

January - August 2026
Issue 18



Othe SINCE 1810
DDfellows
making friends, helping people

out & *about*

Mid-Staffs District Branch

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



British Ironwork Centre, Oswestry



Travel and Trips



Talks



Walks



Social



Food with Friends



Coffee Morning



Games



We do hope you enjoy this edition of our newsletter

Welcome to issue 18 of our combined Events & Diary Newsletter.

Once again, we are saying a HUGE thank you for your continuing support of our social events and fundraising towards our Chairman's two chosen charities, the Midlands Air Ambulance and Macmillan Cancer Support. It really is very much appreciated.

What a Friendship Month we had in September 2025! The weekly coffee mornings and two events in Stoke resulted in new faces coming to see what we are all about and 10 joined as members. See our double page spread!

Many of our newer members have joined us at our social events and it

is also nice to see some more non-members coming along, hopefully they will also become members soon.

In this issue, the format has slightly changed to make our upcoming events easier to follow. They are all in order in our Social Events section, exactly the same order as the 'At a glance' page at the back.

We hope you enjoy this issue of our newsletter and look forward to seeing you at our meetings and socials events. Bring a friend or neighbour along too, everyone is welcome.

If you ever have any questions or feedback, please get in touch.

We wish you good health and our best wishes for 2026.

Tina and Christine

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Office Open Days: Tuesday,
Wednesday and Thursday.

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Facebook:

The Oddfellows - Mid Staffs District

We would love to hear from you

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

“Our branch is very welcoming and friendly, you don’t have to sit at home and feel lonely”

“I have been made to feel welcome by members at Stafford and Stoke branches. Enrolled my friend so she could share in the fellowship”.

“Both Tina and Christine have been very helpful and welcoming. Thank you”

“Been to three events, have enjoyed all. Very welcoming”

“Very welcoming, good amount of interaction”

“I have been made very welcome. Lovely staff”

A bit about us...

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

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

We will be continuing our regular events of Cuppa and Chat and Stoke Dine Around. However, to make it easier for you to follow, these are now listed with all our lovely social events, all together, in date order. We hope you come along and enjoy all our events we have chosen, but don't forget **BOOKING IS ESSENTIAL** with us.

January 2026

TUES
06 **Cuppa and Chat in Trentham**

 10.30am  As per menu 

Join us for this great opportunity to enjoy a cuppa with lots of friendly, local people, in a relaxed atmosphere. All members, friends and anyone interested in knowing more about the Oddfellows are welcome. Six Arches Restaurant, Trentham Garden Centre, Stoke-on-Trent ST4 8AX. Contact Tina or Christine on 01785 258269.

TUES
20 **Cuppa and Chat at the Oddfellows Hall**

 10.30am  £1 

Join us for this great opportunity to enjoy a cuppa with lots of friendly, local people, in a relaxed atmosphere. All members, friends and anyone interested in knowing more about the Oddfellows are welcome. Oddfellows Hall, Greengate Street, Stafford ST16 2HP. Contact Tina or Christine on 01785 258269.

WED
14 **Cuppa and Chat at the Oddfellows Hall**

 10.30am  £1 

Join us for this great opportunity to enjoy a cuppa with lots of friendly, local people, in a relaxed atmosphere. All members, friends and anyone interested in knowing more about the Oddfellows are welcome. Oddfellows Hall, Greengate Street, Stafford ST16 2HP. Contact Tina or Christine on 01785 258269.



TUES
27 **Cuppa and Chat at Clayton**

 10.30am  Members £2
Guests £3 

To celebrate National Chocolate Cake Day, come and join us for this great opportunity to enjoy a cuppa and cake with lots of friendly, local people, in a relaxed atmosphere. All members, friends and anyone interested in knowing more about the Oddfellows are welcome. **Book by Wednesday 21 January.** Church Hall - St James The Great, Clayton Road, Clayton, Newcastle-under-Lyme ST5 3EU. Contact Tina or Christine on 01785 258269.

February

THURS
05

Time to Talk Day



Join us for this great opportunity to enjoy a cuppa and plenty of chat with lots of friendly, local people, in a relaxed atmosphere. This is your chance to talk about one your life achievements, hobbies or experiences with fellow friends. All members, friends and anyone interested in knowing more about the Oddfellows are welcome. Oddfellows Hall, Greengate Street, Stafford ST16 2HP. Contact Tina or Christine on 01785 258269.

WED
11

Stoke Dine Around at Bleeding Wolf



Everyone is welcome to this lunchtime get-together, whether you are a member or someone interested in finding out more about the Oddfellows. **Book by Thursday 29 January.** Bleeding Wolf, 121 Congleton Road North, Scholar Green, Stoke-on-Trent ST7 3BQ. Contact Tina or Christine on 01785 258269.



TUES
17

Pancake Delight



We know you will not be able to resist gorgeous fillings oozing off beautiful pancakes. So you must come and join us, give it a try! We will also have games to entertain you. **Book by Thursday 5 February.** Oddfellows Hall, Greengate Street, Stafford ST16 2HP. Contact Tina or Christine on 01785 258269.

THURS
26

Cuppa and Chat in Trentham



Join us for this great opportunity to enjoy a cuppa with lots of friendly, local people, in a relaxed atmosphere. All members, friends and anyone interested in knowing more about the Oddfellows are welcome. **Book by Thursday 19 February.** Six Arches Restaurant, Trentham Garden Centre, Stoke-on-Trent ST4 8AX. Contact Tina or Christine on 01785 258269.

March

WED
04

British Pie Week



1pm



Members £5
Guests £7



Come and join us for a delicious lunch of pie and mash, followed



by a game or two while your lunch goes down. **BOOKING ESSENTIAL to choose your pie:** steak or chicken and mushroom, veggie option is available on request. If you have any specific dietary requirements, please let us know and we will endeavour to accommodate.

Book by Wednesday 18 February. Oddfellows Hall, Greengate Street, Stafford ST16 2HP. Contact Tina or Christine on 01785 258269.

TUES
24

Lunch out at The Spread Eagle and Shopping at Dobbies



12.30pm



As per menu



Let's meet for lunch at the Spread Eagle Pub at Gailey. Then, if you choose to, it's just a short walk across/ or drive round to enjoy Dobbies Garden Centre. **Book by Wednesday 11 March.** Spread Eagle Pub, Watling Street, Gailey ST19 5PN. Contact Tina or Christine on 01785 258269.



April

WED
18

Annual Summoned Meeting



11am



Free



This business meeting is for members only and gives you the chance to see the business side of things and what we do behind the scenes. A complimentary lunch will be provided after the meeting too! **Book by Tuesday 10 March.** Oddfellows Hall, Greengate Street, Stafford ST16 2HP. Contact Tina or Christine on 01785 258269.

WED
01

Cuppa and Chat at Plume of Feathers



10.30am



As per menu



Join us for this great opportunity to enjoy a cuppa with lots of friendly, local people, in a relaxed atmosphere. All members, friends and anyone interested in knowing more about the Oddfellows are welcome. **Book by Thursday 19 March.** The Plume of Feathers, Station Road, Barlaston, Stoke-on-Trent ST12 9DH. Contact Tina or Christine on 01785 258269.

April

WED 08 Preloved Items Sale and Coffee Morning



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

THURS 23 St George's Fun Fun



A cuppa and chat morning with a twist, cakes instead of biscuits. Wear something red and white and



we will enjoy some games together, whilst raising funds for our charities.

Book by Thursday 9 April. Oddfellows Hall, Greengate Street, Stafford ST16 2HP. Contact Tina or Christine on 01785 258269.

WED 29 Coach Trip to the British Ironworks Centre Oswestry



Join us on our coach trip to visit this centre, where you will uncover decorative metal work and incredible art from around the world. There are 70 acres with over 1,000 different sculptures to explore, a nature reserve, sculpture parks and then you can head over to the café where you will find plenty of tempting treats and an artisan village for lots of shopping too.



The grounds are accessible for all ages and abilities, there is predominantly smooth crushed stone paths. The coach will be picking up and leaving Stafford at 9.15am and then picking up at Trentham, leaving there at 9.45am to drive to Oswestry. Pick-up points to be advised on booking. We will be returning from the British Ironworks at 2.15pm/2.30pm. **Book by Tuesday 7 April.** British Ironworks Centre Oswestry, Oswestry, Shropshire SY11 4JH. Contact Tina or Christine on 01785 258269.

May

TUES
05

Stoke Dine Around at Hammersley Restaurant



Enjoy a beautiful two course lunch in the Hammersley Restaurant, Cauldon Campus of Stoke-on-Trent College, with fellow members and friends.

Booking essential, with menu choices from the following. **Book by Thursday 9 April.** The Hammersley Restaurant, Lifestyle Building, College Road, Stoke-on-Trent ST4 2DG. Contact Tina or Christine on 01785 258269.

Main Course:

Asparagus, pea and roasted shallot risotto, parmesan tuille
or

Grilled chalk stream trout, black pudding, watercress and potato broth
or

Ham hock croquette, parsley linguini, broad bean puree

Dessert:

Steamed syrup sponge and custard
or *creme caramel*

TUES
12

Cuppa and Chat at the Oddfellows Hall



Join us for this great opportunity to enjoy a cuppa with lots of friendly, local people, in a relaxed atmosphere. All members, friends and anyone interested in knowing more about the Oddfellows are welcome. Oddfellows Hall, Greengate Street, Stafford ST16 2HP. Contact Tina or Christine on 01785 258269.

June

WED
03

Cuppa and Chat at the Oddfellows Hall



Join us for this great opportunity to enjoy a cuppa with lots of friendly, local people, in a relaxed atmosphere. All members, friends and anyone interested in knowing more about the Oddfellows are welcome. Oddfellows Hall, Greengate Street, Stafford ST16 2HP. Contact Tina or Christine on 01785 258269.

WED
10

Cuppa and Chat at Jacksons Nurseries



Join us for this great opportunity to enjoy a cuppa with lots of friendly, local people, in a relaxed atmosphere. All members, friends and anyone interested in knowing more about the Oddfellows are welcome. **Book by Thursday 28 May.** Jacksons Nurseries, Thorney Edge Road, Bagnall, Stoke-on-Trent ST9 9LE. Contact Tina or Christine on 01785 258269.



June

TUES

23

Fish and Chips Lunch



12.30pm



Members £10, Guests £13



Come for a scrumptious crispy battered fish and delicious chips sourced from our local chippy. During the afternoon, we will have a few games to entertain you. **Booking essential by Thursday 4 June.** Oddfellows Hall, Greengate Street, Stafford ST16 2HP. Contact Tina or Christine on 01785 258269.



July

THURS

02

Walking Group at Wolseley



10am



As per menu



Meet on the overflow car park at The Wolseley Bridge Garden Centre for a two-mile walk along the edge of Cannock Chase. Followed by a café stop for refreshments around 11.30am in the garden centre. **Book by Thursday 18 June.** Wolseley Bridge Garden Centre, A513, Rugeley ST17 0YA. Contact Tina or Christine on 01785 258269.



WED

15

Stoke Buffet and Bingo



12 noon



£10



Pre-booking and payment in advance is essential. Join us for some fun with games of bingo and a lovely buffet



at 1pm, just £10 per person. Everyone is welcome to this lunchtime get-together, whether you are a member or someone interested in finding out more about the Oddfellows. **Book by Thursday 25 June.** Cotton Mill, Liverpool Road, Newcastle-under-Lyme ST5 2AF. Contact Tina or Christine on 01785 258269.

July

WED 22 Cuppa and Chat at the Oddfellows Hall

🕒 10.30am

£ £1



Join us for this great opportunity to enjoy a cuppa with lots of friendly, local people, in a relaxed atmosphere. All members, friends and anyone interested in knowing more about the Oddfellows are welcome. Oddfellows Hall, Greengate Street, Stafford ST16 2HP. Contact Tina or Christine on 01785 258269.

TUES 28 Cuppa and Chat at Clayton

🕒 10.30am

£ Members £2
Guests £3



Come and join us for this great opportunity to enjoy a cuppa with lots of friendly, local people, in a relaxed atmosphere. All members, friends and anyone interested in knowing more about the Oddfellows are welcome. **Book by Wednesday 22 July.** Church Hall - St James The Great, Clayton Road, Clayton, Newcastle-under-Lyme ST5 3EU. Contact Tina or Christine on 01785 258269.



August

WED 05 Preloved Items Sale and Coffee Morning

🕒 10am

£ Free



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



Bookings and Cancellations

Please remember the importance of early bookings for all events to avoid disappointment or cancellation due to lack of support. Bookings can also be taken by email, see contact section on page 3.

Save the Date and Book

We require your attention, please read below and let us know

Sunday 29 November

We will be holding a three-course Christmas Luncheon at the Oddfellows Hall at 1pm. Menu to follow but we do need numbers in advance, it will be on a first-come first-served basis, Please don't miss out, book your place now.



Keep Checking

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

Do we have your email address? Or are you following us on Facebook? Do you know how to check our events on the website?

Make sure we can get important information to you. Check in with us about your email address, how to find us on Facebook: **The Oddfellows-Mid Staffs District** or use this link to see the list of all our events:
www.oddfellows.co.uk/branches/mid-staffordshire-district-branch.

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

Our Half Year Round Up

Pre-Loved Sale and Coffee Morning - Thursday 7 August

What an amazing turnout of members, helping and supporting us raise a whopping £242.80 between our two charities: Midland Air Ambulance and MacMillan Cancer Support. Thank you so much!

Canal Trip with Fish and Chip Lunch – Thursday 16 October

A great afternoon on board the Judith Mary from Georgies Canal Cruises, Penkridge, with a delicious fish and chips lunch. Lunch was followed by a reverse raffle, so the first drawn out received a tea bag and the last drawn ticket won £10, congrats to Ron. £42 raised for our chairman's charities. The canal trip was described by one member as 'the best one ever'.



Cuppa and Chats at Trentham and at Oddfellows Hall – October

Six Arches Restaurant at Trentham Gardens was our venue for one of our coffee mornings. 14 members and two new faces joined us. Tina gave a talk on safeguarding and scams following a training course. We all need to be reminded not to be taken in. More details are available, get in touch if you would like any further information.



Some of our members started making our handmade Christmas decorations, ready for the Christmas tree festival at St Mary's Church. Then, wow, what a turn out the week after at the Oddfellows Hall, with 31 members and 6 new faces attending and they also made their Christmas decorations. The decorations are themed with our Oddfellows brand colours and saying what Oddfellows means to them.

September – Friendship Month

We went, they came, we talked, we laughed, we enjoyed, we made friends and we all had a great time

What a wonderful few weeks

Event 1 – Our first Friendship Month event had 19 of us enjoy our cuppa and chat at Trentham.

Event 2 – Even on a day of awful weather, 17 of our lovely members made 8 new faces very welcome over a cuppa and biscuits at the Oddfellows Hall.

Event 3 – Another great turnout at our Friendship Month Fancy a Brew! New faces attending again, three became members and booked onto future events. We also enjoyed a talk from our Chair, Anne-Marie, about the history of the Oddfellows.

Event 4 – Fancy a Brew? Come and see us too, saw 28 attend, what a great turnout. We also enjoyed a talk about family history from one of our committee members, Steve. Many were interested in getting started on theirs now.

Event 5 – Our final Fancy a Brew in September. We had fun taking photos with the ‘Make friends with Oddfellows’ cut out portrait posters and two new members joined on the day. Lovely laminated name badges were created by one of our members, she is just peeking out behind the poster in one of the photos. A lovely chatty morning.

Event 6 – What a great end to Friendship month. Our final event of buffet and bingo was enjoyed by all. With a raffle too, raising £44 for our two charities.



The National Arboretum at Alrewas – Wednesday 5 November



Blown away by our day out at the National Memorial Arboretum. We enjoyed a breakfast bap and drink before boarding the 50-minute land train trip around the arboretum. The train stopped on many occasions for us to hear the full story of different memorials and to take photos. It was very emotional and was a perfect time for us to visit and pay our respects.

Give us a Hand Days – Wednesday 12 and Thursday 13 November

A huge thank you to the many members that came along to give us a hand with getting ready for our Christmas Fair and also to those that were so kind with donations of gifts, it is very much appreciated.

Christmas Fair at the Oddfellows Hall – Saturday 15 November

Thanks to our members volunteering and attending our Christmas Fair. It was well attended, much fun was had and we raised £678.54 for our two charities, Midlands Air Ambulance and MacMillan Cancer Support.





Stoke Dine Around at Harvester Poachers Cottage – Thursday 20 November

It was lovely to see 33 members enjoy a lunch at the Poachers Cottage. Janet and Tina were busy making sure everyone got their meals. We met some new faces too and an update was given on upcoming events for 2026.

Beetle Drive at the Oddfellows Hall – Tuesday 25 November

An afternoon of great fun at our Beetle Drive. Noisy dice, moving chairs, bell ringing and “beetle” shouting with plenty of drinks and homemade cakes.



Christmas Lunch – Wednesday 3 December

This year we supported local students at the Riverbank Restaurant, Stafford College for our three-course Christmas Lunch. We used the full capacity of 50 people at the restaurant, what a super turnout. We enjoyed getting dressed up to eat delicious food in wonderful company. And yes, we held the obligatory raffle and raised £105. A great Christmassy start to December.



Our final Cuppa and Chat for 2025 –

Thursday 11 December

For Christmas Jumper Day, 35 of us had fun and games: bowling, cornhole, wind up races and a Christmas quiz. Festive sweet treats were devoured too!



Puzzle Corner (Answers on the page 23)

1. What is the chemical element with the symbol Fe?
2. In which city is the Louvre Museum located?
3. What is the name for the plastic or metal tube found on the ends of shoelaces?
4. What is the capital city of Australia?
5. Which planet in our solar system rotates clockwise on its axis?
6. What is the name of the fourth book in the Harry Potter series?
7. Who wrote the novel 1984?
8. What is the human body's heaviest organ?
9. Which ancient civilization is known for its pyramids, pharaohs, and mummies?
10. In Star Wars, who is Luke Skywalker's father?

District News

On Tuesday 16 September we held our Half Yearly Summoned meeting, where we discussed the business of Mid Staffs District Branch. Our next Annual Summoned meeting will be held on Wednesday 18 March 2026 at 11am. This is open to all our members and a light lunch afterwards is provided, Please see details on page 23.

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

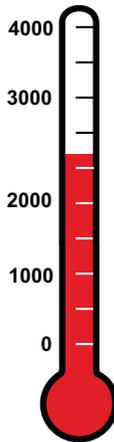
We would like to congratulate and thank all our members who have supported our events and fundraising efforts so far for the Provincial Grand Master's (Chairman) chosen charities.

We are pleased to announce that as of Wednesday 26 November, we have raised:

Midlands Air Ambulance -
£1,596.26

Macmillan Cancer Support -
£858.63

Total as at Wednesday 26 November
2025 - £2,454.89.



Remembrance Sunday



On Remembrance Sunday, our Young Oddfellow, Archie, in his blue Beavers uniform, was chosen to be the wreath layer on behalf of the Scout Movement at Trentham Mausoleum.

What an honour for carrying out this duty Archie, well done from us all.

On Remembrance Day we held a two-minute silence in the office in respect of all those we have lost.

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 [f oddfellowsUK](#)

Oddfellows Members: Do you need help?



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

Local Care and Welfare Support

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

Oddfellows Citizens Advice Line

Call 0800 0149 821*

(free to callers from any landline or mobile number)

Monday - Friday, 9.30am - 4.30pm

Email: oddfellows@citizensadvicemanchester.org.uk



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

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

Care and Welfare Helpline

Call 0800 0149 822

(free to callers from any landline or mobile number)

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

Email: care@oddfellows.co.uk

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

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

Friendship: the constant that carries us forward A message from our CEO, Jane Nelson

Another year has passed by so quickly at the Oddfellows, and it reminds me how fast life moves. However, in a hurried world, friendships really do slow the pace and bring us back to what truly matters.

Life for each and every one of us feels richer in good company. Even between get-togethers, friendships keep us hopeful. They anchor us through life's ebb and flow – deepening our joy in good times and supporting us in challenging ones. True friends celebrate our successes, steady us when we falter, and offer a sense of belonging.

Life may change, but lasting friendship remains a constant that grounds us, making everything a little brighter. And whether near or far, genuine connections help us navigate life with resilience, laughter, and warmth.

Remember every friendship begins with a simple moment of connection, and we all have the power to create new ones or welcome others into our community who seek companionship. Please always stay open to new friendships in 2026 and nurture the ones you treasure.

If you're a member and see a new face at one of our social events, offer that warm welcome we're known for. A friendly chat, a check-in, or an introduction can ease first-visit nerves and help turn a new space into a familiar one. These small acts show that we want people with us for the long run.

Throughout 2026, let's hold on to what gives our Society its strength – the belief that shared friendship creates a place where people feel supported, valued, and at home.

Friendship is the bedrock of our Society. So together, let's continue building a welcoming community where every friendship can begin.

This will be my last turn of year message to you all as of course I retire in May. I want to thank each and every one of you for your support and friendship over the years and I wish you, your friends and your families a very happy and healthy 2026.

Yours in friendship,

Jane Nelson, CEO, the Oddfellows

A warm welcome to Simon, our CEO Designate

In October 2025, the Society appointed Simon Gallimore as Chief Executive Officer Designate. He's currently working alongside Jane Nelson, our CEO, ahead of assuming full responsibilities in May 2026. Read more at: www.oddfellows.co.uk/news/welcoming-our-new-ceo-designate



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 Guaranteed Investment Bonds and 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.

Find out more

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

Annual Summomed Meeting (AGM) of Mid Staffs District Lodge (10037) will be held at Oddfellows Hall, Greengate Street, Stafford ST16 2HP on Wednesday 18 March 2026 commencing at 11am

AGENDA

Opening of the meeting

1. Members present/apologies for absence
2. To confirm the minutes of the last summoned meeting (16 September 2025)
3. Matters arising from the minutes
4. To receive the Financial statements together with the Auditors report for the year ended 31 December 2025 and to reappoint the Auditor
5. To receive the Report of the Committee of Management
6. To consider benevolent grants from the Lodge Benevolent Fund to the following:
 - HA Andrews Memorial Fund
 - Unity Orphan Gift Fund
7. To consider the remuneration of the District Secretary, reimbursement of expenses for the Committee of Management and other members
8. To elect a Provincial Grand Master, Provincial Deputy Grand Master and to appoint the Immediate Past Provincial Grand Master
9. To confirm the reappointment of the Trustees
10. To elect the Committee of Management
11. Report on Social/Fundraising Activities
12. To elect Deputies to the 2027 Eastbourne AMC and consider their expenses
13. Installation of District Officers

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

Puzzle Corner Answers

- | | |
|-------------|--|
| 1. Iron | 5. Venus |
| 2. Paris | 6. Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire |
| 3. Aglet | 7. George Orwell |
| 4. Canberra | 8. The skin |
| | 9. Ancient Egypt |
| | 10. Darth Vader |

At a glance

January 2026

Tues 6 Cuppa and Chat in 10.30am
Trentham

Wed 14 Cuppa and Chat at 10.30am
the Oddfellows Hall

Tues 20 Cuppa and Chat at 10.30am
the Oddfellows Hall

Tues 27 Cuppa and Chat at 10.30am
Clayton

February

Thurs 5 Time to Talk Day 1.30pm

Wed 11 Stoke Dine Around 12.30pm
at Bleeding Wolf

Tues 17 Pancake Delight 1pm

Thurs 26 Cuppa and Chat in 10.30am
Trentham

March

Wed 4 British Pie Week 1pm

Wed 18 Annual Summoned 11am
Meeting

Tues 24 Lunch out at The 12.30pm
Spread Eagle
and Shopping at
Dobbies

April

Wed 1 Cuppa and Chat at 10.30am
Plume of Feathers

Wed 8 Preloved Items 10am
Sale and Coffee
Morning

Thurs 23 St George's Fun Fun 10am

April

Wed 29 Coach Trip to the 9am
British Ironworks
Centre Oswestry

May

Tues 5 Stoke Dine Around 12 noon
at Hammersley
Restaurant

Tues 12 Cuppa and Chat at 10.30am
the Oddfellows Hall

June

Wed 3 Cuppa and Chat at 10.30am
the Oddfellows Hall

Wed 10 Cuppa and Chat at 10.30am
Jacksons Nurseries

Tues 23 Fish and Chips 12.30pm
Lunch

July

Thurs 2 Walking Group at 10am
Wolseley

Wed 15 Stoke Buffet and 12 noon
Bingo

Wed 22 Cuppa and Chat at 10.30am
the Oddfellows Hall

Tues 28 Cuppa and Chat at 10.30am
Clayton

August

Wed 5 Preloved Items 10am
Sale and Coffee
Morning
