



THE DORRIDGE & DISTRICT RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION Newsletter

FOR THE RESIDENTS OF DORRIDGE, BENTLEY HEATH AND FOUR ASHES

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• Chair: JEANINE PLAIN-JONES • Editor: JESSICA BRYAN •

Please email documents for the Newsletter to: dorridgeresidents@gmail.com

>>>> **We are back online with a new website. Please visit ddra.org.uk for updates** <<<<

Please check your DDRA standing order!

A few years ago we increased our annual subscription from £1 per person annually to £4 per person (not per household) each year. Unfortunately there remains a small number of people who don't seem to have revised the amount they send through their bank; we are still getting annual amounts of £1 and £2, which don't qualify people for membership.

The main benefit of membership to an individual is that they can vote at our AGM if a vote is taken; however, to us at DDRA the membership subscription denotes support for what we are doing and enables us to continue supporting our local community in various ways.

I would be very grateful if everyone who has a standing order to DDRA could please check that it is at the correct level, and raise it to £4 per person each year if it's not already that amount. Thank you!

Jane Holt, Treasurer, DDRA

Goodbye Mark and Sam

Dear Community

It is with great sadness that Mark and I have now hung up our boots as Shop Owners in Bentley Heath. Mark has worked at Vernon James Butcher's for over 25 years and we have had the pleasure of owning this lovely little business for 20 years. Our doors closed on Saturday 22 June 2024 and we served this wonderful community for the very last time. We have been so overwhelmed, honoured and humbled at the number of cards, gifts, cuddles, handshakes, good wishes and more from so many of you and we really will miss you all so much.

Mark and I moved to Shropshire in November 2022 following the loss of my Mum. This is the area my Dad and Mark's Mum still live and both are in their 80's and on their own. It was always our intention for Ollie to take on the shop and stay around for the next couple of years to help finish his training and development so he could step into shop ownership and continue to serve the community with the quality produce and personal service you're all accustomed too, but sadly he decided this wasn't for him at his young age of 21 and we wish him well in his future career decisions - I'm sure you will all wish him well too.

We will, of course, see some of you, I'm sure, as we have lots of friends in Solihull, and whenever we are over I'm sure will bump into you. Thank you for those who popped in and saw us on our final day.

Thank you all so much for 25 years of friendship, fun, laughter and memories.

Mark and Sam x

Local Summer Stroll

Coming to a lamppost near you is a poster announcing a Summer Stroll.

KFC - not the finger-licking company but Knowle Football Club - and Knowle & Dorridge Lions are joining forces to offer two local walks, starting at KFC's Hampton Road Ground, at a date to be announced in August. Families are at the heart of our planning, with ball games on the pitch, drinks in the Clubhouse and a football theme competition for young and old along the two walks. Entrance will be by donation. Watch out for those posters.

Graffiti on railway pedestrian bridges

Criminal damage in the form of graffiti has become a persistent problem on the railway footbridge connecting Weston Close and Arden Drive, Dorridge, and increasingly on the footbridge at Bentley Heath Crossing. The problem has arisen since Network Rail gave both these bridges solid sides, providing a blank canvas for those intent on graffiti. Both bridges are the responsibility of Network Rail. They say obscene graffiti is dealt with as a priority, however their response times are nonetheless very slow even for this. If more local residents were to report graffiti when they see it, it might persuade Network Rail to be more responsive and more open to looking at longer term solutions.

To keep our community clean and safe, we encourage residents to promptly report any graffiti they see on these footbridges. Quick action can help to deter further vandalism and ensure that our public spaces remain welcoming and well-maintained.

If you spot graffiti on either of the railway footbridges, please report it to Rita Welsby, our Community Relations Manager. You can reach her via email at comms_service@mailin.custhelp.com. Another simple way to report graffiti (or any other crime or concerns) to

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the British Transport Police is on their Railway Guardian app, which is free to download.

Your vigilance and cooperation are greatly appreciated as we work together to maintain the beauty and safety of our community. Thank you for your support!

Making a difference!

Do you enjoy living here? Do you feel enthusiastic about your local community? Do you have particular interests or concerns that relate to the community? Do you have knowledge, expertise or skills that might help community life in some way? If your answer to any of these is 'yes', your DDRA committee would love you to join them for an hour or so at Hogarth's every couple of months on a Monday evening, to discuss issues that have an impact on the area and to make a positive contribution to its well-being. It's not an onerous commitment and we do hope you will consider it. Get in touch via the DDRA website at <https://ddra.org.uk>. We'd love to hear from you!

Dorridge Day 2024

This year's Dorridge Day on Sunday 8th September is very exciting as it will be the 50th Anniversary of Dorridge Day!

So come along! There will be fun for all the family with stalls, food, drink and inflatables. Plus don't forget your water pistol for the ever popular water fight!

The Classic Cars will parade through the villages before arriving at the event for you all to admire.

If you have a classic car and would like to take part please email dorridgeday.classics@gmail.com.

What is the Round Table?

Yes - we are just an average group of guys looking to get out of the house once or twice a month, do different things and escape from the pressures of everyday life!

No - there are no special criteria. Events are always affordable, and you don't have to make every event.

Yes - new members are always welcome. All men aged 18-45 can join. Events are midweek too, so they don't clash with family time or other friendships.

No - it's not just men! Women can join our sister organisation (Knowle and Dorridge Ladies Circle). There are over 45 clubs too.

Yes - we also give back to the community now and then and have a great laugh doing it.

No - we are not the Masons, nor are we Rotary or Lions, we are deliberately a young man's activities club.

Get in touch to find out more about coming along! knowleanddorridge@roundtable.org.uk

Café@BH and Spire Café

On the first and third Saturday mornings of each month respectively, the Dorridge & Bentley Heath area boasts two monthly community events where members of the community can meet, relax and chat over a hot drink and a slice of homemade cake. Every first Saturday, for over 8 years, The Café@Bentley Heath (Café@BH) has been welcoming people of all ages (from a few days old to nearly 100!) through its doors, the 5 past years of which have been into the lovely Bentley Heath Community Centre. It provides a safe space and a happy atmosphere where guests can meet friends and family, or can come alone with the assurance of being able to make new friends.

A similar venture, Spire Café, at the attractive St Philip's Church Centre in Dorridge, got off to a great start on the third Saturday in May, with the same opportunities for the strengthening of community life and friendship. It also has the option of some tables outside for fine weather, and a dedicated playroom for small children. Why not drop in sometime to Café@BH or Spire Café, and give them a try? And if you know of someone who is feeling a little low or lonely, why not invite them along to one or the other, and help to make their day - you and they will be most warmly welcomed.

In similar news, Eric Lyons will be moving into the much loved Vernon James butchers, another new addition after Kelly's Deli in Bentley Heath.

Fun Run Recap

With an age range from 5 to 80 just over 1250 runners helped the 39th Knowle Fun Run, held on Sunday 19th May, to be another very successful B93 event.

The sun was out, the many wonderful volunteers were at their Marshal Points and at the appointed times the starting horn first set off the KIDS RUN followed by the 5K and 10K runners. Ahead of them the Knowle Parish Church Bells rang out, the crowds cheered and the most welcome Water Station greeted them at the top of Longdon Road. As always the Lions could not hold this annual event without support and help from so many local businesses, groups and individuals - so many that we can't name them all - so let us say "thanks to you all". After all the bills have been paid K&D Lions will be making donations to, amongst others, Age U.K. Solihull, Meningitis Now and local Scout Groups. Next year will be the 40th KFR. We want to make it a celebration. Your ideas would be very welcome.

Knowle & Dorridge Lions need your help!

We need your help! Our club has raised over £1M for local community causes since 1976, but we need more support to continue. If you can spare some time to assist with our fundraising activities, please contact our Membership Secretary, Ken Salway, at 07860 839750 or kensalway@chamberton.co.uk. Visit our website at knowleanddorridgelions.com for more information.

Launch of the Knowle and Dorridge Memory Café

We are excited to announce the launch of the Knowle and Dorridge Memory Café, a valuable new initiative to support our local community. Starting on June 11th, this wonderful activity will take place every Tuesday from 10:30 am to 12:30 pm at Dorridge Methodist Church, Mill Lane.

Run by Unique Senior Care, the Memory Café offers a safe and welcoming space for individuals affected by dementia, along with their families and carers. It's a place to come together, share experiences, and access professional support. The café will host a variety of engaging activities, including art and painting sessions, singing, and dancing, all designed to stimulate cognitive function and provide essential social interaction.

For just £3 per person, participants can enjoy these enriching sessions, complete with refreshments, under the guidance of experienced care professionals and dedicated volunteers. No advance booking is required.

For more information or to become a volunteer, please contact Karen Wilkinson at 0121 6678743 or karen.wilkinson@uniquecare.co.uk. We look forward to seeing you there!

Exciting News for Dorridge Station!

We are thrilled to announce the recent refurbishment of the Dorridge Station ticket hall, where all heritage features have been meticulously restored. The project included the restoration of windows, parquet flooring, a complete repainting, and the installation of new weather-resistant matwells, bringing new life to this historic space.

This remarkable transformation was made possible through the collaborative efforts of Chiltern Railways, Friends of Dorridge Station, and the Heart of England Community Rail Partnership. The newly refurbished ticket hall was officially reopened by our local MP, Saqib Bhatti, marking a significant milestone in our community's history.

The feedback has been overwhelmingly positive, with many locals and station users praising the stunning restoration. Come and experience the beautiful new ticket hall for yourself!

Grants available

One of the ways in which DDRA has supported our local community over the years is by giving grants to local individuals (especially younger people) who need funding to enable them, for example, to volunteer with a charity abroad, or attend an international scouting event.

We have also given grants to a number of local organisations organising activities and raising funds for things which will help to enhance our local community life.

If you would like to request this sort of help, please email me, Jane Holt, via our email address dorridgeresidents@gmail.com and we can discuss it.

Dorridge Probus Club

A Probus club is a local association for retired and semi-retired business and professional individuals. Originating in the 1960s, Probus now spans the globe, offering a non-political, non-sectarian, and non-profit platform for retirees to socialise, make new friends, and pursue their interests. The name combines "PROfessional" and "BUSiness."

Founded in 1975 as Knowle and Dorridge Probus, the Dorridge Probus Club became independent when Knowle formed its own club. Dorridge Probus meets at Copt Heath Golf Club on the first Tuesday of each month at 12 noon, with lunch at 12.45 followed by an illustrated talk. Our meetings feature a variety of informative and entertaining speakers on diverse topics, including local and current affairs. June and December meetings welcome ladies, with the December meeting highlighted by a festive three-course lunch.

We invite retired individuals seeking knowledge and good company to join us. We especially welcome the recently retired to bring fresh perspectives. Visit our website at Probus Dorridge or contact us at dorridge.probus@gmail.com for more information and membership inquiries.

Knowle, Dorridge and Bentley Heath Neighbourhood Forum

We are delighted to announce that our profile and reach across the KDBH area continue to grow, with a high level of engagement from attendance at local community events. Forum membership has increased by over 18% in the past twelve months, which is most encouraging. A huge thank you to all who have joined as members.

Planning Matters

Unfortunately, there is no progress to report at present regarding the Solihull Local Plan. The Plan remains in abeyance, although the Council has recently written again to the Inspectors to explore 'pragmatic solutions' for a resumption without the need to identify further Green Belt land releases. A reply from the Inspectors is still awaited. Given the situation with the forthcoming general election on Thursday 4th July, it would be surprising if a response were received before then. We are continuing to monitor the situation and will update you as soon as we hear anything.

Neighbourhood Plan Review

The Neighbourhood Plan for KDBH was approved in April 2019 with a 96% approval vote at the referendum. We have recently reviewed the entire Plan in detail and opened initial consultations with the Council, members, and residents. We have completed a comprehensive Housing Needs Assessment, available to view on our website. While some outstanding items remain, including housing, Environmental, and Habitats Regulation assessments, once these are complete, we expect to progress to the first formal consultation stage. This will need to be timed relative to

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the Local Plan Examination. Our Neighbourhood Plan remains a 'living' document, subject to regular review and improvement, and is referenced in local planning applications.

Community Actions Audit

We have undertaken an audit on the current state of Community Actions, set out in Appendix 4 of the Neighbourhood Plan. Several actions are being progressed, including resident surveys on mobile phone and broadband usage, roads, footpaths, signs, and cycling issues, as well as an audit of our heritage assets. The Council has launched a borough-wide review of such assets. If you have comments on buildings or local features of interest that should be protected, please respond to the Council. A list of current heritage assets locally is detailed in Appendix 5 of the Neighbourhood Plan, available on our website: (<https://www.kdbh-np.org>).

Funding for Neighbourhood CIL Projects

We are hopeful to hear about available funding pots for Neighbourhood CIL (NCIL) projects within July. These funds may offset the adverse effects of development in the Knowle and Dorridge (including Bentley Heath) Wards. We are optimistic for good news to build on the success of previous years, where projects totalling over £200,000 have provided tangible benefits to our community.

Call for Membership and Volunteers

We have a couple of requests for readers of the DDRA Newsletter: Join the KDBH Neighbourhood Forum - if you are not yet a member, you can join for free by completing a short application form on our website (<https://www.kdbh-np.org/forum-1>). We would be delighted to have you on board, and you will receive regular updates on our activities and matters affecting your local community.

Volunteer Opportunities - we are looking to build on our community engagement in the KDBH area. If you have skills in Web support, IT, or Marketing & Communications and are interested in helping to shape and organise Forum Community Events, please email us your contact details (kdbhforum@gmail.com). We are a friendly, dedicated group passionate about ensuring that any new development in our community is appropriate and that our three villages are the best they can be for now and future generations. You can play an important and exciting part in shaping that future.

**Retired or semi-retired?
If so, join the South Solihull u3a!**

Join a friendly community of retired and semi-retired individuals dedicated to enjoying their third age years. With over 25 new members in the past year, it's clear they offer something special for new retirees.


The group meets monthly at Bentley Heath Community Centre, on the second Monday at 1.45pm, with meetings starting at 2.00pm. These gatherings feature a variety of speakers on diverse topics, and members can enjoy tea, coffee, and biscuits while socialising. Special events like Christmas and national celebrations also provide opportunities for festive gatherings.

South Solihull u3a boasts a wide range of activities each month, catering to diverse interests. Groups include Walking, Gardening, Keep Fit, Racketball, Philosophy, Science, Local History, French and German conversation, Theatre and Music, Art Appreciation, Play Reading, Book Clubs, Family History, Current Affairs, and an International Dining Club. A new Information Technology group helps members develop digital skills. New groups can form easily based on members' interests.

If you want your third age to be fun, busy, and sociable, visit their website at www.ssu3a.org or contact Richard Walton, the Membership Secretary, at membershipssu3a@yahoo.com. Attend an upcoming meeting on 8th July or 12th August and introduce yourself at the Admin Desk—they look forward to welcoming you!

DDRA newsletter deliveries

This newsletter is delivered to your door free of charge by one of a band of about forty volunteers who very kindly deliver it three times a year to the four thousand homes in Dorridge and Bentley Heath. At the moment I have a full complement of deliverers, but usually some are away on holiday when it comes to delivery time. It would be helpful to have a reserve list of volunteers who would fill in for absentees and then become regular deliverers when a vacancy occurs (as it does quite frequently). If you are willing to be on my reserve list, please get in touch via email or phone. Your help would be greatly appreciated. Thank you. - David Aldis dcaldis14@gmail.com 01564 773437



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If you prefer to pay membership of £4 per person per calendar year by cash or cheque (payable to DDRA) please deliver to our Membership Secretary Jane Holt at 217 Widney Road, Bentley Heath B93 9BW

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