

New centre boosts community spirit

Dramatic improvements to a local park and a deepening sense of community pride are just two of the knock-on benefits resulting from the arrival of the new White City Collaborative Care Centre. Friends of Wormholt Park secretary **Cathy Banks** gives her account of how things are changing for the better.

It ruffled a few feathers when the locals heard about the seven-storey health centre and housing block about to land on Bloemfontein Road. The threat of a looming modern structure next to the beloved Wormholt Park was not exactly what the doctor ordered for most residents.

No-one could have imagined how the development, due to be finished in spring 2014, would trigger a wave of positive events which are currently changing the face of the Wormholt and White City estates.

Although tall, the building is surprisingly subtle, set back from Bloemfontein Road to give room for a wide, paved pedestrian area in front of the NHS health centre, which will include four GP practices and a range of community health

and social services.

Dr Tim Spicer, chair of Hammersmith and Fulham Clinical Commissioning Group, told me the centre is central to the NHS's plan to develop integrated health and social care services for local people.

He said: "We will be developing a full GP service with better, large treatment rooms and there is also space for other services such as dentistry, minor

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MICHELLE EVERTON,
MARKETING
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surgery and chiropody. A new integrated centre for children with disabilities will offer radically improved access, co-ordination of services, assessments and treatment in a space which parents and families will feel is welcoming."

The building will also contain 170 much-needed affordable homes and three shop units, including an express supermarket. Through the middle is a new three-storey high entrance to Wormholt Park, which will make the green space visible from Bloemfontein Road and the White City estate for the first time in 15 years.

Also as a result of the scheme, the development partners West London Health Partnership, part of the Fulcrum

Group, and Notting Hill Housing Group are to give £1million towards the redevelopment of Wormholt Park next year.

The plans include a new children's play area, a disabled access park, a new sports area with tennis courts, a wildlife reserve, dog play area and a covered events space for local community groups and schools to use.

Talk of the redevelopment prompted much interest from local residents, who formed together as The Friends of Wormholt Park. The Friends now meet every month and have been part of the consultation process, as well as the activists behind various social events.

The park's successful 2011 centenary party kick-started a year of outdoor community events including the Wormholt and White City Community Market, which ran monthly through last summer and was

kindly supported by Galliford Try Partnerships, who donated generators and manpower for each event. Showing true community support, Galliford Try, along with Fulcrum and Notting Hill Housing, donated funds to cover the entire cost of the Wormholt Park Christmas Fair, when local people got to see the final park plans for the first time.

It has been this uncharacteristic relationship between big corporate companies and a small community group which has made so much possible in so little time.

Michelle Everton, Marketing Coordinator for Galliford Try Partnerships and David St. John, Senior Project Manager were both instrumental in assisting the Friends in their community efforts.

Michelle told me it is 'standard practice' for Galliford Try Partnerships to engage with

local people, adding: "From the outset, we were conscious that we involved and committed to local groups such as the Friends of The Wormholt Park in White City, to assist them in developing their ideas and events for the local area."

The Friends of Wormholt Park have been impressed by the community support given by the organisations involved in the new development. It seems the aptly named Collaborative Care Centre has already made its mark, and the message is clear – that working together is the key to community success.

Local people can now watch with excitement as the project develops, looking forward to next spring when the landmark facility is revealed from behind the hoarding, breathing new life into the Wormholt and White City estates.



Main picture: the White City Collaborative Care Centre is starting to take shape. Above: local residents, including Cathy Banks pictured here with her son Stanley, formed The Friends of Wormholt Park and have been part of the consultation process for the new development.