

NEWS FROM SANDWELL COUNCIL

SANDWELL HERALD



AUTUMN 2026

SHOP LOCAL IN SANDWELL

 Sandwell  @sandwellcouncil  @sandwellcouncil

 www.sandwell.gov.uk

 Sandwell Council, PO Box
2374, Oldbury B69 3DE

 Sign up for email updates at
www.sandwell.gov.uk/emailupdates



Respect for our
armed forces

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Support for shops
and businesses

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There is a lot to be proud of in Sandwell

Welcome to the latest edition of the Herald. I know how much residents across Sandwell value our paper as a source of local information, so I am pleased that you will now be able to pick up a copy in your local supermarket. The Herald can also be translated into a range of languages on our website, so we can make sure every Sandwell resident can find out what is happening across the borough.

There have been a number of activities the council has led over the summer that aim to reinforce pride in Sandwell. That starts with ensuring that the borough is safe, crime-free and clean.

I have been proud to see our teams secure court orders to close ten shops operating illegally on Cradley Heath High Street. As you will read in this edition, these shops were responsible for the sale of illegal tobacco and vapes, selling these products to children, and in some cases were selling illegal drugs. We're backing our legitimate businesses and encourage you to shop local in each of our towns.

We have also launched a crackdown on illegal fly-tipping over the summer, at one point removing more than 17 tonnes of rubbish from Forge Lane and pursuing those responsible. We know one-off clearances won't solve the problem of fly-tipping but, like we've done in closing shops operating illegally, we won't stop until those who are letting everyone down by behaving this way get the message.

As summer turns to autumn, we will once again see our armed forces veterans gather for Remembrance Sunday services in each of our six towns. Sandwell will use this opportunity to reaffirm its commitment to the Armed Forces Covenant, which helps ensure that veterans' service and sacrifice are recognised and that their unique talents are valued, including in areas such as recruitment and employment.

Read on this page where your local event is and please do join us if you can.



Councillor Ray Nock
Leader of Sandwell Council

Launch of free parking and free market stall pilot in Great Bridge and Wednesbury

Residents, visitors and traders can now benefit from a new initiative aimed at boosting footfall, supporting local businesses and strengthening town centres in Great Bridge and Wednesbury.

Sandwell Council has started a year-long pilot introducing free market stall pitch fees and up to two hours of free parking at sites in both centres until 31 August 2027. The offer of up to two hours of free parking applies to Great Bridge Market Place, and at Ridding Lane and Albert Street car parks in Wednesbury.

The pilot will test whether reducing costs for shoppers, visitors and traders can increase footfall, encourage greater market activity and support the wider vitality of local high streets. The findings will help inform the council's wider Town Centre Strategy and future decisions about regeneration, parking and markets across the borough.

Contact the Markets Team at contact_markets@sandwell.gov.uk if you would like to enquire about a market stall.

Parking for Christmas shopping

Shoppers will be able to park for free at Sandwell Council's town centre car parks on all Saturdays in December (5, 12, 19 and 26 December).

Time limits on short stay car parks still apply. Sunday parking is already free in the council's town centre car parks.

Go to www.sandwell.gov.uk/parking for details of council car parks in Sandwell.

Free parking does not include Sandwell Valley car parks, privately-run car parks and on-street parking bays.

This will support town centre shopping during December, which is the most important trading month of the year. We encourage everyone to support our local shops and businesses.



Respect for our armed forces

Sandwell has a proud armed forces community, and we are committed to strengthening the support available to serving personnel, veterans, reservists and their families.

We want to build on the good work already taking place and make sure our armed forces community can access the right support, recognition and opportunities when they need them.

As part of this, we are making it a core part of an officer's role to provide direction, strengthen partnerships and help co-ordinate activity across the council and wider community.

Importantly, this work is being led by a senior council officer who is a veteran, bringing personal understanding alongside professional experience.

Our ambition is clear: to make Sandwell an increasingly armed forces-friendly borough where service and sacrifice are recognised and supported.

Visit www.sandwell.gov.uk/armedforces to find out more about support available.



Sandwell
Metropolitan Borough Council

REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY
SERVICES AND PARADES

Sunday 8 November 2026 from 10.30am to 11.30am

Great Barr: St Margaret's Church
Oldbury: Civic Square Oldbury
Rowley Regis: Powke Lane Cemetery
Smethwick: Smethwick Council House
Tipton: Victoria Park
Wednesbury: Memorial Gardens
West Bromwich: Dartmouth Park

Sandwell Remembers
www.visitsandwell.com/remembranceday

Your Sandwell Herald:

Published by Sandwell Council, Freeth Street, PO Box 2374, Oldbury B69 3DE
Printed by Mortons Print & Mailing Ltd, Boston Road Industrial Estate, Horncastle LN9 6JR



Holocaust Memorial Service 2027

Sunday 24 January 2027. Memorial Gardens, High Street, West Bromwich B70 8RJ www.sandwell.gov.uk/hmd

Shop Local in Sandwell

We're urging everyone to 'shop local' in Sandwell.

We've recently carried out works to public spaces in three town centres – Blackheath, Tipton and Wednesbury – and we thank residents, businesses and shoppers for their patience during these projects, which were supported by government funding.

Now is the perfect time to discover – or rediscover – these town centres and see what they have to offer.

In Blackheath, there's a new bus interchange, public space and pedestrian crossings making it easier to access the town and market by public transport and on foot, while still allowing traffic to flow along Market Place.

In Tipton, along Owen Street, we've resurfaced roads and pavements, put in new streetlights, moved bus stops and installed new shelters, and provided more pedestrian crossings in the right places. This should help pedestrians and bus passengers feel safer.

In Wednesbury town centre, work finishes soon on renovations to the frontages of 15 shops and businesses. This helps improve the look of the area and makes it more inviting for shoppers, while also preserving the town's heritage.

We'll continue to invest in our high streets and town centres to support our residents and businesses, to sustain and create jobs and to boost economic growth.

An example of this is our two-hour free parking pilot in parts of Great Bridge and Wednesbury – see page 2 for more details.

Go to www.sandwell.gov.uk/markets to check out what our markets have to offer.

Photo in Owen Street, Tipton, courtesy of Be Bold/McPhillips



Sandwell Council closes illegal shops

Sandwell Council's Trading Standards team has now secured ten closure orders against premises linked to illegal activity on Cradley Heath High Street.

The shops have been linked to the sale of illegal drugs and tobacco, with seizures of illicit products made, and have previously failed test purchase and underage sales operations.

This latest action follows continued intelligence-led investigations into concerns raised about illegal activity in Cradley Heath and Smethwick.

The closure orders, granted by the court, mean the shops must cease trading and remain closed for three months, disrupting suspected criminal activity and helping to protect residents and businesses in the area.

Unfortunately, the council is limited to three-month closures meaning that some of the shops will be able to open soon. This is why the council has formally responded to a government consultation asking for powers to extend closures for up to a year.

This latest operation follows recent successful enforcement activity across the borough and demonstrates the council's determination to use all available powers to tackle unlawful businesses and improve the safety and appearance of town centres.

Councillor Bob Jones, Sandwell Council's Cabinet Member for Environment and Enforcement, said: "These latest closure orders send a clear message that Sandwell Council will not tolerate illegal activity operating from our high streets.

"We are continuing to work closely with West Midlands Police and our partners to identify businesses that are breaking the law and take robust enforcement action where there is evidence to do so.

"The vast majority of businesses across Sandwell make a positive contribution to our communities and local economy. Our focus is on protecting those legitimate traders, supporting residents and ensuring our town centres remain safe, welcoming and vibrant places for everyone.

"This action demonstrates that our strengthened approach is delivering results and we will continue using every tool available to disrupt criminal activity and hold those responsible to account."

Tackling criminal and anti-social behaviour remains a key priority for Sandwell Council, with officers continuing to work alongside police and other agencies to gather intelligence, investigate concerns and take enforcement action where necessary.

Further updates will be provided following due legal process.

Sandwell is 'open for business'



We want to help businesses make their ideas happen and flourish.

Sandwell offers plenty of affordable opportunities for start-ups and for businesses to grow.

If you are looking for a commercial site or property to rent here, please contact our Business Growth Team. Whether you are an established or growing business, or an entrepreneur, we look forward to learning more about you.

With 11,465 businesses, a talented workforce, and with an annual economy worth £7.3billion, Sandwell has great connectivity by road and rail across the UK.

Our export sector is super active, and our manufacturing sector punches well above its weight generating £1.519billion per year.

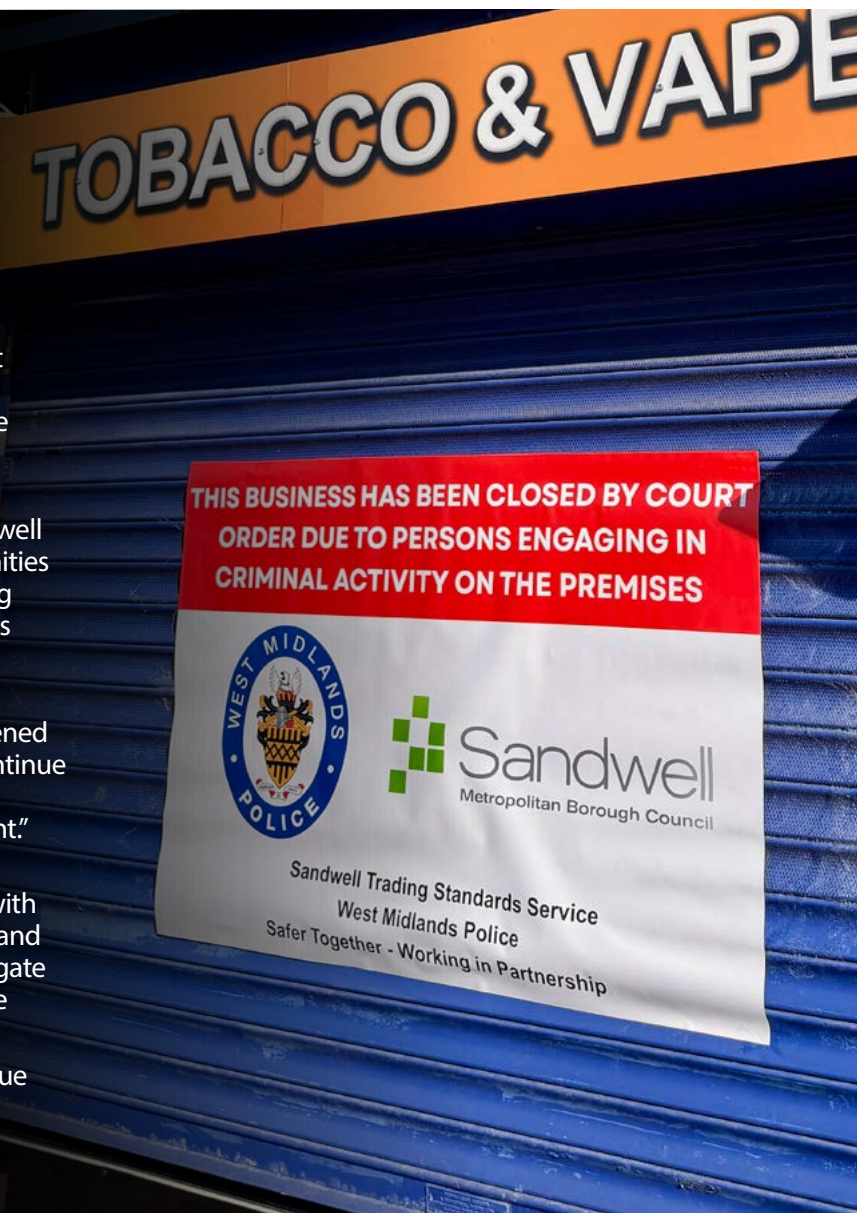
Sandwell is 'open for business' – so we want to hear your enterprising ideas and your business plans and visions for development. Please message our team at business_growth@sandwell.gov.uk – we can take it from there.

The Sandwell Business Growth website is packed with resources to help businesses achieve their ambitions.

Go to www.sandwell.gov.uk/SBG to find out more about how the team can support you and your business

A council visit to Titanium Metals UK Ltd in West Bromwich

Photo courtesy of Osborn Communications



Foster Sandwell is joining BLACK COUNTRY Fostering

**Making a difference
for children across
the Black Country**

To find out how you can
foster with us:

Call: 0800 358 0899

Visit: fostersandwell.co.uk

BLACK COUNTRY
Fostering

Supported by



WE HAVE A NEW PHONE NUMBER FOR MOST COUNCIL SERVICES

We've made it easier for you to get in touch with us by phone when you need to.

The council now has a single phone number, 0121 569 7474, for most of our services.

And for some services, you can now hold your place in the queue without hanging on the phone - and you'll get an automatic call back once you're at the front of the queue.

Each option has an easy-to-understand menu directing callers to select the service they are ringing about.

If you prefer to contact us by phone - why not cut out this article and pop it on your fridge or keep it somewhere safe?

The majority of council services continue to be available online through the council website and MySandwell.

To report an issue or request a service online, go to www.sandwell.gov.uk/reportit or log into your MySandwell account at www.sandwell.gov.uk/mysandwell

Call 0121 569 7474

The new phone number for:

- Housing & Repairs
- Council Tax, Revenues & Benefits and Welfare Rights
- Bins & Street Cleaning
- Adult Social Care Connect
- Registrars (The Register Office)
- Highways
- Regulatory Services
- Complaints & Compliments

Phone numbers remain the same for all other services not mentioned above.



Here to help 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/mysandwell to find out more. It's easy to create an account.

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.

Visit us:

www.sandwell.gov.uk/mysandwell

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

Sandwell Council is hiring...

We are recruiting seasonal Grounds Maintenance Operatives to support our grass cutting operations.



- Do you have a full UK driving licence?
- Do you have 12 months' driving experience?
- Do you have experience using grounds maintenance equipment?



Grounds Maintenance Operative

Seasonal/Fixed Term:

15 March to 22 October 2027

£13.26 per hour (pay award pending)

Visit www.wmjobs.co.uk from 9 November 2026 to apply.

Closing date: **Friday 1 January 2027** (however we reserve the right to close earlier if sufficient applications are received)

Contact: estate_services@sandwell.gov.uk



Doggy Christmas Walk

Book now for a Christmas adventure with your furry companion at Sandwell Valley Visitor Centre on Saturday 19 and Sunday 20 December.

Enjoy this festive experience specially designed for dog owners and their four-legged friends, featuring a guided Christmas walk through Sandwell Valley, beautifully decorated with seasonal lights, festive displays and plenty of Christmas-themed photo opportunities.

Round off your festive adventure with plenty of Christmas cheer and memorable moments alongside your four-legged friend. Every dog will receive a special Christmas gift, helping to create paw-some seasonal memories to treasure.



Santa at the Valley

Create magical Christmas memories at Sandwell Valley Visitor Centre from 21 to 22 December with a festive Santa's Grotto experience for the whole family.

Explore the beautifully decorated Valley, write a letter to Santa, enjoy festive craft activities, and soak up the Christmas atmosphere.

The festive journey continues with a special visit to Santa's Grotto, where children can meet Santa and his friendly elves, receive a Christmas gift and capture a memorable photo to treasure.



Scan the QR code to book your tickets now and avoid missing out on this magical Christmas experience.

Autumnal fun at Museums

Enjoy a season of autumn and Halloween fun at Sandwell Museums.

Follow scarecrow trails, discover fascinating fungi on a guided foray and enjoy family entertainment including live performances and a science show. Adults can also explore the history of witchcraft, superstition and protective marks.

As spooky season arrives, there's plenty more to enjoy, including gothic theatre, family Halloween events, themed crafts and trails. And with Christmas just around the corner, keep an eye out for our festive programme, packed with magical seasonal experiences for all ages.

Visit www.sandwell.gov.uk/joininmuseums and www.visitsandwell.com/sandwell-museums for the full programme and follow us @sandwellmuseums on social media for the latest updates.



Fun on the farm

Forge Mill Farm is bursting with seasonal fun this autumn and winter.

There's still time to enjoy Pick Your Own Pumpkin, where visitors can meet the farm animals before heading to the pumpkin field to choose the perfect pumpkin, with more events including Pumpkin Picking After Dark, Dog Pumpkin Picking Evenings and SEND Early Access.

Looking ahead to Christmas, a packed programme of festive events includes The Living Nativity, Meet Santa, Breakfast with Santa, Santa Paws Welly Walk, the Big Christmas Welly Weekend and the ever-popular Christmas Bedtime at the Farm. Don't miss out on the latest farm news, event updates and seasonal activities. Follow 'Forge Mill Farm' on Facebook and Instagram.



Scan the QR code to view all upcoming events and book your tickets.



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

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

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

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

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



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



Free support | Friendly advice | No wrong door

Smethwick Advice Centre



Smethwick Library, High Street, B66 1AA
Every Wednesday, 9.30am – 2pm

Help with money, benefits and jobs – all in one place.

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 are libraries or other Welcoming Spaces community buildings in your area.

Visit www.sandwell.gov.uk/welcomingspaces to find your nearest.



Sandwell Libraries also offer a wide range of activities and events for all ages – go to www.visitsandwell.com/whats-on to find out what's on.

FREE
to attend

SANDWELL CHRISTMAS LIGHTS SWITCH-ON EVENTS

Join us for our FREE annual Sandwell Christmas Lights Switch-Ons, perfect for families, friends and neighbours of all ages. Enjoy...

Oldbury: Friday 13 November

Blackheath: Saturday 14 November

Tipton: Friday 27 November

Wednesbury: Saturday 28 November

West Bromwich: Saturday 5 December

Check the website for more details about these events
www.visitsandwell.com/christmaslights

new!
CHRISTMAS AT THE AQUATICS CENTRE
Smethwick: Friday 4 December

- New location, new experience
- Santa's diving elves show
- Christmas market stalls
- Live festive entertainment
- Children's fair

Visit Sandwell Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council

'Exceptional' result for Moat Farm Junior

Huge congratulations to everyone at Moat Farm Junior School in Oldbury for achieving a fantastic Ofsted inspection outcome.

Inspectors judged the school to be Strong in all areas, with Exceptional grading for attendance and behaviour – making Moat Farm Junior School the first school in Sandwell to receive the highest possible judgement under Ofsted's brand-new report card grading system.

Ofsted praised the positive atmosphere and high standards across the school, particularly recognising the exemplary behaviour of its pupils. They also highlighted how much pupils enjoy learning.

Moat Farm Junior School, which is part of Stour Vale Academy Trust, has also been recognised nationally as a Department for Education Lead Attendance and Behaviour Hub School. It is one of only 93 schools across the country chosen to share best practice and support other schools.

Mrs Elizabeth Shaw and Mrs Aline Scotney, Co-Headteachers, said: "This recognition belongs to our entire school community. We would like to thank our dedicated staff, supportive families, governors and trust colleagues for their continued commitment.

"Most of all, we are proud of our pupils, who embody our values and have been recognised as confident, responsible and considerate young people who are very well prepared for the next stage of their education."

Community pride: Growing their own at new allotment

It's great to see residents joining together to grow their own fruit and vegetables as part of a new community allotment in Tipton.

Bangladeshi Women's Association – which is based at Tipton Muslim Community Centre – has set up the new allotment with support from West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) and Sandwell Council.

Groups and activities like these can help residents improve their physical and mental health, connect with nature and develop a range of skills.

The allotment is part of a wider investment in the Park Lane Estate under a WMCA pilot scheme. The WMCA project is looking at how neighbourhood-wide improvements can strengthen communities and improve people's quality of life.

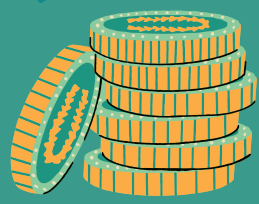
Other recent improvements to the Park Lane Estate have included fitting 35 homes with solar panels to cut energy bills and more trees being planted.

Did you know? Sandwell Council has 40 allotment sites across the borough – all are in high demand with active waiting lists.

Visit www.sandwell.gov.uk/allotments or call 0333 188 2229 to apply to join the list.

Photo courtesy of Bangladeshi Women's Association

Have your say — take part in our budget consultation



Every year, we look at the services people need and how these can be funded from the resources the council has access to. Funding generally comes from council tax, business rates, government grants and charges to service users.

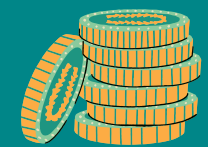
To make sure we can continue providing important services, we look for ways to save money and deliver services more efficiently while still meeting the needs of our communities.

As a council, next year we will set a net budget of around **£475million** to deliver our day-to-day services for the 353,000 people who live in Sandwell.

That's our spending on everything from supporting children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), Adult Social Care, bins and recycling, to looking after our roads, running our libraries, keeping our communities safe and many more services people in Sandwell use every day.

Here's how our net budget for council services is currently funded:

Council Tax:	34%
Business Rates:	36%
Non-specific Government grants:	30%



Have your say by searching for "Sandwell Council budget consultation" online, scan the QR code or go to www.sandwell.gov.uk/budgetconsultation. The deadline for completing the survey is 25 November 2026.



Sandwell Council's Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Services Councillor Gary Dale said: "We are asking people what they think about how the council spends money.

"We want to hear from you on where you think we should increase resources or invest more, what you think of our savings proposals and for you to have your say on the likely impact of any changes.

"This will help us decide how to use our budget for the next financial year, starting in April 2027."

This is our commitment to you as we start setting the council's budget for next year.

- We will continue to prioritise stopping illegal activity and making Sandwell safer – like anti-social behaviour, stopping fly-tipping, closing shops who act illegally and making our high streets safer and tackling nuisance in properties with multiple households.
- We want to do more to support our armed forces veterans and meeting our promises to the Armed Forces Covenant.
- We will continue to look at ways we can save the public money and make our services more efficient.
- We will look after every penny of taxpayers' money.
- We will spend more next year on things that matter to people in Sandwell like social care for children and our older, disabled and vulnerable residents.
- We will spend more looking after children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and giving them the best start in life.

Get involved

You can get involved in how we set our budget for 2027/28 by taking part in our consultation. We want to hear what your priorities are and what your views are on our proposals. This will help us make decisions on how we spend our budget. If you're not online, pop into any Sandwell library and ask for a paper copy.

Community Alarms: Peace of mind

Community Alarms provide reassurance for people who want to remain independent and safe in their own homes while knowing help is available if they need it.

With a simple press of a button, people can connect to a team that can respond to emergencies, falls or urgent welfare concerns, 24 hours a day.

The team is based in Sandwell. If a response is needed, the team aims to be with you within 45 minutes.

Whether you're at home alone, living with a health condition, recovering from an illness or simply want extra reassurance, we're here to help.

Here's what our residents say:

"The people who put my mother-in-law back to bed after her fall were very thoughtful and treated her with respect."

"The lady who came back was here so quickly, I would recommend to the service to people in Sandwell."



For more information, call the team on **0121 569 6800** or visit www.sandwell.gov.uk/communityalarms

Virtual House – explore support from the comfort of home



Our Virtual House is an interactive online tool designed to help residents discover equipment, technology and adaptations that support independent living.

By exploring different rooms, visitors learn about practical solutions that can make everyday tasks easier, improve safety at home and support people to live independently for longer.

Whether you're looking for ideas for yourself, a family member or someone you support, the Virtual House is a great place to start.

Visit www.sandwell.gov.uk/adults to take a tour.



Applying for a Blue Badge

You can now apply for or renew a Blue Badge online at www.sandwell.gov.uk/bluebadge

This makes the process faster and more convenient. For anyone who may struggle to apply online, call the Community Offer service on **0121 612 2934** for free support. They will be happy to help you.



Colder weather: Look out for neighbours

As the weather gets colder, a simple check-in can make a big difference to someone living alone, particularly older residents or those with health conditions.

Checking that neighbours have enough heating, food, medication and support can help keep people safe and well during winter months.

A quick phone call, a knock on the door or offering to collect shopping can provide reassurance and reduce feelings of isolation.

If you're worried about a vulnerable neighbour or family member, don't ignore it. Local support services are available to help people stay safe, warm and independent throughout the colder months.

Adult Social Care Connect

Need support? Adult Social Care Connect is here to help.

If you, or someone you know, need information, advice or support with care and independence, Adult Social Care Connect is the first point of contact.

The team provides guidance on adult social care services, assessments, support available in the community and help for carers.



Please note our contact number has changed.

Call: **0121 569 7474 (option 4)**

Email: ASC_Connect@sandwell.gov.uk

Write to: **Adult Social Care Connect,**
PO Box 15825, Oldbury B69 9EL

Support for unpaid carers

Caring for a family member, friend or neighbour can be rewarding, but it can also be challenging.

Our Carers Service offers advice, information and support to people who provide unpaid care for someone who could not manage without their help. Whether you're new to caring or have been a carer for many years, support is available.

The service can help you access practical advice, local support groups, wellbeing services and information about your rights as a carer.

Visit www.sandwellcarers.org.uk or call **0121 798 2372** to find out more.



New BSL videos to improve access to services

We have launched a new series of British Sign Language (BSL) videos to help residents access important information about council services more easily.

The videos, commissioned by Sandwell Council and produced by Sandwell Deaf Community Association (SDCA), cover a range of key topics including elections, benefits, housing and council tax.

They have been created to support Deaf communities by providing clear and accessible information in BSL, helping ensure residents can access services and information in the format that best meets their needs. If you're not online at home, you can visit any Sandwell library to log on and watch the videos.



Visit www.sandwell.gov.uk/bsl to access the BSL videos.

Tenant and Leaseholder Conference 2026

More than 60 residents joined us for our annual Tenant and Leaseholder Conference in September.

The event brought residents, partners and council teams together for an engaging day of discussion, learning and involvement. The theme of the day was "All About You" and focused on highlighting the important role residents play in shaping housing services across the borough.

The event demonstrated the value of listening, working together and ensuring residents' voices remain at the heart of decision making as Sandwell Council continues to improve housing services.

We're always looking for more Sandwell Council tenants to engage with through our events, consultations, meetings and forums, workshops and more.

If you're a Sandwell Council tenant or leaseholder and want to help us make a positive change, you can find out more information about how to get involved on our website: www.sandwell.gov.uk/tenant-engagement



Home safety checks help keep you and your family safe

If you're a Sandwell Council tenant, we'll need to visit your home from time to time to carry out important safety checks. When we arrange a visit, it's important that you allow us to access your home so we can carry out these checks.

Safety checks look at things such as damp and mould as well as gas, electrical and fire safety. On some visits, we'll also look at the general condition of your home to see if there are any hazards and to make sure we can plan for improvements.

It's important that checks are carried out, as they allow us to identify issues early before they become bigger problems.

Most visits are quick and provide valuable information that helps us keep your home safe, well maintained and fit for the future.

Extra support for rough sleepers in severe winter weather

Extra support will be in place for rough sleepers if weather temperatures fall below zero degrees over the winter.

More bed space is made available, and more council employees will be working in communities to provide extra support.

To access support for rough sleeping for you or someone else, call **0121 569 7474** or call **01323 690856** if support is needed during nights or weekends.

You can also let us know about rough sleepers by visiting www.sandwell.gov.uk/roughsleepers and our team will be able to offer support.

Tell us how you think we should allocate council homes

We're looking at changing the rules about who can join the housing register and who gets priority for a council home.

There are now more than 24,000 households waiting for a home, compared with around 6,000 in 2020. There are also fewer homes available. We're suggesting changes to help make sure our homes go to people who need them most.

The changes could affect who can join the housing register, how long you need to have lived in Sandwell before you join the register and who gets priority.

We want to know what you think before any changes are made.

Find out more and complete our short survey by visiting www.sandwell.gov.uk/housingpolicy

Struggling with your rent? We can help.

If you're a Sandwell Council tenant and you're worried about paying your rent, please get in touch with us as soon as possible.

If you're finding things tough, please don't wait until the situation becomes more difficult. The sooner you get in touch, the more options we may have to help.

We work with residents every day to help with managing rent, accessing financial support and providing advice.

We can help you explore affordable payment arrangements and check if you're receiving the financial support you're entitled to.

If you need help with your rent payments, call us on **0121 569 7477** or visit www.sandwell.gov.uk/rentfirst

Darker nights

West Midlands Police is working to keep your community safe this season. We often see a seasonal rise in burglary and car crime through the autumn and winter months, so as the nights grow darker, we're increasing patrols in key areas, acting on information from the public, and working closely with our partners to prevent crime and protect residents.

Heading out? Make sure your home and vehicle are secure by locking all windows, doors and side gates. Check you have removed valuables from your vehicle, locked it and securely stored your keys.

Lock it, check it - keep side entrances, garden doors and porches locked to deter opportunistic thieves who may target unattended valuables or car keys.

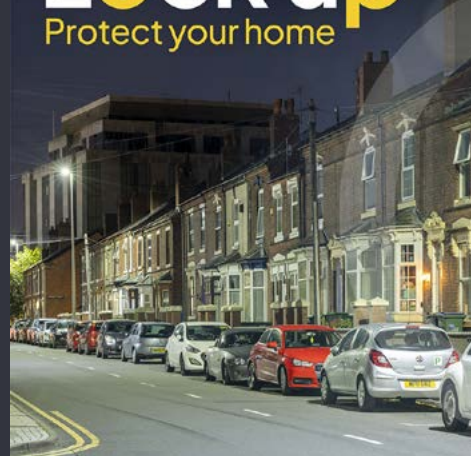
Visit westmidlands.police.uk for advice on fireworks safety, reporting anti-social behaviour and protecting your property.

You can report anti-social behaviour by calling **101** or anonymously via Crimestoppers on **0800 555 111**.

Find out more about policing in your local area and receive regular crime prevention advice by registering for free on wmnow.co.uk



Lockup
Protect your home



**SANDWELL
COLLEGE**
A CAREERS COLLEGE

Full Time Courses & Apprenticeships

1 Spon Lane, West Bromwich B70 6AW



Book your
place online
today

OPEN DAYS

Thursday

26 November 2026

4pm-7pm

Saturday

28 November 2026

11am-3pm

START

HERE.

GO

ANYWHERE.

**FREE
TRAVEL**
FOR ALL
SCHOOL
LEAVERS

100+ COURSES • CALL 0800 622 006 • SANDWELL.AC.UK

Christmas and New Year bin collections

Usual collection date	Christmas collection date
Monday 21 December	No change
Tuesday 22 December	No change
Wednesday 23 December	No change
Thursday 24 December	No change
Friday 25 December	Sunday 27 December
Monday 28 December	No change
Tuesday 29 December	No change
Wednesday 30 December	No change
Thursday 31 December	No change
Friday 1 January	Sunday 3 January

You can check which day we are collecting your non-recycling (grey) bin and which day we are collecting your recycling (blue-lid) bin/(blue) bag using the online bin day finder. www.sandwell.gov.uk/binday

Household Recycling Centre

The Household Recycling Centre (the tip) is open as normal over Christmas (except for Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day). Visits must be booked online in advance at www.sandwell.gov.uk/tip or call 0121 569 7474

This year's garden waste collections end in December

The last garden waste collections for the year are in the first three weeks of December. Don't forget to sign up for your 2027 garden waste collections when subscriptions open next year. www.sandwell.gov.uk/gardenwaste

Have you got a large item to get rid of?

We provide a bulky waste collection service for residents who have large household items such as furniture and other items that won't fit in your bin. www.sandwell.gov.uk/bulkywaste

**Right stuff
Right bin**

Make sure you put the right item in the right bin or else you'll end up on the naughty list!

You can put glass, cans, tins and plastics such as chocolate and biscuit tins, wine bottles and cranberry sauce jars in your recycling (blue-lid) bin

You can put non-foil Christmas cards, non-glitter wrapping paper, paper gift tags, envelopes and paper crafts in your recycling (blue) bag



For more tips, scan the QR code



Don't waste your Christmas dinner

Recycle your wine bottle in the recycling (blue-lid) bin.

Stir-fry turkey scraps with leftover vegetables, rice, soy sauce and a beaten egg.

Blend leftover vegetables with stock for a quick and healthy soup.

Reuse your Christmas decorations next year.

Stir leftover parsnips into a curry sauce and season with mild curry spices.

Add diced roast potatoes to an omelette with cheese and ham or leftover turkey.

Bin reminders

Bins and bags must be out by 5:30am.

All rubbish inside bins/bags unless folded cardboard.

Remove tape, polystyrene and packaging from all cardboard.

Purple bag service

If you are using disposable nappies, you may be eligible for a supply of purple bags if you have children in the family who are aged 3 or under. You can apply for the purple bag collection online or by calling 0121 569 7474.

Need another recycling (blue) bag?

If you regularly have extra paper, card and cartons recycling, you can order an additional recycling (blue) bag. You can apply for an additional recycling (blue) bag online or by calling 0121 569 7474.

Contact us about bins and recycling

0121 569 7474

www.sandwell.gov.uk/bins

Scan the QR code for more information



You can put polystyrene, foil wrapping paper, tinsel, sweet wrappers, broken baubles and ribbons in your non-recycling (grey) bin

You can put turkey bones, vegetable and fruit peelings, tea bags, shells and plate scrapings in your food waste (brown) bin





HELP YOUR BODY FIGHT FLU
STAY STRONG. GET VACCINATED.

You're eligible for a free flu vaccine if you:

- are pregnant
- have a 2 or 3 year old (age on 31 August 2026)
- have a child in Reception to Year 11
- are aged 65 and over
- have certain long-term health conditions, from 6 months to under 65s
- are living with somebody with a weakened immune system due to a medical condition or treatment
- are sleeping rough or in hostels/shelters
- are a care home resident
- are a carer (receiving carer's allowance, or the main carer of an older or disabled person)

Check your eligibility with your GP or visit nhs.uk/book-flu

Free healthy lifestyle support

Live Well Sandwell offers free support for adults who want to improve their health and wellbeing.

The free 12-week Live Well Sandwell programme will help you:

- ✓ Eat healthier
- ✓ Build lasting healthy habits
- ✓ Get more active
- ✓ Access free and low-cost activities

If you are aged 18 or over and live, work, study, or are registered with a GP in Sandwell, contact Healthy Sandwell to check your eligibility:

Call 0800 011 4656 or 0121 569 5100 or visit www.healthysandwell.co.uk/contact-us



Autumn wellbeing

As the days get shorter, looking after your mental wellbeing becomes even more important.

Some simple ways to keep well this autumn:

- ✓ Enjoy green spaces and nature
- ✓ Make the most of natural daylight
- ✓ Stay in touch with friends and family
- ✓ Start a new hobby, such as reading, listening to podcasts, crafting or joining a local club

Remember that support is available at: www.healthysandwell.co.uk/mental-health-services-directory

For urgent mental health support, call NHS 111 and select option 2.

To find local clubs and activities near you, visit: www.healthysandwell.co.uk/activities-finder



The ABCs of safer sleep

Safer sleep for baby, sounder sleep for you

Following the ABCs for every sleep, day and night, will help reduce the risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS).

A always sleep your baby

B on their back

C in a clear cot or sleep space

Safer sleeping guidance: lullabytrust.org.uk 0808 802 6869

Early years support for ages 0-5: www.swbh.nhs.uk/services/health-visiting

#MoveMoreSandwell

Every movement counts!

New research published in July 2026 has confirmed that the benefits of physical activity far outweigh the risks, even for most people living with long-term conditions.

Physical activity guidance for adults and older adults:



Be active everyday

Make a start today: it's never too late

Any activity is better than none, and more is better still

Every minute counts



Aim for

at least 150 minutes per week Moderate intensity increased breathing able to talk

OR

at least 75 minutes per week Vigorous intensity breathing fast difficulty talking

or a combination of both

To keep muscles, bones and joints strong

Build strength

on at least 2 days a week



For older adults

Improve balance

2 days a week to reduce the chance of frailty and falls

Minimise sedentary time

Break up periods of inactivity

To find activities and opportunities to get active near you, visit www.healthysandwell.co.uk/activities-finder or call Healthy Sandwell on 0800 011 4656 or 0121 569 5100

Do you have a question about your child's...

- lifestyle?
- diet?
- toileting?
- health?
- behaviour?
- emotional wellbeing?

Sandwell's School Nursing Service can provide support and advice for a wide variety of health needs for children and young people.

If you are a parent or carer of a child aged five to 19 years, who attends a Sandwell school, you can contact a nurse for confidential advice by texting 07312 263 756 or visit www.healthforkids.co.uk for information.

This service is commissioned by Sandwell Council's Public Health Team.



“Excellent service - I am really grateful for the advice and support provided.”

Sandwell Parent, 2026



Breast Screening
City, Sandwell and Walsall Breast Screening Service

Sandwell and West Birmingham NHS Trust

Breast cancer doesn't care,
BUT WE DO!

That's why the NHS is offering all women aged 50 to 71 free breast cancer screening.

All women aged 50 and over are entitled to regular breast screening

- An invitation letter is sent to you. You will be invited once every 3 years.
- Contact us if you are unable to attend your appointment, to change your appointment or to rebook.
- Come to our Mobile Unit for your X-ray.
- Films are read by two readers. Results will arrive at your home within three weeks.
- Be breast aware between appointments. If you spot any changes, contact your GP.

Don't miss your appointment, it could save your life!

For more information, call 0121 507 4967 (option 1) or visit: www.bscren.org.uk/city



What would you do if you won £455?

Sign up to **StopForLife Sandwell** before **30 November 2026** for your chance to win £455 on top of what you save by stopping smoking...

Our programme is for people aged 12+ who live or work in Sandwell, or are registered with a Sandwell GP, and includes:

- Personalised 1-2-1 support
- Access to Nicotine Replacement Therapy and stop smoking medication
- Flexible appointments

THIS IS A PRIZE DRAW. TERMS AND CONDITIONS APPLY. SCAN THE QR CODE OR VISIT OUR WEBSITE FOR MORE INFORMATION.

StopForLifeSandwell.org

0800 612 4580

Air Pollution Alerts



Air pollution alerts (also called air quality alerts) are public warnings issued when pollution levels in the outdoor air are expected to reach levels that may be harmful to health.

These alerts are usually based on measurements and forecasts from air quality monitoring systems.

Children, older adults, pregnant people and people with heart or lung conditions are more sensitive to air pollution.

Poor air quality can worsen asthma, COPD and other lung conditions, and can also increase the risk of heart attacks and strokes.

Air pollution alerts give people advance warning so they can reduce their exposure and/or take extra precautions when they are out and about.

When a moderate, high or very high alert is issued, you should:

- Continue taking your daily prescribed medication
- Always carry your inhaler or reliever medication
- Exercise in lower-pollution areas, such as parks and green spaces

If pollution levels are high, reduce strenuous outdoor activity and limit time outdoors further if you experience symptoms such as coughing, sore eyes or a sore throat.

If pollution levels are very high, everyone should avoid strenuous outdoor exercise and take extra care. Make sure to check in on vulnerable family members, friends and neighbours.

To sign up for air quality alerts in Sandwell, visit: cleanair.wmca.org.uk



Helping patients stay well and safe this winter



**By Dr Taylor Davis,
Emergency Medicine
Consultant, Sandwell and
West Birmingham NHS Trust**

“ As the colder months approach, I want to make sure you have the information, advice and support you need to stay well and manage your health throughout winter.

Prevention is an important part of this. If you are eligible, I would encourage you to take up your recommended flu vaccination. It can help protect you and those around you from serious illness. If you are aged 75 or over or have a weakened immune system, I would also encourage you to take up the Covid vaccination.

It is also important that children are protected through their routine immunisations, including the MMR vaccine. If you are pregnant, please speak to your midwife or maternity team about the vaccinations recommended during pregnancy, including those that help protect you and your baby against illnesses such as RSV and whooping cough.

There are also simple things you can do to look after yourself during the colder months, keeping warm, eating well, staying active where you can and making sure any existing health conditions are well managed can all make a difference.

Please also make sure you use the right NHS service for your needs. Your local pharmacy can provide advice and treatment for many common illnesses and minor conditions, without you needing to attend hospital. If you are unsure about where to go or what support you need, **NHS 111** can provide advice and guidance.

NHS
Sandwell and West Birmingham
NHS Trust



Our Emergency Departments are there for serious and life-threatening emergencies. By using the right service for your needs, you can help make sure emergency care remains available for those who need it most.

Alongside this Trust-wide advice, our teams are providing additional support for people who may be particularly affected by winter.

Our Community Respiratory Service, for example, is running its annual Weatherwise campaign for people living with respiratory conditions that can be made worse by cold weather.

The sessions offer practical advice on managing lung conditions, breathlessness and keeping warm at home, as well as information about energy and wider support. Patients can speak to respiratory nurses, occupational therapists and dietitians, alongside external speakers, and access one-to-one advice.

Winter can be challenging, particularly if you are living with a long-term health condition. Whatever support you need, the NHS is here for you. **”**

Urgent, but not an emergency? We're here to help.

If you need same-day medical help but your condition isn't life-threatening, Sandwell Urgent Treatment Centre could be the right place for you.

Our GP-led team can treat a range of conditions including minor illnesses, cuts, bruises, suspected broken bones, vomiting and abdominal pain.

Find us at Sandwell Health Campus, Little Lane, West Bromwich, B71 4HR.

Open every day, 9am to 9pm, with minor injury services including X-ray.



You can walk in or contact NHS 111 for an appointment.

For life-threatening emergencies, call 999.



**Our patients
Our people
Our population**

IM9492

Sandwell Police update

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

“As the darker nights are rolling in and we look towards the winter months, it's a good time to reflect on the summer period.

This summer we saw an unprecedented number of fires in, not only Sandwell, but across the West Midlands. Supporting our colleagues at West Midlands Fire Service, officers helped with evacuations, supported animal rescues and followed up with criminal investigations.

I want to acknowledge the appreciation and thanks from the community that were given to police during a really demanding time.

Sandwell officers have worked flat out this summer to keep you safe, which has been recognised in our upcoming West Midlands Police Excellence Awards. You may recognise some of the winners, so watch this space!

The darker months also bring in more celebrations and festivities including Diwali and Bonfire Night. My officers will be out on patrol looking out for anti-social use of fireworks.

We are working closely with retailers to stop anyone under the age of 18 buying fireworks and would always advise heading to a professional fireworks display rather doing your own display. We want everyone to enjoy upcoming celebrations, but we want you to do it safely.”

For further advice and to keep up with local updates but sign up to WMNow – www.wmnow.co.uk – and keep an eye on our ‘**Sandwell Police**’ **Facebook page**.

***In the King's Birthday Honours List this year, Kim received the King's Police Medal (KPM) through her inspirational leadership and dedicated service across almost three decades within the force.**



Fly-tipping crackdown

Sandwell Council is warning criminal fly-tippers to stay out of the borough after a notorious dumping hotspot was targeted again just weeks after a major clean-up operation.

The site at Forge Lane and Park Lane was cleared of 17 tonnes of illegally dumped waste in August as part of a joint operation involving Sandwell Council, Birmingham City Council and waste contractor Serco. Nearly 50 cleaning operatives took part in the large-scale effort to restore the area.

However, despite the extensive clean-up, offenders returned within three weeks and dumped more rubbish at the location.

Council teams gathering evidence at the scene have identified lines of enquiry that will support investigations into those responsible. Anyone found guilty of fly-tipping could face criminal prosecution.

In response to the repeated offending, the council has announced that additional surveillance cameras will be installed at the hotspot to help identify and catch perpetrators. Stopping fly-tippers and the number of clean-ups needed will help save council taxpayers' money.

Residents can report fly-tipping in Sandwell using the council's online reporting form at www.sandwell.gov.uk/flytipping or by calling **0121 569 7474**.

To book a slot at the tip in Oldbury, visit www.sandwell.gov.uk/tip or, if you're not online, call 0121 569 7474.



Stay safe this autumn and winter

As the evenings become darker, Sandwell Council and its partners remain committed to helping women and girls feel safe and confident when using parks and public spaces.

Through our commitment to tackling violence against women and girls, we are working with partners – including the police – to better understand people's experiences and find ways to improve safety and confidence.

We encourage residents to report any concerns about safety, anti-social behaviour and environmental issues that may affect public spaces.

This commitment will continue through campaigns such as the 16 Days of Action, which starts on 25 November, helping to build communities based on safety, respect and shared responsibilities.

We also have a wide range of support for people experiencing domestic abuse – visit www.sandwell.gov.uk/domesticabuse or call Black Country Women's Aid on **0121 552 6448 (24/7)**. For specialist support, call Ask Marc (for men and boys) on **0121 289 6402** or Birmingham LGBT Centre on **0121 643 0821**.

We have recently launched a new Anti-Social Behaviour service to make it easier for residents to report concerns, access support and see problems resolved more efficiently. Visit www.sandwell.gov.uk/asb to find out more and how to report incidents. Or, if you're not online, call police on **101** or the council on **0121 569 7474** to report incidents.

SANDWELL STANDS
AGAINST VIOLENCE TOWARDS
WOMEN AND GIRLS

Tackling abandoned vehicles

We're cracking down on abandoned vehicles across Sandwell – with council teams working together with specialist contractors to remove more than 500 vehicles from our roads and public spaces since the start of 2026.

More than 80 per cent of abandoned vehicles seized were untaxed. Some had also been burnt out.

Vehicles removed included cars, vans, motorbikes, caravans and even a boat!

You can report suspected untaxed and abandoned vehicles at www.sandwell.gov.uk/abandonedvehicles or, if you're not online, call **0121 569 7474**.



Action on hate crime

Work to end hate crimes across Sandwell continues.

You can report hate crimes – as either a victim or a witness – to police by calling **101** or at www.westmidlands.police.uk

Phone **999** only if a crime is in progress, offenders are nearby or a life is in danger.

If you do not want to talk to the police, you can go to any of 47 hate crime reporting centres across Sandwell. These include community centres, Family Hubs and all Sandwell libraries.

Go to www.sandwell.gov.uk/hatecrime to search for your nearest centre. Trained staff will listen to you without judgement and share information with police for them to investigate and to record official crime statistics.

By sharing your experience, you may stop others from becoming a victim.

SANDWELL STANDS
AGAINST HATE CRIME

Pride in Place regeneration programmes across Sandwell

PRIDE IN PLACE
LED BY YOU - BACKED BY UK GOVERNMENT

Sandwell's Pride in Place programmes are continuing to make positive progress, with communities playing a key role in shaping future investment and regeneration plans across Smethwick, Tividale and Friar Park.

In Smethwick, the Partnership Board launched its community grants programme on 1 July, offering funding of between £500 and £25,000 to organisations within the Smethwick Pride in Place investment boundary and delivering projects that benefit residents and strengthen the community. Approved projects are published on the board's website, highlighting how local investment is supporting neighbourhood priorities. The board is starting to plan for next year's funding round. The board has also launched an online survey to gather the views of young people in Smethwick, helping to ensure their priorities help shape future investment.

Meanwhile, the Tividale and Friar Park Pride in Place programmes are continuing to engage with residents, businesses and community groups to better understand local priorities.

Both Neighbourhood Boards have hosted community engagement events, while an online survey remains live for Tividale residents to share their views. More than 230 families attended a Tividale event and 900 people attended a Friar Park event in September.

Feedback gathered through engagement activities and surveys will help shape each area's 10-year Regeneration Plan, which will be submitted to government and set out a long-term vision for investment and improvement.

Go to www.regeneratingsandwell.co.uk to find out more about our Pride in Place programmes.



Groundbreaking ceremony for Tipton homes

Work starts this autumn on a development of 15 new affordable council homes as part of Tipton town centre's continued regeneration, which is supported by government funding.

Leader of Sandwell Council, Councillor Ray Nock – alongside representatives from contractor McPhillips, council officers and other councillors – attended a groundbreaking ceremony to mark the start of initial ground works on the old Flour Mill site in Union Street.

Town centre businesses are not affected by the works and are open as usual.

The locally listed old Flour Mill building will be retained by being converted and modernised into six council apartments. A further block of nine new council apartments will be built on land behind the historic building. The flats – a mix of one- and two-bedroom homes – are expected to be completed by early 2028.

These 15 apartments will bring the total number of new council homes being built in Tipton town centre to 70, with 55 also being developed further along Union Street as part of the wider regeneration project.

Work recently finished on improvements to public spaces along Owen Street. Car parks in Albion Street and New Cross Street continue to offer up to two hours' free parking.



New affordable council homes

Sandwell Council, together with TR Partnership Homes Ltd, has delivered 15 new affordable council homes in Hawes Lane, Rowley Regis.

This latest affordable housing development comprises a mix of two-, three- and four-bedroom houses, two-bedroom bungalows and one-bedroom apartments.

They provide high-quality homes to meet growing local demand. People on the council's housing waiting list will rent the new homes.

These are part of the council's wider programme of building new council homes.

Photos courtesy of TR Partnership Homes



Update on former cinema site

Demolition works continue at the former Kings Cinema site in West Bromwich town centre. These are scheduled for completion in January 2027.

Following demolition, the vacant land will be used for future development opportunities. During and following demolition, the site will be appropriately secured and will not be accessible to members of the public.



Check out our new-look regeneration website at:
www.regeneratingsandwell.co.uk

Many of our regeneration projects are supported by UK Government funding.

Funded by
UK Government

Central Saint Michael's Sixth Form

A UNIVERSITY-STYLE SIXTH FORM

New Square, West Bromwich B70 7PG

EXPLORE OUR A LEVELS &
BTEC QUALIFICATIONS

**FREE TRAVEL
FOR ALL STUDENTS**

Success starts here

OPEN DAYS

Thursday

26 November 2026

4pm-7pm

Saturday

28 November 2026

11am-3pm



Book your place today

FREE TRAVEL • 30+ COURSES • CENTRALSTMICHAELS.AC.UK

Keeping our roads safe this winter

We're ready for any cold weather that comes our way. Our gritting crew will be on 24-hour standby from mid-November, ready to keep Sandwell moving in snow or icy conditions, night and day.



While it is not possible to grit every road, each time Sandwell's gritters go out they treat around **260 miles** of the borough's road network, spreading approximately **55 tonnes** of salt to help keep residents and communities moving safely during winter weather.



QR codes will be added to the council's grit bins this winter to provide residents with guidance on the appropriate use of road salt, together with information on how to report damaged bins or request extra salt where stocks have been used.



Not only are we ready for winter gritting, we're also leading the way in maintaining roads and tackling potholes.



The percentage of residents satisfied with road maintenance in Sandwell (**72%**) is more than double the local government benchmark (**27%**).



And another survey recently put Sandwell in the top three local authorities nationally for the way we deal with potholes.



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.



We're spending **£15million** this financial year to keep on top of these priority highways issues for residents and other road users.

Visit www.sandwell.gov.uk/gritting to read more about our gritting routes



Sandwell Bereavement Services – here to help

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

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

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

What our service users say:

"You all went the extra mile. It is much appreciated."

"...was really happy with how the service was provided and conducted."

We also provide direct cremations for £1,168 as well as pet burials, a wide range of memorials and have a licenced wake facility at Sandwell Valley crematorium.



For more information on all the above or to discuss a burial, please call us on **0121 569 6700** or email us at bereavement_services@sandwell.gov.uk

Visit www.sandwell.gov.uk/bereavement for further information about our services.

★ WORDSEARCH ★

★ 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.

**REGENERATION
HOMES
LIGHTS
VOLUNTEER
GRIT
SAFETY
SHOPS
OCTOBER
TERM
MARKET
PHONE**

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 27 November 2026.

Courtesy of <https://thewordsearch.com>

E	R	E	B	O	T	C	O	E	K	E	R	T	R
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MISSING WORD

NAME

ADDRESS

.....

.....**POSTCODE**

PHONE NUMBER

All information will be processed in accordance with UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018 and held only for the purposes of this competition. www.sandwell.gov.uk/privacynotice

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 Summer 2026 Wordsearch winner:
Jayne Keay from Tipton

Looking for ways to volunteer?

Autumn doesn't have to be the time for drawing all the curtains and hibernating. Across Sandwell's six towns there are hundreds of opportunities to get involved in activities all year round.

Whether it's starting a new hobby or maybe offering a helping hand as a volunteer, there are dozens of ways to brighten the darker days, meet new people and do something worthwhile. Sandwell has more than 1,000 charities and community groups dotted all over the borough, offering anything from a listening ear to a game of footy.

Sandwell Council of Voluntary Organisations (SCVO) is the charity supporting all the other non-profit organisations, and they host two websites where you can start looking for ways to banish the blues.

Search www.route2wellbeing.info for activities, clubs and services and www.letsgosandwell.info for hundreds of different ways to help out. Email getinvolved@scvo.info or call **0121 525 1127** to get your activities or volunteering opportunities listed, or for more information.

Photos courtesy of Sandwell Council of Voluntary Organisations (SCVO)



A graduate's first year at Sandwell Council

By Sakina Bibi

// This October marks my first-year working in Sandwell Council. I joined the council through the graduate programme, which is run by the Local Government Association.

Having reached the halfway point of my two-year programme, I can honestly say it has been an enjoyable and insightful experience.

As part of the programme, I have been rotating across different service areas and within each completing eight-month placements. In my current placement with the Communications Team, I have created press releases, e-bulletins and gained a wider understanding of how the council responds to crises.

Previously, I worked with the Regeneration and Growth Team, supporting a successful funding bid for the demolition and remediation of the Cradley Heath Community Centre. I also worked with a local school, Q3 Academy, on a competition to help name new affordable homes in Tipton.

Through the programme, I have seen the vast number of vital services Sandwell Council provides, far beyond just bin collections! I have found the council to be a great place for young people to start their careers. Young people can make a real and positive difference to the communities they serve.

During my time with the council, I have benefited from its flexible and hybrid working arrangements, as well as its coaching offer.

The council is committed to investing in young people and employing a representative workforce, its year-on-year paid participation in the graduate programme is a good example of this. Graduates often go on to secure full-time employment across different roles within the council. I also hope to continue my career with the council, once the programme ends. //



To find out more about joining Sandwell Council, visit www.sandwell.gov.uk/jobvacancies and www.wmjobs.co.uk

Sandwell Careers Service

Sandwell Careers Service's website is designed to make it easier for young people to explore their career options, discover the wealth of opportunities available to them and take the next step on their career journey.

The service provides pathways into education, employment (including apprenticeships) and training.

Visit www.sandwell.gov.uk/CareersService to find out more or email careers_service@sandwell.gov.uk

Or, if you're not online, call **0121 569 2955**.



**SALTER
SIXTH**
SUCCESS • THROUGH • ENDEAVOUR

POST-16 OPEN EVENING

**Tuesday 17 November
5:30pm – 7:00pm**

No advanced booking required

[OAT]
Ormiston Academies Trust
AN OAT ACADEMY

George Salter Academy, Davey Road, West Bromwich, West Midlands, B70 9UW
post16@georgesalter.com • georgesalter.com/sixth-form • 0121 553 4665 ext 5233



Introducing... Sandwell Rackets Centre

Powered by **Kore** SANDWELL

Tipton Sports Academy is becoming Sandwell Rackets Centre, marking an exciting new chapter for sport, wellbeing and community participation across Sandwell.

You're invited...

To celebrate the transformation, you are invited to our launch event on Saturday 31 October, starting at 10am. The event will feature free taster sessions, coaching, social competitions, roller disco, live entertainment and family-friendly activities throughout the day.

Part of the wider Kore family, the centre is being developed as an inclusive destination where people of all ages and abilities can get active, learn new skills and achieve their goals.

The centre features indoor and outdoor tennis courts, squash and badminton facilities, a refurbished state-of-the-art gym, sports hall, athletics track, and new padel courts, one of the UK's fastest-growing sports.

The rebrand reflects a long-term commitment to investment, accessibility and community wellbeing, creating a welcoming environment where everyone can participate, progress and thrive.

Find out more at: korewellness.co.uk/sandwellracketslaunch or SCAN HERE

FREE RACKET VOUCHER

Bring this voucher into the centre and get **FREE racket hire** when you book a court. Available on all racket sports. Only available at Sandwell Rackets Centre. Valid until December 1 2026. Voucher can only be used once. Racket hire for the maximum number of people on court at once, e.g. x4 for Padel.



Working together to put Families First

Sandwell Children's Services and local partners are introducing Families First – a national programme of changes leading to a new way of making sure children, young people and families get the right help at the right time at the earliest opportunity.

Sandwell Children's Trust, West Midlands Police, NHS, Sandwell Council, SCVO, Best Start Family Hubs, Barnardo's and local schools are working together to improve how we help and support babies, children and young people. Children, young people, parents and carers are sharing their views to shape the offer.

Families First will:

- Make services easier to find and understand.
- Offer earlier support to children and families.
- Help children and young people remain safely at home when it is appropriate.

What will you notice changing?

- Local, earlier support from familiar professionals.
- Better help to build stronger families.
- Brighter futures for children and young people.

Best Start Family Hubs and universal services will continue to provide early community-based support. For more complex needs, Families First will unite services to provide targeted, joined-up support.

We promise to:

Work with families to find their own solutions and strengthen their network of support. Help children to grow up safely, supported and happy in Sandwell.

Email: FFP@sandwellchildrenstrust.org

If you need help for your family, speak to your school, GP, health visitor or local Best Start Family Hubs.



SANDWELL DEAF COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

BSL Training

We deliver accredited British Sign Language (BSL) courses from Level 1 to Level 6, along with Deaf Awareness and bespoke training packages.

Communication Service

SDCA has its very own team of British Sign Language interpreters, who are all registered with the NRCPD. We provide both remote and face-to-face interpreting services.

To book, please get in touch.

www.sdca.co.uk

✉ info@sdca.co.uk

📞 07885 913225



Registered charity number 1124084



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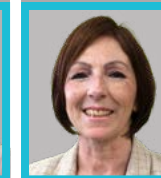


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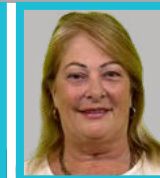
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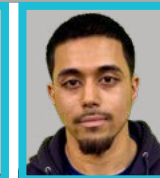


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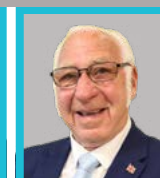
Charlemont & Grove Vale



Rachael Mitchell
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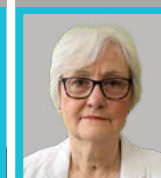


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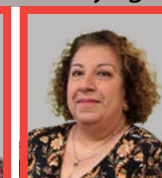


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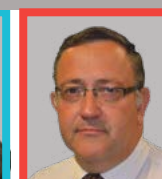
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Key to councillors' political parties

- Reform UK
- Labour
- Green
- 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





NEED URGENT FINANCIAL HELP? APPLY FOR A CRISIS PAYMENT TODAY

Sandwell Council's Crisis Payment Scheme supports low-income households facing unexpected financial hardship.

That might be domestic abuse, a health emergency, fire, flood, theft, broken essential items or a temporary loss of income.

Apply online at www.sandwell.gov.uk/crf

Scan the QR code or search Sandwell Crisis Payments online.

Need help applying? Call Welfare Rights on 0121 569 7474.

Internet access is also available in all Sandwell libraries.



**Funded by
UK Government**

All information in the Sandwell Herald is correct at the time of printing

 **Sandwell**
Metropolitan Borough Council