

February - May 2026



**The** **ODDFELLOWS** SINCE 1810  
making friends, helping people

# out & about

## North Gloucestershire



*Photo from Christmas 2025*

- |   |  |  |  |
|---|--|--|--|
|  Online |  Art/Crafts |  Theatre                          |  Dining Out |
|  Walks  |  Games      |  Day Trip                         |  Meetings   |
|  Social |  Talks      |  Coffee Morning/<br>Afternoon Tea |  Quiz       |

# Welcome to the new Spring Newsletter and events diary for North Gloucestershire District in 2026. We wish you all a safe, happy and prosperous New Year.

All at North Gloucestershire District Lodge want to express our deepest regards to all members, young and old. Hopefully all of our members are safe and well, and so are their family and friends throughout the country and further afield.

Please remember, that if you, as a member have any crisis, health issues or problems that the Oddfellows can help with, do not hesitate to contact us. This could be either through our welfare contacts, or, if legal advice is required and you don't know where you stand, then there is a Oddfellows' Citizens Advice line, and we can advise you.

As the dark and gloom of the January blues subsides and new life appears all around us, spring will soon be on its way. We all very much look forward to meeting again for all our face-to-face events in 2026, as well as continue with several online event, reaching out to as many members as we can, as well as a host of new and exciting - events from meals out



*Mr Mulligans Crazy Golf - Friday 15 May, we hope you can join us!*

and crafting events to suit all members. If you have never joined online or attended a face to face event and feel nervous to do so, please do not! And be assured the warmest of welcomes awaits you, and you can reach out to any of our Social Events Co-ordinators for advice, reassurance and any information you need!

## Contact Details

**Branch Secretary:** Stuart Walker

**Address:** 10 The Gresleys,  
Ross-on-Wye,  
Herefordshire HR9 5JN

**Telephone:** 01452 905010 option: 6

**Email:**  
stuart.walker@oddfellows.co.uk

**Social Event Organiser:**  
Dani Brown  
danielle.brown@oddfellows.co.uk

**Social Event Organiser:**  
Louise Quemby

**Telephone:** 01452 905010 option: 1

**Email:**  
louise.quemby@oddfellows.co.uk.

**Welfare Visitor:** Garth Morgan

**Telephone:** 01452 905010 option: 3

# Regular Events

## Free Bi-Weekly Relaxation with Nicky

Monday Bi-Weekly



**9 February**  
**23 February**  
**9 March**

**23 March**  
**13 April**  
**27 April**

**18 May**

Why not join us and Nicky from Yeleni Therapy and Support for a free relaxation and meditation session. Help yourself to unwind and de-stress from the comfort of your own home using mindful breathing techniques and visualisation to achieve a feeling of peace and relaxation in mind, body and spirit. To access the event please go to [www.zoom.us](http://www.zoom.us) and click on 'Join a Meeting' in the top right, enter the following: Zoom Meeting ID: 858 3806 2233, then click 'Join' to enter. If you have any problems or questions, please contact Alex on 01452 905010. We look forward to seeing you.

## Bi-Weekly Seated Yoga with Mike

Monday Bi-Weekly



**2 February**  
**16 February**  
**2 March**

**16 March**  
**30 March**  
**20 April**

**11 May**

Join Mike from Yoga Skies to practise seated chair yoga. Even if you have limited mobility, this yoga will suit, as there will be no getting up and down off the floor! Help yourself to unwind and de-stress from the comfort of your own home using easy talked through yoga. Achieve a state of relaxation and wellbeing brought about by posture and stretching. To access the event please go to [www.zoom.us](http://www.zoom.us) and click on 'Join a Meeting' in the top right, enter the following: Zoom Meeting ID: 858 3806 2233, then click 'Join' to enter. If you have any problems or questions, please contact Alex 01452 905010. We look forward to seeing you.

# Regular Events

## Monthly Carvery at Toby (Purple Pub Club)

First Wednesday of the month



7pm



As per menu



**4 February**

**4 March**

**1 April**

**6 May**

Come and join us as we indulge into a lovely carvery at Toby's in Gloucester, with dishes from as little as £4.29 and a full roast at only £11.49! Come along for some friendly conversation and great grub. The Toby Carvery, Over Farm Market, Highnam, Gloucester GL2 8DE. If you'd like to join us call Alex on 01452 905010 or email alex.walker@oddfellows.co.uk and he'll meet you there.



## Shhh! Secret Cinema Second Monday of the month



6.30pm



Tickets at cost  
from Cineworld



**9 February, 9 March and 11 May**

It's back! Our popular Secret Cinema event returns. If you fancy catching one of the latest blockbusters while it's on the big screen then join us on our monthly visit to Cineworld.

Each month we will see what is on and in advance choose a movie for us all to enjoy along with popcorn if you fancy too! Cineworld Gloucester, Quays Outlet Centre, Merchants Road, Gloucester GL1 5SH. To book on please contact Alex on 01452 905010 at least two days before the event to let him know you're coming and he can tell you what time to meet as the times are set by Cineworld for the start of different movies. We look forward to welcoming you.



Further events are being added, see: [www.oddfellows.co.uk/events](http://www.oddfellows.co.uk/events).

# Regular Events

## Coffee and Connect Drop-In Session

Second Tuesday of the month



**10 February 10 March 14 April 12 May**

Join us at Whispering Willows in Cheltenham for a relaxed 'Coffee and Connect' drop-in session with the Oddfellows. This is a great opportunity to enjoy a coffee, have a friendly chat and find out more about the events we have planned. You can also get some help with digital queries, share your ideas and learn more about what the Oddfellows has to offer. Whether you stay for a short while or longer, you'll be very welcome. Free hot or cold drink for new attendees. Everyone is welcome - bring a friend! This is a free event, refreshments are available as per menu cost. Parking available on site. Public transport available via the villager community bus, or Stagecoach bus 'S3'. Whispering Willows Bistro, Willow Gardens, Russell Way, Chipping Norton OX7 5FX. Contact Dani on 07587 708263.

## Oddfellows Crafters Coffee Club

Second Tuesday of the month (except December)



**10 February**  
- Pom Pom Minis

**10 March -**  
Mother's Day  
Paper Keepsakes

**14 April**  
- Origami and  
Folded Paper

**12 May**  
- Spring Paper  
Florals

Join us for 'Crafters Coffee Club', a friendly and informal crafting session held on the second Tuesday of every month at The Rustic Bean. Each session includes a beginner-friendly, low-mess craft from our 'Paper and Thread' series, designed to finish in one sitting. Come along to make something, enjoy a cup of coffee and spend time with others in a welcoming and social space.

Open to all - bring a friend. The café is accessible via local bus services to Chipping Norton town centre, with nearby bus stops just a short walk away. A full range of drinks and refreshments will be available to purchase from The Rustic Bean's menu during the session. Materials will be provided, but participants are welcome to bring their own supplies if preferred. The Rustic Bean, 1 Market Street, Chipping Norton OX7 5DD. Contact Dani on 07587 708263.

# Regular Events

## Scrambled!

Second Thursday of the month



2pm

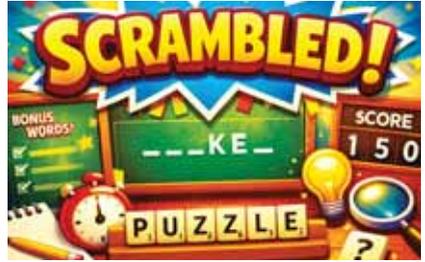


Free



12 February  
12 March

9 April  
7 May



Join us as we play Scrambled! (no eggs involved), a fun game where a jumbled up word or words are shown on screen each round and you have to decipher what the word(s) are. If you would like to take part simply go to Zoom and use Meeting ID: 883 2254 1666. The game host is Alex, if you have any questions please drop him an email at [alex.walker@oddfellows.co.uk](mailto:alex.walker@oddfellows.co.uk).

## Join the conversation @OddfellowsUK

Find us at  OddfellowsUK

## 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 Louise on 01452 905010 option: 1  
[louise.quemby@oddfellows.co.uk](mailto:louise.quemby@oddfellows.co.uk).

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[www.oddfellows.co.uk](http://www.oddfellows.co.uk)

# February 2026

## SAT 07 Baking and Bread Making

12 noon



£ Members Free, Guests £5

This afternoon we will be meeting at Parton Road Community Centre in the café for a drink, then moving through to our meeting room, for our guest baker attending, teaching us the art of bread making from scratch.



Neil who had over 15 years experience of working in bakeries, as well as qualifying and winning National Hovis competitions, will be teaching us the art of making bread by hand. With hints and tips we can learn along the way, all ingredients will be provided. Members are asked to just bring a baking sheet preferably lined with greaseproof paper and a zip lock bag that it will fit in or clingfilm and a tea towel. Making will be done on site, proving and baking will be done in members homes when they return after the event. Parton Road Community Centre the Café, Parton Road, Churchdown, Gloucestershire GL3 2JH. Contact Louise on 01452 905010.

## THURS 19 Food and Friends

12 noon

£ As per menu



Join us for 'Food and Friends' at Toro Lounge, a relaxed social lunch designed to bring people together in a friendly, informal setting. Running from 12 noon to 2pm, this agenda-free gathering is the perfect opportunity to meet new people over a shared meal.



A full menu is available, including vegetarian and vegan options, alongside a £6.95 weekday soup and toastie deal. While the event is free, please book by Tuesday 17 February to secure your place, as seating is limited. Nearby pay-and-display parking is available at The Forum, Brewery, and Old Station car parks, and local bus routes serve the town centre. Please note that attendees are responsible for their own food, drink, and parking costs. Please note that parking charges apply and attendees are responsible for paying for their own parking. Cirencester is also served by local bus routes, with stops located close to the town centre. Dates and time 12 noon to 2pm. Book by Tuesday 17 February. Toro Lounge, 34 Cricklade Street, Cirencester GL7 1JH. Contact Dani on 07587 708263.

# February 2026

**SUN**  
**22** **Sunday Dinner at  
the Clavell and Hind**

 12 noon  Two meats £17.95, Three meats £19.95 



Meeting at 12 noon for a Sunday carvery at the Clavell and Hind, this location provides the most wonderful carvery Sunday dinner in the area! This was a popular event hosted in our last diary and booked up quickly, so will be first come first serve, as there is limited places due to it being a popular location. The food is amazing, good value for money and you can fill your own plate, so there is no chance of going hungry! Members are asked to pay for their own meal on the day. Book by Sunday 8 February. Clavell and Hind, Unit 2, Elmstone Business Park, Elmstone House, Cheltenham GL51 9SY. Contact Louise on 01452 905010.

# March

**SAT**  
**07** **Patch Work with  
Margaret**

 12 noon  Members Free  
Guests £5 

Meeting in the café, we will be then going through to our meeting room to have an hour long lesson and talk in patch work, hosted by our new member Margaret. Come along and bring a friend for an informative and educational lesson in the art of patchwork and enjoy good company and refreshment too. Parton Road Community Centre the Café, Parton Road, Churchdown, Gloucestershire GL3 2JH. Contact Louise on 01452 905010.



## Keeping in touch...

Communication is important to us, we would be grateful if you could get in touch with your Branch Secretary to ensure that we have all your up to date contact details so that we can keep in touch with you. Thank you.

# March

THURS  
12

## Forever Jackson - A Live Tribute



7pm



Members £24.37  
Guests £32.50



Meeting at 7pm outside the Roses Theatre, this will be a fun evening of live music performed by one of the best Michael Jackson tributes around. Ticket cost is £32.50 for non-members and £24.37 for members. This is an event that is essential to book onto in plenty of time as tickets are selling out fast. Book by Sunday 8 February. Roses Theatre, Sun Street, Tewkesbury, Gloucestershire GL20 5NX. Contact Louise on 01452 905010.

FRI  
20

## Bourton River Walk and Tearooms



12 noon



Free



Photo by Dennis Turner

Join us for a relaxing and scenic Bourton river walk. We'll take a gentle stroll along the beautiful river Windrush, soaking in the peaceful surroundings of Bourton-on-the-Water. This leisurely walk is perfect for all fitness levels, allowing you to enjoy the natural beauty of the village at a relaxed pace. The walk will start at Rissington car park, which is a short and easy walk from the Village Green. From there, we'll follow the river path, taking in the tranquil views and ending at the bakery on the water, members get a free hot drink.

The café's full menu will also be available for anyone who wishes to purchase additional items. Parking information: Rissington car park is the meeting point for the walk and offers plenty of parking for attendees. It's short, easy walk to the starting point by the river. The car park is pay and display, so please bring change or use the parking app. We'll be easy to spot during the event as we'll be wearing the navy blue Oddfellows jacket. This is a perfect way to unwind and enjoy a sweet treat while chatting with friends or meeting new people. Whether you're a local or visiting, this event offers a lovely way to experience Bourton-on-the-Water in a relaxed setting. Everyone is welcome, so bring your friends and family for a memorable afternoon! Rissington Road Car Park, Rissington Road, Bourton-on-the-Water, Cheltenham GL54 2DT. Contact Dani on 07587 708263.

# March

## SAT 21 Defibrillator Awareness Training

🕒 10am

£ Free



Meeting at 9.50am outside the front of the Wheatpieces Community Centre, in Tewkesbury for this 1.5 hours quick course into how to access and use a defibrillator. This is a lifesaving awareness course, that many of us hope to never need, but sadly might do at some point in our lives.

As North Gloucestershire Branch have installed defibrillators through out the District, we feel it is important that we also enable members and the public to learn how to use them if needed. This is a bookable event, but everyone is welcome. This training will be delivered by Alex our inhouse defib lead, who has years of knowledge he's looking forward to delivering. Book by Saturday 14 March. Wheatpieces Community Centre, Columbine Road, Walton Cardiff, Tewkesbury GL20 7SP. Contact Louise on 01452 905010.

# April

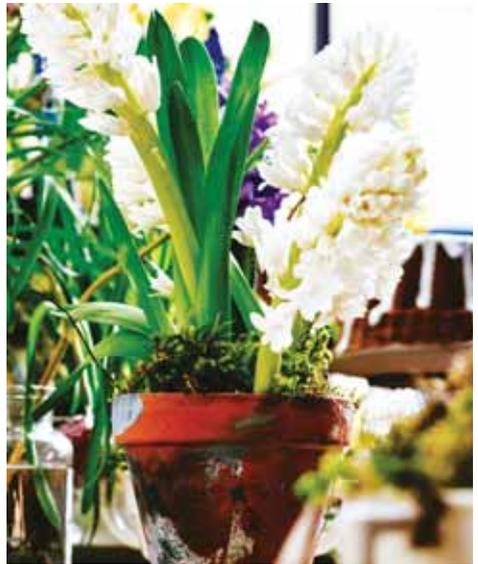
## SAT 11 Potting Mad

🕒 12 noon

Members Free  
Guests £10 (per pot)



Meeting in the café at Parton Road, this afternoon members will get the chance to pot up their own spring basket or pot (as available) with plants provided. Come along for a fun afternoon of good company, chat, get your hands dirty and create your own spring creation you can take away and enjoy into the year. Parton Road Community Centre the Café, Parton Road, Churchdown, Gloucestershire GL3 2JH. Contact Louise on 01452 905010.



Further events are being added, see:  
[www.oddfellows.co.uk/events](http://www.oddfellows.co.uk/events).

# April

FRI  
17

## Pizza and Clay



1.30pm



£14 per person  
plus parking



Join us for a relaxed lunchtime social workshop at Cattivo Pizza House, where you can enjoy great pizza and try your hand at a clay craft. This is a friendly, welcoming space to make something small, have lunch and meet others. Everyone is welcome - bring a friend! Children attending must have an adult accompanying them. Pizza is available from £14 per person. Attendees order and pay for their own food and drinks from Cattivo's menu. Craft activity: Clay - create a small hanging decoration from clay, then paint and personalize it during the session. A fun, beginner-friendly project that is perfect for a lunchtime workshop.

Cost: Free for members ordering lunch, £5 for non-members or attendees not ordering lunch. All materials provided. Booking is advisable to avoid disappointment, as space for the craft activity and seating at Cattivo Pizza House is limited. Pay and display car parks are available near Cattivo. The closest would be The Old Kennels Car Park. Parking charges apply. Local bus services Stagecoach 51 stops outside of Cirencester Park at Chesterton Lane. Please check times of service ahead of event. Book by Wednesday 15 April. Cattivo Pizza, Old Kennels Workshop, The Old Kennels, Cirencester GL7 1UR. Contact Dani on 07587 708263.

SUN  
19

## A Sunday Meal at the Beckford Inn



12.30pm



Starter £9, Main  
£25, Dessert £9



Meet at 12.30pm for sit down at 1pm, this lovely location was the very popular old English pub we had our annual Christmas meal at in December! With a wide and stunning menu, this is going to be a popular event and as it's so sought after we are limited to 10 people being able to attend.

This will be a first come first served event, so please book and do so in plenty of time to save disappointment! Members are asked to pay for their own orders on the day. Book by Sunday 15 March. The Beckford Inn, Cheltenham Road, Beckford, Tewkesbury GL20 7AN. Contact Louise on 01452 905010.

# April

SAT  
25

## Day Visit to Birdland



10am



Members £9-£12.50  
Guests £14.95



Join us for a fun-filled day at Birdland in Bourton-on-the-Water! This is the perfect opportunity to explore the incredible bird collection, enjoy engaging talks with expert keepers and experience the beauty of nature up close. Between 11am and 3pm, you'll have the chance to attend a variety of fascinating bird talks, including those about penguins, flamingos, parrots, pelicans and more. Learn about the unique behaviours, habitats and conservation efforts surrounding these amazing creatures.

Entry costs: Children (ages 3-15) £9. Adults: £12.50. There is also an optional meal deal available at just £6 per person. This includes a warm soup and roll, available in the café on the day, alongside its full menu. Be sure to book your spot as soon as possible to secure your place. Whether you're a bird enthusiast or just looking for a fun day out with family or friends, everyone is welcome! Bring your friends and family along and make it a memorable outing. This event is suitable for all ages and with the fantastic talks and optional meal, you'll leave with new knowledge and lasting memories. Book by Thursday 23 April. Birdland Park & Gardens, Rissington Road, Bourton-on-the-Water, Cheltenham GL54 2AY. Contact Dani on 07587 708263.

THURS  
30

## Food and Friends



12 noon



As per menu



Experience a relaxed lunchtime social at the "Food and Friends" meet-up, hosted at Toro Lounge. Enjoy a relaxed lunchtime social at the Food and Friends meet-up at Toro Lounge. This informal gathering brings people together over good food and conversation, with no set agenda. Attendees may choose from a full lunch menu, including vegetarian and vegan options. A weekday deal offers soup and a half grilled cheese toastie for £6.95, though other offers may apply. The event runs 12 noon to 2pm. Booking by Tuesday 17 February is recommended. Public parking and local bus routes serve Cirencester, attendees cover food costs. Toro Lounge, 34 Cricklade Street, Cirencester GL7 1JH. Contact Dani on 07587 708263.

SAT  
09

## Terrarium Workshop



12 noon



Members Free, Guests £7.50

One hot or cold drink included for free for members



Join us at the Community Hall on Parton Road, Gloucester, for a fun and creative terrarium workshop! Meeting in the Cafe for a hot or cold drink then going through to create your very own miniature garden in a glass jar using succulents, moss, pebbles, and decorative touches. No experience is needed – everything is provided, and you'll take your mini terrarium home with you to enjoy.



This is a great chance to get hands-on, chat with fellow members, and make something beautiful. Tea and coffee will be available from the cafe. Beginner-friendly. Everyone is welcome – bring a friend! What's included: All materials (plants, moss, soil, decorative bits, jar) Spaces are limited, so book early to secure your pot! free for members. Parton Road Community Centre the Café, Parton Road, Churchdown, Gloucestershire GL3 2JH. Contact Louise on 01452 905010.

FRI  
15

## Mr Mulligans Crazy Golf



6.30pm



Starter £9, Main £25, Dessert £9



Meeting outside Mr Mulligans Crazy Golf in the Brewery Quarter, Cheltenham, why not come along for a couple of rounds of crazy golf. We won't be taking ourselves too seriously in this alternative golf environment and we will be enjoying one or two rounds of this fun, fast pasted game in a warm inside environment. Booking is essential by Sunday 19 April. Mr Mulligans Crazy Golf, Unit 5A, The Brewery Quarter, Henrietta Street, Cheltenham GL50 4EF. Contact Louise on 01452 905010.



# May

FRI  
22

## Pizza and Découpage



1.30pm



£14 per person  
plus parking



Join us for a relaxed lunchtime social workshop at Cattivo Pizza House, where you can enjoy great pizza and try your hand at a clay craft. This is a friendly, welcoming space to make something small, have lunch and meet others. Everyone is welcome - bring a friend! Children attending must have an adult accompanying them. Pizza is available from £14 per person. Attendees order and pay for their own food and drinks from Cattivo's menu. Craft activity: Tie-Dye and découpage. Choose your tie-dye back piece before découpage, a beautiful spring print and decorate items with cheerful floral or spring-themed designs.



Cost: Free for members ordering lunch, £5 for non-members or attendees not ordering lunch. All materials provided. Booking is advisable to avoid disappointment, as space for the craft activity and seating at Cattivo Pizza House is limited. Pay and display car parks are available near Cattivo. The closest would be The Old Kennels Car Park. Parking charges apply. Local bus services Stagecoach 51 stops outside of Cirencester Park at Chesterton Lane. Please check times of service ahead of event. Book by Tuesday 19 May. Cattivo Pizza, Old Kennels Workshop, The Old Kennels, Cirencester GL7 1UR. Contact Dani on 07587 708263.

### 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 supporting our members through a range of benefits and services. The Society is run by our members for the members. For more information visit [www.oddfellows.co.uk](http://www.oddfellows.co.uk) or call **0800 028 1810** to speak to one of our team.

# A Quick Hello from Dani our newest Social Events Co-ordinator

As the Social Organiser for the Oddfellows in the Cotswolds, it's been a joy to plan events that bring our members together. Over the past six months, I've been busy creating opportunities for friendship, fun, and shared experiences across the area.



One of my favourite projects has been the Crafters Coffee Club, held on the second Tuesday of each month at the Rustic Bean in Chipping Norton. It's a relaxed space where members meet for coffee, creativity, and conversation, and it's been wonderful to see it so warmly received by the community. In September, our afternoon tea event brought everyone together over scones and cakes for Friendship Month, with plenty of laughter and friendly chatter. We've also enjoyed day trips out as a group, including a refreshing visit to Batsford Arboretum, and we're looking forward to our next adventure at Birdland Park & Gardens in April.

Looking ahead to the new year, there are plenty more opportunities to get involved. From social meet-ups and coffee mornings to outings and seasonal celebrations, there's something for everyone. Being part of the Oddfellows means friendship, support, and shared experiences—and there's always room for more to join the fun.

## Meetings

Committee of Management meetings are held every month. Why not come along and meet new friends, whilst finding out about your own Branch and how it runs! If you are interested in getting more involved, please give us a call to find out how.

## Payment for events

You can always pay for forthcoming events at the meeting the month before the event itself, if you are not going to be able to attend the preceding event. Please contact Louise on **01452 905010** to discuss payment methods.

# Last year in North Gloucestershire

**What a wonderful build up to Christmas we had here in North Gloucestershire District. We lots of wonderful and festive themed events, including meals out, Christmas Markets and even and Adult only Pantomime at the Roses in Tewkesbury, there was something for everyone.**



We continue to have amazing support and attendance by all the members from far and wide across the country with our weekly Zoom events, as well as being able to reach our to a lot more of our rural members throughout the counties, with the wonderful work being done by our newest member to the Social organiser team Dani.



We will endeavour to continue to reach as many of our members as possible through out 2026 with our extensive list of Social Events tryig to fine and host a wide range of activities to suit all! Welcome to North Gloucestershire District Social Events hosted by Louise, Alex and Dani.





## Macaroni and cheese with a twist

**This recipe has been passed onto us by a member (whose family who have all been Oddfellows members) And have followed for over 4 generations. Its quick, cost effective, keeps and freezes well and goes a long way. You can also make your own variations by adding your own ingredients.**

### Ingredients

- 1 large bag of macaroni pasta
- 1 large white onion
- 2 cloves of garlic
- 2-3 cans of Campbells condensed tomato soup
- 1 medium block of strong cheddar
- 1 bag of grated mozzarella cheese
- Breadcrumbs such as panko or normal if desired for top

Parboil our macaroni until still firm. Sieve, but if there is still water in the pan after draining, do not worry too

much; usually, about an inch in the bottom will still be OK. In another pan, place your onion and garlic with a little oil and butter and gently heat until translucent; don't fry, but soften. Then add all three cans of soup, filling the cans about halfway with water after emptying soup into the pan to wash out any remaining soup in the tin.

Then add most of both of your cheeses, saving back a good handful of both. When the cheese has melted into your soup/onion sauce, tip in the pasta. I find if I cook my pasta in a large ovenproof heavy pan, then I can save washing up by adding the sauce to the pasta at this point rather than the other way around, and any of the leftover pasta boiling water can be mixed well into the sauce and pasta.

Add the remaining cheese and breadcrumbs to the top and place in the oven for about 20 mins until crispy and bubbling.

# 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 Garth on **01989 565664** or email our Secretary Stuart on **stuart.walker@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](mailto: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](mailto: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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://www.unitymutual.co.uk) or call us for a chat on 0161 214 4650.

# At a glance

## February 2026

|                 |   |         |
|-----------------|---|---------|
| <b>Mon 2</b>    | Bi-Weekly Seated Yoga with Mike           | 7pm     |
| <b>Wed 4</b>    | Monthly Carvery at Toby (Purple Pub Club) | 7pm     |
| <b>Sat 7</b>    | Baking and Bread Making                   | 12 noon |
| <b>Mon 9</b>    | Shhh! Secret Cinema                       | 6.30pm  |
| <b>Mon 9</b>    | Bi-Weekly Relaxation with Nicky           | 7pm     |
| <b>Tues 10</b>  | Coffee and Connect Drop-In Session        | 11am    |
| <b>Tues 10</b>  | Oddfellows Crafters Coffee Club           | 1pm     |
| <b>Thurs 12</b> | Scrambled!                                | 2pm     |
| <b>Mon 16</b>   | Bi-Weekly Seated Yoga with Mike           | 7pm     |
| <b>Thurs 19</b> | Food and Friends                          | 12 noon |
| <b>Sun 22</b>   | Sunday Dinner at the Clavell and Hind     | 12 noon |
| <b>Mon 23</b>   | Bi-Weekly Relaxation with Nicky           | 7pm     |

## March

|                 |   |         |
|-----------------|---|---------|
| <b>Mon 2</b>    | Bi-Weekly Seated Yoga with Mike           | 7pm     |
| <b>Wed 4</b>    | Monthly Carvery at Toby (Purple Pub Club) | 7pm     |
| <b>Sat 7</b>    | Patch Work with Margaret                  | 12 noon |
| <b>Mon 9</b>    | Shhh! Secret Cinema                       | 6.30pm  |
| <b>Mon 9</b>    | Bi-Weekly Relaxation with Nicky           | 7pm     |
| <b>Tues 10</b>  | Coffee and Connect Drop-In Session        | 11am    |
| <b>Tues 10</b>  | Oddfellows Crafters Coffee Club           | 1pm     |
| <b>Thurs 12</b> | Scrambled!                                | 2pm     |
| <b>Thurs 12</b> | Forever Jackson - A Live Tribute          | 7pm     |
| <b>Mon 16</b>   | Bi-Weekly Seated Yoga with Mike           | 7pm     |
| <b>Fri 20</b>   | Bourton River Walk and Tearooms           | 12 noon |
| <b>Sat 21</b>   | Defibrillator Awareness Training          | 10am    |
| <b>Mon 23</b>   | Bi-Weekly Relaxation with Nicky           | 7pm     |
| <b>Mon 30</b>   | Bi-Weekly Seated Yoga with Mike           | 7pm     |

Further events are being added, see: [www.oddfellows.co.uk/events](http://www.oddfellows.co.uk/events).

# At a glance

## April

|                 |   |         |
|-----------------|---|---------|
| <b>Wed 1</b>    | Monthly Carvery at Toby (Purple Pub Club) | 7pm     |
| <b>Thurs 9</b>  | Scrambled!                                | 2pm     |
| <b>Sat 11</b>   | Potting Mad                               | 12 noon |
| <b>Mon 13</b>   | Bi-Weekly Relaxation with Nicky           | 7pm     |
| <b>Tues 14</b>  | Coffee and Connect Drop-In Session        | 11am    |
| <b>Tues 14</b>  | Oddfellows Crafters Coffee Club           | 1pm     |
| <b>Fri 17</b>   | Pizza and Clay                            | 1.30pm  |
| <b>Sun 19</b>   | A Sunday Meal at the Beckford Inn         | 12.30pm |
| <b>Mon 20</b>   | Bi-Weekly Seated Yoga with Mike           | 7pm     |
| <b>Sat 25</b>   | Day Visit to Birdland                     | 10am    |
| <b>Mon 27</b>   | Bi-Weekly Relaxation with Nicky           | 7pm     |
| <b>Thurs 30</b> | Food and Friends                          | 12 noon |

## May

|                |   |         |
|----------------|---|---------|
| <b>Wed 6</b>   | Monthly Carvery at Toby (Purple Pub Club) | 7pm     |
| <b>Thurs 7</b> | Scrambled!                                | 2pm     |
| <b>Sat 9</b>   | Terrarium Workshop                        | 12 noon |
| <b>Mon 11</b>  | Shhh! Secret Cinema                       | 6.30pm  |
| <b>Mon 11</b>  | Bi-Weekly Seated Yoga with Mike           | 7pm     |
| <b>Tues 12</b> | Coffee and Connect Drop-In Session        | 11am    |
| <b>Tues 12</b> | Oddfellows Crafters Coffee Club           | 1pm     |
| <b>Fri 15</b>  | Mr Mulligans Crazy Golf                   | 6.30pm  |
| <b>Mon 18</b>  | Bi-Weekly Relaxation with Nicky           | 7pm     |
| <b>Fri 22</b>  | Pizza and Découpage                       | 1.30pm  |

## Cheques and payments to the Branch directly

If you need to make a payment to the Oddfellows at North Gloucestershire please can we ask for cheques to be made out to North Gloucestershire District Lodge and forwarded to our Branch Secretary Stuart Walker, however if you prefer to pay electronically by debit/credit please contact Alex Walker on either **01989 601314** or via [alex.walker@oddfellows.co.uk](mailto:alex.walker@oddfellows.co.uk) for a link to be sent.