



THE Newsletter

DORRIDGE & DISTRICT RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

FOR THE RESIDENTS OF DORRIDGE, BENTLEY HEATH AND FOUR ASHES

• 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** <<<<

If you have any stories or announcements you'd like featured, please contact us at dorridgeresidents@gmail.com. Thank you.

News from the DDRA AGM

At our AGM on 19th March 2025 at Ye Olde Knowle Bowling Club, we welcomed a strong turnout of residents and visitors from Knowle, Dorridge, Bentley Heath and surrounding villages. Unsurprisingly, most were eager to hear more about the planned housing developments set to affect our area - particularly the major proposal known as the Arden Triangle.

Aside from a brief recap of the committee's work, finances, and the retirement of Kevin Kane Brooks, the evening focused on expansion plans for the three villages.

The most significant of these is the Arden Triangle - a large site south of Knowle, bounded by Grove Road, Old Warwick Road, and Station Road, with Arden Academy to the north. Plans include a substantial number of homes and a new educational facility.

Representatives from DDRA, KDBH, and the B93 Facebook group were joined by local residents and three Solihull councillors: Ian Courts, Andy Mackiewicz, and Sally Tomlinson.

Roger Cook of KDBH gave an overview of the site and explained the pressure being placed on local councils by the central government. The message was clear: if local authorities don't allocate land for development, the government will intervene, including the reclassification of some Green Belt land as "Grey Belt" where it's not being used 'effectively'.

Councillors Courts and Mackiewicz echoed this concern. And while no formal applications had been submitted at the time of the meeting, two have now been received:

Taylor Wimpey site: PL/2025/00155/PPOL

Kier site: PL/2023/02294/PPOL

These can be viewed on the Solihull Planning Portal:

<https://publicaccess.solihull.gov.uk/online-applications/>

Among the various documents, the Design & Access Statement is often the most helpful. It outlines the design rationale, proposed materials, how the site will be used, and how it fits into its surroundings - all in relatively accessible language. However, current statements deal with individual sites in isolation, without considering how neighbouring proposals might affect one another.

Construction is expected to cause considerable disruption. Issues such as access routes, congestion on Knowle High Street, narrow roads near the sites, and the low bridge in Dorridge are all cause for concern.

KDBH has submitted detailed responses, which can be found on their website: <https://www.kdbh-np.org>

For those interested, Solihull Council has also published an interactive

planning map showing potential development land, Green Belt included:

<https://solihull-mbc.maps.arcgis.com/apps/dashboards/906f0c69fb5e41cb84b56d959f4d4db5>

The map can be tricky to navigate, but clicking on any plot reveals further information in a side panel.

The full article with pictures will be available on the DDRA website.

Concerns raised over scale of future housing

As reported above, the Knowle, Dorridge and Bentley Heath (KDBH) Neighbourhood Forum has raised concerns about the scale of new housing developments being proposed in the area. According to Forum Chair Roger Cook, more than 1,700 homes are now in the pipeline, significantly more than the 808 previously expected by 2036 under the withdrawn Local Plan.

In Knowle alone, this represents an increase of around 30 percent. Proposed developments include several large sites from major developers such as Inspired Villages, Taylor Wimpey, Kier Group and Gardner Land. These are spread across key locations such as the Arden Triangle, Hampton Road and Blue Lake Road.

The Forum has noted that recent changes to national planning policy, including the relaxation of Green Belt protections, are contributing to the pace and scale of development. There is particular concern that the cumulative impact of these proposals could overwhelm the character and infrastructure of the area.

How you can help

Given the scale of current proposals, local engagement is more important than ever. You can support the Forum's work in a number of ways:

- Join the KDBH Neighbourhood Forum to stay up to date and contribute to local responses.
- Contact your local councillors or MP to share your views on recent changes to planning policy and their potential impact.
- Encourage others in the area to get involved by spreading awareness of the issues raised.

Even small actions can help to ensure that the character and infrastructure of our area are not overlooked in future planning decisions.

Meanwhile, the KDBH Neighbourhood Forum continues to monitor planning applications and highlight local views at all appropriate stages of the planning process.

You can read the full article on the Dorridge and District Residents Association (DDRA) website.

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Knowle Library Temporary Closure

Solihull Council are sorry for the inconvenience but Knowle Library needs to close temporarily from Saturday 28th June so that essential roof replacement works can take place. They expect to reopen in January 2026 and will provide further updates later in the year.

While Knowle Library is closed, they will be offering a reduced library service at the Knowle British Legion, 1611 Warwick Road, Knowle, B93 9LU.

Opening times will be:

Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays 10 am - 12 pm.

Saturdays 10 am - 12.30 pm.

Unfortunately, they cannot provide public access to computers or printing at the Knowle British Legion. If you need to use a computer or do some printing, please use another library. The nearest is at The Core, Homer Road, Solihull, B91 3RG.

For more information, please speak with a member of the library team or call 01564 775840.

Love Gate Lane

My name is Gate Lane, a quaint and essential part of most of our daily lives. Most residents know me, use me, and appreciate me. But do you love me as I deserve?

This vista of rural beauty greets us like a warm hug. It is like stepping into our own ‘Secret Garden’ when travelling to or from the M42 corridor - a breathtaking moment to pause, hold, and cherish. It is the gateway to and from Four Ashes, Dorridge, Bentley Heath and beyond.

Sadly, over time, this jewel in the crown became tarnished. The lane became strewn with litter along its entire length, and in numerous places the ditches were choked with fly-tipping.

Two local residents decided to reverse this decline and are determined to restore Gate Lane to the beautiful country lane it once was. Since the end of February this year, they have spent 35 hours cleaning up the lane and have collected a staggering 33 full ‘Love Solihull Green’ sacks. They have also reported numerous fly-tipping incidents to the relevant authorities.

This is still very much a work in progress and every day new litter appears!

An application was recently submitted and granted for local funding to purchase native plants which will enhance the verges and support local wildlife and bee populations. It is hoped that, if the lane looks beautiful and well cared for, people will think twice before dropping litter.

Planting will begin in autumn 2025, with further work planned for spring 2026. Please contact Rachel and team via the DDRA email address dorridgeresidents@gmail.com if you’d like to help with this project. If you’d like to litter-pick safely in other parts of the local area, please register online with Love Solihull via the Solihull Council website. Many hands make light work!

Many thanks to Karen Allen for highlighting the funding opportunity on the B93 Facebook group, to DDRA, especially Jane Holt, for supporting the application, to Love Solihull, and to everyone who has expressed their appreciation.

Let’s all LOVE GATE LANE and continue to value our precious green spaces. *Rachel Lamerton.*

Please help us enhance our local community life!

The Dorridge & District Residents’ Association (DDRA) was founded in 1961. Its aim is to support community life in our local area and improve

it where possible. The DDRA currently has about 400 members, who pay £4 each per year. At present, there are only 6 of us on the DDRA committee. We meet about every 6 weeks to discuss local issues and think about how we might address them.

- We produce a local newsletter 3 times a year; this is delivered by a team of volunteers to over 4,000 houses in the Dorridge, Bentley Heath and Four Ashes area. The newsletter is funded by local advertisers.
- We maintain 4 local defibrillators and facilitate local training sessions in CPR run by our local first responders once or twice a year.
- We organise the annual Christmas Lights switch-on at the Bentley Heath shops; this attracts a sizeable crowd and there is a good family atmosphere.
- We support a team of gardening volunteers who look after some of the planting in Dorridge and Bentley Heath village centres.
- We monitor local planning applications, liaising with the KDBH Forum about larger proposals.

This is all good, but we could really do with some more people with ideas and energy to enable us to do all this and more. Please give it some thought. If you have ideas for our local community, and are prepared to help make them happen, we’d love to hear from you!

If you are interested in joining the committee, please email Jane Holt at dorridgeresidents@gmail.com for further information.

Coffee, Conversations & Community

Join Sian, the Solihull Council Community Development Worker for our area at Hockley Heath Pavilion, Old Warwick Road, B94 6HH between 10 and 12 on the following dates: 15th July, 12th August, 9th September & 7th October.

Stop by for a cuppa, meet Sian and find out how she and her team are working to bring communities together. Whether you’re looking to start a group, need help to find local groups, need to find funding or volunteers for an existing group, or would like to connect with local support, they’re here to help! Come and say hello, have a chat, and make a difference together. Sian would love to see you! If you have any questions please email: cddt@solihull.gov.uk or call 07721236256.

Dorridge Village Hall Association needs you!

Dorridge Village Hall was built in 1975 and subsequently the Dorridge Village Hall Association (DVHA) was formed to maintain, develop, and manage the Hall and to promote it for the benefit of Dorridge and the surrounding area by fostering a community spirit. The Association has its own constitution and is run by a committee of voluntary officers and user representatives. A number of our voluntary officers have recently retired, and the Association is looking to recruit more voluntary officers. In particular:

1. A new secretary whose role would be to organise meetings (including the agendas) of the voluntary officers and user representatives, and to take minutes of the meetings. There are about 6 meetings a year, including the AGM. Ideally, but not essentially, a secretary would update the Association’s Charity Commission information.
2. Individuals to liaise with the booking secretary, to open and close the premises before and after bookings.
3. A vice chair to stand in for the chairman in his absence and to undertake individual jobs within the Association.

Anyone interested in supporting this vital community resource in any way should contact the Chairman: Robert Beckham, by email: chairman@dorridgevillagehall.org, or by phone: 07802 760809

Our AGM is on Monday 18th August at 7 30 pm in the Village Hall. Everyone is welcome.

Dorridge Day 2025

Join us for this years Dorridge Day as we celebrate the 51st anniversary of this much-loved local event. Taking place on Sunday 14th September from 11 am to 4 pm, this year promises to be bigger and better than ever with a packed line-up of entertainment, activities and community spirit.

Dorridge Day began life as the Dorridge Day Fête, first held on Saturday 14th September 1974 by the Village Hall Committee to raise funds for local causes including the Village Hall and the Scout and Guide buildings.

In 1980, Gordon Harvey took on the role of Chairman on behalf of Knowle and Dorridge Round Table, and since then the Round Table has continued to lead the event each year.

From its humble beginnings, Dorridge Day has grown into a cherished community tradition, bringing together neighbours, families and friends to celebrate everything that makes our area special.

There will be performances from local groups, a vibrant selection of stalls (from traditional market fare to local interest organisations), fête games, and the ever-popular inflatables for the kids.

Our food vendors will be back to keep everyone well fed throughout the day and, for the grown-ups, there will be a variety of adult refreshments to enjoy. The day will close with the traditional water fight, so make sure the kids come prepared.

Advance tickets are available now. Buy online to skip the queues and get a discount on the on-the-day price.

Dorridge Day Classic Car Show

The Dorridge Day Classic Car Show is back again, so we are inviting owners with classic cars, lorries and bikes to display their vehicles.

Therefore if you have a 25 year old classic vehicle or older (pre-2001) and are prepared to show it at Dorridge Day, register your interest by sending us an email at dorridgeday.classics@gmail.com with the subject “Dorridge Day Classic Car” with your name, the make and model, and the year.

Thanks in advance!

Memory Café at Birchmere Mews Care Home

Did you know there’s a monthly Memory Café at Birchmere Mews Care Home, 1270A Warwick Road, Knowle, B93 9LQ?

Held on the first Tuesday of every month, from 10.30 am to 12.00 pm, the café is open to anyone affected by dementia or other cognitive difficulties, whether you’re living with it yourself or supporting someone who is.

Join them for complimentary refreshments and pastries in a relaxed, friendly space. The team at Birchmere Mews understands how important it is to feel connected and supported, which is why they’ve created a welcoming environment where people can meet, chat, and share experiences.

The Memory Café offers a calm, inclusive space that helps to reduce isolation and encourages meaningful interaction. All are welcome; no need to book.

If you have any questions, give them a call on 01564 732660.

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Garden Waste Collections – important update

Solihull Council has announced that from Monday 7th July 2025, garden waste collections will no longer be free. If you would like to continue having your garden waste collected, you will need to subscribe to the service and pay a fee. Once you've subscribed, you'll receive a permit sticker to place on your green bin.

Bins without a valid sticker will not be emptied. Subscriptions are valid from July 2025 to June 2026.

To subscribe or find out more, visit: www.solihull.gov.uk/Rubbish-and-recycling/Garden-waste

Other ways to manage your garden waste

If you'd prefer not to subscribe, there are several alternatives for handling garden waste at home:

Home composting: most garden waste can be composted at home. It's an easy, eco-friendly way to reduce waste and improve your soil. Solihull Council's composting advice and bin purchase details: www.solihull.gov.uk/Rubbish-and-recycling/Composting. More tips and guides can be found at Garden Organic: www.gardenorganic.org.uk/composting

Making leaf mould: fallen leaves can be used to make leaf mould, a fantastic natural soil conditioner. It's simple and requires minimal effort. Learn how at: www.gardenorganic.org.uk/leafmould

Grasscycling / mulch mowing: leave grass clippings on the lawn when mowing to let them break down naturally and feed the soil. More information is available at: www.warwickshire.gov.uk/grasscycling

A buzzing success at Bentley Heath Park

Back in early May, Bentley Heath Park welcomed a charming new addition - a bug hotel, carefully designed and built by the Eco Committee of Bentley Heath Primary School. Officially opened by the Mayor of Solihull on Friday 9th May, the project brought together pupils, staff, contractors from Veolia, and the Love Solihull team for a celebration of nature, community, and creativity.

The children's enthusiasm was clear from the moment the ribbon was cut. After admiring their handiwork, they helped to scatter 0.5 kg of wildflower seeds across the soil behind the bug hotel. The seeds were tamped down by the pupils themselves, and over the past few weeks, helped along by the rain, those efforts have begun to take root.

Now, as we move into summer, the wildflower area is coming to life, creating a colourful, pollinator-friendly backdrop to the bug hotel. It's a small but meaningful contribution to local biodiversity and a lovely enhancement to this much-loved green space.

Projects like this are a reminder of what can be achieved when the community comes together and how even the smallest structures can have a big impact.

Solihull Council continues to maintain over 1.1 million square metres of meadows, wildlife corridors and conservation areas across the borough, including its 17 Green Flag Award-winning parks.

Visit Knowle Summer Ball - Saturday 16th August 2025

Silk dresses, sharp suits, swing music, and sparkling conversation, get ready to step into the golden age of glamour at Knowle's 1940s Summer Ball!

Date: Saturday 16th August **Time:** Doors open at 7pm

Location: Old Sil's, Warwick Road, Knowle, B93 9LW

1940s Dress Code: Pull out your best wartime-era fashion! Think swing dresses, victory rolls, military tailoring, and red lips. There'll be prizes for the best dressed, so don't hold back! Having said that, if that's not your thing, simply dress to impress.

Three-Course Meal: Forget rations, this is more indulgence. Enjoy a delectable dinner that's been thoughtfully planned to make your night even more delicious.

Live Swing Music & DJ Sets: Dance the night away to a live swinging set by Alex Norman. Later in the evening, the DJ will keep the good times rolling with party favourites to keep the floor full.

Raffle: With amazing prizes to be won and all proceeds going towards local community projects, it's a win-win!

Artizan Bazaar at Baddesley Clinton

Saturday 20th and Sunday 21st Sept 2025 - 10.00 am to 4.00 pm

Baddesley Clinton, Rising Lane, Knowle, B93 0DQ

Enjoy a weekend of unique shopping and local creativity at the Artizan Bazaar at Baddesley Clinton.

This two-day event brings together a selection of talented independent artists, makers and small businesses, offering a wonderful variety of handcrafted goods. From handmade gifts to artisan homeware, it's the perfect opportunity to browse something special in a beautiful historic setting.

No booking required, free entry to the event (Normal National Trust admission applies), and free for members.

Whether you're looking for a thoughtful gift or simply want to enjoy a relaxed day out, the Artizan Bazaar promises a lovely way to spend your weekend. For more information: www.nationaltrust.org.uk/visit/warwickshire/baddesley-clinton



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