



## Banners Gate & Parklands Community & Neighbourhood Forum

203<sup>rd</sup> April 2026

[bannersgateneighbourhoodforum.com](http://bannersgateneighbourhoodforum.com)

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### **Rob Pocock: LOCAL POLICE SET UP 'OPERATION GREENWAY'!**

Troublesome off-road motorbikes have been a persistent problem on The Greenway for many years, Both things have worsened over the last year or so. Residents have been persistently plagued by nuisance from a particular group of organised local troublemakers, mainly from the Kingstanding side of The Greenway.

I've had great difficulty getting the local Neighbourhood Police to take an interest, and to get the Council Departments to play ball too. But the good news is that we now have a new and larger Sutton Vesey Neighbourhood Policing team, led by Sgt Charlotte Price and PC Ben Cordell. They have been out on site recently talking to residents and getting a grip on the problem at last.

I've been working alongside their enthusiastic new leadership and they have agreed to mount a coordinated action under the banner of 'Operation Greenway' involving both the Kingstanding and Sutton

Vesey neighbourhood teams. Last week we had a further joint meeting between myself, the police, and Council officers from Housing, Youth Offending, Parks and Highways departments. All these agencies need to be part of a long-term solution. Operation Greenway will involve not just a police patrolling operation, it involves tracking down and dealing with the offenders long term. And also possible physical measures to deter bikes from getting onto the Greenway too.

The recent problems were apparently triggered by the accidental death of one young driver in a police incident which has led to a 'shrine' being created on the site too. Thanks to the networking done by the Police, it now appears family members of the deceased are now calling on the troublemakers to call it a day and quit their nuisance activities too.

If problems continue please log them with the Police under the special dedicated incident number that's now been established, 20/174969/26, using either the 101 call line or the chat icon on West Midlands Police website. Hopefully this concerted effort by a range of authorities will

get on top of the problem. It may take some time to fully bear fruit, but the good news is that there is strong leadership being shown over the problem now.

We all hope that many warm summer evenings are shortly on the way, let's hope they will be quiet and peaceful evenings too!



**Max Hatton:**

Here is my text for the Gatepost this month

Hello Gatepost readers! What a glorious start to the month! After what felt like an endless grey winter, Sutton Coldfield has been bathed in glorious spring sunshine these past few weeks. Blue skies, warm days, and that unmistakable feeling that summer is just around the corner have lifted everyone's spirits. Whether you've been enjoying morning walks in the park, al fresco coffees, or simply pottering in the garden, it's been a welcome reminder of how wonderful our local green spaces can be.

Speaking of gardens, don't forget **No Mow May** is now underway! Leaving your lawn to grow this month supports bees, butterflies, and other vital pollinators at a critical time in their life cycle. Many residents are already taking part, and the results are proving both beautiful and beneficial for local wildlife. Why

not join in? Your mower can take a well-earned rest while nature puts on its own colourful show.

Town centre news continues to be encouraging too. The arrival of the new **Harvey Norman** store has been a real boost, bringing fresh energy and an impressive range of home and lifestyle products right into the heart of Sutton Coldfield. Combined with the existing mix of independent shops, cafés, and familiar high-street names, the centre feels vibrant and convenient once again. It's lovely to see people enjoying the improved public spaces, benches, and that sense of community pride returning to our high street.

Looking ahead, mark your calendars for the return of the ever-popular **Boldmere Summer Festival** on **Saturday 7th June**. Organised by local volunteers, this much-loved family event promises a fantastic day out with dozens of local vendors offering crafts, food, and unique gifts, plus children's rides, inflatables, and brilliant live entertainment throughout the afternoon and evening. It's the perfect opportunity to catch up with neighbours, support local businesses, and enjoy live music under the summer sky.

Let's make the most of this beautiful season together!

## New look Gatepost

As and from April's edition there will be a rearrangement of Gatepost content.

Most of Gatepost and the Supplement is static, that is, little changes each month. I have therefore decided to extract the items that do change from month to month and put them in the 40 pages printed edition.

I will leave Gatepost and the Supplement on the internet because I have been thanked several times for leaving, for example, adverts for treatment of dementia when a relative is diagnosed and the associated advert was remembered and looked up.

**Don't miss the PLANT SALE on page 7.**



John Cooper

Royal Sutton Coldfield Town Councillor

[johncooper@suttoncoldfieldtowncouncil.gov.uk](mailto:johncooper@suttoncoldfieldtowncouncil.gov.uk)

Well here we are May '26 a time of change for us all.

Royal Sutton Coldfield is a wonderful place to live, we have Sutton Park, somewhere many people attracted to the Town settle because of its wide offering of something special for each and everyone.

The park should be cherished by all; residents, people from outside the Town, anyone passing through. This relationship has another side to it one that urgently needs to be upheld, we as users are in some ways neglectful of its needs but not as neglectful as those who are the temporary custodians of this magnificent natural asset.

The Park is a SSSI and NNR, nationally recognised as extremely valuable and also recognised as declining. The Park Rangers do a wonderful job but with limited resources, manpower and finance they can only hope to fight off some of the decline, without averting the decline.

The Town Council recently funded an investigation into aspects of the Roman Road that runs through the park picking it up around Rose Cottage location of Rose Gate and travelling through what is now a Golf Course and onto around Streetly Gate. This investigation whilst completed by Leicester University some time ago is not yet fully available for examination. The Roman Road in Sutton Park is recognised as being one of the best examples of such structures in the country. If you were to go there you will not see one single "POT HOLE" unlike the roads that surround the Park, Town and City.

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<https://suttoncoldfieldtowncouncil.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/Strategic-Plan-Consultation.pdf>

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Anja Pawson

Local Campaigner in Sutton Vesey

Vice-Chair of Friends of Boldmere Spinney, Primary School Teacher, School Governor, busy Mum of two

# Getting Things Done



Big wins for Sutton Vesey:  
✓ Road signs cleaned and bollards fixed, like on Chester Road North  
✓ Graffiti cleaned on Queslett Road East, and nearby refuge island fixed  
✓ Traffic lights repaired, like on Bakers Lane



Email us: [veseyward@gmail.com](mailto:veseyward@gmail.com)

Follow us on Fb: VeseyNews

**Boldmere Summer Festival 2026**

**Sunday 7th June 1-6pm**

**Suggested Donations**

**Adults £3.00**  
**Children £1.50**  
**Family (5) £7.50**

The festival is run by a dedicated group of volunteers. To be able to continue putting on festivals in the future we kindly ask that you would donate a nominal entrance fee.

**1:00 Sutton Coldfield Musical Theatre Company**  
Local theatre group performing songs

**2:00 Rosie O'Sullivan**  
Local soulful vocalist and Britain's Got Talent semi-finalist

**3:00 The Reggullites**  
Birmingham reggae collective performing roots and reggae selections

**4:00 The Mockingjays**  
Superb group spinning soul, funk and rock hits

**5:00 LUNAFALL**  
Local trio covering chart topping classics

Full details of our festival at [boldmere.org](http://boldmere.org)

Presented by:

**BOLD MERE FUTURES** and **BOLDMERE COMMUNITY FESTIVALS**

Please read carefully as this includes a lot of information about the Summer Festival. If you have a neighbouring business or organisation that is new to Boldmere, please ask them to email us [info@boldmere.org](mailto:info@boldmere.org) so we can pass on information to them in the future.

This year's Summer festival will take place on **Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> June 2026 from 1pm to 6pm** with the road closed from 10am to 9pm. Details of the event are at <https://www.boldmere.org/community-festivals/summer-2026/>

### **Boldmere Businesses Booking Gazebos and Pitch Space**

We always give priority to Boldmere's own businesses and organisations and so we would urge you to fill in the form at [www.boldmere.org/stalls](http://www.boldmere.org/stalls) to let us know if you would like to book pitch space from us. Boldmere businesses hiring pitch space get a gazebo included free of charge if you don't have your own. We need to know by the end of March so that we can then allocate any remaining gazebos and pitch space to other stalls. I'd also like to welcome Alexandria to the team who will be managing the stalls for this festival and thank Sophie for her efforts for the previous 2 festivals.

### **A Risky Summer Festival**

We are taking a risk with this festival as we haven't yet secured funding. We had to cancel Christmas 2025 due to a lack of funding. If we don't get grant funding for this festival or contributions from businesses on the street that benefit most from the festival then we will most likely exhaust all of our reserves which will make it extremely difficult to attract grant funding in the future and therefore mean an end to the festivals and most likely Boldmere Futures CIC which does so much to keep Boldmere buzzing for everyone.

If you are interested in sponsoring the event, please contact [info@boldmere.org](mailto:info@boldmere.org)

### **Would you like to Volunteer to help?**

We are always looking for people who have a passion for Boldmere to join us at Boldmere Futures CIC (a not-for-profit community group) or to help with the running of festivals. If you could help with the festivals, please have a look at [www.boldmere.org/volunteer](http://www.boldmere.org/volunteer) where there is further information and a very short application form to fill in. If you are interested in helping Boldmere Futures CIC as a wider organisation beyond the festivals, then please email [info@boldmere.org](mailto:info@boldmere.org)

Kind regards  
 On behalf of Boldmere Futures CIC, Paul Long, Event Manager

**DONEGAL ROAD ALLOTMENTS**

# **PLANT SALE**

**On Saturday 16th May 2026**

**10:00am - 2:30pm**

Vegetable &  
Bedding Plants  
Hanging Baskets  
Refreshments

**Donegal Road, B74 2AA**

Enquiries: 0121 354 6182

Parking spaces limited for Disabled parking only

**Jenneyashleigh31@gmail.com**  
**0753 9754 194**



**STAY & PLAY**  
**CHEEKY MONKEYS**

Every Monday Morning  
**BOLDMERE**  
SUTTON ROSE CARE HOME

Every Friday Morning  
**STREETLY**  
SCOUT HOUSE  
STREETLY

# St Columba's Hall Hire

Tables & chairs to accommodate 80 people in comfort

Hall 12m x 12m

Adjoining Kitchen 4.7m x 3.2m is also available for hire when booking hall

Ideal venue for leisure activities e.g., dance groups, keep fit, etc.

Available for one-off events as well as regular bookings

Bookings available 52 weeks of the year including Saturdays

## Facilities

Large easy access car park with 32 spaces

Ground level wheelchair access to all areas

Male / female/ disabled toilets

A Kitchen is available for hire. Suitable for light refreshments

Please contact Alison Jolley, email: [st.columbahall@yahoo.com](mailto:st.columbahall@yahoo.com)

for further details.





Age Concern Birmingham  
is now  
**Age Connects West Midlands.**

While our name has changed, our services, values, staff, and commitment to supporting our communities remain exactly the same.

The new name better reflects who we are today – a modern charity bringing people and communities together and celebrating ageing as a positive part of life.

Thank you for your continued support. If you have any questions, please speak to a member of the team.

Check our socials below



# communittea cafe

## What's On May 2026

Opening Times

Monday to Saturday 8:30am - 4.15pm

Closed Monday 4<sup>th</sup> May

Monday 25<sup>th</sup> May

Call us on 0121 362 3650

For bookings, call us on 0121 630 2462

[communittea@ageconnectswm.org.uk](mailto:communittea@ageconnectswm.org.uk)



Communittea Cafe is owned and managed by  
Age Connects West Midlands

### Monday

**Carers Hub drop-in: 9.30am until 12pm - weekly**  
Our advisors can provide information and advice today. Pop in and have a chat, no appointment necessary.

**Warm Welcome: 9:30am until 12pm - weekly**  
Come and join us in our cosy cafe!

**Energy Advice Drop In: 1:30pm until 3pm - weekly**  
Whether you are looking for tips on how to reduce your energy bill or need help registering with priority services, just drop in to speak to one of our Energy Advisors.

**Knit and Natter: 10am until 12pm - weekly**  
Join our team of knitters and enjoy some great company along with a cuppa and maybe even a slice of cake.

### Tuesday

**Allotment Group: 10am until 12pm - weekly**  
Talk all things gardening with the Communittea Allotment group, you will find us at the allotment if the weather is nice.

**Dementia Carers drop-in: 10am until 12pm - weekly**  
Drop in advice and information for unpaid dementia carers.

**Stroke Support Group: 10am - 12th and 26th Only**  
Bringing together friends and families who have experienced the impact of stroke through our supportive group.

**Warm Welcome: 10am until 12pm - weekly**  
Come and join us in our cosy cafe!

**Friends For Life Veterans Group: 12pm until 3pm - weekly**  
Our group aims to bring together all ex service personnel to make new friends.

### Wednesday

**Community Police drop-in: 11am until 12pm- 13th and 27th Only**  
Come along to meet and chat to a Police officer

**Advice Cafe: 11am until 1pm - weekly**  
From benefits advice to saving energy at home. No need to book, just drop in.

**Friendship Group: 11am until 1pm - weekly**  
Come down for a chat and a cuppa - everyone welcome!

**Digital Inclusion: 3pm until 4pm - weekly**  
Joe will be in the cafe lending a hand for all your tech needs!

### Thursday

**Parkinson's UK: 10am until 12pm - 7th and 21st Only**  
A group welcoming those with Parkinson's and their families and carers.

**Social Worker drop-in: 10am until 1pm - weekly**  
Come along to meet and chat to a social worker - ask us anything

**Knit and Natter: 2pm until 3:30pm - weekly**  
Join our team of knitters and enjoy some great company along with a cuppa and maybe even a slice of cake.

**Craft and Knit Group: 10am until 12pm - weekly**  
Come along to our new craft group, previously held at the Sutton Library. Don't forget to get yourself a cuppa and maybe even a slice of cake.

**AWOC Support Group: 10am - 11:30am - 21<sup>st</sup> Only**  
Are you growing older without children nearby - or without children at all? Our Ageing Without Children group offers a warm, welcoming space to share experiences, build friendships and support one another.

### Friday

**Art Group: 10am until 11.30pm - weekly - Waiting list to join**  
A friendly art group working with various mediums from charcoal and acrylic paints to lino printing. We create artwork in a relaxed positive environment. Contact Angie for availability 07789 408956 or email [angie@therecoveryfoundation.org.uk](mailto:angie@therecoveryfoundation.org.uk)

**Advice Cafe: 11am until 2pm - weekly**  
One of our friendly Advice and Information team will be on hand to help with your queries - from benefits advice to saving energy at home. No need to book, just drop in.

**Chatty Cafe: 2pm until 4pm - weekly**  
Come down for a chat and a cuppa - everyone welcome!

### Saturday

**Legal Services Drop In: 10am until 12pm - 6<sup>th</sup> June Only**  
Drop in to speak to our legal partner Jane from Wills Made Clear if you need advice on a will, lasting power of attorney or trusts!

**Afternoon Tea: Saturday 2nd May Only**  
**Limited spaces remaining.** Enjoy our afternoon tea with friends or loved ones for just £15 per head. Booking essential.

## Hire Banners Gate Community Hall



*A Center of Excellence within Banners Gate Community,  
For Children's Parties, Meetings, Seminars, Dance Classes and more !  
Banners Gate Community Hall has a fully equipped Kitchen, Disabled facilities,  
A Music and entertainment Hub*

Book with us as below.

35 Reay Nadin Drive, Sutton Coldfield B73 6UR, Tel: Jessica 07538794120

Maria Mitchell. Tropic Skincare Ambassador. 07400894034. Flf7b@yahoo.co.uk. Contact me to discuss products, book a pamper party or discuss possibilities for fundraising events. Tropic is an ethical company that is certified vegan and organic.





### Cost of Living 1965 to now 2026

As a sequel to my article in the last edition of Gatepost ; “ **Motoring the Good Old Days**”.

I thought it might be interesting to look at the cost of living in 1965 compared to today.

Inflation and the value of the pound are the main reasons for price rises but increases in wages and salaries over the years have tended to keep pace with rising costs.

Many of the 1960's basics are more expensive today but most groceries are the same if not cheaper.

In 1965 wages were £750-£1000 /year, average salary today is about £40,000/year.

Some things such as buying a house are very much dearer. Average house price in 1965 was £3300 (equivalent to about £40,000 today). The average house price in 2025 was £273,000!

Newspapers were 2.5d-5d (1-2p).

Post; 2<sup>nd</sup> 4d (2p), 1<sup>st</sup> 5d (2.5p), (now 87p/£1.70). Unfortunately (or fortunately because of the huge rise in the cost of postage ) letter writing appears to be a thing of the past with the increased use of eMail and the internet. The post was delivered every day except Sundays and you got to know your Postman/Postwoman.

Buying a TV Set in 1965 was expensive, the average set cost about £ 280 ( equivalent to £3200 today). Most people rented their TV Sets at £1-£2 per week.

Grocery prices are interesting; Bread then 7.5p/loaf now £1.50, Butter 8-10p, £1.98.; Eggs (dozen ) 17-20p, £3.80. Baked Beans 4-8p, £0.42. Cornflakes 9p, £2.29. Sugar 8p, £1.09. Milk 4pts 14p, now £1.65.

In those days the milk was delivered in glass bottles by a milkman or woman doing their rounds. He or she arrived much the same time everyday, come rain or shine and they became a “ friend “ to many people. Today most people buy their milk at a supermarket in cartons/plastic bottles of either 2/4/6 litres.

The major change in costs/prices took place on the 19<sup>th</sup> November 1967 when Prime Minister, Harold Wilson devalued the pound by 14.3%. He used the famous phrase “The pound in your pocket”. The devaluation immediately led to increased costs for imported goods and consequently an increase in inflation.

Matters were made worse by a further devaluation by James Callaghan in 1976.

We have lost the daily contact from the Milkman/Postman and other regular visitors. For many people this was their only link with the outside world.

Nowadays we enjoy more goods exotic foods, holidays etc but are things better than the “ Good Old Days ?”

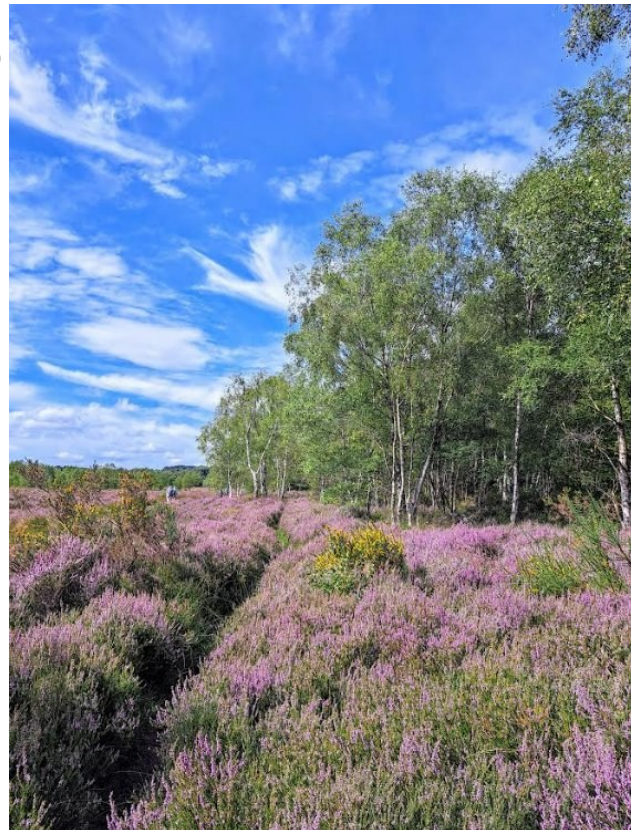
## ***Saving the Heather***

Purple Horizons Nature Recovery Project was launched by Lichfield and Walsall Councils, funded by Natural England and supported by various other agencies. The aim is to restore as much of the ancient heathland that once covered the area between Cannock Chase in South Staffordshire and Sutton Park. Small areas still exist and it is hoped to preserve and improve these, creating a corridor for wildlife between the two main sites.

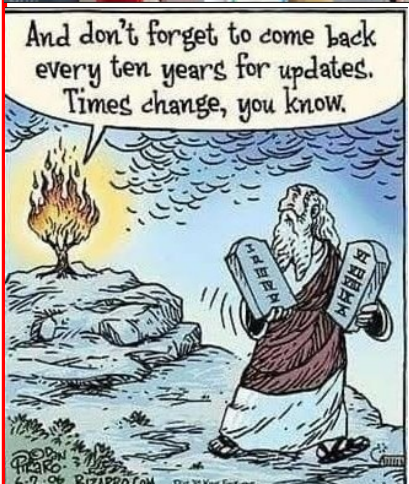
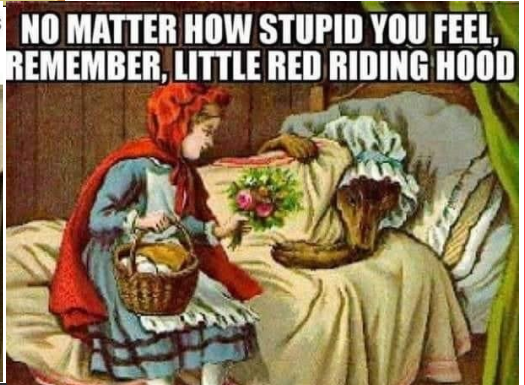
In August 2022 I noticed an area of heather King George V Playing Field off Sutton Oak Rd, close to the Millenium Wood, which is in direct line between Sutton Park and Barr Beacon, one of the main sites in the corridor. We've since heard that it was always there, but persistent mowing has almost eliminated it. Since then Friends of King George V Playing Field have been trying to stop BCC mowing the heather but, in spite of messages to the Wildlife Trust (who were keen to preserve the heather), the BCC Parks Services Manager, our local councillors and anyone else we thought could help, the message never got to the man driving the mower, nothing happened and the heather continued to be mown – until 15<sup>th</sup> April this year that is. On that date a meeting was held on the field between the Friends group, a city councillor, one of the BCC parks managers and the man in charge of mowing. Finally, the situation could be explained to the person actually doing the work and, this week, the field was mown but the heather wasn't. We look forward to seeing a small Purple Horizon on our field. Watch this space!!!

For more information on the [Purple Horizon project](#) click or just Google it, there's a lot of information online. It's also well worth going to Barr Beacon to see what they're doing to improve their heathland.

The heather as it is now and how we hope to see it in the future.



# Cartoons from Chris. Thank you Chris W



Here's your quiz - some hard, but look upon it as education.

1. What type of wheat is generally used to make pasta?
2. If you were a Turophile of what foodstuff would you be a lover?
3. The sweet red liquor, Creme de Cassis is made from which fruit?
4. What foodstuff did Mark Twain describe as "a cabbage with a college education"?
5. What cake consisting of two layers of sponge filled with jam is named after a British Queen?
6. What fruit can be found in the centre of a Sussex Pond Pudding?
7. In which Australian state is the wine growing region of Hunter Valley?
8. What animal features on the logo for Toblerone chocolate?
9. Consisting of a sweet or savoury covered in corn dough and wrapped in corn husks or banana leaves, Tamales are normally associated with which country?
10. On which Mediterranean island did Halloumi cheese originate?
11. From what fruit is Cumberland Sauce traditionally made?
12. In which European country did Pilsner beer originate?
13. What type of pasta translates from the Italian as "Little Tongues"?
14. What foodstuff if stored properly can last indefinitely?
15. Which famous TV cook was a long-time major shareholder in Norwich City football club?
16. In the USA what is a Weiner?
17. Which beer was advertised on TV using the slogan, "Looks good, tastes good and by golly it does you good"?
18. The Nordic dish of Gravlax is usually made with which fish?
19. What liqueur is added to brandy in making a "Sidecar" cocktail?
20. Translating from the Italian as "little bundles" or "little parcels", what are Fagottini usually filled with?

**Answers** 1. Durum. 2. Cheese. 3. Blackcurrants. 4. Cauliflower. 5. Victoria sandwich. 6. whole lemon. 7. New South Wales. 8. Bear. 9. Mexico. 10. Cyprus. 11. Redcurrant. 12. Czech Republic. 13. Linguini. 14. Honey. 15. Delia Smith. 16. (Hot dog or Vienna) sausage. 17. Mackeson. 18. Salmon. 19. Cointreau. 20. Vegetables.

## Weekly round-up from Sutton Vesey NHT

- Online meeting with partners with regards to The Greenway (more updates to follow with regards to this). Several walk throughs have been conducted and residents liaised with.
- A couple of arrests during the set male arrested for robbery and failing to appear at court, males arrested for having a large amount of money unaccounted for, assisted with male being arrested for public indecency and racially aggravated offences. Male arrested for a immigration offence.
- Reassurance visits completed.
- Schools patrols
- Drop in meetings conducted
- Joint visits with the Birmingham City Council officers to serve warning letters. Burnt out vehicle reported to Birmingham City Council which was promptly recovered from Browns Drive.

July  
17

### Upcoming Police & Community Engagements

July  
17

- **Event Name:** Communita Cafe Police Surgery
  - **Date/Time:** 11:00AM - 12:00PM, Wed 29th April 2026
  - **Location:** Communita Cafe Boldmere Road, Sutton Coldfield
  - Details:** Neighbourhood surgery for residents to speak to local PCSO
- **Event Name:** Sweetfields Police Surgery
  - **Date/Time:** 11:00AM - 12:00PM, Thu 30th April 2026
  - **Location:** 141 Sutton Road, Wylde Green, Sutton Coldfield
  - Details:** Neighbourhood surgery for residents to speak to local PCSO
- **Event Name:** Sutton Rose Police Surgery
  - **Date/Time:** 11:00AM - 12:00PM, Wed 06th May 2026
  - **Location:** Sutton Rose Care Home Bistro, St Michael's Rd, Sutton Coldfield B73 5FU
  - **Details:** Neighbourhood surgery for residents to speak to local PCSO



### How to Contact Us or Report Information



- **Non-Emergency:** 101
- **Emergency:** 999 / 112 (if crime in progress or immediate danger)
- **Report Online:** [West Midlands Police](#)
- **Anonymous Reporting:** [Crimestoppers](#)



## New Deputy Chief for West Midlands Fire Service



West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority's Appointments, Standards and Appeal Committee, has recommended that Deputy Assistant Commissioner Paul Askew of London Fire Brigade be appointed as West Midlands Fire Service's Deputy Chief Fire Officer.

Paul has served with the London Fire Brigade (LFB) since 2001, following earlier service in the British Army. He has been Deputy Assistant Commissioner since 2023, initially leading the development and implementation of operational fire tactics, policies, and capabilities in response to emerging environmental risks. This role included

responsibility for hazardous materials policy, specialist teams, and research and development activity.

He subsequently assumed command of the North West area, with responsibility for the safety of 2.7 million residents across 28 fire stations serving nine London boroughs.

Chief Fire Officer Simon Tuhill said: "During a competitive process, Paul's experience, attitude and track record of making considered and effective decisions stood out and will be a great asset to our brigade.

"Our paths crossed at LFB, and I know him to be an excellent professional, a great commander and someone who will be a huge asset to the West Midlands.

"It would be remiss of me not to thank our interim Deputy Chief Fire Officer, Simon Barry, for the calm and meaningful leadership, support and guidance he has given the service in both difficult and transitional periods for us."

DAC Askew said: "It is a real privilege to be appointed to such a vital role in West Midlands Fire Service. I know some excellent leaders have taken this role on before, and I hope to have the same positive impact on the service and the West Midlands as they did."

DAC Askew will join West Midlands Fire Service in the Spring.

You



Message Sent By  
West Midlands Fire Service

can read the full announcement on our website: <https://wmfs.link/4qYrvtk>

Are you a good guesser?  
What are these objects. Answers on the bottom of next page.

**Found at my local community park, no openings I could see, maybe 15ft tall.**



1

**Found this in the attic, made of wood and steel, 4-5 inches, with other World War I memorabilia**



2

**This 7-inch tin has a handle on the outside that turns a small, half cup at the bottom. What is this thing?**



3

# DANCE ARGENTINE TANGO



*with Franco & Julia*

Now at: Oscott Social Club  
Witton Lodge Road. B23 5LX

**Thursdays 8.30—8.45pm**

Fundamentals and techniques with  
practise time

**8.45—10pm**

With practise time

Improvers / intermediate level

Taking your tango to the next level

**\*Please wear non-rubber sole shoes\***



**Contact: Julia 0779 008 4218**

## Answers from last page

1. I am very certain this is for Chimney Swifts (birds)! They also nest on cliffs and other vertical places but prefer fully enclosed areas like chimneys and wells and such

2 That is a knife specifically for cutting this kind of tobacco. You could adjust it for the thickness of the plug that you bought.

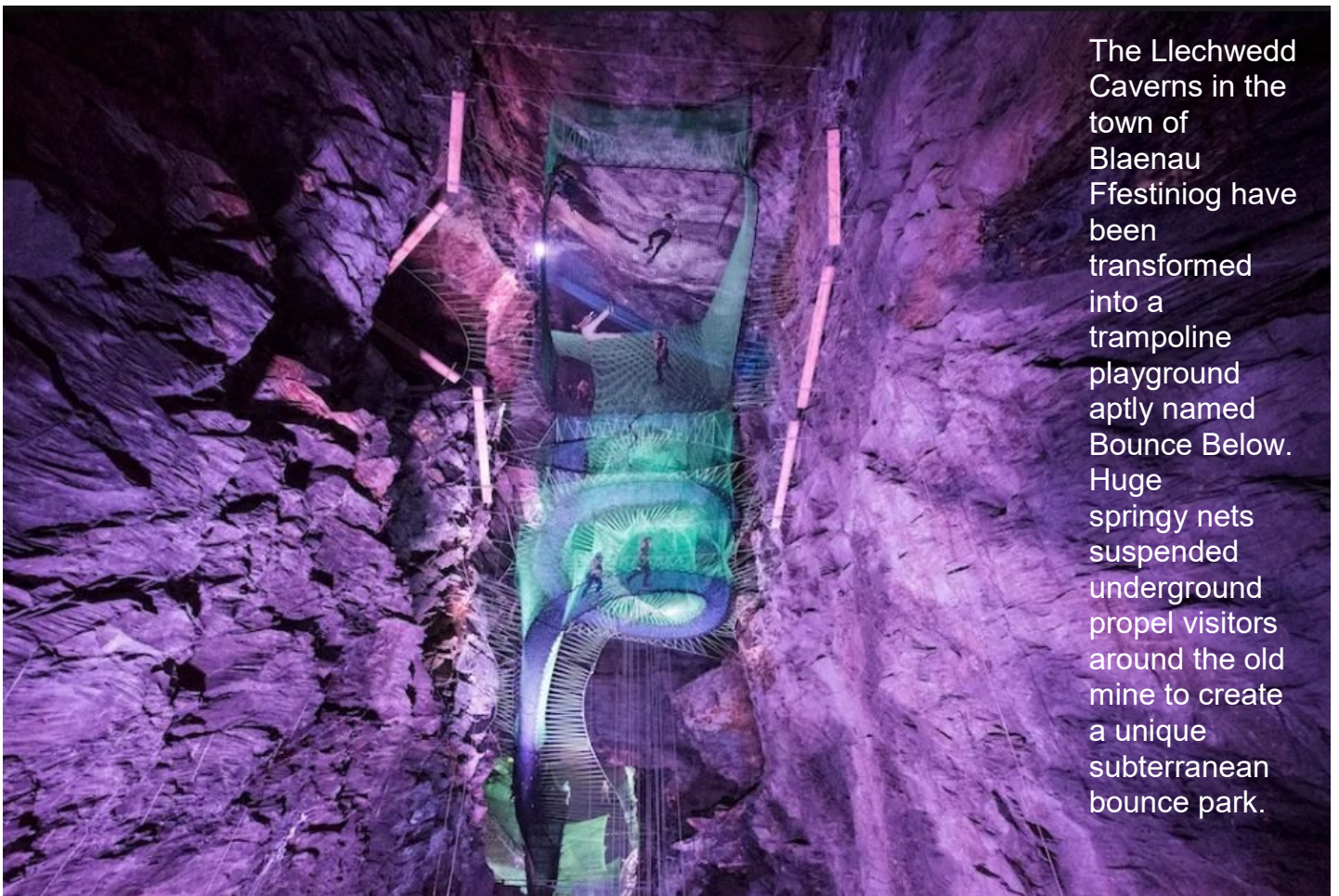
3. It's a retro Giusto Coffee Tin, from what I understand the flap worked as a flap for dispensing the coffee without using spoons, A Dossacafe [Reddit Link showing how it works.](#)

## Things you may not know in Wales



The breathtaking 180-foot-long archway is said to be the longest in the United Kingdom. It was planned by Henry Davis Pochin, the man who created the Bodnant Garden in 1875, and has been enchanting those who pass beneath the ceiling of dangling flowers ever since.

Every spring, this mesmerizing flower arch blooms within a Welsh botanic garden. Golden flowers burst from the branches of the laburnum tree, draping downward to creating a tunnel capped by a lush ceiling of blossoms



The Llechwedd Caverns in the town of Blaenau Ffestiniog have been transformed into a trampoline playground aptly named Bounce Below. Huge springy nets suspended underground propel visitors around the old mine to create a unique subterranean bounce park.



*Alan's pictured on on the famous Flying Scotsman, where he worked this trip as a fireman.*

## Alan Ledger

### MEET THE PHOTOGRAPHER

Alan Ledger is a lifetime steam train enthusiast, photographer & now a retired Train Driver.

After starting work as an apprentice fireman on the railways at age 15, he worked as a train driver right up until his retirement in 2009. In his lifelong career in the railway industry, he personally witnessed the end of stream rail in Britain and captured his unique perspective on these events through his photography collection.

His passion for all things steam, first ignited in his childhood and teenage years, has continued throughout his life, along with a passion for photography. The thrill of capturing that perfect shot, has sent him traveling throughout the world and throughout Britain to this day, taking pictures of engines. With his camera bag slung over his shoulder and his trusty step-ladder under his arm, Alan is known to go to great lengths to find the perfect position to get the right shot, often getting himself into some precarious positions in the pursuits of the perfect shot of a passing steam engine!

Alan is also an accomplished mountain climber, spending many years in reaching some of the tallest and most inaccessible summits in Scotland and the Scottish Isles. In 2012, he became one of the select club of climbers to complete all 285 Munro's in Scotland (*his name is listed in the official Munro completors*).

In 2020, after suffering a cardiac arrest and spinal stroke, Alan became a paraplegic and thus a wheelchair user. Despite all his ongoing health and mobility challenges, he works hard to remains an active train photographer, still making trips to see and photograph steam engines whenever he can.

### ALAN'S BIOGRAPHY

"Trains have always been a significant part of my life and a passion that has been in my blood for as long as I can remember.

My dad's parents lived at Sonning beside the railway, so close to the railway in fact you could hear and feel the vibration of every passing train. For as long as I can remember I spent at least two weeks of my school holidays sitting trackside, down in the cutting watching the steam hauled trains pass by, taking the numbers as we did back then.

I remember taking packed lunch's my grandmother made for me and standing on a platform next to the track, sidelight down in the cutting by the A4 road bridge. Long happy days seeing many of the legendary named and unnamed Great Western engines and the Britannia's from Cardiff Canton. I knew then at the age of 5 or 6 that I wanted to be a train driver.

This dream did come to fruition and as an adult I was able to drive trains through the cutting at Sonning, en-route from Birmingham to London Paddington and Brighton, which never fails to bring back happy childhood memories that little boy train spotting.

I never wavered in my desire to be a train driver, much to the disappointment of my career officer who did all he could to dissuade me, citing poor pay and dirty work... all of which proved to be true of course!

So, age 15 years and 1 Month, I started my working life as a steam engine cleaner at Saltley, Birmingham. I would become very fortunate to be part of the Saltley depot in terms of the rich experiences, the variety of work and many of the colourful characters, all very different but united in their love of our place of work.

To qualify as driver in those days you had to be twenty three years of age before becoming fully competent. So for the next 8 years, I was cleaning and firing steam engines before their sudden demise at Saltley in 1967. Not surprisingly, I became very well acquainted with steam engines and it seemed a natural progression to want to capture them on film, hence my developing interest in photography during these years.

Unfortunately, steam traction finished all too quickly, and August 1968 saw the last working steam on the main lines of Britain. In order to pursue my interest in steam and photography now meant travelling abroad.

Fortunately I wasn't alone in my passion to see steam engines at work, so were several colleagues at work. So when Alan Tregenna, Dave Wright and Bob Pitman organised, just two months later, our first venture to Calais and Boulogne in France to see the last G and K class compound Pacific's at work, only months away from their retirement. When we embarked off the ferry at Calais we came across the Paris bound 'Golden Arrow' train and this was what we had come to see, with 231K16 at its head.

I can remember vividly the excitement of being there, and then it was all aboard to Boulogne. Our trip only lasted two days but in that period I took 30 or so pictures, in black and white with my dad's old German 120 camera. That camera lasted for another year before giving up the ghost and was replaced with a new Praktica 35 mm model.

So started many years photographing all over Europe with visits to South Africa and China, building my collection of photographs which spans all those years up until today."



Hi all,  
Looking down from the footbridge at Bewdley on the Severn Valley Railway in the late summer as people relax and watch a Kidderminster Bridgnorth train headed by Stanier Black 5 45110 prepare to leave. The fireman looks back to get the green flag from the guard before they can leave. Some nice hanging baskets adorn the lamp posts. I may have sent this a long time ago but I like the summer scene so here it is again enjoy.

Summer 2006

Regards ledg



WELCOME TO OUR

# April Newsletter

HELLO FROM SUTTON COLDFIELD NNS!  
Welcome to our monthly Newsletter



## THANK YOU!

From Pete, Rachel, Suzy, Joe, Manjit, Kamleish and Cathy

Hello All!

Spring has sprung and the season of new beginnings is here! We've had our own fresh start with a rebrand - although we are still known as Sutton Coldfield Neighbourhood Network Scheme our organisational lead - **Age Concern Birmingham has rebranded** and is now known as **Age Connects West Midlands**. To follow the Age Connects West Midlands rebrand story, you can find out more on social media (Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn @AgeConnectsWM). The rebrand offers an exciting future, full of potential, although all their brilliant services and teams remain the same.

As usual, if you have any relevant snippets for our May newsletter, or would like to share an NNS 'Story of Difference' please get in touch at [nns@ageconnectswm.org.uk](mailto:nns@ageconnectswm.org.uk)

## CAPACITY BUILDING

### Asda Foundation Local Spaces Community Fund

Accessible community spaces can be a lifeline for local people, and many of these spaces require funding to repair, renovate and develop them so that they can continue delivering vital activities and services. Local Community Spaces funding is to support community groups throughout the UK who provide a safe space for people to meet and be together.

#### When To Apply

Applications open from 14th April - 28th April 2026



#### Who Can Apply

Charities, CICs and Community Benefit Societies that benefit local people

#### Grant Value

Grants of £10,000 to £20,000

## SPREAD THE WORD

## Building Healthier Lives

### A journey through women's health - fertility, menopause and beyond

Royal Sutton Coldfield Town Council has again partnered with Good Hope Hospital to organise a free expert health talk for the local community.

The talk is focused on women's health and is entitled 'A journey through women's health - fertility, menopause and beyond'.

Attendees will have the chance to hear from, and ask questions of, two top experts in their fields:

**Dr Liz Howland, UHB Deputy Chief Medical Officer**, Consultant Obstetrician and Gynaecologist, who will focus on fertility and pre-pregnancy optimisation.

**Dr Pratima Gupta, Medical Director at Solihull Hospital and Community Services, Consultant Obstetrician and Gynaecologist**, who will discuss menopause: the acute symptoms and long-term effects on health, and lifestyle changes which may help after menopause.

The talk will take place on:

**Friday 24th April 2026, 12-1:30pm**

**Trinity Centre, Church Hill, Mill Street, B72 1TF**



Expert-led health talks delivered by Good Hope Hospital in partnership with Royal Sutton Coldfield Town Council

## Presenters:

**Dr Liz Howland**, UHB Deputy Chief Medical Officer, Consultant Obstetrician and Gynaecologist, who will focus on fertility and pre-pregnancy optimisation.

**Dr Pratima Gupta**, Medical Director at Solihull Hospital and Community Services, Consultant Obstetrician and Gynaecologist, who will discuss menopause: the acute symptoms and long-term effects on health, and lifestyle changes which may help after menopause.



To confirm your place please email us at [members@stbc.nhs.uk](mailto:members@stbc.nhs.uk) or 0121 663 1765



To confirm your place, please email [members@uhb.nhs.uk](mailto:members@uhb.nhs.uk) or call 0121 663 1765.

## CAPACITY BUILDING

## How can I show the impact of my NNS project?

How can I show the impact of my NNS project?



Join our free session to learn how to report your impact on public health measures with simple tools and step-by-step support.

Learn about: measuring the impact of your NNS funded project



Thursday 23 April from 11.30am to 2.30pm



The Sanctuary, Castle Vale, B35 7PX



Reserve your free spot today!



How can I show the impact of my NNS project?  
Join a free session to learn how to report your impact on public health measures with simple tools and step-by-step support.

**Thursday 23rd April 26**

**11.30am-2.30pm**

**The Sanctuary Castle Vale, B35 7PX**

Reserve your free spot

<https://www.birminghamcommunitymatters.org.uk/events/>

SPREAD THE WORD

Wonderfully Made - CALM  
A relaxed space for adults with learning disabilities

**CALM is a relaxed space for adults with learning disabilities providing a quiet cafe style group for adults who prefer a calmer environment.**

Come along to relax, enjoy a drink, take part in crafts, or simply spend time with others

Who's it for?

For adults with learning disabilities or sensory sensitivities who benefit from a calm and structured environment.

**Wednesdays, term time only**  
**1-2.30pm**  
**Sutton Coldfield Baptist Church, B72 1TA**

**COST: £3** Support workers are free.

To find out more, please email [info@wonderfullymadegroup.co.uk](mailto:info@wonderfullymadegroup.co.uk)



The poster features the 'CALM' logo in large green letters. Below it, the text reads 'A RELAXED SPACE FOR ADULTS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES'. There are three circular images showing a drink, a cake, and hands working on a craft. Text on the poster includes: 'CALM is a quiet café style group for adults who prefer a calmer environment.', 'Come along to relax, enjoy a drink, take part in crafts, or simply spend time with others.', 'WHAT TO EXPECT' with bullet points: 'Drinks and cake', 'Optional crafts and gentle activities', 'Quiet, low noise environment', 'No pressure to participate', 'Friendly volunteers'. A badge says '£3 PER ADULT' and 'FREE FOR SUPPORT WORKERS'. 'WHO'S IT FOR?' is described as 'For adults with learning disabilities or sensory sensitivities who benefit from a calm and structured environment.' 'STARTING' is 'Wednesday 15th April 2026 From 1.00pm - 2.30pm' and 'Wednesdays (TERM TIME ONLY)'. At the bottom, it says 'Support workers should attend if required' and shows five colorful stick figures.

Introducing our...  
Community Group Sustainability ACTION PLAN

NETWORKERS



Sutton Coldfield NNS are pleased to launch a new **SUSTAINABILITY ACTION PLAN** to support your community group with all the planning, policies and procedures you need to secure a resilient future.

Our Networkers are available to chat about where you are on your community-group journey and explore how we can support your group in achieving its short- and long-term goals.

**Within the action plan we cover:**

- Organisational Structures
- How to generate income
- Policies and Procedures
- Volunteering
- Training needs
- Promotion
- How to measure & report success

Book a chat with a Networker.  
We want to help you thrive and grow in 2026!  
**To book a chat email:** [nns@ageconcernbirmingham.org.uk](mailto:nns@ageconcernbirmingham.org.uk)



## SPREAD THE WORD

## CONGRATULATIONS!

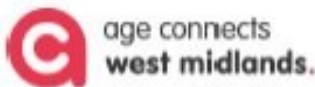
To the recipients of our March Grants Panel

**GROW WELLBEING SUPPORT**

**Grow Family Services** will be expanding their work ensuring adults with neurodiversity / adults who are in need of support with their mental health and carers feel supported through improving wellbeing. This will be achieved through providing a range of services including 1 to 1 support, social activities, art therapy, guest speakers and a meal.

**The ART OF CRAFT**

**Soothing Stitches** will be delivering 25 craft workshops over 12 months at a cafe and church location. An additional ten participants who can't attend in person will benefit from activity packs to enjoy in their home setting. Soothing Stitches will be working in partnership with Wylde Green URC, benefitting from the experience and local knowledge of their community worker.

**FALLS PREVENTION & DEMENTIA AWARENESS SUPPORT**

**Age Connects West Midlands** will be delivering a two year project, using grant funding to employ a part time Falls Prevention Advisor. The project will look to create individualised plans including holistic face-to-face home visits, risk assessments, action plans and signposting. The project will also raise dementia awareness support offering dementia cafes, Interactive Awareness Sessions, Peer Support Networks and links to specialist services.

Sutton Coldfield Charitable Trust  
Grants to make Sutton Coldfield Greener

## GRANTS TO MAKE SUTTON COLDFIELD GREENER



UP TO AND INCLUDING  
**£1,000** PER  
PROJECT, PER  
GROUP OR  
ORGANISATION

OPEN TO BOTH  
NEW AND  
EXISTING  
APPLICANTS



Could your group apply for one of these new grants from Sutton Coldfield Charitable Trust, which support both new and existing applicants to undertake small environmental projects and improvements. The fund will enable organisations to apply for grants of up to and including £1,000 for initiatives that will make a positive difference to the environment.

This could include things such as:

- Installing LED lighting
- Creating recycling points
- Setting up electric vehicle recharging stations
- Making a positive difference to local green spaces
- Supporting nature and wildlife.

## STORY OF DIFFERENCE

## Our Place Support – Advice and Community Navigator Service



Our Place Support were awarded an NNS Small Grant to deliver Advice and Community Navigator services, along with social inclusion activities. We caught them at the mid point of the project, where there have been 37 beneficiaries from Sutton Coldfield, the majority being older adults, many living with long-term health conditions or disabilities, and those on low incomes. Advisors work with clients for as long as support is needed, for many, this is at least three months, allowing time to build trust and develop a positive working relationship.

The following Story of Difference illustrates the benefits of long term support and how building trust and familiarity encourages citizens to access support and services available to them: *Client J is a man in his late 50s who lives in Sutton Coldfield with his 16-year-old son, who is autistic and attends college locally. Client J is a single parent and his son's sole carer following the breakdown of his relationship. He is also registered disabled due to a long-term health condition that affects his mobility. " J describes his son as his world. His daily routine is centred around his needs, rising early and planning his day around college drop off and collection. Outside of this, he has very little social contact and described himself as largely staying at home, feeling that he had everything he needed there. Although now financially stable through a private pension and benefits, he had limited engagement with community groups and little support for himself as a carer. Client J first attended our coffee morning following a conversation during a Household Support Fund application. At the session, he was chatty, sharing his experiences openly. He expressed pride in his home and in caring for his son, but it was clear that he experienced isolation. Through our support, client J has begun to explore opportunities beyond the home. We provided a Brita water filter kettle when his broke, this a sensory requirement for his son, to only have filtered water, this eased a practical worry for him and his son. He later said, "Thank you for the kettle, I really appreciate your help." While small, this support-built trust and opened the door to wider conversations.*

*We have signposted Client J to local carers groups, faith-based groups and parent support networks, and discussed activities suitable for both him and his son. He has since attended a local community group and is planning to try others. He is also being supported to explore funding for a replacement boiler to improve comfort in his home through a personal grant with Sutton Coldfield Charitable Trust.*

*As a result of involvement in the project, Client J has increased awareness of local support, begun reconnecting socially, and feels more confident accessing help when needed. This has positively impacted his wellbeing, reduced isolation and strengthened his ability to continue caring for his son independently in their own home."*

## Sutton Coldfield NNS team: Out & About



Neighbourhood Networkers Manjit and Kamleish were pleased to support a 'Stroke Education' event led by Good Hope Hospital which took place at Sutton Coldfield URC. Invitations were sent to patients who had attended the hospital's emergency department or stroke outpatient clinics over the past few months and were identified as having a transient ischaemic attack (TIA) or 'mini stroke'.

The multi-partner education session, was designed to look at these topics specifically. Sessions were led by Good Hope Hospital's Dr Khaled Darawil, Stroke Consultant, and Professor Sudarshan Ramachandran, Consultant Chemical Pathologist and Professor of Metabolic Medicine.

Manjit and Kamleish were on hand to signpost visitors to local community groups and activities, supporting wellbeing and general health.

### SPREAD THE WORD


## Age Connects West Midlands Volunteer Call Out - Telephone Support Assistant

### VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

TELEPHONE SUPPORT ASSISTANT



JOIN US!

 age connects  
west midlands.


Age Connects West Midlands is looking for Telephone Support Assistant volunteers based at their Head Office in Boldmere. The purpose of this role is to provide friendly, supportive, and reliable first-point-of-contact telephone assistance to callers. This role plays an essential part in ensuring that callers feel welcomed, informed, and supported.


A variety of days and hours are available to suit your availability, get in touch at [hello@ageconnectswm.org.uk](mailto:hello@ageconnectswm.org.uk) or call 0121 362 3650 to find out more.


### Do you offer activities for older people or adults with additional needs?

Please get in touch to discover how we can support your local community group or organisation!

To find out more about the Sutton Coldfield NNS you can visit

 <https://suttoncoldfieldnns.blogspot.com/>

 0121 362 3650

 [nns@ageconnectswm.org.uk](mailto:nns@ageconnectswm.org.uk)

 [Sutton Coldfield NNS](#)

# What's on next at Highbury Theatre?


From The Top Theatre Company Presents  
 The funniest musical ever written...  
 Tel: 07745 724881  
[ticketsource.co.uk/from-the-top-theatre-company](http://ticketsource.co.uk/from-the-top-theatre-company)

## THE PRODUCERS

A MEL BROOKS MUSICAL

Highbury Theatre, Sutton Coldfield, 6-9th May 2026

Book by  
 MEL BROOKS and  
 THOMAS MEEHAN



Music and Lyrics by  
 MEL BROOKS

Original direction and choreography by  
 Susan Stroman

By special arrangement with StudioCanal

This amateur performance is presented by arrangement with Music Theatre International.  
 All authorised performance materials also supplied by MTI [www.mtishows.co.uk](http://www.mtishows.co.uk)

## Improv Comedy with BOX OF FROGS



Spontaneous scenes, sketches and songs based entirely on YOUR suggestions!

LEICESTER COMEDY FESTIVAL  
 NOMINEE  
 BEST QUALITY SHOW 2022

Tringe BEST IMPROV  
 2022 Award 2025

web: [boxoffrogsimpro.co.uk](http://boxoffrogsimpro.co.uk) socials: @boxoffrogsimpro

★★★★★ 'Comedy royalty' (Derek Awards)  
 ★★★★★ 'Hilariously funny' (Moreish TV)

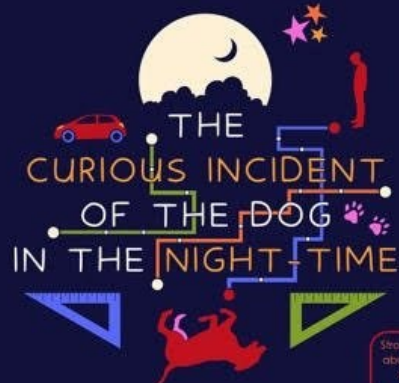
## BOX OF FROGS

Highbury Theatre, Sheffield Road, Sutton Coldfield, B73 5HD  
**Friday, 15th May 2026**  
 7:30pm (doors open 7pm)  
 Tickets: £12  
 Suggested age: 16+  
 Tickets available via [highburytheatre.co.uk](http://highburytheatre.co.uk)

**DRAMA**

## Highbury Players Present

an amateur production by arrangement with Concord Theatricals Ltd on behalf of Samuel French Ltd




### THE CURIOUS INCIDENT OF THE DOG IN THE NIGHT-TIME

Strong language, abuse of people & animals. For 14+

By Mark Haddon / Simon Stephens  
 Directed by Maura Judges

**Who killed Wellington?**

9 - 20 June 2026, 7:30pm  
 at Highbury Theatre, Sheffield Road, B73 5HD  
 0121 373 2761 / [highburytheatre.co.uk](http://highburytheatre.co.uk)



Street Katz Theatre and Film presents:

## 100 YEARS OF WINNIE THE POOH



SOCT  
 Sutton Coldfield Charitable Trust

Saturday 27th June: 6pm  
 Highbury Theatre Centre

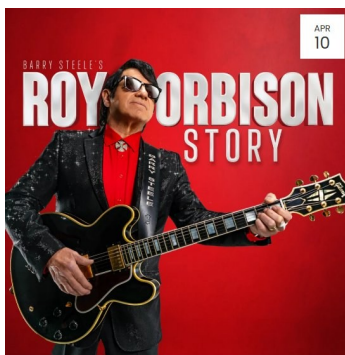
*See you there*

[highburytheatre.co.uk/](http://highburytheatre.co.uk/)

# Sutton Coldfield TOWN HALL

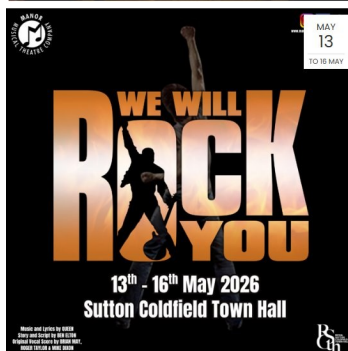
0121 296 9543

What's On: [suttoncoldfieldtownhall.com/events/](http://suttoncoldfieldtownhall.com/events/)  
[enquiries@suttoncoldfieldtownhall.com](mailto:enquiries@suttoncoldfieldtownhall.com)



**SCSAF**  
**SPRING EXHIBITION**  
 9th May — 13th May 2026  
 9 am to 5 pm (4 pm last day)  
 Bedford Suite, Town Hall  
 Sutton Coldfield B73 6DA  
 Admission Free  
[www.suttoncoldfieldsocietyofartists.co.uk](http://www.suttoncoldfieldsocietyofartists.co.uk)

MAY 9 TO 13 MAY

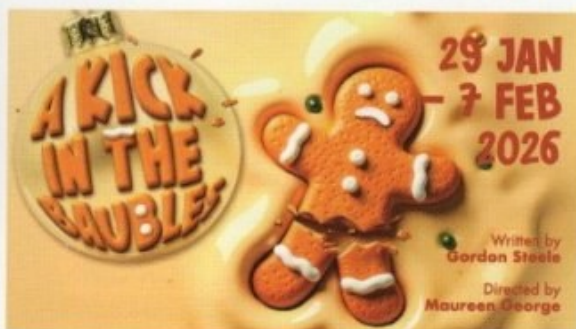
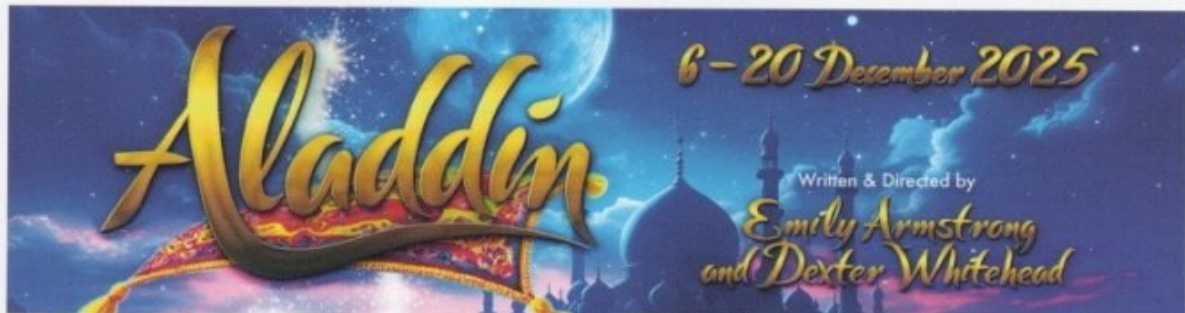
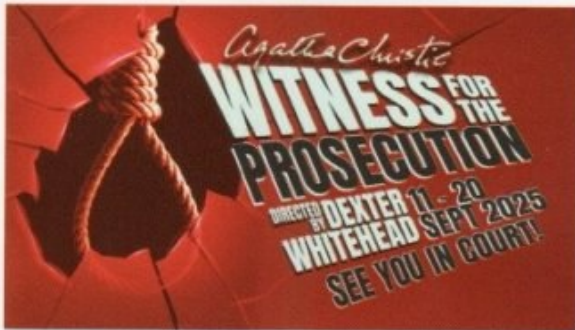


**SUPPORT US**

On the 3rd April 2019, Royal Sutton Coldfield Town Hall was transferred back to the people of Sutton Coldfield and gave management of the building to Royal Sutton Coldfield Community Town Hall Trust. Now a fully-fledged charity-run venue, with your support we can continue to transform and build Royal Sutton Coldfield Town Hall back to its former glory...

<https://suttoncoldfieldtownhall.com/events/>

# WELCOME TO SUTTON ARTS THEATRE 2025-26 SEASON



**BOX OFFICE 0121 355 5355**

DO YOU KNOW THAT FOR EACH PRODUCTION WE DO IT TAKES A MINIMUM OF  
**15 VOLUNTEERS PER NIGHT...** AND THAT DOESN'T INCLUDE THE ACTORS!

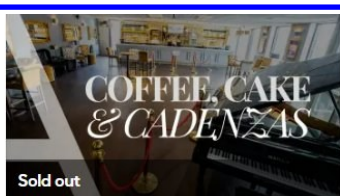
Acting, Directing, Musical Theatre, Backstage, Stage Management, Props, Set Building, Maintenance, Bar, Box Office, Coffee/Programme Selling, Sweets, Costume & Dressmaking, Front of House, Fundraising, Publicity, Lighting, Sound

IF YOU ARE A MEMBER AND ARE INTERESTED IN HELPING US WITH ANY OF THE ABOVE PLEASE LET US KNOW.

# ALEXANDRA THEATRE BIRMINGHAM



Tue 7 Apr - Sat 11 Apr 2026



Sold out

Fri 10 Apr - Fri 5 Jun 2026



Sat 11 Apr 2026



Max Amini

Mon 13 Apr - Tue 14 Apr 2026



Sat 18 Apr 2026



Tue 21 Apr - Sat 25 Apr 2026



Sat 2 May 2026



Tue 5 May - Sat 9 May 2026



Mon 11 May - Sat 16 May 2026



Sold out

Fri 22 May 2026



Sat 23 May 2026



Mon 25 May 2026



Tue 26 May - Sat 30 May 2026



Tue 2 Jun - Sat 6 Jun 2026



Tue 9 Jun - Sat 13 Jun 2026



Sun 14 Jun 2026



Tue 16 Jun - Wed 17 Jun 2026



Thu 18 Jun 2026



Fri 19 Jun 2026



Sat 20 Jun 2026



DANCE  
WORKSHOP

## MUSICAL THEATRE DANCE WORKSHOP

Creative Burntwood  
Tue 5 May



## CHITTY CHITTY BANG BANG

Presented by Brownhills Musical  
Theatre Company  
Tue 5 – Sat 9 May



## LICHFIELD ARTS EMERGING TALENT - BURNTWOOD TAKEOVER

Fri 8 May



## MOVING TOGETHER

Gentle Dance & Creative Sessions  
Mondays at 10.30am



## THAT'LL BE THE DAY: 40th ANNIVERSARY SHOW

Mon 11 – Tue 12 May



## DONATE TO THE BIG TICKET APPEAL!

GIVING YOUNG PEOPLE



## LICHFIELD FILM CLUB - SOME LIKE IT HOT

Wed 13 May



## JONNY COLE: ARMAGUDD'N - BURNTWOOD MEMORIAL HALL

Part of Creative Burntwood  
Wed 13 May



## SSC FILM PREMIERE

Cold Truth & The Move  
Fri 15 May



**SSC FINAL  
PERFORMANCE: THE  
MERRY WIVES OF  
VEGAS**

Fri 15 – Sat 16 May



**THE WEST END  
TENORS**

Sun 17 May



**HAMNET**

Burntwood Afternoon Cinema

Tue 19 May



**CREATIVE  
BURNTWOOD - TOP  
HAT OPEN MIC**

Tue 19 May



**BLOOD BROTHERS**

Presented by Bill Kenwright Ltd

Tue 19 – Sat 23 May



**LISTENING WITH  
YOUR EYES  
WORKSHOP**

Presented by Vamos Theatre

Thu 21 May



**QUILL**

Sun 24 May



**STUPIDEST SUPER  
STUPID SHOW**

Part of Creative Burntwood


Mon 25 May




**OH ZEUS!**

Tue 26 – Wed 27 May

Josh Widdicombe is back on tour, not again! By now he has almost certainly mastered the art of stand-up, either that or he has wasted the last 15 years of his life. Come along and decide for yourself. Expect it to be shorter and with lower production values than Taylor Swift's Eras Tour, but funnier and with more references to tea. Josh co-hosts the hugely popular podcast *Parenting Hell* with Rob Beckett, which has somehow become so popular that they undertook a live arena tour in 2023 and released a book which topped the Sunday Times Bestseller Charts. He's co-hosted in over 30 series of the multi-award-winning Channel 4 series *The Last Leg*, is a team captain on Sky Max's *Rob Beckett's Smart TV* and co-hosts Sky's *Hold The Front Page*. And he has an almost complete collection of Panini football sticker books



**Josh Widdicombe: Not My Cup of Tea**  
Josh Widdicombe is back on tour, not again!  
Tue 5 May



**WNO - Flying Dutchman**  
A gripping reimagining of *The Flying Dutchman* inspired by the sublime beauty of the Welsh coast  
Thu 7 May

A ghostly ship roams the endless sea, vast, lonely and unrelenting. Its captain cursed to sail for eternity until redeemed by true love. Senta, captivated by the story of the mysterious Flying Dutchman condemned to sail forever, becomes the only hope for his salvation. Her longing for escape entwines her fate with his in ways neither could foresee. This gripping reimagining of **The Flying Dutchman** explores the deep ache of loneliness and the fragile hope of human connection. Inspired by the sublime beauty of the Welsh coast, the sea is the opera's canvas, and both a compulsion and prison for its characters. Wagner's orchestrations from the thunderous overture to its haunting arias, become the heartbeat of the story, evoking the power of the ocean and leaving you adrift in its spell.

Get ready for a toe-tapping, heart-warming adventure in **Blaze of Glory!** – an uplifting tale set in a 1950s Welsh Valleys community. After a devastating mining disaster a small group of Welsh miners decide to reform their Male Voice Choir to lift spirits and raise the roof! Led by their heroic Chorus Master and supported by the strong-willed women who stand by them, the men embark on a musical escapade which finds them kidnapping a yodeller, taking part in the historic trans-Atlantic link-up with Paul Robeson and blazing a trail to the Eisteddfodau and beyond. **Blaze of Glory!** is a jubilant celebration of the Land of Song and a tribute to how community spirit can triumph over adversity. Traditional Welsh harmonies blend with the *a cappella* sounds of the 1950s, operetta, gospel and big band as our intrepid band of gleemen Lindy Hop their way to glory. Join our men in blazers, for a feel-good performance which will make your heart sing. Sung in English with surtitles in English



**WNO - Blaze of Glory!**  
Cymru, coal and choral singing  
Fri 8 May



**WNO - Play Opera LIVE - Shipwrecked!**  
Sail the high seas with our interactive family show  
Sat 9 May

**Sail the high seas with our interactive family show that's perfect for toddlers**  
Our fearless captain, Tom Redmond may be stranded on a desert island but we're not that worried, as he's in great company with his trusty crew of the WNO Orchestra and singers. Together, we will introduce you to the orchestra's many instruments with melodies that take you on a journey accompanying our talented singers through story, song, and of course, the swashbuckling music, from stage and screen which are our absolute favourites to perform. This interactive and educational show, for all the family, is the perfect introduction to the wonderful world of opera and classical music. The relaxed vibe will allow you to fully lose yourself in the music, story and drama as we charter the waves and bring Tom and our crew back to dry land. And the adventure doesn't stop there! Before you board HMS WNO, join us in the foyer to experience the backstage magic of opera during our free pre-show foyer activities, available from 1pm. Explore our costumes, make your own props and test your skills on lighting and sound stations. If that's not enough, there's even a treasure hunt – but make sure you find it before those pesky pirates!

Pull back the curtain and step onto one of the UK's largest stages with our **Behind The Scenes Tours**. This is your chance to explore the real working spaces usually only seen by cast and crew. Along the way, our knowledgeable team will share stories from the theatre's past, offer a glimpse into the present and reveal exciting plans for the future. Tours last around 90 minutes and are ideal for curious minds eager to uncover how the magic truly happens. *Please note that the tour involves using several staircases. If you have any access needs or requirements, just let us know in advance and we'll be happy to make arrangements.*



**Behind The Scenes Tours**  
Sun 10 May – Sun 18 Oct



**TOM DAVIS SPUDGUN**  
Tom Davis returns with a new show  
Sun 10 May

Tom Davis is back on the road, firing out his freshly cooked observations on life's hot topics. Co-host of the mega-hit podcast *Wolf and Owl* with Romesh Ranganathan, star of BAFTA and Royal Television Society award-winning comedy series *Murder in Successville* and BBC One smash-hit comedy *King Gary*, Tom also has his own special *Underdog* available to watch on Sky and NOW TV. Also seen on *Wonka*, *Paddington 2*, *The Curse*, *A League of Their Own* (Sky), *Live At The Apollo* (BBC) and *The Jonathan Ross Show* (ITV). Get ready – this one's fully loaded.

As part of **Origins Festival: Celebrating New Work**, watch brand new work-in-progress performances by our hand-picked **Hippodrome Origin Artists**. Each performance will have a British Sign Language interpreter and include audio description. You are also invited to join us post show, to gather with others and enjoy some delicious free food.




**Origins Festival**  
Birmingham's newest theatre festival  
Mon 11 - Sat 16 May

For What's On at Birmingham Hippodrome please click [here](#).



**Whitedust.c**  
Studio

**LAUNCHING FOR SLOW LIVING &  
GIFTING**

Perfect for self-care — or someone you love   
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made in small batches

**What we have**



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**+44 7936989111**



Simply School Supplies C.I.C is a community interest company committed to reducing inequalities in the school environment. In our first six months of operating, we have helped over 300 children with school uniforms. We do this by collecting and sorting pre-loved school uniforms and making them available through pop-ups, an online second-hand uniform shop, partnerships with local schools, and a referral scheme for local children's charities. Everything we do is to promote equal opportunities in the school environment for all children.

This year, we aim to support 500 children, and we can only do this with your support. To meet our target, we need to raise £2,500 to purchase the branded items we do not have in stock. In the coming months, we will be fundraising at local craft fairs, conducting bucket collections at Asda Queslett, and partnering with local schools and charities to reach as many families as possible.

This is your invitation to join our appeal, whether by simply following us on Facebook to help spread the word or by donating your old uniform at one of our donation points. More information about our events, donation points and volunteering opportunities can be found on our website at [www.simplyschoolsupplies.co.uk](http://www.simplyschoolsupplies.co.uk).

Any support is greatly appreciated.

**Nearest Donation Points:**

- St Columbas Church Hall Entrance - Friday and Sunday mornings.
- ASDA Queslett - Trolley by Cafe Entrance, open 24 hours.

**YOUR LOCAL AUDIO NEWSPAPER - a real lifeline for hundreds, yes hundreds! of people across Birmingham.**

[Birmingham Talking Newspaper For The Blind And Visually Impaired](#)

[btnbvi.org](http://btnbvi.org)

When my own mother-in-law's health was fading, we discovered this remarkable service and it gave her a new lease of life at 93!

Do you know anyone who is partially sighted or blind? If so, they may benefit from listening to a local audio newspaper. Or indeed a monthly magazine and a history talk? This is a completely free of charge service, including the loan of equipment to allow you to listen to these articles. It is enjoyed by many people of all ages, some of whom are housebound.

Blind and visually impaired people in the wider Birmingham area can obtain audio versions of local newspaper articles and a range of weekly and monthly audio magazines. These are provided free of charge for listeners who have registered with our service.

You can apply by filling out the registration form which can be found at [www.btnbvi.org](http://www.btnbvi.org). Or by contacting 0300 330 1404 for more information. We will then explain the service that we provide, all completely free of charge.

Please note that we never pass your information to anyone else and you can unsubscribe from our service at any time.

# Heart and circulatory diseases kill 1 in 4 people in the UK.

Heart and circulatory diseases can affect anyone and everyone. Your donations will help fund the research breakthroughs needed to beat the heartbreak these conditions cause, forever.

We particularly need good quality:

- Clothes and Shoes
- Bags and Accessories
- Books, CDs and DVDs
- Homewares
- Toys and Games

Drop your donations direct to your local shop or call to book a FREE home collection.

**British Heart Foundation**

**Units 6-7, Red Rose Centre, The Parade, Sutton Coldfield B72 1XX**

**0121 355 5848**

**For furniture collections  
visit: [bhf.org.uk/collection](http://bhf.org.uk/collection)**

*giftaid it*

©British Heart Foundation 2019, registered charity in England and Wales (225971) and in Scotland (SC039426). BHD5372

# Holistic Healing

## through Sound Vibration, Movement and Nutrition

A unique journey into self-healing through ancient practices for modern wellbeing and a balanced lifestyle.

Join us for a **FREE** special week of daily outdoor sessions in Sutton Park

**Monday 11<sup>th</sup> - 15<sup>th</sup> May 2026 at 10am – 11:30am**

**Sutton Park**

**Boldmere Gate Entrance Stonehouse Road B73 5JL**

### Each session includes:

- Gentle movement, Tai Chi & Yoga
- Simple breathing techniques
- Introduction to Raag singing
- Nutrition and healthy lifestyle guidance
- Vocal exercises and scales – open to all, no experience needed

These morning sessions are designed to support a positive shift in mood, energy, mobility, and overall wellbeing.

#### Location:

Near Powell's Pool, close to the Miller & Carter restaurant, by the Boldmere Gate entrance to Sutton Park

Meeting point: Miller & Carter car park



**What to bring**: yoga mat, water, maybe layers depending on weather

For further enquiries please contact:

Pritam 07773724697 / E: [pritam@drumatized.com](mailto:pritam@drumatized.com)



Sutton Coldfield  
NNS

DAY/TIME	ACTIVITY	VENUE	CONTACT	TEL.
Sun (last) 10.30 – 2.30 pm 10.00 am 10.30 am (fortnightly) 11.00 am 7.30 – 8.30pm	Create at Gate with K & S Family Communion Sunday Gathering Chikara Karate Kai Soul Yoga –last Sunday	Community Hall St. Columba's Banners Gate CC Scout Hall Community Hall	Kathy Weston  Nigel Willis Paul Murphy 07837 Cath Hussey	628 6651 354 5873 353 0230 39 57 89
Mon 11.00 to 6.45pm 7.30 – 9.00 pm	Sign Language Classes Sign Language Classes Sign Language Classes Line Dancing	Community Hall Community Hall Community Hall Community Hall	Shakila Kosar 07825 Shakila Kosar 07825 Shakila Kosar 07825 Diane Pursall	255042 255042 255042 747 4659
Tues 6.00 – 7.00 9.15 - 2.00pm. 3rd Tues 9.15 - 12.00pm 11.45am - 12.45pm 6.30 – 9.00 7.45 pm	Soul Yoga Born to Spa, Baby Spa Coffee Morning 3rd Tuesdays Tai Chi Line Dancing Chikara Karate Kai	Community Hall Community Hall Community Hall Scout Hut Community Hall St. Columba's	Anna Madge 07833 Dave Cockbill Neil Rankine 07721 Diane Pursall Paul Murphy 07837	45 70 74  67 09 13 747 4659 39 57 89
Wed 9.30, 11.00 & 12 10.30 - 12.00 6.30 – 7.30 7.00 pm	Baby Sensory Guide Dog Training Dance Fitness SlimmingWorld	Banners Gate CC Community Hall Community Hall St Columba's	Tracy Jones 0775 Madge Nightingale  Karen 07759	82 56 22 360 0286  17 02 89
Thurs 10.00 – 11.00 am 7.30 on last Thursday 6.30 – 9.45 pm (3rd of each month) 7.00 pm	Yoga Neighbourhood Forum Zig Zag Dance Studio Townswomen's Guild	Community Hall Community Hall St. Columba's Banners Gate CC	Tricia 07954 Tony Willis Warren 01902 Janice Jones 07955	40 39 43 605 4947 897 900 65 59 10
Fri 11.30 - 3.30 5.00 – 6.30pm 7.00 - 8.00 pm	Sign language Classes Repertoire Dance Studio Sign Language Classes	Community Hall Community Hall Community Hall	Shakila Kosar 07825 Chloe Lloyd 07729 Shakila Kosar 07825	25 50 42 47 79 46 25 50 42
Saturday 9 – 10am	Soul Yoga	Community Hall		

**Useful telephone numbers**  
Sutton and Kingstanding  
**Police: 101**  
Good Hope: 424 2000  
Outpatients: 424 2000  
NHS Health helpline:  
Call 111 it's 24/7  
Citizens Advice  
03444 111 444

**BANNERS GATE  
COUNSELLING CENTRE**

Accessible and Affordable  
Counselling to Adults in the  
Community. The Upper Room  
St. Michael's House  
198 Boldmere Road  
Sutton Coldfield  
Tel : 0121 354 6544  
For information or an  
appointment please ring after  
10 a.m. daily, except  
Wednesday

**Banners Gate  
Community hall  
Coffee Mornings  
The next is on  
19th May starting at  
9.30a.m. until noon,  
please note new  
times.**

**BOOKING SECRETARIES:**  
Community Hall mobile: 075 65 54 68 21  
Banners Gate CC - Nigel Willis 07711 284562  
St. Columba's - Alison Jolley [st.columbahall@yahoo.com](mailto:st.columbahall@yahoo.com)  
Scout Hall - A & R Talliss 353 8166

**UNIFORMED ORGANISATIONS:**  
**Scouts:** Margaret Drummond, 33rd GSL  
353 5203 **Girlguiding:** Carol Gardner,  
Vesey West District Commissioner 350 7191

**Banners Gate Ladies Circle**

This is the name of the previously named  
Townswomen's Guild. Contact details,  
meeting days and times remain the same.  
Hopefully next month will let you know how  
we will be going forward as our new  
group.

**Thurs. 21st May - English Gardens.**

**Thurs 18th June—Ukulele Group**

Our vibrant Guild meets on the 3rd  
Thursday of the month, 7.00 - 10.00 in the  
Westwood Hall, **Banners Gate  
Community Church.**

Janice Jones 07955 65 59 10

**Banners Gate Community Church**

Westwood Road. B73 6UH

We meet **weekly** on Sunday mornings from  
10.30am for fellowship, worship, prayer  
and learning together in an informal setting,  
with other gatherings throughout the week.

To find out more visit our website at

[www.bannersgatechurch.com](http://www.bannersgatechurch.com).

**St Columba's  
Church**

**Coffee Morning**

**Every Friday of  
the month**

**10.00 - Noon**

**All Welcome**

The 18<sup>th</sup> Sutton Coldfield West  
Scout Group and the 15<sup>th</sup>  
Sutton Coldfield West Scout  
Group have merged and are  
now named the 33<sup>rd</sup>  
Headquarters are at the Scout  
Hut, Coppice View Road,  
B73 6UE.

**33<sup>rd</sup> Sutton Coldfield Scout Group,**

H.Q. Coppice View Road

Monday Beavers 5.30 p.m. – 6.45 p.m. ages 6 – 8 years  
Scouts 7.00 p.m. – 9.00 p.m. ages 10 ½ – 14 years  
Tuesday Beavers 5.40 p.m. – 6.40 p.m. ages 6 – 8 years  
Cubs 7.00 p.m. – 8.30 p.m. ages 8 – 10 ½ years  
Thursday Cubs 7.00 p.m. – 8.30 p.m. ages 8 – 10 ½ years

**Contact 0121 353 5203**

Email: [margaretdrummond1@btinternet.com](mailto:margaretdrummond1@btinternet.com)



**Girlguiding gives girls and young women a voice....has done so for 100 years....be part of the next 100**

Could you spare 1½ hours a week to help with the St Columba's Guide unit? Gain real satisfaction in volunteering and helping to ensure girls in Banners Gate aged 10 – 14 can continue to enjoy games, projects, badges and outings at Guides.

There are also places available in both Brownie units in September for girls aged 7 or 8.

For more information contact Carol Gardner on 350 7191.



Girlguiding UK

Day/Time	Activity	Venue	Contact	Tel
Mon 6.00 - 7.30pm	39th Brownies	St Columba's Hall		354 5873
Tues 6.00 - 7.30pm	45th Brownies	St Columba's Hall	Carol Gardner	350 7191
Thurs 5.00 - 6.00pm	39th Rainbows	St Columba's Hall		354 5873