



THE HEART OF GREENSTEAD



Edition 6: Community Matters

The Taskforce team had our first meeting of 2023. Colchester City Council's Heart of Greenstead project manager Daniel Barton gave a presentation and completed a Q&A session. Various organisations and services are involved in The Heart of Greenstead and local community projects. Our team are always looking for new members to have their say, we welcome new ideas and opinions.

If you know of anyone that would be interested in the Heart of Greenstead project please share my contact email: leilaharrison@community360.org.uk

This edition introduces you to some of the people making a difference in the community. Now we are moving into February...Spring is not to far away...

Nicola Davey: Greenstead Community Centre Manager. CBH Board member, School Guvnor & local resident.

Nicola has managed Greenstead Community centre since 2021. It provides a local warm space and facilitates numerous social groups. Visitors come in of all ages and the centre is inclusive to everyone. People pop in for a chat or to offload their troubles. This winter has seen an escalation in local residents attending the centre who are struggling, requiring advice and support with housing, finances and other sensitive problems. Nicola would like to do more to reach everyone as she knows that many members of the community are not regularly accessing the centre, possibly due to working during business hours, or have mobility issues. The centre brings people together, is a heartfelt place with no judgement. Nicola's goal is to continue to keep giving back to the community. Everyone who knows Nicola (Nic), knows she cares very much in all she does.

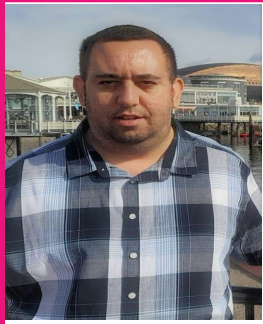


Colchester Walking & Cycling Routes

Essex County Council have been holding a consultation to improve walking and cycling in Colchester, including enhancing the link between the City centre, Greenstead & the University of Essex. This consultation will help inform the designs for this improvement, including developments along East Hill. A short survey was open from November to January but lots of background information is still available to view online. The Bid will always position itself to argue minimal disruption for business whilst developments occur. You can read more about the proposal here:

<https://www.essexhighways.org/colchester-walking-and-cycling>





Taskforce Member: David Carley

Greenstead resident of two years. "Everyone has a voice and everyone needs to be heard".

David brings to the table knowledge of the area, and asks questions that need to be asked. A gardener by trade with naturally green fingers, David appreciates the multitude of natural green spaces, including Salary Brook Local Nature Reserve. He describes Greenstead as a community that stands together strong with people wanting to help others. David cares about local issues and is directly involved with the following groups: Residents Voice, Tenant Inspector CBH, Reading Policies and the Community Incentive Fund. He supports our local businesses, the Co-Op, Johnny Macs Fish & Chip shop & Kelly's Café. He likes the varied and useful community groups facilitated by the community centre and is a service user of the GP Surgery and chemist. David and his partner would like to remain in Greenstead, he is hopeful for the future here.

The Greenstead Growers: Lisa Cross

The Greenstead Growers started from two seeds.

The first came about when some self-seeded tomatoes grew on a grassy area by Macbeth Close garages, prompting residents to joke about having a garden there and the second when Lisa and some friends planted spare vegetable seedlings in trough at Greenstead Centre during the Covid pandemic. Cllr Julie Young kindly gave funds from her locality budget to help start the Greenstead Growers group. With the help of friends, neighbours and Together We Grow CIC they created what is now a productive community garden in Macbeth Close with satellite beds at the Community Centre, and in Cyril Child Close where one of the Growers live. The Greenstead Growers are a group of 12 local residents who meet socially, grow veg, and encourage others to do the same. Very little stops them gardening, a few weeks ago they briefly met at the garden to dig up some new potatoes for Christmas and share a mince pie and mulled wine. Lisa is also a taskforce member.



Neighbourhood warden: Casey Harrison

Funded by the Police, Fire, and Crime Commissioner

Casey has been in his current role since October of last year. Previously worked for the NHS on the covid wards within physiotherapy, he was with Colchester Council for ten years working on communities and served 8 years in the parachute regiment. His background has revolved around helping people in one way or another and he continues to enjoy dealing with the public everyday within a variety of tasks such as dealing with fly tips, graffiti, antisocial behaviour, visiting with vulnerable community members and supporting individuals to access the Foodbanks. Also collaborating with other services to hold community events and he works with the police making a positive impact on the community, especially Greenstead where there is a diverse range of residents. Casey's favourite part of his job is making a positive change with his role by reducing the amount of fly tipping within Greenstead, connecting people in need to the Foodbank and locating information to help a vulnerable resident get their waste collected & other general assistance if they need more support. Casey is proud to be a part of making Greenstead a safer place for all the residents and visitors to the area, enabling the community to be proactive to work with him.



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Hate Crime & Antisocial Behaviour in Greenstead:

The Home Office have invested £500,000 to Colchester City Council's Safer Street project improving safety in Greenstead. This includes new mobile CCTV systems, employing a full time neighbourhood warden. Community action days, youth projects to tackle antisocial behaviour & improving visibility on pedestrian pathways. This will bring comfort to many people in the local neighbourhood concerned for safety, especially in the evenings after dark. Plans for a Hate Crime reporting Centre in Greenstead are in development. I will share more information about this as it happens. **Join Casey Harrison on 'A Community Day Of Action' on February 13th 10:00 AM - 2:00 PM at Greenstead Community Centre.**

Featuring Essex Fire Safety, Essex Police, DR Bikes Skate Park & lot's more. There will be Freighter service for bulky items of waste, picking up fly tips, litter picking volunteers graffiti removal, play site repairs and East Light Housing.

In a recent local survey I asked "What do you not like about Greenstead?"

21% Are concerned with teenagers posing as a risk & causing antisocial behaviour.

18% Are unsatisfied with the quality of street light at night.

9% Do not go out at all after dark due to feeling unsafe



Refugee, Asylum seeker & Migrant Action **Action is the antidote to despair**

Elizabeth Long: Partnerships Manager of RAMA

"I'm moved by the awful plight of people who have to leave everything they know behind, move to a completely different country and learn a new language *just* to have the privilege of living a life in safety."

Not everyone is aware of the difference between refugees and asylum seekers. Those who have refugee status have the same rights as a British citizen, while asylum seekers are still waiting for that positive decision from the Home Office. Asylum seekers survive on limited funds, and are housed in shared accommodation provided by National Asylum Seekers Support Service (NASS) with others who often don't speak a different language. Most are young men, and they can be moved at a moments notice anywhere in the UK. A negative decision, if the Home Office does not approve them as a refuge, means they are liable to be removed from the country. **RAMA:** Individuals use this service for support with many aspects of their new lives. They are helped to find legal services, register with a local GP practice, attend medical and legal appointment's, enrol children into education, arrange language lessons and deal with the Home Office. RAMA has a Food Bank situated in the centre. A refugee can claim benefits: an asylum seeker in shared housing get's £40 a week for food & bills, but if in a hotel accommodation with a room & food, they are given an allowance of £8 a week. Community360 provides a a shuttle bus for the asylum seekers housed in a local hotel.

Greenstead currently has approximately 133 individuals in Home Office accommodation, including 15 families. They are registered with the GP surgery and use local facilities & shops. Most have settled well into their surroundings and are grateful for the kindness of local services. There have been some low level antisocial behaviour experienced in Greenstead, reported as a hate crime, but generally the newcomers tend to keep a low profile. Foreign university students living in Greenstead also visit RAMA for support when struggling with costs. Fortunately, one female refugee now works in her children's primary school after being here a year, one has a placement at Essex University and has been offered a job at the end of it. Some refugees have planted trees locally through a gardening programme. People are giving back to the community that is helping them.

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Sara Kulikowski: Manager of Signpost.

Signpost is a small charity formed in 1994 to support the long term unemployed back to work

Their delivery is client centred & employment is the main focus of conversations with people. Other needs frequently surface requiring “signposting” to multiple partner organisations. Notorious for CV writing, Signpost provide continual additional community support. Since 2016 they help deliver the Big Energy Saving Network project, engaging with vulnerable households to provide energy efficiency advice & support. This year Signpost registered to issue fuel vouchers to service users on a pre-payment meter using their emergency credit, to support with rising energy costs.

Fuel poverty is now a big issue. Housing & benefit concerns repeatedly make it impossible for people to focus on finding work until these barriers are removed by signposting to partners experienced in those areas. Signpost deliver ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) sessions for Ukrainian refugees, combined with employability support to help them find work. Signpost are completing two 6-year projects funded by the National Lottery/European Social Fund, supporting people with common mental health problems & disabilities/long term health conditions back to work or education. These projects are extremely successful, providing intensive 1-2-1 support over an indefinite period of time. Footfall through the centre has reduced since the Covid pandemic allowing the team to provide additional support to individuals. There’s regular enquiries and the volunteers are fully booked with new year job searches. Employment opportunities are limited in the local area (retail, local schools, and a nearby care home) but Greenstead is on a great bus route to the town centre where more opportunities are available

Recent Signpost support success story:

A work-related injury left GC unable to work for several years, impacting on his finances, housing and mental health. Recovery meant alternative work, Signpost supported him step by step to secure a position as Community Caretaker Trainee with Colchester Borough Homes.

Sara enjoys most the diversity in her role, every day is different. Her passion is working alongside volunteers— finding what motivates them and watching them grow & develop. I’m always humbled by the time they give and the skills they bring.

The Signpost Team

Basic Signpost stats, general weekly footfall.

Between January and December 2022 Signpost helped 386 new service users. Recorded over 600 interactions with existing service users. Helped over 75% of service users move into training or employment
95% reported improvements in employability skills.
98% reported improved confidence and wellbeing.
89% reported improved self-esteem and confidence.



The Community Challenge Lab: with Essex University. Started on 05/12/22

Three projects have been proposed for Greenstead community:

- *Greenstead Care: Community & Residents experience of care, health & wellbeing.
- *Connecting the community: Community at the Heart of Greenstead.
- *Emerges: Exploring determinants of Mental Health Resilience in Greenstead.

These projects have been created and will be developed with input from professionals and community members & residents. Each project is designed to benefit the community and undertake health and wellbeing issues. The projects will be completed in phases.

DON'T FORGET: Walking group sessions take place on the First Monday of every month

A Community Day of Action—13th February 10:00 AM– 14:00PM Greenstead Community Centre.

I LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU AT THE NEXT TASKFORCE MEETING 8th February held at Greenstead Community Centre,