

SANDWELL HERALD

SPRING 2024 – CELEBRATING 50 YEARS OF SANDWELL



@sandwellcouncil



Sandwell



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50 YEARS

1974 • 2024



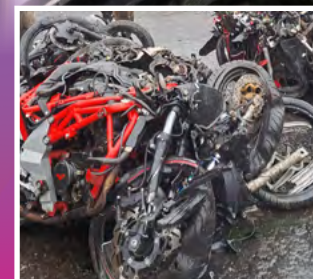
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Sign up to Sandwell Council
email updates
www.sandwell.gov.uk/emailupdates

50 YEARS
1974 • 2024

Sandwell
Metropolitan Borough Council

www.sandwell.gov.uk

50 YEARS
1974 • 2024

Sandwell at 50 Looking to the future with confidence

“ This year, we celebrate 50 years since the borough of Sandwell was formed in April 1974.

It will be a great opportunity to reflect on some of the big moments and achievements over those years, and to look forward to the future with confidence.

In Sandwell, we care about each other and it is our community that makes us proud to call this place our home.

We're down to earth and proud of our heritage as a powerhouse of the industrial revolution, and this history is still evident today in the unique and distinct character of our towns and neighbourhoods.

Sandwell is at the heart of the West Midlands and we have a young, diverse and rapidly growing population.

We already have an outstanding track record in securing funding for our borough and are determined to attract even more investment for the long term.

The Sandwell Aquatics Centre showed what we can do when we get the chance. We played host to visitors from all over the world during the Commonwealth Games and more than 15,000 people are visiting this state-of-the-art community leisure centre every week.

But the thing that really makes Sandwell bostin is our people.

It's not our way to shout about our achievements, but we look out for each other and get things done.

We know that we face some big challenges here. Too many of our residents have their health and life expectancy impacted by their social circumstances.

Child poverty is double the national average and some people's prospects – especially when it comes to health – might not always be as good as they can be. Times have been hard for many of us in recent years.

But we also know our community is amazing when we come together, and there is so much potential to unlock.

As we mark our 50th anniversary, the council is focused on being brilliant at the basics. That means getting things right for our residents – making our services easy to use and working for the people who need them.

But our ambition doesn't stop there. We want Sandwell to be a great place for children to grow up, create the good jobs and opportunities that will help everyone realise their potential, and for our residents to live longer in good health.

Together we can deliver a great future for Sandwell. ”

Kerrie

Councillor Kerrie Carmichael,
Leader of Sandwell Council



As Sandwell turns 50 – share your memories with us!



We would love to hear your stories and see your photographs and videos so we can celebrate Sandwell's 50th anniversary.

To help us to mark the occasion, share your favourite memories of Sandwell from 1974 up to the present, whether it be a story, video or photograph.

Your story could feature on our social media channels and our Celebrate Sandwell website.

Your memories will also help us showcase 50 years of Sandwell in the Sandwell Herald.

Send in your memories to celebrate_sandwell@sandwell.gov.uk

Go to www.celebratesandwell.com for more details of Sandwell's 50th and guidance on submitting stories, videos and photos.

All information will be processed in accordance with UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018.
www.sandwell.gov.uk/privacynotice

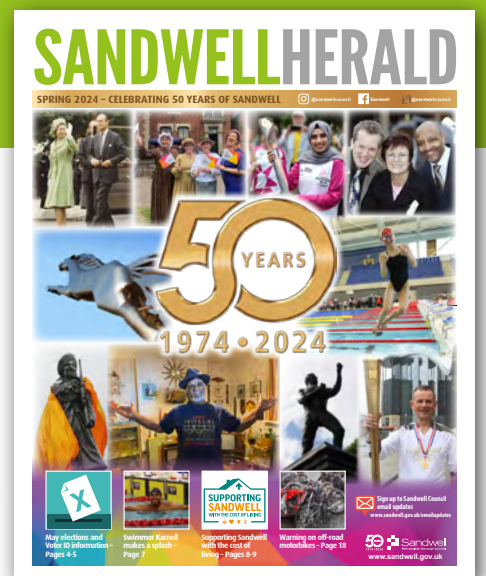
SANDWELL 50TH front page photos

Did the photos on the front of the Herald bring back some memories?

We're looking forward to celebrating lots more memories from the past 50 years throughout our 2024 editions.

Here's a guide to the front page photos, going clockwise from the top left.

- Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, visited Oak House in West Bromwich as part of Her Majesty's Silver Jubilee in 1977
- Sandwell Museums staff prepare to welcome the Birmingham 2022 Queen's Baton Relay at Haden Hill House, Cradley Heath
- Boxing coach Haseebah Abdullah, a batonbearer for the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games Queen's Baton Relay (Getty Images)
- Writer, comedian and presenter Frank Skinner MBE, stage and screen star Dame Julie Walters and Baggies legend Cyrille Regis MBE received the Freedom of Sandwell in 2004
- Gracie, a member of Sandwell Diving Club, at the new Sandwell Aquatics Centre – a host venue for swimming and diving at the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games
- West Bromwich marathon legend and Sandwell freeman Blind Dave Heeley OBE with the London 2012 Olympic Torch
- Bill Haynes' bronze statue celebrating boxer William Perry, the Tipton Slasher, was unveiled in Coronation Gardens, Tipton, in 1993
- Oldbury's Errol Ramsey created a sensory space in his house with a West Indian decor theme inspired by his Windrush Generation mother
- Lions of the Great War, sculpted by Luke Perry, was unveiled opposite Guru Nanak Gurdwara Smethwick in 2018 to mark 100 years since the end of the First World War
- Steve Field's sculpture of the mythical horse Sleipnir, commissioned by Altram, overlooks Wednesbury Great Western Street Metro stop which opened in 1999



Bostin Places: New bike trails at Sandwell Valley

New bike trails have opened at Sandwell Valley Country Park and the former Hill Top Golf Course in Birmingham.

They are part of the 2022 Commonwealth Games Legacy Project, which enhances the sports legacy for Sandwell, Birmingham and the wider Black Country.

The routes are designed for cyclists of all abilities, the green trail around Swan Pool offering a family-friendly route for beginners. For more experienced cyclists, there are also blue, red or black trails available.

These trails will help Sandwell's residents improve their physical and mental health, as well as their skills, helping them to become more confident cyclists.

They are mainly funded by Sport England's Places to Ride programme, with Sandwell Council and Birmingham City Council providing £100,000 each.

Go to www.visitsandwell.com/cycling for more details.



Left to right, Councillor Kerrie Carmichael (Sandwell Council Leader), Councillor Bill Gavan (Mayor of Sandwell) and Lisa Dodd-Mayne (Executive Director of Place at Sport England)

New animal welfare policy at Forge Mill Farm

Sandwell Council recently approved a new animal welfare policy to enable Forge Mill Farm to become a centre of excellence in animal welfare, food and farming education.

This policy will be used by Sandwell Council and Forge Mill Farm staff to deliver high standards of animal welfare. It provides for regular inspection, accreditation and certification from external organisations including a nominated vet practice.

The policy is written for all animals within the management control of Forge Mill Farm across Sandwell Valley Country Park, including Forge Mill Farm, Sandwell Valley Visitor Centre and any other location.

This includes a variety of rare breed animals including sheep, goats, cattle, pigs, alpacas, horses, ponies, donkeys, chickens, ducks and rabbits.

Forge Mill Farm was recently awarded the Whitegrove Trophy by the Staffordshire Country Agricultural Society. The trophy is awarded each year to the farm that shows the best conservation practice alongside a commercial operation within the Staffordshire and West Midlands region.



Spring at Sandwell Valley

This Easter, join us at Sandwell Valley Visitor Centre as we create unforgettable memories.

The Easter Bunny will be hosting in his rabbit house, alongside his springtime helpers, welcoming families and children with some small gifts.

We also have a fantastic Easter trail to navigate and lots of Easter craft activities to fill your visit.

While at Sandwell Valley, take a trip to our tearooms for Easter treats and special hot drinks to match the season. Don't forget the shop, where we are fully stocked with lovely Easter and springtime gifts, toys and locally-sourced products.

Last year's Easter event was incredible, so make sure you don't miss out this year!

Go to www.visitsandwell.com for more details of our Easter activities and to keep up to date with events and attractions this year across Sandwell.

Meanwhile, Forge Mill Farm is currently developing a new natural play barn, set to open this summer. The farm is renovating one of its barns to create a unique natural play space, an education classroom, an indoor seating area and a café.

We look forward to offering a place that is comfortably warm and dry during the winter, yet refreshingly cool in the summer.

For the latest updates and news, follow 'Sandwell Valley Country Park' on Facebook.



Discover Sandwell Museums this spring

Sandwell Museums fling open their doors again for general visitors from 30 March for the spring and summer season.

During 2024, for the borough's 50th anniversary year, Sandwell Museums will be celebrating Bostin People and Bostin Places with projects, activities and exhibitions showcasing Sandwell's past, present and future.

The new season will include a series of Easter and springtime events and activities, including school holiday fun for all ages to enjoy.

Our annual Fabulous 1940s day will be at Haden Hill House on Bank Holiday Monday 6 May, 12 noon-4pm. The Green Man celebration of spring follows at Oak House on Sunday 12 May, 11am-3pm.

Entrance to our museums is free but there will be a charge for some activities and some events.

Go to www.sandwell.gov.uk/joininmuseums for museum opening times and what's on, and find Sandwell Museums on social media @sandwellmuseums





VOTING WITH PHOTO ID

Here's what you need to know:



Don't forget - at the next elections on Thursday 2 May, you'll need to show photographic ID if you vote at a polling station.



ACCEPTED ID



- A passport
- A driving licence
- A Blue Badge
- A biometric immigration document
- A national identity card
- An identity card bearing the Proof of Age Standards Scheme hologram (a PASS card)
- An Older Person's Bus Pass
- A Freedom Pass
- A Disabled Person's Bus Pass
- An Oyster 60+ Card
- Ministry of Defence Form 90 (Defence Identity Card)
- And some other forms of photographic ID. Please check on our website.

ID OUT OF DATE?

Don't worry if your photographic identification document has expired.

It will still be accepted as long as the photograph is still a good likeness of you.



NO ID? DON'T WORRY!

If you don't have photographic ID, you can apply for a free Voter Authority Certificate.

You must apply for one by 5pm on Wednesday 24 April 2024 and take it with you to prove your identity when you vote at a polling station.

If you already have a Voter Authority Certificate, you can use that. You don't need to apply for a new one as long as the photo still looks like you.



DON'T FORGET! If you apply to get free photo ID to vote in a polling station, you must also be registered to vote.

If the name on your polling card is different to the name on your photo ID (for example, because you have changed your name through marriage or divorce) you may need to provide evidence of this at the polling station.

For more details about the types of photo ID you can use, and to apply for a free Voter Authority Certificate if you don't have photo ID, go to www.sandwell.gov.uk/voterID
For help in person, please visit Sandwell Council House in Oldbury.

ARE YOU
REGISTERED
TO VOTE?

IF NOT, YOU
CAN'T VOTE

Being registered to vote will help your credit rating and helps with things like getting a mobile phone contract.

Being registered for Council Tax doesn't automatically register you to vote. You only have to re-register to vote if you change your name or address.



VOTING IN 2024

In May, you will be voting in two elections – the local council election and the West Midlands Mayoral election.

Whether you vote by post or at a polling station, you will receive **two ballot papers**. The ballot paper for the council election will be peach (a pale orangey pink), and the ballot paper for the Mayoral election will be yellow.

At present the Police and Crime Commissioner elections are also scheduled to take place. However, an order was laid in Parliament on 7 February for the transfer of powers from the PCC to the Combined Authority Mayor. If this order is made then the PCC election will not take place.

A **General Election** will take place no later than 28 January 2025. If a General Election is called for Thursday 2 May 2024, you will also vote for an MP. The ballot paper for the General Election, if it takes place in May, will be white.

Do check your poll card if you are voting in person to see if your polling station has changed.

HOW TO REGISTER TO VOTE

It's quick and easy to do online.

Go to: www.gov.uk/register-to-vote

Fill in your nationality, name, address, date of birth and National Insurance number.



The deadline for registering to vote in the May elections is Tuesday 16 April 2024.

! HANDING IN POSTAL VOTES IN PERSON?

Changes to the law mean that if you are handing in postal votes at a polling station or at Sandwell Council House, you will have to fill in a form.

You will also **not be able to hand in more than five postal voting packs** from other people (handing in five plus your own postal vote is permitted).

It's important you are aware of this if you are unable to return your postal vote in the post. **You must not place postal votes in the postbox at the Council House, as these can no longer be accepted.**



CHANGES TO VOTING BY POST AND PROXY

You can now apply online to vote by post and for some types of proxy vote.

The deadline to apply for a postal vote is 5pm on Wednesday 17 April. The deadline to apply for a proxy vote is 5pm on Wednesday 24 April.

You also need to prove your identity when applying, by providing your National Insurance number.

Go to www.sandwell.gov.uk/postalvote or www.sandwell.gov.uk/proxyvote to apply.

You can only act as a proxy for two people living in the UK and two overseas - four in total. Two must be in the UK. These changes apply to all UK elections.

If you have a question or you need help, go to www.sandwell.gov.uk/elections or call the elections team on **0121 569 3244**

Speak to someone face-to-face

We have two community hubs in Rowley Regis and West Bromwich for when you need to speak to someone face-to-face.

Central Library, High Street, West Bromwich, B70 8DZ – Tuesdays 10am to 4.30pm

Blackheath Library, High Street, Blackheath, B65 0EA – Wednesdays 10am to 4.30pm

Find advice on an issue or query, help with accessing council services, wellbeing advice, housing information or just someone to talk to.

Go to www.sandwell.gov.uk/facetoface for more information on face-to-face council services in Sandwell.

Holocaust memorial service



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

Wreaths were laid and former mayor Dr Ann Jaron talked about her grandfather, Professor Marian Gieczykiewicz.

He was arrested during the Second World War for running an underground university and providing medical services in the Krakow ghetto. He was taken to Auschwitz where he was murdered in July 1942.

Holocaust Memorial Day is a day for everyone to remember the millions of people murdered in the Holocaust, under Nazi persecution, and in the genocides that followed.

Here to help 24/7 with MySandwell

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

It's easy to create an account – go to www.sandwell.gov.uk/mysandwell

We've launched a free MySandwell App where you can access a growing number of services. Download it from the Apple App Store or Google Play Store.

Going online can save you time and money on phone calls or travel costs.

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

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, apply for a Blue Badge, ask about school places and much more. Go to www.sandwell.gov.uk

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: **0121 368 1166 / 0121 569 6000** for repairs
- 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**

ONLY £28 PER MONTH

SWIM SCHOOL ENROLMENTS ARE NOW OPEN

Lessons available at:
Sandwell Aquatics Centre
Wednesbury Leisure Centre
Portway Lifestyle Centre
Tipton Leisure Centre

Just Add Water with SLT swimming lessons!

Dive into a world of aquatic excellence with Sandwell Leisure Trust's swimming lessons programme, where every stroke is a step towards water confidence and safety.

SLT's current campaign Just Add Water is designed to make swimming lessons an unforgettable experience for all ages.

In SLT's state-of-the-art facilities, expert instructors lead dynamic classes, ensuring a supportive and enjoyable environment for beginners and advanced swimmers alike. Beyond the physical benefits, the lessons foster a sense of community, connecting individuals through a shared love for aquatic activities.

Whether you're dipping your toes for the first time or refining your technique, SLT's programme promises a journey of joy, skill development and, most importantly, safety in the water.

Join Sandwell Leisure Trust, where 'Just Add Water' becomes a mantra for you and your children to be healthier, happier and more confident in the water.



Free swimming in Sandwell

Sandwell Council provides free swimming at leisure centres 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.



SCAN ME
TO FILL OUT A CALLBACK FORM
www.slt-leisure.co.uk/activities/swimming-lessons

Lessons suitable for
all ages and abilities



Sandwell community groups recognised with King's Award

Three organisations in Sandwell have been honoured with the King's Award for Voluntary Service (KAVS).

This recognises their significant contributions to the local community.

The award, previously known as the Queen's Award, is the highest recognition that a local voluntary group can receive in the United Kingdom and is equivalent to an MBE. The King's Award is awarded for life.

The three Sandwell organisations recognised in the first King's Awards are:

- **Cape Community Care Day Centre in Cape Hill**, which offers services and support for people facing challenges around disability, low income or housing
- **New Beginnings Community in Smethwick**, which provides support for young families as well as wider community services
- **Student Voice, run through St Michael's C of E High School in Rowley Regis**, which engages young people with mental health initiatives, skills workshops and community outreach projects

Leader of Sandwell Council, Councillor Kerrie Carmichael, said:

"These groups do such important work in the local community.

"It is wonderful to see their efforts honoured with such a prestigious award."



Photo courtesy of National World plc



Bostin People: Swimming star Karnell makes a splash!

Oldbury sportsman Karnell Nunes-Smith made quite the splash for Sandwell at the Swim England West Midlands Regional Winter Championships, winning two gold medals.

The 19-year-old won in the 16-and-over 50m and 100m Breaststroke events, setting a personal best in both.

The championships were held in Sandwell's very own Aquatics Centre.

Karnell said: "It was great competing at Sandwell Aquatics Centre, as it's my local pool. I can't wait to go back there and compete again!"

In 2023, he also won gold for Team England in the 50m Breaststroke event in Dubai, as well as starting 2024 with a win in the Warwickshire County Swimming Championships where he won the men's open age group 50m and 100m Breaststroke final events

Karnell is supported by Sandwell Council's Gifted and Talented programme, which supports aspiring sportspeople who live in the borough and show promise on a regional, national and international scale.

Visit www.sandwell.gov.uk/giftedandtalented to find out more.



Photo courtesy of Swim England



Bostin Places: Sundial unveiled at Haden Hill

If you head to Haden Hill House and Park in Cradley Heath this spring to explore the estate and enjoy activities, check out the new sundial on Haden Old Hall.

Black Country sculptor Luke Perry used galvanised steel and period detail to keep the sundial similar to the original, which disappeared under mysterious circumstances after a fire in 1977 and has never been found.

The replica sundial was made possible through the fundraising efforts of Friends of Haden Hill Estate, a volunteer community group which supports the historic houses and park.

The sundial looks fantastic and it is a brilliant addition to this heritage building and its stories, but with a modern take.

Haden Hill Park is one of 15 parks and green spaces in Sandwell to receive the prestigious Green Flag Award and is also a Green Heritage Site winner.

Go to www.sandwell.gov.uk/museums to find out more about visiting the Haden Hill Estate, including opening times, accessibility information and upcoming activities and events.

Look out for our annual Fabulous 40s event on Bank Holiday Monday 6 May.





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 are 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.

Get cheaper broadband and mobile

Social tariffs are cheaper broadband and phone packages for people on certain benefits, including Universal Credit and Pension Credit.

- If you think that you might be eligible for a social tariff, contact your provider and ask to switch to their social tariff.
- If your provider doesn't offer a social tariff, it might be worth switching to another provider – but do check your exit fees to make sure that it's worth it.



Find out how to get cheaper broadband and mobile deals:

www.sandwell.gov.uk/cheaperbroadband

Cost of Living support programme

Do you (or does someone you know) need some additional support in an emergency?

We are offering a free and confidential service provided by trained and experienced advice workers from Sandwell Consortium and Citizens Advice Sandwell & Walsall.

They can help with:

- Benefits and debt advice
- Energy advice
- Budgeting
- Employment support
- Help to get online

This is an outreach service and the team are using different locations for drop-in sessions across Sandwell.

Visit www.sandwellconsortium.co.uk/service/colt to find a session near you.

You can also contact Sandwell Consortium by phone on **0121 533 2568** or by emailing referrals@sandwellconsortium.co.uk



Help with debt and money worries

We know people are seeing household bills rise and, for many people, money is tight

If you are struggling with debt, advice is available – whether your debt is big or small.

The main thing is to seek advice as early as possible, before things get out of control.

Visit www.sandwell.gov.uk/helpwithdebt for services that can help you deal with debt, avoid losing your home and get on top of your finances – or drop in to your local Citizens Advice office.



Help with energy bills

If you are struggling to pay your energy bills, don't wait to seek help.

- Contact your energy supplier and agree a payment plan. Ask them if they provide any hardship funds.
- Contact Warmer Homes West Midlands www.warmerhomeswm.org.uk to speak to a qualified energy adviser. Call on freephone **0800 988 2881** or **0808 196 8298** and press option 2.
- Get in touch with Citizens Advice Sandwell and Walsall, to see if you are eligible for any benefits such as a Winter Fuel Payment or charitable grants. Freephone **0808 278 7812** or go to www.citizensadvice-sandwell-walsall.org to webchat. Visit www.sandwell.gov.uk/energybills for more information.

Telephone befriending volunteers urgently needed!

Sandwell Together telephone befriending service was set up by Sandwell Advocacy in April 2020 to help people in Sandwell who are lonely, isolated and vulnerable.

Volunteers are now needed to continue to provide this much needed support. Just 30 minutes a week could make a massive difference to someone's life.

Do you have?

- Good communication skills
- A friendly disposition
- Patience, sensitivity and kindness
- A willingness to train and develop your skills

If you would like to help please ring Louise Jones or Sharon Jenkins on **0121 520 8070** or email louise.jones@sandwelladvocacy.org





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

Have fun for free!

Now the days are getting longer and the Easter holidays are almost here, there are plenty of ways in which you can get out and about on a budget:

- Visit one of our libraries – there are lots of free activities
- Sandwell's museums have lots of low cost or free activities for all ages. Visit www.sandwell.gov.uk/joininmuseums
Find Sandwell Museums on Facebook @[@sandwellmuseums](https://www.facebook.com/sandwellmuseums)

- Take a walk along one of our beautiful canals
- Visit a local park or try out our cycling routes

Go to www.sandwell.gov.uk/funforfree for more information and ideas.



Cooking on a budget

We are all feeling the impact of rising food prices.

If you would like some ideas for low cost meals you can find a collection of recipes on our website at:

www.sandwell.gov.uk/cookingonabudget



Sandwell Seed Libraries

Swapping seeds is a low cost way of starting or improving your own garden.

All of our libraries have set up collection points for unwanted packets of seeds.

If you have any spare seeds that you would like to donate, please drop them off at your local library.

Alternatively, if you fancy taking up gardening and would like some free seeds then please come and help yourself.



Join us this Easter with Sandwell Holiday Activities

The school Easter holidays are around the corner and we have a range of activities to keep children entertained and active.

Funded by the Department for Education, Holiday Activities are a brilliant way to try new things, make new friends and learn new skills. There's plenty of choice including sports, music, dance, art, drama, cooking and days out.

If your child is in school and receives benefit-related free school meals, you will receive a Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) e-voucher, with a unique code and booking instructions via email or text (a bit like the free school meals supermarket vouchers).

Don't meet the eligibility criteria but looking for activities?

Visit holidayactivities.sandwell.gov.uk for clubs that provide FREE universal or subsidised places. Or follow 'Sandwell Holiday Activities' on Facebook.

We also have brilliant partners offering fun activities throughout the spring, both term time and holidays:

Go Play is open to all children and young people aged 5-12, and free to attend. Run by trained playworkers, Go Play is there to support children and young people to have fun playing in their neighbourhoods. Visit www.goplaysandwell.co.uk or search 'GoPlaySandwell' on Facebook.

Just Youth provides a range of free activities aimed at 11 to 19-year-olds (up to 25 for those with SEND) across Sandwell. We offer sports, arts, music, virtual reality experiences and more, with seven youth clubs. Each town has youth worker teams. Visit www.justyouth.org.uk or search 'JustYouthSandwell' on Facebook.



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: goplaysandwell.co.uk



HOW YOUR COUNCIL TAX IS SPENT

For every £100 of the council's budget, here's how it's spent on services

Adult Social Care
£38.46

Children's Services
£21.32

Central Services
(running the council)
£13.31

Environment and Economy
£9.84

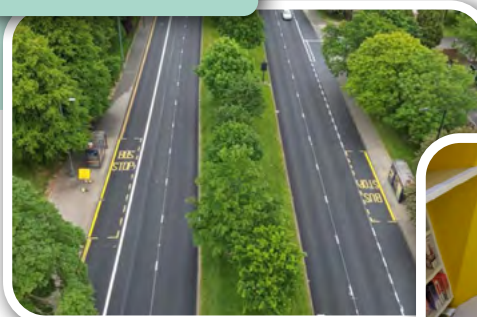
Public Health and Wellbeing
£5.26

Bins and Street Cleansing £5

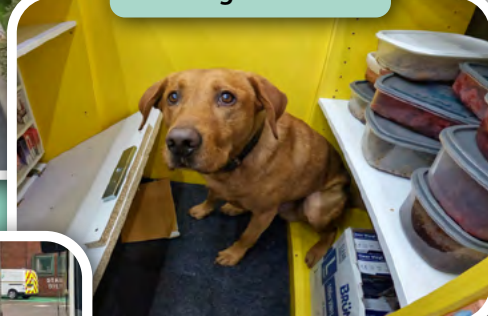
Highways £4.19

Housing Support £2.62

Roads maintenance



Trading standards



Youth services

Our parks



WHAT YOUR COUNCIL TAX HELPS TO PAY FOR

It's not just bin collections and streetlights. In addition to our leisure centres, libraries, museums, parks and road maintenance, there are many services we provide that you may not know about.

The majority of the Council's budget is for key services that help us to look after and support vulnerable or disabled children and adults. Your Council Tax, along with some specific government grant funding, goes towards funding these important services.

We also assist people with financial problems, help people to find work and run many other projects and services with the aim of supporting Sandwell residents through the cost of living crisis.

Then there are our services that look after our neighbourhoods. From our environmental health and trading standards teams, to the work we do around prosecuting fraud and keeping our streets clean, your Council Tax helps us to run services that will cost around £333million this year.

We're also investing £291million on capital projects and a further £223million in the council's housing stock.

Find out how your Council Tax pays for services you may not know about that change people's lives on the next page.

OUR FINANCIAL SITUATION

Sandwell Council isn't in the extreme financial difficulties that some other local authorities across the country have reported.

But we do face significant financial pressures as a result of rising demand for our services at the same time as our costs are going up, which means some difficult decisions have had to be made.

This coming financial year, we've made recurring savings of £12million – savings we'll continue to be able to deliver in coming years – plus further one-off cost reductions of £7million.

And while Council Tax will go up by 2.99% plus a 2% increase specifically for our Adult Social Care service, this increase is in line with the rate by which the vast majority of councils are raising Council Tax.

This will enable us to continue to deliver and improve services, while making savings to balance the books.



Our STAR service (Short Term Assessment and Reablement)

Our STAR service is provided in people's own homes to help them to live independently again. Here's some fantastic feedback from Julie Beard about her mom's experience of using the service following a stay in hospital.

Julie said: "I wanted to say what an outstanding service you provide for people coming out of hospital to help them gain their independence and live in their own homes once again. This recently happened to our family when my mom was hospitalised. We were so impressed by the carers who attended, they were lovely.

"A big shout out to Karen, Tina, Chloe, Chelsey, Sarah (I am sure I've missed someone!) who were always helpful, kind, attentive and kept us in the loop if there were any issues.

"Also, a big thank you to the people on the STAR phone line who were always available to speak with us and keep on top of visits and medication.

"Kerry was a great help in trying to help us move forward to organise a new care package for mom and Malcolm went above and beyond on a Saturday morning when we had an issue with medication that had been prescribed by mom's GP. Thank you so much."

For more information about our STAR service and other support available, go to www.sandwell.gov.uk/supportathome or call our Adult Social Care team on **0121 569 2266**.

Julie and her mom's story



Marcus's story



Marcus Hill has been supported by our Specialist Employment Team to find a job he loves.

The team supports residents with a disability or mental health condition who would like to find a job or return to work.

Marcus, who is deaf, is now working as an apprentice at our supplies warehouse where he's earning a wage while getting a qualification – including his forklift licence.

Marcus said: "The Specialist Employment Team have helped with my CV, they helped with application forms, also setting up meetings and organising interpreters for me. This has really helped with my confidence, having the interpreter in interviews, and the support that has been given has been really valuable.

"My confidence has completely improved and I'm just really enjoying the work."

Marcus's colleagues are now learning BSL using an app and say he's a fantastic and valuable member of the team.

You can find out more about Marcus's experience of his apprenticeship and how the team has supported him on our website.

Go to www.sandwell.gov.uk/specialistemploymentteam

If you have a disability or mental health condition, and you would like help into employment, get in touch with the team.

Please email enquiries_recruitment@sandwell.gov.uk or call **0121 569 5981** or **0121 569 5563**.

To access this service you must be a Sandwell resident, unemployed, have a disability or mental health condition and want support to find paid employment.

Our Shared Lives scheme

Sandwell Shared Lives supports individuals with a learning disability and a wide range of needs to gain more independence and control over their lives.

We do this by matching them with people willing to share their homes for a few hours, an evening, or weekend, or longer.



Karen's story

Karen started receiving Shared Lives Respite support in January last year. She was matched with a Shared Lives Carer who shared her interests and hobbies.

During her respite, Karen has enjoyed visits to the cinema, shopping trips and arts and craft activities to make birthday gifts.

Since beginning her Shared Lives journey, Karen has become more confident and further developed her independence.



Chrissy's story

Chrissy is also being supported by Shared Lives and she's started a new job as a cleaner in a school.

Chrissy is in a long-term Shared Lives placement. Helped by her Shared Lives Carer, Julie, Chrissy has now got the job she set out for. She enjoys cleaning and is a valued member of her team, and she goes above and beyond to do a great job.

To find out more about the Shared Lives scheme or becoming a Shared Lives Carer go to www.sandwell.gov.uk/sharedlives or call **0121 569 4467**.

Our Welfare Rights team

Our Welfare Rights team helps people from all walks of life with benefit claims and debt.

Over the past year, along with the wider Sandwell Advice Providers Network, staff from our Welfare Rights team have helped 39,000 Sandwell people to access £31million in benefits and payments that they would have otherwise gone without.

They've also advised people on dealing with £20million of problem debt.

If you need advice on claiming benefits, benefit overpayments or help with debt, go to www.sandwell.gov.uk/welfarerights to get in touch with the team or call **0121 569 3158**.

Protect your child from measles

Measles is an infection that spreads very easily and can cause serious problems in some people.

Measles cases are rising in England

Make sure your child is up to date with their vaccinations



Measles cases are on the rise in England and across the whole of Europe. Protect yourself and your family from becoming unwell with measles.

You can do this by checking you are up to date with the measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) vaccine.

Two doses of the MMR vaccine gives you and your family lifelong protection. The first vaccine is given at the age of one and the second at the age of 3 years and 4 months.

If you've missed any doses, it's not too late to catch up. Contact your GP practice today to book an appointment to get up to date.

If you are unsure if you or your child are up to date, check your child's red book or GP records. You can then make an appointment to catch up any missed doses.

Check the signs and symptoms of measles by searching 'NHS measles'.

Look out for local vaccination clinics at www.blackcountry.icb.nhs.uk

Scarlet fever

Please also be on the lookout for scarlet fever, which is a contagious infection that mostly affects young children.

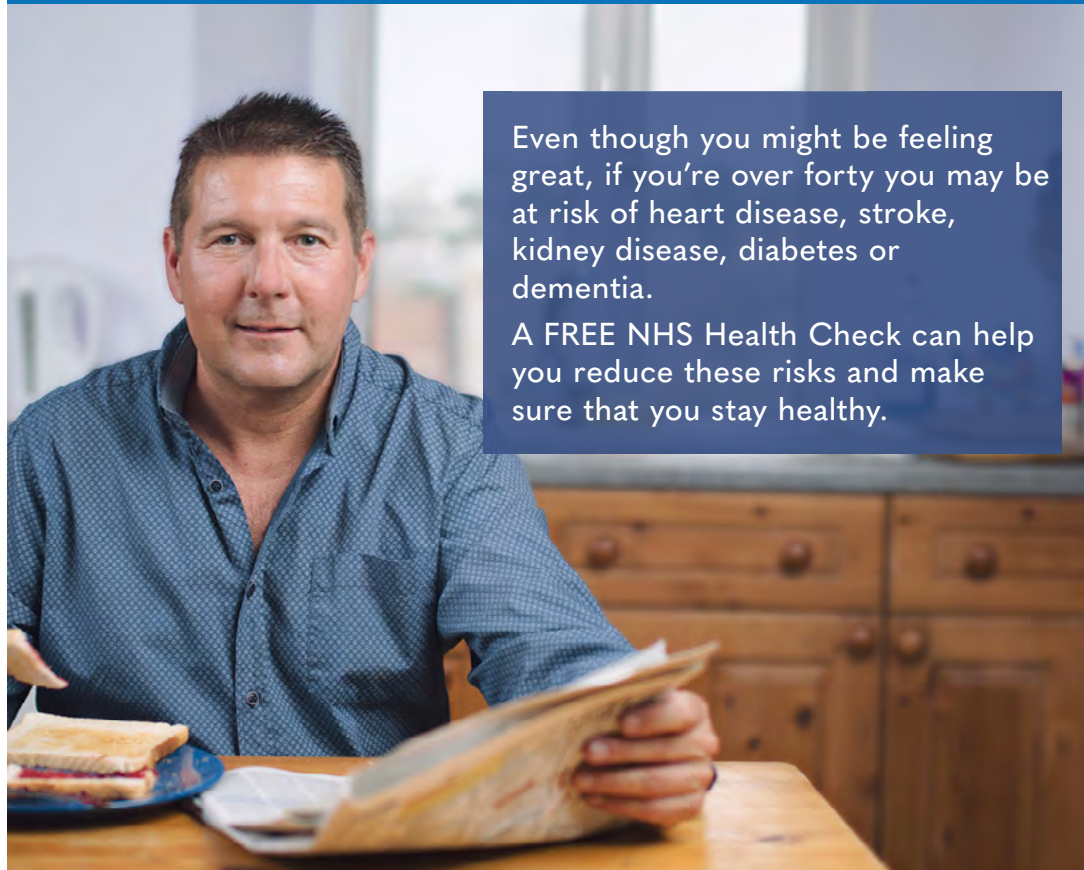
It can be a serious illness but is easy to treat with antibiotics.

Check out the signs and symptoms by searching 'NHS scarlet fever'.

If you think you or your child has scarlet fever, please contact your GP or contact **NHS 111**.



Book your FREE NHS Health Check



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

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



BOOK NOW

Call 0800 2545 163 or visit nhshealthcheck.random.com

In partnership with



WHAT WOULD YOU DO WITH YOUR SAVINGS?



QUIT SMOKING

Get the support you need
0121 740 0040
smokefreesandwell.co.uk

smokefree
Sandwell



Need support with your mental health?

Look no further. We're here to help.

Are you struggling with your mental health or do you know anyone struggling who you want to help?

It's okay to feel how you feel, you are not alone.

We have made available a list of resources to help people in Sandwell. Scan the QR code to access them or visit www.sandwell.gov.uk/mentalhealthsupport

Call the 24/7 Black Country Mental Health helpline on **0800 008 6516** to speak with an expert if you need to talk to someone.



Download the UNITY app today for free!



The UNITY app can be downloaded for free and allows people to manage different health conditions and their wellbeing.

They can share their goals and self-care tasks with friends and family to get support within their own social network in the language of their choice.

The Healthy Ageing project is a partnership between Health Fabric and Sandwell Council.

Download the 'Unity from Health Fabric' app on Google Play or the Apple App Store.



What is a Family Hub?



Children's Centres have grown to include more support and services and are now known as Sandwell Family Hubs.

Our mission is to help all families in Sandwell thrive.

Family Hubs will offer the right help, in the right place, at the right time with services and support for all families with children aged 0 – 19 (or 25 with SEND). Extra support is available for families during pregnancy and in your baby's first years.

Below are a range of services the Family Hubs offer. Visit the website for a full list of services and how Family Hubs can support your family.



Maternity Care and Antenatal Sessions



Midwives and Health Visitors



Infant Feeding Support



Emotional Health and Wellbeing



Housing Support



Support for Parent and Carers



Stay and Play Sessions



Home Learning



Special Educational Needs and Disability Support (SEND)



Benefits and Welfare Advice

Email: Family_HubsTeam@sandwell.gov.uk
www.sandwellfamilyhubs.com

Sandwell
Family
 Helping Families Thrive



Visit your local pharmacy in Sandwell

Local pharmacies offer many of the same services local GPs do. You can speak to your local pharmacist in confidence, without the need for an appointment, about:

- Coughs, colds and the flu
- Aches, pains and minor injuries
- Dry skin and skin allergies
- Ear and eye care, such as dry eyes
- Stomach aches, constipation or diarrhoea
- Oral contraception
- Urinary tract infections (UTI)
- Help with medication and repeat prescriptions



Find out how your local pharmacy can help you

- Advice on healthy living – how to eat better, lose weight and stop smoking
- Advice on vitamins and minerals
- Pain relief (paracetamol and ibuprofen).

Your local pharmacy should always be your first choice for help, advice and treatment for common conditions. Search 'NHS find a pharmacy' online.

NHS

We can help you get free Healthy Start vitamins

To check if you're eligible for Healthy Start visit:
www.healthystart.nhs.uk

Your journey to a healthy pregnancy

When you find out that you're pregnant it's important to book your antenatal care as soon as possible through your local Family Hub within Sandwell. You can also self refer using this link www.swbh.nhs.uk/services/maternity

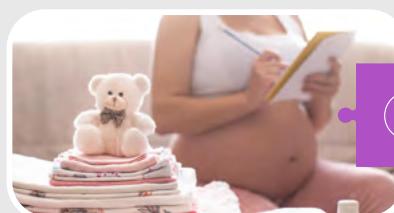


Book your antenatal care

Through your local Family Hub

Changes: Bump to Baby FREE session

Find out how your baby is growing and what you can do to have the healthiest pregnancy possible

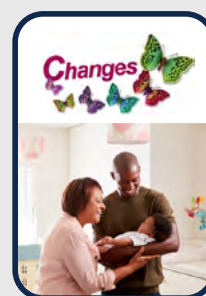


Exercising whilst pregnant

Book onto one of our prenatal exercise sessions



Collect your **FREE Bump to Baby** magazine



FREE session for grandparents-to-be

Encourage grandparents-to-be to attend our FREE Changes: Grandparents session



Sign up here...

To receive information on FREE sessions available during your pregnancy

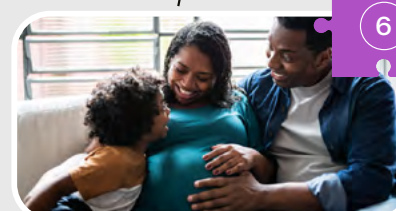
Attend a FREE Breastfeeding Network workshop

Find out more about your feeding choices



Book your FREE 3-week Changes Antenatal course

Delivered by local midwives and health visitors through our Family Hubs or online



Book your FREE Bump and Beyond session

Find out the importance of the first 1,001 days and why early communication matters



To view and to book on to any of the sessions, please use the QR Code.

New state-of-the-art medical centre opens in Wednesbury

The Richard Nugent Centre is the new, modern home for the Spires Health Centre. It's also used by members of Sandwell and West Birmingham NHS Trust's District Nurse Service.

Sandwell Council has worked closely with the Spires Health Centre and NHS Black Country Integrated Care Board (ICB) to deliver the new centre.

It includes a suite of consulting, treatment and meeting rooms as well as 32 on-site car parking spaces and an ambulance drop-off centre.

The District Nurse Service uses two new podiatry rooms and four consulting/treatment rooms for a range of services.

The centre is part of a key Sandwell regeneration project on a council-owned brownfield site that has been developed next to Wednesbury Leisure Centre.

The council has invested in the site's infrastructure, which also includes five new council homes, in King Street, as part of its housebuilding programme.

At the request of the ICB, the centre was named after the late Richard Nugent. Richard served as non-executive director of Sandwell and West Birmingham Clinical Commissioning Group until 2018, and was previously chair of the former Sandwell Primary Care Trust, working in healthcare for 35 years.

Construction of the health centre and the new council homes was carried out by Interclass Plc.



Representatives from Sandwell Council, the NHS and Richard Nugent's family at the centre's official opening

Midland Metropolitan University Hospital set to open doors in 2024

In a landmark moment for the community, the Midland Metropolitan University Hospital is set to open in Smethwick this year – delivering healthcare to the people of Sandwell, Ladywood and Perry Barr in an ultra-modern setting.

And at the heart of the Midland Met care model is a commitment to best practice in treating the most seriously ill, ensuring patients who need emergency and urgent care receive a prompt and effective service seven days a week.

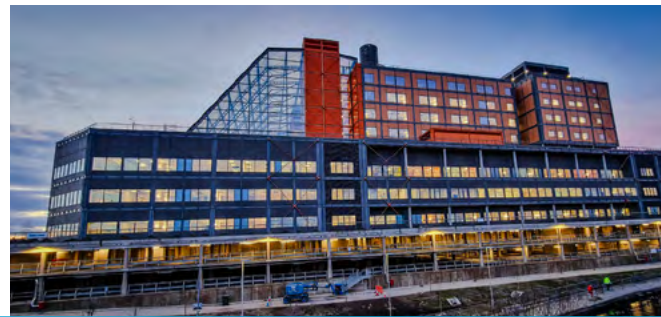
Run by Sandwell and West Birmingham NHS Trust, the two existing emergency departments at Sandwell and City Hospitals will combine at the new Grove Lane site to create one new state-of-the-art emergency department.

Among the highlights will be the hospital's comprehensive maternity service. Expectant mothers, due to give birth later this year, will experience care in a midwifery-led birth unit or delivery suite.

Richard Beeken, Chief Executive at Sandwell and West Birmingham NHS Trust, said: "Our maternity facilities at Midland Met are designed to provide a holistic and positive birthing experience. We are dedicated to celebrating the joy of new beginnings and ensuring that every mother receives the highest level of care during this special moment.

"Our new hospital will provide world-class healthcare services in a modern and therapeutic environment."

As Midland Met gets ready to welcome patients, it signals a new era of healthcare and provides a springboard for local career opportunities and regeneration of the local area.



Investing in your parks

Our parks investment programme continues – providing fantastic community spaces that people can enjoy for free to help stay healthy and active.

Work has started extending the allotments at Britannia Park in Rowley Regis, including creating new raised beds.

This is part of the wider improvement project for the park, funded via the Government's Towns Fund programme and Sandwell Council. Coming later this year is a new changing room facility and children's play area.

We've just finished planting 1,000 trees and 300 shrubs on Yew Tree Open Space. This was funded by the West Midlands Combined Authority and Woodland Trust as part of the MOREwoods project.

We planted a new community orchard at Mill Pool, with more than 70 new fruit trees which will bear fruit next season. This is part of the wider Hateley Cross Big Local Project that we're working with to improve green spaces in the Hateley Heath and Stone Cross areas.

A host of play area refurbishment projects have started (or will start shortly) including play areas at Hartlebury Road on Lion Farm, Riddins Mound in Cradley Heath and Denbigh Drive in West Bromwich.

We continue to plan further improvements across Sandwell including improvements to our existing infrastructure.

Go to www.sandwell.gov.uk/greenspacesworks for more details.



New play equipment at Broadwell Park, Oldbury



Trying out Sandwell Valley's new urban bike park

Free & fast collection
unwanted items.

Book a free collection today

Your donated furniture & electricals save lives

Call your local BHF Smethwick Store
0121 222 1287
bhf.org.uk/collection

Opening 2024

Introducing Midland Met



Midland Met will bring together all acute and emergency care services currently at City and Sandwell Hospitals.

Our two existing emergency departments will combine to create a new one at Midland Met.

The new hospital will look after people who need emergency care or who are seriously unwell.

Midland Met includes:

- A midwifery-led birth unit, triage, delivery suite, two maternity wards, neonatal unit and antenatal services.
- 13 cutting-edge operating theatres supported by skilled staff dedicated to wellbeing and recovery.
- Over 730 beds with 50 per cent of rooms on wards being en-suite.
- Advanced emergency services with a purpose-built emergency department complemented by co-located imaging and diagnostic services.
- A dedicated children's emergency department with assessment unit.
- The regional hub for sickle cell and thalassaemia care, offering specialised services and expertise.

Midland Metropolitan University Hospital, Grove Lane, Smethwick, B66 2QT

SHAPE YOUR TALENT 2024

Recognised by ITV's The Voice Kids

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

Apply online to audition at one of the following heats:

Oldbury

Tuesday 5 March
5:30pm - 8:00pm
Royal British Legion,
5 Windsor Road, Oldbury, B68 8NY

Wednesbury

Thursday 7 March
5:30pm - 8:00pm
Wednesbury Library,
Walsall Street, Wednesbury, WS10 9EH

Smethwick

Saturday 9 March
3:30pm - 6:00pm
Brasshouse Community Centre,
Brasshouse Lane, Smethwick, B66 1BA

Rowley Regis

Tuesday 12 March
5:30pm - 8:00pm
Blackheath Library,
145 High St, Rowley Regis B65 0EA

West Bromwich

Thursday 14 March
5:30pm - 8:00pm
Central Library,
316 High Street, West Bromwich, B70 8DZ

Tipton

Saturday 16 March
3:30pm - 6:00pm
Coneygre Arts Centre,
Sedgley Road East, Tipton, DY4 8UH



Scan the QR code
Apply online at www.justyouth.org.uk
or submit a paper application at your local library!

APPLICATIONS CLOSE ON SUNDAY 10 MARCH, 5PM

Enter SHAPE Your Talent 2024

Applications for SHAPE Your Talent 2024 are OPEN until 5pm on Sunday 10 March 2024.

The annual talent competition is for young people aged eight to 19 (up to 25 for young people with special educational needs and disabilities) who live, work or study in Sandwell.

We are holding six audition heats across the borough so wherever you live, work or study in Sandwell, you can audition at whichever venue you prefer.

Go to www.justyouth.org.uk to apply to audition at one of the six heats. Applications close at 5pm on Sunday 10 March.



SHAPE Your Talent 2023 winners
Shenelle & K'Zino



Sandwell is applying to become a UNICEF Child Friendly Borough



A Child Friendly Borough is a place that respects and promotes the rights of children and young people and provides them with opportunities to participate in its social, cultural, political and economic life.

Developing a Child Friendly Borough involves engaging with children and young people as active citizens, to ensure their safety and well-being.

It's also about creating inclusive and accessible spaces and services for them. This not only benefits children and young people, but also the whole community.

We already have much to be proud of in Sandwell. Here are just a few examples:

- SHAPE Youth Forum • Sandwell Play Service – Go Play Sandwell
- Just Youth website • Corporate Parenting Programme
- Your Voice – Sandwell Children's Trust
- 21st Century Child programme • Pilot School Streets programme

SHAPE survey

Findings from the 2023 SHAPE Survey are now available. The results help support council departments and partner agencies to plan their work and design their services around the needs of children and young people.

The top 3 issues affecting young people today as identified from the survey were:

- School work and exams
- Vaping
- Gangs and youth violence

The survey also covered topics on education, school attendance and youth activities. The main issues young people would solve if they were in charge of Sandwell Council were littering, crime, bullying and mental health and wellbeing.

Thanks to all the children and young people who completed the survey – we value the voices and opinions shared and will work towards addressing needs.

The full survey report is available to download at the Just Youth website: www.justyouth.org.uk/advice-2/shape-surveys

SHAPE news round-up

Another highlight for SHAPE in 2023 was the Anti-Bullying Roadshow in November.

We visited seven primary schools, two secondary schools and one secondary special school in Sandwell to raise awareness of bullying to more than 700 children and young people.

Our SHAPE Youth Forum has been involved in some exciting projects including working with University of Birmingham on its School Food Research Project and Midland Metropolitan University Hospital on supporting its gallery.

Save the date for this year's SHAPE Youth Summer Fest at Sandwell Valley on Saturday 13 July from 12 noon-8pm.

Member of Youth Parliament elections are now taking place in polling stations across Sandwell. Young people aged 11 – 18 can read the seven candidate manifestos and vote for their favourite at www.justyouth.org.uk/shape-youth-elections (closing date for voting is 5pm on Friday 8 March).



CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND EDUCATION

SEE WHAT THEY COULD BECOME MISS SCHOOL, MISS OUT



Attend school for the best start in life

www.sandwell.gov.uk/attendance



Two schools merge in Great Barr

Hamstead Infant School and Hamstead Junior School – both rated 'Good' by Ofsted – have joined together to form Hamstead Primary School in Great Barr.

It is hoped the shared knowledge among the staff will result in even higher standards and the best outcomes for pupils.

The two schools have long shared a single site at the corner of Hamstead Road and Tanhouse Avenue.

Hamstead Primary will now operate as a 420-place, two-form entry primary school.



Access funding for early learning

Research has shown that children who have good quality early learning experiences make a good start to their education – and it even impacts on their later success.

Going to nursery or pre-school can help your child get ready for school by improving their communication and language skills and making friends.

Families can access government-funded places in Ofsted registered settings including school nurseries, day nurseries, pre-schools and childminders.

Funding is being extended to support eligible working parents of two year olds who will be able to access 15 hours of childcare support from 1 April 2024. This will be extended to children from nine months of age from 1 September 2024.

Not at work? You could still be eligible if you or your partner are on maternity, paternity or adoption leave, or if you are unable to work due to caring responsibilities or disability.

Visit fis.sandwell.gov.uk or www.childcarechoices.gov.uk to find out more.

Duke opens Shireland CBSO Academy



Photo courtesy of Gary Williams Photography

His Royal Highness The Duke of Edinburgh formally opened West Bromwich's Shireland CBSO Academy.

A joint venture between Shireland Collegiate Academy Trust and the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra (CBSO), it is the first free, non-selective state school in the country to form a partnership of this kind.

This means that children from Sandwell and the wider region have access to top-class facilities and real opportunities to achieve musically at an elite level delivered via a comprehensive national curriculum.

Become a school governor

Are you keen to get more involved in your community? Maybe you have a few hours per month to spare and want to give something back?

You could do something brilliant – volunteer to be a governor at a school in Sandwell and help ensure all children receive the education they deserve.

Meeting regularly, governors look at the big picture and long-term goals for a school. They set the values and culture and respond to the opportunities and challenges facing a school.

You don't need to be an expert in education, or have any children yourself. We just need enthusiastic people to commit their time and bring their life experience to the role. It's really rewarding – you'll develop skills and receive training to be effective.

If you are a local employer, encouraging your staff to volunteer as a school governor is a great way of connecting with the community and helping staff to obtain valuable professional experience that they can bring back to your workplace.

There is an exciting opportunity waiting in a school near you.

Visit www.sandwell.gov.uk/schoolgovernors to find out more and apply.



Your child needs you!

Don't leave their future to chance.

Kick start it with early learning in Sandwell.

Claim your child's free funded place.

fis.sandwell.gov.uk

#EarlyLearningMatters



Off-road bikes could be seized and crushed

Police and council teams in Sandwell have warned that off-road motorbikes could be seized and crushed if used illegally.

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

Please report nuisance motorbikes incidents to police either by calling **101**, via Live Chat at www.west-midlands.police.uk or anonymously to Crimestoppers on **0800 555 111** or at www.crimestoppers-uk.org

You can also report motorbike nuisance online to Sandwell Council. Visit our webpage at www.sandwell.gov.uk/motorbikenuisance where you can also read the law relating to off-road motorbikes.

When reporting, please include details such as vehicle registration information and a description of the bike or rider (such as the colour of the bike and clothing).

Did you know?

Off-road bikes must also have the following to be used legally on a public highway:

- A log book and be registered with the DVLA
- Road tax
- A valid MOT
- Be fitted with lights
- Be fitted with registration plates

The riders must also:

- Be aged 17 or over (16 if the vehicle is classified as a moped)
- Hold a valid driving licence
- Have valid motor insurance
- Wear suitable safety equipment (i.e. a helmet)

Off-road bikers must have the permission of the landowner to ride on private land.

OFF-ROAD BIKING ILLEGALLY?

DON'T RISK IT

People riding motorbikes illegally face arrest and having their bikes seized and crushed.

WWW.SANDWELL.GOV.UK/MOTORBIKENUISANCE

Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council

West Midlands Police

YOUR BIKE YOUR RESPONSIBILITY

Sandwell Police update

Chief Superintendent Kim Madill, Sandwell Police Commander, reports back on the past few months.

“Just eight months after my arrival in Sandwell, I'm pleased to say that we're starting to deliver some big service improvements for you.

We're answering more of your calls faster than ever moving us to one of the top performing police forces in the country. We're also arriving at incidents faster, arresting more people, seeing more detections and recruiting more officers.

The overall impact is that crime is starting to fall across the borough as the latest data shows. Crime rates here are now lower than the West Midlands average.

These are good results but I know that there is more that we need to make you feel the difference, especially on the things that matter to you such as motorbike nuisance.

That's why, as members of the Safer Sandwell Partnership, we've increased our work on seizing illegal and dangerously driven off-road bikes. You can read more about this in the article above.

Finally, I'd like to say a big thank you everyone who's helped us reduce crime in the area. Whether it's people like you who have been following the home security advice on our website, the Neighbourhood Watch schemes who are sharing crime alerts, the Street Watch volunteers who patrol with their area with our officers or the Speed Watch groups who are helping make our roads safer.”

If you'd like to get more involved, email sandwell_partnerships@westmidlands.police.uk

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



Report hate crimes

Hate crimes can have devastating effects and harm not just victims, but loved ones and entire communities too.

It's so important that we all do what we can to help tackle hate crimes whether they directly affect you or not.

You can report hate crimes online, by phone or at a network of third party reporting centres across Sandwell which are places within the community where you can report a hate crime.

We all have a part to play. Visit our dedicated webpage at www.sandwell.gov.uk/hatecrime to learn what a hate crime is and what you can do if you witness one.

Together we can show that there is no place for hate in Sandwell.

Always call the police on **999** in an emergency. In a non-emergency, call the police on **101** or Crimestoppers anonymously on **0800 555 111**.

**HATE HARMS
TOGETHER WE CAN
END THIS**

Get domestic abuse support

Regardless of age, origin, gender, religion, sexual orientation or race, anybody can experience domestic abuse.

However, the majority of domestic abuse, according to statistics, is committed by men and is experienced by women.

The hashtag **#InspireInclusion** is being used to collectively forge a more inclusive world for women. To find out more visit www.internationalwomensday.com

For details of support available in Sandwell for anyone who is suffering from abuse and for links to advice on healthy relationships, visit www.sandwell.gov.uk/domesticabuse

Report domestic abuse to the police on **101**. In an emergency, always call **999**.

Seek specialist support from **Black Country Women's Aid** on **0121 552 6448**, available 24 hours a day. Or text/WhatsApp on **07384 466 181** (9am-9pm Mon-Fri).

Go to www.blackcountrywomensaid.co.uk to speak to an advisor on webchat. Black Country Women's Aid supports female and male victims of domestic abuse.

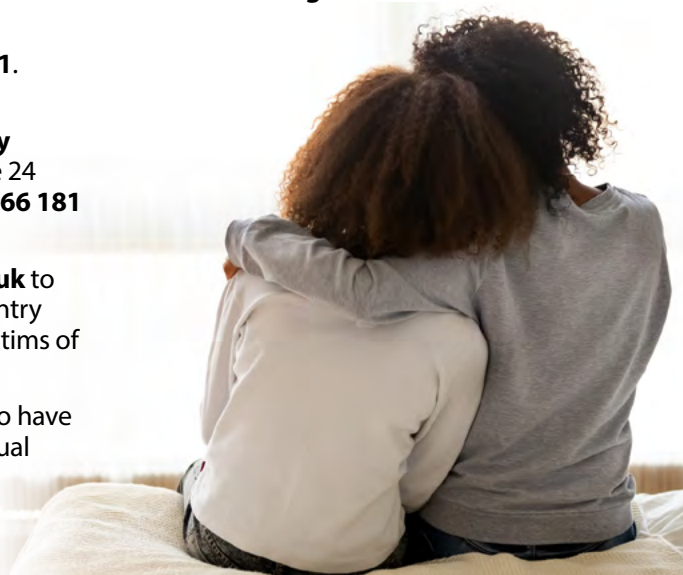
Ask Marc is a service for men and boys who have experienced domestic abuse, rape and sexual abuse. Call **0121 289 6402**, email info@askmarc.org.uk or visit www.askmarc.org.uk

Birmingham LGBT Centre also provides support services: blgbt.org

You can also contact Sandwell Council's **Housing Solutions Team** on **0121 368 1166** (Option 2) or email housing_choice@sandwell.gov.uk

Need help after a crime? Live chat 24/7 with Victim Support www.victimsupport.org.uk, call the local team on **0300 303 1977** (Mon-Sat) or call the free 24/7 Support line **08 08 16 89 111**.

www.sandwell.gov.uk/domesticabuse



Water safety

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

These areas can be particularly inviting during periods of warm weather and people are often tempted to swim in them.

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.

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

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



Protecting your home as the nights get lighter

Spring is just around the corner, which means the days are getting warmer and the nights are becoming lighter – but don't let your guard down when it comes to securing your property.

West Midlands Police is working hard to proactively deter and target thieves, but everybody has their part to play to prevent themselves from becoming a victim of burglary.

- Make sure to close and lock your doors and windows when you go out, even if you are just in the garden, and check doors and windows before going to bed.
- Don't leave valuables or keys where they can be seen or reached through the letterbox and open windows.
- Install security lighting and/or CCTV cameras around your property.
- Lock up all side gates, sheds and garages.

You can find more tips by searching '**WMP Residential Burglary**'.

You can also get information about reporting a burglary at www.west-midlands.police.uk or call **101**.



Still time to have your say on HMOs consultation

Sandwell Council is currently holding a consultation on a licensing scheme for landlords of houses of multiple occupation (HMOs) borough-wide.

An HMO is when at least three tenants live in a home, forming more than one household and they share toilet, bathroom or kitchen facilities with other tenants.

The consultation is looking to improve the management and living conditions for tenants living in this type of property and to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour problems.

The additional licensing scheme would mean that landlords of any house in multiple occupation not covered by mandatory licensing would need to obtain a licence.

Your views are wanted on the plans which would affect around 3,500 houses in Sandwell.

The consultation runs until Monday 18 March and is available online at <https://consultationhub.sandwell.gov.uk>

HMO LICENSING CONSULTATION



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.

The earlier you get in touch, the more likely we can help prevent you losing your home.

There is a range of help available, including if you are struggling to pay your rent.

Visit www.sandwell.gov.uk/homeless or call **0121 368 1166** (option 2) / **0121 569 6883** (out of hours).

Are you an aspiring entrepreneur?

Or are you growing a business in Sandwell?

A free, welcoming working space is available for you at the Sandwell Start-Up Hub in Oldbury.

If you are a new business, and have been trading less than two years in Sandwell, you could qualify for a free working space for 12 months up to March 2025.

We want our local businesses to thrive and grow. It's one of our priorities as your local authority.

Whether you are looking to collaborate, or you're a new entrepreneur seeking resources, we want this hub to be your gateway to success.

There are desks and collaborative spaces, kitchen facilities, free WiFi, meeting rooms for hire and more.

For eligible businesses, additional expert guidance and resources may be available via our Sandwell Enterprise Programme.

The hub is located in Jack Judge House in Oldbury town centre (B69 2AJ) and is available from Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm.

To apply for your space, go to:

www.sandwell.gov.uk/startuphubs

Call the Start-Up Hub for more details on **07379 062 895**.



**Start-Up
In Sandwell**



Stronger businesses, thriving communities

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.

This year we've got a wide range of support to help you thrive and grow. We are offering guidance, networking opportunities and finance for companies both new and established.

Find out more by visiting the Sandwell Business Growth website at **www.sandwellbusinessgrowth.com** which is packed with resources to help you achieve your ambitions.

You can also read our Sandwell Business Growth Plan.



**Sandwell
Business Growth**



Support for social enterprises

SWEDA (Skills Work and Enterprise Development Agency) is running two programmes to support social enterprises in the region.

The 12-week FUSE programme has been designed to take you from your ideas stage to launch and beyond through dedicated business support, peer-to-peer networks, industry connection, hands-on learning and specialist social enterprise expertise.

The four-week MOT programme is to support social enterprises past the start-up stage and looking to become more secure and stable.

Both programmes will be delivered with a mix of online and in-person workshops and events. Participants in both programmes will be eligible to apply for a grant to develop their business.

For the eligibility criteria and to apply, visit **www.sebfwestmids.com**

For more information or to chat with someone, visit **www.sweda.org.uk** or email **sweda@sweda.org.uk**

Are you a West Bromwich-based social enterprise?

If yes, SWEDA is looking for organisations that have similar interests to form clusters who will work together for the benefit of the local community.

They will be looking at mental health, education, young people, nutrition, sports and more.

If you are interested, email **sweda@sweda.org.uk**



What is social value in Sandwell?

We've launched a video explaining what social value means in Sandwell.

Council officer Michael Wragg explains there are four pillars to social value in Sandwell: Employment and Skills; School, College and Community Engagement; Local Spend; and the Environment.

One of our current programmes is working with Lovell Partnership to build new homes in Oldbury. As part of the development, Lovell has targets to take on local apprentices so that local young people can earn money while learning new skills.

Apprentices on the scheme including Jamie (carpentry), Joseph (plumbing), Michael (electrician), as well as Jack and Tom (bricklaying), explain why they chose to become apprentices and what opportunities this has brought them.

Learn more by watching the video at **www.sandwell.gov.uk/socialvaluevideo**



Bricklaying apprentices Jack and Tom tell their stories

Local business buys defibrillator and bleed kit for community

A Tipton family business has bought a defibrillator and bleed kit for the local community – and is encouraging others to do the same.

Ramesh Sahota and his family have run Five Ways Newsagents in Dudley Road for 44 years, including serving the community through Covid-19 lockdowns for people to get their essential shopping.

The family decided to buy a defibrillator and bleed kit as the shop is located on a very busy junction and they have seen their fair share of incidents and near-misses.

The bleed kit can be used in a major blood loss incident to prevent further blood loss. The items in the kit can potentially buy the injured person additional time before the emergency services arrive.

Mr Sahota said: "The emergency services are all under pressure, so if the defibrillator or bleed kit provide an extra window of opportunity and time to allow the emergency services to get to the casualty, we thought this was a valuable investment not only for the shop, but also for the local community.

"The defibrillator is also child friendly so if it is ever needed for a child, people know where to come.

"I would urge other businesses to follow our lead and to invest in a defibrillator and bleed kit as they could one day save someone's life."

We'd like to say a big thank you to Mr Sahota and his family for supporting the local community.



Left to right, Anita Patel, Meera Sahota and Ramesh Sahota with the new equipment at Five Ways Newsagents

REGENERATING SANDWELL

Sandwell is growing. A total of 78 projects across our six towns are transforming our borough, attracting a potential £2.9billion of public and private sector investment over five years.

The aim is to improve the quality of life for everyone, create more well-paid, fulfilling jobs and make Sandwell a healthier, wealthier, greener place to live and work.

Our regeneration journey is well under way – on pages 14-15 of the Herald read about major new health developments including the Midland Metropolitan University Hospital in Smethwick and the Richard Nugent Centre in Wednesbury.

We also feature the official opening of the new Shireland CBSO Academy in West Bromwich (page 17), which supports young musicians, and the opportunities offered by the new Sandwell Start-Up Hub in Oldbury (page 20), which helps aspiring entrepreneurs and new businesses.

Over in Rowley Regis, we're continuing work with the Canal & River Trust to make canal towpaths more accessible to more people, while improvements are also gathering pace at Britannia Park (page 14). We secured money from the Government's Towns Fund to support these two projects.

In other Towns Fund-backed projects, a Digital Den in West Bromwich developed with Greetings Green Community Enterprises has enrolled nearly 500 learners onto varied courses since its launch in 2022. Learners have gone on to jobs ranging from healthcare to accountancy.

At the Ron Davis Centre in Smethwick, a new IT suite is helping Sandwell Adult and Family Learning Service to provide a range of English, Maths and Digital Skills courses.

Meanwhile, restoration work has started at West Bromwich Town Hall and projects to improve cycling and walking routes in Smethwick and West Bromwich are continuing.

Visit our Regenerating Sandwell website to find out more about the 78 projects, 12 of which have already been completed.

www.regeneratingsandwell.co.uk



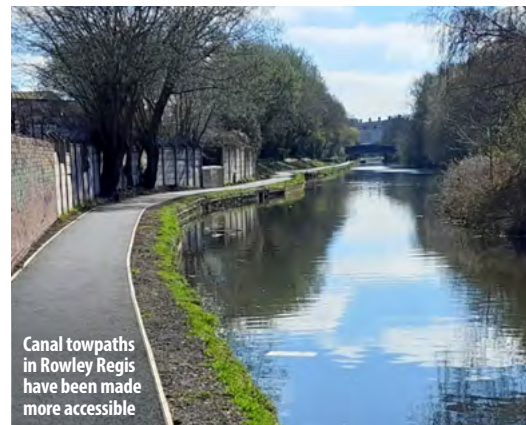
Councillor Peter Hughes congratulates Learner of the Year Rose Kerr who, along with other learners, has benefited from the new IT suite at Ron Davis Centre, Smethwick



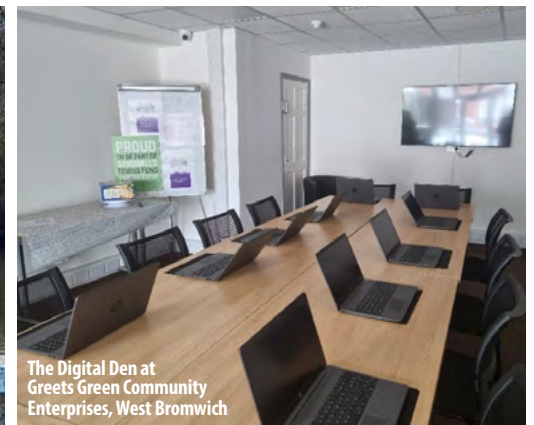
Maths specialist Shahid Anjum in the Ron Davis Centre IT suite



The new IT suite at the Ron Davis Centre



Canal towpaths in Rowley Regis have been made more accessible

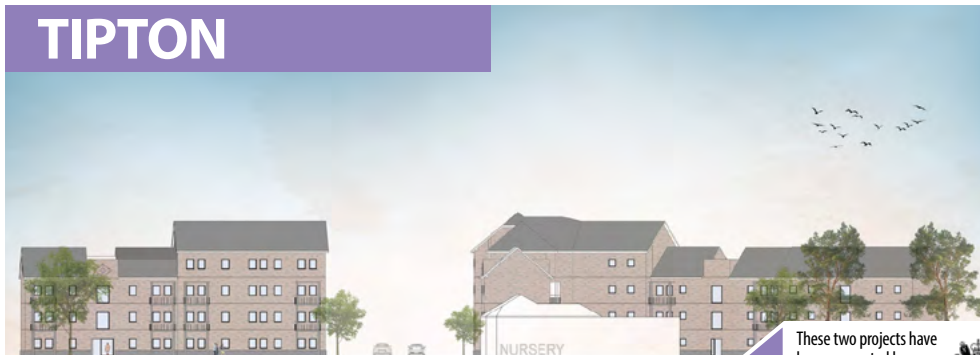


The Digital Den at Greetings Green Community Enterprises, West Bromwich

Regeneration schemes in Tipton and Wednesbury

Sandwell Council is working with the Government on wide-ranging regeneration projects for Tipton and Wednesbury.

TIPTON



These two projects have been supported by Government funding.



WEDNESBURY



Funded by UK Government

We're planning to build around 65 new council homes in Tipton town centre after securing £20million from the Government's Levelling Up Fund.

Three sites along Union Street – under-used or vacant flats and shops – will be redeveloped to provide high-quality, energy-efficient, one and two bed apartments, to be let by the council at affordable rents.

The scheme will also:

- Improve the canal walkway between Union Street and Elliott's Road, making it safer and easier to use, with new trees planted
- Give a facelift to shops along Owen Street
- Resurface pavements and upgrade lighting
- Create higher-quality public spaces
- Improve safety in Owen Street and Union Street

In January, we held a drop-in consultation session in the town, with display boards to explain and illustrate the proposals, which people could also view and comment on online.

More than 200 responses were received, which will help guide the next steps.

Demolition is planned to begin later in 2024, with construction to start in 2025 and completion in 2026.

In Wednesbury, the council and Government have a £20.4million Levelling Up Partnership (LUP).

Six projects are being funded.

The projects are:

- Wednesbury Town Centre – making it greener with new trees and planting, and creating long-term plans to tackle derelict sites and keep the town thriving
- Friar Park Urban Village – preparing the land at Friar Park Urban Village ready to build 630 new homes
- Community Safety – helping partners tackle crime and anti-social behaviour with new and improved CCTV, engaging with residents and businesses, and making changes in green spaces to discourage nuisance motorbikes
- Green Spaces – improving green spaces at Hydes Road Playing Fields, Balls Hill Open Space, Wyntor Lane Open Space, Lakeside and Norbury Road Open Space
- Millennium Centre – expanding the Friar Park Millennium Centre to accommodate a wider range of services helping people to improve skills and access better jobs

The council has set up a partnership board to oversee the LUP. This brings together a range of representatives including councillors, MPs, statutory bodies, business leaders, voluntary sector representatives and young people.

DON'T BIN YOUR BATTERIES!

We're warning residents of the dangers of batteries and electrical items going into bins.

The move follows a spate of fires in the back of refuse and recycling vehicles, and at waste facilities across the country due to batteries being disposed of in household bins.

As well as traditional batteries, many everyday household items including laptops, mobile phones, electric toys, e-cigarettes, Bluetooth devices, shavers, electric toothbrushes and power bank chargers contain hidden batteries. This can make them hard to notice or separate out.

Lithium-ion batteries in particular, which carry the highest risk of combustion, have become increasingly popular in recent years.

Residents are urged to be responsible and dispose of batteries correctly either at their nearest recycling point, at the kerbside if they're separated out into a clear bag or at the tip (Household Recycling Centre) in Oldbury.

Go to www.sandwell.gov.uk/batteries to find your nearest battery and electrical recycling point.

THEY CAN START FIRES



★ WORDSEARCH ★ PRIZES TO BE WON! ★ SUDOKU ★

★ 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.

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

**DAFFODILS
CELEBRATION
SWIMMING
SHAPE
ANNIVERSARY
APRIL
EASTER
ELECTIONS
SPRING
FIFTY**

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 26 April 2024.

Courtesy of <https://thewordsearch.com>

F	I	F	T	Y	R	R	D	P	A	S	I	S	V
L	I	B	O	I	S	R	G	S	P	M	F	U	W
E	L	E	C	T	I	O	N	S	Y	V	O	W	E
E	E	I	N	E	A	C	S	S	P	R	I	N	G
S	G	R	A	N	N	I	V	E	R	S	A	R	Y
C	E	L	E	B	R	A	T	I	O	N	S	S	A
S	L	I	D	O	F	F	A	D	L	G	W	R	M
E	P	F	P	I	M	I	E	T	I	V	I	M	T
S	I	D	I	S	H	A	P	E	A	S	M	C	L
F	E	L	E	I	R	O	R	E	I	R	M	E	U
E	O	F	A	R	E	T	S	A	E	L	I	A	D
I	E	Y	O	E	W	B	I	W	T	E	N	I	T
T	I	I	Y	F	T	B	S	A	S	D	G	O	E
E	S	U	I	O	N	T	R	F	I	E	I	C	R

First correct entry out of the hat wins the prize. One entry per person.
Entrants must live or work in Sandwell.
Congratulations to our Sandwell Herald Winter 2023 winners.
Herald Survey: Jane Peniket, West Bromwich
Wordsearch: Chris Hughes, West Bromwich

MISSING WORD
NAME
ADDRESS
.....
.....
POSTCODE
PHONE NUMBER

★ Win a three-month Family ONE Membership for Sandwell Leisure Trust centres, including the new Sandwell Aquatics Centre.

Scan the QR code to find out more about the centre.



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

		9	3		8	4		
		4		6		3		
3	1						8	2
1				7				5
	4		9		1		3	
9				3				4
7	2						4	3
		6		2		5		
		3	1		7	2		

Send us the top row of numbers from left to right to enter the competition. Send your answer, 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 answer along with your details to:
herald_competition@sandwell.gov.uk by Friday 26 April 2024.
First correct entry out of the hat wins the prize.
One entry per person.
Entrants must live or work in Sandwell.

Puzzle Copyright © Kevin Stone







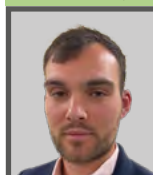



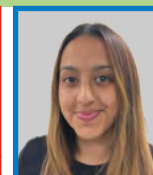

TOP ROW OF NUMBERS (LEFT TO RIGHT)
NAME
ADDRESS
.....
.....
POSTCODE
PHONE NUMBER

YOUR SANDWELL COUNCILLORS

YOUR OLDBURY COUNCILLORS

Bristnall			Langley			Old Warley			Oldbury		
											
Ellen Fenton 07450 963 628	Amolak Singh Dhariwal 07811 583 956	Thomas Johnston 07974 883 588	Caroline Owen 07929 729 943	Bill Gavan MBE 07813 364 277	Jill Tromans 07974 883 521	Jay Anandou 07501 785 027	Harnoor Bhullar 07968 576 563	Chipiliro Kalebe-Nyamongo 07977 710 948	Rizwan Jalil 07444 700 769	Nagi Daya Singh 07811 583 817	Suzanne Hartwell 07814 862 104










YOUR ROWLEY REGIS COUNCILLORS

Blackheath			Cradley Heath and Old Hill			Rowley			Tividale		
											
Kerrie Carmichael 07852 699 513	Danny Millard 07825 706 133	Jag Singh 07812 682 584	Vicki Smith 07970 497 742	Julie Webb 0121 559 9263	John Tipper 07939 380 583	Laured Kalari laured_kalari@sandwell.gov.uk	Claire Mayo 07480 744 438	Khayam Khan 07897 780 526	Maria Crompton 07810 850 960	Amrita Dunn 07555 127 349	Wakas Younis 07424 377 892

YOUR SMETHWICK COUNCILLORS

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

YOUR TIPTON COUNCILLORS

Great Bridge			Princes End			Tipton Green		
								
William Gill 07305 432 400	Soyfur Rahman 07855 985 156	Sahdaish Kaur Pall BEM 07930 492 467	Archer Williams 07929 729 950	David Wilkes 07855 985 153	Justyna Kordala 07549 817 139	Charn Singh Padda 07929 659 645	Abid Hussain 07811 583 951	Syeda Khatun MBE 07766 421 436




YOUR WEDNESBURY COUNCILLORS

Friar Park			Wednesbury North			Wednesbury South		
								
Scott Chapman 07929 658 981	Simon Hackett 07813 989 422	Terry Fitzgerald 07977 532 070	Peter Hughes 07896 914 849	Luke Giles 07549 657 831	Nicola Maycock 07974 876 939	Jenny Chidley 07974 883 522	Ian Chambers 07929 659 646	Kulwant Singh Uppal 07974 883 554

YOUR WEST BROMWICH COUNCILLORS

Charlemont with Grove Vale			Great Barr with Yew Tree			Greets Green and Lyng		
								
David Fisher 07929 658 982	Les Trumpeter 07429 517 031	Natalie Weston 07827 444 769	Liam Abrahams liam_abrahams@sandwell.gov.uk	Steve Melia 0121 502 5751	Michaela Allcock 07977 729 107	Pam Randhawa 07951 861 263	John Giles 07816 353 752	Jackie Taylor 07813 364 299
Hateley Heath			Newton			West Bromwich Central		
								
Kacey Akpoteni 07929 659 528	Paul Moore 07969 138 038	Kay Millar 07971 524 694	Elaine Giles 07715 301 375	Keith Allcock 07970 202 313	Saj Ashraf 07465 724 276	Laura Rollins 07870 501 336	Liam Preece 07515 354 967	Tirath Singh Dhatt 07874 660 324

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



2024

SIGN UP FOR GARDEN WASTE COLLECTIONS

WWW.SANDWELL.GOV.UK/GARDENWASTE



serco

SIGN UP TO RECEIVE
GARDEN WASTE
COLLECTIONS

£35

(T&Cs apply)



Ready for a fresh start?



Fostering changes lives

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