

InspiredLiving

SPRING 2020

THE MAGAZINE FOR OLDHAM PFI RESIDENTS



Teaming up with
Oldham Athletic

STEVEN'S STORY
From customer to colleague

Here's how you can get in touch with us

Call Great Places or Wates on 0300 123 2003

A full range of services are available between 8am and 6pm, Monday to Friday. An extra out-of-hours service, which is provided by Wates, can be reached by using the same number.

Press 1 – for Wates Living Space, who can help you with repairs, refurbishment and new-build enquiries.

Press 2 – for Great Places Housing Group, who can help you with housing management and information on sales units.

Need to email us?

Drop the Great Places team a line on oldhampfi@greatplaces.org.uk or contact the Wates team on infooldhampfi@wates.co.uk.

Come and see us

We're always happy to see you at the Great Places office, which you can find at **119 Union Street, Oldham, OL1 1TE**. The office is staffed from Monday to Friday between 9am and 5pm.

You can also pop into the **Crossley Centre, 323 Denton Lane, Chadderton, OL9 9GA** or call the centre on 0161 652 1419. Alternatively, you can visit the **Primrose Bank Centre, Magnolia Gardens, Primrose Bank** which you can call on 0161 624 7202.



We're online!

Visit www.greatplaces.org.uk and search for Oldham PFI

Like us on Facebook at

www.facebook.com/OldhamPFI

www.facebook.com/CrossleyCentre

www.facebook.com/PrimroseCentre

Follow us on Twitter

@CrossleyCentre @Primrose_Centre

Write to Inspired Living at:

Communications
Great Places Housing Group
2A Derwent Avenue
Manchester
M21 7QP

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investor in excellence



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



Editor: John Walding

(communications@greatplaces.org.uk)

Welcome to

InspiredLiving!

Hello all and welcome to the Spring edition of Inspired Living. As usual its been a busy few months since our last edition, with significant progress in particular being made by both the Primrose and Crossley Community Associations with their funding bids to the National Lottery – fingers crossed they are successful in their efforts to secure £20,000 to deliver a range of activities this year!

Many of you would have completed a recent community peer researcher survey. This has been carried out by both Primrose and Crossley Community Associations, by local volunteers. So far, over 200 surveys have been completed and the results are being reviewed. This will give both charities a strong indication as to what types of activities local residents want, and activities reflecting this will be arranged to suit in the coming year.

We have a fantastic story this edition about Steven, a local resident, volunteer and now apprentice working on the project. We have always focused on building a legacy from the project and our apprentice program is one area we are really proud of that is doing just that.

As usual we are keen to evidence our performance, both good and areas where we would like to improve. Customer feedback is something we are always looking for – your neighbourhood walkabout dates are included so please feel free to come along and give us your thoughts on your neighbourhoods.

Take Care,
Ryan



Ryan Smith
Oldham PFI manager

What's inside?



Steven's Story – From customer to colleague



We first met Steven when he moved into one of our Oldham PFI properties in 2017. Little did we know that two years later he would be supporting customers himself.

Steven Keatley joined the Great Places Oldham PFI Team in October 2019 as a Caretaking Apprentice. However, Steven had been working with the team long before he applied for the role, as he has been an Oldham PFI tenant since he moved out of his family home in March 2017.

When Steven moved into his new home, he was introduced to Amjad (Neighbourhood Coordinator), who encouraged him to start volunteering with the Crossley Community Centre to help tackle the social isolation he was struggling with.

Volunteering at the Crossley Centre helped him immensely and through his hard work and dedication as a volunteer, Steven was encouraged to apply for the Caretaker Apprentice role.

Steven started his role as Caretaker Apprentice in October and immediately made his presence felt. He is fast

becoming an invaluable member of the caretaking team – offering his experiences as a PFI tenant to help improve caretaking service delivery.

As part of his role Steven attends Salford College every Thursday, which he is really enjoying, and at the end of his apprenticeship he will be a qualified Level 2 Property Maintenance Operative.

When we asked Steven how he is finding his role, he said: "I've really enjoyed my time at Great Places so far and I love who I work with. My colleagues have been nothing but welcoming and supportive since my first day here. I really appreciate being given the opportunity to learn the role of a caretaker and I hope to secure long term employment at Great Places."

Amjad added : "It's been an absolute pleasure working with Steven, who on a daily basis presents an infectious positive attitude that spreads to his colleagues helping create a joyful atmosphere.

"Clearly ambitious, senior management figures need to be worried about Steven coming for their positions!"

Neighbourhood News

Keir Starmer shows his skills in the Primrose kitchen on surprise visit



Keir Starmer MP, the frontrunner in the Labour Leadership Election had a chance to show his culinary skills at the Primrose Centre as part of a visit to Oldham in January.

Keir and Jim McMahon MP (Oldham West and Royton) were given a tour of the facility and spoke about the importance of our community-based hub. They also helped to prepare food for the day.

After showcasing his culinary skills, the next stop on the tour of Oldham was to the high street where Debbie Abrahams MP (Oldham East and Saddleworth)

and Cllr Sean Fielding joined Jim and Keir on a walk through the town centre.

Commenting on the visit Jim McMahon OBE MP said, "I am really grateful Keir found the time to come to Oldham during what is sure to be an immensely busy time for him and his team.

"We had an opportunity to see some of the fantastic voluntary work done at Primrose Bank community centre and spent most of the day talking with members of the Labour Party and the public, about what towns like Oldham have to offer our country going forward."

Great Places to team up with partners to make Pocket Park in Crossley

Great Places through the Crossley community association is working with partners including local councillors, Oldham MBC, action together, full circle to create a pocket park in the local area after 10k worth of funding secured.

The Agnes Robinson Pocket Park will be designed to be a safe environment for all local residents to use and enjoy. Local residents will have a chance to see the plans and give their views at a planned consultation event with works to commence very soon.

Neighbourhood News

New ESOL Course at Primrose in March

Are you looking to improve your English skills? Look no further. Places now are available on an ESOL Entry 1 Speaking & Listening course that will be starting next month at the Primrose Centre.

An initial assessment session will be held on Monday 9 March at 11.30am and the course will run on Mondays 11.30am–2.30pm and Fridays 9.30am–12.30pm, starting from 16 March.



**PRIMROSE BANK
COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION**

Charity Registration Number - 1181125

If you are interested in either of these courses please call in or ring **Jan at the Primrose centre on 0161 624 7202** for more information.

Primrose Bank and Wainsford Walk Parking court

Following on from previous letters, newsletter articles in *Inspired Living* and a meeting held at the Primrose Centre last year where a proposal to review the parking court gates took place, this was to discuss the ongoing issue with the damage the gates were enduring.

It was discussed the best option to reduce the level of damage was to remove the motor drives as this was the main element that was being continually damaged. Over the following months the parking court gates on Primrose bank and Wainsford Walk (Keswick site) continued to suffer vandalism and required numerous expensive repairs. After spending over £40,000 repairing these gates the decision was made by the consortium to remove the automatic feature and convert the gates to a manual operation. The security of the gates has not been lost unless the gates are not closed after being used.

A number of gates have now been converted and these are as follows:

- » Chamber Road (lower end)
- » Chamber Road (rear of Olivia Terrace)
- » Lee Street
- » Foxglove Avenue
- » Wainsford Walk (Keswick)

The gates will be converted to a manual operation and will continue to be secured by a magnetic lock, any residents who have use of the parking courts

have been issued with a new fob to allow the gates to be operated. The responsibility to ensure the gates are locked is with you, the user. Please note that replacement fobs will be provided, however if lost or damaged there will be a £20 charge for a replacement.

To operate the new gates please follow the process detailed below:

- » Present your fob to the reader, if recognised one of the gates (lead gate) will be released and the gate can then be manually opened. Once opened, put the drop bolt in place to stop the gate moving (i.e. during high winds). Once the lead gate has been opened, the second gate (slave gate) can then be opened (again this will have a drop down bolt to ensure the gate cannot move). You can now safely drive through the gate.
- » Once you have driven through the gate, the gates will need to be closed.
- » Lift the bolt of the second gate (slave gate) and close the gate, fit the drop down bolt in place to secure the gate.
- » Lift the bolt on lead gate, close the gate and the magnetic lock will engage securing the parking area. The gate can only be opened if the fob is presented to the reader (there will be one fitted inside and outside of the parking area to allow users to enter or leave when required).

Oldham customers have their say at the latest CEO Roadshow



Oldham customers had the opportunity to quiz our Chief Exec, Matt Harrison, and PFI colleagues on a range of issues from complaints handling to antisocial behaviour at the recent CEO Roadshow held at the Primrose Community Centre.

Attendees also provided feedback on how Great Places can look to strengthen relationships and build trust with our customers. The workshop-style session generated some lively discussions, and was part of our work as 'early adopters' of the National Federation of Housing's Together with Tenants initiative. This centres on how the sector can build stronger customer relationships

and is in response to recommendations from last year's Government's Green Paper on Social Housing.

Customers' input will provide valuable insight that, alongside other Housing Associations, we will look to share with the Federation. This will then inform practical recommendations that can be rolled out by all Federation members moving forward.

The session also provided a valuable chance for Matt and Oldham colleagues to chat informally with customers and to update them on the latest news from Great Places and developments in their neighbourhoods.

Neighbourhood Walkabout Dates 2020

MARCH	APRIL	MAY	JUNE
Primrose Bank 4.3.20 at 10am	Primrose Bank 1.4.20 at 2pm	Primrose Bank 6.5.20 at 3.30pm	Primrose Bank 3.6.20 at 10am
Dew Way 11.3.20 at 10am	Dew Way 8.4.20 at 2pm	Dew Way 13.5.20 at 3.30pm	Dew Way 10.6.20 at 10am
Fitton Hill 18.3.20 at 10am	Fitton Hill 15.4.20 at 2pm	Fitton Hill 20.5.20 at 3.30pm	Fitton Hill 17.6.20 at 10am
Crossley 24.3.20 at 10am	Crossley 28.4.20 at 10am	Crossley 26.5.20 at 10am	Crossley 30.6.20 at 10am



What's on in Oldham

Super Saturdays Creative Family Fun **Syd Shelton: Rock Against Racism**

Gallery Oldham

(1st Saturday of each Month)

Be inspired by Gallery Oldham's exhibitions! Super Saturday's include artist led craft activities, painting, drawing and creative fun for all the family on the first Saturday of the month. All Super Saturday activities run 1–3pm are FREE and no booking is required.

For more information visit www.galleryoldham.org.uk

Willow Weaving a Tunnel

Dunwood Park

8 March, 1pm to 4pm. FREE.

Come and have a go at Willow Weaving. An experienced willow weaver will instruct and lead a group of volunteers and members of the public how to construct a willow tunnel in the amphitheatre area of the park. The tunnel will be fixed (planted) in the ground and remain as an attraction within the park. Please dress appropriately as it is a boggy location and the planting of willow is hoped to dry out the area and provide a natural attraction for children to play in.

For more information, visit the Friends of Dunwood Park's Facebook Page.

Gallery Oldham

Saturday 14 March until Sunday 31 May

Syd Shelton's photographs capture one of the most intriguing periods in British post-war history. Between 1976 and 1981, the movement Rock Against Racism (RAR) confronted racist ideology in the streets, parks and town halls of Britain.

RAR was formed by a collective of musicians and political activists to fight racism and fascism through music. Under the slogan 'Love Music, Hate Racism', it showcased reggae and punk bands on the same stage, attracting large multicultural audiences. Shelton photographed performers such as The Clash, Elvis Costello, Misty in Roots, Tom Robinson, Au Pairs and The Specials and their audience, as well as taking contextual social and cultural images that informed the politics of the movement across England and Ireland.

This exhibition revisits the energy of RAR and the creative alliances of black and white musicians, designers, writers, actors, performers and supporters towards a common goal. Shelton's photographs remind us that RAR was a particular treatise on belonging in Britain.

For more information visit www.galleryoldham.org.uk



Uppermill Farmers Market

Saddleworth Museum's community gallery
Every second Sunday in the month. FREE.

Farmers Markets are organised by the "Friends" of the Museum. Currently every second Sunday in the month. Products can change but there are usually breads, cheeses, olives, teas, coffees and chocolates often of high "artisan" quality. Well worth a visit!

For more information www.saddleworthmuseum.co.uk/

For more information
on upcoming events
in Oldham, visit
www.visitoldham.com

Rapunzel

Oldham Coliseum Theatre
21 March – 1.30pm and 5pm

Let your hair down and get tangled in a brand-new musical adaptation of the classic fairy tale, Rapunzel! Immersion Theatre proudly presents a witty, tongue-in-cheek retelling of the family favourite complete with a laugh out loud script, a host of catchy songs, heaps of audience interaction, and an exciting array of magical characters which include a wickedly boo-able witch, a clumsy Prince, and a feisty Princess with the longest hair you're ever likely to come across! With magic and mayhem throughout and a chance to meet the characters after the show, this is one hair-raising adventure the family won't want to miss!

Tickets: £14 (Concessions £12, Family of Four £48)
or more information visit www.coliseum.org.uk

Avenger Universe Partytime

Cockfields Farm
Saturday 14 and Sunday 15 March

Chance to meet and Party with your favourite Avenger characters, all included in your Farm admission ticket.

For more information visit www.cockfields.co.uk



NEWS

from the wider borough

Green Dividend has made a real difference to communities

Over the last four years our Oldham's Green Dividend Fund has helped support 76 community projects across the borough. Dozens of Oldham residents have been in touch to find out how they can get involved in community gardening and growing projects – all in the spirit of 'doing their bit' to improve their neighbourhoods.

To build on that success Council launched the Green Dividend Innovate, a separate pot of money used to improve greenspaces and areas neighbours use through green innovations.

Projects included creating more accessible shared spaces using renewable technologies, for example, using solar lighting to light a back alley, or creating wildlife habitats to promote biodiversity. Many of these innovative green projects are currently a work in progress.

Councillor Ateeque Ur-Rehman, Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Services said: "One of Oldham's strengths is its people, the pride they take in their neighbourhoods and their willingness to pitch in and 'do their bit'.

"Residents are proud they live here, and the work carried out thanks to Green Dividend funding is a great example of that.

"People of all ages got involved to transform area and make a real difference".

The Green Dividend tied in with the Council's Green Oldham campaign, which encouraged residents and organisations to make environmentally conscious choices.

£306m investment strategy approved by Oldham Council

An ambitious plan to transform Oldham, including creating more than 2,000 new homes in the town centre, 1,000 new jobs and 100 apprenticeship opportunities, has been approved by Oldham Council.

The 'Creating a Better Place' vision will unlock £306m of investment across Oldham by focussing on building more homes for local people, delivering new jobs through town centre regeneration, and ensuring Oldham is a great place to visit and do business.

Oldham Council has undertaken a detailed review of the regeneration plans for the borough in order to strengthen the focus on building homes in the town centre. This means it will be able to meet the urgent need for more housing for residents – designed for a range of budgets and needs – by prioritising urban sites, and where possible, avoiding building on greenbelt land to protect the borough's much-loved open spaces.

'Creating a Better Place' is expected to significantly boost regeneration across the town centre, making it a destination of choice with lots of family-friendly and accessible places to go, creating a vibrant night-time economy and improving the variety of retail space. The Council is also committed to preserving Tommyfield Market and providing a sustainable future for it.

Councillor Sean Fielding, Leader of the Council, said: "Since becoming Leader of the Council I have listened to what residents are saying about the future of the borough and I have undertaken a detailed review of the evidence.

"I believe that this refocus of our plans will be revolutionary for Oldham, bringing jobs, homes and investment into our town centre and will help to create a better place to work, live and visit.

"Oldham Town Centre is at the heart of our borough and the potential to create lasting change is immense. Together, we can Create a Better Place to secure the future of our town centre and ensure it thrives."



Oldham Athletic teams up with Great Places to offer local employment training

Oldham Athletic is teaming up with Great Places Housing Group and Oldham Athletic Community Trust (OACT) to offer employment training for members of the community across Oldham.

A SIA course held across two weekends will provide local residents with the skills to work in the security industry and a SIA licence upon completion. The course, funded by Great Places, will offer preferential places to its customers and OACT project participants but is also open to members of the wider public.

Suitable candidates, who successfully complete the training, will also be guaranteed a job interview by Oldham Athletic for a role as one of their match day stewarding team. They will also receive ongoing support from Great Places Employability coach and EDU training to find employment.

Places are limited so preference will be given to those currently attending an OACT project and Great Places customers. However, anyone interested should register in case places become available.

Commenting on the upcoming programme, Rebecca Cremin, Community & Partnerships manager at Great Places said: "Great Places is delighted to be working in partnership with OACT and EDU training. This project provides local residents with a great employment opportunity and the chance to establish a career with real prospects in the security industry." The four-day course will take place on 29 February and the 1, 7 and 8 March 2020 at the EDU Training Centre.

For more information on the course please email: rebecca.cremin@greatplaces.org.uk

For more information on the job roles available within the Oldham Athletic match day stewarding team please email safety@oldhamathletic.co.uk

Great Places and Equity Housing Group to come together to form new organisation

greatplaces & EQUITY

A NEW PARTNERSHIP

The big news for Great Places in 2020 is that in April we are coming together with the Equity Housing Group to form a new organisation.

Nothing will change for you in terms of your tenancy, lease or licence because of the partnership, but being part of a bigger organisation – which will still be called Great Places – means we'll be able to provide better services, build more houses and invest more in our communities.

If you have any questions about the partnership please ask a Great Places colleague or log on to www.greatplaces.org.uk to find out how to contact us via web chat, email, phone or social media.



How are we doing?

Overall satisfaction

93%



Arrears collection

98%



Average time to re-let a home

211 year to date

Estate walkabouts held

8 – as of February 2020

Number of live complaints

0



% of calls answered in 15 seconds or less

95%



No of responsive repairs completed

2613

Gas services completed

551

Repairs post-inspected

358 (14%)

Repairs completed on day of reporting

92%

Repairs completed on first visit

90%