Communities learn to know their place

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A group of over-fifties will be joining forces with local young people in a project to trace the history of the Blakenall, Leamore and Bloxwich areas. The Know Your Place project has been made possible by a grant of £44,700 from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF).

The plan, drawn up by Walsall's Local Community 50 Plus Forum, is to explore the background of an area that has had strong traditional connections with miners, bargees and travellers. It is also hoped that a local history society will be set up as one of the results of the project.

Commenting for the Heritage Lottery Fund, Head of HLF West Midlands, Anne Jenkins, said: "We are delighted that this exciting project will bring these generations together to discover the diverse stories behind their communities, and provide an opportunity for young and old to learn about their history."

Both Walsall Council and Walsall's Local History Centre will be involved in the scheme that is seen as a way to foster an understanding of the local area's heritage and help bring together people from more isolated communities. The project also sets out to bridge different cultures and faiths and encourage healthy activities and wellbeing.

Taking their starting point as the 1920s, Know Your Place volunteers will carry out a series of interviews and run workshops and special events, encouraging older residents to share their memories. A number of trips will take place to locations such as Dudley's Black Country Museum, the Stafford Archives and the Cannock Mining Museum to help in the collection of information.

Stories, photographs and other documents gathered will be used to create a website that will provide a resource for local schools and also encourage the public to find out more about their own family histories.

For Local Community 50 Plus Forum, Chairperson Flo Smith, said: "The forum is really pleased and excited to have the opportunity to delivery a local history project that will benefit our community."

Notes to editors

The Local Community 50 Plus Forum is a part of New Horizons Community Enterprise, a regeneration initiative based in Walsall that seeks, among other aims, to improve community health and wellbeing, education and learning, and community empowerment.