

**ALDRIDGE & BEACON AREA PANEL**

**Area Manager's Report**

**1. Purpose of the Report**

- 1.1 This report seeks to inform Elected Members for the Aldridge & Beacon Area Partnership of some of the work carried out within the local area. The information in this report was correct at the time of writing, Wednesday, 25<sup>th</sup> March, 2015. All information in this report is for work carried out since 1<sup>st</sup> July, 2014.

**2. Recommendation**

The Area Panel is requested to note the contents of this report.

**3. Priorities**

- 3.1 Walsall Council strategic priorities are:

- Safer Walsall: Creating safe, sustainable and inclusive communities
- Children and Young People: Improving safeguarding, learning and life chances for children and young people
- Business and Jobs: Supporting businesses to thrive and supporting local people in to work
- Health and Well-Being: Improving health, including well-being and independence for older people

- 3.2 Aldridge & Beacon Area Partnership has a number of key priorities which have been identified through work with Ward Councillors, partner agencies, Walsall Intelligence Network and the local community:

- Reducing Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour
- Positive Activities for Young People
- Cleaner Streets & Greener Spaces
- Support and Positive Activities for the Over 50s
- Road & Pavement Maintenance & Safety
- Improving Health

- 3.3 Aldridge & Beacon Ward Councillors: Cllr Andrew, Cllr Bird, Cllr Clarke, Cllr Douglas-Maul, Cllr Flower, Cllr Harris, Cllr Hughes, Cllr Murray, Cllr Rochelle, Cllr Sears, Cllr Towe, Cllr Wilson
- 3.4 Aldridge & Beacon Partners: Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Unit, Integrated Young People's Support Services (IYPSS), West Midlands Police, Walsall Housing Group (whg), West Midlands Probation Service, Walsall Intelligence Network, Environmental Health, Reassurance Team, Area Partnerships, Public Health, NHS Walsall Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), Aldridge District Centre, Engineering and Transport, Clean & Green Services, Caldmoreaccord Housing Association, Walsall Voluntary Action, West Midlands Fire Service, Social Care and Inclusion, Leighwood Children's Centre, Streetly Children's Centre, Pheasey Park Farm Children's Centre, Area Family Support Team, Trading Standards, Community Development, Streetly Community Association, Aldridge Community Centre, Collingwood Centre, Pheasey Park Farm Community Centre, Walsall Healthcare NHS Trust, Sports & Leisure Services, Jobcentre Plus, Citizen Advice Bureau, Welfare Rights, Walsall College, Streetly Library, Aldridge Library, Pheasey Library, Walsall Wood Library, Victim Support, Walsall Adult Community College (WACC), Streetly Neighbourhood Watch, Pheasey Park Farm Neighbourhood Watch, South Aldridge Neighbourhood Watch, North Aldridge Neighbourhood Watch, All Saints Church, St. John's Church, Beacon Church, Aldridge Methodist Church, Pheasey Community Church, The Thomas Project, Friends of Doe Bank Park, Friends of Blackwood Park, Oak Park Leisure Centre, The Hothouse, Aldridge Youth Theatre, Walsall Wood Scouts, Key Ring, Collingwood Autism Support Group, Forget-Me-Not Streetly Dementia Group, Blackwood Pavilion User Group, St. Anne's Coffee Morning Group, Aldridge Friendly Club, Streetly Disabled Senior Citizens Club, Aldridge Volunteer Gardeners, Streetly Community Garden Group, Age UK Walsall, The Well, Brownhills & Walsall Wood Fellowship, Brownhills Community Association, Countryside Services, Walsall Wood Football Club, Aldridge School, Streetly Academy, Castlefort School, St. John's School, Blackwood School, Manor Primary School, Lindens Primary School, Pheasey Park Farm School, Meadow View School, Red Star AFC, Shire Oak Academy, Aldridge Cinema.

#### **4. Safer Walsall: Creating safe, sustainable and inclusive communities**

- 4.1 CCTV Camera Deployment – Through confidential tasking meetings, partners agree the priority areas to deploy CCTV, from the crime statistics fed to the area partnership by the Walsall Intelligence Network, which is data shared by all the major stakeholders. Currently we have CCTV cameras deployed in Beechey Close, Pheasey and Collingwood Drive, Pheasey.

- 4.2 Flashing CCTV Sign Deployment – Through confidential tasking meetings, partners agree the priority areas to deploy CCTV flashing signs, from the crime statistics fed to the area partnerships by the Walsall Intelligence Network, which is data shared by all the major stakeholders. Currently we have a flashing CCTV sign deployed in Middlemore Lane, near to Aldridge Community Centre and Collingwood Drive, Pheasey.
- 4.3 Oak Park – Although there are no borough-wide hotspots within the Aldridge & Beacon area partnership, one of the local hotspots within our area for anti-social behaviour is Oak Park. Through the confidential tasking meeting, partners such as the police, fire service, ASB Unit, Clean & Green, Countryside Services, Area Partnerships, Walsall Housing Group, Walsall Wood Football Club, Oak Park Leisure Centre, IYPSS and several local retail outlets (including KFC, Fitness First, Co-Op and Tesco Express) meet regularly to discuss the issues and put an action plan in place to tackle the perpetrators of these incidents. Recently a number of measures have been taken to reduce the ASB around this site, including improved lighting, improved CCTV within the leisure centre and more litter bins around the site.
- 4.4 Hay Head Wood – Through the confidential tasking meeting, partners such as the police, fire service, ASB Unit, Area Partnerships, Countryside Services, and Clean & Green still monitor the activities at this site. On 22<sup>nd</sup> July the police made 2 arrests, 2 men in their 60s and 70s were arrested for outraging public decency. The police still carry out regular visits, both in uniform and plain clothes, to monitor activity and wherever possible, make arrests. The main problem is that there are many cars parked up with a single male occupant inside, but they are not breaking any law by doing this, and without actually catching them in the act, there is not a great deal more that the police can do.
- 4.5 Police Safe House Visits – Since July there have been several visits to the Police Safe House. Numbers have been down on recent trips, probably due to summer holidays. A new schedule of dates is now available, listed below:-
- Wednesday, 28 January – 10am – 12noon
  - Monday, 09 February – 2pm – 4pm
  - Wednesday, 25 February – 10am – 12noon
  - Tuesday, 10 March – 10am – 12noon
  - Wednesday, 11 March – 6pm – 8pm
  - Monday, 30 March – 2pm – 4pm
  - Thursday, 16 April – 2pm – 4pm
  - Monday, 27 April – 6.30pm – 8.30pm

- Wednesday, 29 April – 10am – 12noon
- Thursday, 14 May – 10am – 12noon
- Tuesday, 02 June – 2pm – 4pm
- Tuesday, 23 June – 6pm – 8pm
- Thursday, 25 June – 2pm – 4pm

- 4.6 Neighbourhood Watch Meetings – There have been a number of local meetings for the various Neighbourhood Watch groups since the beginning of July. I attended the South Aldridge AGM on the 2<sup>nd</sup> September at Aldridge Police Station. I have also had a number of bulletins over the summer from Tony Marshall, North Aldridge Neighbourhood Watch and I am actively working in partnership with Pete Roberts, Streetly Neighbourhood Watch, resurrecting the Streetly Business Watch scheme.
- 4.7 Vigo Terrace – Following a complaint raised by Cllr Sears on behalf of the residents of Vigo Terrace, we have held a number of multi-agency meetings to discuss the issues and to put together a plan of action to tackle these issues. The multi-agency group consists of local Ward Councillors, the police, Safer Walsall Partnership, ASB Unit and IYPSS, as well as local residents who are all invited to each meeting, which is always held in Vigo Terrace. Some of the agreed actions were to look at deploying CCTV, increased patrols by the police, detached youth work, signage regarding loitering and a clean up of the alleyway. Since our meetings the incidents have reduced dramatically. The latest meeting with partners and residents took place on 11<sup>th</sup> September, and the unanimous decision was to cease the meetings, as all residents agreed that there had been no issues for the last 3 months. Kevin Pitt was in attendance at the meeting, and the legacy of our work is that a Neighbourhood Watch group will be set up in Vigo Terrace, which is a very successful outcome.
- 4.8 Aldridge Fire Station Open Day – This year's open day at the fire station took place on Sunday, 7<sup>th</sup> September. There were a number of local groups and partners who took part in the event, including the North Aldridge Neighbourhood Watch, West Midlands Police, West Midlands Fire Service, Slimming World, Walsall Healthcare NHS Trust, Aldridge Volunteer Gardeners and Aldridge Young Firefighters. There were a number of demonstrations too, including a chip pan fire demo and cutting gear used to free passengers in a road traffic collision.
- 4.9 Doe Bank Park – Following complaints raised by the local Ward Councillors on behalf of local residents and members of Friends of Doe Bank Park, there have been a number of actions put in place to deter the perpetrators who still insist on riding mini motorbikes on the grass, and the low level anti-social behaviour in and around the park. CCTV has been deployed to Beechey

Close, there has been extensive work carried out in the park, with £100,000 investment secured by the local Ward Councillors, bikes have been seized and crushed by police and a Dog Fouling initiative was piloted in Pheasey, which was so successful it has now been rolled out across all of the Aldridge & Beacon area partnership. Sadly there have been a spate of reports at Beechey Close recently and images have been retrieved from the CCTV to help identify the perpetrators.

4.10 Anti-Social Use of Vehicles in Brickyard Road, Aldridge – the Brickyard Road area of Aldridge has previously been a gathering point for car cruisers who meet at the location and use their vehicles in an anti-social manner to the annoyance of local businesses and residents. West Midlands Police are going through the courts to get a High Court Injunction to stop car cruising across the West Midlands area.

4.11 Networking Groups – our networking groups all have meetings coming up in the next month, the dates are shown below for each area:-

- Aldridge – TBC February / TBC May / TBC September / TBC December
- Pheasey – TBC February / TBC May / TBC September / TBC December
- Streetly – 28 January / 15 April / 15 July / 14 October
- Walsall Wood – TBC March / TBC June / TBC September / TBC December

4.12 Multi-agency meetings to discuss issues that are ongoing around anti-social behaviour and criminal damage in the following areas:-

- Blackwood Road, Streetly
- Boundary Road, Streetly
- Chester Road, Shire Oak
- Nether Hall Park, Pheasey

4.13 Environcam - the North Aldridge Neighbourhood Watch have co-financed, along with Area Partnerships, £200 each for the purchase of an envirocam. This special camera will be used exclusively in the Aldridge & Beacon area, to try and deter fly-tipping, with the hope of catching offenders in the act and bringing a prosecution.

## **5. Children and Young People: Improving safeguarding, learning and life chances for children and young people**

- 5.1 Aldridge & Beacon's Integrated Young People's Support Services (IYPSS) - team continues to provide both supported and detached youth work, which have been taking place across the area. There was a very successful summer programme of activities that was very well utilised and ensured that ASB was low during the summer school holidays. This is also the first year that IYPSS has set up a junior budget consultation programme, including information and a questionnaire for young people. <http://www.mywalsall.org/positive/> is the website with all the information on this new initiative.
- 5.2 Streetly Family Fit 'n' Fun Day – this year's event took place on Saturday, 5<sup>th</sup> July at Veseyans Sports Club in Streetly. Despite poor weather, there was a very good attendance of local groups and partners, including Area Partnerships, West Midlands Police, Community Development (Reach Up and Move Truck), Maddison's, Forever Living, Utility Warehouse, T3 Drug & Alcohol Awareness, Streetly Community Choir, Streetly Churches Together, NHS Cervical Screening, Forget Me Not Streetly Dementia Support Group, Streetly Children's Centre, IYPSS, Mummy's Market Stalls, Motivate Me, Slimming World, Veseyans Rugby Club, Blackwood Pavilion, Streetly Neighbourhood Watch, Walsall Karate Dojo, Streetly Local History Group and Healthwatch Walsall. Around 400 local residents came and supported the event. Veseyans Sports Club are very keen to host the Streetly Family Fit 'n' Fun Day as an annual event. The 2015 event has provisionally been booked for Saturday, 27 June, 11am – 3pm at Veseyans Sports Club.
- 5.3 Pheasey Family Fit 'n' Fun Day – this year's event took place on Saturday, 30<sup>th</sup> August at the Collingwood Centre in Pheasey. There was a good attendance from local groups and partners, including IYPSS, Key Ring, Beacon Church, Community Development (Reach Up and Move Truck), Fairground Rides, Collingwood Centre, Pastures New, Friends of Pheasey Library, West Midlands Police and Area Partnerships. Over 400 local residents came and supported the event. The 2015 event has been provisionally booked for Saturday, 15 August, 10am – 2pm at Collingwood Centre.
- 5.4 Aldridge Family Fit 'n' Fun Day – The Hothouse, from Myatt Avenue, Aldridge have successfully applied for Area Partnerships funding to host this year's Aldridge Family Fit 'n' Fun Day. The event will be taking place during half term, on Wednesday, 29<sup>th</sup> October, at Berryfields Park, Aldridge. The 2015 event will link in with the Aldridge Fayre, 20 June, 11am – 4pm at Anchor Meadow.
- 5.5 BBQs In The Park – Blackwood Park, Streetly is the venue for our BBQs in the Park. The event is organised by a number of agencies, including Area Partnerships, Streetly Neighbourhood Watch, Blackwood Pavilion User Group, IYPSS, Streetly Children's Centre and West Midlands Police. The events are funded by the Blackwood Pavilion User Group, following their successful

venture of taking ownership of the council owned pavilion within Blackwood Park, the committee of the Blackwood User Group, chaired by Pete Roberts, has around £1,500 in the bank, thanks to the successful hiring out of the pavilion to local residents for children's parties, funeral wakes, meetings and other local community events. The 4 BBQ in the Park events were held on 8<sup>th</sup> May, 12<sup>th</sup> June, 10<sup>th</sup> July and 14<sup>th</sup> August. Local business man Sam Ahmed, owner of the Boundary Road shops, very kindly donated the food for the BBQ on the 14<sup>th</sup> August. In addition to the BBQs in the Park, the Friends of Blackwood Park also ran a very successful Picnic In The Park event on Sunday, 6<sup>th</sup> July, which was a free event for local families to come into the park with their own picnic, and a number of free activities were available for them to participate in. There will be a new list of events for spring / summer 2015 available soon.

- 5.6 Citizenship & Community Day – The pupils and staff from St. John's School, Walsall Wood took part in this event back on the 7<sup>th</sup> July. Representatives from NHS Walsall, IYPSS, West Midlands Police, West Midlands Fire Service, Neighbourhood Watch, Victim Support, Clean & Green and Community Development all ran sessions around the theme of safety. The event was a great success and the pupils all had great fun whilst learning valuable life skills.
- 5.7 Teenage Pregnancy Meeting – On the 14<sup>th</sup> July I met with Carol Williams, Manager of the Teenage Pregnancy Team. Carol wants to run an 18 week course at Shire Oak Academy, the course is an evidence based youth development programme that aims to reduce teenage pregnancy by raising aspiration and self-esteem. 8 young people have been identified at the school for attendance on the course. Carol has submitted a funding application to be considered by the Area Panel at the meeting on the 30<sup>th</sup> September.
- 5.8 Troubled Families – As part of the Troubled Families initiative across the borough, I represent Aldridge & Beacon area partnership in the confidential multi-agency meetings. I am pleased to report that there are very few families in our area that are discussed at these meetings.
- 5.9 Aldridge Great War Project – Local historian Sue Satterthwaite, in partnership with Rosie's Helping Hands Charity, Aldridge Library and Aldridge School has recently launched a very ambitious project on the Aldridge Great War Project. Unfortunately, a few weeks after launching the project Sue got news from the Heritage Lottery Fund that the funding bid she had submitted had not been successful. This bid was in the region of £50,000 and would have funded many activities for the young people of the area, including trips to war graves, dedicated permanent exhibitions in Aldridge Library, heritage trails around Aldridge, showcasing the Manor House, which was utilised as a military

hospital during the Great War, as well as Gus Bonner's cottage garden and memorial stone, which will be laid later this year to commemorate him being awarded the Victoria Cross. Sue is now looking to other funding sources to help finance her project and has approached Area Partnerships to help fund the display cases that will be used to house the exhibitions within Aldridge Library.

- 5.10 Aldridge Youth Theatre Drama Workshop – At the last Area Panel on the 1<sup>st</sup> July the Councillors approved a funding application from the Youth Theatre to contribute towards a 5 day drama workshop during the summer holidays. I am very pleased to report that the workshop was very successful, with over 30 young people attending the workshop, which culminated in a performance to an invited audience which included local Councillors.
- 5.11 Streetly Community Garden Project – Through the Community Garden & Wildlife Project, our Senior Area Youth Worker, Julie Hill, included a specific activity during the summer holidays to get young people to make their own flower baskets. Thanks to the generosity of local garden centre Wm Wheat & Son and a small amount of funding from Area Partnerships, Julie purchased the component parts (flower plants, planter pots, soil and compost) and the young people made their own flowering baskets. In addition they also planted some of the flowers outside the Blackwood Youth Centre, Blackwood Road, Streetly.
- 5.12 Library Events – All of the libraries in our partnership area have run events and activities over the summer holidays. There was the summer reading challenge, where the children were encouraged to read 6 books during the holidays. There was also several hippy beads bracelet workshops, aimed at the over 10s. Area Partnerships funded these workshops. There were also a number of taster sessions run at each of our libraries, such as Jo Jingles, Photography Workshops, craft sessions and family reading and story times. We have also funded Aldridge Library (£320) to provide a programme of speakers and activities to a new social group within the library, enabling networking and signposting.
- 5.13 Doe Bank Park Fun Day – This year's Park Fun Day at Doe Bank Park took place on 20<sup>th</sup> August. Sadly the weather turned just after lunch, but there was a healthy attendance during the morning and a number of free activities were available for the family, mainly young people, including bouncy castle, fairground rides, information stalls and donkey rides!
- 5.14 Collingwood Vision Project – Pool Table – following the approval of £1,000 for funding for a new pool table at the last Area Panel meeting, the new pool table is now set up and in use by the young people who visit the Vision Project at

the Collingwood Centre, Pheasey. Now that the schools are back, the pool leagues will be set up and begin in the autumn/winter.

- 5.15 Castlefort Pre-School Toddler Club – following the approval of £934 for new equipment for new toddlers club at the last Area Panel meeting, the equipment has been purchased and new clubs for outdoors play and dressing up have been established.
- 5.16 Sports Project for Walsall Wood Youth Club – following the approval of £1,370 for new equipment for team competitions such as darts, pool and other competitive games, there is an aim to bring in more young people to the youth centre and to help reduce the anti-social behaviour in the area, as well as to provide position activities to the young people's lives.
- 5.17 A Bird In The Hand – funding was approved for £531 to provide new equipment for the local bird ringing group, which in turn will lead to 2 events being run in January and March 2015, providing an opportunity for young people to involve themselves in nature, learning about birds, migration, environment, habitat and how to attract wildlife to their gardens. These events will also promote healthy lifestyles, improvement fitness and wellbeing.
- 5.18 Aldridge Festivities – we have co-financed (£760) along with the Aldridge Village Partnership and the Aldridge District Centre Team towards the Christmas festivities for the event that took place on Saturday, 29 November, 2014.
- 5.19 World War I Service – we contributed £80 towards the decoration of St. John's Church, Walsall Wood for a commemoration service, held on 11 November, 2014, in which all of the Walsall Wood schools participated.
- 5.20 Leighswood Children's Centre Christmas Event – we funded £530 to the children's centre as a contribution towards a Christmas event that took place on Friday, 12 December. The event gave local residents the chance to network, meet new people, look around the children's centre and access local services, information and provision.
- 5.21 Smarter Boxing Project – we funded Youth Support Services £478.80 to run a 12 week non-contact Boxing programme for the local young people, who have asked for such an activity to be available. The programme seeks to build up physical fitness and stamina whilst helping to develop confidence in the young people.
- 5.22 Aldridge Scout Group HQ – we have made a contribution of £2,000 towards the refurbishment of the scout HQ on Middlemore Lane, Aldridge. With well

over 100 children using the hall on a weekly basis, the scout group have secured funding from external sources to help restore the roof, flooring and perimeter fence, making the room safer and more secure for the young people who use the facilities.

## **6. Business and Jobs: Supporting businesses to thrive and supporting local people in to work**

- 6.1 Streetly Business Watch – Following a request from Pete Roberts, Chair of the Streetly Neighbourhood Watch, Area Partnerships and the police are working in partnership to resurrect the Business Watch initiative. Kevin Pitt has provided us with the paperwork, which includes a registration form and information sheet explaining what is included as a member, which is affiliation to the Relay System, enabling instant messaging to businesses to alert them of potential crimes and reducing the risk of them becoming victims of business crime.
- 6.2 Aldridge Business Partnership – Aldridge District Centre Officer Diane Mansell has worked with the local businesses in Aldridge and formed the new Aldridge Village Partnership, which has now replaced the Aldridge Village Business Partnership, the partnership is a company limited by guarantee. This allows the group to apply for external funding and gives the group much more scope for bringing money into Aldridge. It also allows the group to have much more control over what happens in their village centre. The next event planned for the village centre is the Christmas event on the 29th Nov between 10-4 the event will allow the centre to not only celebrate the festivities but more importantly allow local families to enjoy free activities together at a very expensive time of year. The event also allows local services and community groups to interact with hard to reach members of the public.
- 6.3 Aldridge Library Job Club – This club runs on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of each month. To date in 2014 there have been 41 people who have engaged with the job club, 3 people have managed to secure sustained employment in this time. In addition to help find jobs, the club also helps with CV writing and cover letters.
- 6.4 The Thomas Project Job Club – Since the Area Partnership funded the Thomas Project for laptops to set up their Job Club, the newly formed club has engaged with 15 local residents and secured sustained employment for 7 people.
- 6.5 Use of social media – through the use of Twitter and Facebook, we are working more than ever with local businesses to promote them through our Facebook pages:-

- <https://www.facebook.com/LetsdoitinStreetly>
- <https://www.facebook.com/DoltInAldridge>
- <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Lets-do-it-in-Pheasey/337780146321859>
- <https://www.facebook.com/letsdoitinWalsallWood>

The latest “likes” to these pages are:-

- Let’s Do It In Aldridge – 704 likes
- Let’s Do It In Streetly – 204 likes
- Let’s Do It In Walsall Wood – 292 likes
- Let’s Do It In Pheasey – 54 likes

- 6.6 Pioneer Magazine Advertising – we have funded the Pioneer magazines to the value of £990 to advertise our local community and voluntary groups over a 4 month period (November / December 2014 and January / February 2015) to promote and raise awareness of the activities and events that are going on in our area.

## **7. Health and Well-Being: Improving health, including well-being and independence for older people**

- 7.1 Community Gardening & Wildlife Project – Since funding was approved at the last Area Panel, there has been much activity with the Community Gardening & Wildlife Project. Working very closely with the Fire Service, we have 4 raised bed allotments set up within the grounds of Aldridge Fire Station, which are going to be utilised by local community groups, such as the Aldridge Volunteer Gardeners and the Thomas Project. We have also rented one allotment at Oakdene Nurseries in Streetly, which thanks to the volunteers from the newly formed Streetly Community Gardening Group, is almost full to capacity now of vegetables. In addition, funding given to the Streetly Community Association for a green-house for the same project has seen work underway at the association to make an area of land secure, and the green-house should be up and running in the very near future. We have also linked in with the borough-wide Community Garden Forum, and Streetly will be the venue of the next gardening event, on Thursday, 25<sup>th</sup> September, the event being held at All Saints Church, Foley Road East, Streetly. The Streetly Community Gardening Group have also carried out a very successful project in partnership with the shops, library and health centre in Blackwood Road, introducing baskets of flowers outside the shops, an initiative which has delighted both the residents and shoppers. Aldridge Volunteer Gardeners have worked exceptionally hard once again to attain the Gold award at the In Bloom competition. Aldridge has also been invited to participate in the National Finals again in 2015!

- 7.2 Forget Me Not Streetly Dementia Group – Working closely with Diane Cleary, Chair of the Streetly Dementia Group – Forget Me Not, we are working collaboratively with a number of mental health professionals from across the Black Country and West Midlands to produce “information packs” for people who are recently diagnosed with Dementia. The information contained within the pack will be aimed at the sufferer and their carers and family. We have had one meeting so far to discuss what information should go into the pack, with a second meeting scheduled for 15<sup>th</sup> October. The final meeting to approve the documents is taking place on 11 February, 2015.
- 7.3 Collingwood Autism Support Group – Funding was approved at the last Area Panel meeting for a brand new local support group to be set up. The Collingwood Autism Support Group, set up and managed by Jo Weir, held its first support group meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> September. The aim of the group is to offer respite and support for parents and carers of children with Autism.
- 7.4 Walsall Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) – Area Partnerships were asked to help with ‘Consultation on urgent and emergency care choices in Walsall’. A copy of this is available from the Walsall CCG website [www.walsallccg.nhs.uk/urgentcare](http://www.walsallccg.nhs.uk/urgentcare). The term ‘urgent care’ is used as a shorthand term to cover experiences of GPs, Accident and Emergency, Urgent Care Centres, Walk-in Centres, GP Out of Hours, and the 999 and 111 telephone services. The link is at: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/walsallUC>. A public session was held at Aldridge Community Centre on 17<sup>th</sup> July and I understand that the response from local residents was very encouraging.
- 7.5 Christmas Tree Festival – meetings are now ongoing for this year’s Christmas Tree Festival. Area Partnerships have already approved £1,000 towards the events, which are hopefully going to go ahead in Aldridge, Pheasey, Streetly and Walsall Wood on the weekend of 5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup>/7<sup>th</sup> December. Following on from the success of the festival at All Saints Church, Streetly last year, with 48 trees on display and over 1,500 visitors over the weekend, with over £1,000 raised for charity, we are hoping to establish the festival as an annual event across our area. The 2014 event was once again a great success, with 51 trees taking part in the festival, around 2,000 visitors came to the church and over £3,000 was raised for charity (Acorns Hospice & All Saints Church). The 2015 Christmas Tree Festival will take place on the 4<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> December.
- 7.6 Aldridge Friendly Club – thanks to the £500 contribution that Area Partnerships made towards the costs for outings, we are reducing the social isolation of the group of ladies (most of whom are over the age of 80) from the Redhouse Estate in Aldridge.

- 7.7 St. Anne's Coffee Morning Group – thanks to the £1,360 contribution that Area Partnerships made towards the costs of outings, we are reducing the social isolation of the group, which regularly takes over 70 people on their trips, made up of men and women over the age of 70, many with various disabilities.
- 7.8 Streetly Community Association Heating – following the approval of the funding at the last Area Panel, Streetly Community Association is now in a position to improve its heating system and offer more activities for the older residents in the community during the winter months, as a result of the rooms being warm enough, which has been an issue in recent years.
- 7.9 The THOMAS Project – following the approval of the funding at the last Area Panel, the THOMAS Project will be utilising the £1,997 awarded by Area Partnerships to refurbish its new base, which was open for business from 2<sup>nd</sup> September. There will be a formal opening in October. The Area Partnership funding will enable the purchase of a washing machine (for the Community Laundry facility); the sofas, tables and chairs (for the Community Hub room); the first aid equipment; the tables and clothing rails (for The Gift); and general office and storage equipment; all once the refurbishment work has been completed. Walsall Housing Group provided the funding for the structural refurbishment of the building.
- 7.10 The Cottage Garden Project – we have funded the Aldridge Volunteer Gardeners £1,500 to create a cottage garden to commemorate Capt. Bonner VC which will be a long term focal point in the village, as well as forming part of the Aldridge Heritage Trail.
- 7.11 Collingwood Event Planning – we have funded the Collingwood Centre, Pheasey £1,325.74 to purchase new chairs for functions and events at the centre. Although this will benefit everyone that uses the centre, the main emphasis is on the “over 50s” groups that operate from the centre.
- 7.12 Aldridge Cinema – we are working closely with a new community group that has set up in Aldridge. Aldridge Cinema will be showing films twice a week at the Aldridge Youth Theatre, Wednesday matinee and evening shows, which will be aimed at older people, and a Saturday matinee that will be aimed at families and young people. We are currently working in partnership with other local groups who may wish to join up with the cinema.
- 7.13 Replace of Electric Cooker – we have funded the Pheasey Park Farm Community Centre £649 to purchase a new cooker that will enable them to carry on hosting events for “over 50s” groups that operate from the centre, as well as offering the kitchen for catering for private hire and groups that use the centre for community events.

- 7.14 Lancaster Avenue WHG Community Room – we have co-financed with WHG (Area Partnerships £745, WHG £1,475) for a major upgrade to the WHG community room on Lancaster Avenue, Aldridge. This will allow local community groups to use this room for meetings, free of charge.
- 7.15 Aldridge By The Sea – we have funded a 3 day event, “Aldridge By The Sea” to the tune of £1,495, which aims to bring in footfall to the local area over the Easter period. The event, co-financed by Area Partnerships, District Centre Management, Aldridge Business Partnership and LCP (London Cambridge Properties) aims to showcase a number of initiatives and activities around health and well being to benefit the local community.

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