

# Birchfield Big Local News

Spring/Summer 2023

*Bringing together the gifts, passions, aspirations, skills and energy of local people to make Birchfield an even better place to live and work*

## We have moved!

After nine years at Grosvenor Road Studios, Birchfield Big Local has moved a short distance to the **United Reformed Church, 13 Wilton Road B20 3RX**. A timetable of activities is available including:

- **English/IT classes every Tuesday morning**
- **Seniors club every Wednesday afternoon**
- **Women's group – monthly on a Thursday**
- **Job Shop every Friday**

We also host regular Birchfield Environment Group meetings at the URC which include residents and representatives from Birmingham City Council, Midland Heart, and residents' groups.

We are planning further activities including an **Energy Café** and **Mum's and Toddlers group**.

We are always looking for volunteers to help run existing activities as well as start new ones that help meet the needs and priorities of Birchfield residents. We can provide training where required and volunteer expenses. Please contact us if you would like to find out more about the volunteering opportunities with Birchfield Big Local and the new charity—see next page.



## Blossom Local Picnic

Thanks to everyone who came to the Blossom Local Picnic on Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> April at Wilton Road United Reformed Church. The event celebrated the planting of more than 500 blossom trees – fruit trees and ornamental cherry trees – along the Number 11 bus route to create a ring of blossom around Birmingham. The Birmingham Blossom project is a partnership between Birmingham City Council, National Trust and Number 11 Arts and funded by the People's Postcode Lottery.

We were blessed with the weather as the rain stopped mid-morning and the sun shone. Artists, Adlin Shorter, Claudette Holmes, and Mehnaz Afzal provided family arts and crafts activities and Phil Bowers provided musical entertainment.

Thanks especially to Gurminder Sehint from Number 11 Arts for working with us to organise the event and to volunteers Stephen and Tom from The National Trust for support on the day.



## Trustees needed!

A charity – Birchfield Community Association – has been set up to establish a legacy for the Big Local programme in Birchfield. Birchfield Big Local plans to close out by June 2024 so there will be a gradual transition from Big Local to the new charity over the coming year.

*“The charity aims to build on the strengths within the community including the gifts, skills, passions, and aspirations of local people to make Birchfield an even better place to live and work”*

We would like to recruit more trustees to help run the charity. The aim is for the charity to be resident led, just like Big Local, so residents are encouraged to volunteer. It is not necessary to have previous board or committee experience as training will be provided. We welcome applications from all ages and backgrounds. If you would like to find out more about what the role of trustee involves, **please contact 07421 994752**  
**Email: [andrew@birchfieldbiglocal.org](mailto:andrew@birchfieldbiglocal.org)**



## Help with Energy Bills

We're facing the biggest cost of living crisis in a generation, with increases in energy, food, and housing costs. What can we do to reduce our energy costs and do our bit to save the planet?

Birchfield Big Local has joined together with four other local organisations to provide advice and support that will help households save energy and money. The programme is called Community Action Partnership ~ Energy and will be launched at the Witton Lakes Eco Hub on Friday 16<sup>th</sup> June.

We will be organising Energy Café events at Wilton Road United Reformed Church and other venues, providing telephone and face-to-face advice, and arranging home visits for those households that need more in-depth support.

Funded through the Energy Redress Scheme, the programme aims to provide a community-based fuel poverty advice and advocacy to residents impacted by the cost-of-living crisis. For further information, **please contact—07421 994752 or Email: [andrew@birchfieldbiglocal.org](mailto:andrew@birchfieldbiglocal.org)**

## Job Shop



New Beginnings Creative CIC is working with Birchfield Big Local to provide one-to-one careers and employment advice. This service offers guidance and support for those wishing to improve their confidence and self-belief within their job searching and career aspirations. Birchfield Big Local are paving the way for brighter and successful futures for those seeking a positive change in their lives.

The Job Shop runs **every Friday from 10am to 4pm**. It includes help with creating and updating your CV; Job search activities; completing applications and access to education, employment, training, and enterprise opportunities.

If you have any queries or would like to book an appointment, **please call Marvet at New Beginnings Creative CIC on 07566 826346 or contact Birchfield Big Local on 07421 994752.**



# Birchfield Heritage Trail

Thanks to funding from the Commonwealth Games Legacy Fund we have been able to put Birchfield on the map. The Birchfield Heritage Trail was one of twenty trails created to celebrate the history and cultural diversity of the city.

The first trail – or Green Trail – covered parts of West Birchfield including Calthorpe Arms, Lea Hall, St Mary’s Church, and Church Vale and was ready for guided tours during Birmingham Heritage Week 2022.

A second trail – or Red Trail – has now been completed. This takes us on a journey eastward towards Birchfield Road and includes the site of a Roman Kiln, the location of Aston Villa’s first football ground, and the UK’s first Odeon Cinema. The new trail is available on the webpage – [www.birchfieldbiglocal.org/heritage-trail](http://www.birchfieldbiglocal.org/heritage-trail) and a leaflet and map will be ready for Birmingham Heritage Week 2023 when it is planned to run guided tours of both trails.



*Joan and John Taylor at Grosvenor Road Studios*



*First Odeon Cinema—Birchfield Road*



*Wilson Road—site of the first recorded Aston Villa game and home to the WELD photography project.*



*Rev. Eve Pitts, vicar at Holy Trinity Church, marking the anniversary of the Slavery Abolition Act 1833*

## How to contact Birchfield Big Local

Andrew Simons, Community Development Worker– Mobile: 07421 994752 Email: [andrew@birchfieldbiglocal.org](mailto:andrew@birchfieldbiglocal.org)

Mehnaz Afzal, Volunteer Coordinator— Mobile: 07421 994753 Email: [mehnaz@birchfieldbiglocal.org](mailto:mehnaz@birchfieldbiglocal.org)

Russell Green, Youth Worker– Mobile: 07419 213430 Email: [russell@birchfieldbiglocal.org](mailto:russell@birchfieldbiglocal.org)

Office: c/o United Reformed Church, 13 Wilton Road, Birchfield, Birmingham B20 3RX

Website: [www.birchfieldbiglocal.org](http://www.birchfieldbiglocal.org) Twitter: @BirchfieldBigL Facebook: [www.facebook.com/birchfieldbiglocal](http://www.facebook.com/birchfieldbiglocal)

## Birchfield Telephone Befriending Buddies

**Birchfield Telephone Befriending Buddies service** provides regular befriending via a weekly friendly phone call (from a trained volunteer buddy). The service gives support by providing a friendly conversation to those that are not able to get out and meet others or are feeling lonely and isolated. It is for anyone over 50 living in the local

area, who would benefit from a regular friendly chat. The project is supported by Perry Barr Neighbourhood Network Scheme. We would like to thank all the volunteer buddies who give their time for the befriending service.

If you are interested in joining our Befriending Buddies volunteer team or you would like a befriender to call you or someone you know, **please contact: Mehnaz Afzal 07421994753 or email: mehnaz@birchfieldbiglocal.org**

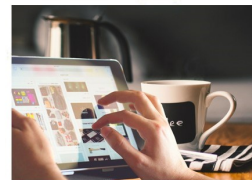
## Seniors Group



The Seniors group meets every **Wednesday between 1.30pm and 4.00pm** at the United Reformed Church, 13 Wilton Road B20 3RX. Dominoes is a popular activity and the group also participate in enrichment activities organised through Athac CIC. This has involved visits to places such as Panel Croft Retirement Village in Newtown, Birmingham and the British Motor Museum at Gaydon in Warwickshire. This activity is supported through the Perry Barr Neighbourhood Network Scheme. For further details, **please contact Andrew on 07421 994752 Email: andrew@birchfieldbiglocal.org**

## English/IT Classes

**Big Local Birchfield Community Learning 2022-2023**



**Survival Digital Learning**

**Understand and Learn Basic iPad/Tablet Skills**



Every Tuesday  
starting:  
6th June 2023



**United Reformed Church**  
13 Wilton Rd, Handsworth,  
B20 3RX



9.30 - 11.30am

**FREE sessions** in partnership with Birmingham Adult Education Service, aim to equip adults with basic knowledge and skills on how to **use digital iPads/tablets safely**, together with helping to **improve English speaking skills**.

**iPads will be provided to use and share during the sessions**  
**Places are limited – To book your place and find out more please contact Mehnaz on 07421 994753 or email mehnaz@birchfieldbiglocal.org**

## Councillor Hussain—Advice surgeries

**1st Wednesday of the month (except August), 6.00—7.00pm**

**4th Wednesday of the month (except August), 6.00—7.00pm**

**United Reformed Church, 13 Wilton Road, Birchfield B20 3RX**

**No appointment necessary.**

## Birchfield Ward Forum Meeting

**7.00pm on Wednesday 19th July**

**United Reformed Church, 13 Wilton Road, Birchfield B20 3RX**

**All Welcome**

