



Blackbridge NEWS

SUMMER 2023

Working together for Podsmead residents



Welcome

Dear Podsmead resident,

Welcome to our first edition of 'Blackbridge News', bringing you up to date with all the recent events and future activities going on in Podsmead.

We are delighted to be supporting such a strong and resilient community. Both Podsmead Big Local and Blackbridge Charitable Community Benefit Society (CCBS) are working hard to create investment opportunities locally so that Podsmead can continue to thrive going forward.

Blackbridge CCBS is a community organisation with entirely charitable objectives established at the end of 2021.

The Podsmead Big Local has also asked the Blackbridge CCBS to help deliver their legacy plan. This includes leading the development of the Blackbridge Community and Sports Hub which will be a new community-owned and community-driven facility in the heart of Podsmead, bringing together sports, exercise, youth activities and other community facilities.



Sue Cunningham
Chair, Blackbridge Charitable Community Benefit Society



Ashley Green
Chair, Podsmead Big Local

In the last 12 months, we have also obtained a further £300,000 of additional funding from the Big Lottery Fund through the Local Trust to meet your priorities up to 2025.

There are so many fantastic articles in this edition and please look out for what's going on over the next few months. Just to note, we hope to launch a free vet clinic in the autumn and we will let you have more details once we have the plans in place.

We are proud to support Podsmead residents and if you have any thoughts or suggestions on what we can do better, please do let us know by visiting www.blackbridge.org/contact

Best wishes,
Ashley Green
Chair, Podsmead Big Local

Sue Cunningham
Chair, Blackbridge Charitable Community Benefit Society

Podsmead Big Local AGM

6pm at Badger Vale Court, Woodpecker Road Podsmead, GL2 5FQ

If you plan to attend the AGM please let Jim know by emailing jim@blackbridge.org.uk or text 07923 445327.

WHAT'S ON?

A summer of fun



The Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme is back again this summer offering lots of fun and free activities to keep families entertained during the school holidays.

A dream team of Play Gloucestershire and Read With Me will be coming to Podsmead for the first three Thursdays in August, so pop these dates in your diary:

3rd August

10th August

17th August

There will be outdoor games and lots of play activities, plus crafts, storytelling, free books to take away and more. Food will also be available, and it's all free!

Booking through the HAF website is preferable, then just head over to the Scott Avenue Green in Podsmead for a fun day.

There will also be a **free pop-up cinema on the Green showing Matilda on 21st August**, funded by Podsmead Big Local and Blackbridge CCBS. Podsmead residents can just turn up for this event, but please bring your own chairs and picnic blankets. Hot dogs will be provided by HAF but bring any other snacks you want. Arrival from 8pm, the film will start at 9pm.

To find out more about the HAF programme and what else is on offer this summer you can visit www.gloscityhaf.co.uk



A spring in your step

Get your feet in tip top condition thanks to a new community foot healthcare service arranged and subsidised by Podsmead Big Local starting soon in Podsmead! This has been set up following a suggestion from local residents who sit on the PBL panel, who had feedback from other local residents that this was a service they would value having access to locally.



Drop-in foot healthcare sessions
at Poets Pantry, with Chiroprapist Michelle O'Neill (DIPCHFP)



- Tuesday 22nd August
- Tuesday 3rd October
- Tuesday 14th November
- Tuesday 19th December

£10 per person

For more information or to book:
email: michelle.oneill2012@gmail.com
or call: 07868142900



Music makers

For nine weeks during spring young people from Podsmead had a fantastic opportunity to develop their music skills, as the Music Bus came to Youth Club every Tuesday!

The Music Bus – an initiative from Gloucester charity The Music Works - is a state-of-the-art studio on wheels which gives young people the opportunity to collaborate and learn how to play instruments, write songs together, and learn music production and recording skills.

Lloyd Williams, a Youth Worker for Blackbridge CCBS said: "The Music Bus programme allowed the young people to access equipment that may not have been accessible to them for so many reasons. The fact that the music bus was able to be driven to the young people rather than them being taken to unfamiliar surroundings made them feel at ease and fairly comfortable early on (so much in fact that they'd be willing to sing solo).

Having a staff member that was not only a role model for the youngsters (having released her own tracks and able to demonstrate firsthand the possibility of recording) but someone who was relatable and engaging showed just how well The Music Works."

Mikel Medley from The Music Works added: "It was great to have a good relationship with Youth Workers who already had a solid positive relationship with the young people. The music the young people created was really expressive and they were a joy to work with.

We were able to identify young people we can forward onto our one-to-one Key Changes programme. The young people gained a lot of confidence from the experience and engaged and supported one another in a positive way."



Podsmead Community Play Day a real hit



"The half term family play event on 1st June on the Green on Scott Avenue in Podsmead was a huge success.

The sun shone and more than 100 children and their families joined us to paint, read and hear stories, whittle and decorate sticks, toast marshmallows and take part in sport and games.

The Venture provided tea and coffee throughout the day and there was toast for breakfast and delicious wraps and fruit kebabs at lunchtime.

Community groups Play Gloucestershire, Read With Me and Wild & Green are fast becoming quite a team, delivering a huge range of activities which

are planned to ensure that everyone regardless of age, ability and interest can take part.

There were noisy games of football, messy painting, quiet time spent choosing new books to take home for holiday reading and most importantly lots of laughter and conversation.

All events are free. We'll be back on 3rd, 10th and 17th August from 11am-3pm, on the Scott Avenue Green. Everyone welcome.

Read With Me are also looking for volunteers if you have an hour to spare once a week go to www.readwithme.org.uk."

Linda Cohen, Founder of Read With Me



Nextdoor Nature

Supporting nature and wildlife is really important to many of us, and we're often looking for ways we can do this in our own homes, gardens and outdoor spaces, no matter how big or small. Blackbridge CCBS are excited to be working in partnership with Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust on a new project from September 2023 onwards, called 'Nextdoor Nature'.

The project will be based across a few sites in Podsmead and will be a great opportunity for local people to develop gardening skills and meet new people.

To find out more or to register your interest and sign up, email jim@blackbridge.org.uk or text 07923 445327.



Pitching a new career

In partnership with Tuffley Rovers Football Club and Multiply, the Blackbridge CCBS team have been delivering a 10-week Grounds Maintenance Course since early May.

With the help of Tom Hughes AFH Groundcare, participants learnt essential grounds maintenance skills such as using ride on mowers, push petrol mowers and scarifiers (tools used to remove dead grass, moss and leaves from a lawn and to help aerate it).

They have also gained a Sports Turf Maintenance Level 1 Award from the Grounds Maintenance

Association – a great start for those that may wish to pursue it as a new career path, and also to create Tuffley Rovers Groundspeople of the future!

Thanks to Multiply, there were also basic functional maths embedded into the course to improve maths confidence.

The next course is planned for September, so keep an eye out for details or contact jim@blackbridge.org to register your interest.



Community and Sports Hub gets go ahead

At Gloucester City Council's Planning Committee on 6th June, councillors voted by 10 to 1 in favour to give the go ahead for the Blackbridge Community and Sports Hub to be developed at Blackbridge field.

Discussions about the 'Blackbridge Project' have been ongoing for several years but now that it has been given the green light by councillors building work is expected to start before the end of 2023.

Spokesperson for the Blackbridge Charitable Community Benefit Society Mark Gale said: "Following a full and thorough debate locally and taking steps to incorporate the feedback of residents into the development where possible, we are pleased the council have approved this project. We are excited about the increased community, sports and importantly wellbeing opportunities this will bring for hundreds of people from Podsmead and the surrounding areas in the years to come.

We've had lots of questions and can confirm the facilities will be available to book for clubs and community groups across all sports - including rugby, football and cricket - and we can categorically rule out coaches coming to the site as this is a community facility. From an environmental perspective the balancing ponds will be mostly dry for overflow heavy rain, but will also have the added bonus of improving biodiversity, which coupled with additional planting will improve biodiversity on the site by up to 50%.

We'll be sharing lots more information in future newsletters and if you'd like to ask a question just visit our website."



Meet the team



Jim Hart
Blackbridge CCBS Project
Coordinator

“Hi, I’m Jim and back in 2008 I first worked in Podsmead as a community sports worker. I also spent some time working in London for Fulham and Chelsea in community sports roles, returning to Gloucester in 2021. I joined Blackbridge CCBS in 2022, and my role is to manage projects, staff and volunteers, as well as developing skills and learning opportunities.”



Wanja Odhiambo
Community Worker

“My name is Wanja and I’m excited to be joining the team at Blackbridge CCBS as a Community Worker. I’ve been involved in building communities in various ways, be it in local government or church organisations, for as long as I can remember. I’m passionate about seeing individuals, families and communities thrive and share experiences that bring more meaningfulness and fulfilment to their lives and I hope there will be many joyful, enjoyable and memorable get-togethers however big or small in Podsmead!”



Debbie Etheridge
Head of Youth Provision

“Hello everyone, I’m Debbie AKA Debs. I have over 30 years of experience working with young people and being a local resident myself, I recognise that our young people need places to go and things to do. Seeing young people learn and grow through unique opportunities and experiences that they may not have otherwise had a chance to engage in at home or at school is what my role is all about. In the coming months, we will also be providing opportunities for adults to train in this area of work. Forming positive relationships and connecting with youth and the community is something I truly enjoy about working in this field.”

Follow us

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Contact us

Website: www.blackbridge.org.uk

Email: jim@blackbridge.org

Phone: 07923 445327

