

Ormlie Community Association

Home Zone Conference

HOW I CAME TO LIVE IN ORMLIE

As a single parent, I moved into the Ormlie Estate in Thurso, in 1998. Previously I had lived in the High Street of Thurso. I loved living there; the beach was just around the corner, my son's grandparents lived near by and there was always something going on. Life couldn't have been better! My bubble was to burst however. Circumstances dictated that I had to move out of the privately rented flat that I had lived in. This led me to go to the local housing department who in turn offered me a four apartment house in Ormlie. Although I was housed I cannot say that I was impressed with the location.

WHY I WAS UNHAPPY WITH LOCATION

However needs must and we moved in the November. I was happy in my house as long as I didn't look out the window or venture far. If I did the view was far from pleasing. Rows and rows of grey houses with black high fencing dominated the outlook and put me in mind of a concentration camp! The area was stark, with no flowers, trees or soft landscaping in sight. The play areas were old, damaged and unsafe and the cars travelled too fast. All in all Ormlie was not the most inspiring place for children to grow, learn and play! There also seemed to be a lot of apathy around, and an acceptance of these conditions. It was as if a grey cloud hung over Ormlie. Could it change?

NOTICING CHANGES

I became aware of Ormlie's involvement in the Home Zone project and was impressed by the plans, which had been drawn up, but was sceptical as to whether it could be achieved. How wrong I was! The houses have now been re-clad in a much more flattering colour and the fences are now wavy and painted. Establishing the community centre gave the residents, children and young people a place to meet and form groups. I now looked out my window and saw things in a different light. The grey cloud was being ousted! I became optimistic that Ormlie could become a place that my family could live, not just survive. As a resident I felt that I

could help this process develop, and so I became involved in the Ormlie regeneration project 2 years ago. I have become an active member of the Ormlie home zone environmental group and recently became involved in the landscaping of an area of ground which has been developed into a public garden space. Trees and tree guards compliment the improvements and the wavy wall has been described accurately as a work of art. Further improvements are currently underway and I am sure these will only add to Ormlie's success in becoming a des res. Indeed, After speaking to a councillor recently I have learned that this is already the case, and that from being an estate that very few would choose to live in, it is now a sought after area.

CONCLUSION

The Ormlie home zone project has improved the whole character of High Ormlie and the impact of the project is a much softer and attractive environment, which creates a greater feeling of well-being. From a personal point of view I feel the area has improved greatly through the regeneration project, in particular the home zone initiative. Ormlie has now become a place where I am happy to allow my younger child the opportunity to play in the street and to grow up in an environment, which is pleasant, safe and attractive. The grey cloud is no more.