



Blackbridge NEWS

SPRING 2024

Working together for Podsmead residents



Welcome

Dear Podsmead resident,

It's wonderful to introduce the second edition of Blackbridge CCBS and Podsmead Big Local News, bringing the highlights of our community events held over the autumn and winter months plus future activities as we move into spring 2024.

We have been very busy over the last six months with the art trail and art car boot held in September, plus bouncy castles and face paints on "The Green", Christmas carols with local visits from Father Christmas, Christmas lunches and hampers, trips for young people to the pantomime, the over 55's monthly luncheon club and subsidised chiropodist footcare held monthly to improve health and wellbeing.

As we mentioned in our first newsletter in August 2023, Podsmead Big Local attracted lottery funding of £1.2 million back in 2012 and we are now in the final tranche of spending £300,000 as the funding comes to an end in August 2025. Your Podsmead Big Local Resident Panel is finalising the last of our projects based on your feedback and we will hand that legacy over to Blackbridge Charitable Community Benefit Society, who will take over the delivery of future projects and activities in the autumn of 2025.

So much has happened over the 12 years through the Podsmead Big Local and we are proud of numerous major achievements, to name a few:

- The Podsmead Hub and Melting Pot refurbishment as a major community support facility
- Supporting our young people through our partnership with Play Gloucestershire providing community activities for children in Podsmead and developing young people into Play Leaders
- Working with Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust to create a wildlife area in Milton Avenue
- Introducing the play park in 2016 as a wonderful play and recreation space right in the heart of the community
- The fantastic work our local Podsmead volunteers do in providing a food club at Poets Pantry distributing food parcels in these challenging economic times

We hope you can celebrate the many achievements with us through a range of events and communications culminating in a big celebratory Podsmead Party in August 2025, handing over the community keys to Blackbridge CCBS.

Looking forward, as part of the regeneration of Podsmead there are exciting opportunities ahead. We are working with Gloucester City Homes to establish a new pharmacy in Podsmead by the end of 2024; we are hopeful that Gloucester City Homes will continue to make further progress on their plans for new social housing, new shops and community provision, and we are so pleased that work has now started on the exciting new Blackbridge Community and Sports Hub which will enhance the great tradition of public sports pitches and the athletic track in Podsmead.

In the meantime, we will continue to deliver our projects and we are proud to support Podsmead residents. If you have any thoughts or suggestions on what you would like in the community or how we can improve, please do let us know by contacting us at info@blackbridge.org.uk

Best wishes,



Sue Cunningham
Chair,
Blackbridge Charitable
Community Benefit
Society



Ashley Green
Chair,
Podsmead Big Local

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What's been happening?



It's been a busy six months of activity in Podsmead! We've been to the beach and Spookyard, litter picking, garden clearing and planting bulbs for spring; we've had courses, meals and lots of opportunities for residents to learn new skills, and not forgetting some festive celebrations too. Over the next couple of pages here's a round-up of just a few of the highlights.

Summer fun for families

During the summer holidays last year, we took a coach full of families from Podsmead to the Cotswold Country Park and Beach and wow we were lucky with the weather! There was sunbathing on the beach, swimming, inflatable fun, picnics and plenty of ice cream consumed. The trip was fully subsidised for Podsmead residents by Podsmead Big Local and staffed thanks to the Blackbridge CCBS team.

In August we also brought some summer fun to Podsmead with a free open-air cinema on Scott Avenue green. The film was Matilda and popcorn was provided thanks to HAF. We were blown away by how many families came along to enjoy the evening and the fantastic feedback we received. Roll on summer 2024!

Blooming Podsmead

There's been lots of hard work happening to keep Podsmead tidy, including twice a month litter picks – one with students from The Crypt School – and some garden clearance work. A big thank you to all of the residents that have been involved, and also to Gloucester City Council and Gloucester City Homes who have also been helping out.



Working with Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust, Blooming Podsmead has also given us all a great opportunity to plant up local areas

for spring and learn new gardening and wildlife skills, and we can't wait to see it all in full bloom!

Poets Pantry

Long-time volunteer and now manager Terry Hook explains how the pantry works, what's available and dispelling some of the foodbank myths:

"I feel Poets Pantry is a port of call in Podsmead" said Terry. "Somewhere people feel completely ok to come, somewhere where nobody is judged. People come week after week and we do some bespoke bags for people with different likes and needs."

Terry explained how the pantry works: "The pantry isn't actually a foodbank – instead it's a food club, people join and then pay £1.50 a week and collect a bag of food worth between £12 to £15 every Thursday afternoon."



"We also do a free food distribution on Thursday and Friday mornings between 9.45am and 10.15am. This food is delivered to us as part of surplus food collections from Tesco, which usually includes fresh fruit, vegetables, bread, buns, cakes and products with a shelf life. Sometimes even chilled microwave and cut flowers – people love being able to take a bunch of flowers home to dress their house."

Terry also does four pickups per week from Lidl and Aldi. "A lot of our food also comes from collections made by different groups that are then donated – Crypt School, Tuffley Rovers FC, Feeding Gloucestershire,

Podsmead Community Association, and Christmas hampers and turkeys supplied by One Church. It is one big collective community effort."

When asked how he and the team of volunteers felt about being part of Poets Pantry, Terry said: "The team feel proud about what we are doing and proud that we are making a difference in Podsmead."

For further information about Poets Pantry email us at

info@blackbridge.org.uk



Celebrating the occasions



Any excuse to bring people together and have fun, we arranged another fully subsidised family day out in autumn half-term to visit Spookyard at Over Farm, and it sure was spooky! At the Hub we also had a Halloween get together with face painting, apple bobbing and other games, and some homemade pumpkin soup.

To celebrate Black History month, residents got to enjoy more of Wanja's fantastic cooking at The Podsmead Hub, as well as some great music.

At Christmas, we sang carols over at Earls Park and had a visit from Santa, followed by hot drinks and other refreshments back at the Hub. Our regular Thursday coffee morning with One Church was also very festive, and we were able to give out vouchers in place of hampers this year, as well as turkeys to ensure residents could cook a lovely Christmas lunch.

During the holidays we took a group of young people to see the Mother Goose pantomime at The Everyman Theatre in Cheltenham (Tweedy was hilarious and silly, as usual), and we had a fun treasure hunt around Podsmead as part of the HAF activities.

When we eat together

Coming together over food is great for families, friends and communities alike. Last October we held our first meal for over 55's at Badger Vale Court with help from Gloucester City Homes, and it went down so well we have repeated it every month. Many of those that attended commented on how much they'd enjoyed coming together and having something fun to break up the day, as well as trying food they'd never had before.

"It was nice to sit and talk to people, make new friends, and have a very nice meal."

A Badger Vale Court resident

Last month with the help of volunteers from One Church we also ran our first community meal for all ages at The Ramblers, with chicken curry, beef stew and lentil curry on the menu, followed by fresh fruit and cake.

We know that residents are keen to learn new recipes to cook more at home, so we've been running cooking sessions at the Hub for adults once a month, plus monthly after school cooking sessions for families.



Community and Sports Hub underway

After many months listening to feedback and fine tuning the plans, work began on the Blackbridge Sports and Community Hub at the beginning of February. Chair of Blackbridge CCBS Sue Cunningham said: "This is a major milestone for the project and wouldn't have been possible without the support of the County and City Councils, our local MP and all our funders."

Local firm E.G. Carters were appointed as the main contractor to build the new Hub. Mark Gale, a Blackbridge CCBS Director added "I am delighted that the Blackbridge Charitable Community Benefit Society board has appointed local builders to develop the site. Based in Podsmead, E.G. Carters appointment, ensures that we keep as much of our spend as local as possible and maximises the local benefit. We are already working together to help use the build to generate more local work opportunities as well as extra community benefits."

"Although we have fenced off the southern end of Blackbridge field where the building site is for Health and Safety reasons, I am pleased that as promised, residents can still use the rest of the field for leisure and dog walking. We anticipate the external building works being completed by the end of 2024 and the fit out being finished shortly afterwards so that the site will be open for community use early in 2025. We are all incredibly excited to have this 'once in a generation' opportunity to create this amazing facility together."

In the meantime, local youth workers funded by Blackbridge CCBS are working with young people in the area to help design the fit out of the building, so that it creates the youth provision that they want alongside the community hub and sports and leisure provision planned for the site.

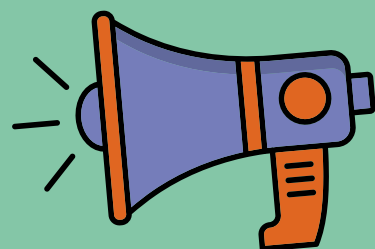
For more information on day-to-day site development queries you can contact the Project Manager, Trevor Stevens, at E.G. Carters directly by emailing trevorstevens@egcarter.co.uk or telephone **07766 137222**.



Youth Voice

HAVE YOUR SAY!

Calling all 14-25 year olds from Podsmead!



Do you want to...

- Be a voice for your community and young people like you?
- Work as a team to help develop projects and initiatives for other young people to take part in?
- Speak on behalf of other young people from the community?
- Help adults understand your world and what you and other young people need?
- Be part of the leadership of the Blackbridge CBBS Community and Sports Hub?

Blackbridge CCBS Youth Work Team want you to be involved and there are lots of ways to do it.

We'll be running participation groups which will enable young people to share their expertise and lived experience to improve services we provide, and there will also be opportunities to become Young Board Members or be part of a Youth Forum.

We're also in the process of recruiting a new Youth Worker to focus specifically on youth voice and participation to make sure young voices are heard and play a key part in the future of our activities and shaping the Blackbridge Community and Sports Hub.

If you'd like to get involved or find out more, email

info@blackbridge.org.uk

WALKING FOOTBALL IN PODSMEAD

Are you aged 50 years or over? If you want to have some fun, stay active, make new friends and get out of the house then Walking Football may be the ideal activity for you.

Aimed at the 50 to 70+ age group there is NO running, NO jogging, NO heading and it's strictly a non-contact activity.

No specific kit is required - just anything comfortable and suitable such as a t-shirt, jogging bottoms or shorts and trainers.

We have one session booked each week on a Thursday from 6pm until 7pm at The Crypt School Sports Hall on Podsmead Road, Gloucester. There is a small charge of £2 which helps to pay for the hire of the sports hall.

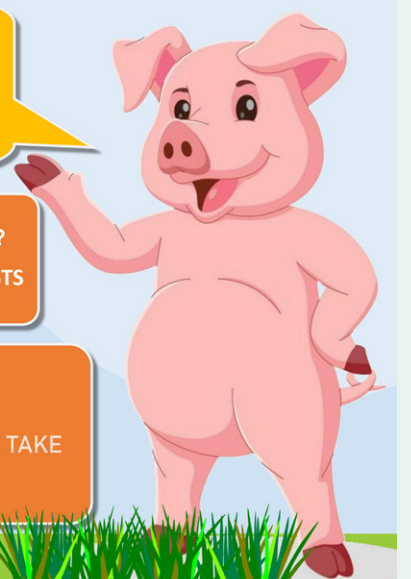
If you'd like to come along or find out more contact us at info@blackbridge.org.uk



GIVE US A *CALL* TO ASK FOR AN APPOINTMENT...
COME AND MEET SAMANTHA AT
THE PODSMEAD HUB, SCOTT AVENUE, GL2 5BD
WE ARE READY TO HELP YOU!

- ✓ HAS THE COST OF LIVING PUT A STRAIN ON YOUR CASH?
- ✓ OR YOU MIGHT BE STRUGGLING TO MANAGE YOUR DEBTS

NOW! IS THE TIME TO TAKE ACTION...
BEFORE LANDLORDS, BAILIFFS OR CREDITORS TAKE
ACTION AGAINST YOU...



GLCommunities CONTACT: 01452 505544 | ADVICE@GLCOMMUNITIES.ORG.UK

What's on?

What's on for children and young people in Podsmead?

The Blackbridge CCBS Youth Project aims to improve the quality of life of young people living in the Podsmead area.

For more information on any of the activities listed contact the Blackbridge CCBS Youth Work Team by emailing info@blackbridge.org.uk

| TUESDAYS | WEDNESDAYS | THURSDAYS | OTHER |
|---|--|---|---|
| YOUTH CLUB NIGHT (Ages 11-16 years) Every Tuesday: 6pm - 8pm Where: The Ramblers Club | YOUTH DAY TRIPS AND OUTINGS (Ages 11+) (some times and locations TBC) 27th March - Tenpin Bowling, Gloucester 3 rd April 31 st July 7 th August 14 th August 21 st August | PLAY GLOUCESTERSHIRE IN PODSMEAD (Ages 8+) (Funded by Podsmead Big Local, starting in the Easter holidays) School holidays: 10am - 4pm Term time: 4pm - 6pm Where: Scott Avenue Green | PODSMEAD YOUTH FORUM 26th March - visit to the Blackbridge Community and Sports Hub site (fully booked, please contact the Youth Work Team for details of further supervised visits planned during the summer holidays) |
| | | YOUTH DROP-IN SESSIONS (Ages 11+) School holidays: 1pm - 4pm Where: The Podsmead Hub, Scott Avenue | PODSMEAD YOUTH FORUM INFO SESSION(S) 3-4.30pm – School holidays Where: The Podsmead Hub, Scott Avenue |



Regular activities

We have lots of regular activities at The Podsmead Hub and other locations which run monthly, fortnightly, and some even weekly!

Please keep an eye on our social media and check our 'What's on' calendar on our website to check exact dates, times and to make sure an activity is taking place.

| MONDAY | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY |
|--|--|--|--|---|
| GL Communities Debt Advice 9:30am until 12:30pm The Podsmead Hub by appointment only | GCH Benefits Support 10am until 1pm The Podsmead Hub First and third Tuesday of the month | Over 55's Meal 12.30pm until 2.30pm Badger Vale Court Third Wednesday of the month | Pop-up Café 9.30am until 1pm The Podsmead Hub | Poets Pantry 9.45am until 10.15am |
| Weigh & Go Drop in session and by appointment Poets Pantry Once a month | Drop in foot healthcare session Drop in session and by appointment Poets Pantry Once a month | Community Lunch 12pm until 2pm The Ramblers Fourth Wednesday of the month | Blooming Podsmead 10am until 12pm The Podsmead Hub Fortnightly | |
| | Crafty Tuesday 1pm until 3pm The Podsmead Hub | | Poets Pantry 9.45am until 10.15am 1pm until 1.30pm | |
| | Youth Club 6pm until 8pm The Ramblers | | | |



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