Goldbury Girl
Jodie triumphs at Games

Sandwell Guarantee
Jobs for young people
SEE PAGE 3

Sandwell needs you
Recycle your food waste
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Homelife
Housing and neighbourhood news
SEE PAGE 15-22

Sandwell Council…working for you
Page 15

The new developments include homes on several sites across the town, a new £353 million “super” hospital and the regeneration scheme for the canalside in the Rolfe Street area.

Council leader Councillor Darren Cooper said he was “immensely proud” of the work the council had done across the borough in difficult times – and welcomed the work now being done in Smethwick.

He was delighted that the multi-million pound plans for the Windmill Eye area of the town would provide more than 200 much-needed quality homes – especially as they included “new affordable homes” for local people.

“This is a really ambitious project and I am proud to have played a part in securing this housing scheme – and that we worked closely with dedicated residents’ groups during 18 months of consultation with them,” he said.

Councillor Cooper heads the Smethwick Delivery Board which is made up of ward councillors, community representatives, the Homes and Communities Agency and the NHS Hospital Trust.

Local council tenants will also see the benefit of an £11 million makeover of three tower blocks – Ashcroft, Birchcroft and Elmcroft – which will lift living standards for hundreds of people.

Councillor Cooper said the decision to give the go-ahead for the new “super hospital” was a great decision for the town because the state-of-the-art hospital would be a catalyst for a wide-ranging regeneration of Cape Hill and Smethwick as a whole.

Councillor Cooper said: “I am proud of the hospital decision because I championed this scheme at local, regional and national levels.

“The council and councillors have worked tirelessly to encourage new jobs and there will be big opportunities in the NHS and the construction industry,” he said.

The proposed £9 million creative village planned for the Galton Valley, which will transform the canalside area in Rolfe Street, will also create job opportunities.

The work will upgrade the Smethwick Enterprise Centre and include the refurbishment of disused factories and provide a construction training centre and business workshops.

“This is another piece of the jigsaw which will raise the profile of that area and provide jobs for local people,” he said.

The council and the specialist regeneration company Complex Development Projects had worked with local residents to come up with ideas for the scheme, he added.

Homes and jobs boost for Smethwick
New housing and regeneration schemes backed by Sandwell Council will breathe new life into the Smethwick area – providing new homes, world-class hospital facilities and job opportunities for local residents.
What's On

Your essential guide to what's on in Sandwell

For more information about these and other events in Sandwell, go to www.sandwell.gov.uk/whatsont

OCTOBER

Wednesday 1 October

Recruitment Fair

West Bromwich Town Hall, High Street

Make a Difference Day: the UK's biggest annual volunteering event, takes place each year in October. This year Sandwell will begin the month with a Recruitment Fair to reinforce the message of local people remaining active in their communities through volunteering.

Time: 10am – 3pm
Price: Free
For info: call 0121 544 8326 or visit www.volunteercentresandwell.org.uk

Saturday 11 October

Year Zero

Smithwick Library, High Street

A documentary about the arrival of Asian workers in Smithwick from the 1950s–1970s and their work in foundries. The film maker Billy Dosanjh will be there on the day to talk about the film.

Time: 1.30pm – 3.30pm
Price: Free
For info: call 0121 558 0497 or email smithwick_library@sandwell.gov.uk

Wednesday 15 to Saturday 18 October

The Vicar of Dibley

Pennyhill School, Hollyhedge Road, West Bromwich

Charlemont Dramatic Society presents The Vicar of Dibley. The performance will consist of four episodes of the original TV series by Richard Curtis and Paul Mayhew Archer. Royalties will be donated to Comic Relief.

Time: 7.30pm
Price: £7.50
For info: 0121 308 1596

Thursday 23 October

The Taming of the Shrew

Thimblemill Library, Thimblemill Road, Smethwick

Time: 7.30pm
Price: £5
For info: call 0121 429 2039 or email thimblemill_library@sandwell.gov.uk

Tuesday 28 October

Don’t Go into the Cellar-Theatre Company

Haden Hill House Museum, Halesowen Road, Cradley Heath

Our popular theatre company return to thrill & chill you once again this Halloween with ‘Dracula’s Mothballed Curiosities’. An all-new adaptation of Bram Stoker’s greatest horror tales, featuring “Dracula’s Guest”, “The Squaw” and “The Judge’s House”. Atmospheric and chilling, this is a stage show designed to raise the goosebumps.

Time: 1st show at 6pm/2nd show at 8pm
Price: £6
For info: 01384 569444

Thursday 30 October

Halloween Disco

Manor House Museum, Hall Green Road, West Bromwich

Come and strut your stuff on the dance floor at the Halloween Disco. Maximum two adults per child. Tickets available from the Manor House and must be collected and paid for before the event.

Time: 7.30pm – under 5s, 6pm – over 5s
Price: £3 child; £2 adult
For info: 0121 588 2985

NOVEMBER

Saturday 1 November

November Model Railway Exhibition

Wednesbury Museum and Art Gallery, Hollyhead Road, Wednesbury

West Bromwich Model Railway Club will display some of their larger models.

Time: 12noon – 4pm
Price: FREE
For info: 0121 556 0683

Sunday 2 November

Wicked Witches

Oak House Museum, Oak Road, West Bromwich

Join us for a family friendly hands-on look at what witches were like when the Oak House was built. Find out why witches wear pointy hats and ride brooms, enjoy the crafts and entertainment but beware of the Witch Finder General who is on the lookout for signs of witchcraft! Sir William Penniman’s re-enactment group take over the house.

Time: 11am – 3pm
Price: FREE
For info: 0121 553 0759; www.sandwell.gov.uk/museums

Sunday 2 to Sunday 30 November

Tug of War

Harry Mitchell Leisure Centre, Broomfield, Smethwick

The Tug of War Association host an annual competition every November, with local teams competing throughout the month in the Midland Championships.

Time: 10am – 4pm
Price: Free
For info: 0300 012 0121

Tuesday 11 to Friday 14 November

Improbable Fiction by Alan Ayckbourn

All Saints Church, All Saints Way, West Bromwich

Sharp comedy and affectionate satire characterise this imaginative play.

Time: 7.30pm
Price: £4.50; concessionary £4
For info: 0121 590 4786

Saturday 29 November

Songs from the Shows

Oak House Museum, Oak Road, West Bromwich

An evening of live music with the ‘Night Watch’ playing songs and tunes which Shakespeare would have known and used in his plays – and as the festive season approaches you can enjoy some historical festive tunes from medieval and Tudor times. You can also see the Oak House lit up with candles.

Time: 7pm
Price: £8
For info: 0121 553 0759; www.sandwell.gov.uk/museums

Bonfire Night

Bonfire Night and fireworks in Sandwell

6 November – Barns at Oak House Museum, West Bromwich

FREE Admission
For more information: www.sandwell.gov.uk/bonfirenight or call 0121 589 4703

Thursday 23 November

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Time: 7pm
Price: £8
For info: 0121 553 0759; www.sandwell.gov.uk/museums

Christmas and Diwali lights

Times across Sandwell will be sprinkled with Christmas and Diwali spirit this winter!

Details of celebration events are being finalized and you will be able to find all the latest information at www.sandwell.gov.uk/whatsont or by calling 0121 588 2985.

For more information on events go to www.sandwell.gov.uk/museumevents.
Guaranteed job or training placement for young people

Sandwell Council is blazing a trail in the fight against youth unemployment by guaranteeing every young person a paid job or training for at least six months.

It has launched a multi-million pound partnership with businesses to create thousands of new jobs and apprenticeships.

The Sandwell Guarantee could help up to 4,000 young people aged 16 to 24 on benefits or not in education, employment or training. (so-called Neets).

It is thought to be the first time a council has given such a comprehensive guarantee to young people.

Leader Councillor Darren Cooper said: “Lots of young people are trapped in unemployment – they can’t get a job without work experience and can’t get experience without a job.

“Every young person will get the skills, experience and confidence to succeed.

“We are determined to break this cycle and give a cast-iron guarantee of a job or training.

“Every young person will get the skills, experience and confidence to succeed.

“Youth unemployment is falling as the job market improves so it is more vital than ever we help those young people who have fallen through the net.

“We have thousands of forward-thinking businesses in Sandwell that can provide the expertise and resources to make a real difference.”

Under the scheme the council will match young people with local businesses seeking to fill posts or expand their payroll.

Employers can offer jobs, apprenticeships, internships or work experience but they must be paid and new, not existing.

The council will split the cost of wages 50/50 for up to one year.

The council will work with organisations such as Job Centre Plus, schools, colleges and the voluntary sector to get young people on board, including those at risk of becoming Neet.

Placements will start with a six-week college course in sectors such as food and drink, construction, business, horticulture, advanced manufacturing and health and social care.

To find out more visit www.sandwell.gov.uk/guarantee

Oldbury golden girl honoured

A civic reception was set to be held for Commonwealth Games golden girl Jodie Stimpson in her home town of Oldbury.

The athletics sensation was due to meet the mayor and fans at Sandwell Council House, after the Herald went to press.

The council rolled out the red carpet after Jodie stormed to gold in the solo and mixed triathlons at Glasgow 2014.

She said: “I’m thrilled to have a civic reception in the town where I grew up and first took up sport. It’s a real honour which means a lot to me.

“It’s been a fantastic year and this really is the icing on the cake.

“I hope my success can inspire and encourage people of every age to take up a sport, whether for competition or pleasure.”

To coincide with the reception, the town was due to be transformed into ‘Goldbury’ with special signs put up for the day.

Other Commonwealth Games competitors due to be celebrated at the event were gold medal winning guide-runner Mikail Huggins along with runner Libby Clegg, bronze medal winning wrestler Chinu and weightlifter Jaswant Shergill.

Council leader Councillor Darren Cooper said he was chuffed by the success of Jodie and her fellow athletes. He said: “They are wonderful role models.”

Jodie’s road to glory in her own words

I started swimming for my local club Oldbury Swimming Club when I was just four years old. It was here where my dad - Ian - taught me how to swim my first widths.

From that day on it was clear that sport was for me, as I would love winning from an early age. I even loved swimming up an age group to be racing with and against the older girls.

My uncle Derek (who when I was younger I called Auntie Derek) first introduced me to the sport of triathlon when I was just eight years old.

It didn’t take long for him and my dad to realise I had potential. My training at that age was mainly on a Tuesday evening where I remember cycling around Langley Leisure Centre several times, then straight into the pool for two hours swim training, before finally running home with my dad. Quite an intense training day for an eight year old!

I was entered into the Milk Series, which was held at Appleby, near to the Lake District, when I was 9 years old and ended up winning my first triathlon.

“That was where and how this whole journey started ….. under the guidance of my dad and Auntie, sorry I now mean Uncle Derek, my triathlon seed had been planted.”

To keep up with all Jodie’s news go to: www.jodiestimpson.co.uk
At the going down of the sun

Sandwell is playing its full part to mark the centenary of the outbreak of the First World War.

Special paving stones are due to be laid at the nearest cenotaph to each of the three Victoria Cross winners born in the borough - Robert Edwin Phillips, from West Bromwich, Joseph John Davies, from Tipton, and Harold John Colley, from Smethwick.

The Government-paid scheme will take place over the next four years.

In addition thousands of poppies have been planted in parks, cemeteries and crematoriums.

And an exhibition of war stories from local families will open at Wednesbury Museum & Art Gallery in the autumn, with plans to take stories out to the community around the six towns over the next four years.

Sandwell Council’s deputy leader Councillor Mahboob Hussain said: “It is very important we remember the sacrifices made by a generation 100 years ago, including the many people from the borough who gave their lives or lost loved ones.”

Other events have included:

- Oldbury Civic Square hosted a 12-hour vigil from 11am to 11pm on 4 August, including a parade and service attended by the Mayor of Sandwell Councillor Derek Rowley and military, veteran and youth organisations based in Sandwell.
- Libraries and other council-owned buildings took part in the nationwide ‘Lights Out’ event on 4 August. They turned on a single lamp from 10pm to 11pm, recalling the remark of British Foreign Secretary Sir Edward Grey, who on the eve of the war said: “The lamps are going out all over Europe, we shall not see them lit again in our lifetime.”
- Lights Out is the headline project of 14-18 NOW, the official cultural programme for the First World War Centenary Comemorations.
- Staff at Central Library in West Bromwich turned the clock back and transformed it into a recruitment office.

D-Day commemorations

Veterans in Oldbury received a spontaneous round of applause as they commemorated the 70th anniversary of D-Day (see pic left).

Members of the Royal British Legion, Oldbury, branch gathered at the Cenotaph in the Civic Square for a service to mark the Allied landings on 6 June, 1944.

RBL Oldbury branch president Dave Williams brought the parade to attention and the branch standard was lowered by Jim Gilbert, who served with 3 Para in the Falklands.

Mr Williams recited the Ode of Remembrance before a minute’s silence was held at 11am.

Adrian Dunn, Oldbury RBL branch chairman and Army Cadet Force instructor, 225 Royal Engineers, said: “We are really proud to see how many of the local community of Oldbury have come along today.

“We really appreciate the support we have had from the council.”

Helping families

A new support service for young people and families is operating in Sandwell’s six towns.

COG teams (Community Operating Groups) are based in Tipton, Wednesbury, West Bromwich (Central), West Bromwich (North), Oldbury, Rowley Regis and Smethwick.

They are made up of Early Help family workers and Targeted Youth Support staff who between them offer guidance to struggling families and young people.

They work closely with colleagues from Sandwell’s Family Solutions team, which focuses on preventing family breakdown, the Young Parents Centre and the Youth Offending Service.

Councillor Simon Hackett, cabinet member for children’s services, visited the COG at its home in Wednesbury Library.

He said: “Our community operating groups bring together professionals who work in the local community to share their resources and make sure timely support is given to those families and young people who really need it.

“We have placed the needs of children at the centre of the work we do to motivate and enable families to make lasting changes.”

Advice from the Royal British Legion

The Royal British Legion holds regular advice sessions at the One Stop Shop at Sandwell Council House in Oldbury.

Every second and fourth Thursday of the month, anyone who has served or is serving in the Armed Forces, or their families, can come to the Council House in Freeth Street for social, emotional and financial advice and support.

The Legion can help with queries about benefits, pensions, help at home and lots more. The stand will be manned from 10am-4pm. Dates include October 9 and onwards.

For further information visit www.britishlegion.org.uk or call 0800 802 3080.

Media at the service in August
The £12.5m West Bromwich Leisure Centre opened its doors to the public for the first time in June. The new centre built by Sandwell Council on Moor Street has a 25m pool, learner pool, sauna and steam room, four-court sports hall and 100-station fitness suite. It also has two dance studios/activity rooms, an indoor children’s adventure play centre and a cafe.

The centre is run by Places for People Leisure Ltd in partnership with the council.

The council is offering free swimming for children aged 16 and under during school holidays and for people aged 60 and over at the centre.

More information on how to join the new leisure centre can be found at www.sandwell.gov.uk/leisure.

Have you got children under 20?

Do you need help with:
• Finding local or national services? • Finding helplines, publications and websites?
• Choosing Childcare? • Looking for activities and fun things to do?
• Support and advice for your family?
• Understanding your rights?

Whether you are a parent looking for childcare, a young person looking for something to do or you need some advice and support with bringing up your child, Sandwell Family Information Service can either help you or, if not, tell you who can!

To find out more just give us a call, we are here to help, call us on 0121 569 4914 or visit www.sandwell.gov.uk/familyinfo

Ice bucket challenge

The Chief Executive and the Leader of the Council, Jan Britton and Councillor Darren Cooper did the Ice Bucket Challenge - with a JCB! They raised more than £700 for the Motor Neurone Disease Association.

West Bromwich Leisure Centre opening

Opening the new centre, West Bromwich East MP Tom Watson, front left, with, left to right, cabinet members Ian Jones, Steve Eling, Paul Moore and Mahboob Hussain.
Son or Daughter, 12 years or older wanted to fill an empty space in the lives of a loving couple.

Large house with your own bedroom. Must like cats and muddy bike rides and other family activities. Stay as long as you need.

Please respond ASAP to 0800 358 0899

Honestly, you can help
0800 358 0899
www.sandwell.gov.uk/fostering
See me, hear me

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) is a form of abuse. It involves perpetrators grooming their victims to gain their trust before abusing them. The victim is often tricked into thinking they are in a loving relationship.

They may be showered with gifts or plied with alcohol and drugs before being emotionally and sexually abused.

We've joined forces with the police and other councils across the West Midlands to raise awareness of Child Sexual Exploitation - to stop it happening, to help victims and to bring perpetrators to justice.

We're not saying that there is evidence of this being a huge problem in Sandwell. But sexual exploitation can affect any child at any time, regardless of their social or ethnic background.

We want to make sure parents, professionals and members of the public know the signs when something isn't right.

We want young people to look out for one another.
We want to make sure our children are safe.

To find out more about Child Sexual Exploitation, how to spot the signs and how to get help go to www.seeme-hearme.org.uk

If you think a child is in immediate danger please dial 999.
If you are worried that you or someone you know is a victim of Child Sexual Exploitation, call the police on 101 or talk in confidence to Barnardo's on 0121 359 5333.

Library cards

Sandwell Council is seeking to encourage a lifelong love of reading by giving library cards to more than 4,000 primary school starters.

The library service is working with every primary school in the borough to launch a membership drive for their pupils.

Each child will receive a Booktastic pack, which will include a membership card, folder and information about the library service.

The scheme is the brainchild of Councillor Simon Hackett, cabinet member for children's services.

He said: "This is a first step towards encouraging children to read for pleasure, which increases literacy levels and improves educational attainment and life chances."

Booktastic will run alongside the BookTrust's Booktime scheme which gives books to all reception-aged children.

To join the library service visit www.sandwell.gov.uk/libraries

Top three young people's books in Sandwell

- Billionaire Boy - David Walliams
- Charlie And The Chocolate Factory - Roald Dahl
- Gangsta Granny - David Walliams

Free Early Learning for Two Year Olds

Do you have a child that is 2 years old or going to be 2 in the next few months?
If so, do you know that you could be entitled to up to 15 hours FREE childcare per week?

To find out if you are eligible, please contact Sandwell Family Information Service

0121 569 4914
Do you know who is taking you home tonight?

**ALWAYS, ALWAYS**

**use a Taxi or Pre-booked Licensed Private Hire Vehicle**

**REMEMBER**

Always use a **Licensed Taxi** or **Pre-booked Private Hire Vehicle**.

Taxis (Hackney Carriages) can be hailed in the street. Many of the Taxis look like black cabs. All Taxis have an illuminated Taxi sign on the roof. They may also have corporate advertising that covers the entire body of the Taxi.

Licensed Private Hire Vehicles cannot be hailed in the street. They must be pre-booked with an operator otherwise they are not insured and no record of the journey can be traced.

The vehicle must have a **Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council ID plate** fitted to the rear of the vehicle and another displayed on the inside. **The driver will have two photo ID badges**, one must be worn and the other must be displayed inside the vehicle.

Cars cruising the streets looking for customers are **illegal**, uninsured and potentially dangerous.

If possible, **book a Taxi or Private Hire Vehicle in advance**. Ask for the driver’s name, as well as the make and colour of the car.

**Confirm the driver’s details when they arrive** - is it the Taxi or Private Hire Vehicle you ordered?

If you are ordering a Taxi or Private Hire Vehicle from a public place, **try not to let people overhear your name and address** - anyone could pretend to be your Taxi or Private Hire Vehicle.

Sharing a Taxi or Private Hire Vehicle with a friend and sitting in the back of the car are all good safety strategies.

If you chat to the driver, **be careful not to give out any personal details**.

**NEVER**

**use Taxis or Private Hire Vehicles that are not licensed. If you do you are getting into a vehicle with a stranger.**

Many people who have used unlicensed vehicles have been the victims of crimes such as rape, assault and theft.
Leisure parties for children and adults

A range of fun-filled party packages are now available to book at Sandwell Leisure Trust centres in Sandwell.

Children’s birthday parties can be booked across Sandwell Leisure Trust centres including: Haden Hill Leisure Centre, Hadley Stadium, Harry Mitchell Leisure Centre, Langley Swimming Centre, Portway Lifestyle Centre, Tipton Sports Academy and Tipton Leisure Centre.

Exciting party options include pool parties, bouncy castle, multi-sports and football.

For a smaller pool party, parents can book the hydrotherapy pool at Portway Lifestyle Centre which is warmer than a regular pool and features colourful lighting and music.

A roller disco party package is also on offer at Tipton Sports Academy.

Parties include one hour of activity followed by one hour room hire for food and party games.

Sandwell Leisure Trust also takes party bookings for adults and for other occasions such as baby showers and special occasions.

For more details visit Sandwell Leisure Trust’s website www.slt-leisure.co.uk or call 0300 012 0121.

Sandwell Guarantee

Giving young people the opportunity of a job or training

The Sandwell Guarantee could help up to 4,000 young people aged 16-24 on benefits or not in education, employment or training.

We are looking for Sandwell residents aged 16-24 years who want an apprenticeship or job opportunity. We are also looking for businesses who would like to employ a young person providing an apprenticeship or job opportunity with learning.

We are holding an open day so you can find out more about the Sandwell Guarantee on Wednesday 15 October, West Bromwich Town Hall, 10am - 1pm

For further information contact the Think Sandwell team on 0121 569 2099 or visit: www.sandwell.gov.uk/guarantee
Healthwatch Sandwell wants your views

A health and social care champion wants to hear about people’s experiences in Sandwell so it can improve services.

Healthwatch Sandwell is an independent group which gives everyone a voice with organisations like the council, hospitals, GPs, and care homes.

It passes on opinions and experiences and gets action so people have the services they want and need.

Chair Pam Jones said: “It is important local people have an organisation like Healthwatch Sandwell to make sure they get the right health and social care services.”

Healthwatch Sandwell can also give advise how people can get help or guidance or make a complaint about health or social care.

To find out more, contact us:
0121 569 7210
info@healthwatchsandwell.co.uk
www.healthwatchsandwell.co.uk

Interested in leading a healthier lifestyle?

Sandwell Lifestyle Choices can help you.

We offer
- Weight management programmes for kids and adults
- Stop smoking services
- A range of physical activity programmes
- Wellbeing services
- Antenatal classes
- Breast feeding support
- Sexual health services
- Drugs and alcohol services

To find out more call free on 0800 011 46 56.

Protect yourself from flu this winter

Winter is well and truly on its way. Unfortunately, that also means more people will catch flu.

For most healthy people, flu is unpleasant but they usually recover within a week.

But very young children, people over the age of 65 and pregnant women are at risk of severe illness if they are unlucky enough to catch the flu.

This year, children aged two, three and four will be offered a safe nasal spray vaccine to protect them against flu.

If you are pregnant or aged 65 or over, it is really important to get vaccinated. Help protect yourself and those you love. Most doctors will write to people at risk and offer them an appointment for a flu jab, but if you don’t get a letter by mid-October contact your surgery to make an appointment.

To find out more about the childhood flu vaccine go to www.nhs.uk and search “flu vaccine for children”.

Give up smoking this Stoptober

If you’re a smoker and looking to quit, why not join in this Stoptober?

Now in its third year, the four week campaign runs throughout October and unites the nation to help smokers stub out their cigarettes for good.

Did you know people who get involved and manage to quit for 28 days are five times more likely to ditch the habit for good?

So why not join the quarter of a million people who got involved last year and sign up to take on the Stoptober challenge?

For the free app, support packs and advice, search Stoptober online.

To find out more about local stop smoking services please call free on 0800 011 46 56.

Sexual health awareness

Sexually transmitted infections (STI) are on the rise and in most cases symptoms will go unnoticed.

If you need advice about STIs, contraception or any aspect of sexual health, please call Sandwell Lifestyle Choices free on 0800 011 4656.

Spare a thought

When pruning hedges this autumn please spare a thought for blind and disabled people who regularly bump into overhanging branches and undergrowth when walking along already cluttered pavements.

It’s a big problem! Roses are beautiful to look at but overhanging thorny plants and neglected hedges can cause a slap in the face, torn clothing or even injury.

Bill, a guide dog owner, says: “Going out has become a nightmare. Cutting trees and hedges back really makes a big difference to Owen and me.”

Please consider that just a little thought and an extra snip with the secateurs can make a big difference.

Tony Averis, chair of Sandwell Visually Impaired.

To find out more about SVI and the problems faced by visually impaired people call 0121 525 4810 or visit www.sandwellvisuallyimpaired.org.uk

What’s Stoptober?

It’s like October but without cigarettes!

Be part of the challenge. Starts 1st October.
Search Stoptober.

Get involved 🗓️ stoptober 🌟 stoptober

Stoptober

From Public Health England

SMOKEFREE
Get a hot meal delivered every day for less than £25 a week

Do you – or does someone you know – need some extra help at home?

Our Meals on Wheels service delivers a hot two-course meal every day of the week. Each meal costs £3.30 including delivery – which means seven days of meals costs just £23.10. This makes us one of the cheapest providers of delivered hot meals, as the council subsidises the cost.

We also provide an alternative main course option each day, as well as choices for vegetarians and people with diabetes. For anyone who doesn’t like puddings, there’s also cheese and biscuits.

To check if someone is eligible for Meals on Wheels, we will do an assessment over the phone and ask questions about the person’s health, mobility and income. This takes around 40 minutes.

To find out more about Meals on Wheels please go to our website www.sandwell.gov.uk/mealsonwheels

You can also email us at sandwell_assist@sandwell.gov.uk or call 0845 352 2266 to arrange an assessment for Meals on Wheels.

Here’s a few examples of the Meals On Wheels we deliver. Every meal includes a main course and a pudding.

**Monday** - Sausage, swede, peas, creamed potatoes and onion gravy. Apple crumble for pudding

**Tuesday** - Roast turkey, boiled potatoes, mixed vegetable and stuffing. Lemon sponge for pudding

**Wednesday** - Chicken casserole, boiled potatoes, green beans, carrots and gravy. Rice pudding & jam

**Thursday** - Fish, boiled potatoes, peas, carrots and parsley sauce. Fruit cocktail for pudding.

**Friday** - Lamb roast, creamed potatoes, sprouts, cauliflower and gravy. Chocolate and pear sponge for pudding.

**Saturday** - Beef, boil potatoes, mushrooms and gravy. Chicken casserole, roast potatoes, sprouts, carrots and parsley sauce. Fruit cocktail for pudding.

Registered to vote online

The way we all register to vote changed in June this year.

If you didn’t receive a letter about this, or if you’re not already registered to vote, you can now do it online using your smartphone, computer or tablet.

It’s quick and easy to do and takes just three minutes and there’s no need to print out, post or sign forms.

Go to www.gov.uk/register-tovote

You will need to enter your National Insurance number and your date of birth.

Every time you change your address or name you must re-register – so please remember to do this if you move house or get married.

The next elections in Sandwell are on 7 May 2015, when residents can vote in the local council elections and the national general election.

You can apply for a postal vote now to make sure your voice is heard on election day.

To request a postal vote visit www.gov.uk/voting-in-the-uk or call 0121 569 3244.

PRIZE PUZZLES

**SUDOKU**

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

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© Kevin Stone [www.brainbashers.com]

Win £25 in Sainsbury’s vouchers

You don’t have to send in all of your completed puzzles. We just need the answers to the three puzzle questions. Send your answers along with your name and a contact number to The Editor, Sandwell Herald, Communications Unit, Sandwell Council House, Oldbury, B69 3DE or you can email Herald_Competition@sandwell.gov.uk. All entries must be in by 11 NOVEMBER 2014.

The first correct entry for each puzzle wins the prize. The editor’s decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into.

**WORDSEARCH**

What word can be spelt with the letters in the gold boxes?

**Lucky voucher winners from puzzles in the last Herald are:**

**Crossword:** Mrs. M. H. Gabrysia

**Wordsearch:** Mrs Francesca Allen

**Sudoku:** Jay Jevons

**MARK OUR SCORECARD TODAY!**

www.sandwell.gov.uk/mycouncil

PAGE 11
During the First World War food waste was a major issue. It was vital for families to be very careful with what they had and throw away as little as possible.

Now, 100 years later, food waste is STILL a major issue. We throw away seven million tonnes of food from our homes every year – most of which could have been eaten. This costs the average family £700 a year – £60 a month – and is bad for the environment too.

By using your food waste bin you’ll save money by seeing how much you throw away. This could help you buy less and save money in the future. It also keeps your council tax bills down as it means the council won’t have to pay expensive landfill taxes.

During these difficult times it’s important to make every penny count, so we want the people of Sandwell to show some of that war time spirit and do their bit to not waste food.

**Sandwell needs YOU to recycle more...**

1. Buy it with thought
2. Cook it with care
3. Serve just enough
4. Save what will keep
5. Eat what would spoil
6. Home grown is best
7. Recycle the rest

Don’t waste it!

**Do your bit, you are needed**
Recycle for Victory

Sandwell needs you to roll up your sleeves and recycle more...

Cans, plastic packaging, cartons, aerosols, cardboard, paper, glass jars and bottles

You can do it!

www.sandwell.gov.uk/recycling
Sandwell makes progress

Sandwell has raced up the national rankings for the number of primary school leavers doing well in reading, writing and maths.

The borough is now in 83rd place, up 34 places from 117th.

Latest results - called Key Stage Two SATs - showed a four per cent improvement in results – double the rate of improvement seen nationally.

Meanwhile progress made by children aged between seven and 11 has also improved dramatically - particularly in reading.

And there were some outstanding results at both GCSE and A Levels in the borough.

They included George Salter Academy, where the percentage of pupils achieving five or more A*-C grades including English and maths at GCSE rose to 70, up by 11 points.

And Ormiston Forge Academy Sixth Form in Cradley Heath celebrated its best ever A Level and AS Level results, with a 100 per cent overall pass rate A*-E.

Cabinet member for children’s services Councillor Simon Hackett said: “There are some really encouraging signs but we will keep focussed on making improvements so children can have the best start in life.”

Sandwell Mayor Councillor Derek Rowley and a senior councillor joined in the fun at the opening of a £150,000 splash pad in West Bromwich.

The borough’s first citizen and Councillor Maria Crompton, cabinet member for highways and environment, jointly opened the water play attraction in Dartmouth Park.

The splash pad is for four to 14-year-olds and is free to use during the spring and summer.

Contractor SSP Water and Play designed and built the splash pad, which was paid for by Heritage Lottery Fund and the council.

Sandwell Council is celebrating after scooping a planning industry “Oscar”.

We were named best local planning authority in the country by the prestigious Royal Town Planning Institute.

Judges praised us for encouraging regeneration projects in tough financial times and said we were an example to other councils.

Working together to make Sandwell safer

Hundreds of A Level students moved into the state-of-the-art facility for the first time in September.

The former Public building has been given a new lease of life following a major refurbishment.

As well as being a sixth form run by Sandwell College, Sandwell Council has ensured it still offers arts-based activities to the general public including the ground floor arts café.

Lifelong learning activities for all ages will also be available as will free business support and advice for start-up companies and encouraging enterprise and entrepreneurs.

Keep an eye out for details of arts activities and community learning classes in the coming weeks.

Central Sixth

West Bromwich’s brand new sixth form college is now open

Council leader Councillor Darren Cooper at Central Sixth, with Sandwell College’s Central Campus in the background.

Working together to make Sandwell safer

Six Towns...Six Weeks

#Safer6  29 September to 9 November 2014

www.sandwell.gov.uk/safer6
The new developments include homes on several sites across the town, a new £353 million "super" hospital and the regeneration scheme for the canalside in the Rolfe Street area.

Council leader Councillor Darren Cooper said he was "immensely proud" of the work the council had done across the borough in difficult times – and welcomed the work now being done in Smethwick.

He was delighted that the multi-million pound plans for the Windmill Eye area of the town would provide more than 200 much-needed quality homes – especially as they included "new affordable homes" for local people.

"This is a really ambitious project and I am proud to have played a part in securing this housing scheme – and that we worked closely with dedicated residents’ groups during 18 months of consultation with them,” he said.

Councillor Cooper heads the Smethwick Delivery Board which is made up of ward councillors, community representatives, the Homes and Communities Agency and the NHS Hospital Trust.

Local council tenants will also see the benefit of an £11 million makeover of three tower blocks – Ashcroft, Birchcroft and Elmcroft – which will lift living standards for hundreds of people.

Councillor Cooper said the decision to give the go-ahead for the new "super hospital" was a great decision for the town because the state-of-the-art hospital would be a catalyst for a wide-ranging regeneration of Cape Hill and Smethwick as a whole.

Councillor Cooper said: "I am proud of the hospital decision because I championed this scheme at local, regional and national levels.

“The council and councillors have worked tirelessly to encourage new jobs and there will be big opportunities in the NHS and the construction industry,” he said.

The proposed £9 million creative village planned for the Galton Valley, which will transform the canalside area in Rolfe Street, will also create job opportunities.

The work will upgrade the Smethwick Enterprise Centre and include the refurbishment of disused factories and provide a construction training centre and business workshops.

“This is another piece of the jigsaw which will raise the profile of that area and provide jobs for local people,” he said.

The council and the specialist regeneration company Complex Development Projects had worked with local residents to come up with ideas for the scheme, he added.
Scaling new heights in Smethwick

Sandwell Council, in partnership with the Homes and Communities Agency, is working with housing partners Barratt Homes and Jephson Housing Association to deliver a major £25 million regeneration scheme in Smethwick. The project will see 228 new and much-needed homes being built in the area.

Work on the new housing scheme, known as Windmill Heights, started in spring 2013 and includes plans to:

- build new houses, bungalows and apartments on vacant sites;
- boost the estate's environment by improving existing open spaces and creating a new area of green space; and
- support local training and employment needs.

All of the affordable housing for rent is due for completion by spring 2015 and the homes for private sale by autumn 2018.

If you are interested in:

- renting a property, contact Sandwell Council on 0121 569 6000.
- a shared-ownership property, contact Jephson Housing Association on 01384 471040.
- buying a property, either outright or through low-cost ownership, contact Barratt Homes on 0844 811 99 33
1. **Messenger Road** 103 properties
   - A mixture of apartments, bungalows and two, three, four and six-bedroom properties made up of:
     - 35 properties for rent (12 bungalows are already occupied)
     - 5 properties for shared ownership
     - 51 properties for private sale
     - 12 properties for private sale through low-cost ownership

2. **The Precinct** 57 properties
   - A mixture of two, three and four-bedroom properties, all for private sale
   - **Anticipated start date:** April 2016
   - **Anticipated completion date:** October 2018

3. **The Crofts Refurbishment** 270 council flats
   - An £11 million external refurbishment programme to three high-rise council blocks: Ashcroft, Birchcroft and Elmcroft
   - **Start date:** July 2014
   - **Completion date:** February 2016

4. **The Crofts** 22 properties
   - A mixture of two, three and four-bedroom properties all for rent
     - 10 already completed and occupied
     - Remaining 12 homes should be completed by the end of November 2014

5. **Unett Street** 46 properties
   - A mixture of two, three and four-bedroom properties
     - 27 properties for private sale
     - 19 properties for rent (already let/occupied)

6. **Midland Metropolitan Hospital**
   - Chancellor announced funding approval in July 2014
   - It’s a Private Finance 2 (PF2) scheme with a value of £353 million
   - 670 beds
   - Due to open in Autumn 2018
   - Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals NHS Trust is currently looking for a construction partner to build it
Do you need to prepare for Universal Credit?

Under the Welfare Reform Act, the following benefits will be amalgamated into one payment called Universal Credit:

- Income-based Job Seeker’s Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Income Support
- Working Tax Credit
- Child Tax Credit
- Housing Benefit

There’s no “go live” date yet for Universal Credit in Sandwell but if you receive any of the benefits listed above, there are things you may need to do to prepare for the change:

1. **Open a bank account with a direct debit facility.** Universal Credit will be paid into a bank account so if you don’t have a bank account you won’t be able to receive your benefit.
2. **Access the internet and improve your computer skills.** Applications for Universal Credit can only be made online. All Sandwell’s libraries have computers with internet access.
3. **Start managing your finances on a monthly basis.** Universal Credit will be paid as one monthly payment. Budgeting advice and support is available for all social housing tenants from Sandwell Financial Services Hub on 0121 561 7935.

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## Credit Union

### Services
- Current Account
- Priority Bill Payment Account
- Savings Accounts
- Electrical and Furniture scheme
- Loans

### Save
- Instant Access Account
- Christmas Account
- Young Savers Account
- iSAs

### Loans
- Everyone considered for every occasion
- Loans from £50.00
- Repay Weekly, fortnightly and Monthly*
- Online Payday Loans

*subject to loan agreement

### How our loans compare

#### Provident Personal Credit
- Loan amount: £100.00
- Weekly repayment: £10.00
- Term: 14 weeks
- Total amount payable: £140.00

Typical APR: **1068.5%**

(www.providentpersonalcredit.com)

#### 6 Towns Credit Union
- Loan amount: £100.00
- Weekly repayment: £7.40
- Term: 14 weeks
- Total amount payable: £103.49

Typical APR: **26.8%**

(www.sixtowns.co.uk)

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**You save £2.60 per week**

**Total saving of £36.51**

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### Problems paying your rent?

#### Are you in receipt of Housing Benefit?

Do you have a shortfall in your rent?

Discretionary Housing Payments are payments that can be made if you can show you are experiencing financial hardship.

Help is also available to cover the cost of a deposit or removal costs on a new property.

Apply online at: [www.sandwell.gov.uk/problemspaying](http://www.sandwell.gov.uk/problemspaying)
Safer Sandwell

Here’s a quick snapshot of how we’re working together through the Safer Sandwell Partnership (SSP) to make a safer borough for all. Read more about our work at www.sandwell.gov.uk/safer

New police chief joins the team
Sandwell Council deputy leader Councillor Mahboob Hussain has given a warm welcome to new Sandwell Police commander Chief Superintendent Matt Ward.

He said: “We’re looking forward to working with Matt Ward and his team to build on the successful partnership we’ve developed in Sandwell over recent years to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour.

“We want to make Sandwell safer for everyone and will be working on the issues that matter most to people.”

Child protection
We launched Sandwell’s Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) in November. Organisations work in the same office to identify risks to children as early as possible, share information securely and respond effectively.

The first of its type in the Black Country, the MASH was singled out for praise in a national awards scheme.

Fires down
The number of accidental fires in homes across Sandwell fell 5.2% in 2012/13, with arson down 6.9%. West Midlands Fire Service visited more than 5,000 borough homes to improve safety. Call 0800 389 5525 for free safety advice and to book a free home fire safety visit.

Tackling extremism
Birmingham’s The Play House carried out 40 workshops in our secondary schools and youth clubs focussing on all forms of extremism.

Anti-social behaviour
More than 80% of people say they’re satisfied with how we’re dealing with anti-social behaviour – but we know people are still suffering.

We’ll be making full use of new powers coming into force on 20 October to help us keep tackling problems and make sure we respond effectively to your concerns. Check out www.sandwell.gov.uk/asb for more info.

Action on VR6 gang
We’ve cracked down on a known gang of criminal and anti-social residents in Tipton. The council, police and Black Country Housing Group took action against 11 defendants, including known members of the VR6 gang.

Actions ranged from evictions from their council and housing association homes to anti-social behaviour orders and injunctions in a bid to curb their behaviour and protect the Moat Farm estate community.

Domestic abuse
We unveiled our new “This isn’t love, love shouldn’t hurt” campaign on Valentine’s Day, to raise awareness of domestic abuse and how victims can get help. We also launched our webpage www.sandwell.gov.uk/domesticabuse

‘Camera car’
Our new ‘CCTV camera car’ will help tackle illegal parking and improve road safety, especially outside schools. Motorists face £70 fines if they park or drop off on yellow zig-zag ‘keep clear’ markings outside schools.

www.sandwell.gov.uk/cameracar

PCC projects
The West Midlands Police & Crime Commissioner gave us £530,000 to:

• Improve home security for domestic abuse victims;
• Identify and manage adult offenders who misuse drugs and/or alcohol;
• Provide targeted activities for young people; and
• Offer forensic property marking to burglary victims.

SSP - who are we?
• Sandwell Council
• West Midlands Police
• Sandwell & West Birmingham Clinical Commissioning Group
• Community Rehabilitation Company
• National Probation Service
• West Midlands Fire Service
• Community/voluntary sector including Sandwell Council for Voluntary Organisations, Rights & Equality Sandwell, Victim Support, Sandwell Women’s Aid
• Our two Youth Police & Crime Commissioners – Wazim Ali and Tasnim Miah – are pictured below with SSP Board chair John Garrett.

Call police on 101 to report crime. Always call 999 in an emergency. Visit www.sandwell.gov.uk/asb for advice on how to report anti-social behaviour. We’re all on Facebook and Twitter too – check out www.sandwell.gov.uk/safer for more info.
Sandwell Council is making it easier to access the services you need by bringing a Sandwell Local centre to your town. Sandwell Local offers numerous council services and advice (including housing) and can signpost you to a wide range of information.

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

Deputy leader Councillor Mahboob Hussain, said:

“Dedicated teams are already providing key services from the centres and we are working with a number of partners to increase the services on offer.

“Each Sandwell Local also has several neighbourhood officers who are responsible for working with ward councillors and residents on local issues.

“The service is still developing, and I would like to hear suggestions from residents about what other services they would like to see on offer at their Sandwell Local.”

Here’s where you can find your Sandwell Local.

- **Sandwell Rowley Regis Local**: Payne Street, High Street, Blackheath B65 0DH. Open Mon to Fri 9am - 5pm.
- **Sandwell Smethwick Local**: Ground Floor, Smethwick Council House, High Street, Smethwick B66 3NT. Open Mon to Thu 9am - 5.30pm, Fri 9am - 5pm.
- **Sandwell Tipton Local**: High Street, Princes End, Tipton DY4 9JB. Open Mon to Fri 9am - 5pm.
- **Sandwell Wednesbury Local**: Town Hall, Wednesbury WS10 7DF. Open Mon to Fri 9am - 5pm.
- **Sandwell West Bromwich Local**: Court House, High Street, West Bromwich, B70 8LU. Open Mon to Fri 9am - 5pm.
- **One Stop Shop, Oldbury**: Freeth Street, Oldbury B69 3DE. Open Mon to Thu 8am - 5.30pm (Last ticket 5.15pm), Fri 8am - 5pm (Last ticket 4.45pm), Sat 9am - 12noon (Last ticket 11.45am).

Planned future services:

- Private sector housing
- Trading standards
- Housing benefits advice
- Planning application advice
- Adults and children’s social care

Tell us which services you would like to see at your Sandwell Local office:

- email: lisa_shakespeare@sandwell.gov.uk
- Tel: 0121 569 5130.

We’re open 24/7 online, visit www.sandwell.gov.uk
Pledge for training and jobs

Councillor Ian Jones, Sandwell’s cabinet member for jobs and economy, said:

“I am committed to creating training and employment opportunities for people in Sandwell. One way the council can do this is by working with our contractors and asking them to play their part in creating these opportunities.

“Young people often find they can’t get a job without work experience and can’t get experience without a job.”

Building Better Futures

Fifteen Sandwell jobseekers are set to embark on a career in construction after gaining a coveted place on an award-winning training scheme run by Wates Living Space.

“Building Futures” is designed to boost job prospects with on-the-job training and experience of life on a live construction site.

The two-week scheme sees candidates gain a wide variety of qualifications and practical skills including carpentry, tiling and plumbing, plus painting and decorating.

The participants had their efforts rewarded with a construction skills accreditation plus asbestos awareness, health and safety, and employability skills and training to help them access future training and experience on building sites.

After completing the sessions, all are offered the opportunity to be interviewed by members of Wates’ supply chain for further employment.

Callum Thompson from Oldbury, who completed the programme, said: “I really enjoyed the ‘Building Futures’ scheme and with the new skills and valuable experience I’ve gained, I am even more determined to get a job in construction.”

Hayley and Matt moving on up

Two young people are carving out careers for themselves thanks to the opportunities given to them by VINCI Facilities.

Matt Haywood and Hayley Lester both started out as apprentice helpdesk assistants and have worked their way up to more skilled roles.

Matt, from Tividale, joined VINCI in 2009, aged 18, after being referred by the Think Sandwell team. Matt has completed NVQ Levels 2 and 3 in Business Administration and topped that with a Higher National Certificate Level 4 in Construction.

Last year, he joined the third year of a quantity surveying degree and is now a trainee quantity surveyor with VINCI.

Also referred by Think Sandwell, Hayley started working in July 2013 and is working towards an NVQ Level 3 in Business Administration and was promoted to trainee project administrator in April this year.

Both agree that their apprenticeships gave them a golden opportunity to get a valuable insight into the world of work, through learning on the job, and being looked after by workplace and college mentors.

Improvements scheme to council homes – well under way

Sandwell Council is working with its three construction partners Lovell, VINCI Facilities and Wates Living Space to deliver £50 million worth of improvements to more than 6,000 homes over the next three years.

Nearly 600 properties have been improved since the contract started this year. Our partners are already delivering improvements to estates in Oldbury, Rowley Regis, Tipton and West Bromwich.

Home surveys are now being carried out to properties in Smethwick and Wednesbury in advance of improvement works starting next year.

Improvements can include new kitchens and bathrooms, electrical rewiring, replacement heating systems and external works such as roofing and windows where they are required.

The improvements can be part upgrades or full replacements depending on the existing facilities in each property.

Compliments from tenants:

“All the workers treated me with so much respect. The reason I coped so well was because everyone was so kind.”

• Mrs Elwell, Tipton – VINCI Facilities

“I could not have had a nicer bunch of men doing my work, they were all so lovely and very polite.”

• Mrs Elwell, Tipton – VINCI Facilities

“I could not fault them, they did an amazing job under the circumstances.”

• Mrs Corcoran, Oldbury – Wates Living Space

Cabinet member for jobs and economy, Councillor Ian Jones, said: “The council has received many compliments from tenants about the work being carried out to their homes and it’s rewarding to receive these so early in the contract.

“We do realise that this can be a difficult time and I’d like to reassure tenants that we work closely with our partners to ensure that the quality of work delivered reaches the standards we demand and that the work is completed in the given timescales.”
A new provider of health science education in Sandwell

A new University Technical College (UTC) aimed at giving young people the necessary skills for a career in healthcare and health science professions is opening in September 2015.

The Health Futures UTC will be built on High Street, West Bromwich, at the former site of Sandwell College.

The UTC is being sponsored by the University of Wolverhampton, West Midlands Ambulance Service and the Midcounties Co-operative Pharmacy, with 23 employer and educational partners including NHS trusts.

Aimed at 14-19 year-olds, the UTC will have a strong focus on science. And it will cover a range of traditional subjects at GCSE and A Level, as well as practical and technical qualifications to help provide skills for careers in the NHS, health science or pharmaceutical industries.

Students will also be involved in employer-led technical challenges and regularly be tested through real-life scenarios, interactive study and the use of simulation technologies.

Science laboratories, a mock hospital ward and an immersive visualisation suite will all be equipped to meet the needs of a diverse student population.

The unique education that the UTC offers will equip young people with qualifications and life skills to help them succeed in any career or higher education choice they eventually make.

For more information about the Health Futures UTC: visit: www.healthfuturesutc.co.uk email: enquiries@healthfuturesutc.co.uk call: 01902 518642

Artist's impression of the Health Futures (UTC) on West Bromwich High Street

Are you a council tenant?

Don't forget to tell us if your contact details change.

This could be because:
• you've changed internet provider and have a new landline number and/or email address;
• you've change mobile phone supplier and have a new number; or
• your family circumstances/household make-up has changed and your next of kin has changed.

Remember that we may need to contact you:
• about a change to your housing benefit;
• to arrange an appointment to carry out your repair request; or
• to ask for information about your application for housing or a move.

Remember that when we phone you and leave a voicemail message we need to make sure that the message gets to you.

Contact us at: www.sandwell.gov.uk/contacthousing email: customer_services@sandwell.gov.uk or by calling 0121 569 6000.
Sandwell’s 72 councillors are here to represent you. They hold regular ‘surgeries’ where you can go to discuss council-related issues. Ring 0121 569 3044 to get details of exactly when and where. You can also ring this number if you are unsure who your councillors are.

Contact your Councillor

MARK OUR SCORECARD TODAY!  www.sandwell.gov.uk/mycouncil  PAGE 23
Recycle food waste
Win prizes!

20 x £1000 jackpot prizes
25 x 12 month Sandwell gym memberships
500 x rolls of food waste liners

Look out for the new number on your caddy lid each week

Mark off numbers that appear on your card

www.sandwell.gov.uk/bingo