



Pupils from Sacred Heart RC Primary School have been

on pins and needles over the past few weeks... and not just in anticipation of an impending visit from Father Christmas! The youngsters have also been taking part in a series of fun, interactive sewing workshops delivered by the vice-chair of Leigh Neighbours, Jan Eckersley.



During the sessions, the children have learnt how to create pin cushions, lavender-scented sachets and various Christmas decorations.

As well as finding out about sewing patterns and other tools of the trade, each of the junior dress-makers also learnt their way around a sewing machine, from how to thread the needle and position the fabric, to applying just the right amount of pressure to the foot pedal to get the machine going.



"They've done so well and taken everything on board so quickly," says Jan. "I expected them to feel slightly overwhelmed - but far from it! They have been entirely immersed in the workshops and have enjoyed themselves."

"Learning to sew is a valuable life skill and an ideal craft activity for children. Whilst having fun, they're also developing hand/eye co-ordination, improving manual dexterity, demonstrating attention to detail and applying focussed concentration to the task at hand."



Jan is pictured with Sacred Heart Teaching Assistant Kerry Pattinson and (l-r) Ali, Kaycee, Lukasz & Mahan

She adds: "Completing a sewing project also fosters a sense of achievement and can boost a child's self-worth. I'm delighted to see how some children have blossomed over the past few weeks - particularly one youngster not long arrived from Eastern Europe, with little experience of a typical classroom environment and a limited grasp of English, who has been totally engaged in the sessions and has really grown in confidence."

Jan is now looking to share her sewing skills with families and is keen to hear from other volunteers who can help her deliver more sessions in schools. "I'd love to get mums and dads sewing. It's a really sociable pastime which encourages people to come together. It can be great fun - if at times a little galling when things don't exactly go according to plan. But you come to learn that's all part of the appeal!"

If you'd like to get involved, or have some fabric or haberdashery items that you would like to donate, please email us at info@lnpb.org.uk



Our chair, Susan Gredecki, reflects on a busy year for Leigh Neighbours...

At this time of year, it's natural to look back on the journey you've been on over the previous twelve months, both the highs and the lows. But in spite of some well-reported challenges here in Leigh West during the year, 2019 has been memorable for many positive reasons – and we shouldn't allow these to be forgotten.

For me, friendship has been a consistent theme of 2019. We've seen familiar faces - old and young - at our popular hanging basket workshops, and made new friends at events such as the recent coffee morning we hosted with The Tim Parry Jonathan Ball Peace Foundation. Getting to know our neighbours was also the message at *Global Friends*, an evening of celebration that we recently sponsored in support of young people from migrant families. In fact, creating opportunities for residents to meet up together and make new friends is a constant thread which runs through everything we do.



Raising the aspirations of young people has again featured strongly for us in 2019. The work we carry out in the area, especially in partnership with schools, is paying dividends. We're delighted to see children growing in self-esteem, developing important life skills, embracing challenges and embarking on new experiences. Likewise, we're seeing far greater engagement with adults, as well. We have more volunteers working with us than ever before, all committed to making a positive difference in Leigh West, and all demonstrating a 'can do' attitude which we hope will encourage more people to get involved. Our thanks to you for everything you do.



Nurturing community relationships has never been more important. We are proud of the collaborative approach we take, working in partnership with local agencies, charities, community groups, schools, churches, businesses and, of course, local residents. We're grateful to all those who have applied to our Residents' Fund, who work tirelessly 'at the coalface' to deliver events, activities and initiatives that improve the lives of local people. We're delighted to play our part in helping them help others through our funding programme. Our thanks must also go to our partners - especially Wigan Council and the ward members here in Leigh West - and to Local Trust for having the confidence in us to administer the National Lottery investment on behalf of The Community Fund.

As well as reflecting on the past, this time of year is also a time for looking ahead. We're beginning to put plans in place for 2020 and we'd love to have your input. If you have ideas, please let us know by contacting us via social media or emailing info@lnpb.org.uk. Or why not drop in to our base on Walmesley Road...? 2020 looks set to be an exciting year for Leigh. There's a lot to look forward to, what with the opening of the new cultural hub which is going to be great for the town, as well as some prestigious sports highlights in the pipeline. We're already thinking of how we might capitalise on these opportunities by working with partners to organise some complementary events and activities - so watch this space! We'll keep you posted in future issues of *NeighbourLeigh News*.

Helping to build a stronger, more tolerant community has always been one of our key priorities, and it will continue to be one of our driving ambitions for 2020. Expanding our work with young people, helping to make our project area 'cleaner and greener', promoting healthy initiatives and creating opportunities for local people... that's what our 2020 is going to be all about! And I really hope you can be part of it. In the meantime, on behalf of all of us at Leigh Neighbours, I wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Best wishes, Susan Gredecki

Top right: Students from The Prince's Trust Team Programme take part in our hanging basket workshop.

Bottom left: Susan Gredecki pictured on a walkabout with Wigan Council chief executive Alison McKenzie-Folan.

Leigh Neighbours PROJECT in pictures October-December



Mark Dickinson brought his grandson Leo along to our recent **Be Seen Be Safe** event. He later commented on our Facebook page: "Excellent work by all involved! It was Leo's bike that received the "Full Monty" service... brakes, lights and full check up so to speak.... All very much appreciated. Thank you very much indeed to all staff that went above and beyond to help all the kids be safe and be seen..." (Mark, you're very welcome!)

The Tim Parry Jonathan Ball Peace Foundation recently hosted a coffee morning in partnership with Leigh Neighbours in a bid to bring communities together, encourage people to make friends and find common ground with their neighbours.



Every Christmas, Leigh Neighbours makes a series of donations to primary schools and community groups in the area for them to distribute in support of local families. Here's how some of this funding is being spent in the community this Christmas...

Christmas donations



Sacred Heart pupils Emily, James and Freya are pictured with Selby Court resident Audrey Ward and their teacher, Miss Cahill

Pupils from Sacred Heart RC Primary School used their donation to make up some Christmas hampers which they hand delivered to the residents of Selby Court. Headteacher, Helen Ahmed, says: "They were thrilled to play a part in bringing smiles to the faces of residents. It's so important they understand the joy of giving from an early age and what better time to experience this than at Christmas!"



Pupils from Leigh St Mary's CE Primary School Maiya, Millie and Zachary are pictured with headteacher Deborah Catchatoor at the school's enchanting Christmas carol service held recently at St Mary the Virgin's Church.

Leigh Neighbours donated £500 to the school to be distributed to local families. Deborah says: "As part of the story of the Holy Nativity, children learn the importance of compassion and kindness, and how sharing what they have with those less fortunate than themselves can make a huge difference. We're grateful that Leigh Neighbours has once again provided a donation to the school, and we'll ensure that this is shared with families in our area who will benefit from having a little extra support. Last year, we distributed some cinema tickets so that families could enjoy a day out and it was really well received, so we hope to do something similar again this year."

Warren Done from Atherton & Leigh Foodbank is pictured with the chair of Leigh Neighbours, Susan Gredecki, at a recent distribution day at Kingsleigh Methodist Church.

He says: "We're always grateful to our friends at Leigh Neighbours and to all the generous people in our community who donate to the foodbank. The Christmas donation means we can do even more over the festive period, and help make it that little bit special for families who would otherwise go without."

Look out for the next collection day at Sainsbury's on Sunday 22nd March. You can also find out how to donate by emailing donewarren@yahoo.co.uk, calling 07980 881925 or visiting www.athertonleigh.foodbank.org.uk



Leigh West Neighbourhood Policing Team news update:

We have been dealing with many reports of anti-social behaviour in and around the town centre, which affects not only shoppers - many of whom are elderly or with young children and pushchairs - but also local businesses. We are urging parents and guardians to know where their children and teenagers are at all times and we've increased patrol presence at peak times in a bid to deter such behaviour.

We are carrying out some plain clothes work in the weeks leading up to Christmas and will be present in the main shopping areas including Spinning Gate and Parsonage Retail Park. We ask people to be especially vigilant with their belongings at this time of year, as shopping areas are often crowded and people are busy and more easily distracted. Please don't leave bags unattended or walk around with bags open. Also, pay particular attention when using a cash machine.

We want everyone to have a pleasant festive shopping experience in Leigh and are carrying out these patrols to prevent not only retail theft, but also personal thefts.

We've carried out some outreach work with partners from Wigan Council, working overnight and in the early hours, locating and assisting those presenting as homeless or found sleeping rough, and offering them our support. Our aim is to have nobody sleeping rough on the streets of Leigh. We do encourage people not to give money to those begging and perhaps instead consider helping with an item of warm clothing or a hot drink.

Finally, we also urge people in the cold weather NOT to leave their car defrosting unattended with the engine running. This is something we see every year, and thefts from motor vehicles always increases as a result. Please allow yourself a few extra minutes to defrost your windscreen whilst ensuring your car remains secure.

For the latest updates visit www.gmp.police.uk or follow us on social media. Emergencies should always be on 999 and any reports that are non-urgent can be made online, via GMP live chat or by calling 101. You can also call CRIMESTOPPERS free and anonymously on 0800 555 111.

Resident's Fund

We've got a pot of money for local people and community groups to tap into - and it can be used for all sorts of different initiatives! So, what's stopping you?!

Wellbeing Dominoes

gave teaching staff at the school tools and ideas designed to help them improve the mental health of children in their care using a variety of arts and crafts. They were shown how to deliver fun, interactive games which focus on relaxation, connection, cooperation, collaboration and creativity.



We provided the funding for staff at Leigh Central Primary School to undergo specialist training with Cartwheel Arts.



Meanwhile, **The Well Women Centre**, a women's support group based on Church Road, recently received £500 from Leigh Neighbours to provide support and training to vulnerable women who live in the project area. The centre, which in part specialises in supporting women in the criminal justice system, will use the money to deliver a 6-week programme designed to develop life skills, improve self-confidence and provide access to training opportunities.

We'll be following the progress of the project in future issues of *NeighbourLeigh News*. For more information about the centre, call 681411 or visit www.wellwomencentre.co.uk

Leigh Neighbours board member, John Gredecki, spoke from the heart when he addressed the audience of the **Global Friends Young People's Group**. John recounted the experiences of his father who migrated from Poland, and called upon the community to offer a warm welcome to all new arrivals to Leigh.



Hosted by Wigan Council's People's Directorate (Children, Adults and Families), the event was part funded by Leigh Neighbours, and provided an opportunity for young people from diverse backgrounds to explore and celebrate their cultural identities through art and performance, as well as giving them a chance to showcase their creative talents.

If you've got an idea for a community initiative and you'd like to find out about potential funding opportunities from Leigh Neighbours, please email us on residentsfund@lnpb.org.uk

This newsletter is brought to you by Leigh Neighbours, a community project set up by Big Local, a National Lottery charity which is investing £1 million in our area over the course of 10 years. Leigh Neighbours is working hard to deliver on the issues that matter to local people. Our base at 14 Walmesley Road is used for lots of social and leisure activities which residents are invited to take part in, and the function room is also available for hire. For more information about Leigh Neighbours and how to get involved in your community, please drop in, visit our website www.lnpb.org.uk or email us at info@lnpb.org.uk You can also find us on Facebook and Twitter!

WINTER TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Council offices will be closed on 25th Dec, 26th Dec, 28th Dec, 29th Dec and 1st Jan. The contact centre will be open to take calls on the 24th, 27th, 30th and 31st Dec from 9am – 4pm. For opening times please check the council website at www.wigan.gov.uk

Leigh Life Centre will be open from 9am – 4pm on 24th, 27th, 30th & 31st Dec and closed on 25th, 26th, 28th, 29th Dec & 1st Jan.

For information relating to adult social care, contact the central duty team on 828777. Home Care Service remains as normal throughout the holiday period. For enquiries, contact your service provider.

Leigh NHS Walk-In Centre offers fast and convenient access to healthcare advice, information and treatment. No appointment is necessary and the centre is open from 7am to 9pm seven days a week, including during the holiday period. It is situated at Leigh Health Centre, The Avenue, Leigh, WN7 1HR, and can be contacted by phone on 483453.

If your GP or Dentist is closed, you can contact the NHS on 111 for confidential health information and advice 24/7 or go online www.111.nhs.uk

GP Evening, Weekend and Bank Holiday Appointments call 482848.

GP Emergency Out of Hours Service, ring 111.

Emergency Dentist 8am – 10pm, 7 days a week, call 0333 332 3800.

If you are experiencing domestic abuse from a partner, ex-partner or family member, you can get free and confidential help.

Police (non-emergency)	101
Police (emergency)	999
DIAS (Drop in and Share)	495230
Victim Support	0300 303 0162
RESPECT	0808 802 4040
National Domestic Abuse helpline	0808 200 0247
Wigan Council Housing Options	489005
Your Housing Group (refuge)	0345 345 0272
End the Fear	0161 636 7525

Samaritans works to make sure there's always *someone there for anyone who needs someone*. Call Samaritans free 24/7 on 116 123.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Any spare books lying around...? If so, Leigh Neighbours Board Member, Michelle Downs, would love to hear from you! The Teaching Assistant from Sacred Heart Primary wants to build a mini-library at the school and is looking for children's and adult education books. Please can you drop them off at Leigh Neighbours, 14 Walmesley Road. Thanks!!



We're delighted to report that Leigh Neighbours was awarded a Level 3 Advancing at this year's **Wigan In Bloom**. Great news! Anyone interested in entering next year can do so by emailing inbloom@wigan.gov.uk or by contacting the borough's In Bloom co-ordinator on 486578. And of course if you're based in our area, we'd love to hear from you, too. And finally, it's confirmed that **Leigh Canal Festival** is happening on 5th-6th September next year, coinciding with the Bicentenary of the opening of the Leigh branch of the Leeds & Liverpool Canal. We're delighted to be supporting it again in what promises to be a memorable year. Organisers are keen to hear your ideas for activities and food stalls, and would also love to see your pictures from this year's event. You can email them at leighcanalfestival@gmail.com