

West Area Committee Meeting 9.06.08
Community Development Report – Bullet Point Updates
Responsible Unit Development Manager – Heather James

- The Area West staff team is still waiting for the evening receptionist at Lewsey Community Centre to start work but staff at both Hockwell Ring and Lewsey Community Centres are continuing to develop their programmes and widen the opportunities available to local people. A survey of community needs will be conducted shortly and staff are keen to hear from individuals and community to groups to see how best to respond to their needs.
- Adult Learning in the community centres has progressed further since the last report, with participants at Hockwell Ring computer class continuing with their programme and moving on to an intermediate stage, new learners coming forward for English as a Second or Other Language (ESOL), and the facilitation of crèches for the children of learners. In addition, the 'New Tactics' course for the parents/carers of teenagers is due to start on 9th June at Lewsey Community Centre. Meetings with staff at Barnfield West Academy and individual parents have proved that there is an urgent need for support to be available to provide guidance, new ideas and specific advice to try to improve the behaviour of young people at home and in the local area.
- Both Lewsey and Hockwell Ring Community Centres have now been granted premises licences. This does not signify any radical change in provision at either centre; it simply means that individual Temporary Event Notices (TENs) no longer have to be applied for when licensable activities are held at the centres (e.g. wedding receptions, entertainment etc). This will save time and money as there has to be ten clear working days ahead to apply for a TEN and community members used to have to pay £21 for the licence. Opening hours, the type of events facilitated and organised, and the management arrangements for them remain the same.
- Security and safety at Lewsey Community Centre has been an issue over the past three months. As a result, a new internal entry system has been installed, anti-vandal paint has been put on the roof and additional hours of 'casual' staffing have been allocated to assist staff on a temporary basis. Close liaison with the Social Behaviour Unit, Library staff, Housing Officers, Ballistic Zone and local PCSO's has been very welcome. Centre staff are also working closely with various agencies dealing with the young people - particularly LBC personal tutors, Connexions workers and Ballistic Zone staff - to try to provide a network to address individual issues and area problems. The 'Banned Scheme' for St Dominics Square was launched at Lewsey on 1st May and will help to alleviate further problems in the shopping precinct, as anyone banned from one shop will be banned from all participating shops.

- New Groups – Hockwell Ring Community Centre now has a weekly Cocaine Anonymous session at which people wishing to get off drugs can follow a supported tried and tested method of doing so, based on the Alcoholics Anonymous programme. Groups set up and taking place at other centres across the town (including Lewsey) have proved to be very successful and similar arrangements are in place to try to achieve the same outcomes. The centre's Young at Heart Group goes from strength to strength and is incorporating 'try it' sessions to develop further. A recent Circle Dancing session was hugely popular and is likely to become a regular activity as a result.
- Activities for children are being developed across the area. At Hockwell Ring Community Centre the Saturday Morning Fun Club continues to offer fortnightly sessions for children aged 5 and over whilst at Lewsey there are plans to link up with Chantry School to provide art/design sessions to work on a mural after school for 4 weeks. In addition, it is likely that the Pirton Hill Pre-school playgroup will re-locate to Hockwell Ring Community Centre for a period of up to 6 months whilst access to their premises is not available. Both community centres will be running 3 weeks of summer playschemes, from 4th August, provided that enough volunteers come forward to help out (information about how to apply is available from Heather on 696355). In terms of area development work, support is being given to Beechwood Primary School in looking at play provision and St Martin De Porres Primary School in helping with their Community Cohesion week, in particular looking at the Islamic faith.
- Plans for the summer also include the Lewsey Festival on 28th June, Hockwell Ring Family Fun Day on 27th July, and family day trips.
- Improvements made to both Lewsey and Hockwell Ring Community Centres continue with the refurbishment of both sets of toilets at Hockwell Ring (started on 21st May) and the internal decoration and furnishing of various areas within Lewsey – including additional carpeting and heating in the Credit Union Room; a new partition, new blinds, repairs to the boxing rings in the back rooms; gardening carried out by the Lewsey Project; and the boxing-in of pipe work in the ladies toilets. Further painting and improved lighting at both centres is planned.