

The Birmingham District Newsletter and Events Diary

News and views from your local friendship group

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Keeping Active



Friendship Month

**The Oddfellows is a friendly society
with Branches across the UK**

Through friendship and social events, we help
our members get more enjoyment out of life,
and offer care, advice and support in times of need.

Call us on 0800 028 1810
BlackCountry@oddfellows.co.uk
[f BlackCountryOddfellows](https://www.facebook.com/BlackCountryOddfellows)
www.oddfellows.co.uk

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. 2265
Registered Office: Oddfellows House, 115-118 Chamberlain Square, Birmingham B5 1RA

Welcome to the latest edition of the News and Views of Birmingham District

As we head into a brand new year, it's the perfect time to reflect on the highlights of 2025 and look ahead with optimism, connection and community at heart. One of the standout moments this year was Friendship Month, bringing together so many familiar and new faces across our groups. It was a real reminder of how important these get-togethers are, and how much laughter and warmth they bring.

We also bid a fond farewell to Linda Aitchison, who has been such a valued part of our team and has helped grow our Black Country membership with passion and enthusiasm. We thank her sincerely for all her support and wish her every success for the future.

At the same time, we're delighted to welcome Karen Phillips, who joins us as the new publicity and promotions organiser for the Black Country. Karen will be working alongside me to help spread the word about Oddfellows and to continue building our friendly community across the region.

There's plenty to look forward to in 2026, including the launch of a new group in Walsall and a new venue and date for our Aldridge meet-up – so do take a look inside the newsletter for all

the details. You'll always find a warm welcome waiting for you.

In the Birmingham and Solihull regions, Wayne Homer and Alison Read continue to lead the way with their brilliant programme of events and socials, while Liz Blackhurst, our District Secretary, remains your key contact for any further queries and support across the Birmingham District.

Thank you for your support and friendship throughout 2025 – we're very excited to see what 2026 brings!

**Yours in friendship,
Kerry Smith
Black Country Social Organiser/
Birmingham Events and
Publicity Organiser**

Traditional Terms

Provincial Grand Master (Prov GM): District Chairman

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

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

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

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

Telephone: 0121 707 5626

Email:

elizabeth.blackhurst@oddfellows.co.uk

Social Organiser: Wayne Homer

Telephone: 07883 070322

Email: wayne.homer@oddfellows.co.uk

Social Organiser: Karen Phillips

Telephone: 07312 101034

Email: karen.phillips@oddfellows.co.uk

Social Organiser: Alison Read

Telephone: 07542 802430

Email: alison.read@oddfellows.co.uk

Social Organiser: Kerry Smith

Telephone: 07365 579287

Email:

kerry.smith@oddfellows.co.uk

Website: oddfellows.co.uk

Facebook: oddfellowsbirmingham
and oddfellowsBlackCountry

Out and About in the Community

Promoting Friendship with the Oddfellows



We've been out and about in the local community recently, spreading the word about the Oddfellows and the many ways we bring people together.

Here's Kerry representing the Black Country District at Tesco Extra in Dudley, chatting to shoppers about our regular social meet-ups, events, and friendship groups.

It's always lovely to meet new faces and share what the Oddfellows is all about - making friends, enjoying good company, and being part of a caring community. If you spot us out and about, do come over and say hello! We're always happy to answer questions, hand out information, and of course, have a friendly chat.

To find out more about upcoming local events or how to get involved, visit www.oddfellows.co.uk or email BlackCountry@oddfellows.co.uk or birmingham@oddfellows.co.uk

Our Annual Summoned Autumn Meeting 2025



Left to right: Brother Jafar, Brother James the Deputy Chairman, Brother Ken the Chairman and Brother Michael.

On Saturday 27 September, Social Organisers Sister Kerry, Sister Ali and Brother Wayne together with the District Committee of Management, assembled at the Toby Carvery, Quinton for our Annual Summoned Autumn meeting.

We were very pleased to also have in attendance, Sister Sophie, a new member who was formally welcomed into the Society. Some of you may have met

Sister Sophie at the Rubery Cuppa and Chat group.

Do get in touch if you would like to find out more about joining the District Committee of Management.

The Committee would like to encourage members to get involved in the decision making of the District. Your opinions matter and being involved in the Committee is a great way to help our District to continue to grow.

Our next open meeting will be on Saturday 18 April at 11am at the Toby Carvery, Quinton. Why not come along, have your say and meet your Committee? Our Provincial Grand Master (Chairman), Brother Ken Blackhurst, warmly invites your attendance. All members are welcome.



All members who attended our 2025 Autumn Summoned Meeting.



The District Secretary and the Social Organisers.



Provincial Grand Master (Chairman) opening address.



Congratulations are in order for Sophie.



Sophie is welcomed into the Society.

Meet Karen Phillips, our new Events and Publicity Organiser for the Black Country

I am so happy to have joined Oddfellows to promote and support the friendship groups in the Black Country. I have also taken on the role of Social Organiser for the Wolverhampton group, based in Compton. I've had a busy start, attending all the groups in the Black Country and getting to know the members. I've received a warm welcome everywhere and it's really heartwarming to see so many people coming together to relax and chat over a drink of coffee or tea, and relax over a quiz and 'Sticky Fingers'.

In April 2025 I took early retirement from the NHS, where I had been the Fundraising Manager for the charity at Russells Hall Hospital for fifteen years. I have always found great pleasure in helping to make people's lives better, and I'm really looking forward to raising awareness for the wonderful work of



Oddfellows, and bringing even more lovely people together. Outside of work, I love to spend time with my Jack Russell, Rocky, who joined us as a puppy back in June. He now has his own seat in our campervan when my husband, Lee, and I spend weekends away exploring the British Isles. I have also taken up yoga, and can't understand why I didn't take it up years ago.

A lovely story from one of our Mere Green members at Oddfellows

A couple of months ago, a new lady called Anne came along to the Mere Green group after spotting our poster in Sainsbury's. The name Oddfellows rang a bell, as she remembered her dad going to meetings when she was younger. She used to tag along, sit at the bar and eat crisps while they played snooker.

Anne brought the medal her dad had from those meetings on her first visit to the Oddfellows. She's since become a member herself and is proudly continuing her family's Oddfellows tradition!



Wishing Linda all the best

Many members will already know that Linda Aitchison, one of our valued Social Organisers, has recently stepped down from her role.

Linda joined Oddfellows back in 2024 and quickly became a well-loved member of the team. She has run many enjoyable social events across the Black Country and brought great energy, kindness and creativity to everything she did. Her contribution has helped grow our community and create lasting friendships among members.

On behalf of the Birmingham Committee and the Social Organiser team - Wayne Homer, Alison Read and Kerry Smith. We would like to say a heartfelt thank you to Linda for her support, dedication and friendship.

We wish her every success and happiness for the future - she'll be very much missed by us all.



Linda is bottom left and enjoying one of the many socials she organised for the Wolverhampton group.

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

Farewell to Sister Doreen Wallis

This September saw the sad passing of our dear Sister Doreen.

The Committee of Management are thankful for Sister Doreen's contribution to her local Branch - Solihull; and the District overall: sharing her community work that she did with the Lions so that members could also benefit from the Message in a Bottle Campaign, day trips and wonderful coach holidays.

During the year that I hosted the Solihull social groups, she was an avid help to me. Without being asked, she helped me to set up and clear away tables and was always ready to welcome a new visitor if I had my hands full. Farewell Sister Doreen, you are greatly missed! The District Committee have sent their sincere condolences to Doreen's family.

Pilar and Rob from the Solihull group also wish to have their condolences to the family mentioned.



Doreen celebrating Friendship Month with Sheila and Bridgitte.



Doreen pictured left with Pauline and Beryl.

Farewell to Sister Sylvia Clark

“Sylvia was such a wonderful lady who I will miss so much. She always had a sunny smile for everyone. Such a contagious laugh too. This year’s holiday to Sinah Warren was a fantastic one, especially the Pimms night, which Sylvia really enjoyed. XX”

Kath – Mere Green group



Sylvia loved to be with people.

“She was a very happy, sociable lady, so meeting up at Oddfellows meetings (The Crown and also Aldridge) as well as Rummikub was right up her street.”

Jenny, Sylvia's sister-in law

“I was fortunate to meet Sylvia just once at the Aldridge group, which was struggling at the time, and Sylvia came along to give her support. Refusing to accept an outlook of doom and gloom, I distinctly remember Sylvia for her positivity, warm smile and the hug we shared at the end of the social as Sylvia had shared some sad news with myself and the then Social Organiser. People like Sylvia leave you feeling better, happier than when you started. I know she will be dearly missed by all who knew her.”

Liz – District Secretary

The District Committee would like to send their sincere condolences to Sylvia's family.

Farewell to Sister Lily Smith

**Our longest standing member,
Sister Lily Smith from Walsall. A
few words from her son:**

“ Mom passed away on Saturday 20 September 2025 at the grand age of 104. She was a tenacious and independent lady that remained in her own home, cooking, cleaning, independent of any carers other than her family and a community nurse monthly visit. She passed peacefully away in hospital after a very short two week stay. Mom was a meticulous planner right to the end and it's almost like she had the end she and all our family desired. You sent her flowers on her 100th birthday, to which she was extremely grateful and also the money gifts over the years. She was indeed very proud to be a member of Oddfellows ”.



Lily Smith earlier this year.



Lily Smith 1921 - 2025.

Many thanks, her son Derek.

It is a sad time when one of our dear founding members passes on. They will have memories of a very different Oddfellows and probably joined the Society as children. Sister Lily was a Life Member and our longest standing member. Sincere condolences are sent to her family on behalf of the District Committee of Management.

Keeping Active with Dance to Health at Our Dudley Social



Our Dudley members enjoyed a fantastic visit from Amy from Dance to Health earlier this year. Amy joined us at The Toby Carvery for a morning full of smiles, conversation, and movement.

Amy led an engaging session, sharing simple, practical ways to stay mobile and improve balance - proving that keeping active doesn't have to mean hitting the gym. With her friendly and encouraging approach, Amy showed us how small movements can make a big difference to strength, flexibility, and overall wellbeing, especially as we get older.

The Dance to Health programme is a national initiative, using dance-based exercise to prevent falls and help people stay independent for longer. Backed by evidence-based research, the sessions combine fun routines with gentle

conditioning to support confidence, balance, and coordination.

We're thrilled that Amy could join us, and everyone left feeling inspired (and a little more flexible than when they arrived!)

A huge thank you to Dance to Health for their brilliant work across Dudley and the Black Country, and for showing us that staying active can be joyful, social, and full of laughter.

Dance to Health runs sessions across the UK, including locally in Dudley, thanks to support from the National Lottery Community Fund and partnerships with Dudley Council.

Learn more or find a class near you:
www.dancetohealth.org



Getting Tech-Savvy with Mohammed from AbilityNet

Over the past year, our members across Birmingham, Solihull, and the Black Country have had a helping hand navigating the digital world, thanks to Mohammed Iltaf from AbilityNet.

Mohammed has been visiting many of our Cuppa & Chat groups, offering friendly, informal drop-in sessions to help members build confidence with technology - from setting up emails and adding apps to phones, to spotting online scams and staying safe on the internet.

His approachable one-to-one support has been a huge hit, with plenty of "aha!" moments as members tackled the digital world with renewed confidence. At recent sessions in Dudley and Solihull, members also took part in a fun 'Are You Scam



Savvy?' quiz, testing their knowledge on how to stay one step ahead of fraudsters.

These visits have been part of AbilityNet's free digital skills training for over 65s, delivered in partnership with BT Group, and have made a real difference to members who may have felt unsure about technology before.





Mohammed will be returning to our Oddfellows groups in the new year, continuing his informal drop-in sessions where members can ask

questions, get hands-on help, or simply learn something new.

If you'd like to know when he'll next be visiting your local group, please speak to your Social Organiser for more details.

You can also contact AbilityNet directly or speak to Mohammed by visiting abilitynet.org.uk/BTDigitalSkills or calling 0300 180 0028.

Photos: Mohammed pictured at our Dudley and Solihull Cuppa and Chat groups, helping members gain confidence with tech and online safety.

AbilityNet
In partnership with
BT Group

Free digital skills training for over 65s

- Need help with your emails?
- Want to book a GP appointment online, or order from the online shop?
- Need to know how to stay safe from scams?

Visit abilitynet.org.uk/BTDigitalSkills to book
Or call free 0300 180 0028

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Feedback from Members

Feedback collected over the past few months from members.

“Meeting new friends and sharing ideas.”

“All friendly people, nice for a chat and nice morning out.”



“Meeting new friends, who were once strangers. Different activities.”

“Meeting new people, sharing their problems as well as mine, not many places where you can meet others in similar positions. All organisers were very helpful in coping with any problems that we have. I myself go to the Dudley, Wednesbury Branch meetings.”

“Meeting people, games, day trip, holidays and social events organised by other members.”



Notice Board

Ways to renew your membership:

Call head office and pay over the phone on 0800 028 1810

Write a cheque made payable to 'City of Birmingham District Lodge', then send it to the District Office: 73 Bradbury Road, Solihull B92 8AE.

Please do not give cheques made payable to 'the Oddfellows' to your Social Organisers, as the cheques for renewing your membership need to be made payable to the 'City of Birmingham District Lodge'.

When you renew your membership at one of the groups, the Social Organiser will give you a receipt for this. When your renewal is processed, you will then be sent a letter of confirmation from head office. An additional receipt from the District office will not be sent.

We take this time to thank you all for your continued membership.

Our Annual Summoned Spring Meeting

All members are warmly invited to our Annual Summoned Spring Meeting where our Chairman Ken Blackhurst, will lead the meeting and oversee the decisions made about the running of the District. The date is Saturday 18 April 2026 at 11am at Toby Carvery, Hagley Road West, Quinton B32 1HP. Contact Liz to confirm your attendance on 0121 707 5626 or email elizabeth.blackhurst@oddfellows.co.uk



Donations Please

Your Social Organisers will be happy to accept small prizes for our monthly quizzes and games, (unused, unwanted items). Used stamps for the Royal National Institute for the Blind are also needed. We thank all past and future donors for their kindness.



Friendship Month 2025

Every September, we celebrate Friendship Month and 2025 was another fantastic year filled with laughter, connection and community spirit! Wayne, Alison and Kerry enjoyed spending the month hosting catch-ups and welcoming both familiar and new faces, who joined us to celebrate friendship in true Oddfellows style.

From coffee mornings to quizzes, it was wonderful to see so many familiar faces return and to welcome new members

into our Oddfellows family. The goody bags were a big hit again this year - a little token of thanks that always raises a smile!

Here are some photos from a few of our Friendship Month events across the district - including Bromsgrove, Harborne, Solihull, Wednesbury, Aldridge, Kings Heath, Dudley and Mere Green.

A big thank you to everyone who came along and helped make 2025 such a warm, welcoming and memorable month. Here's to even more friendship and fun in 2026!





Our Competitions

Friends Wordsearch for Oddfellows

Thanks to our Oddfellows member Tony Brannon for sending us this wordsearch.



Ally	Buddy	Close	Crony	Partner	Soulmate
Alterego	Chum	Companion	Friend	Party	
Amigo	Circle	Company	Lover	Roommate	
Associate	Classmate	Comrade	Oddfellow	Schoolmate	
Bestie	Clique	Confidant	Pal	Sidekick	

Easter Rabbits Anagram Quiz

Rearrange the letters to find the names of these famous rabbits.

1. THE RUMP
2. NUBBY GUNS
3. HITTER WITH BABE
4. BRIBE PATTER
5. VERIF
6. RIOT GRABBER
7. BRAT BRIBER
8. NINJA NUBBY MEN



Competition Winners

We were pleased to have more interest in our competitions this time round. Some were received by email, others via the Social Organiser and the rest by post.

The winner of the Wordsearch was Sylvia De Voisey

The winner of the Crossword competition was Aileen Tibble

The winner of the Anagram competition was Heather Erksine

Each will be sent a £10 voucher.

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 competition entry 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 30 April 2026.
- The winner will be selected at random from fully completed and correct entries by hat.
- 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 and county of the prize winner will be available 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.

All Our Socials: A message from the District Committee

Volunteer led Cuppa and Chat groups

A big thank you to those members who stepped up and stepped out this year to host a monthly Cuppa & Chat social when our Social Organisers were not available to do so. You are true gems!

We are always in need of members to help run the groups, so please contact your Social Organiser if you would consider helping out at a social, so that we can add your name to a pool of potential helpers in times of need. Thank you so much for your support!

Member led socials

Our member led socials are truly valued because they add a diversity of opportunities to the Oddfellows current social offering. Once again, we are very thankful to our members who take the initiative and organise these additional events under the Oddfellows banner - the fabulous 'Oddbod Quizzers' of Kings Heath is just one example. Some of these socials are on a regular basis,

others are organised when there is an event of interest. We are very pleased that we started the WhatsApp groups, because aside from liaising with the Social Organisers in some instances, these WhatsApp groups are the main medium through which these member-led socials are organised. We will continue to support members who want to organise events for other members and friends to come along because those are Oddfellows values. Those who wish to form their own separate group, without recourse to Oddfellows, are free to do so. All the District Committee ask is that this is done in the spirit of openness with respect to the Social Organisers and the District Committee and that discretion is applied, so that those who are not included in your events do not feel left out. We thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Some of our newer members may not be fully versed with our values. The Birmingham District has an ethos of mutuality - as we are part of the Oddfellows, we seek to help each other when we can. Our motto is 'Making Friends and Helping People'.

We wish you all many more enjoyable times at all your socials.

Yours in Friendship, Love and Truth,

**The District Committee of Management
of the Birmingham Oddfellows**



All Our Socials



It is so lovely to see so many of you visiting the socials this year, getting to know new local areas and meeting members from other groups. This is what we want in Oddfellows.

Please remember our budget – just two complimentary drinks a month in total, one at each event but please attend as many groups as you wish and fund the cost of your own drinks, letting the Social Organiser know when you attend your third group that month, that you need to pay for your drink.

We are always happy to make a drinks order on your behalf or you could pay the bar staff directly. Friends and visitors should be advised that there is a complimentary drink for them at their first visit. Following this we would love for them to come again, and fund the

cost of their own drink. As a member society it is hoped that by the third visit friends and guests will have decided to join the Oddfellows where they can continue to receive two complimentary drinks a month.

Exciting Venue Updates for Our Black Country Friendship Groups.

We're delighted to announce a few new venues and updated times for our friendly monthly catch-ups!

Walsall - New!

Held at Reedswood Park
Join us for a relaxed cuppa and chat at Starbucks Café inside Sainsbury's, Reedswood Retail Park, Reedswood Way, Walsall WS2 8XA.

Every fourth Wednesday of the month, 11am to 12.30pm. First meet-up is on Wednesday 28 January 2026.

Aldridge - New Venue and Time

We're moving to the Wellness Café at Aldridge Wellbeing Centre, Leighswood Road, Aldridge WS9 8AB.

Every second Wednesday of the month, 11am to 12.30pm. First meet-up is on Wednesday 14 January 2026

The rest of our Black Country socials continue as usual:

Wednesbury: Second Tuesday of the month at Morrisons Café

Dudley: Fourth Tuesday of the month at Toby Carvery, Burnt Tree Island

Wolverhampton: Fourth Thursday of the month at the Oddfellows Pub, Compton

For more information, contact **Kerry or Liz:**

Kerry: 07365 579287

Liz: 0121 707 5626

Email: blackcountry@oddfellows.co.uk

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.

5 January

2 March

2 February

None in May (due to Bank Holiday)

None in April (due to Easter)

1 June

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.

12 January

9 March

11 May

9 February

13 April

8 June

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.

19 January

16 March

18 May

16 February

20 April

15 June

Our Birmingham and Bromsgrove Socials

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.

20 January

17 February

17 March

21 April

19 May

16 June

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.

7 January

4 February

4 March

1 April

6 May

3 June

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.

15 January

19 February

19 March

16 April

21 May

18 June

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.

13 January

10 February

10 March

14 April

12 May

9 June

Our Black Country Socials

Aldridge Games, Cuppa and Chat

Second Wednesday of the month, 11am to 12.30pm

Aldridge Well-Being Café, Leighswood Road, Aldridge WS9 8AB.

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

14 January
11 February

11 March
8 April

13 May
10 June

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.

28 January
25 February

25 March
22 April

27 May
24 June

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.

27 January
24 February

24 March
28 April

26 May
23 June

Wolverhampton Cuppa and Chat

Fourth Thursday of the month, 11.15am to 12.45pm

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

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

22 January
26 February

26 March
23 April

28 May
25 June

Unity Mutual: A brand-new website and exciting Oddies member benefits

Unity Mutual, the financial arm of the Oddfellows, is delighted to have launched a brand-new website.

The fresh design reflects its updated brand identity, but more importantly, it has been built with accessibility and inclusion at its heart – a continuation of the Oddfellows' ethos.



Whether looking for information on savings, investments or life insurance, the new site is easier to use, clearer to navigate and designed so that everyone can get the most from it.

Unity Mutual has partnered with Recite Me to introduce a full suite of accessibility tools, allowing visitors to customise their browsing experience. These include a text-to-speech function, styling features and translation options, which ensure their online services are available to all –

including those who may face barriers due to disability, neurodivergence or limited English language ability.

James Gilliver, Chief of Operations at Unity Mutual, explained: "Accessibility is extremely important to us at Unity Mutual. Our new website reflects our promise to inclusivity, ensuring all customers can access information in the way that best meets their needs."

"But it's not just about accessibility. We've also worked hard to make our content clearer and more engaging, so you can feel confident in understanding your financial choices. Our aim is to empower you and your family to make informed decisions about saving for the future."

An extra reason to take a look is that Oddfellows members can currently benefit from special Guaranteed Investment Bond rates, available exclusively through Unity Mutual.

To see the new website, its new accessibility features and for more information about its products and rates, go to www.unitymutual.co.uk/oddfellows, and discover how Unity Mutual can help build a brighter financial future.

Thank you for saying 'yes' to friendship

This Friendship Month, we've been encouraging people to say 'yes' to trying new things, making new friends, and discovering all the brilliant things happening at our Branches throughout the nation.

It's safe to say, September 2025 has been another fabulous celebration of friendship. The Oddfellows' CEO, Jane Nelson, said: "Friendship Month 2025 has once again demonstrated what the Oddfellows is all about, and I'm thankful of every single

person up and down the country who had been a part of it."

"Saying 'yes' to trying new things can be daunting, but you've all done an excellent job of showing how positive it is to be a part of friendship groups like ours. So, thank you for saying 'yes' to helping make your Friendship Month events a success, whether that's organising events, serving cups of tea, or simply making people feel welcome and comfortable. It all adds up to another wonderful Friendship Month."



Birmingham Oddfellows



Bradford Oddfellows



Brighouse and Huddersfield Oddfellows



Albert Oddfellows



Derbyshire Peak Oddfellows



Cambridge Oddfellows



Heart of the West Oddfellows



Concord Oddfellows



Halifax Oddfellows



Sudbury Oddfellows

Application deadlines approach!

Whether it's enhancing careers or highlighting fantastic people, the Oddfellows has a number of ways we can give our members a boost – but we can only do so if we hear about them.

Deadlines for applications to be submitted for two of our wonderful schemes are fast approaching – the Apprenticeship Educational Award and the Making a Difference Awards.

Apprenticeship Educational Awards



Each year, the Oddfellows grants up to three Apprenticeship Educational Awards, which consist of £250 per year for the duration of the apprenticeship.*

Eligible members must apply via their Branch. If you, or someone you know, has been an Oddfellows member for five or more years, which includes Young Oddfellows membership, and started or plan to start an apprenticeship in 2025, get in touch with your Branch Secretary.

The Branch's deadline for submitting applications for consideration is **Wednesday 31 December 2025**.

*Each case is reviewed on personal merit. For previous recipients' stories, details on eligibility and how to apply, visit www.oddfellows.co.uk/educational-awards

Making a Difference Awards



Want to shine a light on those special people at your Branch who go above and beyond? Every Branch has them, so make sure we hear about their brilliance.

Any member can nominate a fellow member, so if there are people at your Branch who make a difference, speak to your Branch Secretary to find out how you can nominate them.

The deadline for Branches to submit their shortlist is **Saturday 31 January 2026**, so get your nominations in as soon as possible so they can be considered.

To find out more about our Making a Difference Awards, the categories, nomination process and the prior winners, go to www.oddfellows.co.uk/makingadifference

If you've missed these deadlines this time don't worry, just make a note for next year!



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.

January 2026

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	11am
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

February

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
Wed 11	Aldridge Games, Cuppa and Chat	11am
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

March

Mon 2	Rubery Cuppa and Catch Up	10.30am
Wed 4	Kings Heath Cuppa and Chat	11am

At a glance

March

Mon 9	Harborne Games, Cuppa and Catch Up	11am
Tues 10	Wednesbury Cuppa and Chat	11am
Wed 11	Aldridge Games, Cuppa and Chat	11am
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

April

Wed 1	Kings Heath Cuppa and Chat	11am
Wed 8	Aldridge Games, Cuppa and Chat	11am
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

May

Wed 6	Kings Heath Cuppa and Chat	11am
Mon 11	Harborne Games, Cuppa and Catch Up	11am
Tues 12	Wednesbury Cuppa and Chat	11am
Wed 13	Aldridge Games, Cuppa and Chat	11am
Mon 18	Bromsgrove Cuppa and a Chat	11am
Tues 19	Mere Green Cuppa and Chat	11.15am

At a glance

May continued...

Thurs 21	Solihull Cuppa and Chat	1pm
Tues 26	Dudley Quiz, Cuppa and a Chat	11am
Wed 27	Walsall Cuppa and Chat	11am
Thurs 28	Wolverhampton Cuppa, Games and Chat	11.15am

June

Mon 1	Rubery Cuppa and Catch Up	10.30am
Wed 3	Kings Heath Cuppa and Chat	11am
Mon 8	Harborne Games, Cuppa and Catch Up	11am
Tues 9	Wednesbury Cuppa and Chat	11am
Wed 10	Aldridge Games, Cuppa and Chat	11am
Mon 15	Bromsgrove Cuppa and a Chat	11am
Tues 16	Mere Green Cuppa and Chat	11.15am
Thurs 18	Solihull Cuppa and Chat	1pm
Tues 23	Dudley Quiz, Cuppa and a Chat	11am
Wed 24	Walsall Cuppa and Chat	11am
Thurs 25	Wolverhampton Cuppa, Games and Chat	11.15am

Please don't forget to book your place.

**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

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