



The Birmingham District Newsletter and Events Diary

News and views from your local friendship group

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Oddfellows Social



Friendship Month 2026

Welcome to the latest Oddfellows newsletter for Birmingham and the Black Country

We are so proud to help people find and enjoy friendship all year round and we are delighted to welcome lots of new members.

It is amazing how much a friendly smile and a chat can improve your day, and our socials provide an opportunity to get together and do just that. Take a look at pages 21 to 23 to see, at a glance, details of all our groups. Please give your local group a try (if you haven't already) – a warm welcome awaits.

If you can spare a little time and would like to get involved with your local group, please get in touch with your Social Organiser, we always welcome extra help from willing hands!

And finally, did you know you can attend any of our many online events from the comfort of your living room. Have a look on our website: www.oddfellows.co.uk

We hope you enjoy this newsletter edition and make the most out of your membership.

**Yours in friendship,
Karen Phillips
Events and Publicity Organiser |
Black Country**



Contact Details

For more details about membership and the wide range of benefits available, please call:

Secretary: Liz Blackhurst
Address: 73 Bradbury Road, Olton, Solihull B92 8AF
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Email: elizabeth.blackhurst@oddfellows.co.uk

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Telephone: 07883 070322
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Social Organiser: Karen Phillips
Telephone: 07312 101034
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Social Organiser: Alison Read
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Social Organiser: Kerry Smith
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Website: www.oddfellows.co.uk
Facebook: [oddfellowsbirmingham](https://www.facebook.com/oddfellowsbirmingham)
and [oddfellowsBlackCountry](https://www.facebook.com/oddfellowsBlackCountry)

Traditional Terms

Grand Master (GM): Chairman

Provincial Grand Master (Prov GM): District Chairman

Provincial Deputy Grand Master (Prov DGM):
District Deputy Chairman

Provincial Corresponding Secretary (Prov CS):
District Secretary - responsible for administering Branches

Immediate Past Provincial Grand Master (IPPGM):
Immediate Past District Chairman

Past Provincial Grand Master (PPGM): Past District Chairman

Lodge: Branch

Brother and Sister: Traditional term used in Unions, Guilds and Fraternal organisations to suggest mutual support and family

REFER A FRIEND

Share the love and make someone smile



To refer someone you know and make their day, either fill in the **Refer a Friend** form available from your Branch Secretary, or call Membership on **0800 028 1810**, or visit our Members' Area at **www.oddfellows.co.uk**

*Terms and conditions apply to the Refer a Friend offer. It cannot be used in conjunction with any other member offer. For full terms and conditions and for details of the rewards visit www.oddfellows.co.uk/offers.

Ref 1644

What can you expect from an Oddfellows social

If you're considering an Oddfellows event, you might be wondering what it's like. You can expect a friendly welcome and a relaxed, no-pressure atmosphere, with a bit of fun and laughter thrown in.

A welcoming and relaxed social environment

From the moment you arrive, the aim is to help you feel comfortable and at ease. Oddfellows events are known for their friendly, informal atmosphere, where there's no pressure to be anything other than yourself.

Many people come along on their own, especially the first time. It's quite normal to feel a little unsure – but you'll find an Oddfellows host ready to greet you, offer a chat, and help you settle in.

Some people enjoy getting involved in conversation straight away, while others prefer to take things more quietly at first. Both are absolutely fine. You can simply enjoy being there and join in when it feels right for you.

Oddfellows says when it comes to meeting new people it's important to embrace the unknown. While it's normal to feel anxious at first, pushing past any nerves increases the chance of finding a place where you can relax and be yourself.



District Chairman Ken Blackhurst speaks to meeting.

Newcomers are invited to get in touch and try an event. These include a choice of numerous 'coffee morning' style events where members can relax over a drink and maybe join in with a quiz or game.

As well as the regular coffee mornings, lunch clubs, and games afternoons, sometimes there is a guest speaker. The Branch also encourages members to get together for day trips and guided walks, offering a mix of light-hearted social events and enriching experiences.

Social organiser for the Wolverhampton group, Karen Phillips explained that some of the meetings can be more eventful: "Recently we had a visit from our Provincial Grand Master, Brother Ken Blackhurst, who gave an interesting talk on the history of Oddfellows and all the good work that it does behind the scenes. On the same day we had a visit by the local Express & Star who were responding

to a press release that we sent out. If that wasn't enough one of our members, a cheerful chap called Chris, hosted one his popular quizzes."

Local social events and activities near you

If you've been thinking about joining a local social group, the Oddfellows could be a simple and enjoyable way to begin. Have a look at our various events at the end of this newsletter. Or get in touch with one of our social organisers.



Wolverhampton members being interviewed by the Express and Star.

Happy Holidays!

Thank you to our social organiser Kerry for taking the time to organise the Oddfellows holiday to Torquay in March 2026.

Members from Mere Green, Wednesbury and Harborne enjoyed a lovely few days away together from 20–23 March. Around nine members attended the trip, with some meeting for the very first time. Since returning, new friendships and connections have been formed, with some

members now attending other local Oddfellows groups too.

The holiday was a wonderful opportunity to bring members together, build confidence and create new friendships through shared experiences and laughter.

We look forward to Kerry organising more holidays and day trips throughout the rest of the year, time permitting.

Aldridge Cuppa and Chat prepares for a fresh new chapter



After several months at Aldridge Wellbeing Café, the Aldridge Cuppa and Chat group will be moving to a new venue from July 2026 as part of a fresh push to help the group continue to grow and welcome new faces.

The White House Pub, Bosty Lane, Walsall, WS9 0QE will become the group's new home from July through to December and beyond.

While the café has been a lovely place to meet, the group felt a change of scenery and a larger venue could help attract more people from the local area and create new opportunities for the group moving forward.

Kerry Smith recently met with Claire Taylor, Assistant Manager, and Sarah, the Pub Manager, to organise the new social dates for the next six months ahead. Both were very welcoming and are looking forward to hosting the

Oddfellows Aldridge Cuppa and Chat group at the venue.

The group will continue to meet on the second Wednesday of each month, with a new meeting time of 11.45am to 1.15pm, as the pub opens at 11.30am.

Kerry Smith, Black Country Oddfellows Social Organiser, said:

“We’ve built a lovely little community in Aldridge already and we’re hoping the new venue will help us continue to grow over the next six months. It’s all about giving people a friendly place to get out, meet others and make new friendships.”

The group welcomes both existing and new members, and anyone interested in coming along is encouraged to join for a relaxed catch-up and friendly company.

For further information, please contact Kerry Smith on 07365 579287 or email kerry.smith@oddfellows.co.uk.





New friendship group in Walsall hailed a success

Walsall Cuppa and Chat launched in January 2026 and it has been wonderful to see the group grow over the first six months.

Held at Starbucks in Sainsbury's Reedswood Park, the group has quickly become a friendly and welcoming place for members to meet, chat and make new connections. Adam Blake, Starbucks Manager, made everyone feel very welcome from the very first meeting and kindly provided free cakes to help celebrate the launch.

Kerry Smith, Black Country Oddfellows Social Organiser, said: "It's been lovely watching the group grow over the past six months and seeing friendships form between members old and new. We're really looking forward to the next six months and beyond."



The group will continue running throughout the rest of the year and we always welcome new faces. If you know a friend, neighbour or family member who may enjoy coming along, please feel free to invite them to join us.

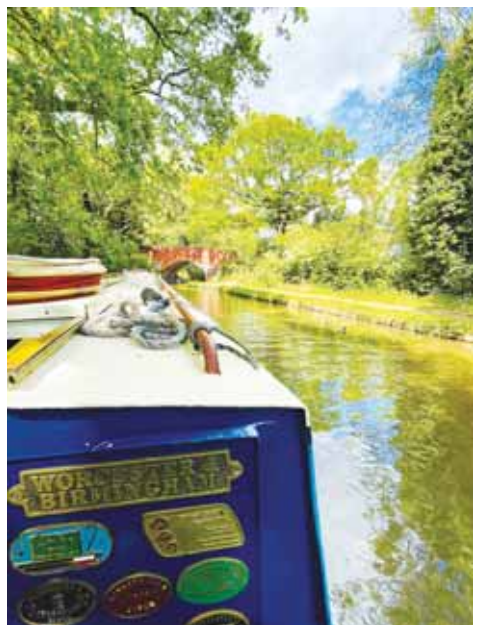
For further information, please contact Kerry Smith, Social Organiser, on 07365 579287 or email kerry.smith@oddfellows.co.uk.



Cecilia Canal Trip

In May and June this year, members enjoyed a relaxing day aboard the narrowboat Cecilia. We navigated along the beautiful Worcestershire and Birmingham canal with a stop halfway through for lunch. The trip offered a wonderful chance to unwind, enjoy good food and company and take in the peaceful canal scenery.

We boarded near Alvechurch Marina and started our travels, enjoying teas and coffees as we went, served by the fabulous volunteers who work for the Worcester, Birmingham and Droitwich Canals Society. Those of us who ventured up to the top deck were also treated to some fascinating information about the history of the canals from the captain.



A wonderful lunch was then served to us at the Hopwood House pub before we headed back along the canal to Alvechurch. We even managed to avoid the rain showers and were blessed with some sunshine. Many thanks to Tony from the Bromsgrove group who supports us with the bookings of the Cecilia boat.



The Cecilia is a community boat for up to 12 passengers and is available for trips on the canal between April and October. For

more information about this please visit www.wbdcs.org.uk.



Do you have a story to share?

We'd love to hear from you. Please send us your news, stories or poems. A photo always helps to tell the story too! Contact your social organiser or email details to: elizabeth.blackhurst@oddfellows.co.uk

Our Annual Summoned Spring Meeting

On Saturday 18 April 2026 Oddfellows members and members of the District Committee of Management assembled for the Annual Summoned Spring Meeting in Quinton.

Our Chairman Brother Ken Blackhurst presided over the meeting and we were all pleasantly surprised by the good

turn out that day. It is at these meetings that we revert to our traditional ways of greeting one another: as Brothers and Sisters. We were happy that all four of our hard working social organisers were also in attendance together with some new members, first timers as well as longstanding veterans.



Brother Lawrence is welcomed to the society by Brother Ken, Provincial Grand Master (Chairman).



Sister Karen receives the three link chain badge after the welcome talk.



After member introductions there was a welcome talk for those who wished to participate.



Our meeting in progress.



In attendance your District Officers. Left to right: Provincial Grand Master Brother Ken, Provincial Corresponding Secretary, Sister Liz and Deputy Provincial Grand Master Brother James.



Brother Chris receives a welcome handshake from the Chairman.



Karen and Kerry, your Black Country social organisers.



Ali and Wayne, your Birmingham and Bromsgrove social organisers.



Friendship Month 2026



Every September, Oddfellows Friendship Month gives people the perfect excuse to get out, enjoy a cuppa, have a laugh and meet new people and 2026 is set to be another fantastic month across Birmingham and the Black Country.

This year, Wayne, Ali, Karen and Kerry will once again be hosting a wide range of friendly catch-ups, coffee mornings, quizzes and social get-togethers across the district, welcoming both familiar faces and new members into the Oddfellows community.

Whether someone comes along for a quick chat, a game of Sticky Fingers, a quiz, or simply to enjoy some company over a coffee, Friendship Month is all about bringing people together and helping people feel part of something welcoming and supportive.

Over the years, many lasting friendships have started at our local meet-ups and we

are proud to continue creating spaces where people can relax, socialise and enjoy good company without pressure or formality.

Throughout September, we will be running 11 regular events across Birmingham and the Black Country, including Harborne, Bromsgrove, Rubery, Solihull, Mere Green, Kings Heath, Wednesbury, Aldridge, Dudley, Wolverhampton and Walsall.

Friendship Month is always a brilliant opportunity for people to try something new, meet others locally and discover just how friendly and welcoming the Oddfellows can be.

We look forward to welcoming plenty of returning members alongside new faces who may be joining us for the very first time.

A huge thank you to everyone who continues to support our events and help make the Oddfellows such a friendly and welcoming organisation. Here's to another brilliant Friendship Month filled with conversation, laughter and community spirit.

For more information about Friendship Month events in your area, contact your local organiser or visit the Birmingham District Oddfellows pages online.

Get the most out of your membership



As well as making friends and meeting new people, the Oddfellows offers a wide range of benefits to members.

From advice and financial aid through to travel opportunities, we provide a helping hand to make life a little easier. With your standard benefit membership, for £25 a year*, you have access to:

- Local social events
- Money saving partner offers
- Care and Welfare Helpline and local support
- Dedicated Oddfellows Citizens Advice Line
- Convalescence and Carer Support (after 2 years' membership)
- Benevolence Grants
- Member referral rewards scheme
- Emergency Financial Aid (Household)
- Accidental Death Benefit
- Legal Aid Scheme
- Access to group holidays and travel discounts
- Educational and Apprenticeship Awards
- 24/7 access to our historical online archive

If you're an extra benefit member, your £35 a year membership* enables access to additional benefits of:

- Optical benefit of up to £30 every second year of membership
- Dental benefit of up to £30 every membership year (after 1 year's membership)

Find out more about the benefits and support available

You'll find more information about member benefits in your member handbook. You can also call **0800 028 1810** 9am-5pm Mon to Thurs, 9am-4pm Fri, or visit www.oddfellows.co.uk/benefits

To make sure you receive our monthly emails for updates on benefits and offers, just email us with your full name, postcode and membership number (if you know it): membership@oddfellows.co.uk

*Terms and conditions apply to all member benefits and services. For full details, visit www.oddfellows.co.uk/terms-conditions, or call us on 0800 028 1810.



The Oddfellows SINCE 1810
making friends, helping people

Notice Board

Benefit Members

When you renew your membership or submit a dental or optical claim you will be given a new claim form. Please keep this safe for future use. However, if you do need a replacement, please send a stamped self addressed envelope to: 73 Bradbury Road, Solihull B92 8AF or you can wait until you attend your next social and collect one from your social organiser.

Dental and optical receipts must show your name, amount paid, date and optician/dentist's name and details. Please do not send treatment plans or credit card receipts. All claims must be sent to the district office as above. Claims sent to head office will be delayed as they will be redirected to the district office, address as above.

Thank you for your cooperation on this.

We are still collecting

For those able, please give any unused and unwanted small items suitable as prizes to your social organisers to be used in your socials. Used stamps are still being collected for the Royal National Institute for the Blind – please hand them to your social organiser. Thank you for your kindness!



Odd Months

We love to see as many of you as possible for the socials. Please don't get caught out by those odd months in the year where there are 5 lots of a certain day that month. For example in January there were five Fridays and in April there were five Thursdays that month. Our groups will always be as stated on the specified day of the week each month, unless there is a bank holiday. So for example the Dudley group is held on the fourth Tuesday each month rather than the last Tuesday of each month. It's always a good idea to keep hold of your events diary for reference.



Dates for your diaries!

Our Annual Summoned Autumn Meeting

Our Provincial Grand Master, Brother Ken Blackhurst warmly invites you to the last open meeting of the year, our Annual Summoned Autumn Meeting. To be held on Saturday 26 September, 11am at the Toby Carvery, Quinton B33 0HP. As always, please notify the District Secretary if you intend to come along as this will assist us with the room arrangements. We welcome all paid up members from all areas of our large District to come along and see the committee in progress and have a voice.



Members of the Committee cheer on the achievements of 2025. Get in touch if you would like to be of service.

Photos of Cuppa and Chat Events



Bromsgrove group.



Harborne group - chatting away.

Competition Time!

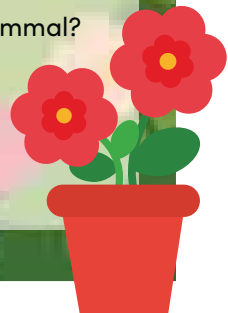
We have a nature quiz and our usual wordsearch competition for you to try this season. Email, post or give your entries to your social organisers when you see them. Don't forget to include your membership number and good luck!



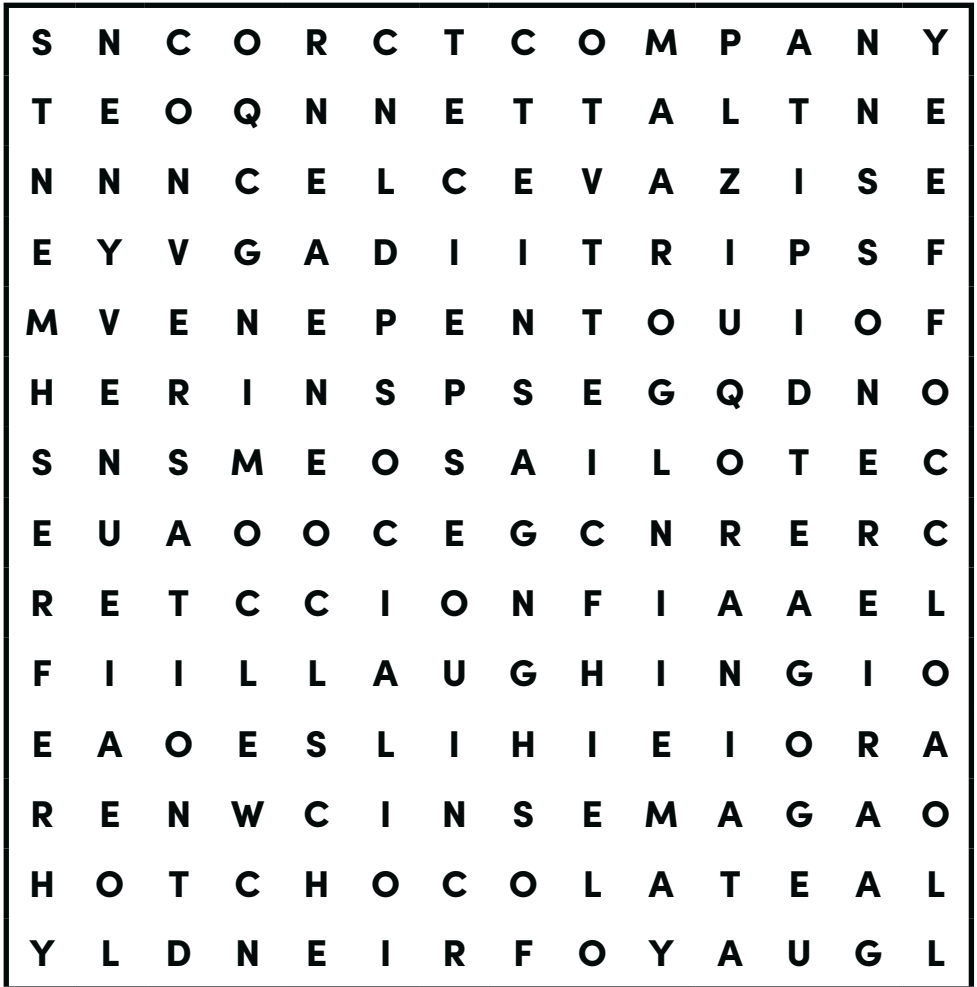
Nature Quiz

This year saw the 100th birthday of British natural historian, broadcaster and author, Sir David Attenborough. To celebrate, why not have a go at entering the Nature Quiz below?

1. What do you call a collective group of crows?
2. What is the fastest land animal on Earth?
3. The bark of the willow tree was historically used to create which common pain-relieving medicine?
4. Which is the only bird known to be able to fly backwards?
5. V E N E R A L D – Which purple flower is this an anagram of?
6. What are baby puffins called?
7. What is the smallest British bird?
8. Urchin is an old English name for which British native mammal?
9. What animal is Basil Brush?
10. Which University did Sir David Attenborough attend?



Oddfellows Social Wordsearch



Coffee

Hot Chocolate

Quiz

Venue

Company

Latte

Refreshments

Welcoming

Conversation

Laughing

Social

Friendly

Online

Tea

Games

Organised

Trips

Competition Winners



We were pleased to have continued interest in our competitions. As before, some were received by email, others via the social organiser and the rest by post.

The winner of the Wordsearch competition was member Marian Hall
The winner of the Anagram competition was member Nicola Thomas

Each will be sent a £10 voucher.
Thank you to all those who took part.

Terms and Conditions for Competitions

- The competition is not open to employees of Oddfellows or Committee members.
- The competition is open to all other Oddfellows members of the Birmingham District but limited to one entry per person, per competition.
- Scan and email your completed Word Search and/or quiz answers with your name and membership number to: birmingham@oddfellows.co.uk, or return in the post to: Liz Blackhurst, 73 Bradbury Road, Solihull B92 8AF, or hand in to your Social Organiser.
- There is no age limit, however, if you are a Young Oddfellow please include your date of birth and parent's signature along with your answer.
- Competition deadline is Friday 23 October 2026.
- The winner will be selected from fully completed and correct entries at random by the Committee.
- The winner will receive £10. No alternative prize available.
- The winner may be expected to have their photograph taken for press or promotional purposes and their name published in Oddfellows newsletters and Facebook.
- The decision of the Committee of Management for the District is final and no correspondence will be entered into.
- The name of the prize winner will be given in the next newsletter or can be obtained by sending a self-addressed envelope to: Liz Blackhurst, 73 Bradbury Road, Solihull B92 8AF.
- The competition is open to residents of the UK, Channel Islands and Isle of Man only.
- Entry to the competition will be deemed to constitute acceptance of these terms and conditions.

The Promoter reserves the right to publish any photos entered into the competition. The decision of the Promoter on any matter relating to the rules shall be final and no correspondence will be entered into.

Our Socials in Birmingham and the Black Country



Oddfellows say when it comes to meeting new people it's important to embrace the unknown. While it's normal to feel anxious at first, pushing past any nerves increases the chance of finding a place where you can relax and be yourself.

Newcomers are invited to get in touch and try an event. These include a choice of numerous 'coffee morning' style events where members can relax over a drink and maybe join in with a quiz or game.

The society is country wide and our local branch organises and hosts around 10 events a month, providing regular meet ups in Birmingham, Bromsgrove and the Black Country including coffee mornings, lunch clubs, and games afternoons.

Member led events

The member for member spirit of mutuality continues to develop amongst you. We have four fabulous social organisers in place to facilitate each event. However we are always pleasantly surprised, and thankful to those members who step up and offer their support, whether it be to host a quiz,

organise a game of bingo or help with the coffee and tea order. Other members take the lead in organising events, such as walking, going to the theatre or just out for a meal, outside of the monthly socials.

Complementary drinks

The Committee are aware that there are ongoing economic challenges. The Oddfellows membership fee has remained unchanged despite this and offers excellent value for money.

Our Socials offer up to two complimentary drinks a month, just one drink at each group attended for members only. If you attend a third group that month then please inform the social organiser that you will purchase your own drink.

Drinks should be non-alcoholic; teas, coffees or hot chocolate, should be small or regular, sparkling drinks, draught rather than canned drinks. Your social organiser will be able to clarify any queries you may have, please just ask.

Visitors or non-members

Visitors or non-members will receive a complimentary drink at their first group visit. If they attend for a second time, we ask that they inform the social organiser that they will pay for their own drink. As we are a membership society, visitors or friends will be welcome to attend for up to three events, after which it is hoped that they will join as members.

Our Birmingham and Bromsgrove Socials

Rubery Cuppa and Catch Up

First Monday of the month, 10.30am to 12 noon

Morrisons Café, Rubery, Birmingham B45 9AH

Contact Wayne on 07883 070322 or Liz on 0121 707 5626 to book your place.

**6 July
3 August**

**7 September
5 October**

**2 November
7 December**

Harborne Games, Cuppa and Catch Up

Second Monday of the Month, 11am to 12.30pm

The Green Man, 2 High Street, Harborne B17 9NE

Contact Wayne on 07883 070322 or Liz on 0121 707 5626 to book your place.

**13 July
10 August**

**14 September
12 October**

**9 November
14 December**

Bromsgrove Cuppa and Chat

Third Monday of the month, 11am to 12.30pm

Bromsgrove Golf Centre, Old Stratford Road,
Bromsgrove B60 1LD

Contact Wayne on 07883 070322 or Liz on 0121 707 5626 to book your place.

**20 July
17 August**

**21 September
19 October**

**16 November
21 December (10am – 11.30am)**

Mere Green Cuppa and Chat

Third Tuesday of the month, 11.15am to 12.45pm

The Crown, Walsall Road, Four Oaks B74 4RA

Contact Alison on 07542 802430 or Liz on 0121 707 5626 to book your place.

**21 July
18 August**

**15 September
20 October**

**17 November
15 December**

Our Birmingham and Bromsgrove Socials

Kings Heath Cuppa and Chat

First Wednesday of the month, 11am to 12.30pm

The Billesley, Brook Lane, Kings Heath B13 0AB

Contact Alison on 07542 802430 or Liz on 0121 707 5626 to book your place.

1 July
5 August

2 September
7 October

4 November
2 December

Solihull Cuppa and Chat

Third Thursday of the month, 1pm to 2.30pm

The Royal British Legion, 18 Union Road, Solihull B91 3DH

Contact Alison on 07542 802430 or Liz on 0121 707 5626 to book your place.

16 July
20 August

17 September
15 October

19 November
17 December

Our Black Country Socials

Wednesbury Cuppa and Chat

Second Tuesday of the month, 11am to 12.30pm

Morrisons Café, Morrisons Wednesbury, 239 Holyhead Road, Wednesbury WS10 7BD

Contact Kerry on 07365 579287 or Liz on 0121 707 5626 to book your place.

14 July
11 August

8 September
13 October

10 November
8 December

Aldridge Games, Cuppa and Chat

Second Wednesday of the month, 11.45am to 1.15pm

The White House, Bosty Lane, Walsall WS9 0QE

Contact Kerry on 07365 579287 or Liz on 0121 707 5626 to book your place.

8 July
12 August

9 September
14 October

11 November
9 December

Our Black Country Socials

Walsall Cuppa and Chat

Fourth Wednesday of the month, 11am to 12.30pm

Starbucks Café inside Sainsburys, Reedswood Park,
Reedswood Way, Walsall WS2 8XA

Contact Kerry on 07365 579287 or Liz on 0121 707 5626 to book your place.

22 July

23 September

25 November

26 August

28 October

No event in December due to Christmas

Dudley Quiz, Cuppa and Chat

Fourth Tuesday of the month, 11am to 12.30pm

Toby Carvery, Burnt Tree Island, Tipton DY4 7UF

Contact Kerry on 07365 579287 or Liz on 0121 707 5626 to book your place.

28 July

22 September

24 November

25 August

27 October

No event in December due to Christmas

Wolverhampton Cuppa and Chat

Fourth Thursday of the month, 11.15am to 12.45pm

The Oddfellows Pub, Bridgnorth Road, Compton,
Wolverhampton WV6 8AA

Contact Liz on 0121 707 5626 or Karen on 07312 101034 to book your place.

23 July

24 September

26 November

27 August

22 October

17 December

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

Oddfellows Online Events

Discover the five Rs for a happier retirement with Dr Anna Machin

Tuesday 14 July, 7pm

Join author, broadcaster and world-renowned Anthropologist, Dr Anna Machin as she offers her expert advice on how to navigate the emotional and social aspect of retirement.

To register, type this link into your browser:
tinyurl.com/AnnaMachin2

Murder Most Austen

Tuesday 28 July, 7pm

Whether you're a fan of Austen or just thrilled by a good detective story, join crime writer and scholar Dr Lucy Andrew for this engaging talk on how Austen's works have shaped the evolution of detective fiction.

To register, type this link into your browser:
tinyurl.com/MurderMostAusten

Staying Safe from Financial Scams

Tuesday 18 August, 7pm

Financial scams are becoming more sophisticated, using new tactics to exploit trust. This talk with Unity Mutual explains how these scams work, highlights key warning signs, and provides practical strategies to help you protect yourself and your finances.

To register, type this link into your browser:
tinyurl.com/FinancialScams1

Understanding Diabetes

Tuesday 15 September, 7pm

Join us for this informative talk covering what type 1 and type 2 Diabetes are, signs and symptoms, who's at risk of type 2 Diabetes, how to access support, and how to live well.

To register, type this link into your browser:
tinyurl.com/OddfellowsDiabetesUK

More Ghostly Tales to be Told

Tuesday 27 October, 7pm

Get ready for Halloween with another fascinating evening of stories and poems by Dr Ann Featherstone, a retired university lecturer, teacher and writer who has appeared on numerous BBC programmes and documentaries.

To register, type this link into your browser:
tinyurl.com/MoreGhostlyTales



Self-help for Living Alone

More people are living alone either due to choice or personal circumstances.

While it can have its benefits such as greater

independence and opportunities for personal growth, living alone can also have its disadvantages.



If not managed well, living alone can be isolating. Not having someone readily available to talk to and share feelings with may lead to loneliness, which can affect mental wellbeing.

It can also be easy to adopt unhealthy habits and neglect self-care such as eating well and having a good sleep routine, which may impact physical wellbeing. But there are simple ways to support wellbeing through self-care, including:

- Staying active and doing something you enjoy e.g. a hobby, which gives a sense of purpose.
- Having a regular routine to give structure to the day e.g. getting up and going to bed at the same time, going for a walk or doing gentle exercise.
- Maintaining connections with friends and family e.g. meeting up for a chat or visiting.
- Creating a calming atmosphere at home e.g. relaxing music and soft lighting.

Silver Stories

The joy of reading is intergenerational, and the charity, Silver Stories, links children and older people through this medium to reduce loneliness in older people and provide a richer reading experience for children.

Founded by a retired Police Sergeant and Headteacher, Silver Stories bridges generational gaps through weekly supervised phone calls in which a child reads a story to a matched older person. The concept of Silver Stories is simple but has a positive impact on both children (Silver Readers) and older people (Silver Listeners). Children learn

important social skills, and older people are less socially isolated. Silver



Listeners are approached by local participating schools, care providers and charities working with older people that are isolated, who identify those that may benefit from being read to by a child.

Schools and parents can get involved with Silver Stories, and the charity has useful information and resources on their website on how to get involved (silverstories.co.uk).

Oddies autumn getaway to Llandudno

Join us as we take a trip to Llandudno, North Wales, on an Oddfellows-hosted group holiday with Alfa Travel.

Oddfellows members and guests will take in some breathtaking scenery during a four-night stay at the Hydro Hotel from Saturday 26 September to Wednesday 30 September 2026.

From £369 per person, half board, the price includes coach pick up and drop off from locations across the South East via Reading, or a self-arrival option.



Outstanding natural beauty

Two optional day trips are included in the price of the holiday.

On day two, you'll head by coach to the Isle of Anglesey, where the entire coastline has been designated an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. You'll call at the seaside town of Beaumaris with its mix of Georgian, Victorian and Edwardian buildings.

On day four, the second day trip will head to Caernarfon, home to Wales' most famous castle and a UNESCO World

Heritage Site. Afterwards, you'll venture into the Snowdonia National Park, calling at Llanberis, situated at the foot of Mount Snowdon, and Porthmadog.

Relax in great company

We'll be organising some group drinks and times to dine together during the stay, and enjoying the hotel's evening entertainment, but your days will be largely free to plan as you please.

The hotel has a large entertainment suite with a dance floor and entertainment most evenings, and there are sun lounges and a games room with a snooker table.

You'll also find spectacular views over the bay or over the town to the Snowdonia mountain range from many of the hotel's bedrooms and from its Looking Glass Bar.

Interested in joining us?

This group holiday is open to any members and their guests and will be hosted by our Oddfellows Travel coordinator and South East Lancashire Branch member, Emma Gorst.

For any enquiries, and to find out how to book, get in touch with Emma by calling **0161 214 4634**, or email travel@oddfellows.co.uk.

Please read and understand Alfa Travel's terms and conditions before booking at www.alfaholidays.co.uk/booking-conditions.

Support with fundraising and donations

Donating to good causes is a cornerstone of Oddfellowship, and symbolises what it is all about – helping to improve lives through friendship and support.

It's a thread that runs right through every Branch of the Society. Whether it's members dropping some spare change into a collection at a coffee morning, or the HA Andrews Memorial Fund supporting cutting-edge medical research projects, it all adds up and contributes to that ethos.

Branch donations add up to huge 2025 total



Reading Oddfellows donated £4,300 to Camp Mohawk

Oddfellows branches and members are avid fundraisers. In 2025, more than £148,000 was handed over to a huge range of wonderful causes throughout the country.

Beneficiaries included schools, charities for people with special needs, animal sanctuaries, causes to improve health conditions, lifeboat and air ambulance

charities, and one branch provided the funds required to buy state-of-the-art medical equipment.

As well as handing over funds, many members bought and collected for foodbanks, including tinned goods and other long-life foods, toiletries and further everyday items.

To find out how you can get involved with Branch fundraising initiatives, speak to your Branch Secretary.

£10,000 raised for Hurricane Melissa relief efforts

The Oddfellows recently donated £10,000 to support the Jamaica Red Cross' Hurricane Melissa Emergency Appeal.

Thanks to the generosity of Oddfellows branches across the UK, and with additional support from central funds, the donation will help communities affected by the devastating storm rebuild their lives.

Hurricane Melissa, a Category 5 hurricane, made landfall in Jamaica on 28 October 2025. The strongest hurricane ever to strike the island, it caused catastrophic damage and impacted nearly 1.9 million people.

The funds have been sent to the Jamaica Red Cross, via the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), to support ongoing emergency relief and recovery efforts. This includes providing essential supplies, shelter, and longer-term assistance to those whose homes and livelihoods were affected.



Further information about the Jamaica Red Cross' Hurricane Melissa Emergency Appeal can be found at www.ifrc.org/emergency/jamaica-hurricane-melissa.

HA Andrews Memorial Fund recipient announced

In October 2025, representatives of the Oddfellows visited the impressive facilities at the Manchester Cancer Research Centre (MCRC) to present a cheque for £67,068 to Prevent Breast Cancer, courtesy of our HA Andrews Memorial Fund.

The money will fund an innovative breast cancer prevention research project for two years.

Carried out by University of Manchester PhD student Anthony Wilby and Dr Hannah Harrison, the project is aiming to discover alternative preventative breast cancer therapies for pre-menopausal women.

The HA Andrews Memorial Fund, which was set up in 1971 to back UK-based medical research projects and organisations, has donated over £1.1m

since its launch. Head to www.oddfellows.co.uk/ha-andrews to find out more about the Fund, including previous recipients.

The very best of Oddfellowship

Spokesperson for the Oddfellows, Pam Casey (pictured below at MCRC), said: "The work the Oddfellows does for charities and good causes always astounds me. It reflects the very best of Oddfellowship and it makes me incredibly proud.

"Donating to good causes, no matter how big or small, or how much we can contribute, can make a huge difference. Our efforts might well have saved a life, put some food on a young family's table, or simply have made someone's day a little brighter.

"Thank you to everyone who has helped in any way. You're all a huge credit to yourselves and the Society."



For more on how the Oddfellows raises money for good causes, visit www.oddfellows.co.uk/about/giving-back

Spring clean your finances for the new tax year

The start of the new tax year on Monday 6 April might sound like an event reserved for accountants, but at Unity Mutual, the Oddfellows' financial services brand, we believe it's a time everyone can make the most of.

Here are some simple ways to spring clean your finances and get on top of your money for the tax year ahead.

Make the most of your ISA

Every adult receives a fresh £20,000 ISA allowance at the beginning of each tax year, so if your savings are lying dormant, why not move them somewhere your interest is protected from tax?



For those comfortable with investment risk, the Unity Mutual Stocks and Shares Flexible ISA* offers potentially higher growth than traditional Cash ISAs (capital is at risk).

Guaranteed returns, less hassle

If you have a lump sum sitting idle or an investment coming to maturity, a Unity

Mutual Fixed Rate Bond* provides a predictable, low-effort option. Simply deposit your money for a set term to secure a guaranteed return.

Even better, Oddfellows members benefit from preferential rates on our 2, 3, and 5-year Bonds.

Make savings work harder

With many banks still offering low rates, a quick comparison is essential to ensure your money is working for you. Even moving savings to a higher-interest account with your current provider can significantly boost your balance over the year.

Find out more

Unity Mutual has over 200 years of experience managing Oddfellows members' funds, and our friendly team is on hand to help you navigate the year ahead. Visit www.unitymutual.co.uk to find out more.

**Terms and conditions apply to all products. With stocks and shares, your investment can go down as well as up meaning your capital is at risk.*

New tax year, new scams

Stay vigilant against common scams such as fake HMRC tax rebates or urgent payment requests for 'unpaid tax'. While these communications can look genuine, always verify them by going directly to the official government website.



Oddfellows Members: Do you need help?

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

Local Care and Welfare Support

For local help and information about Branch benefits and benevolence contact Liz on **0121 707 5626** or email **elizabeth.blackhurst@oddfellows.co.uk**.

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**

At a glance

Hang onto your newsletter so you can be aware of upcoming event dates.

July 2026

Wed 1	Kings Heath Cuppa and Chat	11am
Mon 6	Rubery Cuppa and Catch Up	10.30am
Wed 8	Aldridge Games, Cuppa and Chat	11.45am
Mon 13	Harborne Games, Cuppa and Catch Up	11am
Tues 14	Wednesbury Cuppa and Chat	11am
Thurs 16	Solihull Cuppa and Chat	1pm
Mon 20	Bromsgrove Cuppa and a Chat	11am
Tues 21	Mere Green Cuppa and Chat	11.15am
Wed 22	Walsall Cuppa and Chat	11am
Thurs 23	Wolverhampton Cuppa, Games and Chat	11.15am
Tues 28	Dudley Quiz, Cuppa and a Chat	11am

August

Mon 3	Rubery Cuppa and Catch Up	10.30am
Wed 5	Kings Heath Cuppa and Chat	11am
Mon 10	Harborne Games, Cuppa and Catch Up	11am
Tues 11	Wednesbury Cuppa and Chat	11am
Wed 12	Aldridge Games, Cuppa and Chat	11.45am
Mon 17	Bromsgrove Cuppa and a Chat	11am
Tues 18	Mere Green Cuppa and Chat	11.15am
Thurs 20	Solihull Cuppa and Chat	1pm
Tues 25	Dudley Quiz, Cuppa and a Chat	11am
Wed 26	Walsall Cuppa and Chat	11am
Thurs 27	Wolverhampton Cuppa, Games and Chat	11.15am

September - Friendship Month

Wed 2	Kings Heath Cuppa and Chat	11am
Mon 7	Rubery Cuppa and Catch Up	10.30am

At a glance

September - Friendship Month (continued...)

Tues 8	Wednesbury Cuppa and Chat	11am
Wed 9	Aldridge Games, Cuppa and Chat	11.45am
Mon 14	Harborne Games, Cuppa and Catch Up	11am
Tues 15	Mere Green Cuppa and Chat	11.15am
Thurs 17	Solihull Cuppa and Chat	1pm
Mon 21	Bromsgrove Cuppa and a Chat	11am
Tues 22	Dudley Quiz, Cuppa and a Chat	11am
Wed 23	Walsall Cuppa and Chat	11am
Thurs 24	Wolverhampton Cuppa, Games and Chat	11.15am

October

Mon 5	Rubery Cuppa and Catch Up	10.30am
Wed 7	Kings Heath Cuppa and Chat	11am
Mon 12	Harborne Games, Cuppa and Catch Up	11am
Tues 13	Wednesbury Cuppa and Chat	11am
Wed 14	Aldridge Games, Cuppa and Chat	11.45am
Thurs 15	Solihull Cuppa and Chat	1pm
Mon 19	Bromsgrove Cuppa and a Chat	11am
Tues 20	Mere Green Cuppa and Chat	11.15am
Thurs 22	Wolverhampton Cuppa, Games and Chat	11.15am
Tues 27	Dudley Quiz, Cuppa and a Chat	11am
Wed 28	Walsall Cuppa and Chat	11am

November

Mon 2	Rubery Cuppa and Catch Up	10.30am
Wed 4	Kings Heath Cuppa and Chat	11am
Mon 9	Harborne Games, Cuppa and Catch Up	11am
Tues 10	Wednesbury Cuppa and Chat	11am

At a glance

November (continued...)

Wed 11	Aldridge Games, Cuppa and Chat	11.45am
Mon 16	Bromsgrove Cuppa and a Chat	11am
Tues 17	Mere Green Cuppa and Chat	11.15am
Thurs 19	Solihull Cuppa and Chat	1pm
Tues 24	Dudley Quiz, Cuppa and a Chat	11am
Wed 25	Walsall Cuppa and Chat	11am
Thurs 26	Wolverhampton Cuppa, Games and Chat	11.15am

December

Wed 2	Kings Heath Cuppa and Chat	11am
Mon 7	Rubery Cuppa and Catch Up	10.30am
Tues 8	Wednesbury Cuppa and Chat	11am
Wed 9	Aldridge Games, Cuppa and Chat	11.45am
Mon 14	Harborne Games, Cuppa and Catch Up	11am
Tues 15	Mere Green Cuppa and Chat	11.15am
Thurs 17	Wolverhampton Cuppa, Games and Chat	11.15am
Thurs 17	Solihull Cuppa and Chat	1pm
Mon 21	Bromsgrove Cuppa and a Chat	10am

Please don't forget to book your place.

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:  Oddfellowsbirmingham  OddfellowsBlackCountry

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