



Dudley Federation



of Tenants and Residents Associations

Newsletter October 2014

Celebrating tenants

We're holding our annual Christmas Event again this year. The event will be held on Wednesday 10th December at the Secret Venue in Brierley Hill from 7pm. Invites have been sent to the secretaries of groups so don't forget to let them know if you're interested in attending.

We are working hard with a group of tenants and residents to make the event special.

DFTRA Update

We're really looking forward to celebrating the great work that our members do in December!

If you came to our Annual General Meeting last month then you will already be aware that we have a new board member, John Doughty who has also been co-opted onto the Oval & Tudor TRA committee. We believe that John's experience will bring extra skills and knowledge to the DFTRA board structure which will benefit our Tenants and Residents groups.

Social Media from a Tenants and Residents Association perspective

By Michelle Morgan, Corbyns Bromley TRA

The power of Social Media, in particular Facebook and Twitter, has been a fundamental tool to the successful first year of Corbyns Bromley TRA.

We currently have 370 local people following the updates we post to our Facebook page which is a great achievement. The most amazing thing that Facebook offers is access to viral marketing, our 370 followers all have the ability to share and like our posts, photos, videos or events. If a follower shares our event, all of their followers see that event too meaning that our posts could potentially be read by thousands of local people.

When Corbyns Bromley organised our Black Country Fun Day in July this year, the event was organised pretty much in its entirety using social media. This popular event resulted in our posts reaching over 5000 local people per week, we paid for no advertising whatsoever yet the event was packed out with stalls and visitors.

We regularly post updates using social media on what the TRA are doing, local news from tabloids, updates from Dudley Council and any other issue affecting local people. We also use it to advertise our events and maintain communication with members of our community. Our Facebook page is set up to automatically post our news to Twitter too which means we only have to type it once, it takes a few minutes per day to administrate and you don't need to be a tech genius to use it.

Although Facebook and Twitter are easy to use, you do have to work hard to attract followers; don't expect to get hundreds of likes on pages that just post meeting dates and advertise litter picks as people will only follow what interests them! Our followers don't just want to hear about our TRA activities so, to keep them interested, our posts are eclectically based on a variety of local topics. We updated our followers when X-Factor was in Dudley and when Countryfile was filming at Kinver, we take our own photos of events happening on our housing estates and encourage our followers to share them. When we digitally created an image of 'Pensnett' spelt out on the Countdown board it was shared more than 2000 times. We are also followers of other local pages such as Dudley Council, DFTRA and Spotted: Pensnett to make sure we keep on top of what's happening in our area.

There is no doubt that the marketing powers of social networking have been invaluable to our TRA and we would not have come so far in our first year without it.

Interested in setting up a social media page for your group? Let DFTRA or your Participation Development officer know!

Q&A with... Chapel Street TRA

Q - How long has the group been active?

A - In its' current format, almost 3 and a half years.

Q - What would you say are your biggest success stories?

A - The Capital bid project for netting on balconies to stop pigeons making a mess and sometimes getting into the blocks in high rise flats, getting new grit bins outside blocks, new carpets for blocks that needed carpet repairs, we have introduced regular walkabouts and dealt with fly tipping issues on the estate and we have welcomed some new younger members into the TRA in order to represent the area better.

Q - Have you had any times that you found difficult?

A - One of the main struggles has been getting the Police and the Council to deal with estate issues.

Q - How did the group cope with the tough times?

A - We are very proud of the work that we have already done and it gives us the strength to carry on.

Q - What are your plans for the future?

A - The next step will be to get all outstanding works completed and work with the police and Dudley Council to make the estate a better place to live in.



Spotlight on a capital bid at... Dunns Bank TRA

In December 2012 Dunns Bank TRA put in a capital bid for a lighting column on Bob's Coppice walk. The column was to light a path that leads to the Scout Hut where the group hold their meetings.

They had decided to put in a bid as the absence of lighting on uneven ground was a health and safety issue.

Since the light was installed it has helped, and the group have had good feedback from people using the venue for their meetings and also other events - it has been referred to as 'a lifesaver'.

The TRA said that they found the process simple and easy, and if they did come across anything that needed to be queried the support from DFTRA was excellent. They said that they would put in another bid in the future and they are already looking at other projects.



Winter warmth scheme

Dudley Council's winter warmth scheme which helped more than 600 households keep warm and well in their homes last winter is being launched once again.

Anyone worried about keeping their home warm this winter, struggling with paying their fuel bills or concerned about keeping well at home during the winter can ask for help from the scheme.

All sorts of help can be provided from expert advice on paying fuel bills, help with energy debt, assistance with home energy efficiency improvements and grants, including access to free boiler and home insulation schemes and help accessing warm homes discount funds. Free emergency crisis heating measures are also available, such as portable heaters, blankets and hot water bottles.

It is essential that people start preparing for winter before the cold months set in. If people are concerned about heating their homes they should contact the scheme's helpline to ask for support and advice.

You can call the helpline on **01384 817086**. Advice is initially offered over the phone and is then be followed up by a free home visit, if required.

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