

August 2026 – January 2027
Issue 19



the **ODDfELLOWS** SINCE 1810
making friends, helping people

out & about

Mid-Staffs District Branch

including Stoke-on Trent, Newcastle, Stafford, Cannock, Rugeley and more



Ford Green Hall



Travel and Trips



Talks



Walks



Social



Food with
Friends



Coffee
Morning



Theatre



Games



Members enjoying our April trip to Oswestry

Welcome to issue 19 of our Events & Diary Newsletter.

We can't thank you enough for joining us at our social events throughout Staffordshire. The numbers attending keep growing and it is so lovely to see you all having an enjoyable time together.

We hope you enjoy perusing this issue and like the variety of events we have on offer. Two which we would like to highlight, is the Coach trip to Welshpool with train ride and our Christmas Luncheon, check them out! Some events have limited numbers or will be popular so ensure you book your place as soon as possible (**any dietary requirements need to be requested at time of booking**).

Issue 19 is in the same format as issue 18 and feedback was that members found it easier to follow, as the social

event dates inside are exactly in the same order as 'At a glance' on the back page. Enjoy issue 19, feedback is always welcomed.

We want to extend an invitation for those wanting to know more about us, friends, neighbours and family – come and try one of our events to see how enjoyable they are, as everyone is welcome at Oddfellows events.

Finally, we wish to thank you for continuing to support everything we do, especially the fundraising for our two charities: Midlands Air Ambulance & Macmillan Cancer Support. It is very much appreciated.

We look forward to seeing you soon, if not in person, remember we are at the end of the phone too!

Yours in Friendship
Tina and Christine

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Office Open Days: Tuesday,
Wednesday and Thursday.

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Facebook:
The Oddfellows – Mid Staffs District

We would love to hear from you

We want your feedback, suggestions and comments, these are very important for us to ensure we are following the values of Oddfellowship. Thank you for the following feedback below:

“Made to feel very welcome.”

“I am looking forward to next year’s calendar of events.”

“Had a really great day at The Ironworks, thanks to you and Christine.”

“Thank you so much for organising a wonderful coach trip to The Ironworks at Oswestry. It was great to share the day with friends made at the

Oddfellows and the weather was good for us. The food in the café was lovely and reasonably priced too! And finally, for them to provide a little ice cream for our journey home ended the day perfectly.”

A bit about us...

The Oddfellows is a not-for-profit friendly society that’s been around for over 200 years. Our aim is to bring people together through social events, as well as support our members through a range of benefits and services. For more information visit

www.oddfellows.co.uk or call
0800 028 1810 to speak to one of our team.

We hope you come along and enjoy all our events we have chosen, but don't forget **BOOKING IS ESSENTIAL** with us. We will always try to accommodate everyone that wants to book our events. However, if there is a limited number of places it will be on a first come first served basis.

August 2026

WED 05 Pre-loved Items Sale and Coffee Morning



10am



Free



At this event our aim is to raise funds for our Chairman's chosen charity. You can either help by volunteering on the day, bringing quality pre-loved items for us to sell, or unused gifts which we can use as tombola/raffle prizes. All are welcome to come along and enjoy a cuppa and buy a few bits and pieces, encourage friends or family to come along too, the more the merrier. Opening times 10am to 12.30pm. Oddfellows Hall, Greengate Street, Stafford ST16 2HP. Contact Tina or Christine on 01785 258269.

THURS 27 Cuppa and Chat at the Oddfellows Hall



10.30am



£1



Join us for a cuppa and chat, it is a great opportunity to get to know people, making

friends in a friendly relaxed atmosphere. Everyone welcome. Oddfellows Hall, Greengate Street, Stafford ST16 2HP. Contact Tina or Christine on 01785 258269.



THURS 20 Ford Green Hall



10.15am



Members £10
Guests £12



Do you want to join us for a trip back in time? We will be stepping inside this beautiful Tudor building to see what everyday life was like for families over 400 years ago. There will be a tour around the historic farmhouse bringing 1624 back to life and discover the history behind it. Coffee and Cake will be served on our visit. Please arrive by 10.15am prompt. Book by Monday 4 August 2026 Ford Green Hall, 375b Ford Green Road, Smallthorne, Stoke-on-Trent ST6 1NG. Contact Tina or Christine on 01785 258269.



September

WED
02

Coffee and Cake at The Plume of Feathers



10.30am



As per menu



Coffee, cake and a good old chat with friendly local people, what's not to like? Everyone is welcome. Book by Wednesday 26 August. The Plume of Feathers, Station Road, Barlaston, Stoke-on-Trent ST12 9DH. Contact Tina or Christine on 01785 258269.



WED
09

Cuppa and Chat at the Oddfellows Hall



10.30am



Free



Join us for a cuppa and chat, it is a great opportunity to get to know people, making friends in a friendly relaxed atmosphere. We will also have pre-loved items for sale and raising funds for our charities. Everyone welcome. Oddfellows Hall, Greengate Street, Stafford ST16 2HP. Contact Tina or Christine on 01785 258269.

TUES
15

Cuppa and Chat with Beat The Cold Advice



10.30am



Free



We will be joined by a speaker from 'Beat the Cold' with advice on energy saving. There will be plenty of coffee, tea and biscuits, also we have pre-loved items for sale and raising money for charity. Oddfellows Hall, Greengate Street, Stafford ST16 2HP. Contact Tina or Christine on 01785 258269.

Circle
September for
new friendships



Who can you invite
along to join in the
friendship and fun?

All welcome

ODDFELLOWS
FRIENDSHIP MONTH
1 - 30 SEPTEMBER



To see what's on and find out more about Friendship Month visit www.friendshipmonth.com

September

ODDFELLOWS

FRIENDSHIP MONTH

1 - 30 SEPTEMBER



TUES

22

Half Yearly Summoned Meeting



This is a business meeting for members only. Agenda can be found on page 23. It can be very interesting to find out about the business side of running our Branch and what goes on behind the scenes. A complimentary lunch will be provided after the meeting. Pre-booking is essential by Tuesday 15 September. Oddfellows Hall, Greengate Street, Stafford ST16 2HP. Contact Tina or Christine on 01785 258269.

TUES

29

Stoke Dine Around at Bleeding Wolf

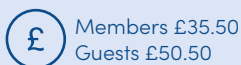


Why not join us for lunch with friends at our member's favourite place to eat. Meals to be pre-ordered when booking with us. Everyone welcome. Book by Tuesday 22 September. Bleeding Wolf, 121 Congleton Road North, Scholar Green, Stoke-on-Trent ST7 3BQ. Contact Tina or Christine on 01785 258269.



THURS
24

Coach Trip: Welshpool Train Ride and Lunch



Coach provided to take us to Welshpool to board the Welshpool and Llanfair Light Railway, which our Chair, Anne-Marie Wright, here at Mid Staffs is the Chair of too. We will commence a magical and traditional journey, taking in the beautiful scenery. When we arrive at Llanfair we will have our lunch at approximately 12.40pm and then return on the 2pm train back. Coach will leave Welshpool approximately 3pm.

Coach pick-up points: Jubilee 2, Brunswick Street, Newcastle ST5 1HG leaving at 8.30am or Stafford Rugby Club, Blackberry Lane, Stafford ST16 2TT leaving at 9.15am. Bacon or sausage (vegetarian too) baps available on pre-order for extra £3.50 each from the Rugby Club. Lunch is optional, either take a picnic or opt for lunch provided, which includes sandwich, a hot drink, crisps and a piece of cake. Pre-order sandwiches: Beef with horseradish, ham salad, tuna mayo and vegetarian options: Cheddar cheese, tomato and red onion or coronation chickpea.

Numbers are limited, so please book early to avoid disappointment by Thursday 10 September. The Welshpool & Llanfair Light Railway, The Station, Llanfair Caereinion, Powys SY21 0SF. Contact Tina or Christine on 01785 258269.



Photo by David Williams

October

THURS
08

Cuppa and Chat at the Oddfellows Hall



10.30am



£1



Join us for a cuppa and chat, it is a great opportunity to get to know people, making friends in a friendly relaxed atmosphere. Everyone welcome. Oddfellows Hall, Greengate Street, Stafford ST16 2HP. Contact Tina or Christine on 01785 258269.

THURS
22

Cuppa and Chat in Trentham



10.30am



As per menu



Join us for a cuppa and chat with friendly local people. Everyone is welcome. Six Arches Restaurant, Trentham Garden Centre, Stoke-on-Trent ST4 8AX. Contact Tina or Christine on 01785 258269.

WED
28

Stoke Dine Around at the Fitzherbert Arms



12.30pm



As per menu



Why not join us for lunch with friends in a beautiful setting. Meals to be pre-ordered when booking with us. Everyone welcome. Book by Thursday 15 October. Fitzherbert Arms, Swynnerton, Nr Stone ST15 0RA. Contact Tina or Christine on 01785 258269.

FRI
16

Walking Group - Great Haywood



10am



As per menu



Meet at the car park behind Great Haywood Memorial Hall on the Main Road. A walk will be planned starting from there, with refreshment stop enroute! Book by Thursday 1 October. Great Haywood Memorial Hall, Main Road, Great Haywood ST18 0SU. Contact Tina or Christine on 01785 258269.



Learn, have fun, and stay in touch from home

Our online events are here to stay

To see what's coming up visit www.oddfellows.co.uk/events

November

TUES

03

Beetle Drive



1.30pm



Members £2
Guests £4



Yes, the beetle drive is returning after last year's fun that was had. Tea and cake will be served too, so why not come and join in! Book by Tuesday 27 October. Oddfellows Hall, Greengate Street, Stafford ST16 2HP. Contact Tina or Christine on 01785 258269.



THURS

12

Give Us A Hand Day



10am



Free



Volunteers are needed at the Oddfellows Hall to help us towards getting ready for the Christmas fair. Any time between 10am to 3pm for any length of time you can spare, we would be really grateful. Also, if you have any items we could use that are Christmas themed for the Christmas stall, small tombola items, raffle prizes or pre-loved/unwanted gifts, please bring them along or drop them by another time. Remember the success at our Christmas fair means our two charities will benefit from the funds. Oddfellows Hall, Greengate Street, Stafford ST16 2HP. Contact Tina or Christine on 01785 258269.

THURS

12

Jack Absolute Flies Again - Stone



7.30pm



Members £16.50, Guests £18



This play is an in-house production at the Crown Wharf Theatre in Stone (contains some strong language). 'Jack Absolute Flies Again' is a play by Richard Bean and Oliver Chris, that promises love, laughter and a touch of chaos in the skies! A hilarious play, set in 1940s British summertime. We are delighted to tell you that one of our members will be performing in this play, I wonder if you will be able to spot them! Book by Thursday 1 October. Crown Wharf Theatre, 1A Crown Street, Stone ST15 8QN. Contact Tina or Christine on 01785 258269.



November

SAT
14

Christmas Fair



10am



Free



One of our favourite events of the year which gives us an opportunity to raise funds for two very important charities – Midlands Air Ambulance and the Macmillan Cancer Support. There will be many stalls, prizes to be won as usual and not forgetting the bacon baps. Come and join in the fun, bring family, friends or neighbours, everyone is welcome. Oddfellows Hall, Greengate Street, Stafford ST16 2HP. Contact Tina or Christine on 01785 258269.

December

THURS
03

Stoke Dine Around at Waggon & Horses



12.30pm



As per menu



Please join us for lunch with friends at this festive time of the year. Meals to be pre-ordered when booking with us and a deposit of £10 per person. Limited numbers, so book early to avoid disappointment by Tuesday 29 September. Waggon & Horses, 33 Higherland, Newcastle ST5 2TF. Contact Tina or Christine on 01785 258269.



SUN
29

District Christmas Luncheon



12.30pm



Members £30
Guests £35



Starters

Chicken Goujons, Tomato and Red Pepper Soup, Prawn Cocktail.

Mains

Beef, Turkey, Mushroom Brie and Cranberry Wellington (V).

All served with seasonal Vegetables, Pigs in Blankets, Stuffing, Yorkshire Pudding and Gravy.

Desserts

Lemon Tart, Apple Crumble, Christmas Pudding with Custard and Cream served to table.

Guest speaker is John Mann, Immediate Past Grand Master of the Order (Immediate Past Chairman of the Society). Menu choices and payment required on booking by Thursday 12 November. Oddfellows Hall, Greengate Street, Stafford ST16 2HP. Contact Tina or Christine on 01785 258269.

December

January 2027

WED
09

Breakfast and Cuppa at Springslade Lodge



10.15am



As per menu



Nestled in the natural beauty of Cannock Chase, this tea room will host us for breakfast and a cuppa. We will meet there at 10.15am for our pre-orders to be served at 10.30am. Numbers are limited, so please book and make your menu choices early to avoid disappointment by Wednesday 2 December. Springslade Lodge, Camp Road, Cannock Chase WS12 4PY. Contact Tina or Christine on 01785 258269.

WED
13

Cuppa and Chat in Trentham



10.30am



As per menu



Join us for a cuppa and chat with friendly local people. Everyone is welcome. Six Arches Restaurant, Trentham Garden Centre, Stoke-on-Trent ST4 8AX. Contact Tina or Christine on 01785 258269.

THURS
21

Cuppa and Chat at the Oddfellows Hall



10.30am



£1



Join us for a cuppa and chat, it is a great opportunity to get to know people, making friends in a friendly relaxed atmosphere. Everyone welcome. Oddfellows Hall, Greengate Street, Stafford ST16 2HP. Contact Tina or Christine on 01785 258269.

TUES
15

Christmas Cakes and Games



1.30pm



Members £2, Guests £4



Let's get in the festive spirit with our friends by playing games and enjoy eating Christmas themed cakes to accompany our cuppa. Everyone is welcome. Book by Wednesday 9 December. Oddfellows Hall, Greengate Street, Stafford ST16 2HP. Contact Tina or Christine on 01785 258269.



Looking Back on our Last Six Months of Fun

Cuppa and Chat Coffee Mornings

From our Oddfellows Hall in Stafford, to Barlaston, to Clayton, to Trentham and Bagnall in Stoke-on-Trent, we met up with members for a cuppa and chat, maybe a cake too!

Summing up our views on a few:

Trentham Gardens

A lovely chatty atmosphere. A record number of 22 came along to this Cuppa and Chat.

The Plume of Feathers, Barlaston

A perfect venue for cuppa, chat and even a slice of cake! 20 came along, plus four new faces joined us. Lots of conversations and laughter, we also raised £25 with a raffle for our chosen charities.



Plume of Feathers.

Oddfellows Hall, Stafford - Cuppa and Chat Events

As always, lots of chatter, smiles and giggles. Ensuring our members are up to date with the benefits Oddfellows has to offer and planning ahead for our future events.

New faces that came along to see what Oddfellows have to offer, really liked the idea of our June Fish & Chip lunch!



Oddfellows coffee.

Jackson Nurseries, Bagnall, Stoke-on-Trent

A lovely place to catch up with members and prospective members for a cuppa and cake.



Lunch Out at the Bleeding Wolf

21 of our lovely members joined us at the Bleeding Wolf, Scholar Green for a scrumptious lunch in a private room on Wednesday 11 February. Here we updated members on the recent Care and Welfare newsletter and took bookings for future events. It's a venue we will return to.

Pancake Delight

What a 'Delightful' afternoon 43 of us had on Shrove Tuesday (17 February). Everyone enjoyed warm pancakes with sumptuous fillings and for those who really wanted to indulge, cream on the top! A quiz about pancakes & pancake day was a challenge, but the fun part was tossing our pretend pancake then throwing it to land on a table a few feet away. We certainly had a giggle at this. A great way to spend time with friends new and old and raise £77 for our Chairman's charities.



British Pie Day

39 pies were eaten by members on Wednesday 4 March to celebrate British Pie Week. Quiz and tombola card game played to help us raise £100 for the two charities we support. We also highlighted the excellent Zoom online events which a couple of our members have tried out, these being the weekly Tai Chi and monthly Quiz. The Care and Welfare Newsletter tips were also shared.



Pre-Loved Sale and Coffee Morning

Thanks to members, volunteers and visitors for April's pre-loved sale held on Wednesday 8 April. We had stalls for Midlands Air Ambulance merchandise, Osteoporosis Society info and Co-op Bank for scam awareness. Over 50 people visited to grab a bargain and/or have a cuppa. Those bargains, teas and raffle helped us raise £232.50 towards the Chairman's charities: Midlands Air Ambulance and Macmillan Cancer Support.

Eyes Down! - St George's Day Fun

On Thursday 23 April, St George's Day fun at our Oddfellows Hall involved playing bingo (wow, how quiet they all were) and corn hole whilst enjoying a cuppa with red and white cakes. Many themed their outfits for the day too! We raised £70 towards our two charities



Coach Trip to the British Ironworks Centre Oswestry

A super coach trip for 32 of us to the British Ironworks Centre, Oswestry on Wednesday 29 April. Perfect all round place to visit, cafe, shopping, weather and of course great company. The centre was so accommodating, also gave us free return tickets and a small pot of ice cream for our journey home. We all enjoyed our day.



Dine Around at Hammersley Restaurant

We thought we would support local students at the Hammersley Restaurant at Cauldon College on Tuesday 5 May. Good value for money and the steamed syrup sponge pudding was delicious.



Oddfellows Extra Training

On Tuesday 16 and Thursday 18 June, training sessions on how to use Oddfellows Extra were run to give members confidence to use and gain savings on day-to-day expenses. During the sessions we were able to assist members to register on the Oddfellows website in readiness to use Oddfellows Extra.



Fish and Chips Lunch

On Tuesday 23 June, our hall was buzzing with chatter from our 48 members until JoJo's fish and chips lunch arrived. Which was delivered piping hot and was devoured enjoyably by all! They weren't impressed with our fish quiz but they gave it a good go!



Walking Group at Wolsley

Our District Secretary Tina arranged her first walk and 15 joined her on Thursday 2 July. They all enjoyed the fresh air, nature and sensory area that Wolsley had to offer. Tina came in her bright blue t-shirt and kept doing a head count to ensure no one had ventured off!



District News

Wednesday 18 March 2026

Our Annual Summoned meeting was held for 30 members who attended. We elected our Officers for 2026/2027: Provincial Grand Master - Anne-Marie Wright, Provincial Deputy Grand Master - Janet Lewis and Immediate Past Provincial Grandmaster - Pat Stewart. Also, we elected an additional member onto our Committee of Management (COM), Jean Gauci.

Our thanks go to all our COM for all their support for our District. At the end of the meeting, we were joined by John Harrison from MacMillan Cancer Support to receive a cheque for their share of our fundraising efforts throughout 2025/26.

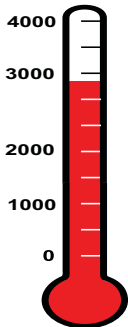


A special mention for Pat Stewart, who had celebrated her 85th birthday the day before.

Midlands Air Ambulance and Macmillan Cancer Support Fundraising update – 2025/2026

We would like to congratulate and thank all our guests and members whom have supported our events and fundraising efforts for the Provincial Grand Master’s (Chairman) chosen charities.

We are pleased to announce that as at 31 March 2026 we had raised a total £2,949.89



Midlands Air Ambulance – £1,898.76, presented to them on Wednesday 8 April.



Macmillan Cancer Support – £1,051.13, presented at Annual Summoned Meeting.

Making A Difference Nominations

This year we nominated two of our members, Bev Marchant and Pat Skelton-Foord to be considered for the Oddfellows National awards. They both received certificates of mention for their volunteering services from our Head Office for their part in 'Making a Difference' in our area. We are so proud of them both.



Also, we are extremely grateful to Bev and his partner Trish who recently had family birthday celebrations and requested donations which raised £300 for our fundraising towards the Midlands Air Ambulance Charity.

A Special Invitation for our Provincial Grand Master

Anne-Marie tells us, "When I am not taking part in the Oddfellows, I am also Chairman of the Welshpool and Llanfair Light Railway (W&LLR) – which we have a trip on Thursday 24 September and I am looking forward to welcoming you all onboard! W&LLR are affiliated with Taisugar (TSC) and the Alishan Forest Railway (AFR) in Taiwan.

On 7 March this year, my husband, Pete and I, along with an international delegation were special guests at an 80th anniversary celebration for one of our two affiliated organisations in Taiwan, Taisugar (TSC). We were welcomed to the event by TSC chairman Wu Ming-Chang, after speeches and presentations we unveiled and travelled in a railcar dating from before the Second World War, which had been recently restored and returned to service at the celebration.

During the visit the party travelled on the Alishan Forest Railway (AFR) line, viewed an exhibition on the railway's history and learned how it is integrating ecological



conservation, cultural heritage preservation and landscape harmony into the challenging engineering of its track maintenance and numerous tunnels.

The relationship between the W&LLR and the AFR was further strengthened by signing an extension, which will see a diesel DL-34 remain with Welshpool until at least 2030.

The Welshpool and Llanfair Light Railway has seen an increase in visitors from the Far East thanks to the promotion of our railway in Taiwan.”

This visit made National TV in Taiwan and a large article in Heritage Railway magazine, so our chairman is famous!

Annual Movable Conference (AMC) Eastbourne 2026

The AMC to be held in May at Eastbourne was cancelled and rearranged to an online AMC taking place on 21 and 22 July 2026.

Puzzle Corner

1. What is the seventh planet from the sun?
2. Before the Beatles were formed, John Lennon, Paul McCartney, and George Harrison were originally members of which group?
3. Who directed the Lord of the Rings trilogy?
4. Who was Henry VIII's first wife?
5. Which country has the bigger population, Scotland or Ireland?
6. Which English football team plays at Meadow Lane?
7. In a website browser address bar, what does “www” stand for?
8. Fissures, vents, and plugs are all associated with which geological feature?
9. How many of Snow White's seven dwarfs have names ending in the letter Y?
10. How many eyes does a bee have? 10. 9. 8. 7. 6. 5. 4. 3. 2.

Don't Forget To Keep Checking

We may arrange some additional surprise activities/events, so don't miss your chance to attend! We want to make sure you don't miss out!

Do we have your email address? Has any of your information changed?

Are you following us on Facebook? The Oddfellows – Mid Staffs District

Do you know how to check our events on the website?

You can find them using this link:
www.oddfellows.co.uk/branches/mid-staffordshire-district-branch

Oddfellows Members: Do you need help?



None of us know what is around the corner...

Local Care and Welfare Support

To request contact from a Welfare Visitor and for local help and information about Branch benefits and benevolence contact the Branch on **01785 258269**.

Oddfellows Citizens Advice Line

Call 0800 0149 821*

(free to callers from any landline or mobile number)

Monday - Friday, 9.30am - 4.30pm

Email: oddfellows@citizensadvicemanchester.org.uk



Run by Citizens Advice for Oddfellows members, you can access free, confidential, independent advice on welfare benefits, money and debt issues, consumer problems, housing, fuel bills, employment issues and many other issues.

*The Oddfellows cannot provide legal advice and accepts no liability whatsoever for advice provided by Citizens Advice, which is an independent advice agency. If you have any queries about the advice you have received or wish to make a complaint then you should contact Citizens Advice directly. Citizens Advice operate a formal complaints process.

Care and Welfare Helpline

Call 0800 0149 822

(free to callers from any landline or mobile number)

Monday to Thursday, 9.30am - 4.30pm, Friday, 9.30am - 4pm

Email: care@oddfellows.co.uk

Run by the Oddfellows Care and Welfare Department, you can access information and guidance on issues such as accessing health and care services, supported housing, support for carers, and planning for later life. The helpline will try and identify any Oddfellows benefits or services in the community which may be of help to you.

**Visit our website page at www.oddfellows.co.uk/benefits/care
for care and welfare information**

Members take centre stage

Look out for some familiar faces this summer!

Throughout June and July, the Oddfellows is running an upbeat new advertising campaign across the UK aimed at reaching the nation's retirees.

Built around the theme of 'real people, real joy, real experiences', the campaign shines a spotlight on the authentic friendships and shared laughter found within our local groups.

Member models

Members from Leeds, Derbyshire Peak, Mersey, Handforth and Altrincham, Mid-Staffordshire, Nottingham Trent, and Ormskirk and Southport Oddfellows all stepped forward to help.

They spent an exciting day at a professional studio shoot in Manchester working alongside an experienced production crew.

"It was such a fun day," said Andrea Jenner from Derbyshire Peak Oddfellows. "There was lots of laughter and interaction with Oddfellows from other areas."

Carol Pitchford from Leeds Oddfellows agreed, adding: "It was lovely to meet up with a crowd of strangers who then became friends."



Spreading the word

The adverts will be appearing on Facebook and Instagram, online via Rest Less and Saga, and in upcoming print editions of People's Friend, Saga Magazine, Yours, and Woman's Weekly.

Spokesperson for the Oddfellows, Pam Casey, said: "We wanted the campaign to reflect the real people at the heart of our Society. Our groups are places where people can simply be themselves, enjoy real companionship, and feel genuinely supported."

How you can help

While we hope this campaign inspires more retirees to give us a try, as members, you're our best ambassadors. If you know someone who would benefit from our social events, travel opportunities or welfare support, please encourage them to head to www.oddfellows.co.uk/retirement to find out more.

Celebrating our 2026 Making a Difference Award winners

We are thrilled to announce this year's incredible Making a Difference Awards winners: Richard West of the Royal Berkshire Branch in the Reading District, and husband-and-wife duo Roger and Susan Williamson of the King's Lynn and West Norfolk District.

The Awards highlight the wonderful ways our members go above and beyond to ensure their branches are the best they can be for their fellow members.

Richard West: Reading's 'guardian angel'



Debbie Jex and Richard West

Presented with the 'Enriching Lives Socially' Award by Deputy Grand Master (Deputy Chair) Debbie Jex, 88-year-old Richard West helps to bring joy and positivity to his fellow members in all he does in organising and hosting social events.



Since joining the Reading District in 1992, Richard has worked tirelessly to build a varied and exciting social programme for his fellow members.

Alongside his late friend Doug Walters, Richard helped establish popular singing and exercise groups, and even relaunched a folded group in the nearby village of Pangbourne, which is now in its tenth year.

From coordinating monthly quizzes to organising glamorous annual trips to the Ascot Races, Richard pours his heart into everything he does.

For many, his efforts have been transformative. "We have a number of ladies who say the choir has become a lifeline for them," Richard shared. "I like seeing them enjoy themselves. You can see how it benefits them individually."

Debbie Jex is also Reading Oddfellows' Branch Secretary. She added: "I don't know where we'd be without Richard. His energy is boundless and his enthusiasm even more so. One member has even described him as a 'guardian angel'."

Roger and Susan Williamson: A wonderful team



(L to R) Roger Williamson,
Susan Williamson, John Mann
and Alison Schultz

The Oddfellows' Grand Master (Chair), John Mann, presented the 'Achieving Together' Award to Roger and Susan Williamson. Both in their 80s and Oddfellows members since 2008, the couple's commitment and kindness are renowned at their Branch.

Both take a seat on the King's Lynn Oddfellows' Committee of Management, ensuring members' voices are always at the heart of decision-making.

Roger, a Trustee and three-time Past Provincial Grand Master, hosts walks,

bingo sessions for up to 40 members, and a popular monthly quiz.

Meanwhile, Susan coordinates the kitchen, manages supplies, and runs the raffles.

The couple were incredibly modest about their win. "Initially, I thought it was a joke because the letter turned up on the first of April," laughed Roger.

Susan added: "We're only doing what anybody else would do, but it's nice to know that people appreciate it. To win the award together is special."

Branch Secretary Alison Schultz praised their selflessness, saying: "They offer friendship to so many in the way Oddfellows should, and treat everyone with consideration, kindness and compassion."

Shining examples

Richard, Roger and Susan are proof that our Society thrives because of the generosity and warmth of our members.

Thank you to all who go above and beyond to help and support others within their Branch.

You can find out more about
our Making a Difference Awards,
including previous years'
winners, at [www.oddfellows.co.uk/
makingadifference](http://www.oddfellows.co.uk/makingadifference).

It's never too early to talk about money

At Unity Mutual, the Oddfellows' financial services brand, we believe it's never too early to talk to the young people in our lives about their finances.



Today's younger generations have a lot to consider, with rising costs, student debt and spending temptations online. Simple chats about saving, budgeting and planning ahead can help young people feel more confident about money as they grow and become more independent.

Passing on more than money

Helping younger family members financially is wonderful, but sharing knowledge can be even more valuable.

Explaining different saving tips, how debt works, or pensions and retirement, gives younger generations practical lessons they may not hear elsewhere. Even small conversations can leave a lasting impression.



Don't wait to save

One way to encourage good saving habits is through a Unity Mutual Junior ISA*, which allows children to start saving and is a great way to introduce them to finances and investment.

Opened by a parent or guardian, family and friends can contribute up to £9,000 per tax year, with any growth free from UK tax. All the money saved belongs to them and once they reach the age of 18 can be put towards things like university costs, driving lessons, or even a deposit on their first home.

Making money conversations normal

The best financial lessons are often the simplest ones. Talking openly about saving for goals, comparing prices, or handling debt helps children develop healthy habits. Younger family members are more likely to feel confident about money if the adults around them discuss it calmly and honestly.



To find out more about Unity Mutual and the products we offer, visit www.unitymutual.co.uk or call 0161 214 4650.

*Terms and conditions apply to all our products. Capital at risk with investment products.

The Half Yearly Summoned Meeting of the Mid Staffordshire District Lodge will be held at Oddfellows Hall, Greengate Street, Stafford on Tuesday 22 September commencing at 11am for the purpose of transacting the following business

AGENDA

1. Members present & receive any apologies
2. To confirm the minutes of the last summoned meeting (18th March 2026)
3. To discuss matters arising from the minutes
4. To receive the Committee of Management/Financial report
5. To consider any applications for Benevolent grants
6. To receive Unity, District Officers and Committee nominations
7. 2026 AMC report
8. Nominations and election of Deputies to 2027 AMC (Eastbourne)
9. Social/Fundraising report

After the closure of the meeting a light lunch will be provided, therefore, for catering purposes, please notify us of your attendance.

Join the conversation @OddfellowsUK

Share your news, start a conversation or simply stay up-to-date! If you're on Facebook, make sure you've liked and followed our Oddfellows social media pages.

Find us at  oddfellowsUK

Puzzle Corner Answers

1. Uranus, 2. The Quarrymen, 3. Peter Jackson, 4. Catherine of Aragon, 5. Scotland, 6. Notts County, 7. World Wide Web, 8. Volcanos, 9. Five: Dopey, Grumpy, Sneezy, Sleepy, Happy, 10. Five

At a glance

August 2026

Wed 5	Pre-loved Items Sale and Coffee morning	10am
Thurs 20	Ford Green Hall	10.15am
Thurs 27	Cuppa and Chat at the Oddfellows Hall	10.30am

September - Friendship Month

Wed 2	Coffee and Cake at The Plume of Feathers	10.30am
Wed 9	Cuppa and Chat at the Oddfellows Hall	10.30am
Tues 15	Cuppa and Chat with Beat The Cold Advice	10.30am
Tues 22	Half Yearly Summoned Meeting	11am
Thurs 24	Coach Trip: Welshpool Train Ride and Lunch	8.30am
Tues 29	Stoke Dine Around at Bleeding Wolf	12.30pm

October

Thurs 8	Cuppa and Chat at the Oddfellows Hall	10.30am
Fri 16	Walking Group - Great Haywood	10am
Thurs 22	Cuppa and Chat in Trentham	10.30am
Wed 28	Stoke Dine Around at the Fitzherbert Arms	12.30pm

November

Tues 3	Beetle Drive	1.30pm
Thurs 12	Give Us A Hand Day	10am
Thurs 12	Jack Absolute Flies Again - Stone	7.30pm
Sat 14	Christmas Fair	10am
Sun 29	District Christmas Luncheon	12.30pm

December

Thurs 3	Stoke Dine Around at Waggon & Horses	12.30pm
Wed 9	Breakfast and Cuppa at Springslade Lodge	10.15am
Tues 15	Christmas Cakes and Games	1.30pm

January 2027

Wed 13	Cuppa and Chat in Trentham	10.30am
Thurs 21	Cuppa and Chat at the Oddfellows Hall	10.30am

The Oddfellows is the trading name of The Independent Order of Odd Fellows Manchester Unity Friendly Society Limited, incorporated and registered in England and Wales No. 223F.
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