

# Volunteers sign up to save lives

A RETIRED bank manager from Bingham is the first volunteer from the town to join an emergency response scheme.

Mr Brian Watts (56) of Juniper Gardens has completed first aid training with the ambulance service and will soon be able to answer emergency calls in his community. The Vale First Responders is one of many across the country that provide vital medical assistance to people.

All 18 volunteers are trained to respond to emergency calls and either live or work in the Vale of Belvoir.

The scheme is particularly effective in rural areas where an ambulance may take some time to reach patients.

In 90% of emergencies, a first responder will arrive within four minutes of the call being made.

## Help

Mr Watts said he decided to get involved after seeing a woman collapse while he was shopping in Nottingham.

He said: "There were people there who knew what to do but I didn't. At the time I couldn't help her."

He did not know about the scheme at the time but a short time later he saw his friend and co-ordinator of the scheme, Mr Rod Whitehead (50) in his first responders uniform.

Mr Watts said: "I spoke to him about what he was doing and he introduced me to it."

"It was something I wanted to do. Living in an area like Bingham we

are slightly removed from immediate medical support.

"It is a way of putting something back into the community."

"I know the scheme has had calls for Bingham and volunteers have had to travel from other villages so it will shorten the response time."

"There will be a greater amount of cover."

## Rewarding

Mr Watts, a part-time administration assistant, is attending emergency calls under the guidance of a more experienced volunteer but said he was looking forward to dealing with them on his own.

He said: "It's been a very enjoyable experience and I'm sure it will be rewarding as time goes on."

He encouraged more people to join the scheme.

Vale First Responders was set up three years ago and works in partnership with the East Midlands Ambulance Service.

Volunteers work on a rota basis and are contacted by the ambulance service control room in Nottingham by mobile telephone or pager after a computer identifies the responder nearest to the emergency.

They carry first aid equipment, including a defibrillator, which is used to help restart hearts after heart attacks.

Mr Whitehead (50) of Langar, who took over the running of the service in 2006, said it made a significant

difference and had saved people's lives.

He said in the past 18 months he had attended around 12 incidents where the person had suffered a heart attack and he had to resuscitate them.

Mr Whitehead, a bank manager, is keen to attract more volunteers from Bingham.

For more information email chair man@vale-first-responders.com or go to [www.emas.nhs.co.uk](http://www.emas.nhs.co.uk)

● **RIGHT:** The responder's co-ordinator, Mr Rod Whitehead, left, and Mr Brian Watts (56) with some of the equipment used by the scheme.

## YOUR NEWS

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## Open night for courses

PEOPLE wanting to take part in a programme of new evening courses at Bingham's Toot Hill Arts Academy can attend an open evening on September 17.

There will be demonstration sessions and the chance to receive a 10% discount on any bookings for courses made on the night.

It will run from 6pm-7.30pm. Courses are due to start later this month and include West African drum-

## Five homes approved

PLANNING permission has been given by Rushcliffe Borough Council for five new homes on the site of a single bungalow at Colston Pastures, Cotgrave.

Dash Homes (West Midlands) Ltd was given approval despite strong objections from two residents who said the density was out of keeping with the area.

A councillor, Mrs Fiona Mason, said it was tragic that a large, beautiful garden was being lost.