



THE Newsletter

DORRIDGE & DISTRICT RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

FOR THE RESIDENTS OF DORRIDGE, BENTLEY HEATH AND FOUR ASHES

• 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** <<<<

News from the DDRA AGM

Our Annual General Meeting (AGM) was held at Ye Olde Knowle Bowling Club, Dorridge, on Wednesday 18 th March, starting at 7.30pm.

30 people attended, including all 3 of our local councillors.

Minutes from the 2025 AGM were circulated and agreed, and a report was given about what the committee had been doing recently, including our support of the LoveGateLane scheme. The accounts for the year ending 31 st December 2025 were presented. The committee was then elected, followed by an update on the work of the KDBH Forum with regards to local planning issues given by their new Chair, Nigel Moore, which was followed by lively discussion from the floor.

Grants available!

DDRA has funding available that we are able to use for grants towards local individuals, particularly young people, participating in an event that will develop skills which will be useful to their communities – for example we have in the past contributed to funding of people attending international Scouting events.

We are also able to contribute part-funding to projects that will improve our local community in some way.

Please email me at dorridgeresidents@gmail.com if either of these applies to you!

Jane Holt, Treasurer

Opportunity to join the DDRA committee!

We would very much welcome new members onto the DDRA committee to help us support our local community.

We already do quite a few things:

- produce and circulate the newsletter 3 times a year
- maintain 4 local defibrillators, with assistance from the local FastAid team
- organise the Bentley Heath Christmas Lights switch-on
- maintain the Christmas lights around the Bentley Heath shops
- support volunteers to look after the Station Approach garden areas in Dorridge and replenish the tubs at the Slater Road/ Widney Road crossroads in Bentley Heath
- work with the KDBH Forum on planning applications affecting our neighbourhood
- join with people from Knowle Society to lobby for improvements to our local bus services

but with more people involved, bringing their energy and fresh

ideas, we are aware that even more could be done!

The committee meets every couple of months – you'd be welcome to come along to one of our meetings to meet us and to see if you feel it's for you! If you're interested or would like further information, please email Jane Holt at dorridgeresidents@gmail.com.

Fancy being a postperson?

The DDRA Newsletter is delivered to all the houses in Dorridge and Bentley Heath thanks to a faithful army of about 40 volunteers to whom we owe a great debt of thanks. It takes about one to two hours three times a year to deliver the newsletters.

For various reasons one or two deliverers are having to hang up their delivery hats. If you are willing to join my team of volunteers, I would be very grateful and would love to hear from you. Please contact me, David Aldis, by email at dcaldis14@gmail.com or by phone on 07780 900157

Staying cool this summer

With some warm weather recently, here are a few simple tips to help you stay comfortable and well.

Try to stay out of the sun between 11am and 3pm, and keep a cold drink close by throughout the day. Water and fruit juice are best, and it's worth sipping regularly even if you don't feel thirsty. Try to avoid too much tea, coffee, or alcohol in the heat as these can dehydrate you.

Closing curtains on the sunny side of the house can make a surprising difference indoors, and opening windows in the cooler evening air helps bring the temperature down overnight. Fans can help too, though try not to aim one directly at yourself for long periods.

If you do need to head out, take a bottle of water with you, wear loose light-coloured clothing, and a hat is always a good idea. Stick to the shade where you can and try to plan errands for the cooler parts of the day.

Cool baths or showers are a great way to bring your temperature down, and a damp cloth on the back of the neck works a treat too. Eating lighter meals with plenty of salad and fruit helps as these foods have a high water content.

It's also worth making sure you have enough food, drinks, and any medication stocked up so you don't need to go out in the hottest part of the day. And do keep an eye out for friends and neighbours during warm spells; a quick knock on the door or phone call can mean a lot.

If you feel unwell, your pharmacist or NHS 111 are always there to help.



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Summer walks on your doorstep

You do not need to travel far for a good walk this summer. Dorridge, Knowle and Bentley Heath sit at the heart of some genuinely lovely countryside, and July is one of the best times to explore it.

Dorridge Park

Dorridge Park is particularly worth a visit in summer, when the woods are full of wildflowers. The park offers a circular walk through woodland, alongside a stream and through an avenue of trees. There is also open space for ball games and a nature reserve to explore, making it a good option for families as well as solo walkers. The park has free car parking and is just a short walk from Dorridge station.

Knowle canal walk

Starting from Knowle, this waterside walk follows the Grand Union Canal east and takes in the Grade I listed Grimshaw Hall before reaching Knowle Locks, a flight of five locks that makes for a fine stopping point. For those who want to extend the route, it is possible to continue to Baddesley Clinton, the moated National Trust manor house with woodland trails, a walled garden, and a lake. The full return trip is around 10km.

Bentley Heath Park

Often quieter than the larger parks nearby, Bentley Heath Park has wide open grassy areas, a small woodland, and a looping path around the edge. From here, footpaths connect back toward Knowle or Dorridge.

Want company on your walks?

Knowle Ramblers is a local walking group with members across Knowle, Dorridge and Bentley Heath, and welcomes all. Find out more at knowleramblers.online.

Volunteers needed: help shape the future of Dorridge Village Hall
Dorridge Village Hall is looked after and run for the benefit of the community by local volunteers. It forms a vital part of the heart of Dorridge, and to ensure it can continue to serve the community long into the future, we are looking for more volunteers to join our committee.

We are particularly seeking someone to help with booking arrangements for a few hours each week, work that can be done online from home at times to suit you, and someone to help with maintaining the building. That said, if neither of these roles suits you, we would still be delighted to hear from you. There may well be other ways your skills could contribute to the committee.

The Annual General Meeting of the Hall Association will be held on Monday 10 August at 7pm in the Meeting Room. Do come along to hear more about the hall and how it is managed. It is important to us that the community stays informed about what is happening here, and even if you are unable to volunteer, your interest and support mean a great deal. Please contact Robert Beckham at chairman@dorridgevillagehall.org or by phone: 07802 760809.

Discover the Joy of Singing with Knowle Male Voice Choir

Looking for a weekly boost of positivity, great music, and lasting friendships? Knowle Male Voice Choir welcomes men of all ages and singing backgrounds. 2027 marks our 30th Anniversary, and we would love you to be part of it. We are a vibrant and growing group of over 45 singers who believe in heart, harmony, and a good sense of humour.

There are no auditions, and you do not need to read music. Led by our Musical Director, Jake, we perform a mix of popular and classical songs and have raised thousands of pounds for local Solihull charities. Keen to hear us first? We have over 100 live performance videos on our YouTube channel, or come along to one of our Wednesday rehearsals, held from 7:30pm to 9pm at Dorridge Methodist Church. Your first month is completely free, so there is nothing to lose.

Find out more at www.knowlemalevoicechoir.org.uk

Dorridge Day '26

One of the highlights of the local calendar returns to Dorridge Park on Sunday 6th September, and this year Knowle and Dorridge Round Table has gone all out with a Brazilian Carnival theme! The lineup includes a Children's Activity Trail, classic carnival games, massive inflatables, dazzling dance shows, and the return of the ever-popular Classic Car Show. It's suitable for all ages, so add it to your diary now.

Retired or Semi-Retired? Come and join us!

Still wanting to learn, stay active, and meet new people in a friendly and sociable setting? Why not come along to a taster session at South Solihull U3A (University of the Third Age), one of over 1,000 groups in the national U3A organisation.

South Solihull U3A is a warm and welcoming group of retired and semi-retired people who are making the most of their third age years: learning new skills, trying new things, and making new friends along the way.

We meet at 1:45pm (for a 2:00pm start) on the second Monday of each month at Bentley Heath Community Centre. Meetings usually feature an invited speaker on a wide range of topics, followed by tea, coffee, biscuits, and plenty of good conversation. On special occasions such as Christmas or national celebrations, we swap the talk for an afternoon party.

The real strength of South Solihull U3A lies in the variety of activities that take place throughout the month, from the physical to the cerebral, the practical to the artistic. Current groups include: Walking, Gardening, "Learn, Laugh, Move" exercise class, Philosophy (4 groups), Repair Shed, Science, Local History (2 groups), French Conversation, Intermediate German, Theatre and Music, Art Appreciation, Play Reading (2 groups), Book Clubs (4 groups), Poetry Reading, Family History, Current Affairs, Technology, Sewing, and the ever-popular International Dining Club.

New groups can start as simply as two members deciding to explore something together and others joining in. That spirit of curiosity and

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collaboration is what makes U3A thrive. Have a look at our website at southsolihull.u3asite.uk, or get in touch with Annie Rayson, our Membership Secretary, at membershipssu3a@yahoo.com. Better still, come along to our next meeting on Monday 10 August, where we are expecting a talk from a local speaker that promises to be highly entertaining. You will be made very welcome.

My U3A Story: Lesley Hinder

Having retired from a long career in adult education, I suddenly felt quite lost and unsure of where I fitted in. The U3A was mentioned to me and, at first, I was hesitant. However, after speaking to Richard, our membership leader, I took the plunge and went along to my first Core meeting.

I was greeted warmly when I arrived and felt welcomed immediately. As a prospective new member, they had been expecting me, and I must admit I felt quite special. I was introduced to an existing member who was friendly and welcoming, and she explained what the Core meetings were all about. I felt comfortable and at home straight away.

I heard all about the interest groups and how to find out more about them. After a very enjoyable and informative meeting, there was tea and biscuits, plenty of chat, and an invitation to a get-together with other new members at a local eatery. To say I was impressed would be an understatement.

Since then, I have joined several interest groups and have been fortunate enough to take on the role of Publicity Officer. I would encourage anyone who is considering it to join. It is our own community, with so much to learn, do, and enjoy.

You are never alone with the U3A. There is always someone looking out for you, and the SSU3A is warm, friendly, welcoming, and encouraging. All you need to do is take that first step.

Your library is back!

Knowle Library is one of the more special places in the area. It sits within Chester House, a 16th century Elizabethan townhouse, parts of which date back to 1400, and is set alongside a knot garden that has featured regularly in Solihull's Britain in Bloom entries. After a period of closure for essential roof repairs, it is open again and well worth a visit.

The library offers browsing, borrowing, PC use, and printing, scanning and photocopying facilities, as well as free access to eBooks, eAudio, newspapers and magazines through its digital offer. Regular events are held throughout the year, and on Saturday afternoons between 1pm and 3pm the library is run by volunteers from Knowle Society.

For children this summer

Solihull Libraries are running a Summer Reading Challenge throughout the holidays, with this year's theme being Read to the Beat, celebrating the universal appeal of music. The challenge is free to join, and children can collect stickers and six themed collector cards. It kicks off on Saturday 11 July and families can sign up at any point over the summer.

Whether you are looking for a good novel for the garden, something for the children to enjoy over the holidays, or simply a quiet place to sit, Knowle Library is on your doorstep and free to use. Find out more at solihull.gov.uk/libraries/knowle-library.

Knowle and Dorridge Lions Club: 50 Years of making a difference

Knowle and Dorridge Lions Club held a hugely successful Fun Run on 17 May, attracting over 1,200 runners, a significant increase on 2025, raising an impressive £24,000 net for local community groups and charities. The event's success is down to the generous support of volunteers, helpers, marshals and advertisers, for which the club is extremely grateful.

This year, the Lions are celebrating their 50th Anniversary, having raised over £1 million for good causes across five decades. Now they're looking for new members to help raise the next million. If you'd like to get involved, contact Membership Secretary Ken Salway on 07860 839750 or at kensalway@chamberton.co.uk. It doesn't need to be a big time commitment and is flexible to fit around you.

Weekly community coffee morning at Dorridge Village Hall

BrightDawn Home Care is hosting a weekly community coffee morning at Dorridge Village Hall every Wednesday, 10.30am-11.45am. Everyone is welcome to come along for a hot drink, a slice of cake, and the chance to chat and make new friends.

Each week features a different activity to enjoy, including games, book shares, special guests, guide dogs, local speakers, Knitter Natter, baking, and much more. Whether you're new to the area or simply fancy some company, it's a relaxed, friendly space where conversations and a small activity can boost wellbeing more than you'd expect. The event is held at Dorridge Village Hall through the side entrance, Grange Road, Solihull, B93 8QA. For more information, call 01564 784598 or visit www.brightdawnhomecare.co.uk.

Bentley Heath School 'Bikeability' training

Bentley Heath School is incredibly proud of its Year 6 pupils, who successfully completed their Bikeability training in June. Throughout the programme, they developed essential skills for cycling safely on busy roads, as well as learning basic bike maintenance.

Guided by experienced instructors in real-life road settings, pupils practised identifying hazards, using clear signals and understanding key road rules. Over the course of the week, they built their confidence and independence, meeting important safety standards for riding on their own.

The instructors were full of praise, describing the pupils as attentive, well-behaved and highly capable riders. Just as you would expect from a fantastic Year 6 cohort!

What's on at Bentley Heath Community Centre

There is something for everyone at Bentley Heath Community Centre throughout the week. Fitness enthusiasts can choose from Bootcamp, Pilates, Yoga, Tai Chi, Kick Boxing, Keep Dancing and



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Line Dancing, while those looking for something a little more gentle can enjoy Extend Gentle Exercise or the weekly Knit and Natter group. Creative classes include art sessions for both children and adults with Studio Kavachi on Friday evenings, and nature lovers are well catered for with the Solihull RSPB Group, Dorridge and District Gardening Club and the Cottage Garden Society all meeting regularly. The South Solihull U3A meets on the second Monday afternoon of the month, and the Packwood and Bentley Heath WI meets on the third Thursday. Rainbows and Brownies meet weekly during term time, and the Jubilee Club offers bingo and a social every Sunday evening.

On the first Saturday of each month, the popular Café at Bentley Heath opens from 10am to 12 noon, welcoming everyone for a chat, cake and a cuppa. The Country Market also runs every Friday morning from 10am, offering a wonderful selection of homemade and homegrown goods. Whether you're looking to get active, learn something new, or simply meet your neighbours, there's always something happening at the centre. Find out more on their website: <https://bentleyheathhall.co.uk/whats-on/>

Baddesley Clinton book fair

Book lovers are in for a treat this summer, as Baddesley Clinton is hosting a three-week book fair from Saturday 8 August to Sunday 30 August. Open daily from 10am to 5pm, the fair will take place in marquees in front of the house and features everything from thrillers to children's books, so there is something for all the family. No booking is needed, though normal admission charges for the venue apply. For more information, contact Baddesley Clinton on 01564 783294 or at baddesleyclinton@nationaltrust.org.uk.

Dancing for Dementia raises £1,000

The Knowle and Dorridge Memory Café and Solihull Memory Café have something wonderful to celebrate. Their Dancing for Dementia tea dances raised an incredible £1,000, with £500 each being donated to Alzheimer's Society and Dementia UK.

Across both cafés, guests danced, laughed, and enjoyed plenty of tea and cake, all in aid of two causes close to many hearts. Dance tuition and performances were provided by Aura Dance Studios,

with Tesco Knowle supplying sweet treats for both events and Solihull Indoor Bowls Club hosting and donating teas and coffees. A fantastic raffle, with prizes donated by local businesses including the Voco, St. John's Solihull, The Tea Chest, BistroViola Café and many more, added to the fun on the day.

Special thanks go to Karen Wilkinson for organising both events, the Memory Café coordinators and volunteers, and to Philip Maundrill and Philip Wright-Howarth at Unique Senior Care for their continued support. The events were also attended by Sally Tomlinson, Councillor for Dorridge, former Mayor of Solihull Annette Mackenzie, the Mayor of Solihull Sardul Marwa MBE, and Dr Neil Shastri-Hurst MP. A brilliant community effort all round!

Solihull Rural Police Update

Local officers have been busy tackling a number of community priorities across the Solihull Rural area, including Balsall Common, Chadwick End and Dorridge.

On anti-social behaviour, officers are taking all reports seriously and are working with residents and partners to investigate issues and deal with perpetrators, using a range of tools including civil interventions where needed. Speeding is also being addressed, with local speed watches, enforcement operations, and support from the road harm team and their mobile police van already in place across the area. Residents with concerns about speeding on their road are encouraged to get in touch with their local officer to find out what is already happening and to request further support.

Fly-tipping has also been a focus in recent months. Officers have been working closely with the local authority, which has already resulted in a fixed penalty notice being issued, with further investigations ongoing. Joint patrols of known hotspot areas are also being planned.

If you have concerns about any of these issues in your area, please contact your local neighbourhood officer.

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


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