

Swindon Young Wardens to tidy up communities

Young people will be making a difference in three communities by joining a Swindon Borough Council-run scheme during the summer holiday.

The Young Wardens scheme was launched in Penhill last summer and saw over 20 young people regularly help the council's Neighbourhood Wardens and take part in a range of different activities.

After this success the scheme has been launched in Toothill, Freshbrook and Pinehurst on 2 August when Swindon Mayor Cllr Ray Ballman met the latest recruits at Toothill Community Centre.

Young Wardens is open to any children between the ages of seven and 11. As well as making new friends, children will get the chance to visit the town's fire station, learn about internet safety and take part in litter picks with treasure hunts.

They will be taking part in gardening projects courtesy of TWIGS (Therapeutic Work in Gardens, Swindon) and Wyevale Garden Centre, whilst TWIGS will also be running Willow Weaving sessions.

The NSPCC will be running some activities such as plate and mug decorating and a nature walk, and the Road Safety team will be organising an interactive talk. Children will also be given a recycling box to decorate and will have a special talk on recycling.

All talks and activities have a strong focus on children looking after their environment, being safe in their neighbourhood, team building and having fun.

At the launch Shauna Shepherd from Freshbrook said she was looking forward to brightening the area around Toothill Community Centre by planting flowers, whilst Tia Atkinson said the attractions of a skating



session at Link Centre encouraged her to join the Young Wardens.

Chloe Jelfs from Toothill said she joined because of the chance to do more gardening. "I grow vegetables and flowers in our back garden and I wanted to learn more about planting them."

Twigs coordinator Alan Holland said the youngsters had done a lot of work before the launch. "We dug over the beds outside the community centre which were very overgrown with self seeded trees and full of all kinds of rubbish. The children did a great job in clearing it up. Apart from the herbaceous flowering plants grown at Twigs, Swindon Discovering Autistic Spectrum Happiness (DASH) have donated a tray of wildflowers to attract pollination insects. The area is going to look great."

A number of firms have donated items towards the scheme. Tesco are providing refreshments for the volunteers, Michael's Workwear has provided the Young Wardens with their very own red uniform and Crapper and Sons have donated compost for the gardening projects. A fire crews from Westlea were present at the launch to show their new appliance to the youngsters.

Cllr Brian Mattock, Swindon Borough Council's Cabinet Member for Health, Housing and Adult Social Care, said: "The Young Wardens scheme was a tremendous success last summer in Penhill and it was great to see the enthusiasm from the young people who took part and put something back into their local community.

"I'm sure the scheme will go from strength to strength in Freshbrook, Toothill and Pinehurst and I would like to thank our Neighbourhood Warden team for all their hard work and for putting on such a fantastic programme of activities this summer."

The Young Wardens scheme will run from 10am to 1pm on Monday (Penhill), Tuesday (Toothill and Freshbrook) and Wednesday (Pinehurst) for the remainder of the summer holidays.

At the end of the project, the youngsters will be invited to a celebration barbeque in Lydiard Park on 13 September where the mayor will present certificates.

For further information about the scheme email: neighbourhoodwardens@swindon.gov.uk or log onto: www.swindon.gov.uk and search for 'Young Wardens'.