

Birchfield Big Local News

Spring 2021

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



Responding to Covid-19

At the very start of lock down in March 2020 Birchfield Big Local teamed up with two local social enterprises, Golden Sparkle CIC and Athac CIC, to distribute food to older residents and some families in the area. Most of the food came from the charity FareShare, who redistribute surplus food from the food industry. In addition there was fresh produce from Livingstone Road Community Allotment donated by Birchfield Residents Action Group. A team of volunteers packed and then delivered the food to residents once a week over a five month period.

In response to Covid-19 the Birchfield Big Local resident-led partnership set up a Health and Wellbeing group to think about what else could be done to address the health inequalities evident in the area.

The partnership funded eight projects over the summer to help address some of the health priorities. This included life and sports coaching sessions for young people; an online programme on managing diabetes; physical fitness and wellbeing sessions with walks in local green spaces; Grow Your Soup—helping families grow vegetables and herbs at home; and a one-to-one job club for residents aged 18 and over. All of the projects were led by local social enterprises.

The job club has continued and is now held online every Friday from 10am till 4pm. A voucher scheme has been set up with the help of a grant from the Covid Emergency Assistance Fund and a telephone befriending service—Birchfield Telephone Befriending Buddies—set up with a grant from the Neighbourhood Network Scheme.

Youth Celebrational Booklet

Russell Green, Birchfield Big Local Youth Worker, has been working with a core group of young people on the My Endz project. The group has just published a second booklet documenting the young people's journey over the past three years.

The booklet is a montage of pictures and young people's thoughts, feelings, and reflections on their experiences after participating in activities during the summer, autumn, winter, and spring breaks.

This past year has been momentous for all. There have been restrictions on what the group can do; yet this booklet is a celebration of the young people's growth, development and learning whilst with the Birchfield Big Local Youth team.

A copy of the booklet can be downloaded from the Birchfield Big Local website. For a printed copy, please contact Russell Green on 07419 213430 or email: russell@birchfieldbiglocal.org



Birchfield Telephone Befriending Buddies

We have recently launched a new project called Birchfield Telephone Befriending Buddies.

The project provides a telephone befriending service for older adults (50+) living in Birchfield who are feeling, worried, lonely or are socially isolated, whether they are housebound due to health conditions or self-isolating during Covid-19.

Our aim is to connect with older adults from within the community through our telephone befriending service, help to reduce loneliness and social isolation, and help improve the wellbeing of people over the age of 50 years within the Birchfield area.

Once registered with us, a trained volunteer telephone befriending buddy, will check in and chat with you over the phone, once a week for 30 minutes or so. Your befriending buddy will develop and build a befriending relationship with you over the phone, by getting to know you, your interests and hobbies and provide a listening ear.

As a low-level telephone befriending service, regrettably we cannot provide higher level support for people who experience memory loss, dementia or have mental health conditions; as such this service may not be suitable for people who fall under these categories.

If you or someone you know feel that a regular friendly chat would help you, we would like to hear from you, or if you would like to find out more about the service, please contact Mehnaz Afzal, Project Coordinator— 07421 994753 or email mehnaz@birchfieldbiglocal.org

How to contact Birchfield Big Local

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Website: www.birchfieldbiglocal.org

Twitter: @BirchfieldBigL

Facebook: www.facebook.com/birchfieldbiglocal



Birchfield Telephone Befriending Buddies is a FREE and Confidential telephone service for people aged 50+ within the Birchfield area, who are feeling worried, lonely or socially isolated, whether they are housebound due to health conditions or self isolating /shielding during the current pandemic.

Our friendly Volunteer Telephone Befriending Buddies, will call you once a week, for approx. 30mins to offer a listening ear and take an interest in your life. Once registered all you have to do is "grab a cuppa" and one of our befriending buddies will call you at an agreed date/time, to have a relaxed friendly chat.



Our service aims to help reduce, loneliness, social isolation and anxiety in the current pandemic and help improve wellbeing, amongst the over 50s, within the Birchfield area.

We aim to connect with older people from within the community, by providing a friendly Telephone Befriending Buddy who you can talk to over the phone, on a weekly basis for 30 mins, to share some time to chat with, about your interests and hobbies.

Important to note this is not a Counselling or Mentoring service. It is a telephone befriending service.

Who is eligible ?

- People who are aged 50+ yrs old
- Primarily for residents of the Birchfield area in Birmingham
- Must have their own landline or mobile number
- Must be able to hear, speak and be understood on the phone

As a low-level telephone befriending service, regrettably we cannot provide higher level support for people who experience memory loss, dementia, or have mental health conditions, as such this service may not be suitable for people who fall under these categories.

For more information please contact Mehnaz Afzal
Project Coordinator on 07421994753
or email mehnaz@birchfieldbiglocal.org to register.



Become a Telephone Befriending Buddy

Would you like to share some of your time and help put a smile on someone's face, by giving them a friendly call once a week?

If this sounds like you, we are looking for friendly volunteers to join our Birchfield Telephone Befriending Team. Training and ongoing support will be provided.

If you are interested please contact Mehnaz Afzal on 07421994753 or email mehnaz@birchfieldbiglocal.org

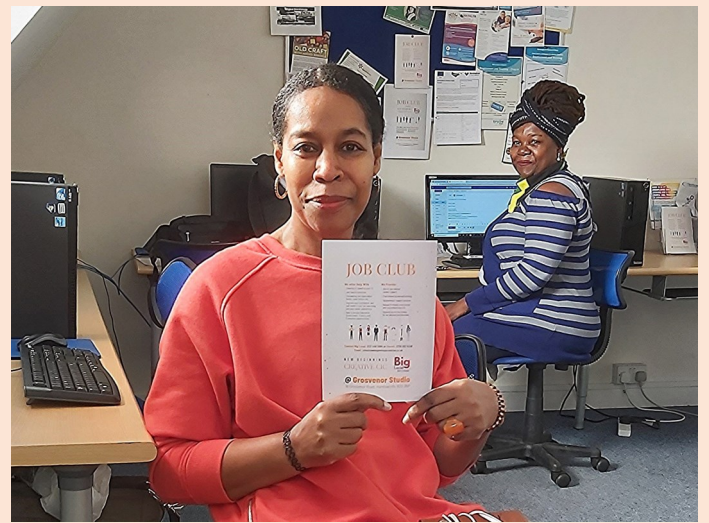
Registered Charity no: 1193147 | www.birchfieldbiglocal.org

Job Shop

Improve your confidence and self-belief in your job searching and career aspirations.

New Beginnings Creative CIC is working with Birchfield Big Local to provide one-to-one careers and employment advice. The Job Shop started in September at 16 Grosvenor Road. With the current Covid-19 restrictions it is being delivered by telephone and online, but as restrictions are lifted it should be possible to return to in-person sessions, by appointment.

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



To book an appointment please call Marvet at New Beginnings CIC on 07566 826346 – or Birchfield Big Local on 0121 448 5594 (Mobile – 07421 994752). Email: info@newbeginningscreative.co.uk



An event planned for early May will bring together key strategic statutory and private partners who can support the Enterprise Hub through its next stage of growth as we aim to create a local economy where micro enterprises can deliver services to address local priorities. Please contact Carol Reid on 07977 880132 or email: info@athac.co.uk

Birchfield Social Enterprise Hub

Are you a local resident thinking about setting up your own social enterprise or micro business? The Social Enterprise Hub offers a network of support, information, and guidance to those starting out or who are at their next stage of growth. We have previously delivered programmes of training and development but due to Covid restrictions this service is currently operating virtually. Members receive weekly development opportunities, research, funding information and updates from a range of sector specialists including: Amazon, Google Garage, PricewaterhouseCooper (PwC) to mention a few.

UnLtd the specialist social enterprise development support organisation will cease their support at the end of March after 6 years of valuable contribution to the Hub during which they have supported over 30 micro enterprises.

Become A Telephone Befriending Buddy

Would you like to share some of your time and help put a smile on someone's face, by giving them a friendly call once a week?

By volunteering as a telephone befriending buddy, not only will you have an opportunity to engage and support an older person, but you can also learn and develop new skills and give back to your community.

If this sounds like you, we are looking for friendly volunteers to join our Birchfield Telephone Befriending Team. Training and ongoing support will be provided.

We particularly welcome volunteer interest from the Birchfield community and those who also speak an additional community language. If you are interested in any volunteering opportunities with Birchfield Big Local, please contact Mehnaz Afzal on 07421 994753 or email: mehnaz@birchfieldbiglocal.org

Local Support

Food Support

Listed are some of the food banks in and around the Birchfield area. For food banks run by the Trussell Trust you will need to be referred by a doctor, health visitor, social worker, citizens advice etc and will be given a voucher that can be exchanged for at least 3 days emergency food. For other food banks no voucher is required.

Handsworth Seventh Day Adventist Church

Food bank open every Sunday from 12 – 2pm at 98 Hutton Road B20 3RD

Mosque – UKIM Handsworth & Islamic Centre

Food bank open every FIRST Sunday of the month only (next food bank on Sunday April 4th) from 2- 4pm at Putney Road Masjid – 27-37 Putney Road B20 3PP

Mosque - As-Suffa Institute – 156 High Street, Aston B6 4UX

Provide free food parcels delivered to the home – Referral will need to be made through registered agencies.

Birchfield Big Local are a registered agency. Please contact Mehnaz Afzal 07421 994753 to make referral for food parcel.

Handsworth Foodbank (Trussell Trust)

New Life Wesleyan Church, Holyhead Road, Handsworth, Birmingham B21 0LA Tel: 0121 507 0734 Open: Thursday, 1 – 3pm

Aston and Nechells Foodbank (Trussell Trust)

This operates across three sites in Aston, Nechells and Ward End Tel: 0121 359 0801. Of the three sites the nearest to Birchfield is - The Salvation Army Centre, Gladstone Street, Aston, Birmingham B6 7NY Open: Friday, 12.30 – 2.30pm

Incredible Surplus (Real Junk Food Project)

Food and other essentials can be collected on a pay-as-you-feel basis from Incredible Surplus – formerly the Real Junk Food Project – at Unit 58, Western Business Park, Great Western Close B18 4QF on Thursdays from 10.00am – 1.00pm and Saturdays from 10.00am to 12.00pm

Villa Cross Soup Kitchen

Based at the New Testament Church of God, 240 – 244 Lozells Road, Birmingham B19 1NP. Villa Cross Soup Kitchen provide hot meals, clothing, advice, and assistance to people in need, in a warm and friendly space.

Find Food Banks Brum

Find Food Banks Brum has a directory of Food Banks and other services including Finance and Advice, Clothing and Furnishings. See – www.findfoodbanksbrum.org.uk

Mental Health & Wellbeing Support

Birmingham Mind

Mind can help people access support from specialist providers. Current opening times: 7 days a week from 9am – 11pm. Telephone: 0121 262 3555 Email: help@birminghammind.org

Support for young people

Kooth is an online counselling and emotional wellbeing service for children and young people, accessible through mobile phones, tablets, and desktops and free at the point of use. See – <https://www.kooth.com>

The Lateef Project

The Lateef Project provides free multilingual Islamic Counselling to the community. The service is available to anyone, who needs therapeutic counselling support for their mental wellbeing. The service also provides counselling to help cope with impact of Covid-19 and bereavement. Email: info@lateefproject.org - 07308 510555

Forward Thinking Birmingham

The city's mental health partnership for 0 – 25 year olds. Provides urgent help and you can also refer someone to the service. Access Centre: 0300 300 0099 Monday – Friday, 9am – 5pm

Debt and Benefit Advice

Birmingham Settlement

Free debt and benefit advice by phone, email, and web chat from Birmingham Settlement. Includes advice on Benefit entitlement; Universal Credit; Council Tax; Rent and mortgage arrears; Utilities advice – gas, electric and water; Hardship grants.

Call: 0121 250 0765 Email: money.advice@bsettlement.org.uk Web chat: go to www.birminghamsettlement.org.uk and click on the red chat box. For general advice phone: 0121 250 0777

Financial support

Local Welfare Provision (LWP)

www.birmingham.gov.uk/lwp Birmingham's Local Welfare Provision (LWP) scheme helps people in short-term crisis with food and essential items. People who receive help will not have to repay anything. It is not intended to replace the council's statutory duties.

Two types of payment are made:

Crisis payments to meet urgent needs such as essential food and/or clothing.

Community Support Grants to meet immediate needs for essential furniture or white goods to sustain housing needs and gain greater independence within the community.

You can either apply yourself or someone else can apply for you. You can only apply online – www.birmingham.gov.uk/lwp

Turn2us

The charity Turn2us helps people in financial need gain access to welfare benefits, charitable grants, and other financial help – online, by phone and face to face through partner organisations. The website includes an easy-to-use Benefits Calculator and Grants Search tools to check what benefits you might be able to claim and what grants you might be able to apply for. See - <https://www.turn2us.org.uk>

The Thomas Bromwich Charity and Handsworth Charity both offer small grants to help individuals and families meet urgent needs. Applications usually have to be supported by a sponsor – an individual or organisation that can confirm the applicant's situation and that they live in the relevant area. **Birchfield Big Local can act as a sponsor.**

The Thomas Bromwich Charity
Vicarage, Church Road, Perry Barr
Birmingham B42 2LB

Provides one-off grants to those who find themselves in need or struggling financially and live in Handsworth, Great Barr, and Perry Barr.

Email: admin@st-johns-perry-barr.org.uk or telephone the charity on: 07746 387741 to request an application form. Include your full postcode in the request in order to receive the correct application form.

The Handsworth Charity

109 Court Oak Road, Birmingham
West Midlands B17 9AA

Small grants are given to people who live in the Ancient Parish of Handsworth in Birmingham and are in need. The following postcodes are eligible: B18, B19, B20, B21, B42, B43, B44.

Grants of no more than £500 may be made to help with essential household items such as bedding, carpets, cookers, fridges, small property repairs.

Email: info@handsworth-charity.co.uk
www.handsworth-charity.co.uk