Summer in Sandwell

What's On
Your essential guide to what's on in Sandwell

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www.sandwell.gov.uk
Councillor Darren Cooper
died suddenly at home in March. He was 52.

His passing prompted tributes from local, regional and national figures – and the launch by the council of the Darren Cooper Apprenticeship Foundation.

Full details of the foundation will be announced later this year, and it will provide support to young people in a number of ways.

Councillor Cooper leaves a widow, Caren, and three children – Marc, Matthew and Holly.

He had represented the Soho and Victoria ward in his home town of Smethwick since May 1991. He became council leader in December 2009.

Books of condolence were opened at Sandwell Council House, Oldbury, and at Smethwick Library.

Hundreds of people attended a civic memorial event at West Bromwich Town Hall, transformed into a sea of blue and white as many guests wore West Bromwich Albion shirts and scarves in honour of Darren, a lifelong Baggies fan.

The event – with more than a dozen speakers including former Labour leader Ed Miliband and hosted by radio and TV presenter Adrian Goldberg – celebrated Darren the family man, politician, mental health nurse, friend of many and proud son of Smethwick.

Council apprentice Daniel Gardner sang Roy Orbison’s Cryin’. And council worker Phil Challoner performed My Way, one of Darren’s favourite songs.

The Albion showed a touching video charting the club’s history and paid their own tribute as Darren’s ‘other family’, saying he would be sadly missed by everyone at The Hawthorns.

A big screen showed Darren talking about his love of the Baggies – and performing as Elvis Presley in a charity event.

Foundation donations
If you wish to donate to the Darren Cooper Apprenticeship Foundation, please call us on 0121 569 3031 or email marketing_publicity@sandwell.gov.uk

Darren’s legacy – now and for years to come

Then acting leader, Councillor Steve Eling, told the “fantastic turn-out” at the memorial event that behind every politician was a real person – and Darren was a larger-than-life enthusiast who put his heart into everything he did.

He was a great team leader, who inspired people to work towards his vision of how things should be. He would not be forgotten.

Focusing on Darren’s legacy, Councillor Eling said that as cabinet member for adult social care he had delivered structural changes that people in Sandwell were benefiting from now and would do so for decades to come.

One reason elderly people in Sandwell now had some of the best ‘extra care’ housing in the country was that Darren had defied doubters and said it would be good for them.

Darren had also stuck his neck out to invest in new leisure centres and deliver fantastic new facilities in Sandwell that were sustainable at a time of massive budget cuts.

Councillor Eling said Darren had also inspired physical legacies that people would see around Sandwell for years to come – with more in the pipeline.

He highlighted Darren’s help for young people in the workplace as the aspect of his legacy that could not be beaten.

Darren had brought forward the Sandwell Guarantee, which works with businesses to create new jobs and apprenticeships and aims to help 4,000 16- to 24-year-olds in Sandwell get into work, education and training.

Councillor Eling – who as Darren’s deputy was in charge of the council’s finances – said:

“Unfortunately most people in politics tend to be not so interested in young people.

“But Darren said they were important.

“Young people who could not get into the workplace needed support.

“Darren came to me – as he often did – and said, ‘I’ve got a new idea’.

“I’d think, ‘How much is it going to cost’, but we’d have a talk about it and, of course, it was all about priorities, not money.

“What was the higher priority? Not to do something for young people and save a few bob? Or do something spectacular for young people and find the money somewhere from within the budget to do it?

“Of course, the priority was to do it. That was the right thing.

“Thousands of young people in Sandwell have benefited from the Sandwell Guarantee.

“The guarantee I give today is that Sandwell is going to continue to deliver the Sandwell Guarantee because it’s the right thing.”
SHAPE festival

After the success of last year’s SHAPE programme of activities for young people, we are back this year with another spectacular event.

The SHAPE Youth Festival 2016 will take place on Saturday 23 July at Sandwell Valley Showground from 1pm – 7pm.

As well as great food and an information zone showcasing services offered to young people in Sandwell, the festival will feature:

- A stage with local musical talents including the winners of SHAPE Your Talent 2016
- It’s a Knockout competition • Born to Move • Zorb football
- Football tournament • Slacklining • Balance bikes
- Mini Zone featuring arts and crafts, planting and plenty more for the younger age groups
- Climbing wall and Youth Bus • Junior fun fair
- Smash Zone – featuring racket sports

Please look out for further information at www.sandwell.gov.uk/shapeevents or email SHAPE_Events@sandwell.gov.uk where you can enter a team for It’s a Knockout and find information on entering the football tournament.

Six weeks of summer activities in parks

We’ll be hosting a wide range of exciting activities across six parks, in six towns, over six weeks this summer for children and young people aged up to 19.

Activities include football, tennis, rugby, arts and crafts and so much more.

The six parks are:
- Sandwell Valley, West Bromwich
- Brunswick Park, Wednesbury
- Britannia Park, Rowley Regis
- Victoria Park, Smethwick
- Jubilee Park, Tipton
- Barnford Park, Oldbury

There will also be other activities hosted at:
- Victoria Park, Tipton
- Tividale Park, Oldbury
- Queensway playing field, Brandhall, Oldbury
- Moor Street Open Field, Wednesbury
- Bury Hill Park, Tividale

Register to take part in the activities. Visit www.sandwell.gov.uk/summer
Healthy Sandwell is Sandwell Council’s public health team. Our aim is to get Sandwell healthier and happier, and to keep people well for longer.

From stopping smoking, to getting more active, we have loads of FREE support to help you. Find out what’s on offer by visiting our webpage www.sandwell.gov.uk/healthysandwell

Healthy Sandwell starts with a healthy you.

Call us FREE on 0800 011 4656
or text GETHEALTHY to 64546
Sandwell Council has elected a new leader, Councillor Steve Eling, and deputy leader, Councillor Syeda Khatun.

The council’s new cabinet of decision-making councillors (and the areas they represent) is as follows:

- **Leader**: Steve Eling (Abbey)
- **Deputy leader (neighbourhoods & communities)**: Syeda Khatun (Tipton Green)
- **Children’s services**: Simon Hackett (Friar Park)
- **Core council services**: Steve Trow (Old Warley)
- **Highways and environment**: David Hosell (Newton)
- **Housing**: Kerrie Carmichael (Blackheath)
- **Leisure**: Richard Marshall (Smethwick)
- **Public health and protection**: Preet Gill (St Paul’s)
- **Regeneration and economic investment**: Paul Moore (Hateley Heath)
- **Social care**: Ann Shackleton (Cradley Heath & Old Hill)
- **Deputy leader (neighbourhoods & communities)**: Syeda Khatun (Tipton Green)

Councillor Eling, who had been deputy leader since 2004, said: “This is a strong group of people with a broad range of life experience and professional backgrounds. This gives us an excellent team to lead the council as it faces the challenges of budget cuts while also maintaining and improving the services that matter most to Sandwell people.

“The team is also committed to making sure this is a well-run council with processes and services in which the people of Sandwell can have full confidence.”

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### Jobs and apprenticeships for young people – apply now!

We’ve already helped more than 570 young people find jobs, training and apprenticeships – and the next person could be you.

We have jobs and apprenticeship vacancies at the council and with local companies for 16- to 24-year-olds. We call this the Sandwell Guarantee – our commitment to helping young people who aren’t currently in work, training or at school. We guarantee we can help you find a job, an apprenticeship or a great training course.

So if you’re thinking about what to do next, if you don’t know what you’ll be doing after finishing school or college (or you know someone who could do with some help to get on the career ladder), get in touch.

Apply and check out our vacancies on the council website – go to www.sandwell.gov.uk/guarantee

Alternatively you can email us – enquiries_recruitment@sandwell.gov.uk or call us on 0121 569 2099 to find out more.

### Make your money stretch further

Keep up to date with our tips to make your money stretch further at www.sandwell.gov.uk/moneysaving

### Looking for a bank account or loan?

For more than 10 years, 6Towns Credit Union has been helping people who live or work in Sandwell, providing savings accounts and loans. It can also offer a current account with debit card.

Unlike banks and building societies, 6Towns can work with other organisations to offer a bank account – even to someone who is homeless – and ‘ring fence’ money to help people budget and prevent eviction.

Check out videos about 6Towns services and budget basics at www.youtube.com by searching ‘6Towns Online’. You can also email info@sixtowns.co.uk or call 0121 553 3110.

### Did you know you could save hundreds of pounds on your fuel bills?

Sandwell Council has teamed up with energy auction specialist iChoose to help you get a better deal on your gas and electricity.

To find out if you can save money, go to www.sandwell.gov.uk/energyswitch and have your latest gas and electricity bills to hand.

Businesses in Sandwell can also take advantage of a similar scheme.

Our Energy Savers webpage www.sandwell.gov.uk/energy also has lots of advice and support on all things to do with energy.

You can also call us on 0121 569 5396 if you prefer.

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### Getting your exam results this summer?

Thousands of students are waiting for their A level and GCSE results in August.

We know it can be a worrying time for students and parents alike, especially if you don’t get the results you are expecting.

Our Sandwell Connexions team is running an exam results service on weekdays at the Council House in Freeth Street, Oldbury, between 10am and 4pm from Thursday 18 August until 31 August.

Staff will have plenty of advice on a variety of options including apprenticeships, traineeships, jobs and college courses.

They’ll also have advice on the university clearing process and help with CVs and interview skills.

To book an appointment, or to speak to an adviser on these dates, please call 0121 569 2955. Parents and carers are also welcome.

Sandwell Council’s cabinet member for children’s services Councillor Simon Hackett said: “This exam results service is designed to give Sandwell’s young people the best possible start to their careers. With so many options available it’s important to get independent professional advice and guidance.”

### Applying for a school place

If your child is due to start reception or in Year 7 in September 2017, you’ll need to start thinking about school preferences soon.

We open the online application process in September on our website www.sandwell.gov.uk/schooladmissions.

Local schools will also hold their open days and evenings around the same time so check with them for further details.
West Midlands Combined Authority

The West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) is now officially open for business.

An order was passed by Parliament on 17 June 2016 to officially create the WMCA. This will see Sandwell work more closely with other local authorities in the region as well as with businesses, other stakeholders and partners to deliver balanced economic benefits for the region.

The devolution proposal will see substantial new levels of funding and powers from central government coming into the West Midlands, unlocking around £8 billion of investment over the next 30 years.

For Sandwell, the deal will bring together resources for economic growth, skills and employability, regeneration, transport and housing.

Visit www.sandwell.gov.uk/combinedauthority to find out how the WMCA deal will benefit Sandwell.

10th Big Spring Clean

The Big Spring Clean is sweeping its way through Sandwell.

Now in its 10th year, the campaign is showing no signs of slowing down. More than 1,000 volunteers have taken part so far with two months still to go. Nearly 100 events have already taken place. This year is on track to be the biggest and best volunteer effort to date.

The campaign includes litter picking, removing fly-tipping and graffiti, planting and painting projects.

Want to get involved?
Email bigspringclean.sandwell@serco.com or call 0121 544 3916.

Tip now open 8am to 4pm

The opening hours at the tip in Shidas Lane, Oldbury, are now 8am to 4pm every day.

The site is only closed on Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year’s Day. Please separate your waste before coming to the site to make things easier during your visit. If you have any questions, please ask a team member to help you.

www.sandwell.gov.uk/tip

Summer of fun at your local library

Your local Sandwell library is the place to be this summer with a wide range of events and activities for all ages.

- **Big Friendly Read 2016** – our summer reading challenge has a Roald Dahl theme, so expect lots of fun! Register at your library from 23 July.
- **Summer holiday fun** – free events and activities to keep you entertained throughout the school holidays.
- **Birmingham Jazz and Blues** – events in each town during July.
- **Black Country Festival** – events and activities for all ages during July at all local libraries.

And don’t forget we have free internet access, free wi-fi and plenty of material for all your holiday reading needs.

Shelf help at your local library

Sandwell libraries have launched 10 new collections of ‘books on prescription’ for young people with self-help advice on issues such as bullying and self-esteem.

For more details, call 0121 569 4911 or pop into your local library.

Sandwell Community Alarms

Peace of mind at the push of a button

- Are you elderly, disabled or feeling vulnerable?
- Do you find it difficult to get help in an emergency?
- Do you want to be independent in your own home?

We can provide you with a push button pendant or fall detector to wear which you can press if you need help.

Email us at community_alarms@sandwell.gov.uk or call 0121 569 6800
Love your bin
don’t put these items in

- **TEXTILES**: Donate to charity for reuse
- **BLACK BAGS**: No bagged recycling
- **FOOD WASTE**: Use your food waste bin
- **CARPETS & RUGS**: Take to the tip for recycling
- **ELECTRICALS**: Use your garden waste bin only
- **HARD PLASTICS**: Take to the tip
- **NAPPIES**: Household waste bin only
- **GARDEN WASTE**: Take to the tip

If your blue lid bin contains any of these items it cannot be collected

Visit [www.sandwell.gov.uk/recyclingguide](http://www.sandwell.gov.uk/recyclingguide) for more information on what can and can’t go into your recycling bin.
Benefits are changing BIG TIME for working age people. Don’t get left behind!

Changes to backdating housing benefit

We normally award housing benefit so it starts from the Monday after the week in which we get your application form. Sometimes, though, it’s possible to award benefit from before that. We call this backdating.

From April 2016 the Government’s rules on housing benefit have changed. This means that now – for people of working age – you can only have a claim backdated for a maximum of one month earlier than the date you apply. It is not possible to backdate a claim for any longer.

The rules say there must be what is called ‘good cause’ for us to look at a request for backdating. We have to be satisfied with the reason you give for not claiming benefit earlier.

Examples of ‘good cause’ reasons are if:

- you were waiting for a decision about another benefit;
- you were ill and had no one to claim on your behalf;
- you were wrongly advised by an official person that you did not qualify for housing benefit; and/or
- you did not claim because of your age, health, lack of knowledge of the benefit system or language difficulties.

If you want to claim backdated benefit, you need to complete the part of the application form which is about backdated claims.

You need to tell us:

- why you want to claim backdated benefit;
- the date you want to claim from; and
- your reasons for not applying at the earlier time.

Please bear in mind that you may be asked to provide evidence of the reason why you did not claim earlier. For example, a letter from your GP which confirms your medical circumstances.

Getting into work – how we can help

Getting into work is the best way to cope with welfare reform changes – and the council can help you.

Think Sandwell is our employment and skills service. We offer support and advice for individuals looking for work and employers seeking the right staff to fill their vacancies.

It couldn’t be easier to get in touch. One phone number gets you through to our Area Employment team. Just call 0121 569 2099 whether you are a jobseeker wanting to register with us or an employer wanting to place a vacancy with us.

Our apprenticeship service is second to none whether you’re aged 16 to 24 and looking for an apprenticeship – or an employer looking for an apprentice or trainee.

Universal Credit – what you need to know

The Government’s Universal Credit is a new type of benefit for people who don’t earn much or who are out of work.

Universal Credit is a single monthly payment for people in or out of work. It will replace:

- Income-based Jobseeker’s Allowance;
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance;
- Income Support;
- Child Tax Credit;
- Working Tax Credit; and
- Housing Benefit.

Universal Credit is a single monthly payment for people in or out of work. It will replace:

- Income-based Jobseeker’s Allowance;
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance;
- Income Support;
- Child Tax Credit;
- Working Tax Credit; and
- Housing Benefit.

You will need to apply for Universal Credit online via www.gov.uk/apply-universal-credit

Before you apply for Universal Credit, you’ll need to get some information about yourself together. This will help make sure you only have to apply once – and help you to get Universal Credit as quickly as possible if you qualify.

Here’s what you will need:

**Your personal information**

- National Insurance number
- Your email address
- Your phone number

**Your housing information**

- Your address
- Your landlord’s address
- How much rent you are paying

**Your financial information**

- Your bank account details
- Details of any savings you have
- Any salary or other income

We give excellent mentoring through our Youth Employment/Apprenticeship Team. We can also help if you want to work and have a disability, mental health issue or long-term medical condition. We can help you prepare for work and apply for jobs – and then support you in the workplace.

We’re committed to helping:

- local people to find local jobs; and
- local businesses to grow and benefit from major developments in Sandwell.

Keep an eye on our website and visit www.sandwell.gov.uk/jobs for latest private sector vacancies. We’re adding new jobs and apprenticeships all the time.

Or join us on Facebook – www.facebook.com/Sandwelljobs

For more information contact the team on 0121 569 2099.

It will replace six existing benefits and is currently being brought in across the country. It came to Sandwell for some new claimants last November.

To see if you qualify, go to www.gov.uk/apply-universal-credit

You will need to apply for Universal Credit online via www.gov.uk/apply-universal-credit

If you don’t have a computer at home, you can use one for free at any of the 19 libraries across Sandwell.

If you get benefits to help pay your rent, this will be included in your monthly Universal Credit payment. It will be your responsibility to pay your landlord directly.

If you are a council tenant and need evidence of your rent, you can ask for a letter from us (called a Universal Credit rent notification letter) by going to any of Sandwell’s six Local Offices or by telephoning 0121 569 6000 (option 2).
Each May, the Fostering Network co-ordinates two weeks of events, activities and publicity, ranging from Lorraine Pascale on GMTV to our own events and publicity here in Sandwell.

But once the national publicity has gone away for another year, we carry on. We still need good people to care for Sandwell’s most vulnerable children and young people. The need doesn’t stop when the cameras are packed away.

Even if becoming a foster carer is not for you – and we know that not everybody can – you can still help us to find the people who can.

Just by talking about fostering to your friends, your family and your neighbours, you might give someone the inspiration to find out about fostering.

So the message is – we are recruiting. You don’t have to live in Sandwell, just close enough to be able to commute into the area easily. You don’t need to be married – single people and same sex couples are also becoming foster carers here.

You do need to have the time and space in your home and your heart to give a child a positive, stable environment and the determination to work for a child in your care.

So if someone you know is looking for a fresh challenge in life or wondering how to fill a hole as their own children are growing up and leaving home, tell them about fostering with Sandwell.

Go to www.sandwell.gov.uk/fostering or call 0800 358 0899 for more information.
We’re working together through the Safer Sandwell Partnership and with the West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) to make a safer borough for all.

Tackling what matters most to you – this year at a glance

- Taking 75 people to court for drug dealing and other crimes following our Safer 6 operation. They received jail sentences totalling 102 years.
- Using CCTV cameras to tackle crime, anti-social behaviour and illegal parking outside schools. And two people were convicted for breaching a Black Country-wide car cruising ban by racing on Sandwell’s roads.
- Bringing 1,250+ people – including more than 1,000 heroin users – into drug treatment, helping to prevent thousands of offences and save millions of pounds in crime, welfare and health costs.
- Helping 1,000+ people with alcohol problems and giving drug and alcohol talks to 16,000+ young people.
- Carrying out 41,208 hours of unpaid Community Payback work, with 381 offenders doing ‘grot spot’ clean-ups, decorating community buildings and much more.
- Getting young offenders to say sorry to victims and make amends – one project saw young people cleaning, tidying and painting a fire-damaged church hall.

Launching a Sandwell Victims Panel – to support victims, make sure their voice is heard and encourage reporting of crimes such as domestic abuse and hate crime.
- Supporting 5,000+ women, children and men affected by domestic violence and abuse – we now have domestic abuse workers for each town and have launched a programme tackling perpetrators too.
- Training more than 240 staff at GP practices on how to spot and respond to domestic abuse, already leading to more than 70 referrals to domestic abuse advocates.
- Educating young people in schools about domestic abuse, sexual violence, exploitation, anti-social behaviour, gang culture and racism.
- Working with young people in schools and colleges to help build positive relationships and prevent radicalisation and extremism.

A new way to involve YOU!
We’ve launched a new approach to get local people more active in their community and shaping its future.

Bringing people together in relaxed, cafe-style settings to share their views with the police, council, fire service and other partner organisations, we’re helping build strong relationships, trust and confidence in our neighbourhoods.
We’re trialling this with the Love Tipton and Love Smethwick initiatives in Princes End and Soho and Victoria.

We’ve just launched a new Community Matters trailer – which has a replica cannabis factory inside – to take safety and anti-drugs messages on the road and help us talk with local people.

70+ people got the knife out of their life by using the new weapon surrender bin supported by the PCC in West Bromwich town centre.

Young voices – our Youth PCCs
We have two young people elected by Sandwell’s Youth Parliament to work with the West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC), David Jamieson.

Jardell Miller, aged 16, gives young people a voice on issues such as stop and search, police cadet schemes, youth engagement and road safety.
He said: “Meeting senior police, working with young people and patrolling with Central Motorway Policing Group have certainly been some of the many highlights.”

Adam Shaikh, aged 18, is working on a positive campaign for local young people.
He explained: “I am focusing on contributing to the work being done with regards to child sexual exploitation and to support young people with a talent or an idea, so they receive the recognition they deserve.”

We're here to help you
Call West Midlands Police on 101 to report crime or call Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111.
Always call 999 in an emergency.
Go to www.sandwell.gov.uk/asb for advice on reporting anti-social behaviour.
Victim Support? Go to www.victimsupport.org.uk or call the free support line on 0808 16 89 111.
Domestic abuse? Call Sandwell Women’s Aid 0121 552 6448 or free 24-hour national helpline 0808 2000 247. Always call 999 in an emergency. More advice at www.sandwell.gov.uk/domesticabuse

Drug and alcohol services? Go to www.sandwell.gov.uk/healthysandwell or call Healthy Sandwell on 0800 011 4656. For under 18s, DECCA (Drug Education, Counselling and Confidential Advice) Team runs www.ourguideto.co.uk or call 0121 569 2201.
Fire safety? Call West Midlands Fire Service on 0800 389 5525 for advice and to book a free home fire safety visit.

See something, do something!
Watch our short film on what to do if you’re concerned about someone’s safety and welfare. Go to www.sandwell.gov.uk/ssds

Thanks to all our residents, businesses and community, voluntary and faith groups that contribute so much to all of this work in helping make Sandwell safer.

Read more about our partnership work and services at www.sandwell.gov.uk/safer
Want to lose weight and get more active?
Do you live or have a GP in Sandwell?

**Sandwell Mytime Active Healthy Lifestyles team is here to help.**

Book a one-to-one initial assessment and receive a personalised plan just for you. Our friendly, healthy lifestyle specialists will support you to reach your goal.

We are offering a 24-week, fun, interactive programme to support adults and their families to get more active, eat better, lose weight and keep it off for good.

We have various packages – each includes a weigh-in, nutrition topic, exercise and goal setting to keep you on target.

- **Men-only weight management package** includes circuits and weights
- **Active weight management package** includes exercise like aerobics, circuits, Zumba
- **Gentle weight management package** includes gentle exercise
- **Family healthy lifestyle packages** learn about a healthy lifestyle as a family with fun, active games

All of these packages are FREE for the first 12 weeks, with a small charge after that. Classes run at different times and locations across Sandwell.

Also available are FREE Weight Watchers vouchers (subject to eligibility) for those who would prefer to join a Weight Watchers group.

Call 0800 011 4656 or 0121 366 0966 for more information or to book your initial assessment.

**See me, hear me!**

**Sexual exploitation is a crime**

The sexual exploitation of young people is hidden from view. Vulnerable girls and boys are groomed and then abused, often by people they trust.

If at any time you believe a child is, or could be, in immediate danger, dial 999. If you have concerns, call West Midlands Police on 101, or confidentially speak to Barnardo’s on 0121 359 5333.

Visit www.seeme-hearme.org.uk to find out more.

**Sandwell Healthy Lifestyle Services**

Did you know there is a range of weight loss and healthy lifestyle services across Sandwell?

**Want to lose weight?**
**Be more active?**
Get in touch to find out more!
Since 2014, we have invested millions of pounds to improve council homes and local neighbourhoods.

Internal improvements – being carried out by Lovell, VINCI Facilities and Wates Living Space – include new kitchens, bathrooms, central heating systems and electrical rewiring, as well as new roofs and windows where needed.

We’ve also begun to improve Sandwell’s 500 non-traditional properties, installing external insulation on these and other hard-to-heat homes.

Meanwhile, Keepmoat and Lovell are improving our high-rise blocks.

They’re making them more energy-efficient with external insulation, installing new windows, entrances and roofs, upgrading lifts, decorating communal areas and improving parking and landscaping.

With Lovell and VINCI Facilities, we’re also continuing to replace all single-glazed windows with modern double-glazing.

On top of this, our partners are giving their time and resources to work with schools, improve community buildings and helping other good causes.

Since 2014 this is what we’ve done...

- **8,290** double-glazed windows fitted
- **1,739** roofs repaired/replaced
- **2,488** bathrooms improved
- **2,323** kitchens improved
- **2,855** central heating systems improved
- **3,138** houses rewired
- **5,000** homes refurbished inside
- **7** high-rise blocks (406 flats) improved

Facelift for Tipton block

A £3 million refurbishment of a tired-looking 1960s tower block in Tipton has started.

Nelson House in Upper Church Lane will be the 35th block of flats to be refurbished in 10 years.

Work includes new windows, balcony doors and panels, a new front entrance and rear exit, a pitched roof, photo-voltaic panels, insulated cladding, decorating communal areas and an upgraded lift. Landscaping, parking and outside lighting will also be improved.

Councillor Kerrie Carmichael, cabinet member for housing, said: “I’m delighted this work is finally going ahead. It’s long overdue for tenants here and we appreciate their patience.

“Not only will the renovation create better homes for the people living here, it will also lengthen the building’s lifespan and improve its appearance.”

Lovell is carrying out the makeover for Sandwell Council.
New skyline for Smethwick
An £11 million facelift to three high-rise blocks in Smethwick is now complete.

Tenants living at Ashcroft, Birchcroft and Elmcroft in Cape Hill have seen their homes and the skyline transformed over a two-year period.

Improvements include new roofs with energy-efficient photovoltaic panels and eye-catching insulated cladding to reduce energy bills, plus new windows and balconies.

These have given the blocks – which comprise 270 homes – a new lease of life.

Keepmoat has worked with the council’s urban design high-rise team to carry out the improvements.

The facelift has also boosted the local economy, with more than £1 million being spent with local small and medium-sized businesses through the supply chain and 11 apprenticeships created for young people.

Housing partners in the classroom
Our four partners have been getting involved with local primary and secondary schools on a range of activities.

These include health and safety talks; visits from the Considerate Constructors’ mascot, Ivor Goodsite; work experience placements and careers exhibitions.

We are trying to encourage young people into construction because it’s a growing industry and often people don’t realise the opportunities being offered.

Statistics from www.goconstruct.org show:
- More than 15,000 construction jobs will be created in the West Midlands over the next five years;
- There are more than 150 different professions in construction, from office work and management to trades such as electricians, plumbers and engineers; and
- 320,000 women work in construction.

Canal clean-up for the Queen
Three stretches of Sandwell’s historic canal network were cleaned up as part of the national Clean for the Queen campaign to mark Her Majesty’s 90th birthday.

Armed with litter pickers, the teams collected more than 100 bags of rubbish and debris from along the canal banks at:
- Old Main Line Canal, Smethwick (near Brasshouse Lane)
- New Main Line Canal, Tipton and Oldbury
- Rushall Canal, Yew Tree and West Bromwich

Hands-on help!
Eight tired and worn-out looking community buildings in Sandwell have benefited from our Hands-on Help scheme.

Community, voluntary and not-for-profit organisations were invited to apply, with our investment partners offering to provide free labour and materials.

Our partners have been busy decorating community rooms, repairing a leaking roof, replacing toilet facilities and fitting a new kitchen.

Hundreds of residents are now enjoying better facilities, and this often helps organisations attract new people.

One of our round one winners, Holy Name Parish Centre, Great Barr, has benefitted from new toilet facilities thanks to Lovell.

Secretary Bernadette Kennedy said: “Our centre is celebrating its 30th birthday this year but some of our fixtures and fittings were falling into disrepair. This has made a huge difference to our users and volunteers who help run the centre.”

The final round of Hands-on Help applications was being assessed as the Herald went to print.

Round two winners were:
- Hope Church, Oldbury
- St John’s Community Centre, Oldbury
- Great Bridge Community Forum
- The Wesley Centre for All, Wednesbury

We teamed up with the Canal and River Trust, Keep Britain Tidy, waste partner Serco, Lovell, VINCI Facilities and Wates Living Space.
New secondary school for Langley

Sandwell's newest secondary school is scheduled to open its doors this September.

Finishing touches are now being made to the new Q3 Academy, which is on the former Langley High School site in Moat Road.

Q3 is the first new secondary school to open in 10 years in Sandwell. The first 150 Year 7 pupils will start this September and the school will eventually accommodate more than 1,500 pupils.

The school is sponsored by Eric Payne, who currently sponsors the Q3 Academy in Great Barr.

Councillor Simon Hackett, cabinet member for children’s services, said: “We have worked in partnership with sponsor Mr Eric Payne to deliver the school in a relatively short space of time.

“We’re committed to ensuring we have more secondary places in the borough to meet increasing demands.

“We will continue to do all we can to ensure we have enough school places for children across Sandwell.”

Regular car boot now in Oldbury

Oldbury now hosts a regular Sunday market and car boot sale.

During July car boot pitches are just £5 and hire of a gazebo is £10 (needs to be pre-booked). Free places are also on offer to any non-food market trader this month.

The market is open from 6am and finishes at 2pm every Sunday – all market traders and car booters are welcome.

Have a clear out and sell your unwanted items, or come along and browse for some bargains.

To book a pitch, call 07471 037 138 or 07476 610 714.

The car park for bargain hunting visitors is off the A4034 slip road to West Bromwich Street in Oldbury. The entrance for stallholders and car booters is off Dudley Road, B69 3DA.

This market and car boot sale is operated by Groupe Geraud.

For more information visit: www.sandwell.gov.uk/oldburysundaymarket

Hands-on help for church kitchen

An Oldbury church is now launching a much-needed luncheon club for older people after its kitchen got a complete makeover.

Council contractor Lovell carried out the facelift at Hope Church in St James Road, Oldbury, as part of our Hands-on Help scheme (see page 13).

The previously tired and outdated kitchen has now been completely transformed with new cupboards, work surfaces and a double sink along with a new floor, replacement electrical wiring and plumbing.

Hundreds of adults and children benefit from a range of activities for all ages run from the church.

Pastor Dave Hancox said: “We’re extremely grateful to Sandwell Council, Lovell and its contractors for this much-needed makeover.

“As well as improving the kitchen for our regular visitors, the upgrade means we can now run a weekly luncheon club, providing a hot two-course meal for older people in a friendly and welcoming environment.”

For more information visit: www.sandwell.gov.uk/oldburysundaymarket

Your Oldbury councillors

For more information on councillors, call 0121 569 3129 or email members_services@sandwell.gov.uk

New principal Peter Lee and Great Barr Q3 Academy students viewed progress on the new school in March
Damaged flats repaired and converted

Following an explosion last year in one of the low-rise flats in Oldbury Road, Rowley Regis, we have now finished our repairs.

An extensive refurbishment has converted the flats into two homes, which are now occupied by tenants.

School children ‘Fighting Fit’

Children are set to become fitter and build better relationships thanks to a new scheme.

Fighting Fit targets young people who may have issues with confidence or low self-esteem, as well as those who have anger issues or show aggressive behaviour.

The scheme, which teaches self-defence techniques and how to work together as a team, has proved a real success at Blackheath and Temple Meadow primary schools. Pupils’ attention span has improved and their behaviour in lessons and at home has got better too.

The scheme was first introduced at Blackheath Primary School, with PCSO Garfield Simpson working on a one-to-one basis with a pupil to carry out work around their emotional wellbeing. The scheme is now set to roll out to Ormiston Forge Academy.

COMICS FOR CRADLEY HEATH SCHOOL

Cradley Heath students at Ormiston Forge Academy are diving into a world of fantasy heroes and time travel thanks to a donation from an international publishing giant.

The academy wrote to Titan Comics to ask for help with literacy lessons. The company kindly donated more than 100 comic books, which will be used to help students create their own comic strips based on Shakespeare plays.

The comics will become reading skills aids and a comic-reading group will be set up.

For more information on councillors, call 0121 569 3129 or email members_services@sandwell.gov.uk
Lightwoods Park and House £5.2 million restoration continues

The clock has now been restored and sits in pride of place on the front of the building, while work continues inside. It was restored by Smith of Derby, the same company that restored the King's Head clock. The clock will be working once the electrics are all connected inside the house.

The new pond and wildlife area is attracting ducks and lots of other creatures and there is now a rustic bridge over the weir. The bridge is a copy of one that existed in the same spot back in the 1920s and was recreated from an old photograph.

And the Shakespeare Garden is being restored to its former glory – very apt given this year is the 400th anniversary of the Bard’s death.

Go to www.lightwoodspark.wordpress.com for the latest on this fantastic project — supported by Heritage Lottery Fund, Big Lottery Fund and Sandwell Council — which will see the house open to the public for the first time in decades.

Once finished, the house will have tearooms, community spaces, toilets and lots more. It’s hoped the house will open to the public next spring.

Smethwick Community Awards celebrate local heroes

Well done to all of our inspirational local heroes who were involved in our recent annual community awards.

More than 100 people who give up their time voluntarily to improve our town were nominated.

The winners were:
- Good Neighbour: Abid Hussain
- Outstanding Youth: Matthew English
- Outstanding Volunteer: Ash Lewis and Deep Singh
- Special Award: Harley Jean Simpson
- Partnership Working: Jalal Uddin
- Community Project: Smethwick in a Stew
- Bob Cohen Outstanding Citizen: Julie McKirdy BEM

Restoring West Smethwick Park

You may have heard we’ve secured the first round of funding to restore West Smethwick Park.

This month (July) we’ll be working on the designs for improving the park, which was donated to the public by the industrialist James Chance back in the 1900s.

We want to recreate the park’s original 19th and 20th century designs – transforming the pools and footpaths as well as improving parking and the playing fields. We also plan to have a games area, new gym equipment, a new pavilion, new railings and signs.

Once we’ve got the plans drawn up, we’ll go back to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) who have given us the first pot of money to get the plans off the ground. If they are happy with the plans, we’ll get the rest of the nearly £5 million of funding to get the work done.

We’re also looking at who uses the park and what for – so we can get a better idea of how the park serves the community and how they use it.

Tell your councillors

If you live in the St Paul’s ward of Smethwick, there’s now a new way of getting in touch with your local councillors.

The new Tell Your Councillor campaign gives residents the chance to raise issues with their ward councillors by filling in forms and dropping them in boxes at the council house and three community centres.

The boxes are emptied every week and the suggestions and comments picked up by ward councillors Preet Kaur Gill, Zahoor Ahmed and Babu Singh Bawa.

You can find the boxes at Smethwick Council House, The Brasshouse Centre, St Albans Community Centre and St John’s Community Centre.
Pride of Tipton

Local heroes were celebrated at the Pride of Tipton Awards 2016, with stories of courage and community spirit at its very best.

Other award winners included:
- Environmental Protection and Awareness: Tipton Litterwatch
- Culture Award: Keith Hodgkins
- Community Champion: John Lawley-Lees
- Inspirational Person: Sally Gutteridge
- Inspirational Young Person: Daniel Cobbold
- Good Neighbour: Sheila Bridgen
- Lifetime Achievement: Linda Paskin and Maureen Whitehouse
- Outstanding Bravery: Faye Cartwright

Sandwell Local Tipton office is now open following a £350,000 refurbishment to bring more services closer to tenants and residents.

We’ve remodelled and extended the office in High Street, Princes End, to accommodate neighbourhood services, adult social care and children’s services as well as local police.

Having more services together under one roof is easier for local people, makes better use of the building and saves on costs. The building is more energy-efficient, which reduces operating costs.

Councillor Jo Hadley, Tipton town lead member, said: “The refurbishment has created a fantastic, modern reception area which is great for visitors, as well as a public space for our partners to offer a wide range of services to local people. It’s great news for Tipton!”

Clean-up praised

Staff from Tipton Local office organised a big clean-up in Great Bridge, Tipton Green and Princes End.

As part of the Big Spring Clean and Clean for the Queen initiatives, they joined forces with the council’s waste partner Serco, local charity Litterwatch, councillors, schools, tenants and residents, community groups, police and Nova Training.

Activities included litter picking, graffiti removal, providing skips for bulky rubbish and clearing overgrown paths.

Councillor Jo Hadley, Tipton town lead member, said: “I am extremely proud of the neighbourhood officers and everyone who has shown their commitment to keeping Tipton cleaner, safer and greener.”

Remembering brave Joseph Davies VC

A commemorative paving stone to Tipton First World War hero Joseph Davies will be unveiled during a local community history day 100 years after his bravery earned him the Victoria Cross.

Tipton Royal British Legion is co-ordinating the free event at Victoria Park on Saturday 23 July, which includes a military band and parade. All are welcome at the event, which is supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund and runs from 10.30am to 4pm.

Corporal Davies, a Royal Welch Fusilier in the British Army, received the Victoria Cross from King George V for his bravery at Delville Wood, France, on 20 July 1916.

Separated from his company, he and eight men were surrounded in an enemy counter-attack. Corporal Davies got his men into a shell hole and, by throwing bombs and opening rapid fire, successfully fought the attackers to join up with the rest of the company. Later rising to the rank of staff-sergeant, Joseph Davies died aged 86 in 1976.

Other award winners included:
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It’s blooming lovely in Wednesbury this summer, as the flowers return...

Wednesbury in Bloom competition is back for a second year and is even bigger and better.

The competition includes new categories and competitors have the chance to win vouchers provided by O’Connell’s Florist & Fruiterers.

Come along to the town centre and see the beautiful blooms and plentiful planters.

...with a summer fete to top it off!

As if Wednesbury in Bloom wasn’t enough, the competition ends with a fun-packed summer fete at Wednesbury Town Hall on Saturday 23 July from 11am to 3pm.

The fete will feature a range of stalls and live music from local musicians.

The event will end with the prize-giving ceremony for Wednesbury in Bloom.

And they say nostalgia is a thing of the past...

A new permanent display to take visitors back in time to their homes of the ’60s and ’70s has opened at Wednesbury Museum and Art Gallery.

Enjoy a 1970s-style living room (pictured below). Museum visitors and staff have donated some of the objects.

To launch this new nostalgic display, an exhibition of 50 photographs of Sandwell people celebrating and meeting the Queen between the ’50s and ’70s runs until the end of 2016.

Wednesbury Museum and Art Gallery, in Holyhead Road, is open Wednesdays and Thursdays 11am-4pm and Saturdays 2pm-5pm. Entry is free.

A clean sweep

We held a clean-up in the Moor Street area, collecting 13 bags of rubbish.

Taking part were Litterwatch, local residents and council neighbourhood services officers.

www.sandwell.gov.uk/joininmuseums
Bedsits transformation under way

An outdated and under-used block of 24 bedsits is set to be transformed into 12 much-needed, one-bedroom flats.

Sandfield House in Walsall Road is set to be remodelled as the building remains structurally sound.

Stone Cross residents gave initial plans the ‘thumbs up’ at a consultation event earlier in the year.

We’re now drawing up detailed plans and will invite companies to tender for the work.

We’ll keep residents up-to-date as plans progress.

Converting Sandfield House into one-bedroom flats will help people who are looking to move into more affordable properties.

Have your say on Manor House plans

We have exciting plans for Manor House – one of the West Midlands’ most important historic buildings.

Recent surveys, research and archaeological investigations have revealed lost and forgotten secrets from the 13th house in Hall Green Road, which opened as a museum in 2010.

With a history of murder, insanity and grave-robbing, and with buildings that have served as court house, chapel, tenement block and bakery, it has proved a tremendous hit with local people for its family-friendly programme of living history, fetes, ghost hunts and concerts.

We want to know what you would like to do and enjoy at this inspiring site.

Visit the museum and tell us how you think it should be developed.

Or let us know your thoughts online at: www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/Manor_House

Volunteers wanted

Oak House Museum is on the look-out for greenfingered volunteers this summer to join in exciting projects in the garden and around the house.

We are looking for people to join the Friends of the Oak House Museum Volunteer Gardening Group, which is working to transform the gardens with new rose beds and fruit trees.

People of all ages and abilities are welcome to join the group, which runs every Tuesday morning between 10am and 1pm. It is free to join and tea and coffee is provided.

Call the Oak House on 0121 553 0759 or visit the group on Tuesday mornings.
To book your FREE NHS Health Check please call 0800 011 46 56

or text GETHEALTHY to 64546* for more information

* Calls FREE from landlines. Charges may apply for calls and SMS texts from your mobile phone.

Aged 40-74?
Find out about our FREE NHS Health Check

Even though you might be feeling great, if you’re over forty you may be at risk of heart disease, stroke, kidney disease, diabetes or dementia.

A FREE NHS Health Check can help you reduce these risks and make sure that you stay healthy.
Feel great this summer

Sign up to free programmes running across Sandwell this summer to get you feeling healthier and happier.

Here are just a few things going on:

- **Free stop smoking groups and support** for anybody who lives in Sandwell, running throughout the summer at different locations.
- **Free weight management support** for people who sign up via Healthy Sandwell and pass the eligibility criteria.
- **Free NHS Health Checks for 40 to 74-year-olds**, aimed at preventing serious conditions like diabetes and strokes. The check is aimed at people who aren’t already diagnosed with a long-term condition.
- **Free antenatal classes** and groups for expectant parents.
- **Free vitamins** are now available in neighbourhood offices and libraries as part of the Healthy Start scheme. If you are currently getting vouchers for Healthy Start, you can now get your vitamins from these locations too.

So what’s stopping you?
Call the Healthy Sandwell team today!

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**Sean’s slimming success!**

Trucker Sean Elms, from Tipton, used to wear 7XL clothes and struggled to walk down the street without getting out of breath.

He tried a few times to lose some weight, but always slipped back to bad habits.

Sean signed up for a 12-week, free Weight Watchers programme, funded by Healthy Sandwell, and then continued his journey with Weight Watchers to help keep the momentum for his weight loss journey.

In two years, he’s lost 21 stone!

He said: “For the first time in my life, I feel fantastic in my own body, and I just want to keep going and stay fit and healthy as possible.”

Feel inspired to start your weight loss journey? Call Healthy Sandwell on **0800 011 4656** today to see how you can join one of our programmes.

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**We’re backing sport in Sandwell!**

Sports clubs across Sandwell are celebrating after another round of grants of up to £1,500 each to help those active in their local communities, working with local schools and promoting healthy lifestyles.

The awards meant that Special Olympics Sandwell could send 32 of their members to the National Games in Sheffield, to participate and represent Sandwell.

Singh Sabha FC’s grant made it possible for them to set up a new under-15s football team, helping to meet the costs of equipment, venue hire and training.

In total, we have now invested almost £45,000 in supporting grassroots sports clubs since 2014.

Email sandwell_sportsclubs@sandwell.gov.uk for more info.

But that’s not all!

**We’ve also launched a new £25,000 Gifted and Talented grant programme to support local athletes.**

Young sports stars of the future could be following in the footsteps of triathlete Jodie Stimpson, who won Commonwealth gold at Glasgow 2014.

Grants of up to £500 are on offer to athletes (including para-athletes) living in Sandwell.

The programme is also backed by the Black Country Consortium (county sport partnership for the Black Country). Applications are now open.

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**Monitor and lose weight in libraries!**

If you are 18 or over with a body mass index (BMI) of 23 or above – and you live or have a GP in Sandwell – our libraries are offering a free self-monitoring weigh-in service.

No groups, no meeting, no hassle – just you and the scales!

Go to [www.sandwell.gov.uk/Weigh2GO](http://www.sandwell.gov.uk/Weigh2GO) to register and see if you qualify.
Queen’s 90th birthday

Congratulations to the winners of our Queen’s birthday poster competition.

The winners and runners-up in each age category visited the Mayor’s Parlour to receive their certificates and see their posters on display. Winners also received a £10 Toys R Us voucher.

We had more than 400 entries and the competition was judged by the then Mayor of Sandwell, Councillor Barbara Price, who thanked everyone who entered.

She said: “I was truly amazed by how many Sandwell children took part and was very proud of the high standard of entries. We have some extremely talented young artists in Sandwell and I have written to the Queen to let her know how Sandwell children have been celebrating her birthday.”

On the Queen’s birthday on 21 April, the Mayor lit a beacon on the Rowley Hills as part of a national chain started by the Queen herself.

Members of the community also held tea parties and street parties in June, as part of the Queen’s official birthday celebrations.

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The Sandwell Herald

Over 60? Get active with Agewell

Summer’s here and it’s the perfect time for older people to start getting more active.

A 60+ multi-activity session has already taken off at Portway Lifestyle Centre, Oldbury. This includes gentle exercise to improve strength and balance, badminton, table tennis, bowls and the outdoor life trail, followed by a coffee and a chat.

Agewell’s Alison Pickering said:

“The popular, weekly, Thursday morning sessions from 10am to 12 noon are a great opportunity to make friends and have a laugh while being active.

“If you don’t live in Oldbury, we have other classes at leisure centres and community venues across Sandwell.

“Older people of any ability can join in. Those who aren’t too steady on their feet can fully participate from a chair, so there’s no excuse for saying ‘I can’t get active’!”

To find out more, call Agewell on 0121 796 9333, email info@agewelluk.org.uk or visit www.agewelluk.org.uk

Learn something new

Our Sandwell Adult and Family Learning team can help you learn something new.

Whether that’s a qualification, a hobby, first aid or skills to help you support your children or return to work, they can help.

Courses include computers, maths, English, fitness, dance and music, crafts and skills, sewing, painting and drawing.

To find out more, go to www.learnsafl.ac.uk

Or call Tipton College on 0121 557 0837, Hateley Heath Family Education and Training Centre on 0121 556 7426 or the Ron Davis Centre in Smethwick on 0121 555 6255.

Blind Dave book celebration

Sandwell freeman Blind Dave Heeley gave a talk and answered questions about his new book at a special event at Sandwell Council House.

Dave also signed copies of From Light To Dark, co-written with Sophie Parkes, which tells the story of how he went blind and went on to complete a series of endurance adventures.

Huge congratulations to Dave and his guide Tony Ellis for completing their Escape from Alcatraz triathlon in June, raising money for the Albion Foundation.

Leisure trust strikes gold for safety

Sandwell Leisure Trust (SLT) has received the highest possible accolade in the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) 2016 Health and Safety Awards.

The Sandwell-based company has landed the coveted President’s Award (10 consecutive golds) and is the first leisure trust to achieve this.

The awards event marks its diamond anniversary this year, with council and trust officials being presented with the award this month.

Paul Slater, chief executive for Sandwell Leisure Trust, said: “We are honoured to receive this nationally-recognised award for health and safety – whose high standards the trust has successfully maintained for the last 10 years.”

Councillor Richard Marshall, Sandwell Council’s cabinet member for leisure, said: “Providing a safe environment for Sandwell residents to enjoy their leisure time will always be our highest priority, and this achievement clearly demonstrates SLT’s and the council’s commitment to do this.”

The RoSPA Awards not only focus on accident and ill-health prevention, but also occupational health and safety management systems, including practices like leadership and workforce involvement.

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**What's On**

Your essential guide to events in Sandwell

To download our full What's On guide, go to [www.sandwell.gov.uk/whatson](http://www.sandwell.gov.uk/whatson)

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**JULY**

**Thursday 28 July**
1 pm – 4 pm

Community Offer Summer Tea Dance
West Bromwich Community Centre, Gayton Rd
Join us for an afternoon of tea and sequence, ballroom, Latin and line dancing led by Heather Roberts. Enjoy swing and jazz music from The People’s Orchestra and find out more about the Sandwell Community Offer.

**FREE**
For info: 0121 565 5605
KPG-CommunityOffer@kaleidoscopeplus.org.uk

**Saturday 30 July**
6pm – 10pm

Big Wild Pyjama Party
Sandwell Valley RSPB Centre, Tanhouse Avenue, Great Barr

£10 adults; £5 children (20% discount for members)
0121 357 7395
www.sandwell.gov.uk/RSPBevent

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**SEPTEMBER**

**Sunday 11 September**
10am

Run for Joel
Sandwell Valley Country Park
3km fun run or 5km charity race raising money for the Smile for Joel charity in memory of Joel Richards, Adrian Evans and Patrick Evans who were killed in the Tunisia terror attack in 2015. Open to all ages and abilities. Register now.

£2 children under 12 (3km);
£6 teens and adults (3km);
£10 for 5km runners
www.slt-leisure.co.uk/runforjoel
www.facebook.com/smileforjoel

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**AUGUST**

**Saturday 13 and Sunday 14 August**
11.30am – 3.30pm

Sandwell Arts Festival – Imagine That!
West Bromwich town centre (various venues)
West Brom is transformed into a town of adventure with a ceramic garden of 1,000+ flowers, giant bumble bees, photography, films, puppet show, dance, music, roaming performers, storytelling, urban beach, community workshops and much more!

FREE admission
www.creativeblackcountry.co.uk
Follow @CreativeBCuk on Twitter using #ImagineThat hashtag

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**SUMMER at Sandwell Valley**

something for everyone!

**Children’s Parties at Sandwell Park Farm and Forge Mill Farm**

Packages include:
- room hire, young farmers’ lunchboxes, a guided tour of the farm and an up close encounter with our farm animals!

Call us for details on 0121 569 3070

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**Summer fun at museums**

There's lots of great activities and free family fun throughout the school summer holidays at our museums.

Attractions include kids crafts, animals with Dudley Zoo, nature fun with the RSPB, music workshops, magic and balloons, storytelling performances, games, movies, trails, art activities and much more.

Discover ancient objects brought back from around the world by Victorian travellers at Oak House. Take a guided tour, try some armour and play medieval games at our fascinating 13th century Manor House.

Get nostalgic at Wednesbury Museum and Art Gallery with our Nostalgia Rooms, showing home scenes from the ‘60s and ‘70s and an exhibition celebrating The Queen and Sandwell.

And check out our heritage open days coming up at all our museums in September, as well as our Proms in the Park music afternoon at Haden Hill House from 2pm to 6pm on Sunday 11 September.

www.sandwell.gov.uk/joininmuseums
has all the details.

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**Love taking photos?**

We are looking for photographs of Sandwell to potentially use in the Herald and other council publicity to promote the borough.

Email marketing_publicity@sandwell.gov.uk or call us on 0121 569 3031 for details.