



Working Together for a better future

# Federation Newsletter

March/April 2012

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# Neighbourhood & Community Decision Making

29th February 2012

I attended this workshop on behalf of my T.R.A. It was held at The Brambles and given by Dr. Electra Soady of Eureka! Associates.

The workshop was all about communicating with migrants and asylum seekers - How can we get them involved? How can we integrate them into our society? What barriers might there be to stop them joining the community?

Everyone was involved right from the beginning. We all introduced ourselves. There were a couple of people from minority backgrounds, and also a young man, so we were a diverse mix. We all got along fine, thanks to Dr Electra. She made sure everyone felt part of the day. Everyone had the opportunity to put forward their ideas on how we should involve minorities and young people.

Tierry Bartholere gave a presentation from a migrant's point of view. It was very interesting and , at times quite funny.

We stopped for lunch, and then split up into two groups to answer the question: What stops people from joining? Lots of different ideas were put forward by both groups, and at the end of the day we presented them to each other. Both groups came up with many of the same ideas, although we were on opposite sides of the room.

The day proved to be interesting, informative, and fun. There was not enough time to discuss anything in depth, although the day was from 9am. To 3pm.

Phyllis Rowley, Secretary of Vicarage Prospect TRA.



## **Social Media Surgeries**

Would you like to know how to use blogs (free websites), video clips, photo sharing sites, Facebook, Twitter or other free web tools to help your group? Are you a Community First Panel or other new group which needs to set up a website to meet funder requirements? We can help you do it easily and for free.

### **No boring speeches, no jargon!**

Come and meet people who understand all about social media and how you can get the most out of it. You might have specific questions that you'd like to ask, or you might just like a general introduction to what's available. You don't need any previous knowledge to take part, and there won't be any lectures. We'll talk to you one-to-one, listen to what you need and explain things clearly.

### **FREE advice about using FREE web tools**

Dudley Social Media Surgeries are completely free advice sessions for community and voluntary groups, clubs and societies. Free web tools can help you to organise activities, promote events, raise funds, collect feedback from your participants and keep a record of everything you do. Dudley Social Media Surgeries take place monthly at different locations around the borough.

All of our helpers are volunteers or staff from local organisations who know enough about using social media tools to help someone else. Perhaps when you have learnt something new you can come back and return the favour.

### **Upcoming dates**

(You don't need to arrive at 5.30pm, these are drop-ins)

Monday 26 March, 5.30pm-7.30pm in Brierley Hill, register to attend here: <http://socialmediasurgery.com/surgeries/dudley-cvs>

Tuesday 17 April, 5.30pm-7.30pm in Dudley register to attend here: <http://socialmediasurgery.com/events/343>

You can also find the links to register for these workshops on the DFTRA website at [www.dfta.org.uk](http://www.dfta.org.uk) under 'Events'.

## **Area housing panels -**

### **Your chance to make a difference to housing services**

If you are a secure Dudley Council tenant then we have some opportunities for you to join an area panel and influence important decisions about housing and related issues.

We are looking for people to join our area panels and represent the views of tenants in your area. Each year elections are held to appoint new members who remain a panel representative for 3 years.

This year elections will be held in June and we are asking for people to put their names forward now.

Area panel members make recommendations and comment on a wide range of issues including:

- Environmental and community safety funding - this means panel members help to allocate money to make areas safe and a pleasant place to live in.
- Policy changes - to improve our services we ask area panel members for their views.
- Monitoring performance - we want to make sure we deliver a first class housing service. Area panels discuss and comment on our performance figures, such as customer satisfaction and performance targets.
- Panel members recommend improvements - this helps to ensure we continuously improve our service.
- New initiatives - whenever we want to set up a new housing initiative we ask area panels for their views. We take their comments on board as this helps us to provide a service geared to meeting tenants' needs.

Idea generation and improvement - tenant representatives on area panels see our service from a different perspective and often provide us with good ideas to improve or introduce new services.

New tenant panel members are helped through the process and are actively encouraged to participate in discussions - so you don't have to worry about any lack of experience or housing knowledge.

Each area panel is made up of 5 tenants and 5 councillors, usually meeting every other month to discuss housing issues. Senior officers attend the meeting and all the necessary administrative support is provided.

If you are interested in becoming a panel member, contact the Tenant Participation Team on 01384 815168 who can send you an application form and also answer any questions you may have. The application form and further information is also available on the Dudley web site at:

[www.dudley.gov.uk/housing/council-housing/tenant-participation](http://www.dudley.gov.uk/housing/council-housing/tenant-participation)

**How to vote** - Only Dudley MBC tenants can vote. If you would like take part in the voting process please come along to your Area Forum in June.

At these meetings you will be able to meet your local area panel candidates and vote. The forums will also discuss the work of the panels during the past year and other local issues.

To vote for the Dudley Area Panel or North Dudley Area Panel please attend the North Area Forum on Wednesday 20 June at 6.30pm at The Lodge, Wellington Road, Dudley

To vote for the Brierley Hill Area Panel, Halesowen Area Panel or Stourbridge Area Panel please attend the South Area Forum on Thursday 21st June at 6.30pm at Dudley Sports and Social Club, High Ercal Avenue, Brierley Hill.

## **Changes to Blue Badge parking scheme**

The first of a number of reforms designed to improve the Blue Badge parking scheme have been introduced in the Dudley borough. The reforms are part of Government changes to make the application process fairer and clamp down on fraud and abuse.

A new centralised system will provide new arrangements for printing and distribution to prevent fraud and to monitor cancelled, lost and stolen badges. Officers will be able to check details of new badges issued anywhere in England.

Although the scheme will still be run by councils, badges will be issued centrally in a similar way to passports – this means that the Blue Badge can no longer be collected from local offices.

If you need to renew your Blue Badge soon:

Allow time to process your application before your current badge runs out

Phone the Blue Badge Team on 0300 555 0055 to request an application form

When you have completed your form please make an appointment with the team who will check if you are eligible, check your ID, take your photograph and take payment

Charges to process applications in Dudley are going up from £2 to £5 from 1 March 2012

For further information please visit:

the Dudley web site at [www.dudley.gov.uk](http://www.dudley.gov.uk)

the Directgov website at [www.direct.gov.uk/en/DisabledPeople](http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/DisabledPeople)

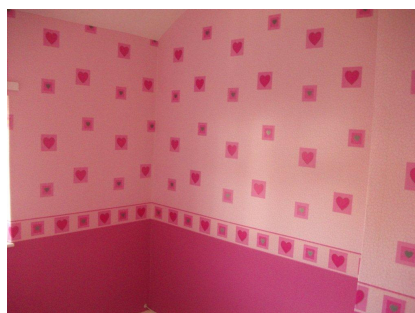
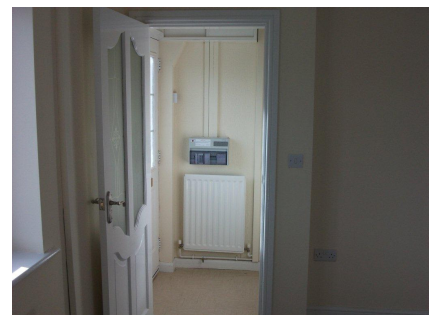
or phone Dudley Council on 0300 555 2345.

This information can also be found on the DFTRA Website.

## Lovells Modernisation at Woodside

On Wednesday 7th March, Martin and Stan were invited by Building Services and Lovells to visit one of the houses that is being modernised on the Woodside Estate. The properties being modernised are 2, 3 and 4 bedroomed houses dated from before the war (circa 1930) and as the bathrooms are next to the kitchens, they don't meet today's Health and Safety standards.

The solution was that the bathroom be relocated upstairs, the kitchen be extended, and a downstairs cloakroom be put in. Martin and Stan were met by Rose and Brian from Lovells, Martin Thomas and Nigel Lindop from building services and Rachel Potterill who is the Housing Manager for the area. They were shown round the property and both Martin and Stan said that Lovells had done a fantastic job and they would move in anytime.



### Norton Green Update

Our Christmas trip to York was a great success. The first meeting of the year and the walkabout were both well attended.

On April 14th we are taking a trip to London for shopping and sight seeing. There are a few seats available at £14 each.

Also, on Saturday 26th May we are having a Diamond jubilee open house from 12-4 including refreshments and a chat. There will be a big raffle and any unwanted gifts would be gratefully received. A donation of the proceeds will be made to Action Heart.

Bas Yeates, Norton Green TRA.

If you wish to submit an article or piece of information, please let Caroline know and either send by post to:

Dudley Federation of Tenants & Residents Associations, The Ground Floor Complex, Booth Court, Lower Derry Street, Brierley Hill, Dudley, DY5 2SJ or email it to [caroline@dfta.org.uk](mailto:caroline@dfta.org.uk). You can also call us on 01384 868 010.

Also, if you have any information for the DFTRA website, please let us know.