

SANDWELL HERALD

SPRING 2025

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 Sandwell

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Bostin People Bostin Place



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www.sandwell.gov.uk

Celebrating and supporting Sandwell

Spring is just around the corner, and this edition of the Sandwell Herald is full of information and advice to help people of all ages, and details of the exciting events and projects we have coming up in Sandwell.

Last year we celebrated 50 years of Sandwell Council. We rounded this off with a celebration of public service in Sandwell, including awarding the Sandwell and West Birmingham NHS Trust the Freedom of the Borough.

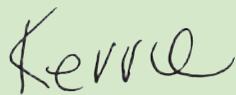
There are more stories from other incredible Sandwell people who have made great achievements and a difference in their communities – including three who were named in the King’s New Year Honours List. Read more about them on page 3.

Looking forward, as a council we’re committed to providing high quality services that work for our residents. We want to be brilliant at the basics and throughout this edition you’ll find information about what we’re doing on the issues that we know matter to you.

Demand for our services, especially tackling homelessness and funding services for special educational needs and disabilities, is increasing and will continue to increase over the coming years.

However, the amount the average Sandwell household pays towards Council Tax remains among the lowest in the West Midlands region and among the lowest in the country. We’ve done all we can to keep it that way. You can read more about how the council spends its budget on pages 4 and 5.

Don’t forget, there is help available if you need it. Read more about our Supporting Sandwell information hub on page 8 and how to find support and advice.



Councillor Kerrie Carmichael,
Leader of Sandwell Council

Sandwell’s new taskforce to promote animal welfare

Animal welfare is very important to us here in Sandwell.

We launched Sandwell Council’s Animal Welfare Charter last year and we have also now set up a Local Animal Welfare Task Force.



Councillor Kerrie Carmichael, pictured centre, has received the RSPCA Massingham Advocacy Award

The task force meets quarterly and is chaired by the Leader of the Council, Councillor Kerrie Carmichael, with representation from other councillors and the RSPCA, and other animal welfare organisations and a community member joining soon.

The task force aims to promote responsible pet ownership, protect wildlife and natural habitats, champion high-welfare food procurement, support animal welfare causes, and create a unified approach to animal welfare policies and practices in Sandwell.

The task force will develop and support local animal welfare educational programmes and public awareness campaigns to promote responsible ownership, address litter issues and advocate for wildlife welfare, including organising regular community clean-up events.

It will also collaborate with local animal welfare organisations and promote adoption from shelters and rescues, keep Sandwell’s charter up to date and engage with the community and relevant organisations to gather insights and feedback on issues.

The council’s commitment has already been recognised by the RSPCA with its Silver PawPrints Award, in addition, Councillor Carmichael was awarded the first ever Massingham Advocacy Award for her dedication to animal welfare.

Go to www.sandwell.gov.uk/animalwelfarecharter to read Sandwell’s charter.



Sandwell remembers the Holocaust

We marked Holocaust Memorial Day in January with a special service led by the Mayor of Sandwell, Councillor Syeda Khatun MBE, at the Memorial Gardens at Highfields House (Sandwell Register Office) in West Bromwich.

Holocaust Memorial Day 2025 marked the 80th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau, which was the largest Nazi concentration camp, and the 30th anniversary of the genocide in Bosnia.

Mindu Hornick MBE, now in her mid-90s, spoke about her inspiring yet heartbreaking journey as an Auschwitz and Holocaust survivor. Mindu and her family were sent to Auschwitz because they were Jewish.

You can read Mindu’s story on the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust website www.hmd.org.uk – search for ‘Mindu’s Story’.

While the day is a time for everyone to remember the millions of people murdered in the Holocaust and the genocides that followed, it is also a chance to look at ahead with hope ‘For a Better Future’, which was the theme for Holocaust Memorial Day 2025.



Our thanks to NHS staff



Sandwell Council has awarded Sandwell and West Birmingham NHS Trust the Freedom of the Borough.

The prestigious honour is a recognition of the extraordinary commitment, dedication and resilience shown by all those who work within the NHS, from doctors and nurses to support staff, paramedics and volunteers.

The Mayor of Sandwell, Councillor Syeda Khatun MBE, said: “We are honouring the NHS’s extraordinary service, not only in times of crisis, but as a constant source of support, healing and care to the residents of Sandwell.”

The council made the award as part of Sandwell’s 50th anniversary celebrations and also recognised the Trust’s response to the Covid-19 pandemic and the opening of the Midland Metropolitan University Hospital in October.



Daughters join Blind Dave for his final London Marathon

Freeman of Sandwell 'Blind Dave' Heeley OBE is set to run in his final London Marathon this April – and he'll be joined every step of the way by his three daughters.

Dave, aged 67, said: "After completing 16 London marathons and following two knee replacements, I guessed running the streets of London was a distant memory, but my three kids had other ideas!

"The girls are now taking up the running mantle and decided, and then told me, I'm running one last time. So, on 27 April I will run my last London Marathon and my three girls, Grace, Georgie-lee and Dannie, will be my guide runners.

"With training now under way, the kids now realise the marathon isn't just about the miles on the day – it's the early morning miles, come rain or shine, not to mention running through the pain barrier.

"I'm very proud of their efforts, I believe they are really getting into the mood of the marathon, my aim is to slow them down!"

Blind Dave and his daughters are raising awareness and funds for The Albion Foundation at the 2025 TCS London Marathon.

Go to www.justgiving.com/page/blinddaveanddaughtersrunlondonmarathon if you would like to support their fundraising.



Honours from the King for Sandwell community heroes

Three Sandwell heroes were recognised for their achievements in the King's New Year Honours List.

Balbir Singh, from Smethwick, was awarded the British Empire Medal (BEM) for services to Bhangra music and to Punjabi culture. His Bhujhangy Group has been recognised by the Guinness World Records 2022 for performing continuously for an incredible 55 years.

Deborah Lowe, from Rowley Regis, who is the chair and director of Youth Onstage (YOS), was awarded the BEM for her work in the performing arts across the Midlands.

Tracy Lowe, from Oldbury, founder of Wallace Youth Project, was awarded an MBE for her 30 years of dedication to supporting young people.

And the King's Birthday Honours in November saw three Sandwell community groups recognised.

Warley Amateur Boxing Club, Warley Woods Community Trust and Wallace Youth Project have all received a King's Award for Voluntary Service.

Black Country Mental Health and The Black Country Blokes CIC also received the King's Award for their support to the wider Black Country area.



Balbir Singh



Deborah Lowe



Tracy Lowe



Some of the enthusiastic 300 volunteers at Warley Woods celebrate receiving the King's Award

Photo: Doug Barber

Sandwell celebrates 40 years of cross-Channel friendship

This May marks 40 years since Sandwell Council signed a Town Twinning protocol with Le Blanc Mesnil, France.



Since then, hundreds of people have criss-crossed the Channel to spend a few days with a family, many forming lifelong friendships.

The twinning was the brainchild of a Sandwell Methodist minister who had visited Le Blanc Mesnil

and noted the similarities between the two places. It was taken up enthusiastically by others and Sandwell Town Twinning Association formed to develop the link.

Many young people have found it a brilliant way to improve their French and, while not everyone can speak French, families from both boroughs have learnt to communicate with each other.

One Sandwell student even found herself on work experience in Le Blanc Mesnil's town hall!

There have been exchanges with sports clubs, disability groups, schools and the Royal British Legion. In 2024, students and teachers from Sandwell College's Central St Michael's Sixth Form joined the Sandwell delegation. This year, a delegation from Le Blanc Mesnil comes to Sandwell.

The Town Twinning Association holds regular social events to raise funds and new members are always welcome. Contact blancmesnil2012@live.co.uk to find out more. Exchange visits are at people's own expense.

Here's to the next 40 years of friendship. Santé!

Photos from the signing of the twinning agreement at West Bromwich Town Hall in 1985 and last year's visit to Le Blanc Mesnil



Do you know how the council spends its money?

Around 60% of our budget is spent on Adult Social Care and Children's Services and Education - looking after older, vulnerable and disabled people, and supporting our children and young people.



What we're doing - our plan for Sandwell Our priorities on what matters to you

GROWING UP IN SANDWELL

We're making sure children attend school. By working with schools and families, we've improved school attendance to make sure children get the very best start in life.

Sandwell children are attending school for 85,000+ more days than they were two years ago, and attainment levels have improved.

We're continuing to fund Youth Services - when many councils have cut funding or stopped providing this altogether.

We're investing in a brand new replacement for Causeway Green Primary School in Brandhall, Oldbury.

We're putting young people at the centre of everything by working with UNICEF to become a Child Friendly Community.

We're doing more for young people who are or have been in the care system, by making care experience a protected characteristic. This means they are officially recognised as a group to be protected from discrimination.

We are committed to improving services for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities.



LIVING IN SANDWELL

Our Welfare Rights team and community organisations providing advice have helped almost 15,000 people to claim more than £20million they were entitled to.

We hosted the Knife Angel to raise awareness of knife crime which was visited by more than 10,000 people. Serious youth violence in Sandwell has reduced by 20% over the past year.

We're launching a campaign on how to report crime and other issues, and our My Tomorrow campaign is focussed on empowering young people and helping them stay safe.

A total of 639 new build homes were completed in 2023/24, up from 340 in 2022/23.

We're making improvements to Britannia Park in Rowley Regis and several other parks - with more than 30 park improvement projects.



We're doing everything we can to support people who are homeless - and prevent people from becoming homeless.

To find out more about how the council spends its budget, search for "Sandwell Council budget" online, go to www.sandwell.gov.uk/budget or scan the QR code



HEALTHY IN SANDWELL

We're helping people to stay independent after a hospital stay and preventing many hospital stays altogether through our digital platform Ethel, and schemes including Harvest View - our flagship social care facility.

We're supporting people at home through our Community Alarms service.

Our investment in mental health support is helping people to find the help they need in their community.

We're reducing drug and alcohol-related deaths – Sandwell has one of the lowest rates of drug-related deaths in the country, thanks to our proactive, community-based programmes.

A £2million improvement and extension project at the Millennium Centre in Friar Park will expand access to community services, offering residents better facilities and fostering a stronger sense of community.

Work has started on the new Cradley Heath Skills Campus and Midland Met Learning Campus, helping to train our healthcare professionals of the future.



THRIVING ECONOMY IN SANDWELL

We're overseeing multi-million pound regeneration schemes in our towns – and major improvements to West Bromwich and Wednesbury town centres, including a new indoor market for West Bromwich.

We're freezing parking charges in our town centres and across the borough and investing up to £55million in highways, which includes fixing potholes, gritting in the winter and maintaining our roads and pavements.

The Smethwick Connected scheme is improving the cycle and pedestrian network.

The opening of the Cradley Heath Skills Campus will provide a new, dedicated education and training centre in partnership with Sandwell College.

We've marked the first year of the £5million Sandwell STEM Centre, which is providing advanced courses in science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) in the heart of West Bromwich.



SUPPORTING SANDWELL

There's help if you need it

Get help and advice by searching for "Supporting Sandwell" online, visit our online information hub at www.sandwell.gov.uk/supportingsandwell or scan the QR code.

For help with financial support or benefits contact our Welfare Rights team on **0121 569 3158**.



Sandwell Council is completely focused on getting things right for our residents – delivering high-quality services that are easy to use and that work well for the people who need them.

We are a caring council, and our budget for the next financial year protects vulnerable people and sets us up to deliver our ambitious plans for Sandwell.

We want our borough to be a great place for children to grow up.

We want to make Sandwell a cleaner, greener and safer place to live and for our residents to live longer in good health.

And we want to create a thriving economy with good jobs and opportunities that will help everyone realise their potential.

Our aim is to make real changes that will benefit our residents and our borough for generations to come. And we're transforming our services - in the past year we've halved waiting times on our contact centre phelines.

Although we're not facing the extreme financial challenges some councils are facing, we have to set a balanced budget and we have had to do this by making some bold and difficult decisions.

Demand for our services is increasing and will continue to increase over the coming years. Despite this, the amount the average Sandwell household pays towards Council Tax remains among the lowest in the West Midlands region and among the lowest in the country. We've done all we can to keep it that way.

We hope this gives you an idea of what your Council Tax pays for, what we're doing to improve our services and how to get help if you need it.



Leader of Sandwell Council,
Councillor Kerrie Carmichael

Deputy Leader of Sandwell Council and Cabinet Member for Finance
Councillor Paul Moore



Adult Social Care – here to help you

Sandwell Council's Adult Social Care service works across the borough to support residents live healthy and fulfilled lives.

Our approach is proactive, focusing on early intervention and prevention programmes designed to reduce or even prevent the need for care and support.

By empowering people to stay independent and resilient, we aim to ensure they can lead fulfilled lives for as long as possible.

Our vision is to provide: "The right support, at the right time and the right place, to maximise independence and empower people to remain safe and healthy."

Last year Adult Social Care supported 1,600 people aged 18-64 years, and 3,400 people aged 65+ with long-term support.

More than 3,000 people were supported with services to support reablement and promote independence.

This is alongside thousands of residents who are supported through our commissioned programmes through community providers.

Visit www.sandwell.gov.uk/adultsocialcare for more information on services or, if you're not online, call **0121 569 2266** if you have an enquiry for Adult Social Care.



Supporting carers

We've worked with over 200 carers to design a new carer support service in Sandwell.

By involving carers from the earliest planning stage, we made sure their views and experiences could help shape the new service to offer support that really meets their needs. It's set to launch later this year.

Go to www.sandwell.gov.uk/carers or call **0121 569 2266** to find out about support for carers.

Empowering people

People with learning disabilities who are using our 12 Week Pathway service have found it empowering to be part of interview panels for recruiting new Adult Social Care workers.

They have also enjoyed helping to design a brand for the service.

The 12-week service helps people gain independence, access services in their local community and connect with training or job opportunities.

Contact us for a chat about our range of day opportunities.

Email 12_weekpathway@sandwell.gov.uk or call **0121 569 4467**.

Ethel helps transform care and independence

The roll-out of Sandwell's new digital social care platform, Ethel, is picking up pace.

Available for people being discharged from hospital or receiving a reablement package, it combines a digital app, device and sensor kit to allow care professionals, family and your wider support network to help you to remain independent.

Thirty devices have already been installed into people's homes across Sandwell.

Thanks to the Ethel app, when Mr H returned home from hospital, his family – who live outside of Sandwell – have been able to stay connected through virtual calls. They can check in regularly to ensure he's safe, healthy and supported—whether that means arranging a visit or simply offering a friendly chat from afar.

Email EthelCare_Admin@sandwell.gov.uk or call **0121 569 2266** for more details.



Building a Dementia Friendly Sandwell

Sandwell Community Dementia Service (SCDS) is free for anyone living in Sandwell or registered with a Sandwell GP who is:

- at any stage of memory loss and/or other cognitive symptoms,
- diagnosed with dementia, or,
- a carer or family member of someone living with dementia.

SCDS is a partnership of eight local voluntary sector organisations working together to provide advice, information and support to people who are worried about their memory or who have been diagnosed with dementia. Their work is funded by the Better Care Fund.

The service provides support at each stage of the dementia pathway and helps to build Dementia Friendly Communities – involving school children and community groups to run sessions and raise awareness of dementia.

Case study: Ricky

Former long-distance lorry driver Ricky was referred to SCDS after being diagnosed with young onset dementia.

Ricky wanted to get out and about, join in with activities, meet up with people and carry on studying.

With support from SCDS and a university mentor, Ricky began studying a Business Studies degree. He's a member of the Let's Talk Hope cancer support group in West Bromwich and enjoys socialising, and he is hoping to do more to support others with his diagnosis.

To find out more about Sandwell Community Dementia Service, go to www.murrayhall.co.uk/scds or email bcicb.dementiasupport@nhs.net or call **01902 826 655**.

Sandwell Co-production Charter launched

Thanks to all the residents and professionals who have worked together to shape Sandwell's first-ever Co-production Charter.

Co-production is a way of working that involves people who use health and care services, carers and communities in equal partnership, and which engages groups of people at the earliest stages of service design, development and evaluation.

The charter sets out a common and consistent approach for everyone. People have a say on the service, care or support they receive, and this helps organisations better meet people's needs.

Go to www.sandwell.gov.uk/coproduction to find out more.



Stay independent with community alarms

Community Alarms supports older, vulnerable and disabled people 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

A community alarm is an emergency button worn around the neck or wrist that helps people stay independent at home or safely return home after a hospital stay.

In December, the team received more than 11,000 calls from Sandwell residents.

Debra's Dad agreed to a community alarm as part of his discharge from hospital after a stroke.

She said: "I wanted to recognise the great support Dave was to my dad. Dave came and immediately put Dad at ease. Dad hasn't removed the pendant since, he has got reassurance with it, and it has offered me some respite from worry. Thank you, Dave!"

Irene added: "I would like to thank the team that came to help my Mom. They were full of respect, kindness and advice to support us further."

Visit www.sandwell.gov.uk/communityalarms or call **0121 521 1050** for more information.



Community Offer Plus here to help

The Community Offer Plus service provides support to adults over the age of 18 across Sandwell.

The service includes information, advice and guidance to help people manage their needs.

Our mission is to bring together a network of organisations to support Sandwell residents through a variety of free, essential services, made possible through funding from Sandwell Council and the NHS.

Visit www.murrayhall.co.uk/community-offer to find out more about the services available to Sandwell residents.

Call **0121 612 2934** or email bcicb.communityoffer@nhs.net



I feel confident again.



A warm welcome awaits at Crossroads Day Club

If you, or someone you know, are looking to get out more and meet other people, but worry that mobility problems or care needs are holding you back, a warm welcome awaits you at Crossroads Day Club.

The day club, held on the first Wednesday of every month, 10am to 3pm at the Oak Tree Centre, Tame Road, Oldbury, B68 0JP, is open to all adults living with any condition, including dementia.



You can socialise and make new friends while enjoying a change of scenery and a hot tasty meal in a safe, warm and secure environment.

Call Crossroads on **0121 553 6483** or visit www.crossroads-caringforcarers.org for information on price, which includes all activities, refreshments, lunch and care assistance.

Shopmobility – here to help you!

Our Shopmobility team have got you covered if a wheelchair or mobility scooter would help you get around West Bromwich town centre – or if you're looking to hire a wheelchair for a while.

Regular customer Suzanne encourages other people to use the service to help them get out and about.

Suzanne said: "Every time I have called to book, the staff are so friendly and nice that I feel like we are family. The staff have gone above and beyond."

"I am on oxygen due to my health, and the staff always bring a scooter to my car because they know I will struggle to walk from my car to the centre."

"I have had times where I am having a bad day and the staff have sat and spoken to me until I calm down, even checking I have got home safe."

"These guys know my routine and how often I come to West Bromwich. To be honest, I would be so lost without Shopmobility."

"This place is my lifeline and gives me a chance to live my life independently without having to always ask my family for help."

Call **0121 553 1931** in advance to book equipment and for prices, terms and conditions.



Sandwell Shopmobility
Unit 1A (by Next),
New Square,
West Bromwich,
B70 7PP

Opening hours:
Wednesday-Saturday,
8.30am-3pm



healthwatch
Sandwell

Healthwatch is your health and social care champion

We are here to make sure that those running services, put people at the heart of care.

We want to hear your experiences of using Health and Social Care services locally.

Call us on 0121 817 5078
www.healthwatchsandwell.co.uk
info@healthwatchsandwell.co.uk



Scan the code to visit our website and have your say!

RECOGNISE AND REPORT ELDER ABUSE

Everyone should be able to live safely, free from abuse and neglect.

On average, older victims experience abuse for twice as long before seeking help as those aged under 61 and nearly half have a disability.

Abuse can be physical, sexual, financial, emotional or psychological.

Coercive control is when an abuser uses controlling behaviour towards someone, by:

- Isolating them from support
- Exploiting them for personal gain
- Depriving them of ways to be independent or to escape
- Regulating their everyday behaviour.

As people grow older, they can often become more dependent on one person, or their immediate family, to meet changing care and support needs. This can lead to a situation in which an abuser becomes the main influence in their life.

You don't have to put up with it, there is help available for you to live free from abuse and fear.

Help and support

In an emergency, always call **999**. If you're worried an abuser may overhear, you can stay silent, tap the phone and dial **55** when prompted by the operator who will send help.

If you are deaf, hard of hearing or speech-impaired, you can register with **emergencySMS.net** – once registered you can send a text to **999** in an emergency.

Help is available from Black Country Women's Aid on **0121 552 6448** (24/7). For specialist support, call Ask Marc (for men) on **0121 289 6402**, Birmingham LGBT Centre on **0121 643 0821** or Sandwell Council's Housing Solutions Team on **0121 368 1166, Option 2**.

See Something, Do Something! If you're worried an older person or adult with care needs is being abused or neglected, call **0121 569 2266** (**0121 569 2355** out of hours). Always call **999** in an emergency.

Visit www.sandwell.gov.uk/elderabuse for more advice.

Families Together

The Families Together programme offers support to parents living in Sandwell who want a better relationship with each other and their children.

The programme supports families to recognise domestic abuse or coercive behaviour that may be happening in the home and to develop awareness, confidence and self-esteem to feel safer and have the tools to improve family relationships.

Search for 'Sandwell' at www.family-action.org.uk or people aged 18+ can call **0808 802 6666** or text **07537 404282** (Mon-Fri, 9am-9pm).

Visit www.sandwell.gov.uk/domesticabuse for more details of domestic abuse support.



We know many of our residents are struggling to make ends meet.

We have a range of support and advice available to support you at www.sandwell.gov.uk/supportingsandwell

Welcoming Spaces near you



Our network of Welcoming Spaces is there to provide a place to sit, chat and join in the free activities.

Staff are on hand to help if you have any money worries – they will be able to put you in touch with services that can provide advice and support.

Look out for the logo on a library or other community building in your area or visit www.sandwell.gov.uk/welcomingspaces to find your nearest.

Supporting Sandwell – there's help here if you need it



Our Supporting Sandwell information hub has lots of advice and resources if you're struggling with the cost of living

Find out more about the help and support we can offer, including:

- Where to find Welcoming Spaces, where you can sit, chat and join in free activities
- How to get help if you're struggling to pay your bills
- How to save money on your water bill
- What to do if you're worried about debt
- Not letting your rent get out of control
- Checking what financial support you may be entitled to with our Benefits Calculator
- Where to donate a winter coat for someone who needs one.

Get help and advice by visiting our online information hub at www.sandwell.gov.uk/supportingsandwell



Deadline to claim £200 voucher

Did you or did someone you know receive a letter from us before Christmas about a £200 payment?

Four thousand pensioners who didn't receive a Winter Fuel Payment but who qualify for Council Tax Reduction (and not Pension Credit) were written to in December with a voucher to cash at the Post Office.

Around 90% of the vouchers have been cashed but anyone who hasn't yet claimed the voucher needs to redeem it by 19 March 2025.

If you received a letter but you've lost it or thrown it away, please contact our benefits team online at www.sandwell.gov.uk/hfspensioners or by calling **0121 368 1155**.



Improve your digital skills with SAFL



Sandwell Adult and Family Learning Service (SAFL) provides learning opportunities for people aged 19+ across Sandwell.

SAFL, which supports adults to develop their digital skills from beginners up to Level 2, was a West Midlands Combined Authority Community Learning (Digital Inclusion) Award winner in 2024.

Digital skills are vital to enable people to live a more independent life, progress in education and improve employment prospects.

Skills covered in SAFL courses include word processing, using spreadsheets, email and communications apps, using the internet, online transactions and e-safety. Most of SAFL's digital skills courses are FREE.

How to enrol

You will need to attend an initial assessment prior to starting your course.

Visit www.learnsafl.ac.uk and search for 'Digital Skills and ICT' under 'Courses'.

For all the latest course information phone **0121 557 0837** to speak to our friendly staff or email contact_SAFL@sandwell.gov.uk



Are you claiming Income-related Employment and Support Allowance?



The government had previously advised that if you claimed Income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) you would not move to Universal Credit until 2028.

The government has now brought forward this date and claimants will receive their migration notice sometime between autumn 2024 and December 2025.

If you are a council tenant and want to know how the changes affect you, please contact the Rents Team on **0121 737 5148** Monday to Thursday 9am to 5.30pm and 9am to 5pm on a Friday.

If you live in the private rented sector and want to know how the changes affect you, please contact our Welfare Rights Team on **0121 569 3158** Monday to Friday 9am to 1pm.

Visit www.sandwell.gov.uk/universalcredit for more details on the move to UC. Alternatively, please scan the QR code using a mobile or tablet device.



Do you know someone aged 66 or over?

They could be entitled to **Pension Credit**

Advice line

0121 569 3158

Monday - Friday 9am-1pm

Make an enquiry online at

www.sandwell.gov.uk/welfarerights

Welfare Rights team will provide you with an all-round benefit health check to ensure you are receiving your full benefit

Homeless or worried about losing your home?

If you are homeless or at risk of losing your home, please seek our help as soon as possible.

Our first priority is to prevent you from losing your home, so the earlier you get in touch the more successful we're likely to be. There is a range of help available, including if you are struggling to pay your rent.

It is more important than ever to contact us as soon as possible. The demand for homelessness support has increased from 3,981 households in 2021, with us helping just over 7,000 households that are either homeless or at risk of homelessness in the past year.

Demand for council housing has also increased significantly with over 19,500 households now looking for council housing. In most cases, the council will look to find suitable private rented housing to meet your needs.

We have a host of information at www.sandwell.gov.uk/homeless to help prevent you from becoming homeless or to support you if you are already homeless.

If you are concerned about a rough sleeper in Sandwell, fill in a form at www.sandwell.gov.uk/roughsleepers and our team will contact the person to offer support.

You can also contact StreetLink at www.thestreetlink.org.uk
Call **0121 368 1166 / 0121 569 6883** (out-of-hours) if you are homeless or concerned about a rough sleeper.



New council homes for Oldbury and West Bromwich

Sandwell Council is working with Seddon Housing Partnership to bring 20 new council homes to Oldbury and West Bromwich – part of the council's ongoing programme to provide much-needed homes.

Work is nearing completion on 12 homes at Crosswells Road in Langley, Oldbury, with a mix of two and four bedrooms including three bungalows. And eight homes with a mix of two, three and four bedrooms are nearing completion in St Vincent Crescent, West Bromwich.

All the homes will have photo voltaic panels installed to help the council meet its carbon-neutral ambitions by using renewable energy sources.

The roof panels and insulation systems will also benefit tenants by reducing their energy costs.

Some of the homes being built include features such as wheelchair-friendly access and wet rooms.

Work started in February 2024 with homes now starting to be offered through the council's lettings system.

The homes have been grant funded by Homes England and Sandwell Council with a total investment of around £6.2million across the two sites.



Latest on Tipton regeneration project

A planning application was approved in October 2024 for two new blocks of affordable housing, providing 55 apartments in total, on the cleared sites either side of Union Street.

The council is currently tendering the building work, with construction planned to start towards the summer. The Tipton regeneration project is supported by government funding.

A further planning application was submitted in January 2025 for the former Conservative Club in Union Street. This locally listed building is to be retained and refurbished, with outbuildings cleared and new development constructed at the rear.

This site will provide a further 15 new and converted social housing apartments. Subject to gaining planning approval, work on the conversion and new build is set to start in the autumn.

A wide-ranging set of environmental improvements will benefit the whole town centre, including Owen Street, the precinct, Union Street and the former Tipton Green Branch Canal walkway. The council is currently consulting residents and businesses on these plans.

Have your say on the environmental improvements online at consultationhub.sandwell.gov.uk or in person at drop-in sessions at St Paul's Community Centre, Brick Kiln Street, Tipton, DY4 8QL on Wednesday 26 February 5pm-7pm and Thursday 27 February 9am-2pm.



An artist impression of how the environmental improvements could look subject to consultation feedback



RENT OUT YOUR PROPERTY WITH SANDWELL COUNCIL

WHY US?

- ✔ **No lettings fees**
- ✔ With a waiting list of over 200, we guarantee to find you a tenant
- ✔ Potential annual incentives worth in excess of £1000 per property
- ✔ Home emergency cover insurance
- ✔ Rent Protection Guarantee for up to 12 months
- ✔ Discounted membership for the Midlands Landlord Accreditation Scheme
- ✔ Free smoke and carbon monoxide detector installation, as well as full electrical and gas certifications
- ✔ Regular property visits, including wraparound support for tenants and landlords if things start to go wrong
- ✔ Top ups between benefits rate and rent rate - with 12 months top up paid up front
- ✔ Right-to-rent checks and affordability checks on all tenants
- ✔ Full support from our accommodation team



WANT TO KNOW MORE?

- 📞 Ring our Accommodation Team on **0121 368 1177** (Option 2)
- ✉ Email us at Property_Offer@sandwell.gov.uk
- 🌐 Visit our website for more information by **scanning the QR code** or go to www.sandwell.gov.uk/secureandsustain

SCIPS – supporting Sandwell residents for over 30 years

Do you live in **S**andwell?

Do you think the **C**ommunity should have a voice in the borough?

Would regular **I**nformation about local services be helpful?

Should resident **P**articipation be integral to local decision-making?

Does access to **S**ervices, skills and expertise appeal to you?



If you answered yes, why not join Sandwell Community Information & Participation Services (SCIPS)? An independent charity, SCIPS is resident-led and cares about the community.

Membership is free and open to individuals, community groups and Tenants and Residents Associations (TRAs).

Call **0121 544 1230**, email enquiries@scips.org.uk or visit www.scips.org.uk to find out more.

Spring at Sandwell Museums

Spring into spring with Sandwell Museums for a new season of events and activities.

Enjoy Easter school holiday fun across our sites with entertainment, crafts and springtime fun, including Bank Holiday Easter Monday family open days at Haden Hill House and Bromwich Hall.



Our AIM (Adults in Museums) programme will be returning this spring with talks, tours, music and theatre.

Look out for our two larger community springtime events in May with our annual Fabulous 40s event at Haden Hill House and Park on Bank Holiday Monday 5 May. This year we'll also be commemorating 80 years since VE Day with live music, costumed characters, vehicles, entertainment and more.

Enjoy our fantastic springtime celebration with the ever-popular Green Man Festival at Oak House Museum on Sunday 11 May with Morris dancing, entertainment, fun for all ages and look out for our green man!

Keep up to date with what's on at Sandwell Museums by following us on social media @sandwellmuseums and at www.visitsandwell.com/sandwell-museums

SHAPE news round-up

Applications are open for **SHAPE Your Talent 2025** and close on Friday 14 March. See the poster on this page or visit www.justyouth.org.uk/syt-info

Save the date for this year's **SHAPE Youth Summer Fest** at Sandwell Valley on Saturday 12 July, 12noon to 6pm. As SHAPE are celebrating 10 years, we are looking forward to making it the best one yet!

Thanks to everyone who took part in the **annual SHAPE Survey** for children and young people last year. A record-breaking 2,751 responses were received, and the results will help council departments and partner agencies plan and design services around the needs of children and young people. Look out for the full survey report at www.justyouth.org.uk

Other **2024 highlights** included taking the Anti-Bullying Roadshow to 10 schools and getting involved in Multistory's Green Roots project and the University of Birmingham's School Food Project.

The **SHAPE 10 Year Anniversary** event took place in January 2025, dedicated to celebrating the achievements of inspirational young people who have gone above and beyond in representing children and young people in Sandwell. Young people commented "SHAPE changed my life, gave me belonging and confidence" and "it helped me gain a sense of self and personal identity".

If you are aged 11 to 21 and would like to join **SHAPE Youth Forum**, register at www.justyouth.org.uk/shape-youth-forum



Sandwell's martial arts champion James

Congratulations to James Bastable from Tipton who was named Competitor of the Year 2023-2024 by the Taekwondo Council United Kingdom.

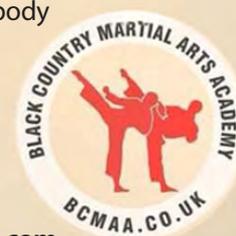
James topped the leaderboard against fellow martial arts athletes from all over the UK and scooped two gold medals at the Scottish Open as well as a silver and a gold medal competing against Team USA at the British Taekwondo Championship.

James trains and is also an instructor at Black Country Martial Arts Academy (BCMAA) in Tipton, which specialises in traditional martial arts taekwondo as well as kickboxing.

James said: "Winning the award blew my mind. Being a part of the club has boosted my confidence and introduced me to some really great people who I can pass my experience onto."

BCMAA welcomes members aged six and upwards, focusing on personal development, self-esteem, confidence building and self-defence.

Three of their students featured in the top ten of the 2024 national governing body Taekwondo Council UK (TCUK) national group of tournaments.



Find out more about joining at www.blackcountrymartialarts.com



SHAPE YOUR TALENT 2025

A talent competition for young people aged 8-19 (up to 25 with SEND) who are in education, live or work in Sandwell.

Apply to audition at one of the following heats:

Rowley Regis

4 March 2025
5.30pm - 8pm

Blackheath Library, 145 High St, Blackheath, Rowley Regis, B65 0EA

Oldbury

6 March 2025
5.30pm - 8pm

Langley Lodge Community Centre, Langley High Street, Oldbury, B69 4SU

Smethwick

8 March 2025
3.30pm - 6pm

Brasshouse Community Centre, Brasshouse Lane, Smethwick B66 1BA

West Bromwich

11 March 2025
5.30pm - 8pm

West Bromwich Central Library, 316 High St, West Bromwich B70 8DZ

Wednesbury

13 March 2025
5.30pm - 8pm

Wednesbury 2000, The Old Post Office, Holyhead Road, Wednesbury, WS10 7DF

Tipton

15 March 2025
3.30pm - 6pm

Coneygre Arts Centre, Sedgley Rd East, Tipton DY4 8UH



Scan the QR code
Apply online at www.justyouth.org.uk
or in your local library!

APPLICATIONS CLOSE ON FRIDAY 14 MARCH 2025





HOLIDAY ACTIVITIES AND GO PLAY

Creating a space for everyone to play



Little moments make big memories
#MAKINGMEMORIES

COME AND FIND OUT MORE AT:



<https://holidayactivities.sandwell.gov.uk>
Or visit: <https://goplaysandwell.co.uk>



f @GoPlaySandwell @GoPlaySandwell
f @SandwellHAF @SandwellHAF

SEE WHAT THEY COULD BECOME MISS SCHOOL, MISS OUT



Attend school for the best start in life

www.sandwell.gov.uk/attendance



Water safety

Sandwell has lots of open water including lakes, pools, ponds, canals and rivers.

It could be tempting to venture onto these areas when they are frozen over or on a warm, sunny day.

Never venture onto frozen water. Even if the ice appears thick, it becomes thinner very quickly.

And if there is open water do not be tempted to swim in it.

Water may feel warm on the surface but just a few feet below can be icy cold, even in hot weather, and can very quickly cause severe cramp and hypothermia.

Young people can often misjudge their swimming ability.

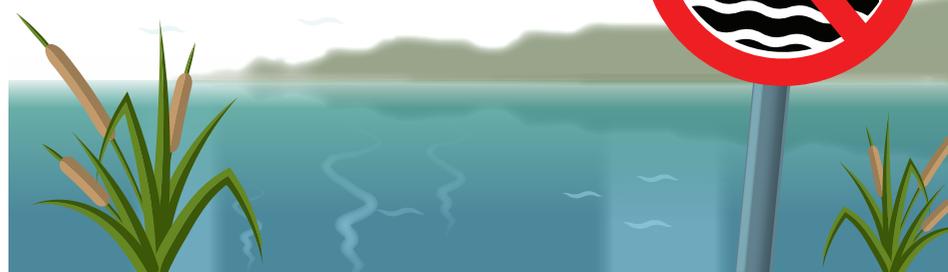
Due to these dangers, we urge people, particularly children and teenagers, not to swim anywhere other than in purpose-built and supervised swimming pools.

Visit www.sandwell.gov.uk/watersafety for tips on staying safe near water.

If you do want to swim safely, we have fantastic swimming pools and leisure centres across Sandwell and some sessions are free for residents as follows:

- Sandwell children aged 18 and under during school holidays (during specified public swimming times)
- Sandwell residents aged 60 and over before 1pm every day
- Sandwell residents who are registered as disabled

Visit www.sandwell.gov.uk/freeswimming for full details of where and when you can access free swimming, how to take part and ID required.



Make 2025 your year to become a school governor



Give something back to your community, become a school governor and make a difference to the lives of children in Sandwell.

Anyone over the age of 18 can apply and you don't need to be a parent or education expert – you just need to be committed to the role, willing to learn and bring your perspective.

There's lots of benefits for you too, take a look and see if you can help at www.sandwell.gov.uk/schoolgovernors

Changes to how we collect waste in Sandwell – coming soon

Changes to Sandwell's waste collection service are planned to improve recycling and save money.

Thanks to everyone who took part in our consultation last year around the proposals to change to alternate weekly bin collections – please be assured that any issues you raised in the consultation will be fully considered as we plan for the changes.

Subject to final approval, we will be introducing alternate weekly collections and dual-stream recycling to separate paper and cardboard into an additional recycling container.

Changes to bin collections are proposed to take place from the autumn this year. Residents will continue to receive a weekly collection, with residual waste (grey bin) collected one week and recycling (blue-lid bin) the next.

Too much of what goes in our bins ends up being incinerated and just 29% of our waste is recycled compared to the national average of 41%. Introducing changes to how we recycle is a huge step towards boosting recycling rates and improving the quality of recycling we collect.

The changes are driven not only by the savings this will achieve but also by government requirements to simplify recycling and increase recycling rates while addressing environmental and climate change concerns.

Food waste collections and dual-stream recycling will become mandatory for all households from April 2026. If we fail to implement these changes and improve our recycling rates, then we would face increased costs.

Clear information and guidance on what these changes mean for households will be shared prior to the changes coming into effect.

Visit www.sandwell.gov.uk/binchanges for more information on the changes.



Fly-tippers face £1,000 fine!



A £1,000 fine was issued for this fly-tipping in Smethwick

Fly-tipping is illegally dumped waste. It might be household rubbish, garden waste, mattresses, construction materials (like bricks and rubble) or electrical items (fridges and freezers).

Sandwell Council is committed to maintaining a clean and safe environment for its residents, with fly-tipped waste removed from public land within 48 hours.

This swift action is delivered through our partnership with our waste management partner, Serco.

Fly-tipping blights the environment, creates safety hazards, damages property values and can result in financial penalties and criminal convictions.

In 2024, Sandwell Council issued 24 fines for fly-tipping and 16 fines to residents who gave their waste to someone who failed to dispose of it properly.

We urge everyone to take responsibility for their waste.

You can help in three easy ways:

- Use the tip in Oldbury, where you can dispose of unwanted items for free. Go to www.sandwell.gov.uk/tip to book a slot.
- For larger items, we offer a bulky waste collection service. Go to www.sandwell.gov.uk/bulkywaste for details.

If someone offers to take away rubbish, check they have a waste carrier's licence, get a receipt and note the details of any vehicle used. If waste is linked to a resident, they may be held liable and could face a £600 fine.

The council can now issue a £1,000 fine to anyone identified as having committed a fly-tipping offence. This includes residents placing waste on the footpath believing that a scrap collector will take it.

We need evidence to be able to tackle fly-tippers, so please report incidents at

www.sandwell.gov.uk/flytipping

If you're not online, you can call us on 0121 368 1177 about any of the services on this page.

2025

serco

SIGN UP OR RENEW GARDEN WASTE COLLECTIONS FOR 2025

WWW.SANDWELL.GOV.UK/GARDENWASTE

SIGN UP TO RECEIVE
GARDEN WASTE
COLLECTIONS

£40

(T&Cs apply)



Current subscribers must RENEW THEIR SUBSCRIPTION to receive garden waste collections for 2025

Bin lorry fire in Smethwick sparks safety reminder

A Sandwell refuse collection crew experienced the dangers of people putting batteries or electricals in the general waste when a fire broke out in the back of their lorry.

The suspected cause of the fire was a lithium-ion battery, emphasising the importance of people safely disposing of batteries and electrical items at dedicated recycling points to prevent similar incidents happening again. You should remove batteries from the electrical item and recycle them both separately.

Small household batteries can be put inside a clear plastic bag on top of the blue lid recycling bin to be collected separately. Alternatively, batteries and electrical items can be taken to the Household Recycling Centre in Oldbury or to collection points at major retailers.

Go to www.sandwell.gov.uk/tip or call 0121 368 1177 to book your slot at the tip.

There are also collection points in all major retailers that sell batteries and electricals.

Go to www.sandwell.gov.uk/batteries for more information and advice.



SCHOOL LEAVERS
**SANDWELL
 COLLEGE**
**A CAREERS
 COLLEGE**

**SANDWELL
 MAKE
 CAREERS
 HAPPEN**

APPLICATIONS FOR SEPT 2025 ARE NOW OPEN

**APPLY NOW
 FOR 2025**

Discover
 MORE



ENJOY FREE TRAVEL TO COLLEGE!

SANDWELL.AC.UK

CENTRAL CAMPUS, SPON LANE, WEST BROMWICH B70 6AW

Work under way on Cradley Heath Skills Campus

Opportunities for young people and adults across Sandwell and the Black Country are set to expand with Sandwell College's newest investment, a £9.3million skills centre in Cradley Heath, which is now under construction.

Sandwell College has appointed Speller Metcalfe as the main contractor for the project, which is funded through the government's Towns Fund programme.

Opening in early 2026, the state-of-the-art centre will be based on Lower High Street in Cradley Heath and provide a diverse range of courses and facilities designed to improve skills and job readiness.

The new skills centre will also be available to local community groups, offering a vital resource hub for social, medical and educational advice and services.

Visit www.regeneratingsandwell.co.uk for more details.



Learning campus to provide job and training opportunities

Construction work is well under way on the £18million Midland Metropolitan Learning Campus, which is set to open later this year as part of the new hospital site in Smethwick.

Sandwell and West Birmingham NHS Trust and Sandwell College have signed a momentous agreement, set to secure hundreds of job and training opportunities for people in the region each year.

The demand for new and upskilled staff across the NHS is high and the provision of training within a purpose-built centre linking these skills and the local jobs market is a first for Sandwell.

The agreement will provide Sandwell College students with direct access to learning opportunities within the hospital, as well as offering apprenticeships, work experience placements and internships, and helping young adults with learning disabilities to access employment.

Both the campus and hospital form a significant part of Grove Lane masterplan, with 800 much-needed new homes set to be built and the creation of a green neighbourhood.

The project is a collaboration between Sandwell and West Birmingham NHS Trust, Sandwell Council, Sandwell College, Aston University and the University of Wolverhampton, funded by the government's Towns Fund programme, West Midlands Combined Authority and the NHS Trust.

An early artist impression of the learning campus



Funded by
 UK Government

These projects have been supported
 by government funding.

Healthy Sandwell

The Healthy Sandwell team is here to help you improve your health and wellbeing.

Whether you want to quit smoking, manage your weight, get more active, improve your mental health or reduce alcohol, our friendly advisers are ready to guide you.

Getting in touch is easy. Call **0800 011 4656** or **0121 569 5100**, email LS@nhs.net or text **GETHEALTHY** to **87007**.

Follow us on Facebook @HealthySandwell and visit www.healthysandwell.co.uk for more advice.

HEALTHY SANDWELL
www.healthysandwell.co.uk

Top tips to protect your health

Keep up to date with vaccinations

Check which vaccinations you and your family are eligible for at www.nhs.uk/vaccinations to give protection from different illnesses.

Pop-up, walk-in flu vaccine clinics are available for eligible adults – search 'Flu pop-up' at www.blackcountry.icb.nhs.uk

Know when to go to A&E

Keep A&E for life-threatening emergencies like chest pain, severe bleeding or difficulty breathing.

Search 'NHS when to go to A&E' online for advice.

For other urgent care, consult **NHS 111** online, call **111** or pop to your local pharmacy.

Stock up your medicine cupboard

A well-stocked medicine cabinet can save you time and worry during minor illnesses.

Your local pharmacy can advise what to keep at home or visit www.blackcountry.icb.nhs.uk for tips.

Handwashing – your superpower!

Handwashing is a simple but powerful way to protect yourself and others from cold, flu, stomach bugs and more.

Always use soap and water – scrub your hands for at least 20 seconds. Check the step-by-step guide at www.nhs.uk/handwashing

Pregnant? Start new habits today

Pregnancy can be a time of great excitement and an opportunity to refocus on what's important.

We're by your side on your journey to a happier and healthier life for you and your baby.

The Sandwell Healthy Pregnancy Service provides free and confidential support to improve health during pregnancy and for life.

With help to stop smoking, access to nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) and one-to-one care, our fully trained, friendly practitioners also give advice on healthy eating, nutrition and exercise, as well as access to healthy start vitamins and more.

The service works alongside community midwives within antenatal clinics, at local Family Hubs and other community venues.

Visit www.sandwellfamilyhubs.com to find out how the service can help.

Ready to quit smoking?

There's no safe amount when it comes to smoking during pregnancy. Make the change today – for you and your baby.

We know it's not easy to stop smoking, but you are far more likely to succeed with support. Our Sandwell Healthy Pregnancy practitioners are here to help, not judge.

Give us call on **0800 011 4656** or **0121 569 5100** to start your journey. You can also ask your midwife to refer you to our completely free service.



Crackdown on illicit tobacco and illegal vapes

Our Trading Standards officers, supported by Public Health funding, and Sandwell Police, are tackling illicit tobacco and illegal vapes.

Since April 2024, they have visited 46 shops and seized 527,920 illicit cigarettes, 350kg of tobacco and 26,676 illegal over-capacity vapes.

These products had a retail value of £650,362 and a duty evaded value of £375,167. With the help of specialist search dogs, the team detected items hidden in some unusual places.

Criminal investigations are ongoing, which may lead to prosecutions and closure orders for offending businesses. The financial gains from these activities often fund organised crime, money laundering and human trafficking.

Cheap, illicit tobacco is a direct threat to honest shopkeepers, who can't compete with the lower prices offered by illicit sellers, and undermines efforts to help people quit smoking.

Illegal vapes haven't gone through safety tests and pose severe risks including dispensing too much nicotine, banned substances or encouraging over consumption.

Smoking remains the leading cause of preventable illness and premature death in the UK, with long-term use responsible for killing one in two smokers.

Our specialist Stop Smoking Service is available completely free to anyone who lives or works in Sandwell or is registered with a Sandwell GP. We offer a 12-week support programme tailored to you as an individual and, if you quit smoking for 28 days, you are five times more likely to quit for good!

For more information on how to give up smoking, call Healthy Sandwell on **0800 011 4656**.



Dad's life saved at bingo lung health check

A dad-of-one who received an NHS lung health check is encouraging others to attend their appointment – after a scan detected a deadly aneurysm in his stomach.

Paul Nightingale, 62, from Wednesbury, was invited to attend a Lung Cancer Screening Check (formerly known as a Targeted Lung Health Check) at a specialist scanning van based in the Mecca Bingo car park in Oldbury.

The checks detect early-stage signs of cancer, but the scan led to clinicians from Sandwell and West Birmingham NHS Trust finding a nine-centimetre abdominal aortic aneurysm instead.

Paul, an ex-smoker, was admitted to Heartlands Hospital in Birmingham, where he underwent life-saving abdominal aortic aneurysm open-repair surgery.

Paul said: "Sandwell's Lung Cancer Screening programme saved my life, and it could save yours too."

If you are aged 55 to 74, are registered with a Sandwell GP and are a current or former smoker, you are eligible for a lung health check.

Call **0121 817 5449** to book your appointment or search for 'Lung Cancer Screening' at www.swbh.nhs.uk for more information.



Midland Met celebrates first babies

Hernata and identical triplets Luna, Theia and Nephela were among the first babies born at the new Midland Metropolitan University Hospital in November.

These were the first hospital births in Sandwell since 2018, with the maternity service moving over from City Hospital in Birmingham to Midland Met in Smethwick.



Drugs – help and support is available



New data shows that Sandwell has one of the lowest rates of drug-related deaths in the country.

These low figures have been attributed to new ways of working and a whole-borough approach to provide help and support to people who use drugs.

Nationally, drug-related deaths are increasing, driven by a changing drugs market with stronger, contaminated supply.

Sandwell is bucking this trend with drug-related deaths falling. However, work continues to bring overdoses and drug-related deaths down as any death caused by drugs is one too many.

Data published by the Office for National Statistics shows Sandwell's drug-related death rate now stands at 1.6 per 100,000 population – significantly lower than regional (6.3) and national (5.5) rates.

Sandwell's success is grounded in proactive, community-based programmes. This includes a new approach to outreach, which has led to more community engagement work and having a nurse out on the streets meeting people who use drugs and supporting them to access healthcare and treatment.

There is also an effective peer-to-peer naloxone distribution programme, which provides people with the skills and equipment to reverse an opioid overdose.

If you, or anyone you know, need support for drugs or alcohol, contact Cranstoun Sandwell on **0121 553 1333** or email sandwellreferrals@cranstoun.org.uk

For drug and alcohol support for anyone aged under 18, visit www.ourguideto.co.uk Email Decca_Team@sandwellchildrenstrust.org or call the Decca Team on **07500 785 889**.



YOU OK MATE? FEELING STRESSED OR ANXIOUS?

Remember, it's ok to talk.
Reach out to the services below:

NHS **NHS 111**
Option 2
Mental Health Crisis Line

24 / 7 Black Country Urgent Mental Health Helpline
Rethink Mental Illness.
Call 0800 008 6516
or text 07860 025 281

Tough Enough to Care
Text 'TOUGH' to 85258 or scan the QR code for more

Albion Foundation Team Talk
Call 08712719840
or scan the QR code for more

CRANSTOUN **Cranstoun Alcohol & Drug Services**
Call 0121 553 1333
or scan the QR code for more

Sikh Helpline **Sikh Helpline**
03000 3000 63 or 07999 0043 63

There is strength in seeking help.
Let's build better mental health for men in Sandwell.



Are you 16+ years and experiencing barriers to employment due to health conditions or disabilities?

WorkWell is here to help you!

Scan the QR code using the camera on your mobile device to submit a referral online now!



WorkWell is a new initiative designed to provide early support to thousands of people across the Black Country with health conditions or disabilities, helping them overcome barriers to find or keep employment and improve their wellbeing.
For more information visit www.blackcountryhealthcare.nhs.uk/workwell

Sandwell Police update

Chief Superintendent Kim Madill, Sandwell Police Commander, gives an update on work to support young people.



“ Spring is almost here and it’s a time to look forward with hope.

As chair for the Safer Sandwell Partnership and lead for policing across the borough, I want you to be hopeful about the futures of the young people in your life.

Over the past few months, you’ll have seen updates about serious violence, where young people are the offender or victim. In every one of those cases, lives have been changed forever.

All partners are increasing their work to keep young people safe. You’ll read more about this in this edition of the Sandwell Herald and if you sign up to www.wmnow.co.uk, you’ll receive updates from local officers about their work in your area.

One of the hidden aspects of policing are the officers we have working with Sandwell Council and Sandwell Children’s Trust. Together they work with young people who are at risk of mixing with the wrong people and becoming involved in crime.

Our officers meet with young people, parents, carers, social workers, teachers and others, using a blend of education and enforcement. This means taking tough legal action when necessary. But it’s also about taking every opportunity to educate people about the consequences of their behaviours and ensuring that young people and their families are offered the right support at the right time from partner organisations so that problems and difficulties do not escalate.

Call us on **101** now if you’re worried about a young person in your life, or you can contact the Sandwell safeguarding team on **0121 569 3100** or the NSPCC helpline **0808 800 5000**. Always call **999** in an emergency.

You can sign up to free WMnow email messages at www.WMnow.co.uk

Community effort brings new football facilities

A new 3G football pitch will provide a much-needed boost to students and grassroots teams in Sandwell.

The £700,000 pitch at Ormiston Sandwell Community Academy in Tividale will be used by pupils and the community, and will be available for local teams to hire from this April.

The project was supported by dedicated pupils from the school who took part in a 16-mile sponsored walk and litter pick last June, as part of the My Tomorrow campaign, which aims to celebrate young people’s contributions to their communities.

School head Peter McKinniss said the students’ efforts were part of the school’s grant application to the Football Foundation, which awarded the project £497,000, with the Academies Trust investing the remaining amount.

Peter added: “This would never have been possible without the drive and commitment of our students who raised awareness of the project and presented the funding bid.

“We are really excited for the opening ceremony we are currently planning. It promises to be a huge celebration of what is going to be an amazing facility for Sandwell. This has really brought the community together.”

To make enquiries about hiring the pitch, you can message **Ormiston Sandwell Community Academy at bookings.edu-lettings.org**

Keep up to date with plans for the grand opening check at Ormiston Sandwell Community Academy’s Facebook page.



Tackling underage knife sales

Most people do not carry knives; most young people do not carry knives. But we need anyone who does, or is tempted to carry a knife, to turn their back on a choice that could cost their or another person’s life.

As part of the Knife Angel initiative and Operation Sceptre, Sandwell Council and West Midlands Police conducted undercover test purchasing operations.

Alarming results revealed nine out of 10 shops didn’t ask the 15-year-old volunteers for identification, allowing illegal sales of kitchen knives, Stanley knives and other bladed items.

These retailers were formally warned and are subject to follow-up test purchases. Further breaches could result in criminal prosecution and substantial fines.

Selling knives to underage people is illegal and irresponsible. Sandwell will continue operations to hold offending businesses accountable. This work is crucial to safeguard young people and our wider community from the dangers of knife crime.

Legacy of the Knife Angel

This operation happened at the same time as the Knife Angel was brought to Oldbury Civic Square. This powerful symbol of the impact of knife crime stands 27-feet tall and is comprised of 100,000 blunted knives received from police forces across the UK.

The sculpture attracted over 10,000 visitors during its stay in Sandwell in the autumn. This figure included 400 young people at facilitated sessions conducted by Ambitious Lives and West Midlands Violence Reduction Partnership (VRP) and 17 classroom visits reaching over 1,000 children and young people.

Activities helped to start conversations around preventing knife crime and violence among those under 25.

In December, a 20% drop in serious youth violence in Sandwell was reported compared to the same time the previous year. These results reflect the work of partner organisations and our communities, but we are determined to do more.

Mentoring schemes, workshops and sporting activities have helped young people as well as support from schools and the council’s young people’s services.

Meanwhile, Sandwell Police continue to carry out extra patrols in high-risk areas, give advice to young people and use mobile metal detectors at tram and bus stops.

You must tell the police if you suspect someone is carrying a knife. You can share what you know at www.westmidlands.police.uk or by calling **101**. In an emergency call **999**.

If you do not want to speak to the police, call Crimestoppers on **0800 555 111**.

Together, we can prevent the devastating consequences of knife crime.



Congratulations to Lucy Anne Dale who won our Knife Angel Photography Competition.



Bleed kits rolled out across Sandwell

We’re also distributing life-saving bleed control kits across Sandwell and training business and community leaders how to use the equipment designed to help casualties in the vital minutes before paramedics arrive.

The kits, from the Daniel Baird Foundation, are filled with first aid equipment specifically designed to stop major blood loss.

The West Midlands Violence Reduction Partnership has distributed 42 bleed control kits across Sandwell. Many schools, colleges and business also have their own kits.



Anti-violence campaign helping to ‘normalise’ taboo subjects

A campaign in schools, which encourages young people to talk openly about consent, knife crime, bullying and gender stereotypes, is helping to ‘normalise’ previously taboo conversations, students have said.

The lessons in the Change Makers Programme have been co-designed by young people to ensure the topics discussed are relevant to their lives.

A number of staff at Sandwell schools and colleges have received the training as the programme continues to be rolled out across the West Midlands.

It has been funded by the West Midlands Violence Reduction Partnership (VRP), which is working directly with schools to empower youth voice as part of the My Tomorrow campaign.

Visit www.westmidlands-vrp.org/mytomorrow for more information.



New Safe Spaces launched

We've launched new Safe Spaces in Wednesbury town centre and Great Bridge, Tipton – thanks to all the businesses and organisations supporting us.

This initiative, which has already been running in West Bromwich town centre and Bearwood in Smethwick, provides a safe indoor location for people who may feel vulnerable, distressed or worried while out and about.

Safe Spaces include shops, libraries and other buildings. There, you can call and wait for a family member or friend to collect you or for the police to arrive.

Thanks to Morrisons and Asda for hosting the launches in Wednesbury (pictured above) and Great Bridge.

Go to www.sandwell.gov.uk/safespaces to find Safe Spaces using our interactive map.



Sandwell leads the way in tackling Blue Badge fraud

Blue Badge fraud affects the most vulnerable people with disabilities or mobility issues.

It can result in disabled people being unable to find suitable parking, leading to missed appointments, an unwillingness to go out and, ultimately, isolation from our community.

That's why we are cracking down on Blue Badge fraud in Sandwell.

Sandwell Council and APCOA Parking Enforcement were named as winners of the ALARM (Association of Local Authority Risk Management) Partnership Award for our scheme targeting Blue Badge misuse.

Since the initiative started, there have been 22 successful prosecutions, a further 22 warning letters and an invalid Blue Badge application cancelled.

A Blue Badge can only be used when the badge holder is present. It is a criminal offence for anyone to misuse a Blue Badge and doing so could lead to a £1,000 fine and confiscation of the badge.

Email fraud_investigation@sandwell.gov.uk to report suspected Blue Badge fraud in Sandwell.

If you or someone you know may be eligible for a Blue Badge you can apply online at www.gov.uk/apply-blue-badge or call our Sandwell Enquiry Team on **0121 569 2266** (9am-5.30pm Mondays to Thursdays, 9am-5pm Fridays) and we will complete an assessment over the phone.

Go to www.sandwell.gov.uk/BlueBadge for more information.



Board games group helps connect people

Sandwell Police officers have shared some of their favourite games with a group that is connecting people and transforming local lives.

PCSOs Laura Holmes and Natalie Furlonger heard the Board Games Drop-in Group at Central Library in West Bromwich needed new games and jigsaws. They asked colleagues if they had any gathering dust at home they could donate.

The group, set up by Sandwell Libraries volunteers, has created a free, fun activity to bring people together, meet new friends and build new skills and confidence.

This also provides somewhere safe for disabled people and people with learning differences to connect.

The group meets on the second Monday of every month, 5pm to 6.30pm.

Everyone is welcome, free hot drinks are available.

Email library_service@sandwell.gov.uk or call **0121 569 4900** for more details, or if you could help us roll out similar groups in other libraries.



The importance of reporting crime and anti-social behaviour

Do you ever hesitate to report crime or anti-social behaviour (ASB), worrying it might not make a difference? You're not alone – but your voice is vital in making Sandwell a safer place.

Many residents fear that reporting won't lead to immediate action. While this can sometimes be the case, every report contributes to building a bigger picture.

By reporting incidents, you're helping to identify trends, pinpoint hotspots and shape the way local services respond. Your report adds to the evidence needed for lasting change.

Another common misconception is assuming that someone else has already reported the issue. The reality is, quite often, no one does. Don't leave it to chance – your report could be the one that makes the difference.

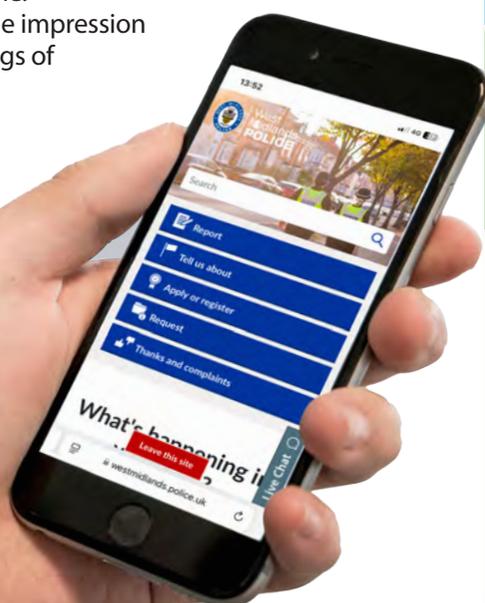
Reporting is also key to addressing the fear of crime.

When incidents go unreported, they can create the impression that nothing is being done, which increases feelings of insecurity in our community.

We understand that reporting can feel daunting, but help is always available.



Safer Sandwell Partnership
Local Police and Crime Board



Here's how you can report concerns:

Police

In an emergency, call **999** immediately

To log an incident, call **101**

Report concerns online at www.westmidlands.police.uk

Report anonymously via Crimestoppers on **0800 555 111**

Sandwell Council Anti-Social Behaviour Team

Call **0121 368 1166** (option 4)

Report ASB concerns/issues through your MySandwell account

Go to www.sandwell.gov.uk/asb for advice on reporting.

Children's Social Care

If you're concerned about a child or young person but believe they're not at immediate risk:

Contact Sandwell Children's Safeguarding on **0121 569 3100** (available outside normal office hours)

Call West Midlands Police on **101**

Contact the NSPCC helpline free on **0808 800 5000**

If you work or volunteer for an organisation, discuss your concerns with your manager or designated professional.

Together, we can make a difference. Let's work towards a safer Sandwell, one report at a time.

Road safety remains a top priority

Over the past 20 years, Sandwell has halved the number of casualties on its roads, including reducing child casualties by 67 per cent.

This big reduction follows a targeted programme of engineering and education measures, and supporting police enforcement action, work which will continue to keep improving safety.

Councillor Keith Allcock, Cabinet Member for Environment and Highways, said: "Road safety remains a top priority for the council and our partner organisations, to build on the significant casualty reductions we have seen.

"We've made good progress over the past 20 years but I'm acutely aware there's more to do, and my heart goes out to anyone who has been seriously injured or lost a loved one on Sandwell's roads.

"My message to all drivers is to always take care, drive safely and think of the potential devastating consequences of their actions if they don't."

Every highway authority in England and Wales has a statutory duty to promote road safety.

Key work in Sandwell includes:

- Spending £1.3million per year on road improvements and education, training and campaigns, using data to decide what will have the biggest impact on road safety
- Holding workshops in Sandwell's schools, with specially trained officers helping children develop road safety skills from an early age
- Working with the police and fire service to raise awareness, support police enforcement action and promote changes to behaviour

In 2024, Sandwell was the only West Midlands council to successfully apply for and receive an extra £750,000 grant from the Department for Transport's Safer Roads Fund to help reduce casualties on the A4030 in Smethwick.

Look out soon for a new digital road safety app we're developing to help primary age children develop lifelong skills. Believed to be the first app of its kind in the UK, it will be available for all Sandwell residents to try out!

Go to www.sandwell.gov.uk/roadsafety for details of our road safety schemes and to read our Strategic Road Safety Plan 2024-2030.



Off-road vehicles face the crusher!

Police and council teams have warned that motorbikes and other off-road vehicles could end up being seized and crushed if they are used illegally.

Bikes are being seized and CCTV footage used to identify hotspots and track down people who are riding illegally, dangerously and putting themselves and others at risk.

Read the law on using off-road vehicles on a public highway at www.sandwell.gov.uk/motorbikenuisance – here, you can also report incidents to the council.

Or you can report incidents to the police by calling 101, via LiveChat at www.westmidlands.police.uk or anonymously to Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111 or at www.crimestoppers-uk.org

Off-road riders must have the permission of the landowner to ride legally.

Help us put a stop to dangerous driving

If you see anyone committing driving offences and it's captured on your dashcam, CCTV or a mobile phone by a passenger or a pedestrian, you can now send it to the police.

Sandwell Council is supporting the West Midlands Police road safety initiative Operation Snap (Op Snap).

To find out more and to submit footage, go to www.westmidlands.police.uk and search for 'Operation Snap'.

Offences might include dangerous or careless driving, using a mobile phone while driving and close passing.

Every piece of footage sent to Op Snap is reviewed by specially-trained staff. If an offence is identified, the driver can be prosecuted or told to take a driver improvement course.

For West Midlands Police to investigate, any footage of incidents from the public must be submitted within 10 days of the alleged offence, include the whole incident and should not be any longer than 10 minutes.

You also need to provide the date, time and location of the incident, the registration, make and colour of the vehicle and details of what happened and how you were involved by completing a statement and upload that with your footage.

For anyone not online, please report driving offences by calling the police on 101, or 999 in an emergency.



Action on street racing

Street racing puts people's lives at risk and can have tragic consequences.

We continue to work closely with Sandwell Police and other councils to tackle dangerous and anti-social street racing.

A High Court injunction order bans street racing in the Black Country, including Sandwell, and applies to drivers, riders, passengers, organisers and spectators.

We have taken nine people to court for breaching the order by racing on Sandwell's streets, including seven on Kenrick Way, West Bromwich. All nine received suspended prison sentences.

Anyone found breaching the order faces arrest and court action as well as civil penalties. Street racing invalidates a vehicle's insurance policy and police can seize and crush vehicles.

One man was jailed for 13 years in November 2024 for the criminal offences of causing death by dangerous driving and causing serious injury by dangerous driving after two teenagers were tragically killed at a street race in Oldbury in 2022.

Report street racing incidents to police on 101 or online at www.sandwell.gov.uk/ash – always call 999 in an emergency.

Go to www.sandwell.gov.uk/streetracing for the latest information.

Stronger businesses, thriving communities

Sandwell Council is passionate about supporting your business to grow in a way that ensures people and communities benefit too. That's what Sandwell Business Growth is all about.

When Sandwell businesses thrive, they create jobs, raise aspirations, boost skills and generate wealth for our local economy. You're Sandwell's lifeblood – and so our Sandwell Business Growth Team is here to champion your business at every stage.

The Sandwell Business Growth website is packed with resources to help you achieve your ambitions. When your business wins, everyone wins.

Thanks to a pro-business council, a skilled workforce and excellent transport links, Sandwell is an ideal place to do business.

The next Sandwell Business Support Roadshow takes place on Wednesday 5 March at West Bromwich Albion Football Club.

Log on at www.sandwellbusinessgrowth.com check if roadshow tickets are still available and to find out more about how the team can support you and your business.



 **Sandwell Business Growth**

New indoor market in West Bromwich

Work has started on the new indoor market in West Bromwich, marking a significant milestone in the town's ongoing regeneration.

The market will create a centralised hub on the High Street next to the outdoor market. This site will replace the existing indoor market in Kings Square.

The new market will blend classic market stalls with modern amenities, including a street food court. This design will create a lively atmosphere that caters to a wide range of tastes.

Existing traders will have the opportunity to apply for stalls in the new location, ensuring continuity for long-standing businesses.

Both small and large stalls will be available, accommodating a variety of business needs when it opens this summer. Government Towns Fund funding has supported the project.

Go to www.sandwell.gov.uk/markets for more information on where and when Sandwell's markets are trading and how to hire a stall. Or, if you're not online, call 0121 553 3074.



Tackling inequalities for care experienced people

People who have experience of being in the care system will now be recognised as a group to be protected from discrimination following a vote by Sandwell Council cabinet members.

Currently, councils are required to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation of people under the nine protected characteristics, but there is no requirement legally to include experience of care.

Now, Sandwell Council will work with its partners to treat care experience as a protected characteristic and seek out and listen to the voices of care experienced people when developing new policies, to ensure their rights are upheld.

Care experienced people may face a range of barriers including being more likely to be homeless, experience mental health issues and be drawn into the criminal justice system.

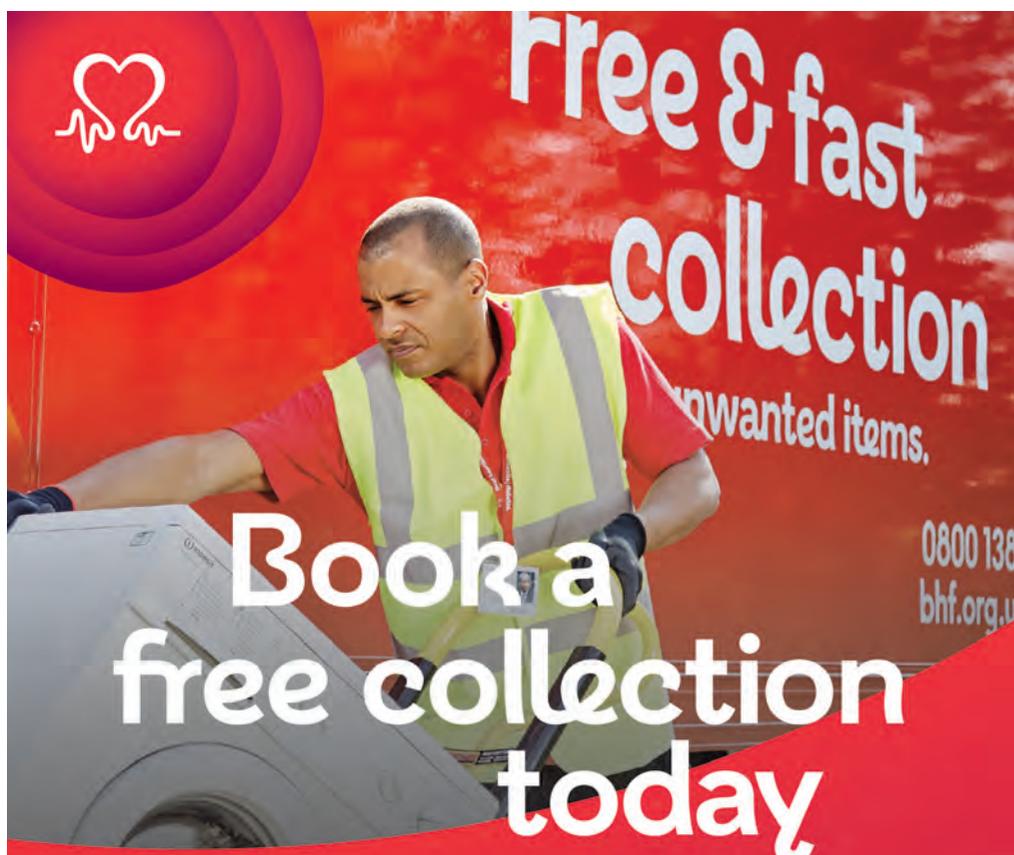
Lukas Butler, a member of the Forum for Independent Young Adults, said: "This recognition will make a big difference as we navigate our communities and access services. We don't want special treatment, just to be treated equally, with support and understanding.

"It's important for people to be aware of what it means to be a care experienced person, and for there to be more training around it. This will help ensure we're treated with the respect and consideration we deserve."

The council offers support for care experienced people to get into employment by matching them with apprenticeship vacancies, as well as sourcing work experience and taster days to help prepare for employment.

We welcome local employers who can provide opportunities for care experienced people looking to start their career, with full support available from our advisers throughout the journey.

For further information, please email enquiries_recruitment@sandwell.gov.uk

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bhf.org.uk/collection

Sandwell's Oak House now on par with Buckingham Palace!

Oak House Museum in West Bromwich has been listed as a Grade I building.

This puts the Sandwell museum on the same par as the Houses of Parliament and Buckingham Palace.

Oak House is a busy heritage attraction of special architectural and historical importance that offers experiences to explore, learn and discover for people of all ages.

With its beautiful timber frame, Oak House dates from the 1620s and is among England's best examples of houses of this size and type, joining the likes of Bromwich Hall (Manor House) and Galton Bridge to become the third Grade I listed structure in Sandwell.

The upgrade to Grade I listed status was granted by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) on the advice of Historic England. Both Sandwell Council and Historic England have invested in repairs to the building.

Go to www.visitsandwell.com/sandwell-museums to find out more about all goings on at Oak House and all of Sandwell's museums. There's so much to discover!



West Bromwich Town Hall and Central Library shine again

West Bromwich is celebrating the successful completion of a significant restoration and renovation project at two of its most iconic Grade II listed buildings – West Bromwich Town Hall and Central Library.

The works, funded by the government's Towns Fund programme and Sandwell Council, have been meticulously executed. They have preserved the historical essence while making sure the structures are fit for future generations.

The project has also delivered incredible social value to the community, led by the contractor responsible for the works.

Morgan Sindall Construction achieved a remarkable local spend, with 41% of funds spent within a 20-mile radius and 135 local people contributing to the project's success, including 34 Sandwell residents.

This was supported by 18 work experience students, a graduate site manager, and seven new apprentices specialising in scaffolding, construction, joinery and electrical work.

The project also involved Sandwell College and Birmingham City University, offering 84 hours of educational engagement activities.



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Work starting on Blackheath Bus Interchange project

Work is officially starting on the Blackheath Bus Interchange Project, marking a major milestone in the regeneration of Blackheath in Rowley Regis.

This will create a new bus interchange around Market Place serving all town centre services along with a new landscaped public space. The project will maintain through traffic through the town centre, in line with people's feedback from previous consultation.

Additional upgrades will include five new pedestrian crossings and ensure loading spaces are closer to businesses, supporting local trade.

McPhillips, the main contractor for the project, will oversee the works with monthly updates shared with businesses and traders to keep the community informed throughout.

Visit www.regeneratingsandwell.co.uk for more information about the project.



The new interchange and road layout will mean buses and other vehicles will no longer have to compete for the same road space in parts of the town centre, so improving traffic flows. Also, buses will be able to dock properly at stops, offering safe, level access for people with mobility issues or with pushchairs.



Funded by
UK Government

These projects have been supported by government funding.

Work continues on £20.4m Wednesbury Levelling Up Partnership

Last year, partnership achievements included:

- Helping to keep Wednesbury safe by installing 26 CCTV cameras, eight deployable cameras and new nuisance off-road motorbike measures in six locations.
- Agreeing a Masterplan for Wednesbury town centre which forms a vision for the town
- Completing work in two green spaces with new planting and new paths
- Starting public realm work in Wednesbury town centre with new paving, lighting, furniture and planting.

Plans for this year include:

- Completing work at Balls Hill Open Space to install new play equipment and upgrade paths
- Finalising plans for Hydes Road Pavilion
- Starting and completing Friar Park Millennium Centre improvements
- Completing public realm work in Wednesbury town centre.

Councillor Peter Hughes, Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Infrastructure, said: "A significant amount of the Wednesbury Levelling Up Partnership programme has been delivered. This includes our community safety project, several green spaces projects and most of the public realm and urban greening work. We have also launched a new Masterplan for Wednesbury town centre."

Meanwhile, work to clean up land ready for the proposed Friar Park Urban Village is expected to start in late 2025.

West Midlands Combined Authority and Sandwell Council jointly own the land – the largest brownfield site in the West Midlands – and are working together to see the site developed with new homes and public open space. The land remediation phase will be funded through the Levelling Up Partnership.



New homes in Oldbury

The Junction housing development in Oldbury, developed by Lovell, is set to deliver 246 new homes including 80 apartments across three blocks.

Of these, 114 are affordable housing, demonstrating the project's commitment to providing homes for all.

The construction of 221 new homes is complete. The remaining units are under construction and 103 open market properties are legally completed.

Beyond construction, Lovell has made a positive social impact in the local community. The project has supported 10 work experience students, welcomed four new apprentices and provided opportunities for 13 existing apprentices to further their skills.

Lovell has also created six local jobs and made charitable donations totalling £1,052 to local causes, reinforcing its commitment to delivering not only homes but also lasting social value.



Making homes warmer and cheaper to run

More than 600 council homes in Sandwell are being upgraded to improve living standards and tackle fuel poverty.

The homes on the Friar Park and Woods estates in Wednesbury, along with homes in parts of Oldbury and Smethwick, were built between the 1920s and 1970s. They are being fitted with new doors and windows, solar panels, better insulation and greener, smarter heating systems.

Sandwell Council is making the upgrades with government funding secured by West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA).

West Midlands Mayor Richard Parker visited Friar Park, where he met resident Holly Farmer.

Holly said: "In the winter with young children it can be a struggle to keep the gas and electricity bill down. Having solar panels and better insulation is a brilliant opportunity to be able save some money."

Sasha Beckford's home is also being upgraded. Mum Sasha said: "I'm excited at the prospect of cheaper bills. That's going to make a big difference to our family budget."

By bringing homes up to modern energy efficiency standards, cutting their fuel usage, this will help residents with the cost of living while also reducing carbon emissions.

During the visit, the Mayor announced the launch of WMCA's £167million energy efficiency fund – an investment which will see a further 10,000 of the oldest and coldest social and privately-owned homes across the West Midlands improved to make them warmer and cheaper to run.

The fund will also help schools, colleges and public sector organisations make their buildings cheaper to heat and power and create jobs for local people in supply chains.

Visit www.sandwell.gov.uk/energy for energy-saving tips and call Act on Energy free on **0800 988 2881** for impartial energy advice.

Sandwell Bereavement Services – here to help

Sandwell Council now offers an affordable funeral service, which can help take away some of the stress during a very sad and difficult time.

The Sandwell Funeral Service costs £1,999 and includes:

- Your loved one being taken into the care of our funeral partners, Trinity Funerals
- Provision of a coffin
- A funeral service at Sandwell Valley or Rowley Regis Crematoria, as preferred
- Cremation fees
- A minister to conduct the service
- Music for entry, exit and during the service as selected via Obitus Music

What our service users say:

“You all went the extra mile. It is much appreciated.”

“...was really happy with how the service was provided and conducted.”

Sandwell Valley Crematorium features an onsite licensed reception suite for up to 80 guests for funeral wakes. A variety of menus are available, with food freshly prepared on site.

Free car parking and Wi-Fi are also provided.

Our staff also provide advice, guidance, administration and sales information on a wide range of cemetery and cremation memorials.

Call **0121 569 6700** or email bereavement_services@sandwell.gov.uk for more information on the Sandwell Funeral Service or to discuss burial / cremation options.

Visit www.sandwell.gov/bereavement for information and costs on all bereavement services.



Here to help 24/7 with MySandwell

You can request council services and report problems to the council 24/7 with MySandwell.

You can go online for all sorts of council services – to pay your rent or Council Tax, apply for benefits, report anti-social behaviour, apply to join the housing register, report a housing repair, book an appointment at the tip, ask about school places and much more. Go to www.sandwell.gov.uk

The MySandwell 'MyAccounts' area is available for anyone with a MySandwell account, where you can register to view your balances and manage payment accounts for a range of Sandwell Council services.

Going online can save you time and money on phone calls or travel costs. It's easy to create an account – go to www.sandwell.gov.uk/mysandwell

You can also pay bills online at www.sandwell.gov.uk/paybills or by phone, by credit or debit card on **0300 456 0514**.

If you're not online, you can still phone us for help:

- Adult social care or urgent help for someone vulnerable: **0121 569 2266**
- Births, marriages, deaths and Register Office: **0121 368 1188**
- Children's services or to report a child at risk: **0121 569 3100**
- Council Tax and benefits: **0121 368 1155**
- Education benefits: **0121 569 8186/8189**
- Housing enquiries (including homelessness/rough sleepers): **0121 368 1166**
- Housing repairs: **0121 569 6000**
- Highways, bins, recycling and other environmental services: **0121 368 1177**
- Pay bills (by debit or credit card): **0300 456 0514**
- Welfare Rights Team: **0121 569 3158**



One of the words in the list below cannot be found in the wordsearch.

- LAMB
- PARKS
- RAIN
- SUSTAINABLE
- HOLIDAY
- REGENERATION
- SHAPE
- DAFFODILS
- SWIMMING
- EGGS
- GARDENING

Win a cream tea for two at Sandwell Valley Visitor Centre Tea Rooms, plus a family ticket for Forge Mill Farm (2 adults and 3 children) and a free bag of food for each person to give to the animals.

A	A	F	N	S	T	H	R	R	S	W	A	E	I
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Courtesy of <https://thewordsearch.com>

Send us this word along with your name, contact number and address including postcode to: **The Editor, Sandwell Herald, Communications Unit, Sandwell Council, Oldbury, B69 3DE**, or you can email the word along with your details to: herald_competition@sandwell.gov.uk by Friday 2 May 2025.

First correct entry out of the hat wins the prize. One entry per person. Entrants must live or work in Sandwell.

MISSING WORD

NAME

ADDRESS

.....POSTCODE.....

PHONE NUMBER.....

Congratulations to our Sandwell Herald Winter 2024 winner: Maria Toorish from West Bromwich

YOUR SANDWELL COUNCILLORS

YOUR OLDBURY COUNCILLORS

Bristnall			Langley			Old Warley			Oldbury		
Amolak Singh Dhariwal 07811 583 956	Thomas Johnston 07974 883 588	Ellen Fenton 07450 963 628	Bill Gavan MBE 07813 364 277	Jill Tromans 07974 883 521	Caroline Owen 07929 729 943	Harnoor Bhullar 07968 576 563	Chipiliro Kalebe-Nyamongo 07977 710 948	Luke Cotterill 07442 878 825	Nagi Daya Singh 07811 583 817	Suzanne Hartwell 07814 862 104	Rizwan Jalil Rizwan_Jalil@sandwell.gov.uk

YOUR ROWLEY REGIS COUNCILLORS

Blackheath			Cradley Heath and Old Hill			Rowley			Tividale		
Danny Millard 07825 706 133	Jag Singh 07812 682 584	Kerrie Carmichael 07852 699 513	Julie Webb 0121 559 9263	John Tipper 07501 066 202	Vicki Smith 07970 497 742	Claire Mayo 07480 744 438	Khayam Khan 07897 780 526	Sohail Iqbal 07442 878 404	Amrita Dunn 07555 127 349	Wakas Younis 07424 377 892	Maria Crompton 07810 850 960

YOUR SMETHWICK COUNCILLORS

Abbey			Smethwick			Soho and Victoria			St Paul's		
Bob Piper 07817 617 595	Jennifer Hemingway 07890 952 567	Nicky Hinchliff 07929 658 986	Ashley Lewis 07855 985 146	Luke Davies 07974 879 379	Parbinder Kaur 07956 149 668	Mohammed Jalal Uddin 07811 583 860	Ragih Mufihi 07974 883 550	Farut Shaeen 07967 591 228	Aqeela Choudhry 07855 985 100	Muhammad Loan 07424 965 084	Sukhbir Singh Gill 07929 729 532

YOUR TIPTON COUNCILLORS

Great Bridge			Princes End			Tipton Green		
Soyfur Rahman 07855 985 156	Sahdaish Kaur Pall BEM 07930 492 467	William Gill 07929 729 485	David Wilkes 07855 985 153	Justyna Kordala 07549 817 139	Archer Williams 07929 729 950	Abid Hussain 07811 583 951	Syeda Khatun MBE 07766 421 436	Richard Jeffcoat 07442 879 919

YOUR WEDNESBURY COUNCILLORS

Friar Park			Wednesbury North			Wednesbury South		
Simon Hackett 07813 989 422	Terry Fitzgerald 07977 532 070	Elizabeth Giles 07443 707 790	Luke Giles 07549 657 831	Nicola Maycock 07974 876 939	Peter Hughes 07896 914 849	Ian Chambers 07929 659 646	Kulwant Singh Uppal 07974 883 554	Jenny Chidley 07974 883 522

YOUR WEST BROMWICH COUNCILLORS

Charlemont with Grove Vale			Great Barr with Yew Tree			Greets Green and Lyng		
Les Trumpeter 07429 517 031	Natalie Weston 07827 444 769	Dalel Singh Bhamra 07443 551 022	Steve Melia 0121 502 5751	Michaela Allcock 07977 729 107	Connor Horton 07380 334 497	John Giles 07816 353 752	Jackie Taylor 07813 364 299	Pam Randhawa 07951 861 263
Hateley Heath			Newton			West Bromwich Central		
Paul Moore 07969 138 038	Kay Millar 07971 524 694	Amardeep Singh 07925 174 940	Keith Allcock 07970 202 313	Saj Ashraf 07465 724 276	Elaine Giles 07715 301 375	Liam Preece 07515 354 967	Tirath Singh Dhatt 07874 660 324	Farzana Haq 07449 541 778

Key to councillors' political parties

- Labour Party
- Conservative Party
- Independent

Your councillors ARE HERE TO HELP

Your local ward councillors are here to support you.

If you need to check which ward you live in, and search for your local councillors, go to www.sandwell.gov.uk/councillors

For more information on councillors, email members_services@sandwell.gov.uk



RECYCLE

MORE WITH SANDWELL

Recycle these items in your blue lid bin



Plastic bottles, pots, tubs & trays



Tins, cans & foil



Paper



Card



Glass bottles & jars

- ✓ Loose recycling
- ✓ Clean and dry
- ✓ All recycling inside bins
- ✓ Flatten card
- ✓ Crush plastic bottles

Recycling should be clean, dry and loose (not bagged)

www.sandwell.gov.uk/recycleguide

Pass on or donate

There are lots of ways to pass on unwanted items that are still in good condition which will prevent them being thrown away in the bin.



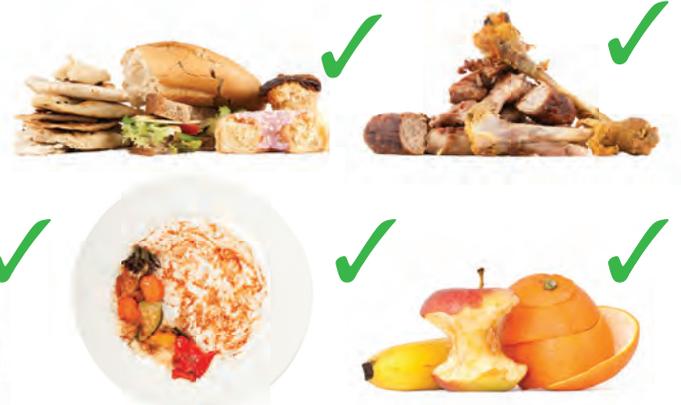
Bulky item collections



To book a bulky waste collection and find out what we can collect, go to www.sandwell.gov.uk/bulkywaste or scan the QR code.

Sign up to free weekly food waste collections

Food waste put in the brown bin is turned into fertiliser and energy which is better for the environment than going in your household waste bin. Sign up at www.sandwell.gov.uk/foodwaste or scan the QR code.



✗ No plastic bags ✗ No packaging ✗ No liquids

Recycle at the tip



To book a slot at the tip to recycle these items and more, go to www.sandwell.gov.uk/tip or scan the QR code.



Subscribe to garden waste collections

For details of how to subscribe and pay, go to www.sandwell.gov.uk/gardenwaste or scan the QR code.



If you do not want to pay to receive this service, you can take your garden waste to the tip in Oldbury.

www.sandwell.gov.uk/bins

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