



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.

Bentley Heath Community Centre

Bentley Heath Community Hall is urgently in need of new volunteer committee members to join the existing team. Duties are not onerous: four committee meetings a year plus AGM, and occasional brief checking visits. Decisions are made to monitor expenditure and decide on future projects and upkeep.

Is there anyone out there locally, perhaps recently retired, who can spare an hour now and then to help. We do need to keep this valuable local resource alive. If interested, please contact the secretary via <https://bentleyheathhall.co.uk/contact-us>

Basic Life Support Training Session

Alison Routledge and our local first responder team, FastAid, will be holding a basic life support training session in Dorridge Village Hall on Friday 14th November 7-9pm.

This aims to teach people what to do in various medical emergency situations, including what to do if you see someone collapsed, when it is appropriate to use a defibrillator and how to do that. It's much easier to know what to do in such a situation if you have had some training.

If you would like to come to this session, please email Jane Holt at dorridgeresidents@gmail.com

People who have been to this or similar sessions in the past and would like a refresher are also very welcome to join us. There is no charge for the session, but donations are always welcome, as the FastAid team are all volunteers and need to buy equipment for what they do. There will be a bucket to take cash donations at the session!

Visit Knowle Events

Visit Knowle invites you to join its AGM and informal networking event at Knowle British Legion at 6pm on November 12th 2025 to find out more about their work and their plans for 2026.

Their Quiz Night is on Friday 14th November, 7 p.m. at the Knowle British Legion where you can test your knowledge with teams of between four & six people, or join others there if you haven't got a ready-made team. Includes Fish & Chip Supper from the Knowle Fish Bar. Book your tickets at <https://visitknowle.co.uk/events/>

There is also the first ever NOEL Market, a festive artisan event on Station Road, Knowle, on Saturday 6th December from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Discover beautifully crafted, one-of-a-kind Christmas gifts from local makers.

Connecting Communities - Mental Health and Wellbeing Event

Solihull's Community Development Team would like to invite you to their Mental Health and Wellbeing marketplace. Taking place on Thursday 13 November 2025 between 1 and 3 p.m. at The Core library, Homer Road, Touchwood, Solihull, B91 3RG, this event is open to residents and any groups or organisations to find out what support & activities are available for adults in Solihull. There will be a range of organisations & services providing information, support & signposting. If you have any questions, please email: cdt@solihull.gov.uk.

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

The Christmas Fair at St Philip's & St James' Church is on Saturday 22nd 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.

Seasonal Events At Dorridge Methodist Church

Advent Breakfast Saturday 29th November, 8:45am for 9am. Come to enjoy food and company, and to hear the fascinating story of Anji Barker who journeyed from Australia across 3 continents to settle in a community in Winson Green where she and her husband advocate for justice and equip local leaders to transform urban neighbourhoods. Tickets cost £10 pp. Book your place at office@dorridgemethodists.org.uk.

Forget Me Not Carols held in partnership with Dorridge Memory Café. Tuesday 9th December 11.30am with coffee/mince pies from 11am.

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Knowle & Dorridge Santa Sleigh 2025

Ho, Ho, Ho! Knowle & Dorridge Round Table are thrilled to be bringing Santa back to B93 again this year. We want the maximum number of children 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. 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/>

Christmas Lights Events

As usual this year there are three community Christmas events for your diaries:

Thurs 20th Nov 4.30 pm Bentley Heath Christmas Lights Switch-on

Bring the whole family to enjoy our annual event outside Lyons' butchers, Bentley Heath, which promises to be full of festive cheer, with community carol singing accompanied by a wind band, a guest appearance of Knowle Male Voice Choir, the Christmas lights switch-on, nibbles and mulled wine, and last but not least, Meet'n'Greet Santa and photo shoot.

Mon 1st Dec Dorridge Christmas Lights Switch-on with entertainment and Father Christmas. Details to be announced.

The DDRA committee would like to thank all those contributing towards making these two events a success. We'd also like to thank Steve of Santa's Fields and Steve's Christmas Trees for the generous donation of a Christmas tree for each centre.

Thurs 27th Nov 4.00 pm onwards Knowle Christmas Lights Switch-on, with music and entertainment, Father Christmas, and late-night shopping. See Visit Knowle website for more details.

Solihull Twinning Association (STA)

Many of you will have visited Paris or Berlin and know something about these famous capitals. However, like London, they only partly reflect their countries. If you'd like a more authentic experience of France or Germany, the Solihull Twinning Association (STA) could be for you.

Members stay with local people in Cholet or the Main-Taunus district and explore the area together. It's a great way to experience everyday life and culture. Friendships grow when STA members act as hosts, welcoming visitors who want to discover Solihull and the local countryside. Language is rarely a problem, though exchanges are a good chance to practise French or German if you wish.

In August 2025, a group from Solihull visited Main-Taunus-

Kreis (MTK), just 15 minutes from Frankfurt. They explored Bad Kreuznach, Saalburg, Mainz, Rüdesheim and Frankfurt itself. A visit to Cholet is planned for May 2026, and in September next year, STA will host guests from MTK. To get involved, visit www.solihulltwinning.org, find STA on Facebook, or call 01564 774618.

Festive Christmas Walk

Had your fill of festive food and films? Stretch your legs and join us for a post-Christmas countryside walk on 27th December, setting off at 9:30 a.m. from Dorridge Village Hall and ending at Dorridge Cricket Club.

Take your pick from a 3- or 6-mile marked route and enjoy a relaxed morning with family, friends and neighbours. Entry is free, but donations to local causes are always appreciated.

Children can join the Festive Safari, hunting for hidden lions, and walkers can unwind with refreshments at the Cricket Club afterwards.

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

Knowle Male Voice Choir: A Year of Song and Giving

Knowle Male Voice Choir has had a fantastic year so far, raising £2,376 for local charities through vibrant Spring and Summer concerts. They were thrilled to perform at the inaugural Solihull Choir Festival, joining voices with the wider community.

This December, they're bringing festive cheer with a Christmas Concert alongside Pop Voices Youth Choir at Dorridge Methodist Church (Dec 6th). The busy month also includes performances at Berkswell Reading Rooms (9th), Knowle & Dorridge Racquets Club (17th), and Knowle & Dorridge Cricket Club (19th). They'll also be singing for residents at local care homes, spreading joy throughout the season with exciting plans for 2026 already underway!

Find out more at www.knowlemalevoicechoir.org.uk, www.facebook.com/knowlemalevoicechoir or contact Haydn at KMVC14@gmail.com.

Dorridge Day Recap

K&D Round Table spent over six months planning Dorridge Day, but there's one thing even the best organisers can't control and that's the great British weather! So, a huge thank you to everyone who braved the downpour and made the day a splash, literally.

Couldn't be there? Don't worry, here's what you missed. As usual we kicked things off in style with the traditional parade of 80 gleaming classic cars cruising from Knowle to Dorridge Park, but then Dorridge Day went full medieval, complete with a knight's village, lively battle re-enactments, and perhaps most importantly, the dramatic (and messy) execution of a whole lot of watermelons!

At its heart, Dorridge Day is all about bringing our community

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together and this year we managed it by bringing together 37 stands from local groups and charities which set the park buzzing while dance groups and the rock choir brought the arena to life. We included more tasty food stands such as bubble tea and noodle bar, the delicious locally sourced Eric Lyons BBQ manned by our friends in 41 Club, and much needed hot drinks and cake that our amazing Ladies Circle served up. In addition, there was a bustling market space of over 40 stalls where you could browse everything from trendy clothes and jewellery to quirky 3D-printed models.

Sadly, the weather ruined our plans for the usual inflatable funfest (we know the kids big and small missed it!), but we still had the climbing wall and there were free fête games manned by the Girl Guiding Members of Knowle and Dorridge. We are crossing our fingers for sunshine next year. If you want to get involved drop us a message or email us at knowleanddorridge@roundtable.org.uk.

Enhance Neighbourhood Security: Join Dorridge Streetwatch

Supported by West Midlands Rural Police, Dorridge StreetWatch relies on local volunteers to help deter crime and anti-social behaviour. If you're 18 or over, you can join at no cost and team up with another member for just two hours of patrolling each month, at times that fit around your day or evening schedule. High-visibility jackets are provided so both neighbours and potential offenders recognise an active patrol.

The more volunteers involved, the stronger the deterrent to crime and anti-social behaviour. The commitment is small, but it's a valuable way to support the community, stay active and meet others locally. Crime prevention is of course something to which we all can contribute by securing our possessions appropriately and also by being on the lookout for suspicious behaviour.

Remember that if an active crime is underway call 999 or if you see something suspicious, report it on 101. Find out more about joining Dorridge StreetWatch by dropping an email to dorridgestreetwatchmembers@gmail.com

Bentley Heath C of E Primary School Wins Prestigious Conservation Award from Chester Zoo

Bentley Heath Primary School has proudly been named an Outstanding Conservation School 2025 by Chester Zoo, recognising the school's exceptional efforts in wildlife conservation and sustainability education.

The award, announced this summer, highlights schools that go above and beyond in inspiring young people to care for the natural world. Bentley Heath particularly impressed judges with its new Conservation Area including eco-classroom made from old plastic bottles, student-led wildlife and gardening projects, and strong community involvement in environmental action. Of particular interest also, was the 'bug hotel' in Bentley Heath Park that was built by children and unveiled by the Mayor earlier this year.

Headteacher Mrs Hannah Cook said, "We are absolutely thrilled to receive this award. Our students are passionate about protecting the planet, and this recognition from Chester Zoo means the world to them and to us as a school community."

The school will now be featured as a case study on Chester Zoo's national education platform, serving as an inspiration for other schools across the UK. Congratulations to all the pupils, staff and families who helped make this achievement possible!

For more information about the school, the fantastic Conservation Area or for admissions information get in touch <https://bentleyheath.bdmat.org.uk/>

Trains, Tickets And Tidbits By Fraser Carter

I am happy to say that the Polar Express trains will run every Saturday and Sunday from 22nd November to 21st December, as well as on 22nd and 23rd December. Timetables are not yet confirmed so keep your eyes peeled!

Also please note that the Birmingham Christmas Market begins on 1st November, and trains from Birmingham, especially in the evenings, are expected to be much busier than usual. Plan ahead where possible. Thanks for your continued care for our lovely station and feel free to pop in for a chat any time.

Action Required Now

In July's newsletter, we highlighted the unprecedented number of housing developments being proposed for Knowle, Dorridge and Bentley Heath. While new homes are an expected part of growth, the scale of what is being put forward is deeply concerning. Our area is being asked to take on a disproportionate number of new homes compared to the rest of the Borough.

Bloor Homes is now proposing up to 350 houses on land bordered by Blue Lake Road, Knowle Wood Road and Grove Road in Dorridge. The resulting congestion and pressure on local infrastructure would be significant, and the character of our area would be permanently altered.

This is in addition to the Arden Triangle development featured in our last edition. Many feel it is only reasonable to understand the impact of that scheme before adding further strain to the community.

A local action group has now been formed, led by residents and supported by professional advisors, to oppose this application as effectively as possible. Membership is growing, but more support is urgently needed. If you would like to help protect our Green Belt and the character of our community, please contact blorposition@gmail.com for more information.

Local Bus Update

The seemingly endless churn of local bus routes and timetables continues! Our local bus group has been sent the following information from our contact at TfWM, and we do think that overall this will improve our local bus services:



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From November 2nd 2025:

A6: Withdrawn

A7: Increased to every 30 minutes and re-routed via Purnells Way and Longdon Road replacing A6

A8: Increased to every 30 minutes and re-routed via Purnells Way and Longdon Road replacing A6

A9: Withdrawn between Blythe Valley and Solihull, Solihull to Kingshurst now operated by Diamond bus.

From January 4th 2026:

73: Solihull to Heartlands Hospital - Withdrawn

A9: Solihull to Kingshurst - Withdrawn

98: New service Solihull to Heartlands Hospital via Lyndon every 30 minutes

99: New service Solihull to Kingshurst via Lyndon, Sheldon every 30 minutes

98/99: Combine to a new 15 minute frequency between Solihull and Lyndon/Sheldon

These changes will simplify the network and increase frequencies and hours of operation where possible. The 118 goes from Solihull to Coventry, passing through Bentley Heath, Dorridge, Knowle and Balsall Common. In September there was a fairly sudden change to the timetable, due to congestion and HS2-related roadworks. The updated timetable is now on the DDRA website but the timetables at the bus stops have not yet been updated, which is very misleading. We have asked that this be done as soon as possible.

The new timetables for the 118 and A7/A8 services are all on the DDRA website ddra.org.uk. The 118 is operated by Stagecoach; the A7/A8 are operated by Landflight.

**KDBH Planning Update: Town vs. Village
– A Strategy to Protect the Green Belt**

Government planning policy is changing and introducing the concept of 'Grey Belt', which refers to Green Belt land judged to be less critical and therefore easier to release for development. A key loophole states that strong Green Belt protections only

apply to land preventing the merger of towns, not villages. As long as KDBH is classed as a village, the surrounding Green Belt is considered weakly protected and at risk of being redesignated as Grey Belt.

To prevent this, the Neighbourhood Forum and Solihull Council propose to classify Knowle, Dorridge and Bentley Heath, with a population close to 20,000, as a single town for planning purposes. This strengthens the Green Belt's status by clearly defining it as the land preventing towns from merging, which triggers the highest level of protection.

Reclassification also means that if development does occur, it must follow strict "Golden Rules" which require meaningful affordable housing and legally binding infrastructure investment through Section 106 agreements.

This strategy aims to protect local character while ensuring any change brings real community benefit rather than uncontrolled sprawl.

A full, comprehensive review of this planning strategy, including detailed analysis of the policy changes, is available on the Scays Newsletter on Substack: <https://scays.substack.com>

REMINDER

Bentley Heath Christmas Lights Switch-On:

Thursday 20th November, 4:30 p.m.
outside Eric Lyons and Kelly's Deli.

Knowle Christmas Lights Switch-On & Late Night Shopping:

Thursday, 27th November, entertainment starts at 4:00 p.m.

Dorridge Christmas Lights Switch-On:

Monday 1st December TBC.


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