



Paganhill & Farmhill

NEWS

Neighbours helping neighbours

Summer
2021

A warm welcome to Laurie - our Community Hub's new Manager



The Directors of Paganhill Community Group Community Interest Company have recruited our first paid Community Hub Manager for Farmhill and Paganhill, **Laurie Davies!**

We received a grant to fund a 20-hour-a-week post for two years, match funded by Stroud District Council and Gloucestershire County Council Public Health.

Laurie has joined us at a key time; we are planning for the opening of The Octagon off Farmhill Lane as a Community Hub with a range of activities, some still in the planning stage and, most importantly, a **Big Survey** we are organising with the help of Stroud Town Council and the University of Gloucestershire. *See more info on p7.*

Laurie will be based in The Octagon Community Hub and will also be out and about in Farmhill and Paganhill to hear your ideas and signpost any help or support you might need.

Her appointment is a welcome relief for our Chair, Jaqui Smith and her fellow Directors of the Paganhill Community Group CIC – Sally-Anne Wherry and Haydn Sutton, as she will be able to take on a lot of the day-to-day work in the community off their shoulders.

Laurie says: “I am so excited to start my role, learn more about the local community, meet as many of you as possible and start the hard work needed to build upon the amazing work and commitment that has taken place to make Paganhill

Community Group the amazing community asset that it is.

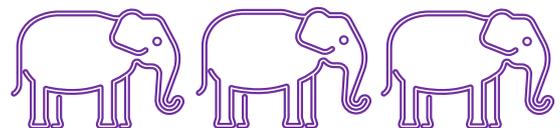
“I have worked as a Project Coordinator for Gloucestershire Community Foundation, as a Senior Caseworker for David Drew when he was our MP and I worked in Bristol as a Project Coordinator for a youth charity helping young people set up their own community-focused social action projects.

“I have also been on the Stroud Town Council for five years and I was recently elected as District Councillor for the area I live in, often known as the 'top of town'.”

Laurie grew up in Stroud and went to Archway School. She left the area at 19 but came back seven years ago to raise her son.

- **Contact Laurie on 07828 168857 or email laurie@paganhill.org.uk if you want to chat or are interested in helping with our survey.**

In the first quarter of 2021, our food hub at The Octagon shared the weight of an elephant in food. That's a LOT!



A HUGE, elephant-sized thank you to all our wonderful **PCG Members** who volunteered their time to set up the food hub twice a week at both the Maypole Hall and The Octagon during the pandemic, collecting from local supermarkets and from The Long Table, donating food and money and supporting their neighbours, as well as delivering food boxes to people in need over this time. We would also like to thank the generosity of those who have donated to the Group and to The Long Table.

See page 6 for more info about how the food hub will change from July.

Good food shared with good neighbours

Looking to the future...



Jaqui Smith, Chair of the Paganhill Community Group CIC (Community Interest Company) says:
 “As this newsletter was being written, we were waiting to hear if we would be able to lease The Octagon building for the future. We need the

security of having a base for all our exciting plans to support our community, as a permanent resource for everyone in Farmhill and Paganhill.



“Obviously, The Octagon isn’t perfect – we know about the rutted access lane and the fact that the building is in need of a lot of work, but we’re hoping to come to an agreement with the owners, the West of England Baptist Network about a long-term lease.



“However, not wanting to have all our eggs in one basket, we are also working with a group of interested parties locally looking at the possibilities offered at Wyatt House, the former care home in the heart of Paganhill which closed some time ago, as a potential alternative base for us. See some of our ideas here:

<https://paganhill.org.uk/news/wyatt-house-a-community-venue/>

“If you have any ideas or want to get involved in any way, please do contact me and join the Group!”

- jaqui@paganhill.org.uk
- www.paganhill.org.uk

Take Shannon’s Challenge!



When Shannon Carter moved into her flat in Allen Drive, Paganhill, she was determined to keep her green fingers occupied.

Previously, she had tended a 30m-long garden, complete with a wonderful two-level pond which she designed herself. Now she only had a sunny balcony of about 1m x 3m. But the determination which had helped her cope with homelessness and mental health issues came to the fore, and she set herself a growing challenge.

“I looked around and saw many of my neighbours’ balconies were empty; there was nothing growing. So I decided to grow as many fruit and veg plants as I could on my little balcony, and to help my neighbours learn the delights of growing their own!”

She decided to throw out the challenge to her neighbours last year – but building work on the blocks of flats meant she had to move all her plants indoors and meant people were unable to enjoy their balconies during the long hot summer.

Despite all that, Shannon grew an astonishing forty different varieties!

Now, with lockdown easing, Shannon’s Balcony Challenge has been revived with the help of a grant from the Barnwood Trust.

People can pick up seedlings, compost and pots from The Octagon on **Wednesdays from 2-4pm** and get advice from green fingered Shannon on how to grow fruit and veg in the smallest spaces.

- **For more information, keep an eye on the Paganhill Community Group Facebook Page or text 07828 168857 for more information.**

A truly growing community...

A dedicated team of PCG Members have spent many months transforming what was a small, overgrown meadow at the side of The Octagon into a productive vegetable patch.

And not only are they growing fresh veg to share with neighbours in the food hub, they have also created a wildlife haven including a pond and 5-star bug hotel! Every other Wednesday afternoon, the Garden Group welcome residents to lend a hand in the garden, and perhaps learn new skills. We also now have a welcoming picnic table for local people to use and enjoy the view of the garden, rest a while and perhaps catch a wonderful sunset!



- Want to get growing and join in? Text or call **07828 168 857** or email garden@paganhill.org.uk - and keep an eye on Facebook!

Community café planning - and opportunities for budding chefs!

Many of you will remember our café at the Maypole Hall on Fridays. As we come out of Covid restrictions (fingers crossed) we're hoping to open again, this time at The Octagon, on **Wednesday afternoons**.



We're hoping to offer light lunches, sandwiches, tea, coffee and cake – using ingredients donated through the food hub and from our community garden.

Our café will also become the place to go to get friendly advice and support from local organisations including **The Independence Trust, P3** and **Clean Slate**.

As well as **needing volunteers** to help with the café, setting it up, welcoming visitors etc, we are also looking for local residents interested in getting experience in hospitality and cooking. Some training will be available! We're hoping to 'get cooking' in our kitchen at The Octagon, sharing meals with our neighbours.



- If you are interested in helping out, or want to know more about opening times, or about our plans to get cooking, please text **07828 168 857**, keep an eye on our Facebook Page, or sign up to our e-news on our website www.paganhill.org.uk

Our book and DVD corner is the place to find what you're looking for!



At The Octagon on **Wednesdays 2-6 and Fridays 10-12** – keep an eye on Facebook or text **07828 168857** for more information.

Give The Dance of Life a try!

Try a FREE taster session of Biodanza (The Dance of Life) – a system of wellbeing developed over 50 years ago in Chile:

August 22nd 2021, 10:30am to 12:30pm at The Octagon Community Hub.

Organised by Alicia Kon (Argentina) and John McLellan (UK) who are Teachers under Supervision from the Bristol School of Biodanza.

There are no steps to learn, the session is suitable for adults of all ages. Wear loose clothing and bring some water!

Regular weekly classes are starting September 8th 7pm—9pm. Numbers are limited and booking is essential.

- Email info@communitybiodanza.org.uk or call Alicia on 07397 839918 or John on 07974 371882 for more details.



Taekwon-do at The Octagon!



Classes every week on Tuesdays:

- 4pm Puma (4-7 year olds)
- 4.30pm Taekwon-do (8 - 16 year olds)

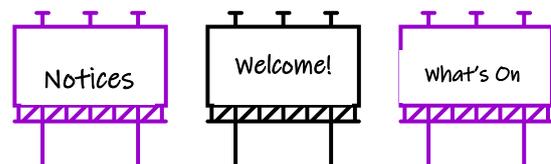
Do your children need some exercise, some fun or just to get out from under your feet for a little bit?

Paganhill Community Group is working with **New Horizons Martial Arts** to run two classes for young people each week.

Classes are on a 'pay as you can' basis (suggested £3), with a starter pack at £83 once you are sure you like it! This is a special offer for the next year. Some grants are available for starter packs on application thanks to a grant from the **High Sheriff of Gloucestershire**.

- **Sign up for the classes:**
families@paganhill.org.uk or text **07828 168 857**
- **More info about the organisation running our sessions:**
<https://newhorizonsmartialartsstroud.co.uk/>

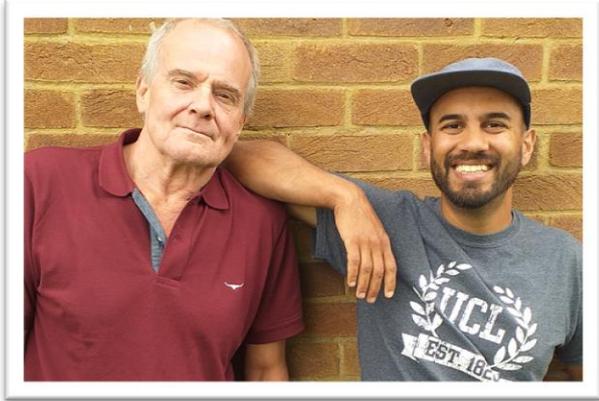
Getting ourselves 'noticed' in our community



We know that not everyone goes on Facebook so we're delighted that there will soon be public noticeboards dotted around Farmhill and Paganhill. We will be putting up posters to keep everyone informed. Please keep an eye out for info! **If you can help put up posters, or just check things are kept up to date, let us know! 07828 168 857**

- **Current plans are for the noticeboards to go up at Jack Russell Close (near the walk through), Farmhill Lane (near the bus stop in Farmhill), Archway Gardens walkway and Paganhill Estate.**

What is a community workshop and what could it offer us all?



Local residents **Simon Ffiske** (left) and **Kam Longia** are working on some amazing ideas for a community workshop, hopefully based at The Octagon (once the lease has been sorted!) and starting in the Autumn.

So, what sort of things could happen?

Kam explains: “We want to open a workshop where different things can happen, where people can make and repair things, make friends and be sociable, or just pop in for a cup of tea and maybe do some woodwork quietly.

“It will be a place to learn, teach and socialise together while working on projects. We will have some sort of shed, with basic woodworking tools and benches.



“It will be open to all residents in Farmhill and Paganhill during regular sessions, so, for example, one session could be for repairing items, one could be to make something for the community, and one could be a Men’s Shed – a supportive space for men who sometimes find it difficult to socialise. There could be women only sessions too. It’s what anyone wants it to be!”

They are also looking for donations of tools and time!

Sessions will be offered free of charge or for a small donation. There will be an open day in September – so keep an eye out on Facebook and our WhatsApp groups.

Kam and Simon want to hear from anyone who has experience in woodworking, electrical repairs or similar skills; and could help with organising or mentoring participants. They are also looking for donations of tools.

- workshop@paganhill.org.uk or text 07828 168 857 for more info

Here comes summer! What’s on for children...

In the summer holidays, Paganhill Community Group plans to organise some events for kids and their parents or carers – Taekwando classes are at The Octagon on Tuesdays (*see p4*) but there could also be pizza parties, and maybe forest school activities.

- **Keep an eye out on on Paganhill Community Group Facebook and Twitter** or text 07828 168 857 for details!

Games workshops starting end July!

Do you have youngsters who are keen on games like **Pokemon, Warhammer** and **Magic the Gathering**?

Kobold’s Cave will be starting at The Octagon Community Hub GL5 4BX from **July 30** - for all ages!



Organiser Seb Parkinson (above), who used to run **Atlantic Games in Stroud**, says: “We promote friendly competition between, encouraging teamwork and friendship. The emphasis will be on group activity and equality, helping build a sense of community spirit and encouraging mutual respect and acceptance.”

- **Weekly, starting Friday July 30th 4-7pm for young people and beginners under-16 and 7-11pm for a more competitive experience**
- **Contact Seb koboldscave@outlook.com or text 07394 855795 to find out more**

Support from Town, District and County Councillors and our MP

Two of our Stroud Town Councillors in Farmhill and Paganhill are active Members of Paganhill Community Group. **Liz Child** (left) puts her green fingers to work in our community garden and **Haydn Sutton** (right) is also a Director of the PCG Community Interest Company and represents us on Stroud District Council.



Our former MP, **David Drew**, is now our Gloucestershire County Councillor and is already actively supporting the Group, while we make sure our MP **Siobhan Baillie** is very aware of our work and the needs of our community.



David Drew **Siobhan Baillie MP**

Big, big thanks to our funders and supporters: **Gloucestershire County Council, Stroud District Council, The Barnwood Trust** and numerous individuals and organisations who have helped us to help our neighbours.

- **There's a vacancy for a new Stroud Town Councillor for our Ward– find out more:** <https://www.stroudtown.gov.uk/contact-us.html>

Getting crafty on Sundays!

Paganhill Community Group Presents: **The Garner Strode Makers' Market: On the last Sunday of each month, 12pm-5pm starting Sunday July 25.**

We are hosting a new monthly Makers' Market at The Octagon Community Hub to promote the gifted artists and craftspeople of the Stroud area who will be selling their wares.

There will be outdoor and indoor stalls with fun activities for children to try their hand at being artists and makers! Hot drinks and snacks (home-made cakes and brownies) will be available!

- **Makers: to sign up for a stall, costing £10, go to** <https://tinyurl.com/paganhillmarket>

Looking back at the Food Hub

Over the past year, our food hub has played a major part in helping people. Organised by Heidi Wicks (left, below) and Claire Connell and supported by a team of fantastic, hard-working and devoted PCG Members, the Hub shared food donated by local residents and surplus picked up from local supermarkets, and from Fare Share. Our community garden contributed seasonal veg and salads and we're looking forward to more than one apple from our new orchard this year!



The Food Hub opening times and days changed recently to **Wednesdays 2-6 and Fridays 10-12**, sharing surplus food from FareShare and local supermarkets. The 'shop' has moved from the main hall at The Octagon into a side room.

- **Text 07828 168 857 or check our Facebook page for more info.**

Decorating the wall: step 1

Archway art students have taken on the challenge of decorating the wall by the bus stop in Farmhill Lane, and, in preparation, a team from the community workshop group set to with filler and white paint.

Before:



After:





A few weeks ago, we said goodbye to PCSO Gary Lynch and hello to his replacement, Amy Webb (left)

Our BIG Survey – coming to you soon!

As a Community Group of local people trying to make Farmhill and Paganhill an even better place to live, we are really keen to find out from other residents what YOU think about what can be done in future.

So, we will be launching our Big Survey over the next few weeks, when we're aiming to visit everyone in the area!

We will be working with Stroud Town Council and the University of Gloucestershire and a team of volunteers including Paganhill Community Group Members and local councillors will be coming to your door to ask you a few questions about where you live.

But we need more help to carry out the survey and talk to people! Stroud Town Council is offering a voucher for anyone willing to help ask questions!



There will be questions such as:

- ❖ What one change would make Farmhill and Paganhill a better place to live
- ❖ Have you felt supported during the pandemic
- ❖ Do you like living here, and do you feel part of the community
- ❖ Do you know how to report a problem in the neighbourhood

If you are interested in helping us knock on doors in the area to ask people a few questions for our Big Survey, please text or call or email Laurie (Paganhill Community Group Hub Manager)

- **07828 168857**
- laurie@paganhill.org.uk

WANTED: PCG Good Neighbours!

Paganhill Community Group is all about neighbours helping neighbours in Farmhill and Paganhill. It would be great to have a contact in each of the roads and blocks of flats to help us keep everyone up to date with what's going on, helping to spread the word. We need people happy to help deliver newsletters like this one, or to update posters on the new noticeboards which will be going up in our area.

- **If you're interested in becoming a Good Neighbour, please text or call Laurie on 07828 168 857 for a chat!**

Fundraising

If you can't spare some time to join Paganhill Community Group, but can **spare a few £**, please support our work by scanning this QR code to take you straight to our fundraising page!



<https://www.peoplesfundraising.com/donation/paganhill-community-group>

KEEP IN TOUCH!

Paganhill Community Group is active on **Facebook** and **Twitter** thanks to local people giving their time to keep everyone up to date. We have various **What's App** groups too. We also use traditional ways of keeping in touch, using posters and flyers and occasional articles in the local paper. Or pop in and see us at **The Octagon Community Hub, off Farmhill Lane, GL5 4BX**. Or see www.paganhill.org.uk.

We also send out occasional news by email – but we need your email address to do that! Let us know on hello@paganhill.org.uk or text or call us on **07828 168 857 or 07971 819 097**.

- **FACEBOOK:** Like our Page [FarmhillPaganhill](https://www.facebook.com/FarmhillPaganhill) Join our Group [paganhillcommunitygroup](https://www.facebook.com/paganhillcommunitygroup)
- **TWITTER** [paganhill](https://twitter.com/paganhill)



USEFUL INFO FOR STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL TENANTS
www.stroud.gov.uk/housing/council-tenants-and-leaseholders/

Email Neil Boulton neil.boulton@stroud.gov.uk
 if you're worried about:

	Loud music, shouting or other anti-social behaviour		Health and safety issues		Communal areas
	Dog fouling, dogs barking a lot		Maintenance of the play area		Overgrown trees or bushes on communal ground
	RUBBISH & FLY TIPPING Call 01453 766321 housing.management@stroud.gov.uk		PROPERTY CARE Call 01453 754852 or text REPAIRS to 07851 729 229 property.care@stroud.gov.uk Out-of-hours emergencies 01453 222 104		
...or please call SDC Customer Services 01453 766321 & leave a message			Your local Police Community Support Officer is Amy Webb amy.webb@gloucestershire.police.uk		
	Paganhill Community Group can help with emergency food, shopping, collecting prescriptions and issue food bank vouchers. We're at The Octagon Community Hub, Farmhill Lane, GL5 4BX				
	Suffering from anxiety? Find helpful info and tips here: www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters Online counselling & wellbeing for adults: https://www.qwell.io/				

Neil Boulton is Stroud District Council's Neighbourhood Management Officer for Farmhill and Paganhill. Information correct at 18/06/2021

Paganhill Community Group was set up by local people in Farmhill and Paganhill in the spirit of neighbours helping neighbours. Our Members give their time freely. We are not affiliated to the Council or any political party or religion. Apart from Laurie, we are all volunteers. Why not join us? Or, if we can help you or a neighbour, let us know. Find out more at www.paganhill.org.uk or text or call Jaqui or Laurie on 07828 168 857 or 07971 819 097 or email hello@paganhill.org.uk for more info.