided a school with customised training for their students and although it is currently just a pilot we are confident that it will prove to be extremely popular.

“The students have really enjoyed coming to Merlin, learning from real world situations as well as having the opportunity of working together outside of a school environment, which helps prepare them for the world of work.” Simon Blackham, Key Stage 3 Phase Leader, Heartlands Academy

: CCTV Handover

Merlin Security is preparing to move to become part of the Castle Vale Community Housing Association at the end of March. After being developed and managed by Merlin since 2002 and still providing an invaluable service to Castle Vale, we are delighted to be able to hand the service over to CVCHA who will continue to run it in the same professional way that Merlin has.

The transfer is necessary due to the cuts in funding from the Endowment Trust Fund and with only CVCHA willing to provide the necessary financial support they are the natural successor to make sure that Castle Vale residents can continue to live in the safe environment that they have become used to.

To Contact the control room you will still only need to call 0121 776 8880



: More Jobs for the Future

Merlin, in conjunction with Be Birmingham, was part of the final push for the Future Jobs Fund project that has been running all year. Taking place in the Council House, potential employees browsed the hundreds of jobs available at over thirty employment companies.

The day was a great success with Merlin rising above the crowd with a great range of vacancies and drawing in the biggest crowds. With this being the final phase of the Future Jobs Fund, the project ends in March and will be replaced by a new all encompassing work programme from the coalition government.



Rounding off our very successful year delivering the Future Jobs Fund, we have been able to provide 62 people with six month paid work placements which have been so successful that many of them have been kept on permanently.

Due to our success we have been asked by Be Birmingham to provide an additional five six month work placements, so with the programme finishing at the end of March, we now have a number of new vacancies looking to be filled.

To find out more about any of our vacancies and how we can help you into work please call us on:

0121 384 5614



merlin:news

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

: Star Awards



: Star Employee



Joe McCartan is our first Star Employee of 2011. Joe is Merlin's Maintenance Man and is a deserving winner with a record 4 nominations this month from Ann Barnett, Paul Clarke and the JETS and Job Coach teams!

Joe has been described by everyone who nominated him as a friendly person with no job being too much trouble for him.

“Joe is always willing, hard working and reliable. He is an absolute star and doesn't mind getting involved in things above and beyond his job role.” Ann Barnett.

: Star Team



This month's Star Team award goes to our Castle Vale Business Group team, John Lewis and Ann Barnett, who is currently on a placement at Merlin through the ILM project.

With another high number of nominations they constantly work hard, across a wide range of projects but especially with the Castle Vale Business Group.

“John does an excellent job organising the Business Group, he always brings in new ways of encouraging new members to join with exciting events at great local venues.” Robert Brown.

“Ann is currently working as an Admin Assistant for John and myself and has shown extreme enthusiasm in all that she is asked to do. She is willing to help everybody and always shows initiative. Ann is an excellent secretary and is an asset to any company that employs her.” Jackie Elston.

If you would like to nominate somebody, please call 0121 384 5614 or email gemma@merlinventure.co.uk

: New Valley Travel Bus

Castle Vale residents can look forward to an improvement in the 696, with the addition of a new vehicle hitting the estate in February.

With funding provided by the Endowment Trust Fund, Valley Travel have been able to purchase a second low floor vehicle meaning that the 696 will always be easy to get on and off.

The new bus is painted in an eye-catching yellow colour making it just as noticeable as its purple cousin.



Have Your Say

Following numerous requests from residents, we will be trialling a special service to the Fort Shopping Park in February on either a Saturday or Sunday.

This will be free of charge during the trial and what day it runs on is up to you, let us know whether you would like to use a Saturday or Sunday service to the Fort Shopping Park by calling us on **0121 384 5614** or emailing info@merlinventure.co.uk with your preference.

With the Valley Travel coming into its 11th year of carrying passengers around Castle Vale this is a great time to start using the service more as it does rely on passenger numbers to keep on the road.

Support Your Local Bus!

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: Case Study



Company: Merlin Training
JETS Advisor: Rita O'Grady
Placements: Jessica Cross

Jessica Cross 'Merlin Training'

Jessica Cross, aged 19 from Sutton Coldfield, had previously worked in sales before leaving for a change in career. Whilst unemployed, Jess heard about a Training Assistant vacancy at Merlin Training through her local Jobcentre.

Jess applied for the vacancy working alongside 14-16 year olds at Merlin Training and was successful, starting a 6 month placement on the Future Jobs Fund programme, which enables unemployed people to access paid placements.

"I am really enjoying the opportunity I have been given here at Merlin Training. I enjoy working with the students and it's a great experience."
Jessica Cross

Jess is now 4 months into her placement at Merlin Training and is doing well supporting the Education Manager with admin duties, assisting the Tutors and working alongside the Students in the work bays, helping them on a 1-1 basis.

: Victory For Merlin JETS Again!

The Merlin JETS football team are on a continuing winning streak with yet another victory for the team made of up students from Merlin Training. Following our initial wins in 2010 we have continued our winning streak with another couple of great matches.

Playing against local team Platinum United at Powerleague on the 12th January, our boys won by an amazing 12 goals to 3, followed by a 12 - 1 win against Future First on the 19th January.

Congratulations to goal scorers; Jack Evans scoring 6, Jordan O'Loughlin 5, Andrew Johnson 4, Joe Robinson 2, Adam Powell 2, and Jordan Cogger 2, Kieron Middleton 2 and Harry Mahon 1.

Well Done Lads, Keep It Up



: When Santa Came To Tiggy's

On the 15th December, Tiggy Winkles children had a special visitor come to the nurseries...Santa!

With his big red coat and shiny boots, Santa (who looks remarkably like our Marketing Manager Ian Gilbert) came bearing gifts for all!

The children all sat and had a chat with Santa about what they wanted for Christmas.

Tiggy Winkles have had a busy few months with Santa coming to visit and the renovation of one of the nurseries!



: Renovation Of Tiggy Winkles Pegasus

Pegasus Tiggy Winkles has undergone a face lift during the festive season, with paint kindly donated by Johnsons Paints. A team of decorators from Merlin Training redecorated the nursery over the Christmas break, creating a fresh new look for the New Year. Operating from Pegasus school for more than 15 years, Tiggy Winkles was more than ready for the makeover, which included the fitting of a new kitchen and upgrading the staff and visitor areas.

"It is so nice to see the nursery now it has been repainted; it's marvelous and the children love the bright new colours in their rooms!"
Jayne Swann - Deputy Nursery Manager, Pegasus.



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Tiggy Winkles

: Castle Vale Business Group Update

2010 was a busy year for the Castle Vale Business Group (CVBG) with breakfast meetings and networking sessions across the region. Venues ranged from Castle Vale Performing Arts College to the McLaren Building, meeting topics included E-Networking and Best Practice For Your Building with influential speakers such as Jonathan Baker, Head of the BBC College of Journalism.

Keep an eye out in the next newsletter for 2011 breakfast group dates!

Look out for the next issue of the Merlin News for a full breakdown of the latest CVBG meeting on Thursday 27th January at the Ramada Hotel, Sutton Coldfield, 'Getting Your Business Fitter For The New Year' with speaker Mike Pagan from "Breaking Frontiers" which provides businesses and managers with the training to ensure they make their time as productive as profitable with a new take on time management.

The Next CVBG meetings are to be held on : 31st March, 12th May, 14th July, 29th September, 17th November with speakers and venues to be confirmed.