

Changing Times

WINTER EDITION

Big Litter Picks

Working in Partnership with Tipton Litter Watch, GM2LF Big Local organised 3 Community Litter Picks across the Big Local area in August 2020.

Thank you to everyone who took part and helped to fill 2 skips and collect over 60 bags of rubbish. All events were organised and delivered in a COVID safe way and it was amazing to see the community come together to clean up litter in the area.

Over 60 people took part and 33 households will each be receiving a Christmas hamper in December, as a way to say thank you for helping us to keep our streets clean. In addition, 11 household were given food goodie bags on the day, supplied by the Real Junk Food Project.

We would also like to thank Tipton Litter Watch and their amazing team of volunteers, without their support we would not have been able to carry out such a fantastic project. (www.litterwatch.org.uk)



Community News

It's Panto time! Oh no it isn't! Oh yes it is!



Christmas Pantos will not be held in theatres in the usual way this year, however we are delighted to say that we have been working with the Grand Theatre Wolverhampton. The GM2LF Big Local is providing funding for the theatre to bring the panto to our local schools.

The Theatre will be performing Jack and the Beanstalk in December, with COVID-19 safety measures in place at Oakham Primary School and Grace Mary Primary School.

St James Primary School will have access to an online version of Jack and the Beanstalk via Panto Online.

After a challenging and difficult year, we hope this will bring a bit of cheer and laughter for pupils and teachers.



Wolverhampton Grand Theatre: www.grandtheatre.co.uk/
Panto Online: www.pantoonline.co.uk



Merry Christmas

December
23rd

12pm
1pm
2pm

Big Local's Big Christmas Feed

This Year big Local wants to give you all a Christmas to remember after the hard times 2020 has seen.
 Big Local will be offering a free 2 course Christmas lunch Hamper to vulnerable and low-income families across the GM2LF area.

Book @ www.trybooking.co.uk/WDA

If you have no internet access call 07528023950

2 course hamper will include, all Christmas dinner necessities
 Desserts and a Christmas Cracker
 Plus a visit from Santa Claus with a gift for all the children!
 (bookings close on Wednesday 16th December 2020)

COMMUNITY
 Big Local

Reaching Out to People at Christmas

The GM2LF Big Local is reaching out to individuals and families who are in need of a little extra help this Christmas.

We will be providing vulnerable and low income households with a free 2 course Christmas lunch hamper to help make Christmas a little easier.

Book at www.trybooking.co.uk/WDA
(If you don't have access to the internet please call 07528 023950)

The 2 course hamper will include all Christmas dinner necessities, desserts and a Christmas cracker. Plus a visit from Santa with a gift for all the children.

(Please note to access a free hamper you will need to provide proof of eligibility)

Gm2Lf
a formula for change

Community News

In Bloom Lockdown Competition

This year the GM2LF Big Local has been unable to hold our Big Local in Bloom competition in the same way as previous years, so instead we launched a Big Local in Bloom Lock Down Competition.

The competition was split into four categories - Best garden, Best hanging basket/window box, Best vegetable and Best houseplant. We also had a category for Best Work of Art, for budding artists.

We were pleased to see so many fantastic entries and stories of how people have spent so much time nurturing their gardens, growing plants and vegetables.

Well done to everyone who took part and thank you to Sandwell Council of Voluntary Organisations (SCVO) who had the difficult role of judging the entries.



Best Houseplant
Kirsty Taylor

Well done to
all the
winners and
runners up
who each
received an
ASDA gift
voucher



Best Vegetable
The McNeill Family



Best Garden
Mrs Shaheena Baig



Best Window Box
Marianna Szentgyorgyi



Best Work of Art Age 12+
Harpinder Kaur

News from the Board

2020 Annual General Meeting (AGM) and Community Party Postponed

The Grace Mary to Lion Farm (GM2LF) Big Local AGM and Community Party planned for March 2020 was postponed due to the current pandemic.

We do plan to reschedule the AGM to a later date.

The GM2LF Big Local Partnership Board members are happy to continue, so will remain in their current positions on the Board until such time that the AGM can be held.



What is the GM2LF Big Local Partnership Board?



The GM2LF Big Local Partnership is a community led partnership of local residents and people who work or volunteer in the area.

Representatives from key organisations in the area include Wallace Youth Project, St James Church, Holy Cross Church and Oakham Church. The GM2LF Partnership is responsible for driving Big Local forward, making sure it remains resident led and enable local people to improve the area and achieve the long-term change.

Since March 2020, the Partnership have not been able to meet in person and instead have moved to meeting virtually. People can take part in the meetings, exchange ideas and make decisions regardless of where they are.

If you would like to know more about joining the Partnership Board and/or interested in getting involved with Big Local, contact: Helen Trueman, email: helen.gm2lf@outlook.com or tel: 07724 584241.

GM2LF Big Local Plan 2020 – 2025

The GM2LF Big Local Partnership Board have been working hard in the background and meeting up virtually to develop a plan of what, how and when we can start delivering our activities again.

Our final Big Local Plan was approved in June and since then we have held community litter picks, opened grant programmes, supported community groups in the area and launched competitions.



To read our plan please visit <https://www.biglocalmillionshare.org/about/our-big-local-plan/> or contact Helen Trueman as above for more information.

News from the Board

GM2LF Big Local as a Charity

As we move forward, part of managing the end of the GM2LF Big Local programme and to be achieved within the next 5 years, is to formalise the group as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO).

This will enable GM2LF Big Local to become GM2LF Charity. Sandwell Council of Voluntary Organisations will continue to be our Locally Trusted Organisation and a key partner through our transition. The GM2LF Charity will have an increased access to a wide range of opportunities and a greater ability to sustain the work for the benefit of the community beyond the next five years.



The residents of the GM2LF area remain at the heart of everything we do.



2020 has been the year that nobody expected, and we have faced challenges and struggles in our own different ways.

Our creativity and the community spirit during this year has been astonishing, from home schooling, to working at home, to supporting neighbours and those most vulnerable, to volunteering, to getting online, to adhering to social distancing and government guidelines. The list just goes on..

We certainly have been apart together, and this creativity, solidarity and community spirit is something that the virus cannot take away. What we can do now is better prepare for the future, to retain optimism and be ready for what's to come next.

We want to again thank and think about all the key workers who may not have a break over Christmas and who have enabled us to get through this year.

Christmas does mean different things to different people and this Christmas will not be one like any other. Even at a distance, keep connected with your family, friends and neighbours and those people that have no one.

The GM2LF Big Local Partnership Board would like to wish everyone a safe and peaceful Christmas and a prosperous New Year.

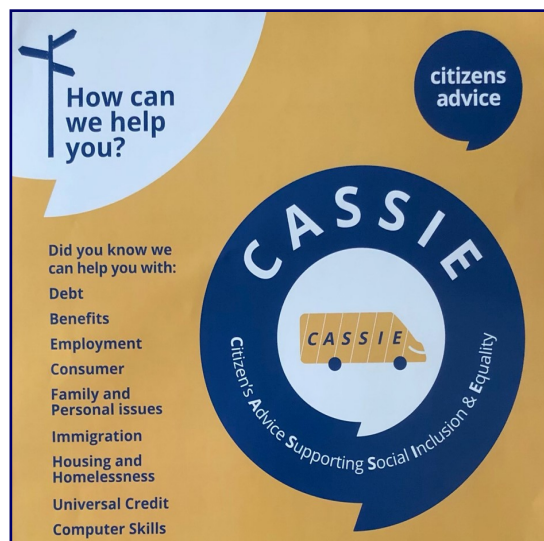
Grace Mary to Lion Farm Big Local

Visit our website: www.gm2lf.org **Like us on Facebook:** Grace Mary to Lion Farm Big Local (GM2LF)
Follow us on Twitter: @GM2LF_Official

General Enquiries

Helen Trueman, Email: helen.gm2lf@outlook.com **Tel:** 07724 584241

Support Services



Citizens Advice Sandwell are offering a new service that goes by the name of CASSIE (Citizens Advice Sandwell Supporting Inclusion & Equality)

CASSIE is a mobile Advice Unit that will be travelling and parking up at locations across the 6 towns of Sandwell. One of these locations is on St James Church car park, Shelsley Avenue, Oldbury. The bus is located on the car park every Thursday, from 9.30am – 2.30pm

Experienced Advisers will be on hand to offer you up to date advice and guidance around a variety of issues at this drop in facility.

Further information about these services can be found on the website: www.citizensadvice-sandwell.org.uk

Food Banks in Oldbury and Rowley

What are they?

Food banks provide emergency provision for those in need. The volunteers at the foodbank often provide a warm drink and signposting to other charities and agencies who can help combat other issues of crisis. As well as a friendly face and a listening ear.

How do they work?

Different organisations run their food banks differently. The two main organisations are Trussell Trust and Black Country Food Bank. These food banks are run on a voucher basis. This means you cannot collect food unless you have been issued a voucher by a care professional (e.g. schools, health visitors, social workers).

What do you get?

A foodbank parcel will ensure that you have 3 days of nutritionally balanced, non-perishable food. All foods are subject to availability. Examples of foods are: UHT milk, pasta, rice, tinned tomatoes or pasta sauce, tinned fruit and vegetables, tinned meat, fish or lentils, beans and pulses, custard, rice pudding, sugar, tea, coffee, cereal, tinned soup, biscuits and fruit juice. You may also receive toiletries or hygiene products, again this is subject to availability. Where possible food banks will check dietary requirements with their clients to ensure the food parcel is as suitable as possible.

(Please note due to the services being run on a volunteer basis, occasionally centres may not be able to open.)

Oldbury:

The Fountain of Life (Black Country Food Bank)
bcfb.admin@blackcountryfoodbank.org.uk
01384671250
The NT Church of God, 31A Church Street, Oldbury, B693AG

Quinton and Oldbury Foodbank (Trussell Trust)

Info@quintonoldbury.foodbank.org.uk
07732157619
The Coffee Shop, 151 Castle Road West, Oldbury, B680EL

Rowley Regis:

Netherton Foodbank (Black Country Food Bank)
bcfb.admin@blackcountryfoodbank.org.uk
01384671250
Primrose Hill Community Church, Chapel Street, Netherton, Dudley, DY29PN

The James Project (Black Country Food Bank)

bcfb.admin@blackcountryfoodbank.org.uk
01384671250
St James's Church, Highgate Street, Oldhill, B64 5SA

BLACK COUNTRY
FOODBANK
LOVE . CONNECT . INVEST

Support Services

Black Country Mental Health Helpline

Black Country Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust helpline (0345 6460827), is open to residents of all ages across the Black Country, available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Particularly suited to those who feel like they need urgent help, the helpline is manned by specialist mental health staff, who will provide advice, support and signposting over the phone.

Alongside the phone line, get support through the Healthy Minds / Talking Therapy services which

offer psychological therapy services for people experiencing common problems such as low mood, depression, anxiety and stress.



Sandwell Healthy Minds

visit: www.sandwellhealthyminds.nhs.uk/
or call 0303 033 9903

Together with you to achieve
healthier, happier lives



Black Country Healthcare
NHS Foundation Trust

Self Care

Self care is vital now more than ever, it is important that you find an approach that SETTLES the mind.

Stay focused on the here and now and avoid thinking too far into the future and take each day one step at a time.

Engage and stay connected to friends, family and support networks. Working together with communities, united as a country we can move through this.

Thoughts are thoughts, not necessarily facts. Be alert to negative thoughts and don't give them power.

Treat people with kindness, support others through this time of uncertainty.

Limit information and time on unhelpful media. Constant exposure to anxiety-fuelling stories drives panic and uncertainty.

Exercise is key, research shows that good physical health is critical for a healthy mind, focus on good sleep, eating well and working out.

Seek help, if you are concerned about yourself or others talk to your GP or a support helpline.



Domestic Abuse Support



Black Country Women's Aid provides support to women, men and children.



- Call the 24-hour helpline on 0121 552 6448,
- Text or WhatsApp on 07384 466 181 (9am-9pm weekdays),
- Call 999 if you are in immediate danger. If you can't speak and are calling from a mobile, listen to the operator and, when prompted, dial 55 to connect to the police.

If you are concerned about your own behaviour towards others, call the anonymous Respect helpline on 0808 802 4040. For details go to www.respectphoneline.org.uk

For more information about help available in Sandwell visit: www.sandwell.gov.uk/domesticabuse



Black Country Women's Aid

we listen, we support, we care



The Great Realisation, by Tom Roberts



2020

"Tell me the one about the virus again, then I'll go to bed,

'But my boy, you're growing weary, sleepy thoughts about your head.
'Please! That one's my favourite. I promise just once more.

'Okay, snuggle down my boy, though I know you know full well,
The story starts before then, in a world I once dwelled.

'It was a world of waste and wonder, of poverty and plenty,
Back before we understood why hindsight's 2020.

'You see the people came up with companies to trade across all lands,
But they swelled and got bigger than we could ever have planned.

'We'd always had our wants, but now it got so quick,
You could have everything you dreamed of in a day and with a click.

'We noticed families had stopped talking. That's not to say they never spoke,
But the meaning must have melted and the work life balance broke.

'And the children's eyes got squarer and every toddler had a phone,
They filtered out the imperfections but amidst the noise, they felt alone.

'And every day the sky grew thicker, til we couldn't see the stars,
So we flew in planes to find them while down below we filled our cars.

'We'd drive around all day in circles. We'd forgotten how to run,
We swapped the grass for tarmac, shrunk the parks till there were none.

'We filled the sea with plastic cause our waste was never capped,
Until each day when you went fishing, you'd pull them out already wrapped.

'But then in 2020, a new virus came our way,
The government reacted and told us all to hide away.



'But while we were all hidden, amidst the fear and all the while,
The people dusted off their instincts, they remembered how to smile.

'They started clapping to say thank you, and calling up their mums,
'And while the cars keys were gathering dust, they would look forward to their runs.

'And with the sky less full of planes, the earth began to breathe,
And the beaches brought new wildlife that scattered off into the seas.

'Some people started dancing, some were singing, some were baking,
We'd grown so used to bad news but some good news was in the making.

'And so when we found the cure and were allowed to go outside,
We all preferred the world we found to the one we'd left behind.

'Old habits became extinct, and they made way for the new,
And every simple act of kindness was now given its due.

'But why did it take a virus to bring the people back together?',
Well, sometimes, you got to get sick, my boy, before you start feeling better.

'Now lie down, and dream of tomorrow, and all the things that we can do,
And who knows, maybe if you dream strong enough, make some of them will come true.

'We now call it the Great Realisation, and yes, since then there have been many,

'But that's the story of how it started, and why hindsight's 2020.'

