



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** <<<<

Visit Knowle AGM November 13th

Join Visit Knowle for the Annual General Meeting, followed by informal networking at Knowle British Legion at 6 p.m. on November 13th 2024. Meet fellow Knowle businesses and the Visit Knowle team.

Christmas Fair at St Philip's & St James' Church

The Christmas Fair at St Philip's & St James' Church is on Saturday 16th November, from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Discover a variety of homemade crafts, unique Christmas gifts, a festive raffle, and more! Refreshments will be available, so bring your friends and family along for a cosy and festive day out. Don't miss the chance to kick off the holiday season and find some special treats.

Knowle & Dorridge Santa Sleigh 2024

Knowle & Dorridge Round Table are proud to announce the dates and scheduled routes for the 2024 Santa Sleigh.

We are sharing this in the hope that the maximum number of children will get to enjoy waving to Santa as he drives past their own front door on his Sleigh! As they did last year, Santa's elves will be knocking on doors, collecting food or cash donations that will then go to support local good causes and food banks. If you don't have cash, then you can donate through SMS and online donations.

Santa would love to be with every child at 6.30 pm but he has to save his magic for Christmas Eve. We hope staying up for him when he visits your road will be worth it, even if it's a little later than normal bed time.

We have a Facebook page www.facebook.com/KandDRT/ where you can keep up to date with Santa as circumstances sometimes force him to change his plans at the last moment! You can see full details of the route maps at <https://kandd.org.uk/santa/>

If you have any questions or would like to get involved in Round Table please get in touch.

Bentley Heath Christmas Lights Switch-On

Join us for a festive evening on Thursday November 21st to celebrate the Bentley Heath Christmas Lights Switch-on, right outside Eric Lyons and Kelly's Deli! Bring the whole family to enjoy:

- A Meet & Greet with Santa
- A live performance by the Sing! Bentley Heath Choir
- Carols and Christmas songs led by a live band
- Treats and festive nibbles from local shopkeepers.

Festivities will kick off at 4:30 p.m. For a detailed schedule, visit the DDRA website at ddra.org.uk.

The DDRA Committee extends a heartfelt thank you to everyone involved in making this event possible. A special thanks goes to Steve of Santa's Fields and Steve's Christmas Trees for generously providing the Christmas trees at the heart of both Bentley Heath and Dorridge.

We look forward to seeing you there for a magical start to the Christmas season!

Dorridge Christmas Lights Switch-On

The much-anticipated Dorridge Christmas Lights Switch-On will be held on Monday 25th November 2024 at 5:30 p.m. in Dorridge Village Centre!

Hosted by Mat Bullock, this festive evening will include a special visit from Santa Claus and the exciting "Big Switch-On" to light up Dorridge. Along with the stunning Christmas lights display, there will be live festive music from Shed Men Walking to set the holiday mood.

The event also features a Food, Bar & Mini Fun Fair, perfect for families and friends to enjoy seasonal treats, festive drinks, and fun activities for all ages. Don't miss this wonderful community event that marks the start of the Christmas season. It's a great way to get into the festive spirit, enjoy an evening out, and create lasting holiday memories!

For more information, visit:
www.facebook.com/dorridgexmaslights.

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Knowle Christmas Lights Switch-On & Late Night Shopping

The ever popular Christmas Lights Switch-On & Late Night Shopping Night is scheduled for Wednesday November 27th!

With entertainment starting at around 4 p.m. and Knowle Parish Church & Father Christmas leading us in the countdown for the grand switch-on, it's always a popular evening. Throughout the afternoon & evening shops, salons, coffee shops & restaurants have lots of exciting plans for the night & many will be staying open late so that you can stay for some Christmas shopping followed by refreshments.

Father Christmas Comes to Knowle

Visit Knowle are excited to share the news that Father Christmas is taking a break from his Christmas preparations to meet & greet shoppers in Knowle on the morning of Saturday 14th December. Keep your eyes peeled as he strolls around the village & stop for a chat when you see him!

The Strolling Players Present: "Sing a Song at Christmas"

The Strolling Players have been singing in 4-part harmony since 1984, and for the last 40 years they've called Knowle Village Hall home. The group consists of 21 singers with a diverse repertoire that includes Songs from the Shows, Folk music, Opera, Ballads, and more, with a special focus on Gilbert and Sullivan. Each year, they proudly support a different charity.

The Strolling Players are not just about singing – they're a joyful group! Weekly rehearsals are filled with laughter, and they enjoy plenty of social events, often in back gardens, which is where the group first started.

On Saturday December 7th, the Players will present their annual festive performance, "Sing a Song at Christmas", at Knowle Village Hall. The programme will include a wide range of music, such as "Adiemus" by Karl Jenkins, a Nice'n'Easy medley, selections from The Beatles and Miss Saigon, and, of course, plenty of seasonal music.

The concert begins at 2:30 p.m. Tickets are £10.00, available by calling 01564 777634.

For more details, contact Stephen Yeomans at 01564 778163.

Knowle, Dorridge and Bentley Heath Neighbourhood Forum

Are you a member of the KDBH Neighbourhood Forum? If not, you can join for free by going onto our website and completing a short application form (<https://www.kdbh-np.org/forum-1>). We would be delighted to have you on board and you will receive regular newsletter updates on our

activities and matters that affect your local community.

We are delighted to announce that two new members have recently been recruited which is an excellent outcome. We are, however, still looking for someone with communications skills to support the Forum so if you would like to help to contribute to shaping the future of our community and can spare a little time please send us a short email at kdbhforum@gmail.com with your contact details and we will get straight back to you.

World Cup of Stations 2024

The annual World Cup of Stations competition, organised by Rail Delivery Group, was established in 2019 to celebrate great stations across the UK. The competition challenges carefully shortlisted stations - this year, 48 of them - to battle it out head-to-head in an online public vote. Each year there is a special emphasis, and this year's competition celebrated the variety of local businesses in and around railway stations and the benefits they bring to their communities and economies.

Small businesses are the heart and soul of train stations up and down the country, playing a vital role in serving their local communities, regular commuters and day trippers on a daily basis, and creating job opportunities

Our station in Dorridge is certainly to be celebrated and treasured, and we are fortunate to have an excellent station master in Fraser Carter, and, as highlighted in the last DDRA newsletter, the waiting room and entrance foyer underwent a beautiful transformation. But the business that in particular was being highlighted in this year's entry was the station's café, Espresso, an independent coffee shop serving artisan coffee and food all day, including freshly baked pastries, made-to-order paninis, and toasties, amongst other menu delights.

Dorridge Station made it through the preliminary rounds all the way to the final on Friday 18th October, where, during the course of the day, a tense, nail-biting battle took place between Dorridge, Maghull (Merseyside) and King's Lynn (Norfolk). At 9.00 p.m. the voting progress was hidden, and everyone was kept in suspense until Friday 25th October when the results were announced.

And sadly, we were pipped at the post by Maghull! However, we would like to thank everyone who voted – it was a valiant effort. Congratulations to Maghull, and who knows, maybe we will try again next year!

Defibrillator News

A new defibrillator for community access was received & installed at Dorridge Village Hall recently, replacing the previous one which was nearing the end of its useful life. Three DDRA committee members, together with local

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participants of Sarah's Zumba & Zumba Gold classes, were there to mark the occasion.

A defibrillator like this, ready & available for community access, can make the difference between life & death. Its prompt use can double the chance of someone's survival.

Dorridge & District Residents' Association have funded 4 community defibrillators in our area for over 10 years now. They are in various locations: on the walls at the butcher's in Bentley Heath (was Vernon James, now Eric Lyons), Bentley Heath Community Centre, Dorridge Village Hall and outside Sainsbury's supermarket in the centre of Dorridge.

Each defibrillator is kept in a protective cabinet on an outside wall, so that it is available 24/7. They are linked into the West Midlands Ambulance Service's Circuit and each one is accessed by keycode, which is given when an emergency 999 call is made; the ambulance service will be able to locate the defibrillator nearest to where the call is coming from.

Local Community First Responders from FastAid regularly check that the device is rescue-ready & are also notified when it is used.

Our next free Heartstart (Basic Life Support & Defibrillator Training) session is taking place at Dorridge Village Hall on Friday 29th November, 7-9 p.m.

The aim of the session is to help you to know what to do if you see someone collapse.

If you'd like to book a place on this session, email Jane Holt at dorridgeresidents@gmail.com

Buses could be under local control by 2027

Bus services across the West Midlands could be under public control by 2027, the mayor has announced. The proposed franchise model would allow Transport for West Midlands (TfWM) to control routes, timetables, fares, and service standards. A final decision is expected by March 2025, following an independent audit and public consultation later this year, with an estimated transition cost of £22m.

Labour mayor, Richard Parker, who campaigned on this policy, said: "Our buses are failing. The West Midlands is paying an additional £50m subsidy every year to private operators, and yet they increase prices and cut services year-on-year... This has to change."

Under the franchise model, bus companies would bid for contracts, but TfWM would decide on key details like fares and schedules. If approved, the transition will take two years, affecting services across Wolverhampton, Birmingham, Solihull, and Coventry. TfWM is working with bus operators to maintain services during the transition, though some changes to routes and services are expected from January, as current subsidy agreements with operators expire at the end of December.

Dorridge Railway Station refurbishments

The new information screen at the side entrance of the station is now up and running! This is a valuable resource for those using the car park and entering the station from that direction.

Refurbishment work is also scheduled for both the gents' and ladies' toilets, and there are plans to lift and refit the flooring in the waiting room on Platform 2 and 3, which has been affected by flooding on at least two occasions.

Fraser also wanted to give thanks for the community's support during the World Cup of Stations. It has been absolutely incredible and makes him very proud, so thank you all for your continued enthusiasm and involvement.

Join the Ladies Circle today

Ladies Circle is a club for women aged 18-45, offering a fantastic way to meet like-minded people, have fun, and support the local community. The group meets on the 1st and 3rd Tuesdays of the month at various locations for activities such as Hot Pod Yoga, Ghetto Golf, Escape Rooms, Cocktail Nights, and more.

Alongside their social events, they also support local charities through volunteer fundraising, recently helping Solihull Mind, a mental health organisation in the area.

For more information, contact them via

Twitter: [@KDLadiesCircle](https://twitter.com/KDLadiesCircle)

or Facebook: facebook.com/knowleddorridge

Festive Christmas Walk

Feeling the effects of too many mince pies and too much TV over Christmas? Get some fresh air and stretch your legs on our 31st Festive Walk on 27th December, starting at 9:30 a.m. from Dorridge Village Hall, concluding at Dorridge Cricket Club.

Choose from a gentle 3 or 6-mile sign-posted stroll through the beautiful local countryside. It's free to join, but donations for local causes are welcome. Maps can be collected from and donations made at the Village Hall, and don't forget to come back and claim your certificate on your return!

Bring your friends, your dog, and all the family - everyone is welcome. Kids will love hunting for hidden lions on our Festive Safari, and walkers can enjoy a well-deserved drink and bite to eat at Dorridge Cricket Club at the end of the walk.

We can't promise sunshine, but we can promise a fun day out! For more details, visit www.knowledgeanddorridgelions.com.

Improving Dorridge Community Gardens

Dorridge Gardening Group is a small team of volunteers who look after the garden area on the slope between Skogen and



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the station, and the smaller area on Grange Road opposite Station Approach, under the aegis of the DDRA.

The Station Approach area is on quite a steep slope, so soil slowly spills on to the pavement on Station Approach. Plants put near the border are also vulnerable to people treading on them. One way to reduce soil spillage would be to put raised edging along the demarcation line of the soil bed between it and the pavement. This is along the boundary between land owned by Network Rail and the pavement owned by the Council, so both would need to give permission.

The two benches along the Station Approach slope need either refurbishment, if possible, or replacing. DDRA is happy to support this scheme in principle, as it will be helpful to our team of gardeners and help to make the areas more sustainable in the long run.

In September, a small group of DDRA committee members and people from the Gardening Group met with our supportive local Councillor Sally Tomlinson, and Sarah Ashford, the Visit Solihull Manager from the Economy & Infrastructure Directorate at Solihull Council, to discuss these ideas. Sarah is currently waiting to hear back from Chiltern Railways/ Network Rail, but in the meantime is arranging for some planter tubs to be put on the pavement at the corner of Grange Road and Station Approach to cheer up the area and discourage parking of cars on the pavements there.

The Gardening Group would really welcome some new members – many hands make light work! If you would be interested in joining them, please email Jane Holt at dorridgeresidents@gmail.com and she will put you in touch with them.

DDRA would also welcome constructive comments about this proposed scheme and other ideas that would improve the Dorridge Centre area – if you have such ideas, please contact us via the above email!

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 knowleanddorridge.org.uk for more information.

Solihull Council scrap local plan

Solihull's local plan has been withdrawn after a heated Full Council meeting on October 8th. Councillors voted to scrap the current plan and start again, following a recommendation from the Planning Inspectorate due to a shortfall in available land for development.

The plan, which has faced delays since 2022, has encountered several challenges, including disagreements over housing numbers and land supply, as well as legal battles and changes in government policies. In December 2023, the previous government said councils didn't need to alter Green Belt boundaries to meet housing targets. However, the new Labour government is proposing changes that would require councils to release Green Belt land to meet housing needs.

In addition to meeting its own housing targets, Solihull must also help neighbouring areas that don't have enough land for their housing requirements. Work on creating a new local plan will begin immediately.

REMINDER

Bentley Heath Christmas Lights Switch-On:


Thursday 21st November, 4:30 p.m. outside Eric Lyons and Kelly's Deli.

Dorridge Christmas Lights Switch-On:

Monday 25th November 5:30 p.m. Dorridge Village Centre.

Knowle Christmas Lights Switch-On & Late Night Shopping:

Wednesday, 27th November, entertainment starts at 4:00 p.m. Knowle Parish Church.



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