

FREE

# Village Voice

*Chris Smith - We Remember!*

ISSUE 231 | DECEMBER 2025



Community magazine for Kingswinford, Wall Heath & Wordsley





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# Village Voice

Community magazine for  
Kingswinford, Wall Heath & Wordsley

## Cover story

Christmas is, of course, almost upon us and the annual frenzy of buying presents has well and truly started – indeed, some of the “Christmas” sales actually began in October! If, however, you can put aside all the commercialism that abounds, Christmas can still remain a time of quiet reflection with the family. Many of us strive to keep the familiar Christmas customs such as decorating the Christmas tree, a roast turkey lunch and even the King’s Speech. Indeed, even those that go abroad at this time of year still often look forward to maintaining the old traditions with Christmas trees and turkey sandwiches on the beach!

Wherever you are have a very Happy Christmas and a Prosperous and Peaceful New Year.

*Gail*



## IN THIS ISSUE

**6,16,42,58** It's A Fact!

**10** Brainteasers

**18** Some Christmas Trivia.

**28** Black Country at War.

**32** Rock the Mistletoe is a newly formed band who have dedicated their time and effort free of charge to come up with a song. All in aid of children's charities.

**46-47** For our Wordsearch competition this month, our good friends at the Odeon Cinema, Merry Hill have very kindly given us 2 x family passes to give away. Will you be a winner?

**50-51** Our Charity Focus this month features the Samaritans

**68** Brainteasers Answers

**70-75** The Parish Pump: Read about what is going on in your area.



Please note that the closing date for our competition this month is **FRIDAY, 19<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 2025**. Entries received after this date will not be entered into the draw. Please ensure your name, address, telephone number and email address are included on your entry.



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Would you like some **FREE** publicity for forthcoming events or to recruit new members? Give us a call, send us an email or drop us a line here at **VILLAGE VOICE** – we would love to help. See our contact details on page 3.

## COPY DEADLINE

Please note that the copy deadline for the **JANUARY 2026** edition of **VILLAGE VOICE** is **THURSDAY, 18<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 2025**. Please book your space early to avoid disappointment.



Courtesy of **THE ROBIN** in Bilston, we have two tickets up for grabs for one lucky winner. All you have to do to be entered is to send your **NAME, ADDRESS, TELEPHONE NUMBER** and **EMAIL ADDRESS** to [villagevoice@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:villagevoice@hotmail.co.uk) or write to us at The Robin Tickets, Forge House, 50 Redhall Road, Dudley DY3 2NL. The lucky winner will be drawn on **Friday, 19<sup>th</sup> December 2025 – GOOD LUCK!**

Congratulations to **MICHELLE GARRATT** of Tipton who was the lucky winner of the two tickets on offer in the **NOVEMBER** edition.

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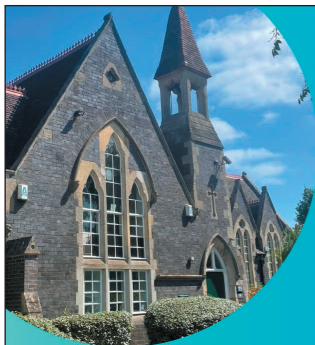
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## it's a fact!

- ★ **In 1864 George Whitehouse, a local publican, was fined £10 and ordered to pay 14s/6d compensation to the Himley Troop of the Staffordshire Yeomanry after he left their ranks and refused to return some equipment. He was warned that if he did not pay then he would be committed to prison for seven days.**
- ★ **In August 1887 the annual festival of Church Sunday Schools in the parish of St Mary's, Kingswinford was held. The children all assembled at their schools and marched to the church where a short service was held before they all formed a procession (accompanied by the Kingswinford Volunteer Band) to the grounds of the home of Henry Smith of Summerhill. Tea was provided for the 470 or so children who were later joined by almost 1000 parents and friends.**
- ★ **In November 1902 the Sporting Life noted that the All-England £5 Rabbit Coursing Sweepstakes was being held in the grounds of the Waggon and Horses Hotel in Wall Heath. It was being organised by Joe Foley, landlord of the nearby Yew Tree Hotel and it was said that some of the best dogs in the Midlands were due to compete in catching a rabbit on a 60 yard course.**
- ★ **There was a certain amount of outrage at the monthly meeting of the Kingswinford Grouped School Managers in March 1907 when a report highlighted the expenditure per head for the pupils at Wall Heath Schools. The report by the Council Education Committee showed the cost in Wall Heath was £14 per head whilst at Wordsley it was only £6/17s/6d, at Brockmoor £8/10s/10d, at Mount Pleasant £8/2s/6d and Quarry Bank £6/8s/7d. An explanation was requested as to why the Wall Heath figure was so high but no response was forthcoming.**



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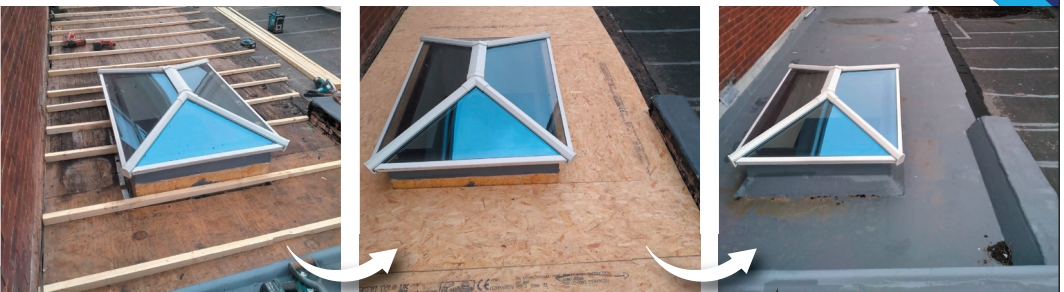
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# BRAINTEASERS

**We end 2025 with another batch of devious Brainteasers. If you by chance need the answers they can be found on page 68. Good luck!**

1. Two barrels contain the same amount of water. The water temperature in one (barrel A) is 47°F and the other (barrel B) is 29°F. Two cricket balls of the same size and weight are dropped simultaneously from the same height into each barrel. Which ball will touch the bottom of the barrel first?
2. To paint two lines dividing a motorway into three lanes costs £1000 a mile. What would it cost to paint lines to divide the road into six lanes over a distance of six miles?
3. Rearrange the letters of NEW DOOR to make one word. A clue is that the answer ends in 'd'.
4. John has three sons. The eldest is four years older than the second son who in turn is four years older than the youngest who is exactly half the age of the eldest. How old are the three sons?
5. And now for a WORDBAT! All you have to do is to identify the word or phrase.

D	D
O	O
O	O
G	G
O	O
N	N



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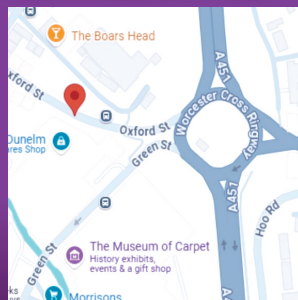
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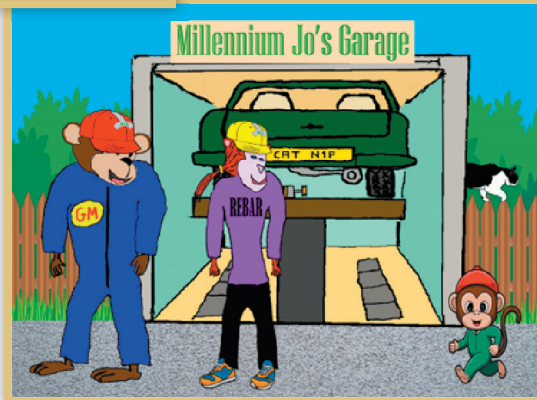
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*Businesses and friends of the Smestow Bridge Industrial Estate have all joined together to raise enough money to produce a special edition 2026 Calendar and make a donation to their friends at Wombourne's High Flyers Charity to bring a little joy and happiness every day in 2026.*

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FRIDAY 5TH DECEMBER  
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SATURDAY 6TH DECEMBER  
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SUNDAY 7TH DECEMBER  
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THURSDAY 11TH DECEMBER  
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**FRANKIE THE CONCERT**  
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WEDNESDAY 17TH DECEMBER  
**BLACK EYED SONS**

THURSDAY 18TH DECEMBER  
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FRIDAY 19TH DECEMBER  
**TALON**  
BEST OF EAGLES

SATURDAY 20TH DECEMBER  
**KICK UP THE 80'S**  
80'S PARTY NIGHT

SUNDAY 21ST DECEMBER  
**MOSTLY AUTUMN**  
PROGRESSIVE ROCK

SATURDAY 27TH DECEMBER  
**MAET LIVE**  
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SUNDAY 28TH DECEMBER  
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it's a fact!

- ★ On 19th June 1882 the independent Free Gardeners held a 'Grand Demonstration & Picnic' at Shutt End Park. The park was loaned by its owner, Gabriel Jones and on the day members of the Society's local lodges assembled at various pubs and marched to Shutt End where the crowds were entertained by amongst others—Tom Betts ("comic singer, author and motto vocalist") and Ettie Lloyd ("dashing seriocomic ballad singer from the principal music halls"). Admission was 6d for adults and 3d for children.
- ★ Heavy rain and gale-force winds in May 1971 caused wholesale disruption in and around Kingswinford. A 70 foot sycamore tree was brought crashing down, completely blocking the A449 at Summerhill. Three teams of council workmen with electric saws were despatched to cut up the tree whilst the police said that it was a miracle that no-one was injured.
- ★ Greenfield Gardens was the first public park in the town of Stourbridge and was originally opened in 1903. It had an ornamental pool, fountain and bandstand (all of which have long since gone). Initially it was known as Burnt Oak Field then Paradise Gardens before being given the name by which it is known today.
- ★ An important auction took place at the Seven Stars Inn at Wall Heath on 22nd September 1845 when land and potatoes were put for sale. The first lots on offer were a series of plots of "desirable freehold building land in a delightful situation". These were then followed by an auction of a crop of two acres of potatoes "of a superior quality and to be sold without reserve"



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# CHRISTMAS TRIVIA

**Just how much do you know about Christmas? We have gathered together some little-known facts that surprised us—and we hope will intrigue you too!**

The use of the shortened form of the word Christmas—Xmas—dates back to the 16th century. The ‘X’ comes from the Greek letter Chi which is at the start of the Greek word for Christ.

**The portrayal of Santa Clause as an old man with a white beard came from a cartoon (seen right) by Thomas Nast and featured in Harper’s Weekly in January 1881.**

Did you know that Christmas was once banned in the UK? In 1647 Parliament passed an ordinance that abolished Christmas Day and it lasted for 13 years between 1647 and 1660.

**The first person to dress up as Santa in a department store was James Edgar in 1890. He owned a store in Brocton, Mass. and decided to take the part of Santa himself.**

In Sweden it is a tradition to watch a Disney film entitled *From All Of Us To All Of You* on Christmas Eve. The film features Donald Duck.

**The most important family member should sit at the head of the table. This tradition comes from the days when families would share their meals with the servants. The head of the table was where the most important family member would sit. This tradition (strangely) has carried on and is actually still used in some British households.**

Santa’s suit was not always red—Coca Cola actually re-invented it for an ad campaign. St Nick had appeared in numerous illustrations and written descriptions previously wearing tan, green and even scarlet, but never the bright red we now all know and love!



**Yet another connection between Christmas and Coca Cola is that Santa’s friend, Sprite Boy inspired the drink ‘Sprite’. In 1942 Coca-Cola introduced “Sprite Boy” a character who appeared with Santa Clause in Coca-Cola advertising campaigns throughout the 1940s and 50s.**

Coal was given to naughty children for two reasons. Parents left coal for their naughty children because it killed two birds with one stone—it was designed to convince their child to be less naughty and could also be used for cooking food or heating homes during the cold winter months.

**During World War 1, soldiers stopped fighting at Christmas. British and German troops held a truce on Christmas Day. They stopped fighting, exchanged gifts and played games of football.**

The highest grossing Christmas movie is the Grinch. *Home Alone* was beaten by this animated hit.



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## THE STRANGE CASE OF JOHN DUNCALFE

**On 22nd June 1677 John Duncalfe was buried at St Mary's Church, Kingswinford and shortly afterwards his "fame" spread throughout the land, largely due to the publication of two pamphlets about him.**

The most popular of these was by a gentleman called James Illingworth who gave his work the descriptive (if not very succinct) title: *"A Just Narrative of Account of the Man whose Hands and Legs rotted off in the Parish of King's Swinford in Staffordshire, Where he died June 21st 1677, Carefully collected by J.A. Illingworth BD, an Eye and Ear Witness of most of the material passages in it"*.

The story of John Duncalfe is indeed fascinating. He became known as the "man whose hands rotted" and many at the time believed that his demise was directly caused by *"God's anger and justice"*. He was born in Codsall but, having been orphaned, moved to Kingswinford as an apprentice wheelwright. About 30 months into his apprenticeship, however, he was sent to prison for stealing goods from his master. On his release from Stafford gaol he fell into criminal ways again and stole a bible from the wife of Henry Babb in Wolverhampton and sold it to a servant girl at Grange Mill. He was caught but fervently denied the theft saying that *"he cursed himself wishing his hands might rot off if it were true"*. Reports say that within days his arms and legs started to wither. He was unable to walk and was taken back to Kingswinford for relief under the Poor Law. He was committed to the care of John Bennett of Wall Heath but his condition became steadily worse and on 21st June 1677 he finally died as a result of his affliction. In his last days he was visited by many churchmen who professed that the "rotting" was due to him having uttered the oath about not stealing the bible. Subsequently the tale was told in many sermons across the land.



---

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## DID YOU KNOW?

At one time in the 19th century many pubs in the area had a rat pit in their backyard. Traditionally 30 rats would be put into the pit and then a fighting dog introduced. Bets would be taken as to the length of time that the dog took to kill all 30 rats.

The first Conservative Club in Dudley was established in 1884 on Birmingham Road opposite St Edmund's Church. It was officially opened by the Rt Hon Earl Beauchamp. To celebrate the opening a banquet for 200 people was held at the Dudley Arms Hotel and by the following year the club had over 350 members who had paid a guinea entrance fee and a further annual subscription of a guinea. Within five years the membership reached almost 750.

The Round Oak Steelworks opened in 1857 and closed in 1982. At its peak in the 1950s it was producing up to 500,000 tons of steel a year.

'The Dudley Herald' newspaper was established in 1866 and 'The Dudley Chronicle' started publishing in 1885. Both, however, were predated by Brierley Hill's first newspaper—'The Advertiser' which was started by George Ford in 1853. It ceased publication in 1967.

In 1987 the Richardson twins, Don and Roy, announced that they were planning a £500 million leisure complex at Merry Hill. It was to include a sports village with a 20,000 sq ft sports hall, five indoor tennis courts, eight squash courts, an indoor wet ski arena and a health and fitness centre. There was also to be a floating galleon restaurant, an 'Atlantis Water World' fun water park including wave and beach pools, saunas, jacuzzis and spas.

It is almost 48 years since the death of Carl Bridgewater at Yew Tree Farm at Prestwood.



**KTI AIR**



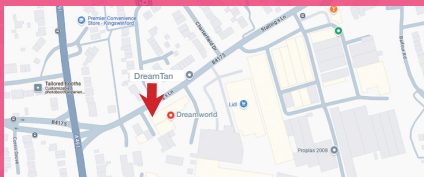
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## FOR REINDEER READ GOAT!



**If anyone tells you that they have seen Santa's sleigh being pulled by a team of reindeer don't believe them! In fact since ancient times it has been pulled by two goats!**

The suggestion that the sleigh is powered by eight reindeer called Dasher, Dancer, Prancer, Vixen, Comet, Cupid, Donner and Blitzen comes from an American poem entitled "*A Visit From St. Nicholas*" by Clement Moore and published in 1823. Before this it was generally accepted that the sleigh was pulled by two magical goats called Gnasher and Cracker. This comes from ancient Norse mythology in which it is said that Thor, the God of Thunder was pulled on his chariot by two goats. Through this tale goats became revered and it was said that if you were to put a goat on its head on New Year's Eve you would have good luck for the next year. The Moore poem, however, introduced the idea that it was reindeer that pulled Santa's sleigh and in America at least, this became the widely accepted story. The reindeer were described as "tiny" and not at all like the traditional Caribou-type animals depicted in most films since including the very popular 1994 version of "*Miracle on 34th Street*". In New Brunswick, Canada there is a range of peaks known since 1964 as the "*Christmas Mountains*". There are a total of 10 separate peaks in the range—eight of which are named after the reindeer in Moore's poem. The other two are North Pole Mountain and Mount St. Nicholas.





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## BLACK COUNTRY AT WAR

### 1914-1918

Despite the fact that in the autumn of 1914 troops were told that *“it will all be over by Christmas”* they had to ensure four festive seasons before peace was declared.

The Christmas of 1914 was particularly remembered for the unofficial truces that the British and German forces observed along parts of the Front Line:

*“On Christmas Day the Germans stuck up a white light and shouted that if we refrained from firing they would do the same. We did so and people started showing themselves over the trenches and waving to each other. Shortly two Germans advanced unarmed towards our trenches and our men did the same. They met half way and shook hands, exchanged cigars and cigarettes and souvenirs and soon there was quite a big crowd between the trenches...Both sides then buried the dead whom they had been unable to get at before, after which the Germans were ordered back to their trenches.”*

(Rifleman Jack Chappell, 1/5th London)

Many soldiers of both sides took photographs of these unusual meetings and a number of units even arranged a second truce on New Year's Day so that prints could be exchanged.

All this activity was firmly discouraged by the senior ranks and in early December 1915 orders were issued to every battalion on the Front Line that no fraternisation with the enemy would be allowed and that any soldier



*British and German troops met in No Man's Land between the two Front Lines on Christmas Day.*

found doing so would be severely punished. In fact there was little appetite amongst most troops for a repeat of the Christmas Day truce of the previous year. Reports of zeppelins killing civilians back home, the sinking of the Lusitania and the use of poison gas in France had all contrived to raise the level of hostile feelings towards the German troops.

For the troops serving in France and Belgium at Christmas in 1917 life proved particularly tough. It began snowing just before Christmas and all over the festive season the ground was frozen solid, making the digging of trenches virtually impossible. Much worse was to come, however, as the snow melted so the trenches flooded and in some cases had to be abandoned, often with the loss of all the soldiers' belongings and kit. Elsewhere in the world Christmas for the troops was equally hard. In East Africa December 1916 saw almost 25,000 British troops were suffering from malaria whilst in Gallipoli Christmas 1916 saw the Allied troops preparing to retreat.



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**ROCK THE MISTLETOE** is a band of around 20 local artists who have got together to record a song entitled “*Christmas Time (Bells Chime)*”. The idea was the brainchild of Steve Taylor of Black Country Carpets in Stourbridge who got together with Alan Bell from Stage Studios in Halesowen, Ade Hill from the band Dr and the Medics, Gel Newey from Bleeding Hearts and Plutonium.

Alan was the initial creator of the song and with everyone’s help and a few studio sessions they turned it into the song it is today.

Steve hosts Retro Rock on Black Country Radio every Monday evening and through the show he met all the artists now involved in putting together the song. It was a case of getting together over a couple of weeks to record the vocals and instrumentals and then Alan went ahead and arranged for the song to be mixed.

The line-up boasts an impressive array of talent including Alan Bell and Mark David from Moosejaw, Russell Peake from Electus, Lisa and Tallukah Lilley from Showcall Academy of Performing Arts, James Barnes and Mike Conningby from Queen Reloaded, Ian Slater from Don’t Stop, Ian Hideous and Jay Decay from Decay 87, Jason Keely from Black Country Radio, Cy Wooldridge and Jess Skidmore (who Steve knew mainly from local theatre as well as performing with them in various bands such as Housewives Choice and Adam Husk from Labelled Ded). Alex Bell played keyboards with Sofia Whitehouse on vocals. Also on vocals were Mike Croutear from Queen Reloaded and Alan’s fellow band mate Mark Davies from Moosejaw

Everyone involved with this project has freely given their time and Alan has done all of the recording and offered his studios free of charge. The object is quite simply to raise as much money for children’s charities as they can via downloads and streams. CDs will also be available and a video (edited by Philippa Davies and assisted by Jess Skidmore) has been recorded which is now available to view on YouTube. The song is available to download on most major streaming apps and platforms.

The group are hoping that the song will become a future favourite and, fingers crossed, that it also makes the charts. All they need is enough interest and promotion which they are constantly striving to get—if there is anyone out there who has any ideas of further promotion the team are always willing to listen.



**If you would like further information or would like to speak about possible promotional aspects of the project please contact Steve Taylor at Black Country Carpets on 0795 898 2246**



## ONE COMMUNITY UPDATE BY SHAZ SALEEM

Hey wonderful people of Kingswinford and Wall Heath, I'm very proud to be part of the Village Voice writing a monthly blog to highlight amazing community groups and community champions.

As the founder of the Saleem Foundation charity and recipient of The High Sheriff Award, I believe volunteering makes me feel as though I am an ambassador for my area; I feel a sense of pride for where I come from.

### Kingswinford Remembers

I was honoured to join Kingswinford Royal British Legion at the Remembrance Parade service. The turnout from our amazing residents of Kingswinford was incredible as hundreds lined up to watch the parade go past!! This is why when it comes to #OneCommunity, Kingswinford leads the way!

Special shoutout to the 2488 Kingswinford Squadron Air Training Corps who led the parade and the band were amazing, they are based in Kingswinford. Their support is greatly appreciated!

The parade began at the Legion and concluded at St. Mary's Parish Church, Kingswinford, where I had the opportunity to lay a wreath on behalf of the Saleem Foundation and be part of a moving ceremony that took place honouring and remembering those fallen for us led by Fr. Chris Smith.



### Santa Truck Convoy 2025!!

The Santa truck run is getting closer – it will be taking place on the 20<sup>th</sup> December at 5pm starting in Bilston at Pallants Transport in Withy Road and we will finish at Dudley Kingswinford RFC. There will be food and a drinks bar available at the DK rugby club. We encourage everyone to attend and support, there will be a live feed on [facebook.com/shazsaleem001](https://www.facebook.com/shazsaleem001). Huge thank you to Andrew and the team for organising this incredible event, this will be the 10<sup>th</sup> annual Santa Truck Convoy!!



### Susan Bolton & Graham Roberts win the November TSF Award for Heroes

The incredible Susan and Graham from Wall Heath in Bloom have won this month's #TsfAwardForHeroes. Sue and Graham were nominated by Louise Vale. The Award was presented by our community champion Lydia Longville from The Bonsai Black Belt Academy, Kingswinford. If you know anyone who lives or works in Kingswinford, Wall Heath, and the surrounding area and deserves to be recognised, please nominate them by emailing me on [askshaz@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:askshaz@hotmail.co.uk).



### Upcoming community events

**12<sup>th</sup> December** - Kuppa Club - 9.15am to 11am at Wall Heath Tavern • **13<sup>th</sup> December** - Jingle the Wall Heath - Santa Trail - Wall Heath Tavern • **14<sup>th</sup> December** - Kingswinford & Wall Heath Litter Pick - 10am • **Kingswinford in Bloom** meet every Saturday and Sunday 10am by the library.

### Contact me

📞 07786 196666 ✉️ [askshaz@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:askshaz@hotmail.co.uk) 🌐 @shazsaleem001

## IT'S THAT TIME OF THE YEAR AGAIN!

I know we have a few weeks to go but we thought it our duty to break you all in gently with some amusing cracker jokes....



For many people, Christmas lunch just wouldn't be the same without crackers and without the groans that come from the jokes. Here are just a few to get you in training for the big day:

**What is Santa's favourite pizza?** One that's deep pan, crisp and even.

**Why would you invite a mushroom to a party?** He's a fun guy to be with.

**What never eats Christmas dinner?** The turkey, it's stuffed!

**What do you get if you eat Christmas decorations?** Tinsilitis!

**What is the best Christmas present in the world?** A broken drum, you just can't beat it.

**Why are Christmas trees so bad at sewing?** They always drop their needles!

**How do snowmen get around?** They ride an icicle!

**Why did the Christmas tree go to the barber?** It needed a trim.

**What is it called when Santa takes a break?** A Santa pause.

**What would you give your dog for Christmas?** A mobile bone!

**Why has Santa been banned from sooty chimneys?** Carbon footprints!

## HAPPY CHRISTMAS

## — POEMS FROM — A BLACK COUNTRY BLOKE



JOHN HOMER

For many years John Homer has been involved with West Bromwich Albion, the Albion Foundation and the Black Country Living Museum, and is also a founder-member of the 'ME, MYSELF AND I' group which is a dementia support group for carers.

He is a speaker on everything and anything to do with the Black Country and local football.

He has now put pen to paper to produce a book of poetry 'Poems from a Black Country Bloke' which is dedicated to all things Black Country—a wonderful collection of poems about his youth and life in general.

The book is available to buy at **£9.99 (plus postage)**—please contact John on **07818 291578** or **01384 236827** or email him at **johnhomerwba@hotmail.co.uk**

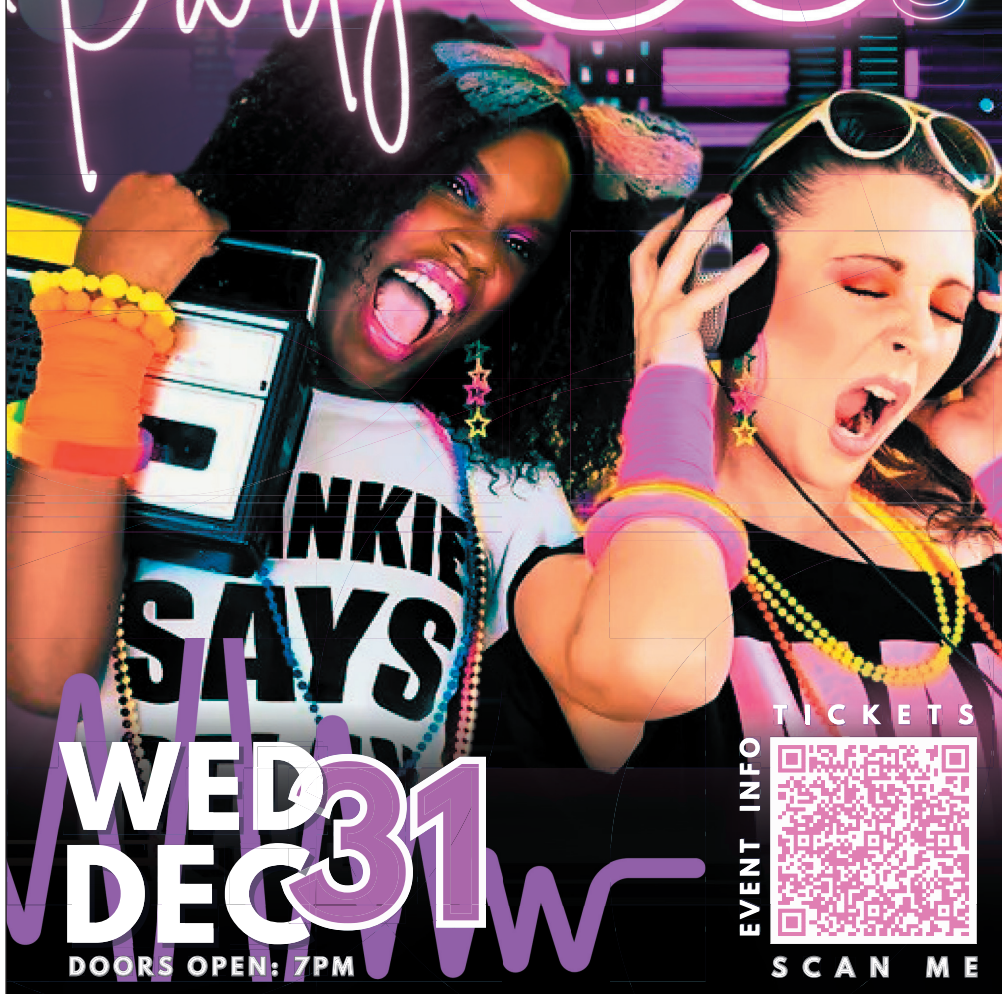
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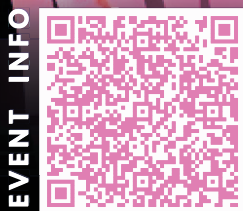
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EVENT INFO

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Sun 25 Jan Stamford & Peterborough £25

Sat 31 Jan Welshpool & Oswestry £24  
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Tue 24 Feb Abergavenny & Monmouth £20  
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17 Mar	SIDMOUTH IN SPRINGTIME	5 days	£520
30 Mar	ISLES OF SCILLY	5 days	£980
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# INTERESTING FACTS!

Identical twins do not have the same fingerprints. You can't blame your crimes on your twin, after all. This is because environmental factors during development in the womb (umbilical cord length, position in the womb and the rate of finger growth) all affect your fingerprint.

Earth's rotation is changing speed—it is actually slowing down. This means that, on average, the length of a day increases by around 1.8 seconds per century. 600 million years ago a day lasted just 21 hours.

Earlobes have no biological purpose. Whilst they are rich in nerve endings and may play a role in social bonding, many scientists argue that earlobes do not have any true biological purpose.

Most people stroke cats the wrong way. Research shows that they often just tolerate it for the food and attention. But just what are the safest spots? Under the chin, cheeks and base of the ears. The worst place is their belly and the base of their tail—touch there and you're more than likely to annoy them than bond with them!

Ants do not have lungs—instead they breathe through spiracles. These are nine or ten tiny openings, depending on the species.

You don't actually lose most of your heat through your head. Your face, head and chest are more sensitive to temperature changes but this myth is not entirely true. In reality, covering any part of the body helps prevent heat loss in the same way.

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Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> December – CLOSED  
Friday 26<sup>th</sup> December – CLOSED  
Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> December – CLOSED

Monday 29<sup>th</sup> December – 9.00am-5.00pm  
Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> December – 9.00am-5.00pm  
Wednesday 31<sup>st</sup> December – CLOSED  
Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> January 2026 – CLOSED  
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*Gail*



# Townsend Place and



## MARKET

**Thursday/Friday/Saturday prior to Christmas – 9am-3pm**

**22<sup>nd</sup> & 23<sup>rd</sup> December – 9am-3pm**

**The market then re-opens Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> January 2026 – 9am-3pm**

### Lathams



Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> December will be the last chance to pick up pre-orders.

### Wall Heath Bookworms



Any 3 Christmas books for £10.00.

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### Claireabelle's



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### The Pet Stall



Everything you need for your pet this Christmas including wild bird food.

### JSE Celebrations



Due to changes in family circumstances and work commitments it has become more and more difficult to be able to run the stall as I have done in the past. The stall will be open on the usual market days and will be finishing on Tuesday 23 December. Up until then everything is for sale and we are open to offers.

### Bric-a-Brac

Come and see us for some Christmas gift inspiration. Week prior to Christmas – normal hours. The market will return on 8 January 2026.

Look out for **Pet Beds** returning to Townsend Place in the New Year.



# Market

*Kenchington Ltd wishes its trusted shops, market traders and their valued customers a very Merry Christmas and a Happy and Healthy 2026.*

## GREGGS

Open 24 December  
7am-4pm  
Then re-open  
27 December  
normal hours  
31 December  
7am-4pm  
1 January – 9am-3pm



22 December  
8.30-6pm  
23 December  
8.30-6pm  
24 December  
8.30-12 noon  
Reopen 2 January

## GEEVES

and

## THE GLOW HAUS

24 December  
open until 4pm  
27-30 December  
normal hours  
31 December  
open until 4pm  
Re-open 2 January  
normal hours

## Superdrug

24 December  
9am-5pm  
Then re-open  
26 December  
10am-4pm  
27 December onwards  
normal hours  
1 January  
10am-4pm



24 December  
9.00-12 noon  
31 December  
9.00am-12 noon  
Re-open 2 January  
normal hours

## R. NEWBY

21 December – Closed  
22 December – 6am-6pm  
23 December – 6am-6pm  
24 December – 6am-2pm  
25-29 December – CLOSED  
30 December – 9am-3pm  
31 December –  
7.30am-2pm  
1 January – CLOSED  
Re-open 2 January  
normal hours

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10am-3pm  
24 December  
9am-3pm  
Open New Year's Eve  
9am-5pm  
Re-open  
2 January



24 December  
9am-2pm  
Re-open 27 December  
normal hours  
31 December  
9am-2pm  
Re-open 2 January  
normal hours

## ZAKS HAIRDRESSING

22 & 23 December  
open 9am-8pm  
24 December – Closed  
Re-open 2 January  
normal hours

## Specsavers

24 December  
8.30am-4pm;  
27 December  
normal hours;  
31 December  
8.30am-4pm.  
Re-open 2 January  
normal hours

## FONESTECH

24 December – 9.30-5pm  
27 December  
normal hours  
29 & 30 December  
normal hours  
31 December  
9.30am-5pm  
Re-open 2 January  
normal hours

## ROBBY'S INDIAN DINING

24 December  
4.30pm-11pm  
25 December  
12 noon-6pm  
26 December  
5pm-10.30pm  
27 December onwards  
normal hours

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it's a fact!

- ★ In December the Wordsley Dramatic Society put on a performance of a comedy called "Heroes" and a farce entitled "Borrowed Plumes" at the Drill Hall (now Richardson) Hall in Wordsley. The subsequent review of the play said that the standard of acting was very good but there were problems encountered because of the small stage. Another concern was the meagre attendance on the night meaning that the society made a sizeable financial loss.
- ★ In May 1857 John Mills, a miner from Wordsley, was charged with brutality towards his wife. He did not appear at Wordsley when summoned and so had to be arrested on a warrant and brought before the court. He was committed to hard labour for two months.
- ★ One of the most popular outings for many people from Kingswinford was a day at the Annual Wakes at Brierley Hill. In 1935 the crowds were able to witness animals at either end of the size spectrum. "Jimmy", the world's smallest racehorse, was on show alongside "Billy", a pig weighing half a ton. "Jimmy" was the size of a small dog and at the age of 5½ weighed only 37lbs. At the age of just over a year, however, "Billy" was over 8 foot in length and had a daily intake of four cases of apples, 16 large cabbages, six or seven buckets of milk and two bushels of bran and crushed grain.
- ★ The good people of Wordsley were generous contributors to the fund to help the sick and wounded in the war in France and Prussia of 1870. Over £65 was sent to the national appeal.

# Christmas Services

Midweek Carol Service - Weds 10th Dec, 2.00pm

Children's Nativity Service - Sun 14th Dec, 10.30am

Traditional Carol Service - Sun 21st Dec, 4.00pm

Christmas Day, 10.30am

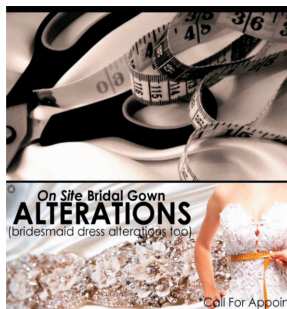
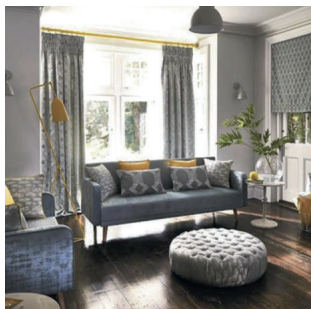
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Our friends at the Odeon Cinema complex on Merry Hill have very kindly sent us 2 x family passes to give away to the two lucky winners of this month's competition. So, pen at the ready and get finding those hidden words and, who knows, you could be a winner of our competition this month.

All you have to do is search out the square below for the 16 words associated with **ODEON CINEMA** on our list. Fifteen of them are hidden in the square (spelt forwards, backwards, up or down or diagonally) whilst one is not there at all – or it may be misspelt! Once you have identified which one is missing just fill in the form below and send it to us.

Alternatively send us an email at [villagevoice@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:villagevoice@hotmail.co.uk)

(remember to include your name, address, postcode, telephone number and email address).

The winners will be the first two correct entries drawn at random after the closing date of **Friday, 19<sup>th</sup> December 2025**. Good luck!

S	T	N	E	V	E	M	E	R	R	E
T	S	O	C	N	O	E	D	O	S	S
A	T	N	E	E	W	R	W	D	C	E
E	N	Y	V	P	M	R	E	I	R	S
S	L	L	I	H	N	Y	N	O	E	A
E	V	V	L	L		E	C	N	E	E
T	E	F	I	L	M	T	E	A	N	L
S	F	A	C	A	M	A	M	T	S	E
O	L	P	S	M	L	I	F	S	C	R
C	O	F	E	E	E	F	F	O	C	S
P	O	P	C	O	R	N	O	C	O	P

## HIDDEN WORDS

1. ODEON
2. CINEMA
3. RELEASES
4. NEW
5. MERRY
6. POPCORN
7. HILL
8. COSTA
9. FILMS
10. VIP
11. FAMILY
12. EVENTS
13. SCREENS
14. SEATS
15. LIVE
16. COFFEE

MISSING WORD:..... NAME:.....

ADDRESS: .....

POSTCODE:..... TEL NO:.....

EMAIL ADDRESS:.....

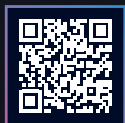
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Brierley Hill Samaritans are as vital as ever in supporting the Black Country. For 52 years the Samaritans at Brierley Hill has supported some of the most vulnerable people in our community.

The core Samaritans service is the telephone-based national helpline, available 24/7 every day of the year (free to call on 116 123). Whatever people are going through in life, if

they're having a tough time, they can call that number to talk to someone. All Samaritans are trained volunteers – none are paid for their time – and they are there to listen, focus on thoughts and give people space to explore their feelings.



The 80 volunteers at Brierley Hill Samaritans are also keen to make a difference out in the local community, attending outreach and awareness events throughout the year. In the last year, they have attended post-incident prevention work at railway stations following suicides on the railways locally), held awareness events at Merry Hill and a number

of other locations, attended Pride events, handed out leaflets and mental health tips at local Supermarkets and given talks to a variety of groups.

As with all charities around the country, regular funding is a major cause for concern to the Samaritans. Brierley Hill is an affiliated branch of the National Samaritans Charity, but it is also an independent charity in itself (registered Charity Number 1168020) and is entirely self-funded. Through a generous bequest some years ago, the branch is fortunate to operate from a purpose-built building, Beryl Hill, on Albion Street just off Brierley Hill High Street. However, in order to continue to operate they must cover their own annual branch running costs which are now approximately £25,000 a year. Volunteers specifically for the Fundraising and Outreach teams are therefore always a vital part of the branch.



It is interesting to note that 80% of people who contact the Samaritans do not express suicidal feelings at the time they are calling. However, by calling when they are having a tough time, they may have taken an important first step in allaying further despair by accessing a service where they are listened to in confidence, and they can talk freely without being judged.

Samaritans support and empower callers by helping them to explore their emotions and clarify what is causing their distress. Hopefully by doing so they can then make

sense of their situation and see a way forward. Every life lost to suicide is a tragedy and it is the vision of all who work for the Samaritans that fewer people die by suicide. Between 2021-2023 Dudley registered 8.8 suicides per 100,000 people, the highest rise in deaths for decades. Every death by suicide creates a ripple in our communities too, on average it is



estimated that 135 people are affected every time someone takes their life. This includes family, friends, work colleagues and the wider community. It is clear that the need for the Samaritans service is as vital today as it was in 1973, when a dedicated group of local people first came together to form the Brierley Hill branch. If you need emotional support please call the Samaritans free of charge on 116 123. If you are interested in volunteering at Brierley Hill Samaritans or making a donation to help with the running costs of the branch, please visit their website: at [www.samaritans.org/branches/brierleyhill](http://www.samaritans.org/branches/brierleyhill) or follow them on Twitter: @BrierleyHillSamBrierley Hill Samaritans.

**Samaritans can be reached around the clock, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year** and respond every 10 seconds to a call from anyone who is struggling to cope and who needs someone to listen to them without judgement or pressure. If a caller needs an immediate response it is best to call on the phone using the **freephone number 116 123** or by emailing [jo@samaritans.org](mailto:jo@samaritans.org)

Although Brierley Hill Branch is not always open, they are linked with other branches in such a way so that anyone who calls, whatever the time of day or night, is able to speak to a volunteer.

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## IN THIS MONTH

Over the years, December has been a busy month for interesting events and here is what we have come up with...

**1791—The Observer, the oldest Sunday newspaper in the world, was first published (4th)**

**1903—Orville and Wilbur Wright achieved the first powered airplane flight near Kitty Hawk, North Carolina (17th)**

**1911—Roald Amundsen became the first person to reach the South Pole (14th)**

**1919—Lady Nancy Astor became the first woman in the House of Commons (1st)**

**1939—The film *Gone with the Wind* starring Vivien Leigh and Clark Gable had its world premiere in Atlanta (15th)**

**1967—The first successful heart transplant was performed by Dr Christiaan Barnard in Cape Town, South Africa (3rd)**

**1980—John Lennon was assassinated in New York City (8th).**

**2004—An estimated 230,000 people died and 1.5 million were left homeless by the tsunami that hit South Africa (26th)**

**2005—The Civil Partnership Act came into force in the UK with singer Elton John and David Furnish one of the first couples to form a same-sex civil union (21st)**

**2020—AT&T Inc's Warner Bros Studio announced all its 2021 movies would stream online the same day they appeared in theatres because of the pandemic (3rd)**



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## STRANGE BRIDES OF WORDSLEY

We came across this story on a small leaflet produced in 1951 that highlighted some pretty strange weddings that apparently took place in Wordsley in the 18th and 19th centuries. We have no way of knowing whether the stories are true—but they make interesting reading anyway.

The first story concerns a local farmer, Paulus Jones, who wanted to marry his favourite pig! Not surprisingly local churchmen refused and so a “friend” of his arranged for a preacher from Bromsgrove to perform the ceremony. When the pig died Jones wanted it buried in consecrated ground but this was not allowed and—eventually—he was persuaded that no legal marriage had taken place. He promptly started legal action against his friend for the return of the £50 (a very considerable sum in those days) that he had paid for the preacher’s services.

The next story relates to a lady called Mary Ann Smith who caused something of a problem when she regularly turned up at various local churches in full bridalwear despite not having a wedding booked. Indeed on at least two occasions she even gate-crashed existing weddings and once actually walked down the aisle only for the bemused groom to say that it was not her to whom he was expecting to get married! Worse still, it was later found that she was already married...bigamously to two men!



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# Your Local Councillor Update

Dear Residents

It's been a busy and rewarding few weeks since our last update, with a range of community events and civic duties that truly reflect the spirit of our area.

At the end of October, Wall Heath was once again transformed into a spooky spectacle as the annual Halloween Trail returned—bigger and better than ever. It was fantastic to see the village bustling with families, laughter, and some incredible costumes. Our thanks go to the Wall Heath Village People who did a *spooktacular* job organising the event. Local shops and businesses really got into the spirit of it, decorating their windows and joining in the fun, which made the whole village feel alive with autumn energy.



Arguably our most important civic duty of the year took place in November, as we proudly joined the Remembrance Parades in both Wall Heath and Kingswinford. It was deeply humbling to see so many residents attend, and particularly moving to witness so many young people participating in the parade and services. We'd like to thank everyone involved in organising both events, including the British Legion branches, church volunteers, community groups, and of course the public for turning out to line the streets. It is the greatest honour to represent the community at these services and to lay wreaths in memory of those who made the ultimate sacrifice.

Alongside all this, we've remained busy with our usual casework—responding to resident concerns, chasing up highways repairs, supporting local groups, and working closely with council officers across a wide range of issues. If there's anything you'd like to raise, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

Phil, Ed & Mark



## CONTACT YOUR LOCAL TEAM BELOW



Cllr Phil Atkins  
Tel: 07929 662888  
Email: [cllr.phil.atkins@dudley.gov.uk](mailto:cllr.phil.atkins@dudley.gov.uk)

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Cllr Mark Webb  
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## DRINKS: Wines—some sparkling sensations

A review by Trevor Langley

Exton Park Vineyard is located in Hampshire and was commenced during 2003, with vines being very well suited to the climate and soil conditions. Exton Hall boasts a premium events space and venue. Exton Park's award-winning sparkling wines have many devotees and their production of wines continues to expand, complementing the core range and are now available and served in top hotels, plus restaurants and can be found in leading retailers and wine merchants. The prestigious Vault Wine Club offers exclusive discounts, plus member-only events. Wine Club membership can be purchased as a gift voucher – perhaps as a surprise for someone special?



Certainly, some of the company's wording states 'Wines That Satisfy The Imagination' – and I have to agree. I decided to try the Exton Park Discovery Pack.

**Exton Park Brut (11.5% vol) Reserve Blend** is produced utilising Pinot Noir and Chardonnay grape varieties (60% and 40% respectively) to a great advantage. Bottle-aged, for at least three years, this production has countless devotees. A fruity freshness is most evident, for this very popular wine.

**Exton Park Blanc De Noirs (11.5% vol) Reserve Blend** uses 100% Pinot Noir grapes in its production. With tropical fruits on the bouquet and mouthfeel, the palate's delight continues through, for a most impressive finish.

**Exton Park Rosé (11.5% vol) Reserve Blend** has 70% Pinot Noir and 30% Pinot Meunier grapes in its make-up.

An excellent pink rose colour, plus flavour, give this wine the recognition and respect that are justifiably deserved. Delicately balanced and with tropical fruit overtones, this delectation adds colour to any dining occasion too.

These are just some of the impressive wines from Exton Park Vineyard. Fine perlage, plus huge enjoyment are further delights of these wines. Perfect for pre-dining, on their own and for accompanying foods, I found these Exton Park Vineyard productions to be attractively presented and a most enjoyable introduction to their wines. I look forward, absolutely, to furthering my tastes and desires. Please visit the very informative website for all details and information. Highly recommended.

Exton Park Vineyard, Allens Farm Lane, Southampton SO32 3NW. Tel: 01489 878788.  
E-mail: [enquiries@extonparkvineyard.com](mailto:enquiries@extonparkvineyard.com) Website: [www.extonparkvineyard.com](http://www.extonparkvineyard.com)

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*Trevor Langley*



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# it's a fact!

- ★ For some reason Baldwin's steelworks in Swindon seemed to attract real characters. Teddy Price, who lived in Kingswinford and cycled to work every day, was known to one and all as 'Glass Eye'. He enjoyed a drink (or two) with his mates in 'The Old Bush' and they regularly took a swig from his beer whenever they were on his blind side. To stop his beer disappearing completely when he answered the call of nature he would—to the consternation of other visitors—drop his glass eye into the drink saying *"keep an eye on that, will you?"* Another employee at Baldwin's was Noah Whale who also was known to like a drink...or two...or three. One day, so the story goes, the vicar of Kingswinford was walking to church when he saw Noah come staggering out of "The Courthouse" in the Village. *"Drunk again, Mr Whale"* said the clergyman with a certain amount of distaste. *"And me, vicar"* replied Noah with a smile on his face!
- ★ In 1846 John Gibbons of Corbyn's Hall on the border of Pensnett and Kingswinford was found dead in a pond on his estate. The water was so shallow, however, that his shoulders and the back of his head were not immersed and rather than suicide it was thought that he had taken a wrong turn and tripped, banging his head and drowning. However, the verdict at the inquest said that he was *"found drowned but how or by what means he came there, there is no evidence to show"*.
- ★ For many years in the middle of the 19th century the most popular newspaper in the area was the interestingly titled *"Worcestershire Chronicle and Provincial Railway Gazette"*.



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Call : 01902 661377 or 07848 039795





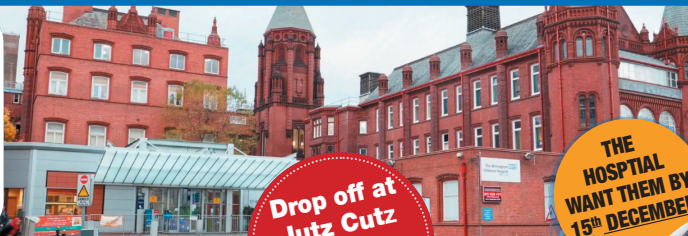
# SANTA DROP 2025

**This Christmas we're collecting gifts to spread joy for Children on Ward 12 at Birmingham Children's Hospital, and also Ward 23 at The Freemans Hospital, Newcastle, we know just how much every gift big or small will make some festive cheer for the kids!**



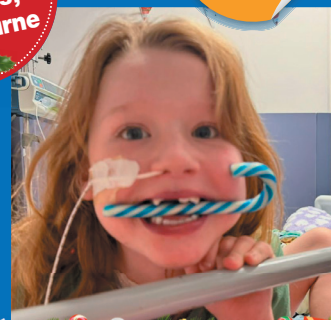
Birmingham  
Children's Hospital  
Charity

Doing more for sick kids



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Barbers,  
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HOSPITAL  
WANT THEM BY  
15<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER



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**XMAS EVE** 7.30am - 2pm

**REOPEN**

**MONDAY 29th** 8.30am - 6pm  
**TUESDAY 30th** 8.30am - 6pm  
**NEW YEAR'S EVE** 8.30am - 4pm

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<b>£10</b>	BEARD TRIM	<b>£14</b>
<b>£7.50</b>	BEARD TRIM	<b>£6</b>
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<b>£10</b>	SKIN FADE/BEARD/STEAMER	<b>£20</b>
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FOLLOW US ON





# OR WHATEVER by John Sparry

## *David Humphries...Enthusiast*

My friend, David Humphries, a fellow pupil at Stourbridge King Edward VI, was a wealth of knowledge on local history and technical subjects. When doing National Service, I recall him telling me of all the masses of wireless apparatus of which he was in charge when on expedition with his officer—who also came from the local Midlands. ‘Come on Humph, get all the gear on the truck and let’s get going!’”

David was fascinated by all the science behind the making of coal gas—when at Tipton Gasworks. After, David had a spell with his father’s Ocker Hill milk business which led to superviseship with Midland Counties Dairies.

Later on when he was Manager at Littlewoods Stores there was a week when he worked nearly 130 hours, “we had ladies dresses retailing at £1.99.”

David, in one of our phone chats told me all that there was to know about the Oystermouth Horse Drawn Rail Service. David worked in managerial roles for a scaffolding firm and the West Midlands County Council’s Highways Department—accidents to highways road furniture sometimes demanded very sensitive dealings with folk who had suffered injury or personal loss.



*At the installation of the restored Sundial in Mary Steven’s Park, (l to r) Bryn Williams, Alan Cutler, John Sparry, John Farmer and David Humphries*

Humph also dedicated himself over many years to the discovery and reinstallation of the Sundial presented to Stourbridge by King Edward’s in celebration of the School’s Charter of 1552.

It was when managing departments of the West Midlands County Council’s Highway Authority—the offices were in an ancient building, David reckoned he had seen a ghost. Still, it was all part of the job.

A very courteous and kind man—he nursed his wife through her final illness—and above all, an enthusiast. It was a pleasure to have known David Humphries.

I still have a few copies of my first King Edward’s book available in which the article about David is included. and have just brought out the third—which features stage and screen alumni. Each volume is £12.50 including P&P or £9.99 at Hayes Cycles, Wall Heath. Actual phone calls only, sorry, I can’t cope with texts or voice messages—or carrier pigeons, for that matter!



*An exterior shot of Tipton Gasworks from the scrapbook of David Humphries.*

**By John Sparry, Ridge Cot, 15 Enville Road, Wall Heath**  
**Mobile: 07831 342209**

*(Sorry folks, no texts or voicemails accepted—I just can’t cope with that!)*



# GOT A ROOF LEAK?



## PREVENTION IS BETTER THAN CURE.

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## **E: DENSONGARETH@YMAIL.COM**

# Kingswinford in Bloom

## Meet THE Team

### Part 2



**TRISH**

**Age:** Old!!!

**Occupation:** Vape Sticker Remover!!!!

**Any previous gardening experience:**  
Love making my pots in my own garden look great in the summer.

**What, in your opinion has gone well for Kingswinford in Bloom?**

Working together and making friends whilst having a laugh and giving back to the community.

**What is your favourite planter in the village, and why?**

The one outside Emotions.

**If money was no obstacle, what else could the Bloomers do for Kingswinford?** A magic automated watering system, it's so hard in the hot weather keeping them all watered sufficiently even with our trusty bowser Thomas. We use around 200 litres on average per day!!!

**What have you gained personally from volunteering for Kingswinford in Bloom?** Love seeing the village looking beautiful for everyone who uses it. Have learnt a lot about which plants suit which location, and we will be able to use this to take forward for our future plans.



**THOMAS**

**Age:** unknown

**Occupation:**

Thomas the Water Bowser.

**Any previous gardening experience:**  
No, luckily I don't have to get my wheels dirty.

**What in your opinion has gone really well for Kingswinford in Bloom:**

With my help, they have managed to keep the plants alive during the really hot Summer in 2025.

**What is your favourite planter in the village and why:**

The tiered planter by Tax Assist, it's the first one we get to for watering, so I can get rid of some of the weight of water on my back.



**PAMMY**

**Age:** 66

**Occupation:** Retired School Pastoral Support Officer/Kford in Bloom Social Secretary.

**Any previous gardening experience:**  
Only mow the lawns at home so gaining a lot of gardening knowledge as well.

**What, in your opinion has gone well for Kingswinford in Bloom?**

Kingswinford in Bloom rely entirely on donations and fundraising however the generosity of the people and businesses of Kingswinford have been exceptional.

**What is your favourite planter in the village, and why?**

Favourite planter? I love them all, on mass I think they look very impressive.

**Why did you decide to volunteer for Kingswinford in Bloom?**

I joined the Bloomers as wanted to give something back to the community now I'm retired.

**What have you gained personally from volunteering for Kingswinford in Bloom?**

It's so rewarding in so many ways and enjoy working with some lovely people of all ages to make a difference.



**DEB**

**Age:** 65

**Occupation:** Market stall trader.

**Any previous gardening experience:** Limited knowledge at the beginning but have loved the chance to learn and help out.

**What, in your opinion has gone well for Kingswinford in Bloom?**  
Kingswinford had planters, but they had been neglected and were an eyesore, KIB has been a brilliant opportunity to bring pride back to the village.

**What is your favourite planter in the village, and why?**  
The wooden ones sponsored by local businesses.

**What have you gained personally from volunteering for Kingswinford in Bloom?**  
It's lovely to see all the colour back in the village and I'm proud to be a Bloomer.



**JO**

**Age:** 54

**Occupation:** Customer Experience Manager/Chairperson Kford in Bloom.

**Any previous gardening experience:** I have no previous gardening experience, but my Dad was a landscape gardener and my Mom is still a keen gardener, maybe I have absorbed some basic knowledge by osmosis.

**What, in your opinion has gone well for Kingswinford in Bloom?**  
The support we have had from local residents and retailers has been phenomenal. We have a great team of volunteers and the planters actually look much better than we could ever have imagined.

**If money was no obstacle, what else could the Bloomers do for Kingswinford?** I would love to create areas for local primary school children to get involved, where it could be visible for everyone in the village!!!

**What is your favourite planter in the village, and why?**  
I love the planters by the library, they have looked stunning all Summer, because of their position.

**What have you gained personally from volunteering for Kingswinford in Bloom?** I have gained a great sense of achievement in just one year since the group was formed. It's been great to be able to put skills learnt at work into a community project. I have made friends with people that I would never have had the chance to meet and love the sense of community that we seem to have created.



**LISA**

**Age:** 58

**Occupation:** Funeral Plan Arranger/Outgoing Treasurer of Kford in Bloom

**Any previous gardening experience:** All the gear, no idea

**What, in your opinion has gone well for Kingswinford in Bloom?**  
The improved community spirit and wonderful feedback we get from people.

**What is your favourite planter in the village, and why?**  
All the wooden planters probably. They just look great, and it's been a lovely way of working with businesses and helping them to participate in how the village looks.

**If money was no obstacle, what else could the Bloomers do for Kingswinford?** I'd like to put hanging baskets or planters on all of the streetlights.

**What have you gained personally from volunteering for Kingswinford in Bloom?**  
I have gained enormously from volunteering with Kingswinford in Bloom. Everyone is so positive and it's lovely to get so many happy smiling faces thanking you for the work that you do. It makes it all worthwhile. I think often people believe that volunteering is serious work but we have such fun and I've made such great friendships. I would certainly recommend it.



## PEDDLING THEIR WARES 1933 STYLE

In 1933 Kingswinford Parish Church (Wordsley's Holy Trinity Church was

the official parish church at the time) celebrated its centenary and as part of the celebrations a booklet detailing the church's history was published.

Whilst details of the first 100 years of its life are interesting what is perhaps more fascinating are the advertisements that were included in order to offset some of the production costs.

**Alfred Yeates & Sons**, DISPENSING CHEMISTS OF Wordsley and Stourbridge were advertising their 'Stomach and liver mixture' (trial size 1/3d) and their 'Neuralgic Mixture' (2/- a bottle) whilst the **Brierley Hill & Stourbridge Building Society** was publicising 'Liberal advances at 5 per cent'. They also boasted that they had assets of £271,800 and a reserve of £15,000.

One of the many coal merchants in the area was **Thomas Fletcher** of Amblecote who took an advertisement extolling the virtues of his 'best Cannock coal' and the availability of 'cobble and range nuts'. He also announced that Miss P. Fletcher of North View, Mount Pleasant was his agent for Wordsley and Kingswinford.

**Darby's Quality Bread** of Brettell Lane left readers in no doubt about why their bread was so good—"because it is MADE CLEAN in the best equipped bakery in the district, BAKED CLEAN in steam, dust-proof ovens and DELIVERED CLEAN by courteous men in spotless vans.

Other advertisements were included from the **Midland Radio-Gram & Electric Supply Co.**, **Fred Webb High Class Family Butcher**, **Bells Café**, coffin makers **Farmer & Son**, and **Matty & Charrinton** who claimed to sell the best underwear and frocks in the area. The booklet was a great success and the initial print run of 200 copies quickly sold out and a reprint was then ordered which was also quickly snapped up by locals. Copies today in excellent condition can still fetch in excess of £50 on some internet sites.

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# BRAINTEASERS ANSWERS

As water freezes at 32°F, the cricket ball would not reach the bottom of Barrel B!

As five lines are required the cost per mile is £2500, making the total cost £15,000 for the six miles.

The answer is ONE WORD

16 years, 12 years and 8 years.

The Wordbat was a bit more tricky. The answer is **UP TO NO GOOD**

So another year comes to an end. We are always on the lookout for new Brainteasers so be sure to look out for more coming your way in the January edition.

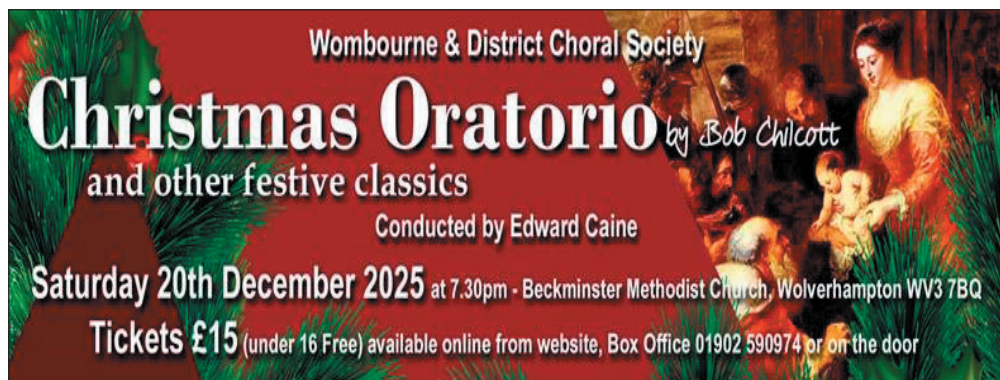
## COMPETITION WINNERS

The answer to our Wordsearch Competition in the **NOVEMBER** edition was **HISTORY** (which was misspelt). The two lucky winners who each receive a **£50 SHOPPING VOUCHER** are:

**MR H. HANS** of **WORDSLEY** and  
**APRIL MORGAN** of **SEDGLEY**

You can find this month's competition on page 46.

**PLEASE NOTE:** Only one entry per person per month is allowed – multiple entries will be disqualified. Winners are chosen at random from all correct entries received by the closing date.



Wombourne & District Choral Society

# Christmas Oratorio

by Bob Chilcott

and other festive classics

Conducted by Edward Caine

Saturday 20th December 2025 at 7.30pm - Beckminster Methodist Church, Wolverhampton WV3 7BQ

Tickets £15 (under 16 Free) available online from website, Box Office 01902 590974 or on the door



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WITH A  
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CHRISTMAS  
WREATH.  
ORDERS NOW  
BEING TAKEN*



**Winter nursery hours – Open Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays 10am to 3pm and other times by appointment only. The Nursery will close on Saturday, 20<sup>th</sup> December and will re-open early March 2026.**



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A VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR**

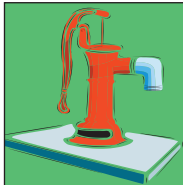
**07703 529004** [cave.carter@yahoo.com](mailto:cave.carter@yahoo.com)

A449, Wolverhampton Road, Prestwood, near Kingswinford DY7 5AN

Keep up to date by following our Facebook page

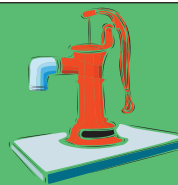


PRESTWOODCAVENURSERY



The Kingswinford, Wall Heath & Wordsley

# PARISH PUMP



## DUDLEY SENIOR RAMBLERS

Dudley Senior Ramblers are an active rambling group for the over 50s which meets every second Wednesday of the month from different start points within a 10-15 mile radius of Dudley. The walks are approximately 5-7 miles long.

The group usually conclude the walks towards the end of November and will resume again in February 2026. As such they are actively recruiting new members for 2026.

If this is of interest to you, please contact Jayne Keay (Members' Secretary) at [mjkeay@btinternet.com](mailto:mjkeay@btinternet.com)

## ST ANDREW'S UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

Foundry Road, Wall Heath  
DY6 9BA



On the run up to Christmas there are various events planned at St Andrews, as follows:

**Monday, 8th December: 6.15pm—  
Christingle Service**

**Sunday, 21st December: 4.00pm—  
Blue Christmas led by Rev Alison Smith**

**Wednesday, 24th December: 6.30pm—  
Christmas Eve Carol Service led by  
Rev Andrew Mann-Ray**

**Thursday, 25th December: 9.30am—  
Christmas morning service led by  
Bernard Peters.**

For further information please contact  
Daphne Darby on 0753 0071 068

THE NEXT PARISH PUMP  
WILL BE IN THE **JANUARY 2026**  
EDITION AND THE COPY  
DEADLINE IS **Thursday, 18th  
December 2025.**

Don't forget that insertions are free if you run a Group or Association that is non-profit making. Please send your details via email to Gail at [villagevoice@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:villagevoice@hotmail.co.uk)

## KEEP DANCING AND KEEP FIT...



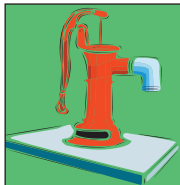
**GRAB YOUR BOOTS AND HATS...  
FOR THE HONKY TONK HOEDOWN!!**

*Original Dances and  
exercises to some  
great country tunes  
old and new*

**FUN, FRIENDS AND LAUGHTER ALL THE WAY!!  
ALL AGES AND ABILITIES WELCOME**

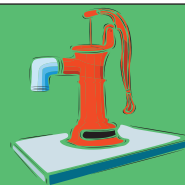
**Every Tuesday 7-8pm**

Only £3 first lesson  
£6.50 Thereafter or £20 per month upfront  
For details contact: Sue Smith 07305 065245  
Wordsley Community Centre, Wordsley Green,  
Wordsley, Stourbridge DY8 5BN



The Kingswinford, Wall Heath & Wordsley

# PARISH PUMP



## Kingswinford Methodist Church Christmas Services

All-Age Sheep Trail Service	14th December	From 10am (formal start at 10.30am)
Carol Service	21st December	4pm
Holy Communion	Christmas Eve	11.30pm
All-Age Service	Christmas Day	10am

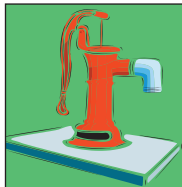
Stream Road, Kingswinford DY6 9NP  
[www.kingswinfordmethodist.co.uk](http://www.kingswinfordmethodist.co.uk) : [kmc.enquiries66@gmail.com](mailto:kmc.enquiries66@gmail.com)

### MEN'S BOWLS AT WORDSLEY COMMUNITY CENTRE—YOUR COMMUNITY NEEDS YOU!

If you have time on a Friday afternoon, why not pop along to see us between 1.00pm and 4.00pm and join this highly popular group for Short Mat Indoor Bowls, Cards and Dominoes. There is always lots of laughter and jollity with this group and it is the perfect way to meet new friends and enjoy a nice cup of tea/coffee and, of course, cakes and biscuits! All equipment is supplied. If you have never played before that is not a problem as the group welcome all abilities. There are subsidised subscriptions.

If this is of interest to you, please give Bob a call on 07572 321401 and leave a message with your name and telephone number or contact the Community Centre on 01384 273186.





The Kingswinford, Wall Heath & Wordsley

# PARISH PUMP



Do you want to  
**make a difference**  
in your community?



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opportunities



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## WORDSLEY TEAM PARISH

Holy Trinity Church, High Street, Wordsley.

You are invited to:

**Carols at the Lawnswood Pub, Lawnswood Road**  
**Thursday, 18 December at 7.00pm. Donations to Mary**  
**Stevens Hospice.**

**Crib Service, Christmas Eve**

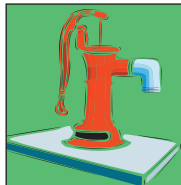
**Wednesday, 24th December at 4.00pm**

**First Holy Communion of Christmas (Midnight Mass)**

**Wednesday, 24th December at 11.30pm**

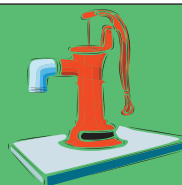
**Christmas Morning Service with Holy Communion at**  
**9.30am.**

**ALL ARE WELCOME**



The Kingswinford, Wall Heath & Wordsley

# PARISH PUMP



## Wordsley Bridge Club

Come and play, or learn to play, bridge at Wordsley Bridge Club.

We meet in the upstairs room at Wordsley Community Centre on Wednesday Evenings from 7.30pm to 9.30pm, and on Friday afternoons from 1.30pm to 4.00pm.

We are a small friendly group and welcome all, whether experienced or wanting to learn the game. There is a small charge which includes a cup of tea or coffee and you will be guaranteed a game.

Contact Trevor Mansell on  
**01384 395110** or the  
Community Centre on  
**01384 273186.**



## Kingswinford Concert Band

proudly presents:

**‘Christmas Showtime’**

**Wednesday 17th December 2025**

7pm until approx. 9.30pm

Kingswinford Methodist Church,  
Stream Road, Kingswinford

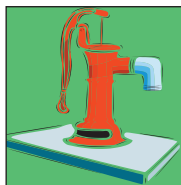
Admission by ticket £6

Available on line at: [https://](https://www.trybooking.com/uk/FMIJ)

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Or use QR code





The Kingswinford, Wall Heath & Wordsley

# PARISH PUMP



CHRISTMAS MARKET - CHURCH OF ASCENSION  
SANTA'S GROTTO - WALL HEATH COMMUNITY CENTRE  
FESTIVE ACTIVITIES - WALL HEATH PARK  
FAIRGROUND RIDES - WALL HEATH TAVERN  
SANTA TRAIL - AROUND WALL HEATH BUSINESSES

**TICKETS INFORMATION  
CONTACT BELOW**

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT  
SHAZ SALEEM 07786 196 666  
THE SALEEM FOUNDATION

## MERRY CHRISTMAS

*To all our  
Groups and  
Associations  
who have kept  
us informed  
of their events  
throughout  
2025. We look  
forward to  
hearing from  
you all  
throughout  
2026.*

*Gail*

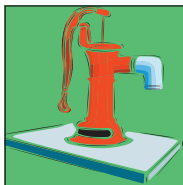
## WEDNESDAY SENIORS GROUP 50+

invite you to enjoy afternoons of speakers and entertainment on the 1st and 3rd Wednesday each month at 2.00pm at Wordsley Green Community Centre, Wordsley DY8 5BN

**21st January 2026 :** The group are holding an 'Open House' which is a free afternoon with entertainment by U3A Singing for Fun group. Tea, coffee and biscuits will be served and a run through of the forthcoming 6 month programme, with any other future events, will be announced.

Visitors are most welcome to come along and hear how we organise this very friendly group. Open to Ladies and Gents.





# The Kingswinford, Wall Heath & Wordsley **PARISH PUMP**



## **WALL HEATH COMMUNITY CENTRE**

**Envile Road, Wall Heath DY6 0JT**

**Telephone: 01384 273744 : Email: [wallheathcommunityassoc@gmail.com](mailto:wallheathcommunityassoc@gmail.com)**

**PLEASE NOTE: There will be no Wednesday Club meetings in December.**

**15th January—Thursday at2 Club—2.00pm:** Pamela Manning will be giving a talk “Meet the Wise Women”. A historically funny and factual very adult themed talk. Pamela presents her talk dressed in medieval costume. *(Risque content. Not for those easily offended.*

**28th January—Wednesday Club—2.00pm—Chris O’Grady,** “ Travelling around Japan on a couch” Chris’s small contribution to world peace. A personal story of couch surfing, hitchhiking and unexpected kindness from around the world.

**5th February—Thursday at2 Club—2.00pm:** David Bartley, comedian will be making us laugh the winter away with his wonderful entertaining jokes and humour.

**11th February—Wednesday Club—2.00pm:** Alan Peace, “Never Work with Children or Animals (by the man who has done both and survived). An anecdotal and light-hearted look at some of the comical situations Alan has found himself in during the 40 years of working with children and animals.

**19th February—Thursday at2 Club—2.00pm:** Michelle Birch talks to the group about Food and Mood and how the food we eat can alter our state of mind and make us feel good.

**25th February—Wednesday Club—2.00pm:** Kate Round, “Meet the Designers” The talk describes how art and design developed in glassware. The elements of good design are functional, practical, ergonomic, aesthetically pleasing and affordable. Good designers lead fashion, making objects that are both desirable and collectable. Spanning from 2500 years BC to the 20th Century the talk follows the development of fashion in glassware into the modern era focusing on the designers who made sure that Stuart Crystal products were so successful.

**5th March—Thursday at2 Club—Careena Fenton** “Now you see it, now you don’t!”. Enjoy an afternoon’s performance of magic and illusion from the hands of this very talented lady who is a Member of the Magic Circle and PhD Candidate of University Birmingham (Drama and Theatre Arts). Please note there is a £5.00 admission fee to this talk.

**11th March—Wednesday Club—2.00pm:** John Homer, “Why Black Country?” John is very well known for his work at the Black Country Living Museum and has appeared on television. His vast knowledge of the Black Country and its history will be showcased in this talk about the area.

**19th March—Thursday at2 Club—Andy Casserley** gives his talk entitled Musical History. Andy will be talking about 800 years of music and he will be displaying some interesting instruments.

# WHEN HEADLINES MAKE THE STORY!

Occasionally the headline for a news story is far more interesting than the story itself so we thought that we would share a few of our favourite ones:

PLANES FORCED  
TO LAND AT  
AIRPORTS

FRUIT LORRY  
CRASHES  
CAUSING JAM

TORTOISE THEFT  
LEFT OWNER SHELL  
SHOCKED!

MAN'S LEGS  
STOLEN—WEDDING  
DREAM SHATTERED

KITTEN CHOKES  
ON  
MOUSE

HOMICIDE VICTIMS  
RARELY TALK TO  
POLICE

CORPSE  
CONFIRMED TO BE  
DEAD!

WEAPONS FOUND IN  
POLICE RAID ON  
GUN SHOP

KIDS MAKE  
NUTRITIOUS  
SNACKS

**OVER £100M!**  
Is this the rail price? Is this just fantasy?  
Caught up in land buys  
No escape from bureaucracy

Woman in sumo wrestler suit  
assaulted her ex-girlfriend  
in gay pub after she waved at  
a man dressed as a Snickers bar!

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# AFC WOLVES CIC: Football, Community and a Vision for Wolverhampton



AFC Wolves CIC is more than just a football club. Based in Wolverhampton, we're a community interest company with a simple but powerful vision: to use football as a force for good, bringing people together, creating opportunities, and giving back to the city we call home. Since starting with just one player, we've grown to over 300 participants, running teams from juniors through to men's and women's football, alongside Development Centres for boys, girls, toddlers, and players with disabilities. Our work goes beyond the pitch — we run after-school clubs, holiday camps, and community sessions, all designed to make football accessible to everyone, regardless of background or ability.

But AFC Wolves is about more than the game itself. At the heart of everything we do is a commitment to supporting people. For some, that means a place to develop as a player or coach. For others, it's about finding confidence, making friends, or feeling part of

something bigger. We're proud to create pathways in football, but equally proud of the life skills, employability opportunities, and sense of belonging we help to build along the way.

As a CIC, we reinvest everything back into our work and the communities we serve. That's why we're launching initiatives like our Winter Warm Clothing Collection. This November, we'll be collecting hats, scarves, gloves, socks, blankets, and thermals, which will be donated directly to Wolverhampton's homeless community. We know times are tough for many, and if the club can play a part in helping those most in need, then that's exactly what we'll do.

Looking ahead, our vision is to continue growing AFC Wolves into a hub for football and community in Wolverhampton. That means strengthening our grassroots teams,

expanding our development programmes, building more partnerships, and ensuring that the benefits of football reach as many people as possible. Whether it's through football sessions, volunteering opportunities, or charitable projects like the clothing appeal, AFC Wolves CIC is committed to making a positive difference in the city. We're here to prove that football is more than just a game — it's a way of changing lives.

AFC WOLVES CIC

## Winter Warm Clothes Appeal

*Spread Warmth, Dignity, and Hope*

Let's come together as a community to support the homeless in Wolverhampton. Please donate essential items like coats, gloves, socks, scarves, thermals, blankets, and sleeping bags to help those in need this winter.

contact@afcwolves.com  
www.afcwolves.com

AFC WOLVES

**EMAIL:** [contact@afcwolves.com](mailto:contact@afcwolves.com) **WEBSITE:** [www.afcwolves.com](http://www.afcwolves.com)



# ADVERTISERS' INDEX

## ACCOUNTANTS

Nicholas Barwell & Co  
TaxAssist Accountants

16  
48

## ANIMAL SERVICES

Nature's Pawz

45

## BAKERIES

The Village Bakery

39

## BARBERS

Jutz Cutz Barbers

60-61

## BEER COMPANIES

The Ninja Beer Company Ltd

7

## BLINDS & AWNINGS

Castle Blinds & Awnings

IBC

## BUILDING & CONSTRUCTION

Fix4u Roofing Services

8-9

## CAFES

The Village Café

20

## CAR REPAIRS & BODYWORK

Chips Away

76

## CARPETS

Trinity Carpets

67

## CARPET CLEANING

Zero Dry Time

57

## CATERERS

Mary Herman-Smith

29

## CHURCHES

New Life Church, Wall Heath

43

## CINEMAS

Odeon Cinema, Merry Hill

47

## CLUBS & COMMUNITY CENTRES

The Robin, Bilston

4

## COMMUNITY UPDATES

Clr Phil Atkins  
Mr Shaz Saleem

55  
33

## DECORATORS

Patrick J Bellew

49

## DENTAL SERVICES

St James Dental and Facial Aesthetics

6

## DOUBLE GLAZING

Cloudy 2 Clear Windows

5

## ELECTRICIANS

Wilf's Electrical

29

## ESTATE AGENTS

Richard Allen-Zoarder

17

## EVENTS

Dudley Kingswinford Rugby  
Football Club: New Year's Eve

35

## FOOTCARE

Step Ahead

26

## FUNERAL SERVICES

J.T. Brookes & Co

38

## FURNITURE

Dreamworld Furniture  
Buy Sofas Direct (Merry Hill)

23  
12-13

## GARAGE DOORS & SECURITY SHUTTERS

Rings Security, Shutters & Gates

54

## GAS, PLUMBING & HEATING

Wheeler's Gas, Plumbing & Heating  
Rightio Plumbing & Heating

10  
27

## HAIR SALONS

Blaze Hair Salon

37

## HOME CLEANING SERVICES

Lisa's Cleaning Services

26

## HOME & DÉCOR

Total Sewing

44

## HOME & GARDEN

Decormar

21

## JEWELLERS

Arthur's Jewellers

29

## KITCHENS & BATHROOM INTERIORS

Shawfit Interiors  
Round Oak Interiors

42  
53

## KITCHEN DOORS

Dream Doors

OBC

## LOCKS & SAFES

Adams Locks & Maintenance Ltd

52

## MOBILITY

Power Link

66

## MUSIC VENUES

The Robin Club, Bilston

15

## NURSERIES & PLANT CENTRES

Prestwood Cave Nursery

69

## PAVING & LANDSCAPING

J&B Paving & Landscaping

19

## RESTAURANTS/PUBLIC HOUSES

Royal Masala  
The Five Ways Inn

IFC  
24

## ROOFERS

GMD Roofing & UPVC 30-31,63  
Fix4u Roofing & Building Services 8-9  
Shayne Orme Roofing 22

## SECURITY POSTS

Delta Security Posts

19

## SHOPPING CENTRES

Townsend Place Shopping  
Centre

40-41

## SOLICITORS

Waldrons Solicitors

11

## TANNING SERVICES

DreamTan

25

## TRAVEL COMPANIES

Phillips International Travel

36

## TREE & LANDSCAPE SERVICES

J&B Tree & Landscaping  
Gornal Tree Services

27  
58

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PAGE 59

- OvenBlitz
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