

Merlin Training Update

With the second group of students completing the courses at Merlin Training, Sutton Coldfield, we thought we would bring you the latest updates.

"I have really enjoyed the course, I've met lots of new people who enjoy the same thing as I do!" Rhommel Henry, Merlin Training student.

Merlin Training are now offering four week trade taster courses which are free for 16-25 year old Tyburn and Stockland Green residents.

The training centre in Sutton Coldfield offers short courses in:

- * **Electrics** — you'll learn how to change plugs, re-wire a fuse board, understand circuits and connect lighting circuits.
- * **Plumbing** — in plumbing you will learn basic domestic maintenance, how to repair and install taps and how to fit bathroom suites.
- * **Painting and Decorating**—you will learn how to prepare rooms including priming and gloss woodwork, tiling and grouting, as well as decorating using special effects.

As well as the short courses, you will also get an opportunity to undertake your first aid training where if successful will receive an 'Appointed Person' certificate which is a benefit to any employer and you will also receive full training to enable you to get your CSCS card which is essential for any worksite.

Throughout the course, there will be qualified Employment and Training Advisors on site to help you prepare you for what you want to do when you finish.

With new courses starting every month, there's no better time to enrol! Call or text **Lynette on 07957911196** for more information.



Thank you to all Merlin Venture staff for helping raise £39 by playing the 'Name The Cuddly Toy' competition for The Lennox Children's Cancer Fund. Congratulations to Gemma Donnelly who won the cuddly bear!

Welcome Merlin JETS

As previously mentioned in earlier newsletters, Merlin Recruitment and Enterprise have undergone a re-branding. Well, it's finally complete and their name has been changed to Merlin JETS. The staff and services offered are still exactly the same and Merlin JETS are still based at the Castle Vale College Monday to Friday from 9am-5pm.

- J** Looking for a **JOB**? Whether it's full time, part time or permanent work you're looking for, we can help you.
- E** Visit our **ENTERPRISE** team if you would like to find out about starting your own business.
- T** If you're looking for additional skills, our **TRAINING** team can take you through all the available opportunities.
- S** As with all of Merlin Ventures business, we are here to **SUPPORT** you every step of the way.

For more information, call our friendly team on **0121 747 2200** to book an appointment or visit:

www.myspace.com/merlinjets

Merlin Venture would like to say thank you to Avant Photography for giving us permission to use the photo taken of Lord Coe which appeared in last months edition of the newsletter. www.avantphotography.co.uk

JOB OF THE MONTH

A Telemarketer Supervisor is required to work for the market leader in fleet management. Based in Birmingham, you'll be responsible for supervising a team of 4 telemarketers, calling business contacts, identifying sales opportunities, direct mail campaigns and working to individual points targets etc.

You will need to have previous experience in telesales or telemarketing, supervising, and have excellent negotiation skills and the ability to work towards and achieve targets. Knowledge of using Goldmine software would be an advantage.

Working a 37 hour week Monday to Thursday 8.30am—4.45pm and Friday 8.30am—4.15pm with a basic salary of £15,000 (OTE £20k).

Call Lynette on 0121 747 2200 or email your CV to lynette@merlinventure.co.uk

CVBG 2008

January 23rd saw the first Castle Vale Business Group meeting of 2008. A different approach was taken for this first meeting of the year focussing on networking and planning for the rest of 2008. Members had an input into what they would like to be covered in future events.

For details on the next event, call John Lewis on 0121 747 2200. Membership is currently free.



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

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0121 776 6141

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www.merlinventure.co.uk



MERLIN NEWS

The Merlin Venture Ltd. Newsletter

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

Goodbye And Good Luck Catherine!



Catherine James, Manager of both Tiggy Winkles Chivenor and Pegasus and indeed founder of the excellent service before Merlin became involved, left us for pastures new at the end of February. Catherine has decided to fulfil her lifetime dream of returning to the South Coast.

Debbie Hawkins (Pegasus) and Emma Ridley (Chivenor), Catherine's deputies will now be running the two nurseries.

To enable them to take more responsibility on a gradual basis, Catherine has taken a back seat from when she gave her notice in back in December.

Catherine will be sadly missed by everybody but we wish her well in her exciting new life!

Merlin Stars



Congratulations to Andrew Jones who is this month's Star Employee. Andrew is described as 'very willing and committed to proving himself at his placement company.'



Andrew's confidence has grown over the last six months and hasn't gone unnoticed—his manager will be offering him a full time position at the end of his placement in January to develop him as a Manager himself. Well done Andrew!

Tiggy Winkles Get Smart!

Tiggy Winkles Update

Did you make your new years resolution? We did! Tiggy Winkles goal for 2008 was to increase the literacy of all their children and they've already taken a big step towards this resolution by launching the brand new **Smart Readers Book Club!**

The book club, exclusive to Tiggy's has been welcomed by parents encouraging their children to bring home different books each week to practice reading with them. Experts say that repetition is a stimulator of interest and important to the process whereby brain cells make connections. So when Tiggys are reading books to the children at nursery and parents then read them again at home, they can comfort themselves with the knowledge that they're supporting their child's development.



Tiggy Winkles currently have several special offers running including:

£100 worth of gift vouchers when your child starts at Tiggy Winkles!

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

* Terms and conditions apply



Congratulations to the Valescapes team who have won the Team Award.

Valescapes have been nominated for their excellent work throughout the Winter period. As well as completing their normal grounds maintenance work, Valescapes have also done several Commercial contacts including a big job at a local school.

"They've been extremely busy with grounds maintenance and landscaping contracts and they have worked well together as a team to get the work done." Robert Brown, Merlin Venture's Chief Executive.

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**.

Tiggy Winkles have entered in the bedtime stories competition with www.ichild.co.uk. If 'Prickles First Day At Nursery' story gets into the final you can help us to win £50 worth of prizes by downloading it from their website! Thanks for your help and support!

See inside for **Community Advisory Group**

Bringing you, Castle Vale residents the latest updates and information from CAG meetings.





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!

Questions are continually being asked regarding Merlins CCTV cameras that are being obscured by trees.

The Merlin Security Manager has explained that the Erdington Tree Officer has now cut back some of the trees in both Innsworth and Hawkinge Drive allowing the cameras to catch more clear footage.

There are currently some issues with funding but he also explained that the Tree Officer would be forwarding quotes for some of the other sites around the estate.

CVCHA, who liaise very closely with the control room have offered to contribute towards the cost of cutting back the trees at the swimming baths. Merlin will also be asking Birmingham City Council to contribute.

Community and Neighbourhood Partnership Issues

Farnborough Road

A meeting has been arranged to discuss the development of proposals to take things forward regarding the paddocks over on Farnborough Road.

Homeowners

Around 600 properties have been inspected so far to see if they are eligible for Warm Front Funding. There is also a thermal installation grant from N Power for people on benefits. The Neighbourhood Partnership are liaising with Birmingham City Council about payments for people who aren't entitled to any other funding.

Neighbourhood Renewal Fund

Councillor Lynda Clinton reported that herself and Councillor Mike Sharpe will be recommending that the under spend from the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund should be spent on the Swimming Baths and a CCTV camera on Castle Vale High Street.

Community Engagement Update

As reported by Mike Overton, December 2007.

The Erdington Town Centre Partnership made excellent progress in the organisation and management of the Christmas lights switch on. The light switch on took place on Saturday 1st December in Erdington and St Baranabas church was seen as the focus of attention of a much more traditional event.

The Tyburn JET, also known as the Jobs Bus was utilised by The Jericho Foundation at the Yew Tree in Yardley.

The day was extremely successful for the Foundation and they have requested to Merlin if they could make it a regular arrangement.

We are hopeful that the support we are providing to them will cement a very effective partnership between both Merlin and Jericho.



Congratulations!



Merlin JETS (previously Merlin Recruitment and Enterprise) had an excellent few months at the end of 2007.

Overall, Merlin JETS are 50% ahead of target across the four Tyburn Projects helping many local people find work!

Thanks All Around!



Roy Whelan, Community Bus Valley Travel 696 driver still remains on long term sickness, but is making an excellent recovery.

Everybody would like to say thank you to both Dave Butters and Terry Sexton who have been covering shifts for the route between them.



Sallyann Rose would like to thank the Ramada Hotel and Resort Birmingham for inviting Castle Vale Business Group and their members to a talk by Lord Sebastian Coe at the hotel on Penns Lane.

Sallyann also gave her thanks to Bob Brueton for putting up the signs for the Christmas Farmers Market and also thanked Councillors Mike Sharpe and Lynda Clinton for their help with the Swimming Baths which is very valuable to the residents of Castle Vale.

Farewell to the Fort

The Fort Centre on Castle Vale has now been demolished. After being set on fire back in November 07 and emptied ready for demolition in December 07, the well known centre has now gone. The centre has been used in the past for things such as fitness groups, falconry and play centres.



Courses At The Astral!

Bob Brueton reported that new courses designed especially for adults are starting in February at the Astral.

The new adult education courses will include basic IT training, using a digital camera, flower arranging, cake decorating etc.

There will also be a 'Trace Your Ancestors' course for beginners and a basic 'Home Money Management' course is being looked into.

There will be a low cost to support the service but it will be no more than £2 per session.

£500 Raised For Charity!

Joan Lawrie reported that the Santa's Grotto at The Sanctuary was extremely successful and raised £500 for charity! Thanks and congratulations to everybody who contributed.

Merlin Venture hopes that all CAG members that attended the Christmas Buffet over at Castle Vale College thoroughly enjoyed it.



Our Generous Mayor

Councillor Mike Sharpe made a donation of £18,722 to the John Taylor Hospice which he collected whilst he was Lord Mayor.

Travel Update!

Good news for Valley Travel...funding has been secured until 2009!

With funding secured until December 2009, thanks to the generosity of the Endowment Trust Fund and the support from the Castle Vale community, the bus can continue to operate around the estate and help people get around.

Unfortunately, the news wasn't so good for Buster Werkenbak.

The service through North Solihull and Hams Halls (Hams Hall 95 Special) has not grown sufficiently to make it viable therefore it will cease at the end of March 2008.



Tiggy Winkles Update

Child numbers continue to rise as more special offers were put on. Discounted places for parents looking for work and half price offers for pre-school aged children were just some of the offers Tiggy Winkles had.



The number of incidents during November showed a significant drop, in particular bonfire night was a lot quieter than 2006.

Incidents of anti-social behaviour also took a drop to 56 from 72 back in October. Graffiti incidents have also dropped from 6 in October to just one in November.

At January's meeting, it was reported by the CCTV Manager that the CATCH radio and CCTV are working extremely well and in conjunction with the police operations, the overall December figures are lower than in previous months. Incidents of anti social behaviour, mini motorbikes, nuisance, alcohol and graffiti were also quite low.

Make A Difference To Your Community, Join the Community Advisory Group!

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

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 Mike on:

0121 776 8880