

April - June 2026
Spring Issue



THE
ODDFELLOWS SINCE 1810
making friends, helping people

out & about

Making friends across 5 Shires District



Bletchley Park - the mansion



Travel



Social



Games



Dining Out



Music



Talks



Quizzes



Friendship



Walk



Meeting



Coffee Morning/
Afternoon Tea

www.oddfellows.co.uk



5 Shires



Trish Dewar (Deputy Chairman), Jackie Proctor (Chairman), Brian Harper (Immediate Past Chairman) and Em Ellis (District Secretary).

Welcome to the Spring edition of your Out and About

Hello all

I hope this newsletter finds you well. It has been a whirlwind this end. The office is now all done, the team is built and year end accounts have been completed – just awaiting audit.

The outgoing Chairman Brian Harper raised an amazing £1,600 for the Orphan Gift Fund and we have a new Chairman Jackie Proctor with Trish Dewar becoming Deputy Chairman.

On Saturday 31 January 2026 at the Annual Meeting the new officers were installed including myself as your District Secretary. The Chairman's appeal for 2026 is the Keech Hospice in Luton.

In January 2026, our four Branches were amalgamated into one District Branch – with our events now arranged by four Social Organisers. I am delighted to introduce the new Social Organisers in the following pages, and as you will see, many social activities across the district as well.

The amalgamation is complete from our end, but the computer system won't catch up until after the end of year accounts have all been audited etc. So, you will notice that your letters regarding renewal will have extra details with them. You are still able to claim as normal just pop them in the post to the office address in Wootton.

I am already looking into the panto for the end of the year at Milton Keynes theatre – let me know if you will be looking for tickets – as always our junior members go free.



Over the past few months I have spoken to many members who are stuck at home and feeling a little lonely. With this in mind we are asking would you like to be a 'telephone pal'? Let us know if you are interested in having a natter with another member from time to time. This role does need a basic ID check for everyone's safety.

Yours in friendship
Em

Branch Contacts

5 Shires District

District Secretary: Emily Ellis

Postal Address: Kingston House, 106a Bedford Road, Wootton MK43 9JB

Telephone: 07932 529205 **Email:** emily.ellis@oddfellows.co.uk

District Email: 5shiresdistrict@oddfellows.co.uk

Assistant District Secretary: Sarah Wetherell

Telephone: 07932 529205 **Email:** sarah.wetherell@oddfellows.co.uk

The District Branch meets every third Tuesday of the month at Kingston House, 106a Bedford Road, Wootton, Beds, MK3 9JB

Bedford Social Branch

Social Organiser: Samantha Henderson

Telephone: 07932 529207 **Email:** bedfordsocial@oddfellows.co.uk

Meets on the last Thursday of the month at Kingston House, 106a Bedford Road, Wootton MK43 9JB.

Grenville Social Branch (Buckingham)

Social Organiser: Kelly Israel

Telephone: 07932 529203 **Email:** grenvillesocial@oddfellows.co.uk

Meets on the last Tuesday of the month at Buckingham Library, Verney Close, Buckingham MK18 1JP.

Albert Social Branch (Hitchin)

Social Organiser: Sam Johnson

Telephone: 07984 530287 **Email:** albertsocial@oddfellows.co.uk

Meets on the third Monday of the month at 8 Nuns Close, Hitchin, Herts SG5 1EP at 7.30pm

Victoria Social Branch (Wellingborough)

Social Organiser: Maria Kelly

Telephone: 07932 529162 **Email:** victoriasocial@oddfellows.co.uk

Meets on the second Monday of the month at Finedon Independent Wesleyan Chapel, Affleck Bridge, Finedon, Northants NN9 5LZ at 7.30pm

If you would like to attend any of the meetings or events at any Branch, or would like further information, please contact the District Secretary via phone, email or post at the contact details given above.

Note: Colour coding of branches is used – corresponds to articles later in the magazine: **Dark Blue** = District **Brown** = Bedford **Blue** = Grenville
Orange = Albert **Purple** = Victoria

Albert Branch Regular Coffee Morning

Coffee Morning at Hitchin



10.30am



Free



Come and join friends and members of Albert Branch for coffee and cake in the lodge rooms. Kettle will be on from 10.30am. 8 Nuns Close, Hitchin SG5 1EP. Contact Sam on 07984 530287.



Tuesday 28 April

Wednesday 27 May

Wednesday 24 June

Jigsaw and Coffee Morning



10.30am



Free



How much can we complete of a 500 piece puzzle over a cuppa and cake? Even if jigsaws aren't your thing, you're very welcome to come for a natter, coffee and cake! 8 Nuns Close, Hitchin SG5 1EP. Contact Sam on 07984 530287.

Thursday 9 April

Tuesday 9 June

Coffee Morning at Poplars Garden Centre



10.30am



As per menu



Please meet in the café for a hot drink, followed by a walk around their 'secret' nature reserve. Poplars Garden Centre, Harlington Road, Toddington, Dunstable LU5 6HE. Contact Sam on 07984 530287.

Tuesday 14 April

Thursday 4 June

April 2026

MON
20

Albert Branch Social Evening Guest Speaker Age UK Bedfordshire



7.30pm



Free



Tonight there is a talk from Age UK Bedfordshire about the services they can provide. They will be bringing a variety of information booklets and will be able to answer any questions you may have. Followed by a cuppa with cake and chat. Please note Age UK Bedfordshire can only help those living in this county and are unable to cross the county boundary. It is the same for Age UK Hertfordshire. 8 Nuns Close, Hitchin SG5 1EP. Contact Sam on 07984 530287.

May

TUES 12 Lunch at The Angels Pub



12 noon



As per menu



Join friends and members for lunch at The Angels Pub in Hitchin, please let Sam know by Wednesday 6 May if you are coming. Welcome to join if you'd just prefer coffee and cake. The Angels Pub, Bedford Road, Ickleford, Hitchin SG5 2NG. Contact Sam on 07984 530287.



MON 18 Albert Branch Social Evening Table Top Treasure Hunt



7.30pm



Free



Join us for a table top treasure hunt with cuppa and cake. 8 Nuns Close, Hitchin SG5 1EP. Contact Sam on 07984 530287.



THURS 21 Coffee Morning at North Herts Museum



10.30am



As per menu



Please meet in the café for a cuppa followed by a walk around the museum if you wish. North Hertfordshire Museum, Brand Street, Hitchin, Herts SG5 1JE. Contact Sam on 07984 530287 or Samantha on 07932 529207.



June

MON 15 Albert Branch Social Evening Guest Speaker from Silvertime Legal



7.30pm



Free



Tonight there is a light-hearted talk from Silvertime Legal, talking all things wills, trusts and estate planning. Followed by a cuppa, cake and chat with friends and members. 8 Nuns Close, Hitchin SG5 1EP. Contact Sam on 07984 530287.



Bedford Branch

Regular Coffee Morning

Bedford Social Branch Coffee Morning



Join us for a brew, cake or brunch and enjoy the conversation and laughter, maybe make new friends! Contact Samantha on 07932 529207.

8 April

Peacocks Auction House, Eastcotts Park, Wallis Way, Bedford MK42 0PE.

13 May

Mill Yard Coffee lounge, 1-2 Mill Yard, Mill Street, Bedford MK40 3HD.

Bedford Social Evening - Guest Speaker



Come along to our social evening and enjoy a cuppa with cake and a chat with friends. A guest speaker will be joining us - details to be confirmed. Kingston House, 106a Bedford Road, Wootton, Beds MK43 9JB. Contact Samantha on 07932 529207.

28 May

25 June

April 2026

WED 01 Bedford Social Branch - Priory Country Park Walk



Join us for a countryside walk at Priory Country Park, followed by coffee at Cloverdale Retreat.



Meet at the totem pole near the Barkers Lane Car Park. Priory Country Park, Barkers Lane, Bedford MK41 9DJ. Contact Samantha on 07932 529207.

THURS 23 Bedford Social Branch Evening - Bedford Landmark Quiz



Test your local knowledge with our Bedford Landmark Quiz and see how well you really



know the town's hidden gems and historic highlights. Kingston House, 106a Bedford Road, Wootton, Beds MK43 9JB. Contact Samantha on 07932 529207.

April 2026

SAT 25 Bedford Social Branch - Croquet



10am



£7.50



Our annual croquet trip returns this year, offering a relaxed and enjoyable day of friendly competition and good company.



Please remember to wear flat shoes and bring a packed lunch. Stoney Stratford Croquet Club, Ancell Trust Sports Ground, Ostlers Lane, Stoney Stratford, Bucks MK11 1BN. To book your space contact Samantha at bedfordsocial@oddfellows.co.uk or call 07932 529207 by Saturday 18 April.

WED 29 Bedford Social Branch - Lunch with Victoria Social Branch



12.30pm



As per menu



Join us for lunch at this lovely restaurant in the Northampton Garden Centre. Carvery and menu options - cost as menu. Northampton Garden Centre, Newport Pagnell Road, Wootton, Northampton NN4 6HP. To book your place contact Samantha at bedfordsocial@oddfellows.co.uk or call 07932 529207 by Wednesday 22 April.

May

SUN 10 Bedford Social Branch - Visit to Twinwood Museum



11am



£5



Join us for a trip to the Twinwood Museum and discover the stories behind its unique aviation and music history. Entry is £5 per person. Twinwood Museum, Twinwood Road, Clapham, Bedford MK41 6AB. To book your space contact Samantha at bedfordsocial@oddfellows.co.uk or call 07932 529207 by Saturday 2 May.

TUES 26 Bedford Social Branch - The Choir Man at MK Theatre



7.30pm



From £18.95



An uplifting celebration of community and friendship where everyone is welcome. A night of feel good, foot stomping entertainment. Cost from £18.95 (tickets between £18.95-£55) plus travel. Milton Keynes Theatre, 500 Marlborough Gate, Milton Keynes MK9 3NZ. Contact Samantha at bedfordsocial@oddfellows.co.uk or call 07932 529207 before Tuesday 14 April to book your ticket.

June

WED 03 Bedford Social Branch - Harold-Odell Country Park



Come for a country side walk in this 144-acre park. Walk at Harold-Odell Country Park, followed by coffee in the Dragonfly Café. A walk on the 'Red Route' around the lake takes you on a surfaced path through the woodland and the beautiful Grebe Lake. It's approximately 1.6 miles and takes about 45 minutes. Harold-Odell Country Park, Carlton Road, Harrold, Bedford MK43 7DS. Contact Samantha at bedfordsocial@oddfellows.co.uk or call 07932 529207 by Wednesday 27 May.



WED 10 Coffee Morning at Wixams Retirement Village



Come and join us for a brew, cake or brunch and enjoy the conversation and laughter, maybe make new friends! Wixam Retirement Village, Bedford Road, Bedford MK42 6EA. Contact Samantha on 07932 529207.

WED 17 Bedford Social Branch - Lunch with Victoria Social Branch



Join us for lunch at this lovely restaurant in the Northampton Garden Centre. Carvery and menu options - cost as menu. Northampton Garden Centre, Newport Pagnell Road, Wootton, Northampton NN4 6HP. To book your place contact Samantha at bedfordsocial@oddfellows.co.uk or call 07932 529207 by Wednesday 10 June.

SUN 21 Bedford Social Branch - Visit to Herring Green Activity Farm and Birds of Prey Centre



The farm is home to one of the largest collections of birds of prey in the UK. We will take a walk round the centre and stop to see one of the flying displays. Our group will get to chat to the falconer and handle an owl. Entry is £12 per person. Herring Green Activity Farm and Birds of Prey Centre, Cotton End Road, Wilstead, Bedford MK45 3DT. Contact Samantha on 07932 529207 or bedfordsocial@oddfellows.co.uk by Wednesday 10 June.



Grenville Branch

Regular Coffee Morning

Social Afternoon at Lace Hill Sports & Community Centre



Join us for an afternoon of friendship and come enjoy a cuppa and cake in good company. Further details will be released as they are confirmed (check our Facebook page). Buckingham Library, Verney Close, Buckingham MK18 1JP. Contact Kelly on 07932 529203.

28 April

26 May

30 June

Bring, Buy and Swap Jigsaw Fundraiser and Drop in Coffee Morning



Join our monthly jigsaw fundraising event and enjoy a cup of tea or coffee. We continue to raise funds for local charities and our Provincial Grand Master's (Chairman) charity. Jigsaws not your thing? You are still very welcome to pop in for a cup of tea or coffee and a chat. Buckingham Library, Verney Close, Buckingham MK18 1JP. Contact Kelly on 07932 529203.

7 April

5 May

2 June

Buckingham Nurseries and Garden Centre



Come along to this independent garden centre on the third Wednesday of the month for a coffee, tea, cake and a catch up - even stay for lunch afterwards if you fancy it! Buckingham Nurseries and Garden Centre, Tingewick Road, Buckingham, Mk18 4AE, Contact Kelly on 07932 529203.



15 April

20 May

17 June

April 2026

WED
22

Grenville Social - Brunch
at The White Hart



Join us for some brunch and a chance to catch up with friends old and new. Book by Wednesday 15 April. The White Hart, Market Square, Buckingham MK18 1NL. Contact Kelly on 07932 529203.

Victoria Branch

Regular Coffee Morning

Coffee Morning at The Garden Deli



Coffee morning at The Garden Deli. Come along and enjoy a relaxed coffee morning - perfect for a cuppa, a chat and maybe a slice of cake! The café serves a lovely selection of drinks, food and snacks. Cost as per menu. A great chance to catch up, unwind and enjoy good company. Everyone welcome! The Garden Deli, Nene Court, The Embankment, Wellingborough NN8 1LP. Contact Maria on 07932 529162 or email victoriasocial@oddfellows.co.uk.

Wednesday 22 April

Thursday 21 May

Thursday 18 June

April 2026

WED 08 Victoria Social Branch - Ten-Pin Bowling



Come join us for a strike-tastic morning of bowling, followed by some tasty food at Hollywood Bowl! Bowling costs: Seniors/registered disabled/carers - from £3.50. Adults - from £7. Kids - from £6. Food available - cost as per menu. Whether you're a bowling pro or just in it for the laughs and food, everyone's welcome! Grab your friends and come along for a great time. Hollywood Bowl, 15 Whitworth Way, Wellingborough NN8 2EF. Please let Maria know on 07932 529162 if you're coming by Wednesday 25 March.

MON 13 Easter Social Branch



Hop along and join us for a lovely Easter evening, full of fun, games and good company, plus a cuppa and cake of course. Bring your Easter spirit and come enjoy a relaxed, friendly night with us. Everyone welcome - love to see you there. Finedon Independent Wesleyan Chapel, Affleck Bridge, Finedon NN9 5LZ. Contact Maria on 07932 529162.



April 2026

WED 29 Victoria Social Branch - Lunch with Bedford Social Branch



12.30pm



As per menu



Join us for lunch at this lovely restaurant in the Northampton Garden Centre. Carvery and menu options - cost as per menu. Northampton Garden Centre, Newport Pagnell Road, Wootton, Northampton NN4 6HP. Please book with Maria on 07932 529162 by Wednesday 22 April.

May

MON 11 Social Evening - Fish 'n' Chips Supper



7.30pm



Free



Fancy a chippy tea and a good natter?

Come and join us for a relaxed evening of



fish and chips with a cuppa and great company! Remember to bring your knife and forks! Good food, hot drinks and friendly faces. Cost as per menu (from £5 to £8). Finedon Independent Wesleyan Chapel, Affleck Bridge, Finedon NN9 5LZ. Contact Maria on 07932 529162 or email victoriasocial@oddfellows.co.uk.

May

SAT 30 Victoria Social Branch - Dinner at The Priory



7pm



As per menu



Dinner at The Priory. Come and enjoy a lovely lunch out with friends and members of Victoria Branch - good food, good company and plenty of chat! We'd love to see you there. The Priory, Bourton Way, Wellingborough NN8 2LF. Please let Maria know on 07932 529162 or email victoriasocial@oddfellows.co.uk if you're coming by Wednesday 20 May.



June

MON 08 Victoria Social Branch Evening - Guest Speaker



7.30pm



Free



Join us for a relaxed evening of cake, a cuppa and an interesting guest speaker. Come along, bring a friend, enjoy a warm welcome and great company. Finedon Independent Wesleyan Chapel, Affleck Bridge, Finedon NN9 5LZ. Contact Maria on 07932 529162 or email victoriasocial@oddfellows.co.uk.

June

WED 17 Victoria Social Branch - Lunch with Bedford Social Branch



12.30pm



As per menu



Come along for lunch at this lovely restaurant in the Northampton Garden Centre. Carvery



and menu options - cost as menu.

Northampton Garden Centre, Newport Pagnell Road, Wootton, Northampton NN4 6HP. Please book with Maria on 07932 529162 by Wednesday 10 June.

FRI 26 Victoria Social Branch - Dinner at The Lilacs



6.30pm



As per menu



Come and enjoy a lovely lunch out with friends and members of Victoria Branch - good food, good company and plenty of chat! We'd love to see you there. The Lilacs, 39 Church Street, Isham, Kettering NN14 1HD. Please let Maria know on 07932 529162 or email victoriasocial@oddfellows.co.uk if you're coming by Tuesday 16 June.



District Event - April 2026

SUN 26 Annual Church Service 5 Shires District Branch



3pm



Free



Come and join members and friends of the District for the annual church service. Following the service there will be refreshments. Finedon Independent Wesleyan Chapel, Affleck Bridge, Finedon NN9 5LZ. Please let Em know on 07970 793978 if you can make it, so we can ensure we have enough cake!



District Meeting

Third Tuesday of the month at 7.30pm

Join members and friends for our monthly business meeting. Kingston House, 106a Bedford Road, Wootton, Beds MK43 9JB. Contact Em on 07970 793978.

21 April

**19 May – no meeting
due to AMC**

16 June

Interested in volunteering?

Helping others is at the heart of being an Oddfellow and that's exactly what our wonderful volunteers do. There are lots of ways you can get involved as a volunteer, from one-off help to regular support.

You can help us by:

- Welcoming members, guests and speakers at events
- Helping prepare refreshments
- Being the volunteer host at external events
- Organising events as part of a social committee
- Joining the Committee of Management
- Becoming a Volunteer Welfare Visitor or befriender.



To find out more, contact Em by phone on **07970 793978** or email emily.ellis@oddfellows.co.uk

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 **The Oddfellows** SINCE 1810
making friends, helping people
www.oddfellows.co.uk

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

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 Em on **07970 793978** or email **emily.ellis@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**

EDCWA50223

District News

36 of us were in Milton Keynes for the panto in December.



Welcome our new member

Our new youngest member who is already attending lunches! Here he is with Ann Boyle (great grandma). Benjamin was born Saturday 21 February 2026 weighing in at 7lb 8. Mother and baby are both doing well.



Kingston House - What a transformation!!

From this:



To this:



As you can see we are still organising the office – I will pop a photo of a tidy office in the next newsletter.

Albert Branch News

Hello everyone, with the recent changes, I thought I would re-introduce myself- I'm Sam the Social Organiser for the Hitchin Area. I've been in position for over 18 months now and it's been fantastic meeting and getting to know so many of you along the way.

Although there have been many changes, these will not affect you the members or our upcoming events. It would be great if anyone has any suggestions for example: activities they'd like to try, places to visit or where you'd like to have a coffee morning- I'm always on the look out to keep our events diary exciting! Let me know at the next events or drop me an email/text.

As promised, I've included some photos from our Christmas lunch, tree festival and afternoon at the panto - a fab time was had by all!



This is me with my two beautiful children at the panto back in December.

P.S my New Years resolution was to remember to take more photos at our events- if I'm busy nattering please give me a nudge to remind me!

See you all soon,
Sam

Sam's contact details are:
07984 530287 or email
albertsocial@oddfellows.co.uk

Pictures from the last couple of months



January Social Lodge evening – Pig racing.



Christmas lunch.

Pictures from the last couple of months



Christmas tree festival – our entry.



Panto 2025.

Bedford Branch News

Hello everyone! I'm Samantha Henderson and I'm really pleased to introduce myself as the new Bedford Social Organiser. I'm looking forward to meeting you all and helping to plan a lovely mix of socials over the coming months.



A little bit about me - I enjoy meeting new people, I love a good book, a nice walk, and I'll never say no to cake! Most of all, I'm always up for a good natter, so please do come and say hello when you see me.

If you have any ideas or suggestions for future events, I'd love to hear them. I can't wait to meet you all soon!

Samantha's contact details are:
07932 529207 or email
bedfordsocial@oddfellows.co.uk

Grenville Branch News

Hi everyone! I'm Kelly, and I'm thrilled to be joining Grenville Social Lodge as a new Social Organiser. I live in Yardley Gobion, Northamptonshire, with my husband and our two children, and I'm really looking forward to getting stuck into our local Oddfellows community.

I wear a few hats - running my music-based Community Interest Company (CIC) 'Music With Meaning' and performing professionally as 'Melody Woman', a pianist-vocalist, but I'm excited to bring that same creative energy to this role. I have a 20-year professional background in third sector development and delivery prior to starting my own businesses. I'm passionate about accessibility and disability advocacy -

especially around neurodiversity as I am an AuDHDer. I love bringing people together and look forward to making our social gatherings inclusive and fun for everyone.



Beyond the work stuff, I'm a fan of real conversations, good ale, the garden, and anything that involves music. I look forward to getting to know you all soon.

Kelly's contact details are: Email grenvillesocial@oddfellows.co.uk and telephone number 07932 529203.

Christmas Lunch 2025



Victoria Branch News



Hi, I'm Maria the new Social Organiser for Victoria. I've been a member of the Oddfellows for many years and I love meeting new people and hearing people's stories! I have two beautiful boys who also love meeting new people.

Over the next few months, I plan on getting to know members and seeing what everyone wants to do socially, as well as visiting other areas and getting to know their members. We also have many junior members, so I will be looking to also do things for them that everyone can join in with!

If you have any questions or would like to tell me what you would like to do, please do not hesitate to contact me and I look forward to meeting you all.

Maria's contact information:
07932 529203 or email
victoriasocial@oddfellows.co.uk.

Coffee morning at Doddington Nurseries



Lunch at the Ock n Dough – more very large puddings!



Thousands raised for Hurricane Melissa relief efforts by Oddfellows branches

The Oddfellows has 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.

Essential supplies

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.

Pam Casey, spokesperson for the Oddfellows, said: "When communities are devastated by disasters of this scale, the need for swift and compassionate support is critical. We are incredibly proud of our branches for coming together to raise these funds.

"Every contribution helps people to access shelter, food, and vital services as they begin the long process of rebuilding.



"Supporting this appeal reflects the very best of Oddfellowship – standing alongside others in times of greatest need."

The Oddfellows extends sincere thanks to everyone who contributed to the appeal and helped make this support possible.

Find out more

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

You can also learn more about how the Oddfellows raises money for good causes on our website at www.oddfellows.co.uk/about/giving-back

To find out how you can get involved with fundraising initiatives Oddfellows branches are conducting locally, speak to your Branch Secretary.

Talented trio win Educational Awards

We're proud to announce our 2025 First Degree Course Educational Award winners: Melanie Healy (Humber Wolds Oddfellows), Will Stevenson (Pride of Woolwich Oddfellows) and Emma Corbin (Worcester Oddfellows).

Each winner will receive a non-repayable bursary worth £900 per year for the duration of their studies, which can go towards anything from text books and vital equipment to helping out with rent, bills and other practical items.

Jane Nelson, CEO of the Oddfellows, said:

It fills me with pride each year when we announce the winners of the First Degree Course Educational Awards, and I'm sure that Melanie, Will and Emma will work hard and have a wonderful university experience.

University is an exciting time, but it can also be quite stressful. I hope this money will go some way to help reduce some of the financial pressures that are a reality of being a student.

Melanie Healey, Humber Wolds Branch

In October 2025, Melanie began her Asian and Middle Eastern Studies course at the University of Cambridge. The four-year course will begin with learning Arabic language skills from scratch, building up her existing French language skills and looking at French Literature.

She says she is hoping to put the money towards travelling to French and Arabic-speaking countries for internships and exchanges to help sharpen these skills.

Melanie said: "I was delighted when I found out that I'd been chosen to receive the funding, and I would like to thank the Oddfellows for the grant."

Although unsure what her career plans are at this stage, Melanie says she "would definitely like to work in a role that allows me to use my language skills".



Will Stevenson Pride of Woolwich Branch

Will started reading Geography at the University of Durham's Trevelyan College in Autumn 2025, where modules cover



topics such as climate change, physical geography, human geography, geographical research and geographies in crisis.

The money, he says, will go towards the social aspects that university life has to offer, such as the Durham University Big Band.

Will said: "Hearing I was a recipient of the award was incredibly exciting, and I am extremely thankful to the Oddfellows for the trust and generosity they have offered me."

Will also hasn't mapped out his career plans at this stage, but says that's one of the reasons the course appealed to him, given "the breadth of Geography and its wide application".

Emma Corbin Worcester Branch

Unbeknownst to either, Emma and Will have ended up on the same Geography course at the University of Durham.



Emma plans to put the money towards learning materials and field trips.

"I felt extremely grateful and lucky when I was picked as one of the successful candidates from what would have been many amazing applications," she said. "I would like to say how thankful I am. It is a great opportunity to have an award like this available."

Emma too hasn't decided which direction she wants her career to take, but thinks her chosen course will provide her with a range of opportunities.

"It's an increasingly relevant subject, considering topics such as climate change and geopolitics," Emma added.

More about our Educational Awards

Each year, our Fraternal Board chooses who will receive the Educational Awards funding, based on the applications received from members. To learn more about the awards, including the Apprenticeship Educational Award, eligibility and how to apply, visit www.oddfellows.co.uk/benefits/care/educational-awards.

2026: Time to make a financial plan



a proud part of the Oddfellows

The year might have only just started, but we all know how quickly the calendar can flip. One minute it's spring, and the next we're wondering where the mince pies have gone.

Taking a little time now to think about your finances before the new tax year starts in April can make life feel calmer and more organised.

Where to start?

A financial plan doesn't have to involve spreadsheets or complicated formulas. It can simply start with a few questions, like: 'What do I want to save for? Am I prepared for life's surprises? Could my money be working harder for me?'

For some Oddfellows members, the focus might be on simply enjoying life or planning for the future. Others may also be thinking about the younger people in their lives – children, grandchildren, or that teenager who changes career ambitions daily.

Small, regular contributions now could grow into something meaningful later.

Start saving

Lucky for Oddfellows members, our financial services arm, Unity Mutual, is close at hand.

Unity Mutual is a regulated provider of ISAs and other savings and investment

products, which means they follow strict rules designed to protect our members.

Unity Mutual's Guaranteed Investment Bonds, including two, three and five year terms, offer fixed-rates for savers with a lump sum to invest, and Oddfellow members can benefit from preferential rates.

Alternatively, ISAs are a tax-efficient way to save or invest, whether you're building up funds to enjoy retirement or looking to help give your child a confident step into adulthood.

ISA Products available from Unity Mutual for Oddfellow members include a Lifetime ISA, a Flexible ISA and a Junior ISA, and you can also make the most of the Adult and Child Tax-Exempt Savings Plans.

Get in touch

And the good news? You don't have to figure it all out by yourself. Unity Mutual is happy to chat with you about your goals, big, small, or somewhere in between.

Our friendly staff can provide information on what is available to you. They'll talk through things in plain English, not financial jargon, so you can make decisions confidently and comfortably.

Terms and conditions apply to all products.

Find out more

Visit www.unitymutual.co.uk or call us for a chat on 0161 214 4650.

At a glance

Orange◆ = Albert, Brown● = Bedford,
Blue■ = Grenville and Purple★ = Victoria

April 2026

● Wed 1	Bedford Social Branch – Priory Country Park Walk	10.30am
■ Tues 7	Bring, Buy and Swap Jigsaw Fundraiser and Drop in Coffee Morning	10am
● Wed 8	Bedford Social Branch Coffee Morning	10.30am
★ Wed 8	Victoria Social Branch – Ten-Pin Bowling	11.30am
◆ Thurs 9	Jigsaw and Coffee Morning	10.30am
★ Mon 13	Easter Social Branch	7.30pm
◆ Tues 14	Coffee Morning at Poplars Garden Centre	10.30am
■ Wed 15	Buckingham Nurseries and Garden Centre	11am
◆ Mon 20	Albert Branch Social Evening Guest Speaker Age UK Bedfordshire	7.30pm
Tues 21	District Meeting	7.30pm
★ Wed 22	Coffee Morning – The Garden Deli	10.30am
■ Wed 22	Grenville Social – Brunch at The White Hart	11am
● Thurs 23	Bedford Social Branch Evening – Bedford Landmark Quiz	7.30pm
● Sat 25	Bedford Social Branch – Croquet	10am
Sun 26	Annual Church Service – 5 Shires District Branch	3pm
◆ Tues 28	Albert Branch Coffee Morning	10.30am
■ Tues 28	Grenville Social Afternoon	1.30pm
● Wed 29	Bedford Social Branch – Lunch with Victoria Social Branch	12.30pm
★ Wed 29	Victoria Social Branch – Lunch with Bedford Social Branch	12.30pm

May

■ Tues 5	Bring, Buy and Swap Jigsaw Fundraiser and Drop in Coffee Morning	10am
● Sun 10	Bedford Social Branch – Visit to Twinwood Museum	11am
★ Mon 11	Social Evening – Fish ‘n’ Chips Supper	7.30pm
◆ Tues 12	Lunch at The Angels Pub	12 noon
● Wed 13	Bedford Social Branch Coffee Morning	10.30am
◆ Mon 18	Albert Branch Social Evening Table Top Treasure Hunt	7.30pm
Tues 19	District Meeting	7.30pm
■ Wed 20	Buckingham Nurseries and Garden Centre	11am

At a glance

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May

◆	Thurs 21	Coffee Morning at North Herts Museum	10.30am
★	Thurs 21	Coffee Morning - The Garden Deli	10.30am
■	Tues 26	Grenville Social Afternoon	1.30pm
●	Tues 26	Bedford Social Branch - The Choir Man at MK Theatre	7.30pm
◆	Wed 27	Albert Branch Coffee Morning	10.30am
●	Thurs 28	Bedford Social Evening - Guest Speaker	7.30pm
★	Sat 30	Victoria Social Branch - Dinner at The Priory	7pm

June

■	Tues 2	Bring, Buy and Swap Jigsaw Fundraiser and Drop in Coffee Morning	10am
●	Wed 3	Bedford Social Branch - Harold-Odell Country Park	10.30am
◆	Thurs 4	Coffee Morning at Poplars Garden Centre	10.30am
★	Mon 8	Victoria Social Branch Evening - Guest Speaker	7.30pm
◆	Tues 9	Jigsaw and Coffee Morning	10.30am
●	Wed 10	Coffee Morning at Wixams Retirement Village	10.30am
◆	Mon 15	Albert Branch Social Evening Guest Speaker from Silvertime Legal	7.30pm
	Tues 16	District Meeting	7.30pm
■	Wed 17	Buckingham Nurseries and Garden Centre	11am
●	Wed 17	Bedford Social Branch - Lunch with Victoria Social Branch	12.30pm
★	Wed 17	Victoria Social Branch - Lunch with Bedford Social Branch	12.30pm
★	Thurs 18	Coffee Morning - The Garden Deli	10.30am
●	Sun 21	Bedford Social Branch - Visit to Herring Green Activity Farm and Birds of Prey Centre	10.30am
◆	Wed 24	Albert Branch Coffee Morning	10.30am
●	Thurs 25	Bedford Social Evening - Guest Speaker	7.30pm
★	Fri 26	Victoria Social Branch - Dinner at The Lilacs	6.30pm
■	Tues 30	Grenville Social Afternoon	1.30pm

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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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