



WEST MERCIA

## Press Release

For immediate release

24 July 2008

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### **Offenders construct garden for local residents**

Offenders serving community orders have worked for over four months to construct a new garden from scratch at the Warndon Community Centre. The garden will be officially opened to centre users this weekend.

The official opening, on Saturday 26 July at 10.45 am, will be carried out by two regulars, one elderly and one young person to represent the broad age range of those that use the centre. Some of the offenders who helped construct the garden will be present along with Doug Rushton, Probation Supervisor, who supervised the offenders on the project.

The idea for the garden came from Community Worker, Alan Poyner, who wanted to see the land surrounding the centre used in a purposeful way. He says It also links in with a health project the centre is currently running which encourages people to grow their own vegetables and eat more healthily. Alan hopes that once people see the vegetables growing at the centre it will encourage them to do the same in their own gardens. Alan is delighted with the professional job offenders have carried out, he said,

“Without them this project wouldn’t have happened. What little bit of money we had we used to cover the materials and would never have been able to afford the labour costs.

“They were very committed and hard working and I hope they found it rewarding. Some of them are from the local area so they are really putting something back into the community they live in”.

A work party of at least six offenders from Worcester worked most Saturdays for over four months to construct the garden from scratch. Work included flattening the area, laying hardcore and slabs, building paths and raised beds, filling with soil and planting.

Doug Rushton, Probation Supervisor said,

“This was an excellent project; we had a really good group that worked hard throughout. We were lucky to have some very skilled offenders on the project that knew about building and carpentry and those that were un-skilled learnt from them”.

“A lot of hard work and effort went into this project. They had a very systematic and professional approach and there was good use of people’s skills. It was a pleasure to see community workers and the offenders working together to come up with solutions on the project”.

The garden has an extensive paved area and paths leading to raised beds to accommodate wheelchairs. Both flowers and vegetables are planted in the beds. Any produce will be used for lunch clubs and children’s activities

ENDS

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**PHOTO OPPORTUNITY**

At Warndon Community Centre – official garden opening  
On Saturday 26 July at 10.30 am start 10.45 am official opening  
Some offenders that took part in the project will be in attendance with Doug Rushton, their Supervisor