



Newsletter May 2021

Council Plan on the Move Again



First and Foremost

Huge thanks to each and every one who, in response to our last newsletter, has donated to help fund the continued charitable operation of your KDBH Neighbourhood Forum. Thus far we've received £320 - enough to cover our most urgent cost, company insurance, due in May and one of our major expenditures.

We know, however, that we still have much to do to increase awareness of our donations appeal across our membership of c. 1,000 and 2,000+ Facebook followers. You may have missed the details at the end of March's long newsletter - added again below. Every contribution makes a real difference. Thank you.

Raising Funds for a Sustainable Forum

KDBH Knowle Dorridge and Bentley Heath Neighbourhood Forum CIO Registered Charity No. e.g. 123456

1. Donation 2. Your details 3. Payment

Your donation

How often would you like to donate?

Just one donation

How much would you like to donate?

£ 10.00 £ Amount

Gift Aid *giftaid it*

Please Gift Aid this donation

Your KDBH NF Subscription

Help your Neighbourhood Forum to serve you professionally and effectively. Our volunteer team provide their skills and time for free. But our work crucially depends on interacting with our 20,000 strong community via eg. web and other software and IT infrastructure, printing and publicity, running and attending public events, undertaking surveys etc. Your donation goes directly to meeting the necessary costs of operating the Forum for the benefit of the whole KDBH community.

Find out more about this campaign

We are asking for you to show your support through a £10 year's subscription. Less than £1 a month will enable us to continue our work to:

- actively inform, engage, debate and reflect community views on the future of our villages through newsletters, open meetings (Covid allowing), special events, topic-based workshops etc
- act as custodian of your KDBH Neighbourhood Plan, providing planning expertise to help ensure its implementation to protect and enhance the character of our villages, address local need and promote sustainable development
- raise awareness of, and provide guidance and support on, opportunities for community funding

We use the Charities Aid Foundation (CAF) to process donations for us via credit/debit card or Paypal. Please make a payment via the **Donate** button at the top of our website [Home Page](#)

A downside of successfully completing the Neighbourhood Plan is that your Forum no longer has recourse to any grant funding to sustain its continued work on planning - and now also its wider charitable purposes - to deliver community benefit. It's never easy asking for donations, but two years on from completing the Neighbourhood Plan our continued operation depends on support from our community.

It's important to note that donations are needed not to fund the team, all of whom are volunteers who continue to offer their skills and time for free...

- collaborate with other community-led organisations to deliver community benefit through our wider charitable purposes.

The funds raised will go directly to meeting the necessary costs of operating a Forum professionally and effectively across our very large neighbourhood of c. 20,000 people. Costs such as web and other software and IT infrastructure, printing and publicity, running and attending public events, undertaking surveys, company insurance, specialist training etc.

Our annual accounts will, of course, continue to show you (and the Charities Commission) how funds raised have been spent in meeting our charitable purposes for the benefit of KDBH.

Solihull Local Plan – Draft Submission Plan

**A Plan for People and Places;
Where Wellbeing and the Environment Matter**

Council Submits its Local Plan for Independent Examination

On 19 May, the Council let us know that they had submitted their Local Plan to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government.

This triggers the next stage of the process, Independent Examination (IE) - the final scrutiny before the plan can be adopted (assuming it passes IE). An Inspector is appointed on behalf of the Secretary of State to oversee the process of reviewing the Plan and its evidence base, taking due account of all the representations made in last year's consultation. More details on the Council's website [Here](#)

There's nothing more we can do just now regarding the Local Plan itself. However, we do expect that the Inspector will call Hearings and have asked to attend any relevant to matters affecting KDBH. We continue to prepare for these, most notably the below:

Independent Transport Study Review for KDBH

Concern about transport and parking is one of the foremost issues for residents - even before the Local Plan proposals.

Over years, we first tried working with the Council to jointly undertake studies for KDBH; when they backtracked on their commitment to work together, we pressed time and again for early sight of their study findings.



Only at the last possible moment, when legally required, was transport information made available at the start of the last consultation; a consultation that allowed only the minimum legally required timeframe for responses. Part of the Council's stated rationale for this approach was to deliver a 'quick turnaround' for Plan submission in the New Year - now achieved, 5 months on.

The Forum has always anticipated the need for independent review of the Council's transport findings. But there are big challenges. The work is very specialist and requires us to find a consultant who is: a) willing to work at less than commercial rates for us as a community

body; and b) not 'conflicted out' due to involvement in (the huge amount of) other work currently underway for the Council, developers or other 'interested parties'.

The Council's approach last October left us with nowhere to go. What chance in six weeks to: find a consultant immediately available; commission work based on newly released evidence; allow time to undertake, review and make the study available to residents; and then include evidence-based views in our response to the Council?

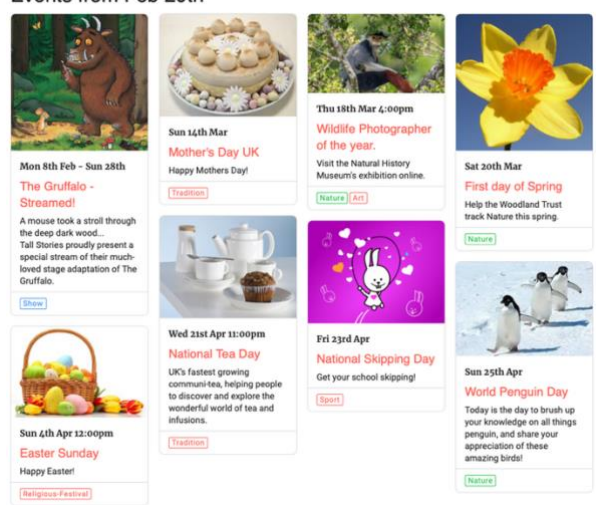
We didn't give up. After many ups and downs, we're very happy to say that in April we commissioned an initial, independent assessment of the Council's transport evidence relating to KDBH. But, with our donations campaign still in its early days, how to fund the study was an issue - even at a reduced charity rate kindly offered by the consultant. We are very grateful to the Knowle Society for their donation that made the study possible, to the benefit of the whole of KDBH.

This initial study aims to identify if, and where, more in-depth investigation of the Council's transport evidence may be required - further work, and funding, may be needed. It's fortunate that we can take advantage of the extra time available due to the Council's later-than-expected submission of their Plan.

Supporting KDBH Community Clubs and Organisations

Following up on the feature in March's newsletter. Over the past month, the team has started contacting KDBH community organisations (there are lots of them!) with a view to running a pilot for a centralised community listing and events calendar for KDBH. As a quick reminder, details again below.

Events from Feb 20th



- One idea is to use our technology and communications infrastructure and skills to bring details of community groups together into one place as a way of helping to raise their profile across KDBH;
- provide an 'Events Calendar' enabling groups to quickly and easily publicise and promote their events, which the community can then access all in one place.

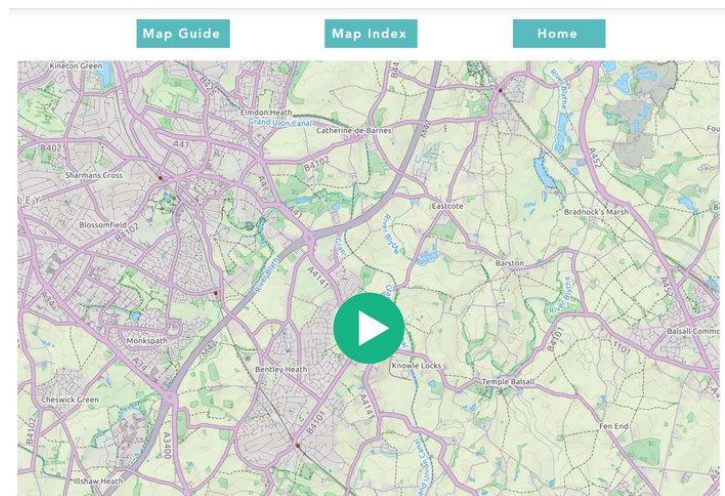
You can see a mock up of what this might look like [Here](#).

We've enjoyed getting to know more about our clubs and those who run them, and appreciate the positive feedback received from those contacted thus far. As a result, we are now targeting start of a pilot after the half term holidays. We know that the information we currently have on clubs is incomplete, with some details out of date. If we've not yet contacted you and you want to get involved, please do get in touch at kdbhforum@gmail.com.

Interactive Map - Walks

It's not exactly been the best of walking weather over the last month! - but hope is for better in June. We've added another walk to our site (called Dorridge Boxtrees), this time focusing around Dorridge - and have several more in the pipeline. Part of the challenge is getting out in good weather to take photographs to add to the walk and associated leaflet.

Please do share any photos you have taken on the walks - it's good to have shots taken in different seasons.



[Take Me to Interactive Map](#)

KDBH Planning Applications

After a busy start to the year, a relatively quiet patch since our last newsletter:

PL/2016/02754/MAJFOT: Motorway Service Station at Junction 4 of M42

We note that appeal proceedings are underway and await details from the Council.

Your Forum has responded on three applications

- 6 April 2021: **PL/2021/00696/TPO: 89 Manor Road, Dorridge, B93 8TT**
- 6 April 2021: **PL/2021/00422/MINFOT: Lane at Lodge Croft Knowle**
- 10 May 2021: **PL/2021/01000/MINFOT: 2 Station Approach, Dorridge, B93 8JF**

Details as usual on our planning responses webpage [Here](#)

KDBH Community News - Supporting our Local Businesses

All of us want to be part of a thriving and vibrant local community, served by a range of local shops, businesses and services. The work we are doing for our local clubs, above, aims to be part of that.

Many of you may be aware of the great work **'Visit Knowle'** has been doing to promote Knowle, attract more visitors and re-invigorate the High Street - all the more important now post Covid. Their new website <http://visitknowle.com> has details on a number of new initiatives, including a 'Support Local' campaign to promote our local businesses, suppliers, jobs and people.

And there's more good news: in a similar vein, a 'Shop Local' initiative has been launched aimed at Dorridge and Bentley Heath residents and run by our local Soroptomists group (www.si-solihull.org.uk) working in collaboration with Solihull Council and Visit Knowle. As a first step, they've recently launched a resident survey seeking thoughts and opinions on how we would like to see local shops and businesses in Dorridge and Bentley Heath develop. The aim is to find opportunities to improve our local area by exploring local opinions and using this to develop a plan of action. This initiative is another great opportunity for us as a community to steer future development of our villages - please do take the time during the next couple of weeks to complete the short survey [Here](#)
