



# Hall Green Community Update



## September 2020 Edition 1

### Welcome to the Hall Green Community Update

Welcome you to the latest edition of the Hall Green Community Newsletter. We hope our readers are keeping safe and well. The start of September has seen Coronavirus cases in Birmingham and surrounding areas rise, meaning that new Coronavirus restrictions have come into place for Birmingham, Sandwell and Solihull from the 15<sup>th</sup> of September. Read about the new Coronavirus restrictions and support that is available to Hall Green constituency residents in this edition of the Hall Green Community Newsletter.

This edition we also have two 'Spotlight On...' articles featuring Birmingham PlayCare Network and Bethel Health and Healing Network. Alongside these features find information on some great local and city-wide projects.

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### Who We Are

Accord is the lead partner for NNS and Early Help for families in the Hall Green Constituency. Our community teams are working across **Moseley, Kings Heath & Brandwood Sparkhill, Sparkbrook, Balsall Heath and Hall Green** to support people of all ages in diverse communities. More details about this citywide partnership can be found [here](#) and [here](#)

- [Neighbourhood Network Scheme](#) (NNS)
- [Children & Families Early Help](#) Network



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## Hall Green Community News

### New Coronavirus Restrictions in Birmingham

Following an increase in Coronavirus cases across Birmingham, Sandwell and Solihull new Coronavirus regulations have come into place in affected areas starting from the 15<sup>th</sup> September 2020.

It is important to remember that support is out there, and we are incredibly lucky in Hall Green to

have a large number of fantastic community organisations that can offer a diverse range of support. From hot meals, prescription and shopping services to telephone befriending, advice and fun activities to help people relax during these stressful times there are plenty of opportunities in Hall Green.

In our COVID-19 News and Information section we have compiled a list of up-to-date resources, information and guidance from trusted organisations. Alongside this a number of beneficiaries of the Hall Green NNS and Early Help COVID-19 resilience funds are able to translate COVID-19 information into a number of community languages. If you or someone you know is struggling please contact the team for support.



### Hall Green COVID-19 Community Consultation

In light of the new Coronavirus restrictions and an increase in cases in Hall Green constituency we will be hosting a community asset consultation with organisations based in Hall Green to find out how we can work together to improve key safety messaging about COVID-19. We also want to find out what communities in our locality need in terms of support moving forward.

The meeting will take place on Zoom on Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2020 6pm to 7pm. To attend please get in touch with the team on [HallGreen.NNSTeam@accordgroup.org.uk](mailto:HallGreen.NNSTeam@accordgroup.org.uk)



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## Early Help Spotlight On... Birmingham PlayCare Network

There are a number of fantastic projects supporting children, families and young people in Hall Green. One such organisation is Birmingham PlayCare Network. For our Early Help Spotlight On... we spoke to Emma Payne who is the Business Development Manager for the organisation whose aim is champion children's right to play whilst combating waste!

### What organisation do you work for, and what is your role?

Birmingham PlayCare Network – Business Development Manager

### How does the work that you do support children, families, vulnerable adults or over 50s?

BPCN is the play association for the city and champions for the child's right to play. We also manage The Scrapstore Birmingham we collect clean business waste to avoid them going to landfill and redistribute items to organisations who will then give those items a second life.

Since the beginning of April 2020 we have used those items to create craft packs for children and families to give them the opportunity to make, create and play.

The packs are made up of simple craft resources along with basics such as pencils, paper, fabric, card, crayons and books. As well as some nice treat items such as soap, bath foam, lego.

All the packs are delivered in a Morsbag – this is a cloth bag made using recycled fabric and they are all produced by our volunteers across the city.

We have also produced craft packs for elders and started a letter writing project called 'Pick me up post' to address issues around isolation and loneliness.

We post lots of makes and ideas on our social media pages including You Tube and Facebook and we also have Instagram and Pinterest.

### What do you enjoy most about your project or the work that you do?

Seeing all the resources coming in knowing they would have been headed for landfill and repurposing them so they can be used for play and craft is the most rewarding part of the role.



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The packs will also give a message to children and families that reuse is so important and time to play and create is essential for childhood.

## Are there any challenges?

Challenges for us are around space and time to process donations. We receive deliveries of items sometimes in large quantities so the challenge is to repurpose those resources to become a fantastic craft kit.

## What is your favourite thing about working in Hall Green Constituency?

Hall Green is a very joined up constituency, we have enjoyed the many networking opportunities that have been created from working there.

To find out more about Birmingham PlayCare Network visit their Website [HERE](#)

## NNS Spotlight On... Bethel Health and Healing Network

For our NNS Spotlight on we spoke to Santosh Rai from the Bethel Health and Healing Network. Santosh is the service manager for the RAPHA Listening Service, a role that she has held since December 2019. During our chat she told us about the project, Bethel Health and Healing Network and gave us an insight into her life outside of her role with the organisation.

Bethel Health and Healing Network are a registered charity that has been providing services for the community since 2006. Bethel Health and Healing Network focus on supporting vulnerable adults to become “physically, emotionally and spiritually healthy” with a focus on supporting people’s health and wellbeing. Alongside the RAPHA Listening Service the charity also provides a Doula service. Doula’s are women who provide emotional and practical support to pregnant women leading up to the birth of their child. Many of the women who access Bethel’s Doula service are referred through their GP surgeries because of vulnerabilities; many have escaped domestic violence or are asylum seekers or refugees without family in Birmingham. Upon referral to Bethel they are assigned



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a volunteer Doula who takes them through their pregnancy journey. The Doula project is funded mainly through Birmingham and Solihull CCG and provides a lifeline to otherwise isolated vulnerable pregnant women.

The RAPHA Listening Service is also a lifeline to those who use it. The Listening Service was developed in 2017 when the charity recognised that there was not a lot of support available for people who were experiencing low level mental health needs. “There are many people who just need someone to talk to, and without that can face deterioration in their mental health”, Santosh explained. After successfully applying to funding from the Tudor Trust the RAPHA Listening Service began and has been supporting people with low level anxiety and depression ever since. The project is delivered by volunteers who are trained in listening and focuses on prevention rather than intervention. As the team are not medically trained, they are unable to support individuals with more complex mental health needs, and those who need more care and support are referred to relevant organisations. The project acts as an important stepping stone for people who might otherwise be shut out from accessing mental health support.

The name of the project is literal, staff and volunteers are there to listen to clients who are experiencing hardship and need to talk. But the name of the project also helps to combat stigmas around mental health that can exist in society, particularly within Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities. Santosh explained that “Within BAME communities there can be a stigma around mental health and accessing mental health support. It can be hard for people from BAME communities to tell their friends and family that they are attending counselling, but if they say they are going to a listening appointment it is easier for their families to understand.” Bethel harnessed previous experience running a counselling service to inform the Listening Service, adapting it to meet the diverse needs of the communities they work with.

Adapting is what Bethel Health and Healing Network are good at, and when COVID-19 hit they were quick to adapt their services and move to providing remote support for their service users. The team were also quick to bring in new volunteers, with a focus on recruiting volunteers with the ability to speak community languages, ensuring that as many people as possible can benefit from their support. This has also enabled Bethel Health and Healing Network to help meet the growing demand for wellbeing support that the Coronavirus pandemic has given way to.

At the time of our chat with Santosh the team were continuing to provide support via social distanced resources. While the pandemic has brought along many challenges it has also



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enabled Bethel Health and Healing Network to try new approaches to the support that they provide. During the pandemic and lockdown measures Bethel were able to trial their Telephone Listening Service, helping them to support hard to reach individuals: “We anticipate that most people will prefer a face-to-face service when lockdown eases, but having a telephone option for people who may not be able to travel to us because of their disabilities or who cannot get childcare, it enables them to access a new service”.

For those who would be accessing face-to-face support, Bethel has a base in the heart of Balsall Heath in Hall Green constituency, as well as a location in Alum Rock in neighbouring Hodge Hill. They also use other venues so people can access support in their local communities. When asked what her favourite part of working in Hall Green is, Santosh informed me that the diversity of the constituency reminds her of her own childhood, “in the early part of my childhood I lived in Handsworth and Lozell’s so the diversity of Hall Green reflects my upbringing. Hall Green has a lot of affluence but there is also a lot of poverty and need, when I see that it reminds me of why the work that we do is so vital.”

Alongside her role with Bethel Santosh owns a consultancy company and works alongside charities to support them with their strategy, planning, monitoring and research. It is this work that lead Santosh to Bethel Health and Healing Network after she got to know the charity through her consultancy work. Her faith was also a big motivation in her working with Bethel, “I am a Christian and have been since I was 21. My faith is a big driver for what I do. I do have a compassion for people and want to use my skills to support others, which is why I was drawn to working with charities and Bethel which is a faith-based organisation.”

With much of Santosh’s work focusing on supporting staff and volunteers working on the RAPHA Listening Service, a role that can have its demands, we wanted to know how Santosh relaxes when she is not at work. Santosh told us that gardening is a big part of her life, “each spring I like to start fresh and replant my garden, I like having new flowers each year”. Santosh also likes to keep active and starts her morning with a hula-hoop routine, something which has kept her active during lockdown measures alongside daily walks. Travelling is another interest of Santosh’s, but she has put this on hold during the pandemic.

Going forward Bethel Health and Healing Network are continuing to provide vital health and wellbeing services to those in need. To find out more information contact Santosh Rai via 0121 389 0267 or [Santosh@bethelnetwork.org.uk](mailto:Santosh@bethelnetwork.org.uk).



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## COVID-19 Information

With new Coronavirus restrictions coming into place in Birmingham, Sandwell and Solihull from Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> of September 2020, below we have compiled a list of trusted information resources to keep you up to date on what the changes mean for people living in Hall Green.

### New COVID-19 Restrictions in Birmingham

#### Local Birmingham Solihull Sandwell Guidance

<http://ow.ly/rpAL50BqZLm>

#### Birmingham City Council FAQ

<http://ow.ly/GWNm50BqZLk>

#### Q&A from Justin Varney on Birmingham Live site

<http://ow.ly/883450BqZLj>

#### National Guidance

<http://ow.ly/O6j650BqZLn>

#### The Rule of Six regulations

<http://ow.ly/HID050BqZLI>

## Trusted Information

It is so important to only follow trusted guidance around the COVID-19 pandemic from legitimate sources. If you are struggling to get the right help or advice you can contact a member of the Hall Green Communities team who will link you in with trusted support on your doorstep.

For details of *Covid-19 Support Services in*

*Sparkbrook, Balsall Heath, Sparkhill, Hall Green, Moseley, Kings Heath & Brandwood* please visit our [WEBSITE](#)



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## Local & City-wide Help and Support

**Stuck at home? Join....  
Carers Zoom at Noon!**

Are you caring for a family member or friend? Let's get together in a new, relaxed way! A cuppa and a chat with other Carers might be just what you need.

Carers Zoom at Noon is on the **last Wednesday of every month, 12 noon until 1pm** from the comfort of your own home. Book your **FREE** place at <https://carerszoomatnoon.eventbrite.co.uk>

To find out more about carer support call us on: **0333 006 9711**

### Forward Carers

With many of us spending more time at home than ever before it can be pretty lonely. And sometime due to our responsibilities in the home it can be hard to go out and meet new people, especially if we are caring for a loved one. To help bridge this gap Forward Carers have a new Carer's Zoom group to enable Carer's to meet other Carer's, make new friends and take some time out all from the comfort of their own homes.

The meetings are free to join and take place on the last Wednesday of each month 12pm to 1pm. To book a place via Eventbrite follow this [LINK](#)



### Age UK Birmingham and Sandwell Later-Life Planning Service

Age UK Birmingham and Sandwell have announced a new later-life planning service for over 50s.

The Charity now offer a professional, low cost Wills and Lasting Power of Attorney Service to clients across Birmingham, Sandwell and Dudley. To find out more information, including the pricelist for services, contact Tricia Scarpelli on 0121 437 0033 or email [laterlifeplanning@ageukbirmingham.org.uk](mailto:laterlifeplanning@ageukbirmingham.org.uk)



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## Get Involved

We want the many unique voices who make Hall Green great to be involved in our Hall Green Communities newsletter. Do you know of a brilliant community project we should be featuring? Or do you want to shine a spotlight on a neighbour who has been supporting people through the pandemic? Perhaps you have an idea for how the Newsletter should look or what we should feature? Regardless of what your suggestion might be we want to hear from you!

Please contact Natalie Tichareva at [Natalie.Tichareva@accordgroup.org.uk](mailto:Natalie.Tichareva@accordgroup.org.uk) to make a suggestion or find out more ways you can get involved with the newsletter.

**Thank you for reading our Hall Green Communities Newsletter**  
**Please stay safe, share this information and encourage others to join our mailing [list](#).**



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