# **Sandwell Herald – Summer 2025 edition (published by Sandwell Council)**

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# **Front page**

The Herald front page features a collage illustration image for the new Sandwell Story which includes a number of landmarks across Sandwell’s six towns.

The front page also encourages people to sign up for the council’s email updates at [www.sandwell.gov.uk/emailupdates](http://www.sandwell.gov.uk/emailupdates) and promotes the council’s website [www.sandwell.gov.uk](http://www.sandwell.gov.uk) and [social media channels](https://www.sandwell.gov.uk/socialmedia).

# **Making It Sandwell – the launch of the Sandwell Story**

Over the past year, businesses, community, voluntary and public sector organisations have come together to start an active partnership to celebrate and champion Sandwell to improve what it’s like to live, learn, work and visit here.

The Sandwell Story is our project to promote what Sandwell has to offer, tackle our borough’s challenges together and help people to think about what ‘making it’ means in their lives.

The story will be used to attract investment and the number of businesses and visitors in Sandwell. We hope that this will also strengthen existing networks, raise aspirations and create more opportunities across the area.

The Sandwell Story began its first chapter in June with a launch event at West Bromwich Albion FC. Our host was local comedian and broadcaster Darren Harriott who shared his story of growing up in Oldbury.

Darren said: “This area is very special to me having grown up here and I’ve recently moved back to the region. I hope that by sharing my story it can inspire others in making it in whatever they want to do in life.”

With one of the youngest populations in the UK, the event heard from young people across Sandwell sharing what ‘making it’ means to them and what they feel they need to do well in life as well as key partners sharing what can be achieved together.

Sandwell College looked ahead to welcoming learners at both the Midland Met Learning Campus and the new Cradley Heath Skills Campus for adult learners in January next year, Sandwell Council announced a £1m investment in apprenticeships across Sandwell by 2026.

‘Making It Sandwell’ is a short campaign film featuring young people from across Sandwell, with a spoken word poem from Casey Bailey who, as well as living and teaching in the region for several years, used stories from young people to write about what making it in Sandwell is all about.

**A place built on making things happen**

Sandwell’s six towns have a rich history of industry meeting innovation and where strong communities still shape the future.

Guy Perry, Managing Director of Perry Group, shared what’s helped their family-run business in making a success in Sandwell over the last 100 years.

Guy said: “We’ve been making things for a very long time, but a key driver for us has been the importance of innovation in developing our business. Sandwell has always been the best place for us to do that – from the people we employ to the networks and the central location we benefit from here in the UK.”

Sandwell Council Leader, Councillor Kerrie Carmichael, shared her experiences of growing up in Blackheath and what making it meant to her at the launch.

Councillor Carmichael said: “We’ve been making things throughout our industrial past and continue to do so today, including making the workforce of the future.

“Hearing from young people at the launch event was an important reminder to really champion our region and help to inspire children and young people growing up here, as well as bringing together partners so that we can tackle challenges together.”

**From the streets of Oldbury to the catwalk**

Jashaan Gill, a fashion designer from Oldbury, said: “Sandwell is full of talent. We must believe in our potential for success nationally and internationally and invest in the opportunities to get us there.”

Jashaan features in the short film and was on a panel at the launch event, which was hosted by Midlands influencer Emmanuel Omoregbee. He was joined by singer/songwriter Madi Saskia, actor Mya Kandola, farm worker apprentice Brandon Talbot and youth leader Ayyatulahi Adigun who also chairs the SHAPE Youth Forum, an integral part of Sandwell’s child’s voice initiative.

**What does this mean for me?**

If you or your business/organisation are interested in becoming a Sandwell Ambassador, joining the network and sharing the campaign, visit [www.sandwellstory.com](http://www.sandwellstory.com) where you can register for more information.

Visit the Sandwell College website [www.sandwell.ac.uk](http://www.sandwell.ac.uk) to find out more about the new learning opportunities at the Midland Met Learning Campus and Cradley Heath Skills Campus.

Go to [www.sandwell.gov.uk/jobs](http://www.sandwell.gov.uk/jobs) if you, or someone you know, might be interested in taking on an apprentice. Or, if you’re interested in applying for an apprenticeship, our Think Sandwell Employment and Skills Team [www.sandwell.gov.uk/thinksandwell](http://www.sandwell.gov.uk/thinksandwell) has plenty of help on offer.

The campaign film is available at [www.sandwellstory.com](http://www.sandwellstory.com) and hear from each young person featured about their stories so far.

# **A further £4.3million for your parks and green spaces**

With over 30 parks and gardens, Sandwell has some of the Black Country’s greenest areas – and if you add that to our fields, sport pitches, nature reserves and allotments, that comes to an incredible 539 green spaces for you to enjoy.

And this year the council will be investing a further £4.3million to improve our spaces even more.

During 2024, we invested nearly £4million in:

* Significant improvements at Britannia Park in Rowley Regis and The Railer in Tipton
* Refurbs to six play areas
* New play zones and tennis court refurbishments

Coming up this year, we’re investing in:

* Over 50 projects across the borough
* A new pavilion at Hydes Road, Wednesbury
* Further improvements to Britannia Park
* Upgrading play facilities at Haden Hill Park, Lightwoods Park and Sandwell Valley
* Allotment improvements

Investment in our parks comes from a number of sources, including council budgets and the government-supported Towns Fund programme, Levelling Up Partnership and UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

We are proud that 15 of our local green spaces hold the nationally prestigious Green Flag Award. The link between access to green space and health and wellbeing has been clearly demonstrated – so we encourage everyone to explore and find out how we have made your parks even better.

Visit [www.sandwell.gov.uk/parks](http://www.sandwell.gov.uk/parks) to find your nearest green space.

# **No fires or barbecues in parks please**

Barbecues can burn more than sausages. No stoves, BBQs or fires in our parks or green spaces. Don’t risk a £100 fine.

We’re urging people not to light fires or barbecues in our parks and green spaces. Let’s protect each other and our wildlife!

Fire can spread very quickly, risking lives and endangering natural habitats.

If you see a fire, please report it immediately to West Midlands Fire Service by calling 999.

Council officers are carrying out patrols – and we’d remind everyone that people face a £100 fine if they light a barbecue or fire in Sandwell’s parks and green spaces.

Visit [www.sandwell.gov.uk/pspos](http://www.sandwell.gov.uk/pspos) for more information on fines.

# **Children and young people share ideas**

Sandwell Council is currently in the Discovery phase of its journey to become recognised as a UNICEF Child Friendly Community. The aim is to ensure children and young people guide the decisions made in the borough.

In March, nine schools took part in the Discover Day which saw children and young people learning about their human rights – as set out in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child – and speaking directly to councillors and decision-makers about their ideas for making Sandwell more child-friendly.

We want Sandwell to be a place where children’s rights are realised and where children’s voices influence decisions that will impact them. The council will now work with children and young people to understand which areas or ‘badges’ they think should be prioritised to make Sandwell more child-friendly – for example feeling safe or staying healthy.

Visit [www.sandwell.gov.uk/childfriendly](http://www.sandwell.gov.uk/childfriendly) to find out more.

# **Jensen leads the way on litter**

Community spirit starts at a young age as Jensen, aged four, has voluntarily been picking up litter on his way home from school.

Regardless of the weather, Jensen has consistently continued to do his part to maintain a beautiful and tidy environment.

Debra, his grandma, explained how this initiative started. She said: “Jensen asked if he could pick up litter on his way home from school, as he noticed rubbish left on the pavement. From that day forward, Jensen has been taking it upon himself to pick up litter with my supervision.

“Despite his age, Jensen understands the importance of looking after the community. He explained he likes to clean up because he knows everyone likes a clean area.”

Jensen’s commitment to keeping the community tidy is very inspirational and is a reminder that everyone has a part to play in making Sandwell a cleaner living space.

# **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](http://www.sandwell.gov.uk)

The MySandwell ‘MyAccounts’ section 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](http://www.sandwell.gov.uk/mysandwell)

You can also pay bills online at [www.sandwell.gov.uk/paybills](http://www.sandwell.gov.uk/paybills) or by phone, by credit or debit card on 0300 456 0514.

**Our phone numbers will be changing**

We’re making it easier for you to get in touch with us by phone when you need to, and soon we’ll be launching a new, single telephone number for most enquiries.

You’ll also be able to hold your place in the queue without staying on the line – and you’ll get an automatic call back when it’s your turn.

Look out for more information on our website, our social media channels and in the next edition of the Sandwell Herald.

For now, please keep using the numbers below.

* 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 and 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

# **Positive change for Sandwell – foreword by Council Leader Councillor Kerrie Carmichael**

This summer we have launched the Sandwell Story – a story that has been developed with residents, local businesses and voluntary organisations across Sandwell to help us tell a new story about our home borough.

I am from here. I grew up here, I was educated here and I work here in Sandwell. My family tree shows that my family have lived in Rowley Regis area since 1506 and I still live in Blackheath today.

Over the years I have watched our borough grow into an amazing place to live and work. Its people are genuine, caring, and proper Black Country grafters.

I was brought up in a typical Sandwell family. Everyone I knew had the same challenges, everyone’s parents worked locally in engineering or were labourers and everyone relied on the council for housing. Things have moved on but, in my role as Leader of the Council, I make sure that the decisions we make today are always informed by our lived experiences in Sandwell – my Cabinet and I all want our council to be a caring council.

Our priorities reflect the things that you – the people of Sandwell – have told us are important:

* Build the best place for our children and young people to grow up
* Create and maintain a cleaner, greener, safer place to live Improve the health of our residents
* Foster a thriving economy, providing opportunities for growth, good jobs and prosperity.

Of course, we face challenges. The cost of living crisis continues to impact households and businesses in Sandwell. We want to support our community and have ambitious plans to create the good jobs and opportunities that will boost everyone’s life chances.

Through the Sandwell Story we want to let the rest of the country know about the great things happening in Sandwell so we can create those opportunities, and to celebrate the stories of the people who live here and make it such a welcoming place.

# **Sandwell’s Cabinet members and their priorities**

**Councillor Paul Moore, Statutory Deputy Leader, Finance and Resources:**

We will provide the very best services we can for residents and businesses by managing the council’s money and resources responsibly.

We will consult with you when planning our spending and we will work with our partner organisations to co-ordinate spending wherever we can.

We will keep improving the customer experience – whether you’re contacting the council by phone, in person or online – and help more people to access services digitally.

**Councillor Suzanne Hartwell, Deputy Leader, Neighbourhoods and Community:**

We will invest in CCTV and continue working with partner agencies to tackle crime and support victims.

We will carry out more improvements at Sandwell Valley Country Park – as well as improving other parks and our allotments service.

We continue to invest in leisure centres and will host a programme of local, regional and national events at Sandwell Aquatics Centre.

Our new way of neighbourhood working will make our services more responsive to local issues.

**Councillor Keith Allcock, Environment and Highways:**

We are working hard to keep all our public spaces clean and tackle litter and fly-tipping.

We will keep promoting recycling and support everyone through the changes to our waste collection service.

We will continue to be a national leader in tackling potholes and will invest more than £15million in maintaining our roads.

Our road safety plan aims to further reduce road accidents that cause injuries.

**Councillor Harnoor Bhullar, Education:**

We will ensure every child has access to a place in a good or outstanding school and help schools to improve attendance.

We will improve our excellent educational outcomes even further with our brand-new school at Causeway Green and by continuing to invest in our specialist Albright Education Centre.

We will invest more in our playgrounds, with new play zones in our parks and open spaces planned.

**Councillor Syeda Khatun MBE, Business and Skills:**

We will fund apprenticeships and spend more of the council’s money with local businesses to support our economy and boost jobs, training and apprenticeships for Sandwell people.

We are committed to making sure children and young people have the right skills and support to take the next step into adulthood.

We are providing support and advice to businesses through our Sandwell Business Growth Plan, including our Start-Up Hub, focusing on innovation and expansion.

Please note the Education Business and Skills Cabinet portfolio is a job share between Councillor Bhullar and Councillor Khatun.

**Councillor Peter Hughes, Regeneration and Infrastructure:**

We are working with public and private sector partners to attract investment and deliver regeneration projects, to boost our towns and create jobs and skills opportunities.

We are designing major road improvement schemes, and we’ll keep working with landowners, developers and others to make sites available for much-needed housing.

We will continue to work with the government and West Midlands Combined Authority on key regeneration projects and to seek new funding.

**Councillor Vicki Smith, Housing:**

We will improve the customer journey for residents who use our housing management services and will publish a set of standards for council tenants including a Repairs Charter.

We continue to build new council homes to offer more accessible affordable housing and we will invest in ongoing improvements to existing homes.

We will set up a new supported housing service to address complex housing needs and prevent homelessness and rough sleeping.

**Councillor Jackie Taylor, Adult Services, Health and Wellbeing:**

We will help people live safe and independent lives and support carers.

We will innovate in the way we provide adult social care and increase our numbers of skilled staff to provide high-quality services for our residents.

We will continue to invest in mental health and wellbeing, and we are a dementia-friendly borough.

We will promote public health initiatives across our six towns to help people live healthy lives and tackle health inequalities.

**Councillor Jalal Uddin, Children and Families:**

We are striving to achieve UNICEF UK Child Friendly status for Sandwell.

We will do all we can to support children, young people and families – including those in our care and care leavers.

We are continuing to fund youth services – when many other councils have cut funding or stopped providing any service.

[www.sandwell.gov.uk/cabinet](http://www.sandwell.gov.uk/cabinet)

# **Responding to people’s priorities**

# **Sandwell leads the way for road maintenance and tackling potholes**

Sandwell continues to lead the way in maintaining roads and tackling potholes according to the latest public satisfaction surveys.

The percentage of residents satisfied with road maintenance in Sandwell (61%) is more than double the local government benchmark (27%).

A separate survey put Sandwell in the top three local authorities nationally for the way it deals with potholes.

More investment is planned – more than £15million this financial year – to keep on top of these priority issues for residents and other road users.

Prevention is better than cure. If water freezes within the road surface, it expands and damages the road. We work to stop potholes by preventing water penetration.

We intervene to stop small road defects becoming bigger ones. This extends the road’s life, costs less over time – which saves taxpayers’ money – and leads to less congestion.

We’ve also invested in innovative machinery, such as the Multihog. This is an example of how Sandwell is looking to prepare the road surface for repairs much more quickly, reducing the need for temporary repairs and ensuring more potholes are fixed ‘right first time’.

We’re responsible for maintaining nearly 550 miles of roads across our six towns. So, while we can’t stop them all, we are winning the battle with potholes.

# **New digital road safety app to launch in Sandwell**

Road safety remains a top priority for us here in Sandwell. We are working with the Learn Play Foundation and 3D Native to develop a revolutionary education game app that will help more than 14,500 Sandwell children aged five to seven develop important safety skills.

The free digital road safety app will give children the skills to walk along and cross the road safely. It will encourage walking to school thereby improving health, reducing obesity, improving air quality and increasing children’s attention at school. We will test the app in September and launch it in the spring.

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.

We have a statutory duty to promote road safety. In Sandwell we invest £1.3million per year on road improvements and education as well as training and campaigns.

Go to [www.sandwell.gov.uk/roadsafety](http://www.sandwell.gov.uk/roadsafety) for details of our road safety schemes.

If you witness anyone committing driving offences and it’s captured on a dashcam, CCTV or mobile phone by a non-driver, you can send it to the police via the Operation Snap webpage at [www.westmidlands.police.uk](http://www.westmidlands.police.uk) and search ‘Operation Snap’ ([direct link to Operation Snap webpage](https://www.westmidlands.police.uk/police-forces/west-midlands-police/areas/campaigns/campaigns/operation-snap/)). You can also report driving offences by calling 101 or 999 in an emergency.

# **CCTV upgrades for your safety**

Sandwell Council is investing in CCTV to improve public safety and tackle anti-social behaviour and environmental crime such as fly-tipping.

In 2024, a £650,000 project saw CCTV control room infrastructure upgraded to improve network and systems. The council is now rolling out CCTV and concierge services for council tenants in 27 additional high-rise blocks thanks to a £900,000 investment.

Town centres are also benefitting, with £80,000 from the government’s Safer Streets Fund in 2024 delivering 12 new cameras to Bearwood High Street.

A £250,000 grant through the government-supported Levelling Up Partnership has enabled CCTV networks in Wednesbury and Friar Park to be updated, and a further eight deployable Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) enabled cameras to be added.

The council is now planning to upgrade the CCTV system in West Bromwich town centre later this year. Additional investment is also being made to buy 18 new deployable cameras with ANPR functionality.

Visit [www.sandwell.gov.uk/cctv](http://www.sandwell.gov.uk/cctv) for more information.

# **Action on fly-tipping**

We’ve stepped up our fly-tipping crackdown as we know dumped rubbish is a big concern for our residents and businesses.

We issue £1,000 fines to anyone identified as having committed a fly-tipping offence. This includes anyone placing waste on the footpath believing that a scrap collector will take it.

Our waste management partner Serco helps us get fly-tipping swiftly removed from council land, within four hours if it’s hazardous and 24 hours otherwise.

In 2024/25, we issued 40 fines for incidents of fly-tipping, littering and where residents 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:

1. Use the tip in Shidas Lane, Oldbury, where you can dispose of unwanted items for free. Go to [www.sandwell.gov.uk/tip](http://www.sandwell.gov.uk/tip) to book a slot. Same day, same hour slots are usually available and it’s open every day (summer hours are 7am to 4pm, with van appointments available from 8am to 3.15pm).
2. Use our bulky waste collection service for large household items – it’s a great value for money service. Go to [www.sandwell.gov.uk/bulkywaste](http://www.sandwell.gov.uk/bulkywaste) to book.
3. 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 fly-tipped waste is linked to a resident, they may be held liable for a fine of £600 under Householders’ Duty of Care.

We’re using CCTV more and more to tackle fly-tipping and other anti-social behaviour, with new mobile cameras with Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) helping us target hot spots.

We’re all working closely together to gather evidence, so we can take more action against fly-tippers.

You can help us with this by reporting all incidents to us at [www.sandwell.gov.uk/flytipping](http://www.sandwell.gov.uk/flytipping) or, if you’re not online, call us on 0121 368 1177.

# **Championing animal welfare**

Animal welfare is very important to us in Sandwell. In 2024, we launched our Animal Welfare Charter.

Inspired by the RSPCA Animal Welfare Charter, it was developed in partnership with the Leader of Sandwell Council, Councillor Kerrie Carmichael, other councillors and partner organisations.

An Animal Welfare Taskforce was established to promote responsible pet ownership, protect local wildlife and habitats, and support animal welfare.

Actions taken so far include a fireworks ban on council land to limit distress to vulnerable people, pets and wildlife, and a ban on helium balloons and sky lanterns which pose a risk to animals and ecosystems and cause littering.

These efforts show our determination that Sandwell remains a safe and caring place for all animals, and more is planned over the coming months. The council’s dedication has already been recognised with the RSPCA Silver PawPrints Award.

Visit [www.sandwell.gov.uk/animalwelfare](http://www.sandwell.gov.uk/animalwelfare) to read Sandwell’s charter.

# **New Mayoral team launches charity appeal**

Councillor Steve Melia is the new Mayor of Sandwell and Councillor Elaine Giles is the new Deputy Mayor.

Councillor Melia, who has been a councillor for 30 years, having represented both Great Barr with Yew Tree and Wednesbury South wards, will be raising money for The British Polio Fellowship and Acorns Children’s Hospice.

His Mayoress is his sister, Valerie Thacker, while Councillor Giles’ Deputy Mayoress is her granddaughter, Grace Giles.

On becoming Mayor, Councillor Melia said: “I hereby promise to fulfil my role as Mayor of Sandwell to the best of my ability, that is, to support all sections of the community in any way that I can, and to promote Sandwell Council and the borough.”

The Mayor is the first citizen of Sandwell. The Mayor presides over meetings of the council, attends events across Sandwell and represents the borough at functions outside Sandwell.

Email [mayors\_parlour@sandwell.gov.uk](mailto:mayors_parlour@sandwell.gov.uk) for details on how to invite the Mayor to an event or how to make a donation to the Mayor’s charities.

# **VE Day 80th anniversary celebrations**

Sandwell marked 80 years since the end of the Second World War in Europe in May, with a civic service, a Fabulous 40s event and street parties.

Thanks to everyone who joined us at the service in Oldbury on 8 May, which included Royal British Legions and schoolchildren, and at the Fabulous 40s event at Haden Hill House.

We reflected on the many sacrifices made by the Second World War generation, to honour them for what they achieved and to celebrate their legacy.

We paid tribute to all those who gave so much to liberate Europe as well as Japan later in 1945. This includes everyone who fought overseas, including people from around the Commonwealth, everyone who served their country on the home front and all those who sadly never came home.

**Peace Cards for schoolchildren**

Tipton Town Libraries Local History Group came up with a wonderful idea to celebrate VE Day 80 by delivering Peace Cards to pupils at local schools.

This came about when one of the history group’s members, Betty Johnson, now aged 93, unearthed a ‘borough card’ she received when she was seven in 1938 from the old Urban District Council of Tipton.

So, the history group – with sponsorship from local firm A&A Walters Funeral Directors – created a similar card to the one Betty and lots of children in Tipton would have received, this time with a poem for peace by local poet Barbara Fletcher.

More than 4,000 Peace Cards were delivered to schools and groups in Tipton in May, and copies were also sent to the King and Prime Minister.

**The story of Sergeant Harold White – an SAS pioneer**

Sergeant Harold White, a Wednesbury man and former West Bromwich Albion player, became one of the first members of the SAS during the Second World War.

He started his football career on the works team at the Patent Shaft and Axletree Company, before playing for Darlaston and then The Baggies, playing 36 games for WBA in the 1938-39 season.

Harold enlisted in January 1940 and, in 1941, became one of the first members of L Detachment, Special Air Service Brigade – a commando unit in North Africa – which later became the first SAS regiment.

He was awarded the Military Medal for his gallantry during a raid on an airfield in Libya in December 1941. He was wounded but recovered to see further action in Sicily, occupied France, including the Normandy landings, and at the Rhine. He was 29 by the time the war ended in 1945. Despite his injuries, Harold continued playing football after the war, finishing his career back at Darlaston in 1951. He died in 1981 aged 65.

What an incredible story! Thanks to Mark Whitehouse for sharing this story and photo with us, and to Harold’s daughter Carol, who still lives locally.

# **West Midlands Police Special Constables recruitment advert**

Interested in policing? Volunteer as a Special alongside your job or studies.

Free uniform, training and support, flexible hours to suit you, keep your community safe, full police powers and equipment.

[Direct link to West Midlands Police Special constable webpage for more information](https://www.westmidlands.police.uk/police-forces/west-midlands-police/areas/careers/wmp-jobs/special-constable/). Or search ‘Special constable’ at [www.westmidlands.police.uk](http://www.westmidlands.police.uk)

# **Padel comes to Sandwell!**

The world’s fastest-growing sport has officially landed in Sandwell!

Three brand-new indoor Padel courts have opened at Tipton Sports Academy, making them the first of their kind in the Black Country.

The exciting launch event drew a crowd of over 150 people, including curious locals, sports fans and special guests.

Councillor Syeda Khatun MBE, the then Mayor of Sandwell, kicked things off in style by cutting the ribbon and hitting the first ball.

This investment brings a brilliant new way to stay active and social. Padel is a racquet sport which is super easy to pick up, fun for all ages and fitness levels, and perfect for playing with friends or family. Plus, with indoor courts, you can enjoy it all year round!

Whether you’re competitive or just fancy trying something new, Padel is ready and waiting for you in Tipton.

Go to Sandwell Leisure Trust’s website [www.slt-leisure.co.uk/padel](http://www.slt-leisure.co.uk/padel) to find out more and book online or call 0300 012 0121.

# **Sandwell Leisure Trust advert for fun and safe swimming lessons**

Building confidence in every stroke and learning skills for life

* Fully Trained & Friendly Instructors
* Fun & Safe Environment
* Boost Water Safety Skills
* Swim England Framework
* Progression and Awards

Find out more and sign up at [www.slt-leisure.co.uk](http://www.slt-leisure.co.uk)

# **Enrol now with SAFL for September 2025**

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

Our aim is to enable all adults in Sandwell, from all walks and stages of life, to learn something new and shape their own futures.

We offer a range of subjects, with over 200 courses delivered across the borough.

We have initial assessment dates at various locations between now and September. Visit [www.learnsafl.ac.uk](http://www.learnsafl.ac.uk) for latest course information or call 0121 557 0837.

# **Adult Social Care – here to help you**

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

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 we completed 13,900 assessments with Sandwell residents, provided home care to 2,431 people and delivered 41,000 pieces of equipment to support people to live independently at home.

Visit [www.sandwell.gov.uk/adultsocialcare](http://www.sandwell.gov.uk/adultsocialcare) for more information or call 0121 569 2266 to speak to Sandwell Enquiry, our Adult Social Care phone service.

# **Building a Dementia Friendly Sandwell**

Work continues to support our residents who are living with dementia, and those who care for a family member or someone living with dementia.

To find out about local support about our community dementia service, visit [www.murrayhall.co.uk/scds](http://www.murrayhall.co.uk/scds) or call 01902 826 655.

The Virtual Dementia Tour Bus is back in the borough this July. Virtual reality provides staff working with people with dementia a unique, immersive way to better understand what living with the condition might feel like.

In Sandwell, we have higher numbers of people with early onset dementia than the national average, and more people with a dementia diagnosis who live on their own.

As we begin work to refresh our Dementia Strategy, we want to increase the number of Dementia Champions across the borough as part of our efforts to make Sandwell a more Dementia Friendly community.

Go to [www.sandwell.gov.uk/dementia](http://www.sandwell.gov.uk/dementia) for more information about these initiatives and support available. Or call 0121 569 2266 to speak to Sandwell Enquiry, our Adult Social Care phone service.

# **TV spotlight for Harvest View**

We were delighted to welcome a film crew from ITV to Harvest View, our care and health centre based in Rowley Regis.

The facility enables people to get back home after a hospital visit and those who need some structured support to avoid a hospital stay altogether.

The news story showcases the amazing journey two Sandwell residents have been on since staying at the centre.

Jasbir said: “Harvest View has given me my confidence back, provided me with the tools to cope independently and I’m ready to go back home.”

Margaret said: “I can’t thank the staff enough.”

# **Spotlight on support for hoarding**

A Black Country-wide conference to support people with hoarding behaviours saw professionals from a range of organisations hearing people’s experiences, sharing best practice and pledging to work to improve support.

The Behind Closed Doors conference coincided with National Hoarding Awareness Week in May.

Sandwell Hoarding Improvement Programme (SHIP) gave an overview of its work. The conference included workshops focussed on mental health, stigma and trauma followed by a Q&A session with people with lived experience.

Working in partnership, Sandwell, Dudley, Walsall and Wolverhampton Safeguarding Adults Boards held the event at Walsall FC’s Bescot Stadium.

Mind has information and advice to help people recognise hoarding behaviours and how to get support – visit [www.mind.org.uk/hoarding](http://www.mind.org.uk/hoarding). People can also talk to their GP.

# **See Something Do Something**

**See Something:**If you are concerned that an adult with care and support needs is at risk of abuse or neglect and is unable to protect themselves.

**Do Something:**In an emergency dial 999  
Call Sandwell on 0121 569 2266 (out of hours 0121 569 2355)

# **Supporting carers**

We’re working with local carers to shape a new carer support service that’s set to launch in Sandwell this year.

The service will be a central contact point to refer to and for unpaid carers to access information and advice.

Go to [www.sandwell.gov.uk/supportforcarers](http://www.sandwell.gov.uk/supportforcarers) or call 0121 569 2266 to find out more about the services and support for carers that’s available in Sandwell and ways you can have your say about them.

# **Community support**

There’s lots of support for people here in Sandwell.

There’s the Community Offer Plus service – a network of organisations – which provides support to adults over the age of 18. This includes information, advice and guidance to help people manage their needs.

Visit [www.murrayhall.co.uk/community-offer](http://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](mailto:bcicb.communityoffer@nhs.net)

Meanwhile, a warm welcome awaits at Crossroads Day Club if you want to get out more but worry that care needs are holding you back.

The day club, which takes place 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. Here you can enjoy a change of scenery, social activities, and a hot meal in a safe and secure environment. Call Crossroads on 0121 553 6483 or visit [www.crossroads-caringforcarers.org](http://www.crossroads-caringforcarers.org) for information on price and activities.

You can also check out the range of activities, support and advice for older people and their loved ones offered by Age UK and Agewell. For Age UK, call 0121 437 0033 and for Agewell, call 0121 796 9333.

# **Supporting Sandwell**

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

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](http://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.

Welcoming Spaces logos are libraries or other Welcoming Spaces community buildings in your area. Visit [www.sandwell.gov.uk/welcomingspaces](http://www.sandwell.gov.uk/welcomingspaces) to find your nearest.

# **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 wanting to hire a wheelchair for a while.

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

Sandwell Shopmobility is based in Unit 1A (by Next) at New Square, West Bromwich, B70 7PP. Open Wednesday to Saturday, 8.30am to 3pm.

# **Homeless or worried about losing your home?**

Homeless or worried about losing your home?

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

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

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 7,200 households that are either homeless or at risk of homelessness in the past year. Demand for council housing has also increased significantly with over 21,300 households now looking for council housing. In most cases, the council will look to find suitable private rented housing to meet your needs.

Visit [www.sandwell.gov.uk/homeless](http://www.sandwell.gov.uk/homeless) for a host of information and support.

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

Call 0121 368 1166 / 01323 690 856 (out-of-hours) if you are homeless or concerned about a rough sleeper.

# **Holiday meal vouchers and more household support**

Sandwell Council will continue supporting families of 46,000 children with vouchers during school holidays.

The vouchers – worth £130 per child over the year – are for pupils who get benefits-related Free School Meals.

Eligible families will receive two vouchers per child directly from schools – one for £90 this July to cover Easter and Whitsun holidays (backdated) and the six-week summer holiday.

A second £40 voucher will be issued in December to cover October half-term (backdated) and the Christmas and February half-term holidays.

The vouchers are part of a £6million package of help funded through the Household Support Fund this financial year.

This funding will also support Local Welfare Provision to help people in crisis – more low-income working households will be eligible to apply, including residents who need help with disability equipment including wheelchairs. The money will also support local food banks and food pantries, carers and young people leaving care, budgeting and benefit advice through the council’s Welfare Rights team, and help for residents with rent arrears and Council Tax bills.

Go to [www.sandwell.gov.uk/hsf](http://www.sandwell.gov.uk/hsf) for more details.

# **Struggling with your rent? (Advert with a graphic featuring three ice cream scoops)**

Let us help you afford an extra scoop this summer

The council wants to help you this summer with:

* Extra help paying your rent
* Extra help with school uniforms
* Extra help with holiday activities

If you’re struggling with your rent, then we’re here to help. Call us on 0121 737 5148 for advice.

# **Sandwell College advert**

Sandwell College – a careers college.

School leavers enrol from 21 August – there’s still time to apply.

Enjoy free travel to college.

Visit the Sandwell College website at [www.sandwell.ac.uk](http://www.sandwell.ac.uk)

# **Bins and recycling – bin collections are changing**

From 15 September 2025 your bin collections are changing.

You will still have a weekly collection, but we will be collecting non-recycling (grey) bin one week and recycling the following week or vice versa.

You will be getting a new recycling (blue) bag for paper, cartons and cardboard.

Your recycling (blue lid) bin will still be used for glass bottles and jars, cans, tins and plastic bottles, tubs and food trays.

In August every household will receive a leaflet and calendar explaining what will be changing and when.

These changes do not affect flats and high-rise buildings at this stage.

**Why are we making these changes?**

We are making these changes to comply with Government legislation, called Simpler Recycling, which needs to be in place by April 2026.

In Sandwell this means from 15 September 2025 we must start separating paper, cartons and card and put them in a new recycling (blue) bag.

You will still use your recycling (blue lid) bin for glass bottles and jars, cans, tins and plastic bottles, tubs and food trays.

Get ready for 15 September – reduce, reuse, recycle.

Reduce your waste with simple swaps like:

* using a reusable water bottle
* buying loose fruit and veg
* cancelling any junk mail
* changing to reusable cleaning cloths

Save space in your bin – squash, crush, fold.

**Key points to prepare for 15 September:**

Keep recycling your plastic bottles, tubs and food trays, cans, glass bottles and jars as well as your cardboard, cartons and paper in your recycling (blue lid) bin until September.

Get ready for the start of your new collection service and start putting your cardboard, cartons and paper in your new recycling (blue) bag in September.

Find out more about what can go in your bin at [www.sandwell.gov.uk/bins](http://www.sandwell.gov.uk/bins) or call 0121 368 1177 if you need more information.

Sign up for waste and recycling email updates at [www.sandwell.gov.uk/emailupdates](http://www.sandwell.gov.uk/emailupdates)

**Everything you need to know about your new recycling (blue) bag**

* I have a hoop and loop fastening system for easy closing.
* Place me next to your recycling (blue lid) bin.
* You can write your house number anywhere using a permanent marker.
* Put large cardboard pieces between me and your recycling (blue lid) bin – remove anything that isn’t paper or card, like tape.
* If they can, collectors will place me under your bin lid after emptying.
* I’m bigger than I look! I’m 84 litres which is bigger than an average bin bag.
* My base weighs 800g to help stop me blowing away when it’s windy.
* I’m water-resistant and safe to store outdoors.
* Lost or damaged? I can be replaced at no cost to you.
* You can close my lid it will help keep your card and paper as dry as possible.
* If your paper and card becomes a little damp – do not worry, we will still be able to recycle it.
* I have a handle underneath for easy emptying by collectors.
* I will be delivered between 26 August and 14 September.

# **Food waste**

Did you know?

In 2021 – 2022 across the UK households threw away on average 6.4 million tonnes of food of which 3.4million tonnes was edible! Follow our top tips to reduce your food waste and sign up to our weekly food waste collections to recycle what’s left.

Reduce your food waste with these simple steps:

1. Plan wisely
2. Shop smart
3. Store right
4. Eat leftovers

Sign up to our weekly food waste collection service and turn your tea bags, peel and plate scrapings into fertiliser and energy.

Request a caddy for food waste at [www.sandwell.gov.uk/foodwaste](http://www.sandwell.gov.uk/foodwaste) or call 0121 368 1177.

# **Sandwell Police update**

Chief Superintendent Kim Madill, Sandwell Police Commander, gives an update on policing and partnership work.

As the borough’s policing commander and chair of the Safer Sandwell Partnership, I’d like to say a big thank you everyone who’s got involved in this year’s Sandwell Safer 6 campaign.

These six weeks of activities have helped us to showcase the work organisations are doing to keep you safe. They have also provided a great opportunity for you to meet your new named neighbourhood officer.

Every ward in Sandwell now has a named officer who will solely work in that area. They will focus on problem solving, working with local people and delivering targeted activity.

They will work alongside partner organisations and are supported by a location action team as well as other departments such as the Roads Policing Unit. Find out who your dedicated neighbourhood police officer is by searching your postcode at [www.westmidlands.police.uk](http://www.westmidlands.police.uk)

Your dedicated neighbourhood officer will continue to act on your concerns throughout the summer. We know that the dangerous and illegal use of off-road bikes will feature heavily in those concerns.

If we are to stop this nuisance and keep people safe, it is essential that you tell us where these bikes are being stored and who is riding them. Your call to report someone could stop nuisance and save a life. We can seize and destroy the bikes, so make sure to call us on 101 so we can crush it.

You can sign up for free WMnow email messages at [www.WMnow.co.uk](http://www.WMnow.co.uk)

# **Safer 6 campaign in your town**

Sandwell’s Safer 6 community safety campaign has brought six weeks of focused action and activities to tackle crime, anti-social behaviour and other community concerns.

The campaign launched on 9 June and ran until 20 July, providing information and promoting services to help Sandwell people stay safe and healthy.

Through the Safer Sandwell Partnership, there has been a wide mixture of activity including enforcement, joint operations, education around the dangers of carrying weapons and highlighting services available to support our communities.

Each week has focused on a specific town, with activities run by council services, police, fire service and other partner organisations.

Safer 6 builds on the work taking place day in, day out across Sandwell to address people’s concerns and help raise awareness of the support they can access from different agencies.

Go to [www.sandwell.gov.uk/safer6](http://www.sandwell.gov.uk/safer6) for full details of the campaign’s aims and the activities and events across Sandwell. Thanks to everyone who has supported this year’s campaign.

**Please report all incidents**

Your voice is vital in making Sandwell a safer place. By reporting incidents, you’re helping us to identify trends, pinpoint hotspots and shape the way services respond.

Police: In an emergency, call 999 immediately. To log an incident, call 101. Report concerns online at [www.westmidlands.police.uk](http://www.westmidlands.police.uk)

Crimestoppers: Report anonymously on 0800 555 111 or go to [www.crimestoppers-uk.org](http://www.crimestoppers-uk.org)

Sandwell Council Anti-Social Behaviour Team: Call 0121 368 1166 (option 4) or go to [www.sandwell.gov.uk/asb](http://www.sandwell.gov.uk/asb)

For domestic abuse support, visit [www.sandwell.gov.uk/domesticabuse](http://www.sandwell.gov.uk/domesticabuse) or call Black Country Women’s Aid on 0121 552 6448 (24/7), Ask Marc (for men) on 0121 289 6402 or Birmingham LGBT Centre on 0121 643 0821.

# **Choose life, not knife**

Amazing T-shirt designs by Sandwell young people are helping us to spread the message about tackling knife crime.

Congratulations to the winners and thanks to everyone who entered our competition which was sponsored by Eurox. The T-shirts are now on tour around Sandwell in a roving exhibition.

We’re building on the legacy of the Knife Angel’s visit to Sandwell last year and continuing our work with partners to tackle the issue of knife crime.

We are all working together with the police, schools, colleges, youth clubs and other organisations, through our Safer Sandwell Partnership and the Violence Reduction Partnership.

Did you know? There are three weapon surrender bins in Sandwell where people can safely dispose of a knife, blade or other weapon. The secure bins are located at Sainsbury’s Oldbury, Tipton Sports Academy and Windmill Shopping Centre, Cape Hill.

# **Stay vigilant this summer**

We are supporting Counter Terrorism Policing West Midlands this summer by encouraging our communities to stay alert and report anything that doesn’t feel right while they’re out and about.

While this advice is not based on an increased threat to the region, we know that busy or crowded events can unfortunately be a target for criminal or terrorist activity.

If you hear or become aware of something that doesn’t feel right, report it to security staff where you are or police straight away.

Report suspicious activity online anonymously at [gov.uk/ACT](https://act.campaign.gov.uk/) – and in an emergency, always call 999.

# **Summer of Fun for Sandwell’s children and young people**

# **Bostin summer activities**

Sandwell Council’s Youth Service is running free holiday activity and food programmes in Sandwell parks and open spaces across the six towns.

A range of activities aimed at 11 to 19-year-olds (up to 25 for those with SEND), supported by the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme, is offering some bostin fun and excitement for young people.

Young people can access our NEW Youth Bus – kitted out with the latest technology and gadgets. Scale the heights on our mobile climbing wall and take part in multi sports, graffiti art and laser fun.

Back by popular demand is our skate park coaching and competitions which are returning to Brunswick Park, Britannia Park and Victoria Park, Tipton.

And don’t miss our summer holiday adventure days at Malthouse Outdoor Activity Centre in Tipton. For children aged eight and over to try out canoeing, climbing, abseiling and archery. Email [youngpeople\_services@sandwell.gov.uk](mailto:youngpeople_services@sandwell.gov.uk) to find out more and book places.

Visit [www.justyouth.org.uk](http://www.justyouth.org.uk) for more information on activities and programmes or follow us on the [Just Youth Sandwell Facebook page](https://www.facebook.com/JustYouthSandwell).

Our Youth Service runs a number of activity days in key parks in each of our six towns this summer.

Our regular youth clubs will still be open during the evenings, as well as our youth workers being out and about throughout the summer on estates, parks and open spaces.

They will be helping young people to find somewhere safe to go, something positive to do and someone to talk to.

Activity days are free and open to all young people (just turn up on the day). They are running in a park in each town, offering a range of activities, thanks to funding from the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme, including our climbing wall, graffiti art, laser fun and multi sports. Our amazing Youth Bus is at some of these days too.

Activity days in parks still to come this summer:

* Wednesday 20 August to Thursday 21 August, 4pm-8pm Victoria Park, Smethwick B66 3QB
* Wednesday 27 August to Thursday 28 August, 4pm-8pm Victoria Park, Tipton DY4 8SW

Full details at [www.justyouth.org.uk/sandwell-activities/summer-of-fun-2025](http://www.justyouth.org.uk/sandwell-activities/summer-of-fun-2025)

# **Exciting summer activities for children**

We have a spectacular line-up of Sandwell Holiday Activities to keep your youngsters entertained and active.

Funded by the Department for Education, Holiday Activities provide fantastic opportunities for children and young people to explore new interests, create friendships and have fun. Whether it’s sports, music, dance, art, drama, cooking or day trips, there’s something for everyone.

If your child receives free school meals based on benefits, you’ll receive a Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) e-voucher. This voucher will come with a unique code and booking instructions via email or text.

Head over to <https://holidayactivities.sandwell.gov.uk> to find activities offering FREE universal or subsidised spaces. Stay updated by following [Sandwell Holiday Activities on Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/SandwellHAF).

Let’s make this summer unforgettable with a great range of exciting activities for children and young people of all ages in Sandwell!

**Go Play Sandwell!**

Become part of the fantastic Go Play Sandwell family with Sandwell Council’s play service.

Dive into indoor and outdoor fun including arts and crafts, archery, mud painting, family games and much more! All you need to do is check what’s on in your area, show up and play – all at no cost!

Amazing FREE play sessions are available for all school aged children and families across the borough all year round.

Check out our play sessions calendar at [www.goplaysandwell.co.uk](http://www.goplaysandwell.co.uk) for a full calendar of events and contact details. Follow [Go Play Sandwell on Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/GoPlaySandwell).

Go Play Sandwell will be running a number of free activities for children aged 5-12 at various locations in each of our six towns this summer, no need to book just turn up and play!

# **Sandwell celebrates National Play Day**

We’ve been celebrating National Play Day – which is back for its 16th year, having already delighted over 10,000 children and families.

The next free National Play Day event is on Wednesday 20 August, 12 noon to 4pm, at Bromwich Hall, Hall Green Road, West Bromwich B71 2EA.

Enjoy free food workshops, Dohl drumming workshops and theatre productions. Engage in play across the entire site with sporting activities and crafts.

Pack a picnic and enjoy the summer fun! Don’t miss out on this fun-filled day of play and entertainment!

Go to [www.goplaysandwell.co.uk](http://www.goplaysandwell.co.uk) for more information.

# **Summer Reading Challenge and libraries activities**

Sandwell Libraries are celebrating in style this summer with the Story Garden Summer Reading Challenge.

The Summer Reading Challenge encourages repeated visits to libraries across the summer holidays, with fun incentives and stickers for taking part and certificates and medals for all children who complete the challenge.

Aimed at children aged four and over, the Story Garden will explore the magic of nature and stories.

For younger audiences, all libraries will be holding interactive Play, Talk, Read sessions and, if you are lucky, you may see our very own Sandy Bear as he tours around the libraries.

We will also be running a special Summer Reading Challenge for under-fours.

Every library will have a packed programme of storytelling, games and crafts – fun for all the family.

Contact your local library for their full programme – find out more at [www.sandwell.gov.uk/librariesonline](http://www.sandwell.gov.uk/librariesonline) and [www.visitsandwell.com](http://www.visitsandwell.com) or Sandwell Libraries on Facebook.

Visit [www.summerreadingchallenge.org.uk](http://www.summerreadingchallenge.org.uk) for the Summer Reading Challenge.

# **A sensational summer at Sandwell Museums**

Discover and explore Sandwell Museums this summer and enjoy a world of creativity, adventure and entertainment for families to enjoy.

Get crafty and decorate bags, create phone charms with beads, make kites, turn nature into art and loads more!

Get messy with clay and make pots and tiles, enjoy seaside-themed fun with our sandpits and Punch and Judy shows, and be amazed with our science activities.

Play games with Go Play Sandwell and bring a picnic to enjoy our grounds and beautiful buildings while you solve our trails.

We’ve also got our new exhibition – The Extraordinary, Ordinary – at Wednesbury Museum & Art Gallery celebrating creative and colourful things you might not expect to have been made in Sandwell during the Industrial Revolution.

Find out full details of what’s on at [www.sandwell.gov.uk/joininmuseums](http://www.sandwell.gov.uk/joininmuseums), find out more about Sandwell Museums at [www.visitsandwell.com/sandwell-museums](http://www.visitsandwell.com/sandwell-museums) and follow us on social media @sandwellmuseums

# **Summer fun at leisure centres**

Looking for ways to keep the kids active, engaged and having fun?

Sandwell Leisure Trust offers a fantastic range of children’s activities – from exciting holiday camps and sports clubs to free swimming sessions and more.

Whether it’s making new friends, learning new skills, or just burning off energy in a safe and fun environment, we’ve got something for every child.

Explore all our activities at [www.slt-leisure.co.uk/childrens-activities](http://www.slt-leisure.co.uk/childrens-activities) and book now!

# **Free swimming sessions available**

Free swimming is available for Sandwell children aged 18 and under during designated sessions over the school summer holidays.

For Sandwell Leisure Trust centres – Sandwell Aquatics Centre, Tipton Leisure Centre and Wednesbury Leisure Centre – go to [www.slt-leisure.co.uk/free-swimming-in-sandwell](http://www.slt-leisure.co.uk/free-swimming-in-sandwell) or call 0300 012 0121.

For West Bromwich Leisure Centre, register for free swimming by visiting reception at the centre or call 0121 580 6430, or go to [www.placesleisure.org/centres/west-bromwich-leisure-centre](http://www.placesleisure.org/centres/west-bromwich-leisure-centre)

# **Stay safe, stay out!**

Stay safe this summer and please only swim in purpose-built, supervised swimming pools.

Lakes, pools, ponds, canals and rivers may seem inviting on a warm summer’s day, but please don’t be tempted to swim in them. People can often misjudge their swimming ability.

Even in hot weather, water can be icy cold a few feet beneath the surface and very quickly cause severe cramp and hypothermia. Go to [www.sandwell.gov.uk/watersafety](http://www.sandwell.gov.uk/watersafety) for more advice.

# **Discover nature close to home**

Visit Forge Mill Farm and Sandwell Valley Country Park this summer.

Enjoy local outdoor fun and make lasting memories at Sandwell Valley Country Park, which spans over 1,800 acres.

[Follow Sandwell Valley on Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/sandwellvalley) for the latest updates on both Sandwell Valley and Forge Mill Farm.

Explore attractions such as Forge Mill Farm, the Sandwell Valley Visitor Centre, high ropes courses, an adventure playground, cycling trails and scenic walks.

Forge Mill Farm is home to rare animals like sheep, alpacas and Highland cows. It’s a fantastic educational destination for families and school groups, offering farm trails, interactive activities and a farm shop.

Go to [www.visitsandwell.com](http://www.visitsandwell.com) to check out all the activities and events on offer at Sandwell Valley Country Park and across Sandwell.

**Community events**

Join in all the fun at exciting, family-friendly community events taking place this summer in Sandwell.

In August, enjoy ONE Fest, a free celebration of African, Caribbean and South American arts and culture at Sandwell Valley Country Park from 23 to 25 August. [Register your free attendance for ONE Fest at the Eventbrite website](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/one-fest-tickets-1365317785249). ONE Fest is a community events organised by external organisations.

# **Exam results – whatever the result, we’re here to help**

Have you had your exam results and you're not sure what to do next?

Get specialised information, advice and guidance on weekdays Thursday 14 August to Friday 29 August, 10am to 4pm (Not including Bank Holiday Monday 25 August).

Get in touch. Call Connexions Sandwell on 0121 569 2955, visit [www.connexionssandwell.co.uk](http://www.connexionssandwell.co.uk) or email [sandwell\_connexions@sandwell.gov.uk](mailto:sandwell_connexions@sandwell.gov.uk)

# **30 hours of childcare for eligible working families**

From September 2025, eligible working parents can now apply for 30 hours of childcare from the term after their child turns 9 months until they start school.

If you currently receive 15 hours as a working family, just reconfirm as usual and the code will work for the 30 hours offer in September, providing you remain eligible and your provider has confirmed your new attendance pattern for your increased hours.

Remember to reconfirm your code every three months.

Visit [www.childcarechoices.gov.uk](http://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk) for more information.

# **Information for families**

Sandwell Family Information Service (FIS) offers free, impartial information to families with children from birth to 19 years (or up to 25 years with a special educational need or disability), young people and professionals.

FIS can support you to help find the right childcare provider, help with childcare applications and answer any other childcare-related queries.

Visit the FIS Hub [fis.sandwell.gov.uk](https://fis.sandwell.gov.uk/kb5/sandwell/directory/home.page) for national and local services, activities and advice pages.

The hub includes the Sandwell All Age Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Directory which provides a wide range of local, regional and national support services for children, young people and their families.

# **Healthy Sandwell**

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 support you.

Getting in touch is easy. Call 0800 011 4656 or 0121 569 5100, email [LS@nhs.net](mailto:LS@nhs.net) or text GETHEALTHY to 87007. Follow us on the [Healthy Sandwell Facebook page](https://www.facebook.com/HealthySandwell) and visit [www.healthysandwell.co.uk](http://www.healthysandwell.co.uk) for more advice.

# **Pregnant or a new parent?**

Are you pregnant or a parent or carer with a child aged 0 to 4?

We are delighted to be able to offer FREE activity sessions for you and your child.

Go to [www.sandwellchanges.co.uk](http://www.sandwellchanges.co.uk) to find out more about our Changes programme and to book your space.

# **Family Hubs are here for you**

Our Family Hubs offer the right help, in the right place, at the right time.

They offer free activities, services and support for all families in Sandwell with children aged 0 to 19 (or 25 with SEND) and extra support is available for families during pregnancy and in your baby’s first years.

Visit [www.sandwellfamilyhubs.com](http://www.sandwellfamilyhubs.com) to see what we have on offer this summer at our seven Family Hubs across Sandwell.

# **Courses to help parents and carers**

Bringing up children is one of the hardest jobs out there! Children don’t come with an instruction manual, and we all need a bit of help and guidance from time to time.

In Sandwell, we offer a range of support to help you on your parenting journey – from one-off sessions and online programmes to longer courses.

Go to the Sandwell Family Hubs website at [www.sandwellfamilyhubs.com/journey/parent-support/parenting-courses](http://www.sandwellfamilyhubs.com/journey/parent-support/parenting-courses) to find out more about what we have on offer this summer at our seven Family Hubs across Sandwell.

# **Have fun and make happy memories together**

Our Choices Team helps families with children aged 5 to 12 to join in free activities that support healthy eating, feeling good and staying active. There’s lots to try – like arts and crafts, gardening, games, horse riding, rock climbing and more. All activities are free and take place throughout the year. There’s something for everyone to enjoy!

Visit [www.bookwhen.com/choices](http://www.bookwhen.com/choices) or email the team at [choices\_sandwell@sandwell.gov.uk](mailto:choices_sandwell@sandwell.gov.uk)

# **Sandwell School Nursing Service**

Do you have a question about your child’s behaviour, toileting, diet or health? Does your child need some support regarding bullying or a healthier lifestyle?

School nurses can provide support and advice for a wide variety of health needs for children and young people to enable them to reach their full potential.

If you are a parent or carer of a child aged 5 to 19 in a Sandwell school and would like confidential advice and support, visit [www.healthforkids.co.uk](http://www.healthforkids.co.uk) for information or access Chat Health by texting 07312 263 756 to contact a nurse directly.

All primary schools are offered the opportunity to host a parent drop-in facilitated by the School Nursing Service, so speak to your school to find out more.

Visit [www.healthysandwell.co.uk/school-nurse](http://www.healthysandwell.co.uk/school-nurse) to find out more.

# **WorkWell in Sandwell**

Across Sandwell, WorkWell is helping residents take meaningful steps towards employment, personal growth and improved wellbeing.

Led by Black Country Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust, WorkWell offers tailored support for residents facing barriers to work due to health conditions or disabilities.

Through one-to-one support and access to local resources, the service helps people build confidence, manage their health and explore routes into employment or training.

Visit [www.blackcountryhealthcare.nhs.uk/workwell](http://www.blackcountryhealthcare.nhs.uk/workwell) to find out more.

# **Advert for Sandwell’s parks**

Our parks are wheeeeeeeliegreat!

Go out, get moving. There’s fun for all the family at your local park.

Visit [www.sandwell.gov.uk/parks](http://www.sandwell.gov.uk/parks) for park information.

# **Walking for men’s mental health**

A big thank you to everyone who joined us for our 52-kilometre Walk in the Park Challenge and stood shoulder to shoulder for men’s mental health.

Councillor Jackie Taylor, Cabinet Member for Adult Services and Health and Wellbeing, and Councillor Luke Cotterill led a six-park, three-day walking challenge in June, which finished at West Smethwick Park.

Whether you walked with us, cheered everyone on or provided activities, games or advice along the way, thank you.

Visit [www.healthysandwell.co.uk](http://www.healthysandwell.co.uk) or call Healthy Sandwell on 0800 011 4656 for advice and support around mental health and wellbeing.

# **Advert for Stop For Life Sandwell**

Your first step towards a new smoke-free you.

FREE 1-2-1 support with Stop For Life Sandwell for people who live, work or have a registered GP in Sandwell.

Visit the Stop For Life Sandwell website:  
<https://www.stopforlifesandwell.org>

Call 0800 612 4580

Text QUITNOW SANDWELL to 66777

# **Regenerating Sandwell feature**

Visit [www.regeneratingsandwell.co.uk](http://www.regeneratingsandwell.co.uk) for details of these and other regeneration schemes across Sandwell.

The regeneration projects featured below are supported by Government funding.

# **More improvements for Britannia Park**

More improvements are on the way at Britannia Park in Rowley Regis, including a dedicated toddler play area set to benefit local children and families.

The new toddler area will be perfect for young children, complementing existing play facilities unveiled in August 2024.

Upgrades to the park entrances at Ross and Mackmillan Road are also planned to provide better access. Tree planting will include the creation of a new beech tree maze, and ecological signage will be installed. More sports pitches will receive drainage upgrades.

This is all part of a £3.2million project to improve Rowley Regis parks supported by the government’s Towns Fund programme and other partner organisations.

The new Football Association-approved changing rooms are now complete, ready for teams and referees to use from the start of the new football season.

Other recent improvements include the addition of 15 new allotment plots, two refurbished tennis courts, an upgraded multi-games area (MUGA), an avenue of trees and a newly laid out, larger car park.

A new skate park is coming soon, and the nearby Britannia Park Sons of Rest community building will undergo refurbishment.

# **Learning Campus is halfway there**

Constriction of the £18million Midland Met Learning Campus in Smethwick has passed the halfway mark.

The pioneering health and education hub will bring life-changing opportunities to Smethwick and the wider region.

The landmark project is led by Sandwell and West Birmingham NHS Trust, in partnership with Sandwell Council, Sandwell College, Aston University and the University of Wolverhampton.

It is funded by the government’s Towns Fund programme, overseen by the Smethwick Partnership Board, with additional co-funding from the NHS Trust and the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA). Construction is being led by Kier.

Once operational in early 2026 and co-located with the Midland Metropolitan University Hospital in Smethwick, the Learning Campus will become a trailblazing centre of excellence for health and social care education.

It will support over 1,200 learners annually, helping them into high demand careers across the NHS and the broader care sector.

# **Blackheath open as usual during improvement works**

Businesses are open as usual while works continue on the new Blackheath Bus Interchange.

The town centre and Blackheath Market are open and accessible throughout the works. Temporary traffic plans are in place to minimise disruption.

The £2.9million regeneration project, funded by the government’s Towns Fund programme, is creating a new bus interchange around Market Place.

There will also be a new, inviting, landscaped public space, which will replace the existing traffic island and create a safer pedestrian environment. Upgrades include five new zebra crossings and new loading spaces closer to businesses.

This project aims to encourage more people to visit Blackheath town centre and will support shoppers, businesses and traders. It will make it easier to access public transport links as well as improving safety and reducing congestion.

Traffic will still be able to travel through the town centre in the future, in line with people’s feedback from previous consultation.

# **Significant milestones reached in £20.4million Wednesbury project**

Wednesbury town centre is benefiting from improvements made under the Levelling Up Partnership, funded by the government.

Following community safety improvements launched earlier this year, the main phase of public realm work was completed in June and was marked by a planting event at Ethelfleda Square, next to the bus station, with school children from St John’s Church of England Primary Academy.

The design of the square celebrates Wednesbury’s history and its connection with the places surrounding. The square is named after Queen Ethelfleda, daughter of Alfred the Great who fortified Wednesbury in Anglo-Saxon times. It honours her as a strong leader. Students from Wood Green Academy helped choose the name.

The council wants to thank residents, visitors and businesses for their patience during the main works.

Further work continues in the town centre, at Hydes Road Playing Fields, the Friar Park Millennium Centre, and at Friar Park Urban Village.

# **Update on Tipton regeneration project**

Planning permission was secured in May for the third and final phase of new housing in Tipton town centre.

This will secure the conversion and refurbishment of the former Conservative Club on Union Street, with new build units at the rear, in total creating 15 new homes.

This will bring the total new affordable council apartments across the three sites to 70.

The project, which is supported by £20million of government funding, also includes improvements to public spaces in the town.

The construction contract for the first two sites, either side of Union Street, has now been let and building work is expected to begin on site later in the summer.

In the meantime, wooden security hoardings that surround these sites now feature decorative murals.

The images, which depict aspects of Tipton past and present, have been designed by artist Mark Murphy in conjunction with Multistory and local community groups. They also include imaginative images created by pupils from Q3 Academy Tipton.

# **Smethwick Plan for Neighbourhoods**

Smethwick is set to benefit from up to £20million under a government-funded project. Residents are invited to have their say on how funding should be spent.

An online survey and community workshops are planned to gather feedback.

Visit [www.sandwell.gov.uk/smethwickpfn](http://www.sandwell.gov.uk/smethwickpfn) to find out more and have your say.

Congratulations to Naomi whose vibrant design won the competition to create a logo for the Smethwick Partnership Board.

The colourful mosaic globe perfectly captures Smethwick’s spirit, representing diversity and unity, with iconic industrial symbols honouring our rich heritage and bright future.

A huge thanks to everyone who entered the competition.

# **New and improved council homes**

We’re busy building much-needed new council homes across Sandwell as well as improving our existing properties for tenants.

This is part of our ongoing commitment to providing safe, comfortable, high-quality affordable homes for our residents.

The developments pictured with this story are just some of the latest council homes to be completed, working with a range of construction partners and supported by grant funding from Homes England.

The pictures with this story show developments at Beever Road, Tipton; Crosswells Road, Oldbury; St Vincent Crescent, West Bromwich; Whitgreave Street, West Bromwich; West End Avenue, Smethwick.

As of April 2025, Sandwell Council had built 547 new council homes since 2016 and is currently building 89 new council homes, of these 74 are anticipated to complete this financial year.

We plan to build a further estimated 133 new council homes by 2027. This makes a potential total of around 769 new council homes. Alongside this, we are developing a future pipeline aimed at bolstering these numbers both up to 2027 and beyond.

Meanwhile, we continue to improve existing council homes. For example, a project at Thorn Close, Wednesbury, saw a major refurbishment of apartments, facilities upgraded and the addition of two brand-new apartments within the original under-used underpasses.

# **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.

Go to [www.sandwellbusinessgrowth.com](http://www.sandwellbusinessgrowth.com) to find out more about how the team can support you and your business.

# **Free family event in West Brom town centre – 16 August**

Multistory invites you all to Green Roots on the Meadow, a free, family-friendly celebration event on Saturday 16 August, 12 noon to 2pm, behind Primark in New Square, West Bromwich.

Enjoy creative workshops, live music, complimentary snacks and the unveiling of a new commission on the meadow by Juneau Projects.

Part of the Sandwell Council’s wider Towns Fund Urban Greening project, the event brings together art, nature and community to celebrate one of Sandwell’s green spaces.

# **Work starts on setting a new bar for design in Sandwell**

We’ve started developing a Design Code for Sandwell to help guide future developments – and everyone will soon have the chance to get involved and have their say.

A Design Code is a planning document, required by the government, that includes design standards for the way a site or area is developed. Our existing guidance will be reviewed and replaced by the new code.

It will establish a set of rules which all new developments in Sandwell must follow during the planning process. This will help raise the quality of developments and ensure the design of them is directly influenced by the character of different areas of Sandwell.

We’ve started chatting to community groups to understand their priorities and soon there will be opportunities for everyone to find out more and get involved – please keep an eye on the council’s planning webpages at [www.sandwell.gov.uk/designcode](http://www.sandwell.gov.uk/designcode)

# **Unstoppable spirit – celebrating Sandwell’s endurance champions**

Sandwell proudly celebrates two local heroes whose grit and determination embody the spirit of Healthy Sandwell – inspiring us all to push boundaries for better health and wellbeing.

Tipton’s Karl Hinett, who overcame life-changing injuries from military service in Iraq, completed the punishing 514km Montane Lapland Arctic Ultra this March.

Alongside fellow veterans, Karl’s team made history as the first ever to finish together – enduring frozen rivers and icy terrain over 10 gruelling days.

Their journey raised around £117,000 for SSAFA, supporting Armed Forces personnel. Karl’s achievement reflects Healthy Sandwell’s commitment to resilience and physical challenge.

And West Bromwich’s Blind Dave Heeley OBE ran his 17th and final London Marathon at the age of 67, joined by his daughters Grace, Georgie-lee and Dannie, raising £40,000 for The Albion Foundation.

Despite two knee replacements, Freeman of Sandwell Dave is dedicated to raising funds and awareness, inspiring healthy lifestyles and community support.

Congratulations to Karl, Dave and all Sandwell athletes promoting health, wellbeing and determination across our borough and beyond.

# **Sandwell Bereavement Services advert**

Here to help at the most difficult of times

Sandwell Bereavement Services offer a range of services for the bereaved across the region including:

**The Sandwell Funeral Service**

An affordable service for loved ones - £1,999\*(2025) includes:

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

**Sandwell Valley Reception Suite**

A peaceful and modern purpose-built venue located at Sandwell Valley Crematorium.

Our private room offers:

* Space for up to 80 guests to gather and reflect
* Freshly prepared food made on site
* A variety of menus to choose from
* A private fully licensed bar
* Free wi-fi

Plus, car parking.

Funeral wakes may be held here in memory of a loved one.

**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.”

For more information on any of the above or to discuss burial options or memorials please contact us on 0121 569 6700 or email us at [bereavement\_services@sandwell.gov.uk](mailto:bereavement_services@sandwell.gov.uk)

Further information on all our services, including memorials and pet burials, along with up-to-date costs and prices are available on our website at [www.sandwell.gov.uk/bereavement](http://www.sandwell.gov.uk/bereavement)

# **Your Sandwell councillors**

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](http://www.sandwell.gov.uk/councillors)

For more information on councillors, email [members\_services@sandwell.gov.uk](mailto:members_services@sandwell.gov.uk)