

Regenerating North Solihull

Spring 2010

Your News, Your North Solihull

Spring time at Smith's Wood



INSIDE...

**A tale of two
builders**

– see Page 3

**Schools
update**

– see Page 4

**New homes
take shape**

– see Page 7

**Myth
Buster**

– see Back Page

Contact Us:

Regeneration Hotline 0800 389 7997

Email info@northsolihull.co.uk Visit www.northsolihull.co.uk

Welcome from Ian Cox

– Programme Director of North Solihull Regeneration Partnership



“Welcome to your spring edition of **Regenerating North Solihull**. I have been involved with the North Solihull regeneration project since 2003, when Solihull Council first announced that they were looking for partners to work with them to deliver major investment in this part of the borough.

I was one of the selected partners and have recently been appointed as the new Programme Director. Since taking up post in November I have been impressed with the change being made in improving the local area.

The new schools and homes are transforming North Solihull's skyline and the demolition of the Nuffield and Worcester high rises has also been warmly welcomed by residents.

Whilst we are working hard to achieve the level of change that people want to see, we don't underestimate the challenges we face.

North Solihull like so many areas has been affected by the recession but I want you to know we remain fully committed to our goals

of delivering thousands of new homes, modern schools, new village centres and better green spaces. It is, however going to take us a few more years than we first anticipated.

I want to thank you for your ongoing support and to let you know that we appreciate the time you take to get involved in our events and consultations.

We also want to get better at the way we communicate with you. In a few months we will be appointing a communications officer and we will be asking for your thoughts on how we should best keep you up to date with news and progress and how you would like to get involved.

As you may know, we have been updating our delivery plans and we will be writing to residents living in Kingshurst, North Arran Way and Craig Croft soon to confirm these changes.

I hope that you enjoy reading about some of the great developments happening in your neighbourhoods and please do get in touch with the team if you have any questions, suggestions or ideas.”

Did you know?

We have invested over half a million pounds in supporting community projects involving young people in the regeneration of their area and creating training and employment opportunities for local people and businesses.

Did you know?

500 residents have been rehoused through the regeneration programme

Our priorities for the year ahead include:

- ✓ Investing half a million pounds to improve Lanchester Park
- ✓ Re-housing around 125 residents
- ✓ Delivering more than 200 new homes
- ✓ Developing the North Arran Way Village Centre
- ✓ Master-planning the next regeneration areas
- ✓ Investing in job creation with our apprenticeship schemes

A tale of two builders

Bellway Homes, the construction partner of Regenerating North Solihull, is creating job opportunities for local people at all levels.

When grandfather of six David Vincent, 63, was made redundant due to the recession, he feared he might not work again, so was delighted when he landed the job as site manager for Bellway.

David, who has lived in Chelmsley Wood for 38 years, said: “It is great to be working in my local area, I'm proud to be making a difference in my own neighbourhood.”

David is currently working on the new Keepers Gate development of three and four bedroom homes and believes North Solihull is benefiting from investment through regeneration.

He added: “When I first moved to Chelmsley Wood it was really nice, but it went downhill, so there is a need for new, modern housing, shops and schools to help keep young people and families in the area. The plans for the area will improve it for everyone who lives here.”

Ryan Berry, 17, grew up in North Solihull and landed an apprenticeship with Bellway. He lives with his mum in one of the new houses built in Smith's Wood.

He said: “My mum kept asking them if there were any apprenticeships coming up and finally they had an opening and they offered me an interview. I go to college at Griffin Park one day a week and I'm on site in Chelmsley Wood for the other four days. I've learned a lot already and it's great that I'm working so close to home. I feel lucky that I've been given a three year apprenticeship contract.”



Ryan and David on-site

North Solihull Partnership will continue to maximise the potential training and employment opportunities for local people as part of the regeneration project in North Solihull.

For further information please contact Yvonne Platts on 0121 717 1675.



Chelmsley Wood plans

The North Solihull Partnership has appointed a team to produce and consult on a new masterplan for investment in the North and South cluster areas around Chelmsley Wood.

Lead consultants Alan Baxter & Associates along with architects John Thompson and Partners, planners Savills and landscape architects Neil Tulley, will be drawing up new proposals for the area.

The masterplan will look to identify areas for development, improve open green space areas and increase usability.

The team plan to hold community events to allow residents to participate in the design process over the coming months. North Solihull Partnership will be in touch with dates for the planning events and how to get involved in the transformation of the neighbourhood.

Smiles all round at **Smith's Wood School**

Hundreds of pupils are settling into their new Smith's Wood Community School in North Arran Way.

Head teacher John Talbot says the bright and modern environment is good for learning. The former Kingfisher and Bosworth Wood primary schools came together when the new Smith's Wood school opened its doors in September last year.

John says it was a very proud moment when all 420 pupils turned up wearing their new school uniforms.

"The children have come together very well. It's not easy for communities when schools need to

amalgamate, but I think everyone can see the benefits that a brand new building like this offers children. The former schools had been built in the 1960s and were in a bad condition with leaking roofs and were a bit dark and dingy. The design of the new school brings in as much natural light as possible, which is great for learning."

John says the design of the building left a "blank canvas" for the students and teachers to get creative with.

"We have created a bat cave in an alcove and a curved wall in the library has become a giant wave with an under the sea theme.

We have our very own Hollywood style theatre that even has its own VIP area where children can attend when they are being rewarded. This is about raising aspirations and encouraging the students in a positive way."

The school, which cost over £7million, has been delivered as part of Regenerating North Solihull and links into other developments in North Arran Way where a new village centre is being planned.

The school offers extended opening hours, so that it can welcome pupils and the wider community after normal school hours.

It also boasts a multi-purpose games area where children can play football, hockey and enjoy basketball lessons.

"There is a great sense of togetherness here and we are very proud to be part of the regeneration of North Solihull," added John.



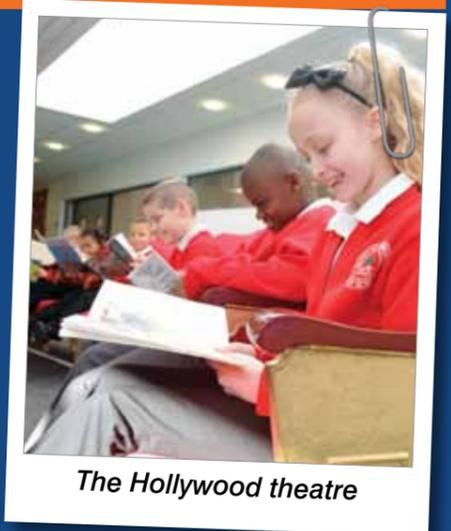
John Talbot joins pupils in the playground



Under the sea



The Bat cave



The Hollywood theatre



St Anne's under construction

Ringling the changes

A huge amount of progress is being made in delivering new schools in North Solihull.

Hundreds of pupils are now enjoying their new Kingshurst Primary School and Smith's Wood Community Primary School, with the third, St Anne's, part funded by the Homes and Communities Agency, set to be completed in the Fordbridge area in October.

Coleshill Heath and Alcott Hall will become Coleshill Heath in September. Hatchford and Bennett's Well will also join together to become Fordbridge Community Primary.

Did you know?

Children are enjoying two brand new primary schools with a third set to open its doors later this year.

Major improvements to **Lanchester Park**



North Solihull Partnership is delivering a £500,000 public open space improvement scheme at Lanchester Park, Smith's Wood.

The project, funded by the Homes & Communities Agency, will provide a range of new play and sports facilities for both young and older children in the area as well as preserving the existing football pitch areas and natural woodland area near Lanchester Way.

The highlight of the scheme, which is due to start on site this spring, is the creation of a new purpose-built concrete skate park.



Changing the skyline

The skyline of North Arran Way has had a dramatic transformation with the much anticipated demolition of two high rise blocks.

Nuffield House and Worcester House on Kingfisher Drive had been built in the 1960s and were out-of-date and suffered from some anti-social problems.

The demolition started late in 2009 and the final stages were completed in February this year.

The demolition of the blocks have helped make way for the new High Street which will contain new shops and offices and is situated adjacent to the new Smith's Wood Community Primary School.

Around 120 Solihull Community Housing tenants were successfully rehoused.



Update on North Arran Way High Street

Work on the new village centre in North Arran Way is making progress, following the delivery of Smith's Wood Community School.

The improvement work, being delivered by Inpartnership, the commercial partner of Regenerating North Solihull, will see new streets and roads take shape before new shops and offices are delivered.

New pavements and a road linking into Windward Way, with access to Smith's Wood Community School, will be completed by the end of March. The High Street is part funded by Advantage West Midlands.

Detailed plans for the next phases are being brought forward and will include high quality street furniture including lampposts, seating and planting. These

works will start early next year to tie in with the construction of new shops with office space above. Existing retailers are being offered priority in the new developments and there will also be space for some new shops.

Proposals are also being progressed for a new medical centre with a GP surgery and The Care Trust is in the process of developing a design brief for this flagship building. Local people will be consulted on the proposals later this year.

Plans are also being made to improve some public green space across from the Windward Way area of the High Street (in the Woodpecker Grove area). The contractors HFN, will start work in early April and it will take around six weeks to complete.

New 'greener' homes taking shape

Hundreds of people are enjoying their new homes in North Solihull, delivered by Bellway as part of the ongoing regeneration of the area.

A total of 469 homes have been built so far with 179 in the last year. A further 200 will be built in Smith's Wood, Craig Croft and Kingshurst this year.

All new developments are built to level three of the Code for Sustainable Homes, which makes them more energy and water efficient, achieving a 25% improvement in efficiency over a typical new home.

Each new home has been provided with solar hot water systems, which utilizes sun energy converting it into heat to generate hot water. The system also incorporates a traditional gas fed boiler and a hot water override for when the solar intensity is at its lowest in winter.

All homes are fitted with high efficiency, low energy lighting which can last up to 12 times longer than traditional bulbs, helping to cut lighting bills.

The homes are also being built with enhanced insulation, reducing draught and heat loss. Water efficiency devices are aimed to further reduce bills and all homes have water butts, so that rain water



can be used for watering the garden or washing the car.

The new homes also help residents to make more sustainable choices, each being fitted with recycling and composting bins.

Ben Wright, Technical Director for Bellway said: "The new homes are designed to look good, but also be better for the environment, which is great for residents, helping to cut fuel bills."

For further advice on how to save energy and reduce your fuel bill, you can contact SMBC's Energy Conservation Officer on 0121 704 6450.

HomeBuy Direct joy for first time buyers

First time buyers Ben Muddiman and his partner Emma Hinks are celebrating their good fortune after finding the home of their dreams on Bellway's Chapel Walk development in North Solihull.

"We had been looking at property in the region for the last six months," said Ben, a key worker.

"What attracted us to the Bellway development in Chapel Walk, apart from the quality of the homes, was the HomeBuy Direct deal. Emma and I had been renting a property in Birmingham which was costing us nearly £600 per month and we both felt as if we were burning money and getting nothing back for our investment. The HomeBuy Direct deal is ideal for us; it means that we can buy a new home of our own with a reduced mortgage."

Ben and Emma bought a three storey three bedroom former Bellway show home paying £174,995. The

HomeBuy Direct deal means that they can take advantage of a 30% Government backed loan that is interest free for the first five years.

Like a mortgage, the loan is repayable within 25 years and Ben and Emma can redeem the outstanding loan in instalments at the market rate enabling them to staircase to full ownership.

Alternatively, if they sell their home, the equity loan is repaid by way of the sale proceeds.

Located within the area covered by Regenerating North Solihull, Chapel Walk offers some of the best value, newly built homes in the West Midlands

If you are interested in purchasing a Bellway property you can either email wmid-sales@bellway.co.uk or telephone 01827 255 755

For information on the HomeBuy Direct scheme contact 0303 444 0000 or by email at contactus@communities.gov.uk



Ben and Emma outside their new home

myth **BUSTER**

I have heard that the North Solihull Partnership has no money and the regeneration work will stop. Is this true?

No. Like many other regeneration projects up and down the country, it is true that North Solihull has been affected by the recession. Due to the change in the economic climate, NSP has reviewed the business plan and the initial objectives of 10 new primary schools, five village centres and over 8,000 new homes remain the same however it will take us five years longer to complete.

I haven't been contacted for a while, so presumably my home will no longer be demolished.

The programme has been affected by the economic recession and we have needed to remove some areas from the redevelopment programme. Those residents whose homes were removed have been written to and visited. If you did not receive such a letter and your home was previously identified for redevelopment, then it is still our intention to redevelop your area. If you are unsure please contact the North Solihull Partnership Office on 0800 389 7997

All demolition work is going to stop and the properties that are now empty and security boarded are going to be refurbished and re-let.

No, this is not true. All the properties emptied and security boarded by NSP will be demolished. There can sometimes be a delay in demolishing properties because the contractors have to wait for the disconnection of services such as gas, electricity and water. These disconnections cannot be ordered until the last remaining resident in a row of houses or a block of flats has moved out.

You want to build houses on all our green spaces.

Whilst it is true that NSP do build on some green spaces, investment gained directly from the use of the green space helps fund regeneration projects such as new schools, new parks, green space improvements and new community facilities.

I have heard that you are speaking to Solihull Community Housing to agree what type of property is needed for tenants to live in for the future, is this true?

Yes this is true. NSP realise that as the population changes and the demands on the housing waiting list increase, it is important to build the right type of social rent property. As a result, Solihull Community Housing has carried out an assessment to identify what type of property they need built to meet the demands of the rehousing programme and general housing waiting list. This has helped to influence the type of new properties being built.

Get involved with the RIGS

The Resident Implementation Groups give local people the chance to get more involved with the regeneration of their area.

North Arran Way RIG is a fairly new group that meets once a month at St John's the Baptist RC School. Residents can actively engage with the regeneration process by feeding in ideas, suggestions and proposals into the local neighbourhood plan.

Craig Croft RIG has been running for around three years and voices the comments of local people. Residents have already been involved in early designs for the village centre, the North Solihull Partnership website and comments on new housing designs.

Kingshurst and Babbs Mill RIG has been in place for more than two years and meet monthly at the new Kingshurst primary School. The group were responsible for naming the new housing development 'Kings Wood' as they felt it reflected the history of the area.

Contact the Regeneration Partnership on **freephone 0800 389 7997** for meeting times and dates.

If you have any questions, comments or are concerned about a rumour you have heard please call the team on FREEPHONE 0800 389 7997 or speak to your local RIG.