Follow those bears!
The Big Sleuth comes to Sandwell

We’re very proud to be part of The Big Sleuth – a brilliant public art trail bringing bear-illiant bears to Sandwell.

The 10-week project supporting Birmingham Children’s Hospital Charity will see up to 100 decorated bear sculptures on display in the region’s streets, parks and open spaces.

A sleuth is the collective noun for a group of bears and you’ll be able to sleuth your way around the trail which includes Sandwell, Birmingham, Solihull, Sutton Coldfield and Resorts World.

We have six bears in Sandwell – three in West Bromwich and three in Bearwood. All of the bears have been designed by young people and local artists.

The trail, which is being run in conjunction with Wild in Art, is on until Sunday 17 September. During that time we want as many people as possible to visit all of the bears, check out The Big Sleuth app and have fun.

Three of the bears will be auctioned off in aid of Birmingham Children’s Hospital Charity in the autumn, while the three community bears will be found new homes around Sandwell.

For more details and to see a map of the trail, go to www.thebigsleuth.co.uk

To register and for more information go to www.sandwell.gov.uk/mysandwell

Are you online?

Save time with MySandwell

We’re busy adding more services to our MySandwell portal – saving you time and the need to call us to report a problem or request a service.

You can now report an environmental health issue and even record a noise nuisance diary online.

And soon you’ll be able to book a pest control appointment through your account.

All you need to do is register for a MySandwell account – it takes a few moments. Then you can access all of these services and more online:

- Council tax and benefits – check your council tax bill, benefits and business rates balances and transactions
- Bins and recycling – check your bin day and report a missed bin
- Environmental health – report an environmental health issue
- Housing – join the housing register, rent a garage and inform us about a change in your circumstances
- Registration Services – request copies of certificates for births, deaths and marriages
- Report problems with street lights, fly-tipping, graffiti and dropped kerbs
- Register complaints, compliments and Freedom of Information requests

The Youth Festival

Saturday 22 July 2017
11am – 5pm at Sandwell Valley Country Park, B71 4BG

Featuring the Blind Dave Colour Run
starts at 1pm

Free admission

To register or for more information visit: www.thealbionfoundation.co.uk

The 5k Blind Dave Colour Run starts 1pm

Race registration opens at 11am

Visit: www.thealbionfoundation.co.uk to register to run

£10 Registration Fee includes:
- T-shirt
- Your runner’s number
- Your personal colour packet
- Finisher’s medal
- Pennywell colour fun on the day

You can collect your pack on the day when registering or have it posted to your home from £2.50
If you fly-tip in Sandwell...

WE WILL CATCH YOU

Dumping rubbish is a CRIME

TIP OFF
Stop fly-tipping in Sandwell

Call 0121 368 1177
www.sandwell.gov.uk/flytipping
Joy of Jazz

Top musicians are sharing the joy of jazz in Sandwell after the borough teamed up with a major international festival.

The newly-renamed Birmingham, Solihull & Sandwell Jazz Festival 2017 is under way and runs until 23 July.

There are around 30 performances across Sandwell’s six towns – with our libraries, museums, parks, Sandwell Arts Café, Windsor Theatre Bar and other venues hosting events.

Go to www.sandwell.gov.uk/jazzfestival and www.discoversandwell.co.uk for more information.

Follow the festival on Twitter @BirmJazzFest or search ‘Birmingham Jazz Festival’ on Facebook.

Bostin Black Country

Throughout July, Sandwell libraries are celebrating all things local as part of this year’s Black Country Festival.

Activities include music, poetry, quizzes and a series of local history talks. Find out more at Discover Sandwell, follow @sandwellbibs on Twitter or search ‘Sandwell Libraries’ on Facebook.

Bloomin’ Lovely Arts Trail

Thanks to everyone who submitted fantastic pieces of art for our Bloomin’ Lovely Arts Trail, which features paintings, drawings and photographs celebrating nature in Sandwell.

Discover the trail at venues across Sandwell between now and September and vote for your favourite piece of work.

Go to www.sandwell.gov.uk/joininmuseums for exhibition details.

Sandwell Valley

Check out what’s on at Sandwell Valley Country Park this summer, including over the Bank Holiday weekend, at the ‘Sandwell Valley’ Facebook page.

On 20 August, it’s Fairy Tales at The Valley with local dance companies and organisations working with our museums and arts service to bring some classic fairy tales to life around the country park.

Email alex_howell@sandwell.gov.uk to get involved.

It’s Run for Joel on 10 September in memory of Tunisia terror attack victims Joel Richards, Adrian Evans and Patrick Evans. Register for 5k or 3k runs at www.smileforjoel.com and raise money to support families who are victims of murder and terrorism.

On 30 September, it’s the 5k Race for Life Pretty Muddy, raising money for Cancer Research UK.

Summer fun at Sandwell museums

Join us at Sandwell’s museums for summer holidays packed with affordable and free fun for all ages.

Attractions include craft activities, circus skills, film shows, performances, pirate fun, party time, fun days and much more.

On 20 and 22 July, Manor House, West Bromwich, is screening House of Screaming Death, a horror movie filmed on location at the Manor House. Booking is advised. This particular event is not suitable for children.

Enjoy music and more at the Indoor Outdoor Festival at Wednesbury Museum & Art Gallery. Book your place at our Sundays at Oak House in West Bromwich to discover secrets of a 400-year-old building.

Plus, coming up in September, we have Proms in the Park at Haden Hill and Heritage Open Days, including a medieval re-enactment at the Manor House.

Vélo Birmingham in Sandwell

It’s just a couple of months now until Vélo Birmingham – when the Midlands plays host to a major new 100-mile cycling event.

On Sunday 24 September, charity fundraisers and recreational cyclists will start their journey in Birmingham City Centre and ride around the Midlands.

It’s a completely closed route – for Sandwell, this will be along the A465 Hagley Road in Bearwood and Oldbury.

Go to www.velobirmingham.com for more information.

Library activities

We have events for all ages throughout the year in our libraries.

www.facebook.com/sandwelllibraries

0121 569 4911
Just 100 of the things the council does for the community...

1. Responds quickly to emergencies – making sure residents are supported and looked after in their moment of greatest need.

2. Provides free-to-use computers at all libraries across Sandwell.

3. Protects frontline services that matter to people – including keeping libraries open despite millions of pounds of cuts.

4. Repairs around 2,500 potholes every year to keep Sandwell’s roads safe.

5. Inspects hundreds of restaurants and takeaways to make sure their food is safe to eat.

6. Treats thousands of homes with pest problems – including rats, fleas and bedbugs – every year.

7. Prosecutes rogue traders – the council’s enforcement teams have investigated nearly 1,300 criminal complaints about scams.

8. Tackles and prevents the sale of alcohol and tobacco products to children.

9. Collects your bins every week – including recycling and food waste.

10. Supports the most vulnerable by reducing council tax bills for people on the lowest incomes.

11. Has issued hundreds of fines to people who don’t clean up dog mess – and prosecuted nine people who did not pay the fine.

12. Has supported more than 2,500 teenagers to find suitable education, training or employment since 2014.

13. Makes sure there are enough school places and childcare places available in Sandwell each year.


15. Regenerates town centres – and the council has big plans for the future of Wednesbury including a new Business Improvement District.

16. Gives more than 100 young people an apprenticeship with the council each year.

17. Works with local businesses to identify the skills they need – organising around 200 apprenticeships and jobs with local firms each year.

18. Has secured £5.5 million of funding to transform unfit land into sites where we can build hundreds of new homes.

19. Encourages people to walk and cycle by creating new pedestrian crossings and walking and cycling routes.

20. Keeps traffic moving by enforcing illegal parking on red routes and in bus lanes.

21. Tackles anti-social behaviour using portable CCTV cameras that can be moved to crime hotspots.

22. Works with Sandwell’s top 150 companies to help them grow even bigger – creating more jobs and bringing in investment.

23. Prosecutes fly-tippers who dump rubbish using portable CCTV cameras to catch them.

24. Supports parents and carers with advice, courses, childcare and activities at children’s centres across all of Sandwell’s six towns.

25. Trains staff to identify victims of domestic abuse, hate crime, radicalisation and modern day slavery.

26. Supports people who have lost loved ones. The council’s caring bereavement services team helps thousands of families every year.

27. Trains taxi drivers to recognise and report signs of child sexual exploitation.

28. Makes it quick and easy to contact the council online 24/7 – more than 18,000 residents now have a MySandwell account.

29. Still has a Sandwell Local office in every town where residents can get help, support and guidance.

30. Tackles hate crime – working closely with the police and Sandwell’s new hate crime reporting centres.
31 Will make sure Sandwell gets a slice of the West Midlands Combined Authority’s £8 billion devolution deal.
32 Is one of the most effective in the country at collecting council tax – making sure everyone pays so we have the money to continue providing services.
33 Helps residents to be healthier by promoting and supporting free NHS Health Checks and other services.
34 Tackles benefit fraud – saving the council £38 million to spend delivering public services.
35 Has an excellent coroner service with state-of-the-art technology. Other councils are asking for advice on good practice.
36 Is developing an internship programme to give young people with learning disabilities a year’s work experience placement.
37 Works hard to make sure the council has a balanced budget while delivering good services to Sandwell’s residents.
38 Supports 2,500 pupils with special needs to help them learn, making sure we listen to parents and children.
39 Is fighting for the Metro to be extended from Wednesbury to Brierley Hill for the benefit of residents.
40 Offers outdoor education experiences for all children at four fantastic residential education centres.
41 Supports families in most need to claim free school meals and offers financial help towards school uniforms.
42 Helps families to improve their children’s attendance at school.
43 Keeps older people active – particularly focusing on preventing falls.
44 Offers support to vulnerable pregnant women and their families.
45 Funds free swimming for people aged 16 and under and people aged 60 and over. More than 29,000 residents have enjoyed free swims since June 2013.
46 Makes sure utility companies and contractors who dig up Sandwell’s roads reinstate them properly.
47 Works with young women to reduce the amount of alcohol they drink, encourages dads to be more active and funds cancer screening programmes.
48 Helps victims of anti-social behaviour to have a say in how perpetrators are punished.
49 Is focusing on improving areas of poor air quality.
50 Talks to private landlords in Sandwell – making sure they’re aware of their responsibilities and their rights.
51 Works with the police, the fire service and other partners to inspect properties where there are concerns that landlords or tenants are acting illegally.
52 Is looking at tougher taxi licensing requirements that will help keep the public safe.
53 Warns vulnerable people about letter, email and phone scams.
54 Helps prevent older and disabled people ending up in hospital – and when they do, we help get them back home as quickly as possible.
55 Provides equipment and grants to help older and disabled people stay safe and independent in their homes.
56 Supports and trains 35,000 carers who provide essential support to vulnerable people.
57 Helps people to remain independent in extra care housing – an alternative to long-term residential care.
58 Supports teenage parents to give their children the best start in life.
59 Works with young offenders to reduce reoffending and protect the local community.
60 Looks after children who need adopting – and the families who want to adopt them.
61 Supports more than 450 foster carers who look after more than 600 Sandwell children who can’t live at home.
62 Does more than 90 assessments of vulnerable children every week to identify their needs and keep them safe from harm.
63 Provides regular respite support for up to 200 families who have children with additional needs and life-limiting illnesses.
64 Builds great new leisure centres – we’ve opened four new ones in the past four years.
65 Helps thousands of victims of domestic abuse through domestic abuse advocates.
66 Runs the fantastic Sandwell Valley Country Park – where thousands of people walk, hire bikes, play golf and tennis every year.
67 Sandwell has 11 Green Flag award-winning parks and green spaces with excellent facilities for everyone to be proud of.
68 Supports gifted and talented sportspeople with grants to help them develop their skills.
69 Coordinates the safeguarding of vulnerable adults in Sandwell.
70 Keeps people safe. Staff in the council’s CCTV control room helped people who made 91,500 intercom calls from their homes last year.
71 Grits more than 250 miles of Sandwell’s roads each winter to make icy roads safe.
72 Has trained ten community champions to raise awareness and tackle female genital mutilation, honour-based violence and forced marriage.

73 Engages with thousands of young people to help build positive relationships and prevent radicalisation, extremism and terrorism.

74 Runs safeguarding days at primary and secondary schools with partners including DECCA, Black Country Women’s Aid and Rewind.

75 Detects tenancy fraud – the CCTV control rooms worked with the council’s fraud team to save the council £400,000.

76 Teaches children about Sandwell’s heritage – last year museums staff went into 12 schools and worked with almost 2,000 pupils.

77 Brings the arts to each of Sandwell’s six towns with events and exhibitions celebrating art, dance, photography, poetry, writing and creativity.

78 Has spent nearly £150 million in the past three years improving council properties with double glazing, insulation, new boilers, kitchens and bathrooms.

79 Provides award-winning services in supporting Sandwell’s armed forces as recognised by the Ministry of Defence’s Employer Recognition Scheme.

80 Does around 170,000 repairs to council properties every year.

81 Provides free, fast Wi-Fi in public buildings including libraries, council offices and town halls.

82 Runs fantastic events at Sandwell Valley – more than 15,000 visitors came to the first Christmas at the Valley.

83 Has refurbished Lightwoods House and Park in Bearwood – making a great green space, visitor attraction and venue.

84 Has reduced carbon emissions from public buildings by 20% over the past four years.

85 Helps young people to tidy-up their estates and youth centres through a scheme to keep teenagers out of trouble and focused on their education.

86 Has popular leisure centres run by Sandwell Leisure Trust and Places for People Leisure – they are visited around two million times a year.

87 Encourages people to get into sport – last year a further 1,700 residents took part in the 1 x 30 minutes exercise campaign.

88 Helps people to claim what they are entitled to – last year the council’s welfare rights service helped more than 10,500 people claim £23 million.

89 Loans out more than a million books at Sandwell libraries each year – and Sandwell has the second highest number of library volunteers in the country.

90 Is cracking down on unauthorised encampments – working with the police and creating a transit site to cut the huge cost of cleaning up after these groups.

91 Helps homeless people get back on their feet by providing housing and support for mental health and substance abuse problems.

92 Makes sure working environments are safe by giving health and safety advice to more than 300 businesses a year.

93 Enrols more than 2,000 people on adult and family learning courses every year.

94 Works closely with residents to develop town plans – covering important local priorities for each town and tackling the issues that matter most to residents.

95 Maintains 550 miles of roads, 880 miles of pavements, 35,000 streetlights and signs, 270 traffic signals and crossings and 143 bridges.

96 Continues to invest in the regeneration of West Bromwich town centre – including plans to redevelop sites at Shaftesbury House, Crosswells Road, the gas showroom and the multi-storey car park.

97 Is fighting for Sandwell’s fair share of funding for improvements to Junction 2 of the M5 to cut delays and traffic jams.

98 Has helped tackle crime by spending nearly £500,000 on improving lighting, fencing and car parking across Sandwell.

99 Promotes Sandwell as a great place to live, work and visit through the new Discover Sandwell website – www.discoversandwell.co.uk

100 Uses social media and the award-winning sandwell.gov.uk website to reach thousands of people every week. Join us – search ‘Sandwell’ on Facebook and follow @sandwellcouncil on Twitter.

Find out more about Sandwell’s Vision for 2030 at www.sandwell.gov.uk/vision2030
Making Sandwell safer – this year at a glance

- Thousands of residents received crime prevention, safety and healthy living advice thanks to our autumn Safer 6 campaign.
- We’re trialling a new Kids Court, where drivers caught speeding or on their mobile phone outside schools can choose to sit in front of a panel of children to answer for their actions instead of points and a fine.
- More Sandwell people are recovering from drug dependency, with those successfully completing treatment up from 98 to 166 in two years.
- Our Blue Light Project – which has so far supported 24 people with chronic alcohol dependence – has won praise from Public Health England.
- Our Youth Offending Service was named the 8th best in England for cutting the number of offenders who re-offend within two years. First time offending is down by nearly 20%.
- We’ve boosted our Integrated Offender Management team, linking up various services under one roof in West Bromwich, including probation, community psychiatric nurses, police and drug and alcohol workers.

Great Get Together

At Sandwell Valley, people decorated and planted pots for their neighbours, made badges, shared a picnic and raised money for the Jo Cox Foundation.

The event was co-ordinated by the Love Sandwell Partnership, including Near Neighbours, Sandwell Churches’ Your Neighbour team, which includes West Bromwich East MP Tom Watson and council deputy leader Councillor Syeda Khatun join the community-run Sandwell Valley Great Get Together.

- We’ve launched a Victims Panel, to support victims and encourage reporting of crimes such as domestic abuse, modern slavery, female genital mutilation and hate.
- We’re funding two SHAPE Youth Forum projects – one to protect young people from exposure to pornography and internet crime; the other to motivate and inspire young people.
- Black Country Women’s Aid helped 3,000+ victims of domestic violence and abuse from Sandwell. Support ranges from one-to-one advice to refuge accommodation.
- More than 50 domestic violence perpetrators have now completed our Brighter Futures behaviour change programme, and we’re all working more closely to protect high-risk victims and their children.
- We’ve held school talks on unity, tolerance and understanding and are helping parents and carers tackle online extremism and radicalisation from within the home.
- We’re working at a local, regional and national level to prevent terrorism and radicalisation and our community leaders have stood in unity at events and vigils following recent terror attacks.

Thanks to all our residents, businesses and community, voluntary and faith groups that contribute so much to making Sandwell safer.

‘Zero tolerance’ on hate

We’re urging people to report all hate crimes so victims can receive support.

A hate crime is an incident motivated by prejudice, where someone is targeted because of their disability, gender identity, race, religion/faith or sexual orientation.

Report by phone or online – or at many centres in the community trained to deal with reports.
- Police (non-emergencies): 101
- Crimestoppers: 0800 555 111
- Sandwell Council: 0121 368 1166

To report incidents to the council online, or for a list of more than 30 places where you can report, go to www.sandwell.gov.uk/hatecrime.

In an emergency, always call police on 999.

The council has recently backed a new three-year deal with Rights and Equality Sandwell to continue working with partner organisations to help promote good community relations, tackle hate crime and discrimination and protect vulnerable people.

We’ve issued eight £400 fixed penalty notices in just five weeks since launching a new rapid response team to tackle fly-tippers.

Did you also know you could be prosecuted and face a fine if you give your waste to someone who then illegally dumps it?

Fly-tipping crackdown

To report incidents to the council online, or for a list of more than 30 places where you can report, go to www.sandwell.gov.uk/hatecrime.

Always ask where they are taking it and ask to see their waste carrier’s licence. If they don’t have one, don’t use them.

Remember, you can take bulky items to the tip or book a bulky collection.

Go to www.sandwell.gov.uk/flytipping or call 0121 368 1177 to report fly-tipping.

Great Get Togethers were held in Sandwell as part of national events to celebrate the life and values of Jo Cox MP, a year on from her murder.

West Bromwich East MP Tom Watson spoke of his memories of Jo and her belief that “we have far more in common with each other than things that divide us”.

At Lightwoods Park, a bring-and-share picnic was organised by Crafty Muthas and the Bearwood Pantry, together with other local groups.

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At Lightwoods Park, a bring-and-share picnic was organised by Crafty Muthas and the Bearwood Pantry, together with other local groups.
‘Giants’ is a unique collaboration between Sandwell and 12 other councils across the Midlands.

The councils joined forces to fund and develop a film that highlights the importance of foster carers who can offer more than one child a home. This allows siblings who come into care to stay together.

‘Giants’ was launched with a film premiere at the Everyman cinema in Birmingham and has already received more than 3,000 views on the Sandwell Fostering Facebook page alone. The combined viewing figures across the Midlands are expected to exceed 50,000.

The short film blends the concept of giants – people who stand tall and help others – with the importance of the bond between brother and sister, who often ‘look up’ to their older sibling and care for each other in life, becoming ‘giants’ to each other. The film highlights the importance of having foster carers who have space for more than one child.

Councillor Simon Hackett, cabinet member for children’s services, said: “I would urge everyone to watch ‘Giants’ and share it on your own social media accounts. It really is a powerful film and just by sharing it, you can help us to find the foster carers we need to keep young brothers and sisters together when they find themselves in care.”

The film was launched in May at the start of Foster Care Fortnight.
Our priorities for the year ahead

Councillor Steve Eling

- I will continue to ensure we have a budget and services in Sandwell that meet the needs of the local area despite the unstable political situation at a national level.

- I will carry on working through the West Midlands Combined Authority to make sure everyone benefits from the programme being delivered.

- I will continue to make sure we take a team approach to getting the best for everyone and the biggest bang for our buck.

Councillor Syeda Khatun

- I will make sure local town plans address community priorities and deliver the council’s ambitions together with our partners.

- I want to improve access to council services through better use of our local assets and developing new ‘community hubs’.

- I will work with the voluntary and community sector to develop services and help achieve the council’s new 2030 ambitions.

Councillor Simon Hackett

- I will continue to improve social care for children and services for young people and families.

- I want children to have the best start in education and to help them do the best they possibly can in school.

- I will ensure young people get the right advice and support to secure the best further education and employment opportunities.

Councillor Steve Trow

- I’ll be continuing to modernise council services – including more online access to services where local people want that choice.

- At the same time, I also want to make sure residents who have more complex needs will always get the help they need.

- I’ll be putting a new focus on how the council, businesses, community groups and all our partners can increasingly work together to ensure the very best future for all our residents.

Leader of the Council

Deputy Leader & Neighbourhoods and Communities

Children’s Services

Core Council Services
The council’s cabinet is committed to improving the things that matter most to you.

Each cabinet member has a specific area of responsibility – from children’s services to highways, leisure to public health.

Here you can read about the issues each cabinet member, with the support of officers at the council, wants to tackle.

This year, we welcome a new cabinet member, Councillor Elaine Costigan, following Councillor Preet Gill’s election to parliament at the general election in June.

Councillor David Hosell

Highways and Environment

- I want to make our roads safer by introducing a 20mph speed limit on all estate roads and will be consulting people on our proposals.
- I will oversee the council providing a rapid response to fly-tipping, raising awareness of the impact illegal rubbish dumping has on our borough and taking firm action against fly-tippers.
- I want to see our worst pavements improved as well as continuing to improve street lighting.

Councillor Richard Marshall

Leisure

- I’m excited about putting on great events across Sandwell and making Sandwell Valley a regional and national visitor attraction and leisure facility.
- I will work with all our key partners to deliver high-quality leisure activities across the borough and encourage more residents and children to take regular physical activity.
- I want more residents and visitors to access the council’s cultural facilities and activities and support the development of arts and culture across Sandwell.

Councillor Kerrie Carmichael

Public Health and Protection

- Building more high quality and affordable council homes is a key priority for me.
- I will work with the private rented sector to ensure landlords are providing a good standard of accommodation for their tenants.
- I want children and young people to have access to good quality homes and apprenticeship opportunities with the housing service and our contractors.
- I want to tackle domestic abuse by supporting victims and also working with perpetrators to get them to change their behaviour. I will work with schools on a programme to address sexual violence.
- I will focus on keeping people well for longer and tackling obesity, encouraging people from all ages to do more exercise and promoting healthy eating options.

Councillor Paul Moore

Regeneration and Economic Investment

- I will be pressing for sites where former council buildings are surplus to requirements to be regenerated for new housing and commercial development.
- I will ensure the council works closely with West Midlands Police to reduce the number of unauthorised encampments in Sandwell.
- I will represent Sandwell at the West Midlands Combined Authority – making sure we get our share of investment and the wider benefits of devolution.

Councillor Elaine Costigan

Social Care

- People’s safety is my top priority. I will work together with the police, fire service and others to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour and prevent the threat of radicalisation.
- I want to tackle domestic abuse by supporting victims and also working with perpetrators to get them to change their behaviour. I will work with schools on a programme to address sexual violence.
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- I want children and young people to have access to good quality homes and apprenticeship opportunities with the housing service and our contractors.
- I want to tackle domestic abuse by supporting victims and also working with perpetrators to get them to change their behaviour. I will work with schools on a programme to address sexual violence.
- I will focus on keeping people well for longer and tackling obesity, encouraging people from all ages to do more exercise and promoting healthy eating options.
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Flying the flag for award-winning parks

We’re incredibly proud of our parks and green spaces in Sandwell – especially the 11 that have already won Green Flag awards.

Green Flags are awarded by Keep Britain Tidy to parks and open spaces that are well looked after and look great.

Our award-winning green spaces include six town parks, a cemetery, Sandwell Valley Crematorium and a volunteer-run allotment, as well as Sandwell Valley Country Park and Warley Woods, which is run by a community trust. Despite the pressures on council budgets, we’re committed to investing in our parks and improving them for everyone’s enjoyment.

Our friends groups, community organisations, volunteers and allotment committees play a huge role in helping us to make these green spaces great. And our council staff and waste partner Serco work incredibly hard to keep these places clean and tidy.

Look out for the 2017 Green Flag Awards announcement this month and the People’s Choice Awards in September, when you can vote for your favourite Green Flag park.

For more about our Green Flag parks, go to www.sandwell.gov.uk/greenflag
Get active this summer
With longer days and warmer weather, now is the perfect time to get out and get active.

Set yourself a goal for summer
Having a goal can motivate you to get more active. It could be signing up for a new class at your local leisure centre or walking for 10 minutes each day. Apps like Active 10 Walk Tracker and Couch to 5k are great tools to help you track your progress and keep motivated. Search ‘One You’ online for information and advice.

Get outdoors
Getting fit outdoors is a great way to get some fresh air and enjoy some of our beautiful parkland. Our parks are ideal for walking or jogging and many have outdoor gym equipment which is all free to use. Search ‘Keep fit in Sandwell’ online for more information.

Make it a family affair
Keep the kids entertained over the summer holidays and get them moving to burn up energy. Search ‘10 Minute Shake Up’ online for some great ideas for games to keep your little ones active.

Do something you love
It’s never too late to take up a new sport or re-discover an old favourite. Did you love playing football as a kid? Or were you a dab hand at netball? Whatever sport you’re into, check out what we have on offer. Search ‘Keep fit in Sandwell’ online for more information.

Find a package just for you
Healthy Sandwell can offer a range of support to get you fitter and healthier.
Give our friendly team a call on 0800 011 46 56 to find out how we can help you. You can also text GETHEALTHY to 87007.

Smoke-free play areas
All fenced children’s play areas in Sandwell will now display no smoking signs.

Just like smoking, second-hand smoke is dangerous to everyone. Children are especially vulnerable as they have less well-developed airways, lungs and immune systems.
Every time a child breathes in cigarette smoke, they breathe in thousands of chemicals. This puts them at risk of serious health conditions such as respiratory infections and pneumonia.
By not smoking in areas where they play, you are protecting children from the harmful effects of smoking and reducing the chances of them copying you and taking up smoking themselves.

For information on how to quit smoking, call Healthy Sandwell on 0800 011 46 56 or text GETHEALTHY to 87007.
Blue Light scheme helps drinkers

A specialist Sandwell scheme that gives support to chronic drinkers has won national praise and helped save money for the emergency services.

The Blue Light Project provides specialist training for hundreds of frontline workers, including police and ambulance service staff, who have direct contact with hard-to-reach drinkers.

Public Health England has recognised the scheme, which has so far supported 24 people with chronic alcohol dependence.

By accepting help, they have not been such a demand on ‘blue light’ emergency services, saving many thousands of pounds.

Jyoti Atri, Sandwell’s director of public health, said:

“While we would rather no one reach this stage of alcohol dependency it is a fact that a few people do and they are frequently seen by the emergency services.

“The Blue Light Project means more people are getting the support they need. This also reduces the cost to health and community safety services.”

Goal for fat-busting footballers

Fat-fighting men on a Sandwell weight-watching football scheme have scored a great goal, losing a whopping 61 stone – the equivalent of 61 FA Cups – between them.

Men taking part in the weekly tournament get advice about nutrition as part of the league, which runs for 14 weeks. Men who have scored the most goals can go onto a further league to help keep the weight off.

Contact Healthy Sandwell on 0800 011 46 56 or text GETHEALTHY to 87007. For more information visit www.manfatfootball.org/smethwick

Preventing diabetes

NHS Diabetes Prevention Programme is aiming to tackle Type 2 diabetes by encouraging people at high risk to change their behaviour and avoid developing the condition.

The programme is being run in the Sandwell, Birmingham and Solihull areas by Living Well Taking Control (LWTC). This is an organisation with a proven track record of supporting people to make changes to their diet, weight and physical activity to improve their health and wellbeing.

Go to www.lwtsupport.co.uk for more information or speak to your GP.
If you want to make your life healthier, we can help you make a lifestyle change today. From stop smoking support to losing weight, go to www.healthysandwell.co.uk to find out what’s on offer.

Healthy Sandwell is part of Sandwell Council’s public health team. Our aim is to get Sandwell healthier and happier, and to keep people well for longer.

If you live in Sandwell, we have lots of free help and support to make your life healthier and happier.

Call us FREE on 0800 011 4656 or text GETHEALTHY to 87007

Healthy Sandwell starts with a healthy you.
Alberta Wood, from Wednesbury, is celebrating after losing an amazing five stone.

Setting herself small goals and maintaining a positive attitude, Alberta has made a number of lifestyle changes from the food she eats to the amount of exercise she does. Alberta says Mytime Active’s Healthy Lifestyle Service is the best programme she’s done since starting to lose weight.

She said: “The programme teaches clients how to stick to healthy things and gives useful exercise advice.”

Do you want to lose weight or become more active?

Mytime Active’s Healthy Lifestyle Service is a FREE* weight-management programme available in Sandwell.

You can expect:

• regular one-to-one support with qualified healthy lifestyle specialists;
• access to a wide range of exercise classes throughout Sandwell; and
• Weight Watchers vouchers and reduced gym-memberships at Sandwell Leisure Trust centres and other gyms across Sandwell.

*The programme is free for the first 12 weeks.

Classes are also available for families with young children and people with long-term conditions. All classes includes nutritional advice, weigh-ins and physical activity.

If you want to lose weight in a way that’s fun, friendly and right for you, call Mytime Active on 0121 366 0966.

“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!”

To book your initial appointment with one of our friendly healthy lifestyle specialists:

Call: 0121 366 0966 / 0800 011 4656
Text: GETHEALTHY to 87007 or visit: www.mytimeactive.co.uk/sandwell
Twitter: @SandwellMTA
Facebook: SandwellMTA

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SANDWELL LEISURE TRUST SUMMER HOLIDAY ACTIVITY PROGRAMME.

Activities for everyone... 24 July - 1 Sept 2017

TIPTON LEISURE CENTRE
Alexandra Road and Thurstonfield Road, Tipton, DY4 8TA

SMETHWICK SWIMMING CENTRE
Thimblemill Road, Smethwick, B67 5QT

HARRY MITCHELL LEISURE CENTRE
Broomfield, Smethwick, B67 7DH

WEDNESBURY LEISURE CENTRE
High Bullen, Wednesbury, WS10 7HP

HADLEY STADIUM
Wilson Road, Smethwick, B66 4NL

HADEN HILL LEISURE CENTRE
Illams Road, Cradley Heath, B64 1HA

LANGLEY SWIMMING CENTRE
Sturgeon Road, Oldbury, B69 1HE

PORTWAY LIFESTYLE CENTRE
Newbury Lane, Oldbury, B69 1HE

TIPTON SPORTS ACADEMY
Wednesbury Oak Road, Tipton, DY4 0BS

www.slt-leisure.co.uk 0300 012 0121

Harsha Patel attends recovery sessions at Sandwell Leisure Trust-run Portway Lifestyle Centre in Oldbury, to improve her balance, strength and stability.

She now walks freely with the aid of a stick and has regained a lot of the feeling down her right side.

She said: “Someone at the hospital mentioned Portway and I quickly felt at home there and started working closely with instructor Scott Parish doing targeted exercises. We hit it off straight away. It proved better than all the previous treatments, plus the hydrotherapy pool got me moving again. I’ve recently started walking in a more dynamic way, more like I used to do – so I can say from experience that Portway has been the best thing that’s ever happened to me!”

Husband Dinesh added: “Portway turned out to be the light at the end of the tunnel. Scott has been brilliant and is very professional and thorough and we get regular progress reports and evaluations. Indeed, all the staff there are superb and the place just radiates positivity.”

Harsha Patel with instructor Scott Parish at Portway Lifestyle Centre

Alberta Wood, from Wednesbury, is celebrating after losing an amazing five stone.

“I lost 5 stone with Mytime Active, you can too!”
Employer supported finishing school or college, or you know someone who could do with some help to get health conditions and disabilities.

Since September 2014, we've registered 2,430 young people with the Guarantee, 541 aren't currently in work, training or at school. We guarantee we can support you to find a 16 to 24-year-olds.

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 support you to find a job, an apprenticeship or a great training course.

Since September 2014, we’ve registered 2,430 young people with the Guarantee, 541 have started apprenticeships and we’ve helped 250 into jobs – including many with health conditions and disabilities.

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.

Applying for a school place
If your child is due to start in reception or Year 7 in September 2018 you’ll need to start thinking about school preferences soon.

You can apply online from 17 July 2017 for secondary places (Year 7) and from 18 September 2017 for reception and junior (Year 3) places. Go to www.sandwell.gov.uk/schooladmissions to apply.

We’ve already helped nearly 800 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.

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**Oldbury Sunday market and car boot sale**

Come along to the Sunday car boot and market on West Bromwich Street car park in Oldbury.

Car boot pitches are just £5.

For a car and trailer it’s £10, and £15 for a van.

To book call 07471 037138.

It’s open to car booters and traders from 6am and finishes at 2pm.

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

The car park entrance is off the A4034 slip road to West Bromwich Street in Oldbury. The entrance for stallholders and car booters is off Dudley Road. The market and car boot sales is operated by Groupe Geraud.

More information at www.sandwell.gov.uk/oldburysundaymarket

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**Oldbury Writing Group publishes World War II book**

A collection of poems and short stories inspired by World War II has been published by the Oldbury Writing Group.

Launched at Oldbury Library, the book called ‘From Sunrise to Sunset: a World War Two Anthology’, focuses on people and their individual experiences, rather than the war as whole.

It features a wide range of characters and themes including a grieving mother, a Spitfire pilot, women of the war, POW camps, the fall of Warsaw and contributions made by people from the Caribbean and Asia.

Group founder, Angela Garratt, said that the group – which meets every Saturday at Oldbury Library – decided to start writing the book together in 2015, the year which commemorated the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II.

The anthology is available from all online book retailers and to order from all book shops.

www.oldburywritinggroup.wordpress.com

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**Advice for armed forces**

Oldbury Royal British Legion holds twice weekly welfare advice sessions for people who have served or are serving in the armed forces.

Pop along to the One Stop Shop at Sandwell Council House, Freeth Street, on Thursdays from 10am to 3pm or Oldbury RBL, Windsor Road, on Saturdays from 12 noon to 3pm.

Call Bob Clarke on 0121 552 2290 if you need more details.

Visit our webpage at www.sandwell.gov.uk/armedforces for more information on Sandwell’s Armed Forces Covenant and support available to the forces community.

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**Upgrade for Lion Farm Estate**

Work is set to start in August on a £9.7 million refurbishment scheme to three high-rise blocks – Harry Price, Hackwood and Wallace Houses – in Oldbury.

Improvements to the 1960s-built Lion Farm Estate – which has more than 200 individual flats – include new windows, balcony doors and panels.

Front entrance and rear exits will be redecorated and pitch roofs replaced. Fire-resistant insulated external cladding will be fitted to the highest standard.

New lifts will be installed, communal areas will also be redecorated and a new door entry system fitted. Extra car parking is also being created.

Lovell is carrying out the work for the council, which is expected to last around 18 months.

The 12-storey blocks have around 70 flats in each.

The improvements will not only create better homes for people living on Lion Farm but will also lengthen the lifespan and improve the look of the blocks.

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**Come along to Funday Sunday at Tividale Park**

A host of free family fun and entertainment is being lined up at Tividale Park in an action-packed community ‘Funday Sunday’ event.

The Friends of Tividale Park and K9 Search UK are organising the event along with help from the council’s parks team. It starts Sunday 6 August from 11am onwards at the park in Dudley Road West.

A fun dog show gets under way at 11.30am, so wash and groom your own canine and see if they can scoop the ‘best in show’ prize or marvel at the special dog agility displays.

There’ll be a bouncy castle, face-painting, stalls and great food and refreshments too.

More information at www.k9searchuk.com/events
Pyjama party at Rowley Regis pre-school nursery

Parents and children came along to the nursery with many dressed in pyjamas. They enjoyed some bedtime-themed story books read to them by Sam Lavender from our libraries team.

Children and parents sang songs accompanied by talented guitarist Silvia Sermon, the nursery deputy manager. Silvia is thrilled the nursery has such great links with our libraries.

“Children dressed in their pyjamas with, left to right, parents Tammy, Tracey, Danielle next to Sam Lavender from Sandwell Libraries with parents Kirsty and Bev

She said: “We know how important it is to get children and parents to read together and many of our families visit the library regularly.

“We are very fortunate to have support from staff at our local library in Blackheath and the children and parents very much enjoyed our pyjama party.”

Sandwell libraries teamed up with Cornerstone Nursery to organise a pyjama party for parents and pre-school age children.

New house wins award

A new house in Corngreaves Road, Cradley Heath, has picked up a top award.

Our building control team nominated the property for the West Midlands Building Excellence Awards where it won Best Individual Home.

The private, self-build project beat far bigger and more expensive new builds due to:

• the quality of the project;
• the complexity of engineering works;
• the difficult location by the River Stour; and
• the fact the design – and almost all of the physical work – was carried out by the owner, engineer Andrew Rudge.

Red Route clampdown on bad parking

A red route is now in force outside Cradley Heath train station – banning parking on a one-mile stretch of road.

The red lines, put down in late May, ban all parking and stopping on Forge Lane, Lower High Street, Foxoak Street and Upper High Street.

The council received many complaints about vehicles blocking pavements and preventing drivers from passing due to parked cars.

Please do not park or stop on these lines. The red route is being enforced by traffic wardens and the council’s CCTV camera car – which issues automatic fines to anyone caught parked or stopped anywhere along the red route.

Rowley ward’s Councillor Susan Eaves is Sandwell’s new Deputy Mayor.

Her husband John will be her consort for the year ahead.

The couple will be supporting new Mayor Councillor Ahmadul Haque MBE and his wife, Mayoress Surma.

Councillor Eaves said: “I am very proud to have this role and am enjoying meeting lots of people in the community and visiting many different groups and organisations.”

Your Rowley Regis councillors

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

The transformation of Lightwoods House and Park has been nothing short of incredible.

Since falling into disrepair for decades before becoming derelict in 2007, Birmingham City Council handed over the house along with the park to Sandwell Council in 2010.

Since then, the council and the community living around the park and beyond have worked hard to secure millions of pounds of Heritage Lottery and Big Lottery funding to bring the house back into use and make the first major improvements to the park in more than 20 years. Work on the house is now in the final weeks.

We’ll be celebrating the official opening of the house in the coming weeks and we have a summer of great events to look forward to.

Thimblemill Library – a place of sanctuary

We’re extremely proud that our very own Thimblemill Library is the UK’s first Library of Sanctuary.

The award is thanks to the work the library and its staff do to welcome refugees and migrants into the community.

Several of the library’s services, including English as a Second Language (ESOL) courses, fundraising events for refugees and work with the Bearwood Action for Refugees group, led to the Birmingham City of Sanctuary movement awarding the accolade.

For community groups who would like to run any type of session at the library, call 0121 429 2039.

Tackling street drinking

We’re tackling issues with street drinking in Smethwick.

The council and police have received several complaints from residents and shop owners about the issue.

The alcohol treatment service Swanswell will be working with the council and the police to identify street drinkers who need help and get them on a recovery plan.

For details call 07980 955 309.

Preserving Smethwick’s heritage

Smethwick’s Grade II-listed Council House is being preserved for generations to come thanks to a £350,000 scheme.

The terracotta façade at the front of the historic building has been cleaned and repaired and the timber and leadwork on the clock tower has been fixed.

The work, which is ongoing and will continue into the autumn, has already uncovered this coat of arms (pictured right) in all its glory.

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

Parents are finding new pals in Tipton as part of a pilot scheme to bring moms, dads and carers together.

Regular coffee mornings are helping dozens of parents make the most of all the information on offer about children’s development and family support.

Tipton Community Operating Group (COG) is leading the project with support from lots of other organisations.

The project runs from Tipton Christian Church. To find out more, call 0121 569 7291.

New school for Sacred Heart

Pupils have moved into the brand-new Sacred Heart Primary School in Sedgley Road East.

The 15-classroom school was designed and built by Sunesis – a joint venture between Willmott Dixon and Scape Group.

It replaces the old school in Victoria Road, which was very small and dated back nearly 100 years.

The new school is expected to offer 420 primary places and 52 nursery places by the time it’s full in 2022.

Head teacher Mrs Gee said: “The new building means so much more to us than extra school places, the way the building is designed means we can better meet the needs of our pupils.”

Head girl Amara, aged 11, said: “Our old school was a bit cramped, but this new school is great, it has an extra big hall and is very spacious and colourful.”
We will never forget

Sandwell Council has created a memorial plaque to honour victims of the 2015 Tunisia terrorist attack.

Family members Patrick Evans, Adrian Evans and Joel Richards were among those killed along with 27 other British tourists.

Councillor Elaine Costigan said: “It’s such a wonderful dedication to three special local people who lost their lives while on holiday. I’m proud Sandwell has done this for the family to go and visit, and for residents to pay their respects. They will never ever be forgotten.”

Business boost for
town centre

Wednesbury businesses are working with Sandwell Council to set up a Business Improvement District (BID), to improve the town centre over the next five years.

The main goals of the BID are:
• Making Wednesbury more attractive, tidier and cleaner;
• Improving the profile of Wednesbury outside of Sandwell;
• A safer and more welcoming Wednesbury; and
• Championing the town centre.

For more information, contact BID co-ordinator John Hodgkiss on 0121 553 3074 or email john.hodgkiss@westbromwichtown.co.uk

Nursery teacher retires after 33 years

Nursery teacher Wendy Priest has said farewell to The Priory Primary in Wednesbury.

Mrs Priest, pictured right on her last day, clocked up more than 40,000 teaching hours at the school, which used to be known as Joseph Edward Cox Infants.

The school marked her retirement with a special assembly where she was presented with flowers and messages from pupils.

Mrs Priest said: “I enjoyed teaching at the school so much that I stayed 33 years. I finished my time there teaching the children of pupils I first taught earlier on in my career.”

Councillor Simon Hackett, cabinet member for children’s services, said: “My family have a special connection with Mrs Priest and the school. My wife Gina started at the school in the same year as Mrs Priest, my children Keira and Jaya were taught by her, and now my son Elliott, who’s currently in the nursery, is one of the last to be taught by her.

“I want to wish Mrs Priest all the best in her retirement.”

Making Friar Park safer

Our CCTV team and police in Friar Park are working together to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour.

Councillor Simon Hackett, pictured with control room supervisor Lee Jameson, said:

“Many residents ask whether the cameras are working and evidence used from them to tackle anti-social behaviour.

“This is a great example that they are working and are used to tackle crime in our area. I want to congratulate the CCTV team, the police and the neighbourhoods team for their hard work and recent success.”

Report anti-social behaviour at www.sandwell.gov.uk/asb or by calling police on 101.

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Getting creative with GAP Centre

Art-inspired activities are getting people creative at The GAP Centre in Hargate Lane. A grant from Creative Black Country is helping the centre to run the following projects:
- The Garden Project – redeveloping the centre’s outdoor area, creating an inspiring play space, communal garden and ‘memory garden’.
- The GAP Family Singing Group – keen singers who want to have a bit of fun and meet new friends.
- Creative workshops to re-tell the story of the famous Sandwell Salamander, including puppet making, crafts and storytelling around the camp fire.
- The community centre wants to expand over the next five years. The aim is to reach a wider audience from across the town and get more people taking part in social activities and volunteering opportunities.

For more info, email andrew@thegaponline.org or call 0121 525 4442.

Pupils promote road safety

Pupils at St Margaret’s CE Primary School, Great Barr, have designed signs encouraging drivers to slow down and urging pedestrians to use the subway and crossings safely.

Our highways team has been running a community road safety campaign with the school since January. Pupils have conducted a speed check outside their A34 Birmingham Road school with the police and students from Q3 Academy.

The campaign follows accidents in the area, including three fatalities. Councillor David Hosell, cabinet member for highways and environment, said: “This campaign is aimed at getting drivers to stick to the 30mph speed limit outside the school and encouraging people to cross the busy dual carriageway safely.”

For enquiries email fm_helpdesk@sandwell.gov.uk or call 0121 569 3939.

Historic Sandwell Valley

Visitors to Sandwell Valley Country Park can find out more about the historic parkland thanks to a new project.

New interpretation panels and leaflets give an insight into the past, including Sandwell Hall and 12th century Sandwell Priory, ruins of which can still be seen today.

At the Sand Well, a carved lion’s head has been fitted, in keeping with a 1920s photo of the well. Work has also included replacing an ugly concrete water channel leading from the well with brick that matches sandstone found on the site.

Ibstock Cory Environmental Trust (ICET) has worked with the council on the project, with support from Historic England and the council’s former archaeologist Dr Mike Hodder.

Cabinet in town

The council’s cabinet met volunteers at Yew Tree Community Centre during one of their regular visits around Sandwell’s six towns.

Cabinet members heard what refurbishment works were needed at the centre, and improvements are already being made following the visit.

They met volunteers from organisations that are run from the centre, including The Hub community project.

While on the Yew Tree, they also visited Redwood Road shops and saw first-hand the problems caused by motorists parking on grass verges, discussing ways to tackle the issue.

Your West Bromwich councillors

For more information on councillors, call 0121 569 3129 or email members_services@sandwell.gov.uk
Investing in homes and neighbourhoods

Since 2014, we've spent more than £98 million on improvements to more than 6,000 council homes. So far this is what we’ve done:

- **15,000** roofs repaired/replaced
- **2,119** bathrooms improved
- **3,049** kitchens improved
- **2,910** central heating systems improved
- **3,496** houses rewired
- **3,841** bathrooms improved
- **6,153** central heating systems improved
- **1,500** double-glazed windows fitted

### Tenants warm to double-glazing scheme

A successful window replacement programme which has seen thousands of council tenants benefit from warmer homes will be completed in August.

The £6 million scheme has seen more than 15,000 single-glazed windows replaced with more efficient UPVC doubled-glazed ones since 2015.

The windows have made a real difference, making homes warmer, reducing draughts and condensation, and lowering fuel bills.

One of the latest tenants to benefit is 90-year-old Doreen Perkins, of Church Walk, Rowley Regis.

Doreen said: “The new windows are wonderful, they really keep the heat in and are a lot easier to open.”

Friend and neighbour Pauline Taundry added that she was really impressed with the new windows and new doors that had also been fitted as part of the work, saying she felt safer and more secure in her home.

### Gas safety inspections for council homes

As your landlord, the council needs to carry out this important safety inspection on your gas appliances every 12 months.

Please make sure you let our ‘Gas Safe’ registered engineer in to your home to do this.

Unsafe gas appliances can produce the poisonous gas – carbon monoxide.

Every year around 14 people nationwide die from carbon monoxide poisoning caused by gas appliances and flues which have not been properly installed or maintained.

You can’t see, taste or smell carbon monoxide but it can kill without warning in just a few hours.

If you can't keep the appointment we send you, please contact our gas service partner to arrange a new one.

Oldbury and Rowley Regis
Phoenix Gas Services – 0121 569 0089

Smethwick and West Bromwich
Vinshires Plumbing and Heating Ltd – 0121 569 6423

Tipton and Wednesbury
Glevum Heating Services – 0121 569 6056

### Facelift for the Shrubbery

Streets on a Tipton estate have been totally transformed after homes underwent a massive £500,000 facelift including new external rendering.

Internal improvements including new kitchens and bathrooms, central heating and rewiring were already planned for the properties.

However survey work showed it was clear that the outside of houses desperately needed not just new roofs and doors, but also new external rendering, which had begun to flake, discoulour and look dirty.

The whole Shrubbery Estate now looks fresh and revitalised, with homes modernised inside and out.

Streets on the estate include Menin Road, Shrubbery Avenue, Poplar Avenue, Cedar Road, Geneva Road and Vernon Avenue.

### Check your heating now!

Don't wait until the winter before you check that your gas central heating is working properly. Try it now. Simply switch it on and run it for an hour or so. If it works now, you’ll have peace of mind when the winter comes.

If it’s not working the following checks could solve the problem:

- **Is there power to the central heating system?** If the fuse spur has been switched off, the system can ‘lock out’.
- **Try to reset the central heating boiler using the reset button or on/off switch – this can restart the boiler.**
- **Check the batteries in the digital programmer, these use an AA battery and power the programmer.**

If you still have a problem call the Gas Services Team on 0121 569 6000.
First bricks laid for supported housing scheme

The first bricks have been laid on the site of a £9.6 million supported housing scheme in West Bromwich.

The council is developing 93 new affordable homes – made up of 58 apartments and 35 bungalows – in Oxford Road.

The scheme – which includes four bungalows especially designed for wheelchair users – will provide much needed homes for people with a range of health issues.

Councillor Ann Shackleton, cabinet member for social care said: “We’re one step closer to providing spacious accommodation so that people can live independently but also being able to get extra care and support for their individual needs.”

Councillor Kerrie Carmichael, cabinet member for housing added: “The scheme provides an extra opportunity for people who have disabilities to benefit from having a council tenancy with accommodation suitable to their needs.”

The project, which is being built by Keepmoat Regeneration, is set to be completed in March 2018.

New council homes for Smethwick and Tipton

Sandwell Council is in the process of buying 38 new homes on a development in north Smethwick.

The homes – a mixture of two and three bedroom properties – will be added to the council’s housing stock.

The site was previously called Brindley 2, but is now known as Galton Lock and is being built by Countryside Properties in Lewisham Road.

Around 160 new houses are being built overall with the rest being available for private sale.

The first four council-owned properties are set to be handed over to tenants in July. Others will follow in the coming months.

Tenants – Have your say on housing services

More than 5,000 of you will receive our customer satisfaction survey during August and September. The STAR (survey of tenants and residents) questionnaire gives you the chance to have your say and tell us what you think about a wide range of housing-related services.

These include your levels of satisfaction with repairs, the condition of your home, service priorities, your neighbourhood and feedback on how helpful our employees are.

If you get a survey in the post, please fill it in – it will only take you five minutes – and return it in the pre-paid envelope provided.

The results are analysed and your feedback helps us to improve our services for you.

Tenant Views Club reviews housing standards

Three of the council’s local housing standards have been reviewed by the service improvement group of our Tenant Views Club.

The standards reviewed were:
Home; Neighbourhood and Community; and Tenant Involvement and Empowerment.

Topics for the standards are set by the government.

Tenants met with officers from Neighbourhoods and agreed performance targets for each standard which will be monitored every six months by the Tenant Review Panel.

You can view the standards at www.sandwell.gov.uk/localstandards

To join the Tenant Views Club and get involved in monitoring housing services, fill in our online form at www.sandwell.gov.uk/getinvolved or call in to your Sandwell Local centre to register your interest.

Voluntary groups – do you need funding?

Sandwell Council continues to invest in the voluntary sector and wants to hear from groups that would like to apply for funding for new initiatives helping local people.

The funding will support new town plans, which will detail priorities for each of our six towns.

There’s the Local Area Budget for community projects, Healthy Towns Funding for health-related initiatives and the Youth Offer for schemes supporting young people.

For more information on applying, ask your Sandwell Local centre or call 0121 368 1166 or 0121 569 6184.

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The results are analysed and your feedback helps us to improve our services for you.
Residents at the home, some of whom have dementia, enjoyed the seaside-themed activities as part of Dementia Awareness Week. Sandwell Council currently funds residential or nursing care services for more than 750 people living with dementia.

Be responsible – don’t plonk it, park it
Sandwell Visually Impaired (SVI) has been working with the police and partner organisations to encourage responsible parking.

The charity says the vast majority of people park considerately. But cars, vans and other vehicles parked fully on the pavement or against lamp posts or trees make it very difficult for pedestrians to get past, especially if they are blind or have limited sight.

This can force pedestrians to put themselves and others in danger by walking in the road.

For more advice on this issue, call SVI on 0121 525 4810 or visit the Guide Dogs Streets Ahead campaign at www.guidedogs.org.uk/StreetsAhead

Creative Arts success
What a year it’s been for our Creative Arts team, which provides day opportunities for people with disabilities.

The Ceramic Garden, a display of 1,200 beautiful hand-made ceramic flowers, helped the team win a Royal Horticultural Society Britain in Bloom Award.

The RHS liked the garden so much it featured the display at the Malvern Spring Festival, as pictured below.

More than 500 people from community and education groups helped create the garden in a project co-ordinated by Creative Black Country and Creative Arts.

Creative Arts produces beautiful and unique work all year round. Visit the studio at Unit 37 to 39 Cyprus Street, Oldbury, B69 4XD, to view, commission or buy work. Open Mondays to Fridays, 10am to 3pm.

The team’s latest project is The Pull of Wool. This features interesting photos of people knitting in unusual locations as well as photos of people who don’t normally knit and some quirky knitted items!

Peace of mind at the push of a button
Sandwell Community Alarms

- 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

To request equipment, contact Sandwell Enquiry on 0121 569 2266 or email sandwell_enquiry@sandwell.gov.uk.

To return loaned equipment, call Prevention Stores on 0121 569 3670.
The challenge draws children from across the borough into local libraries each summer and inspires them to read for pleasure. Children can sign up to read at least six library books over the school holidays and collect incentives along the way.

The Summer Reading Challenge enables libraries to support parents and carers with their child's reading during the long summer break from school.

It also provides an opportunity for young people to volunteer at their local library and develop new skills.

PuZZLEs
WIN £25 of Sainsbury’s vouchers

SUdOKU
From left to right, what is the top row of numbers?

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Sudoku © Kevin Stone

WORDSEARCH
Which word is NOT in the wordsearch?

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ESOUHIPTYW
IPMACJOARK
YNELSONIAF
GUTUBKTOCH
ZRYRAEZMET
ESBERBXCAM
DEDSBAXE
IQRXYVXNYML
RYRAUTCNAS
PROGEXJVQ
```

• SANCTUARY • NURSERY • WRITERS • EXAM • NELSON • HOUSE • PRIDE • CAR • ALARMS • BOOT • SLEUTH •

Send your answers along with your name, contact number and postcode to:

The Editor, Sandwell Herald, Communications Unit, Sandwell Council House, Oldbury, B69 3JE or you can email your answers along with your contact number and postcode to: herald_competition@sandwell.gov.uk by 30 September.

First correct answer out of the hat wins the prize. The editor’s decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into.

Lucky voucher winners from puzzles in the last Herald are:

- 1 Glassworks in Smethwick (6)
- 4 (____) Scissorhands (6)
- 9 Pupil (7)
- 10 Strong, thick cords (5)
- 11 Notion or concept (4)
- 12 To reuse and make better (7)
- 14 Your uncle’s wife (6)
- 16 Problems (6)
- 19 Someone learning a job (7)
- 21 Dry climate (4)
- 23 Area of Tipton (____) Hill (5)
- 24 Dense group of trees (7)
- 25 Quite new (6)
- 26 To type something again (6)

- 1 Cold (____) (4)
- 2 To dump or leave (7)
- 3 Dance in a line (5)
- 5 Shows the way (7)
- 6 Jelly in pork pie (5)
- 7 To disrupt or move away (8)
- 8 Feeling pride (5)
- 13 Bush with WBA connection (6)
- 15 Bake in oven (5)
- 17 Useful room (7)
- 18 To collect (5)
- 20 Twisted (5)
- 21 Common fruit (5)
- 22 Fun summer event (4)

What word is spelt from the golden boxes?

SUDOKU

ACROSS
1 Glassworks in Smethwick (6)
4 (____) Scissorhands (6)
9 Pupil (7)
10 Strong, thick cords (5)
11 Notion or concept (4)
12 To reuse and make better (7)
14 Your uncle’s wife (6)
16 Problems (6)
19 Someone learning a job (7)
21 Dry climate (4)
23 Area of Tipton (____) Hill (5)
24 Dense group of trees (7)
25 Quite new (6)
26 To type something again (6)

What word is spelt from the golden boxes?

DOWN
1 Glassworks in Smethwick (6)
2 To dump or leave (7)
3 Dance in a line (5)
5 Shows the way (7)
6 Jelly in pork pie (5)
7 To disrupt or move away (8)
8 Feeling pride (5)
13 Bush with WBA connection (6)
15 Bake in oven (5)
17 Useful room (7)
18 To collect (5)
20 Twisted (5)
21 Common fruit (5)
22 Fun summer event (4)

Sudoku © Kevin Stone

Sign up to Sandwell Council email updates

Did you know you can get news from Sandwell Council weekly and for free?

How? Go to www.sandwell.gov.uk/emailupdates to sign up to our email updates.

Get all the latest news and information about events. Keep up-to-date with the latest job vacancies from around Sandwell.

Are you interested in fostering? We can help.

From bins and recycling to schools, roadworks, health and leisure, there’s all this and much more with our email updates.
Contamination alert!

Thank you to all residents who are using their blue lid bin.
Please check what you put in your blue lid bin as up to 20% of what we receive can’t be recycled.

These items cannot be recycled in your blue lid bin

For more examples of what can and can’t go in your recycling bin, visit www.sandwell.gov.uk/recyclingguide