



# The Oak Tree Centre Annual Report 2008

King's Community Church  
Project

May 2009

## Welcome to the Oak Tree Centre

*Press the button to release the door,  
and in walks a friend,  
a stranger,  
an old lady or a teenager.  
When you say, 'Hello, welcome to  
The Oak Tree Centre',  
the smiles come without thinking.  
'How are you?' comes next.  
Then you listen.  
'Isn't the weather awful'  
Or, 'wonderful',  
Or 'cold', they say,  
whichever word fits the day.*



*Being on reception is such a friendly  
start  
Each swing of the door brings an-  
other smile,  
Another 'Hello.'  
Maybe the visitor wants to talk  
about their aches and pains,  
Or their sick child,  
or their housebound mum',  
or how their child has passed their  
Grade 2 piano exam.  
You answer the phone,  
Or open the door,  
For an old man with a stick,  
Or a mum with a heavy pushchair.  
You just have to be there.*

*'Welcome to The Oak Tree Cen-  
tre'*

*That's the work,  
The joy,  
The gist*

*Of being an Oak Tree Centre Re-  
ceptionist.*

*Ann Wilde*

*Visitors to the Oak Tree centre  
will meet Ann on duty at recep-  
tion on Tuesday mornings.*

*Ann's career started in teach-  
ing; she then moved to Christian  
radio, working with Radio  
Worldwide. A children's writer  
for many years, she has had 3  
books published. She is now pur-  
suing writing as a hobby and is  
writing longer stories.*

### Inside this issue:

**Chairman's Report 2**

**Our New website—  
thanks to SCIPS 2**

**Comments about  
the Oak Tree Cen- 3**

**Financial Report 3**

**Directors' biogra- 4  
phies**

**Directors' biogra- 5  
phies**

**Achievements in 6  
2008**

Ann is one of a team of 10 volunteer Receptionists, providing on average **27** hours of cover per week, that is more than **1000** hours per year. This year we welcomed Asha Kattri and Stuart Lamb to the team. A big thank you to Graham Middleton, who covers for all our party bookings.



## Chairman's Report



*'When we work together it's amazing what can be achieved.'*

When you walk through Brandhall these days it has changed so much. For those of us here every day it happens bit by bit and we don't always see the impact the changes are making. But, when people return to visit they are amazed at the changes that have taken place.

It has been a privilege to be part of that change and to see the friendships that have forged us together as a community. Doing things on our own virtually makes it impossible to make a differ-

ence but when we work together it is amazing what can be achieved.

Some folk are absolute stalwarts when it comes to community and Brandhall doesn't know the debt of gratitude that it owes to people like George Watkiss\* and Joyce Richardson \*who have worked so hard over so many years to make Brandhall a better place to live. It's an honour to have them on the Board of Trustees.

The Oak Tree Centre has

played an important part in all of this and its relationship with the church has meant that we have been able to offer many things that help bring Brandhall together. The many man hours that are given by volunteers and the various groups that meet within its walls have made it a hub of activity.

There was a time that I would drive past the church and people would see cars outside the building and ask me what was happening. I would stop the car and go

## 'Bringing the community of Brandhall together'



in and check just in case we were being burgled! Now I rarely know why there are so many cars outside because there are so many things going on I have lost track of the activities inside.

As minister of the church and chairman of the Board it's been a real buzz for me to see us working together and

sharing our lives. Friendships that have been forged are lifetime relationships and to me it has been an expression of God's kindness to us as we have shared problems, hopes and dreams and discover that He is not tucked up comfortably in heaven but passionate about being involved in our lives.

Who knows what next year will reveal?!

*Mark Timmins*

\* Read more about George and Joyce in our directors' biographies on pages 4 and 5

## A new Website—Thanks to SCIPS!

Last June we hosted a very successful fund-raising training event, with the object of helping our staff and volunteers to raise funds for their groups. Our tutor was Rob Harvey-Duffield of SCIPS (Sandwell Community Information Partnership).

We weren't previously aware that Rob was involved with IT

Empowerment Project, and was offering a free service to community groups, setting up their own website.

So we took the plunge, and asked Rob to set up our website—which was long overdue. Our thanks to Rob for all the hours of work involved, and also his excellent design ideas.

Have a look at the website, [www.oaktreecentre.co.uk](http://www.oaktreecentre.co.uk) where you can read about the history of the Project, download Annual Reports, look at photos of the Centre, find out our programmes, etc. A big thank you to Rob and SCIPS in getting us started. We look forward to improving our website over time!



## Your comments about The Oak Tree Centre...

2008 saw growth in all the family-based groups meeting in the Centre. There are now **32** families attending Stay and Play, and **45** attending Toddler Plus—so many that leaders have had to start a waiting list. The Centre is now used for Family groups/ creche on 6 days per week!

Some comments from Toddler Plus parents:

- 'always activities for the children'
- 'a lot of good toys ,a happy

### friendly place'

- I like it being clean and new'
- 'the children enjoy playing'
- 'Very welcoming'
- 'great effort goes into running the Centre'
- 'clean and fresh'
- 'Friendly and helpful'
- Informative about events'
- 'Very good, fan-

### tastic groups'.

- 'Staff very helpful and welcoming'

This year we promoted the Centre as an excellent venue for birthday parties. Comment from parents who booked the Centre for their child's birthday party:

- 'Excellent- the best venue we've found for miles around— everything's clean, bright, airy and new.'



'Body & Tone' keep fit class

## Financial Report

### Loan

Oak Tree Centre finances include repayments towards the **£100,000** loan towards construction costs. At the beginning of the year we owed **£41,180**. During the year we repaid **£14,210**, thus owing **£26,970** at the end of the year.

We thank everyone who contributed so we could pay of this amount in just one year.

### Running Costs

Our income increased by £1500 during the year, much of this from an increase in outside book-

ings. However, our outgoings also increased, due to increases in wages, utility bills and other costs. Thus our cash reserves decreased from £10,000 to £5,000 at the year end. This result was achieved with no outside funding so,

**'We repaid over £14,000 capital on the loan in 2008'**

## Looking ahead to 2009.....

We will need an income of **£21,000** just to run the Centre at its present level. To increase our groups and replace some furniture and equipment, we will need over **£30,000**.

Where will this come from?

We plan to increase our outside bookings still further, as well as attracting

new long term bookings. We plan to increase our funding from grants to **£5000** .

During 2008 we promoted the Centre as a venue for children's parties, so far in 2009 we have doubled the number of bookings.

In 2008 our grants were negligible, so far in 2009 we

have received £550 , with more applications in the pipeline...

We cannot afford to be complacent, and we are always looking at new ideas – including expanding the number of fitness classes, increasing use of our IT suite. If you have an idea then please share it!



Special occasion– wedding reception at the Centre



## Oak Tree Centre Directors (Church)



Oak Tree Centre Chair person  
Mark Timmins

**This year we are including information about all the people who serve on the Board of The Oak Tree Centre. They all live locally, and bring a wide range of talents and experience to the Board. All have shown a commitment to improving people's lives in the Brandhall area. There are 2 types of Board Membership- 'Church' and 'Community' .**

### Mark Timmins – Chair

Mark spent his early years on Brandhall Estate. He trained at a University in Glasgow that specialised in mission training. He and his wife Angela and 2 sons spent 10 years in Thailand from 1983- 1993. The first two years he worked with refugees from Cambodia and Vietnam and the last

two years were spent between Thailand and Cambodia as the Asian Director for the mission.

Since returning to the UK He has been the Senior minister of King's Community Church for 15 years and has been ordained in the Baptist Ministry. Mark oversees the church at George Road, as well as keeping close links with the church in Khun Han, North-

### Mick Brookes- Vice chair and Operations Manager

Mick was born and bred in Brandhall. He previously owned his own business promoting companies and was an Operations Manager for Sandwell Local Education Authority.

He is co-founder of Smart Spenders, a Charity set up 4 years ago offering budgeting advice to Brandhall residents. He is a member of the Church leadership team.

Andy has lived in the Brandhall area for almost 40 years. He spent a number of years working as a civil servant. He recently completed an M Sc in counselling and is founder and Director of The Oak

**'All our Board Members have shown commitment to improving people's lives in Brandhall'**

### Andy Nott - Company Secretary.

### Julia Button - Centre Treasurer and Building Manager

Originally from London, Julia has lived in Brandhall for 35 years. She was previously a local authority Town Planner. As well as fundraising for the Centre, Julia is involved in 2 community garden projects and is community rep on the Green Flag Advisory Board, advising government on Green space issues.

### Tricia Sheridan

Tricia is new to the Oak Tree Centre Board, elected in July 2008. She was brought up in North Birmingham, and moved to the Brandhall area 30 years ago. She trained in nursing and midwifery, and worked for the NHS for 40 years, 30 of these as a Health Visitor. Tricia describes herself as a 'people person' . Her role at the Oak Tree Centre includes supporting the work with

young families, helping at After Schools Club, catering team, and representing OTC at Sandwell – wide meetings.

### Mike Jordan

Mike is our youngest member. He was educated at Perryfields High School and Birmingham University. He recently qualified as a Solicitor and works locally. He is the father of two young sons and has been leader of Friday Club for several years, a club for children aged 7 to 11.



## Oak Tree Centre Directors (Community)

### Clr Dr. Trevor Crumpton

Trevor was educated at Oldbury Secondary Technical School. After sixth form he worked in industry as an assistant chemist in the field of metallurgical analysis. After some valuable experience in industry he qualified as a teacher and then spent most of his ca-

reer teaching chemistry and science in Sandwell secondary schools.

During Trevor's time as a teacher he obtained 2 Open University Degrees. He returned to full time study as a mature student at the University of Birmingham, and after four years of research he was awarded a PhD by the School of Chemistry

Trevor became a Councillor for Old Warley Ward in November 2004, after winning a by-election. He was elected to serve again in May 2007. During the municipal year 2008/09 he was appointed to serve on a total of 12 council committees and 10 outside bodies. He is presently Chair



Trevor talking to local residents at community event April 08

### George Watkiss

of the Education & Life Long Learning Scrutiny Committee. I left school at 14 and gained employment in the building trade. After 12 months I decided to work on the railway, and was given employment at Monument Lane Locomotive sheds. I was first a cleaner and then a fireman eventually firing on the main line trains to London, Liverpool, Manchester, Blackpool etc.

In 1953 the Diesel Locos began to show their faces and in 1955 I could see that steam would eventually go. So I decided to apply for the Police Force and was stationed at Steelhouse Lane in Birmingham. I was on the beat and on the area cars until 1967 when the Panda car system came into force. I was then given a permanent beat which took in the University of Aston, for 10 years until March 1977.

I was awarded the British Empire Medal in the New Years Honours List of 1976 and I am also the holder of the Royal Humane Certificate for saving life, having saved two gas workers who were unconscious in a Gas filled trench. In March 1977 I went into the Coroner's Office as an Officer dealing with death, until May 1985 when I retired from the Police.

I was Chairman of the Sandwell Allotments Council from 1982 until 1998, and I was on the Board of SCIPS until August last year. I am Vice chairman of the Housing Service Committee. I am also Co-ordinator for Neighbourhood Watch and was Chair of Brandhall Tenants and Residents Association until April this year.

### Joyce Richardson

Born and reared in Smethwick, Joyce's first job was for a pawn broker's. She moved into a new house on Brandhall Estate 53 years ago, and still lives there today. She worked at City Hospital in auxiliary nursing for 26 years. Joyce has campaigned for better facilities on Brandhall Estate, and has served as vice-chair of Brandhall TRA for 12 years.

### Jon Grant

Jon attended Perryfields High School and then spent some years working at a well-known Birmingham music store. After serving as Youth Pastor at King's Community Church, he started KRUNCH in 1998 which has grown as a Sand-

well young people's Charity working with several High Schools. He is on the executive committee for SFVYO (Sandwell Forum for Voluntary Youth Organisations), Sandwell Co-ordinator for the NET, and is the church leader of Sandwell Christian Centre in Oldbury.

## King's Community Church Project

Tame Road  
Oldbury  
B68 0JP

Phone: 0121 422 4114

Fax: 0121 422 0369

Email: admin@theoaktreecentre.co.uk

## Brandhall's Community Centre



The Oak Tree Centre

**We're on the web!**  
**www.oaktreecentre.**  
**co.uk**

## Our groups in 2008:

- **For families and young people:** , Tuesday & Wednesday Moms, Friday Club, Flex After Schools Clubs, Mothers at Heart, Saturdads, Stay and Play, Toddler Plus.
  - **For older people:** Time Out and Extend
  - **Community groups** Body & Tone , Brandhall TRA, , LearnDirect, Martial Arts ( Jan—July), Slimming World ( Sept—Dec)
- New for 2009 Jordon School of Dance**
- **Advice services:** SmartSpenders and Oak Tree Counselling Service
  - **Community hire** : 8 children's parties, 3 adult parties, 2 Workshop Conferences, 2 Astbury Court tea parties, Wedding, Funeral receptions, Hope 08 Party, Building Industry training, Perryfields Staff meetings, Sandwell MBC events, etc .

## Our achievements in 2008

In 2008 we saw growth in almost all areas ' of The Oak Tree Centre.

- Extend is now fully subscribed and has a waiting list
- ' Time Out ' has grown, with 30+ attending weekly
- Body & Tone now has 15—20 attending weekly, with demand for new sessions
- LearnDirect continues to be popular, with new enquiries received weekly.
- 2 new Alpha Moms courses with ToddlerPlus providing the Creche
- 45 families attending ToddlerPlus
- 32 families attending Stay and Play
- More families attending Saturdads
- Oak Tree Counselling Service fully subscribed, referring clients to other centres
- Smart Spenders restricting service to Brandhall families because of increased demand.
- Events for the community included 2 Astbury Court tea parties



Tea party for local residents