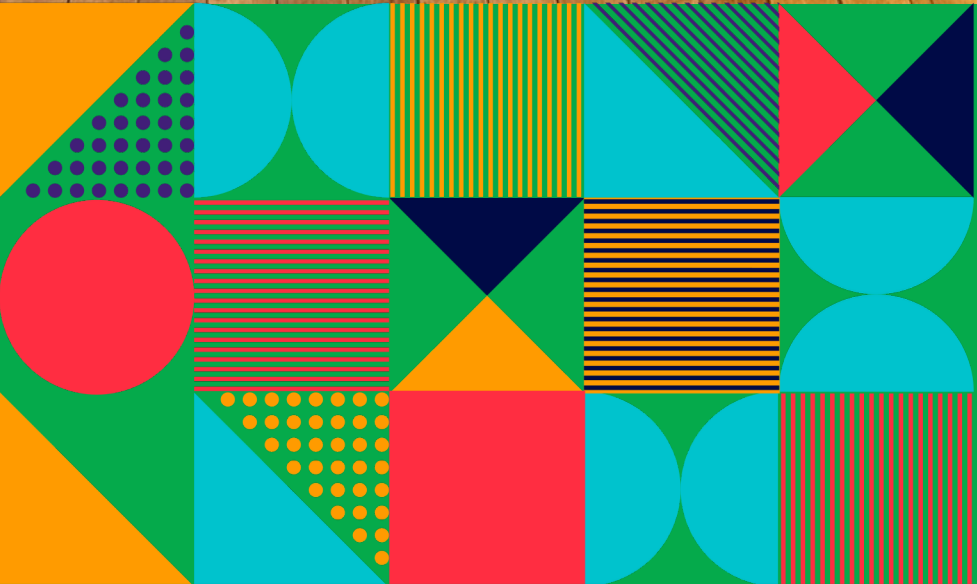




Edgbaston Neighbourhood Network Scheme Newsletter

June 2026



Feature Story:

Move Well, Eat Well, Age Well!

What does it mean to age well?

For many people, it is not simply about living longer, but about staying active, independent, connected and able to enjoy life as we grow older. In Edgbaston, local community groups are helping older adults do exactly that through food, movement and social connection.

“Adding Life to Your Years”

Nutritionist Fiona Allan, founder of Fiona Allan Nutrition, believes ageing well is about supporting both physical and emotional wellbeing.

“More and more research is showing how damaging loneliness and isolation can be for health,” she explains. “We don’t live in isolation, so wellbeing is something communities need to support together.”



Fiona’s sessions combine practical cooking with realistic nutrition advice for people of all ages. One of the biggest myths around healthy eating, she says, is that it is all about restriction. “So much healthy eating is not about what we need to cut out, but what we can add in.” For older adults, nutrition becomes especially important. Protein, calcium, vitamin B12 and vitamin D all help maintain muscle strength and bone health, reducing the risk of frailty and falls. Fiona encourages simple, affordable changes rather than expensive diets. One of her top tips is using frozen fruit and vegetables.

“People often think frozen vegetables are less healthy, but they can actually keep more nutrients because they’re frozen quickly after picking. They also reduce waste because you only use what you need.” She also recommends switching to rapeseed oil, commonly sold as vegetable oil. “It’s one of the easiest healthy swaps you can make for heart and brain health, and it doesn’t cost more.”

Fiona believes enjoyment of food is just as important as nutrition itself. “As we get older, food can start to feel like a chore, especially if someone lives alone. But food is connected to memories, culture and enjoyment. We shouldn’t lose that.”

As part of the Edgbaston NNS funded Living Well, Ageing Well project, to help people continue enjoying familiar meals, Fiona showed simple “shortcut” recipes, including a one-tray Sunday roast designed for one person using easy, low-effort ingredients.

Movement Builds Confidence and Independence

Exercise instructor Amber Cahill runs Move It or Lose It classes for older adults in Edgbaston and says movement plays a huge role in helping people remain independent. “Keeping moving allows you to stay confident and continue doing everyday tasks for longer,” she says.

Amber is keen to challenge the idea that exercise only means gyms or intense workouts. “Even standing up every 45 minutes, stretching, walking to the local shop or doing seated exercises all count as movement.” Her classes focus not only on physical health, but also on friendship and connection. “A lot of people who attend live alone. The social side becomes just as important as the exercise itself.” Many participants now meet outside classes, check in on one another and have formed lasting friendships.

Amber also highlights the power of music, particularly for people living with dementia. “Music can bring back memories and lift people’s mood immediately.” Her message is simple: no one is too old to exercise. “Activities can always be adapted to suit different abilities. Exercise is for everyone.”

The Power of Community

Charlie, who attends activities at St Germain’s says, community classes have transformed her confidence and wellbeing. “I used to be very introverted,” she says. “Now I can interact with anybody.” Through cooking classes and exercise sessions, Charlie has learned healthier ways to prepare meals while staying active and socially connected. “Before, I would feel bloated after eating. Now I feel good, I sleep better and I even enjoy going for walks.”

For Charlie, the relaxed community atmosphere makes all the difference. “It’s not stressful like a gym. We laugh, talk and encourage one another.”

She believes more outreach is needed to help isolated older adults take that first step. “Sometimes people need someone to come and bring them along, not just hand them an invitation.”

The message from everyone interviewed was clear: ageing well does not require dramatic changes. Most importantly, ageing well is something communities can support together. As Charlie says: “Believe in yourself that you can do it.”



Charlie Jacobs

Small Steps Matter

- Eating breakfast regularly
- Drinking more water
- Adding more vegetables to meals
- Moving more often throughout the day
- Joining local groups and activities
- Staying socially connected

HIGHLIGHTS

>>> YEAR IN REVIEW

View highlights of our work over the past year in this Year End Review Video

[Click Here](#) ▶

>>> TIME TO TALK PODCAST

Our latest Time to Talk Podcast episode is now available on Spotify

[Click Here](#) ▶

WHAT'S NEW

>>> DEMENTIA CAFE IN NORTH EDGBASTON

Age UK Birmingham hosts a Dementia Café on the third Thursday of each month, from 11.00am–12.30pm, at the Nature and Wellbeing Centre, Birmingham Settlement, 79 Selwyn Road, Birmingham B16 0SL. The café offers a friendly, relaxed space for people living with dementia, their carers, and anyone concerned about their memory. Drop-in for a cuppa, a chat, monthly activities, and information about local support services. For more information, email dementia.cafes@ageukbirmingham.org.uk.

>>> JAMES' PLACE - MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT FOR MEN

James' Place - a service supporting men experiencing suicidal crisis - opened in Harborne in May, at the start of Mental Health Awareness Week and is now accepting referrals. Working alongside the NHS and local support services, James' Place provides free, rapid access to proven therapeutic support in a safe, welcoming, non-clinical environment. Self-referrals, as well as referrals from family, friends and professionals, are all welcome. The centre is open Monday-Friday 9.30-5.30 by appointment only. To access support from James' Place, make a referral or find out more visit www.jamesplace.org.uk

EVENTS AND TRAINING

All Edgbaston NNS Events and Training are free to access for those living and/or working within the constituency (Bartley Green, Edgbaston, Harborne, North Edgbaston and Quinton). For a full list of upcoming events and training, please visit or subscribe to our Eventbrite page.

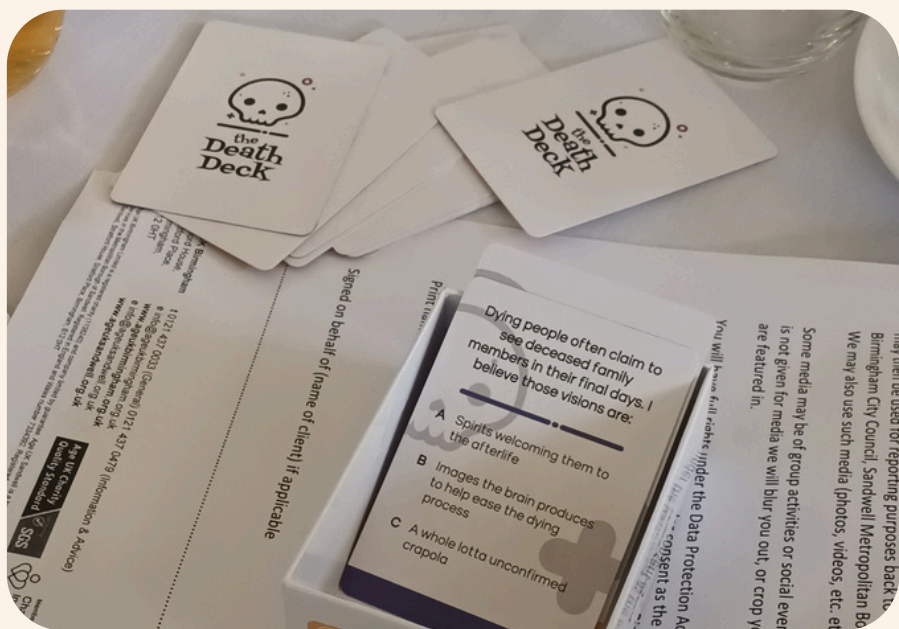
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OUT & ABOUT



➤➤➤ INCLUSION, INSIGHT AND WELLBEING DAY

A day of networking, creativity, dance and music, our SEND event was buzzing with excitement, but also provided a useful one-stop shop for information and support. We also had the Autism Bus on site which proved popular and an opportunity to get a glimpse into what life is like for someone who is neurodivergent.



➤➤➤ LIVING WELL, LEAVING WELL

Hosted to mark Dying Matters Week, the event facilitated conversations around death and dying, and the many layers of loss and grief. Set in the peaceful surroundings of Birmingham Botanical Gardens, it offered a chance for quiet reflection during and after the event. Thank you to everyone who joined us, shared personal stories of grief and helped make it such a special and impactful gathering.



➤➤➤ DEMENTIA ACTION WEEK MARKETPLACE

As part of Dementia Action Week (18–24 May), Edgbaston NNS was at the marketplace hosted by Alzheimer's Society supporting citizens with information around what is available locally for memory concerns or dementia. It was a great day of networking with opportunities for rich conversations with carers and citizens.



➤➤➤ STROKE CLUB EXHIBITION AT THE QE

We were incredibly inspired by our visit to the Arts4Stroke Exhibition at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. Seeing such creativity, resilience, and expression through art was truly moving. A wonderful reminder of the power of community, recovery, and the arts to bring people together. Thank you to South Birmingham Stroke Club, their volunteers and the stroke survivors involved for giving us such a meaningful experience. The project was jointly funded by Northfield NNS and Edgbaston NNS.

BE IN THE KNOW

➤➤➤ DEMENTIA FRIENDLY BIRMINGHAM ACCREDITATION

The Dementia Friendly Birmingham platform is a free online hub that helps people living with dementia, their families, carers, and professionals discover local activities, support services, events, and community opportunities across Birmingham. The platform also supports organisations on their dementia-friendly journey by providing access to a self-assessment tool, enabling businesses, community groups, and services to review their practices and work towards becoming Dementia Friendly Birmingham accredited. By bringing together information, resources, and support in one accessible place, the platform helps create a more inclusive city where people affected by dementia can remain active, connected, and supported. For more information visit [Dementia Friendly Birmingham](#).

➤➤➤ MATCH MY PROJECT

Match My Project is a free online platform that connects community organisations with businesses looking to make a positive impact in Birmingham. Community groups can post projects requiring support, while businesses can offer funding, resources, expertise, equipment, or volunteer time to help bring those projects to life. The platform helps organisations build meaningful partnerships, deliver social value, and create lasting benefits for local communities, making it easier than ever to turn ideas into action and strengthen community wellbeing across the city. More information available at [Match My Project](#).

➤➤➤ WEST MIDLANDS BUS SERVICE - RING AND RIDE

West Midlands Bus is offering a door-to-door transport service for anyone living in the West Midlands who finds it difficult or impossible to use public transport. All trips must be booked at least one day prior to travel. For more information: [Ring And Ride – West Midlands Bus Users](#)

PROJECT UPDATES

➤➤➤ DEMENTIA FRIENDLY HARBORNE PROJECT

A year-long project jointly funded by Public Health and Edgbaston NNS culminated in a celebratory event at Moor Pool Heritage Trust on 2nd May. There was a mix of creative activities as well as information stalls and a reminiscence opportunity with Birmingham Museums Trust with their collection of toys from the past and seaside puppets. It was lovely to see so many citizens in attendance who had provided valuable input throughout the project as well as seeing those living with Dementia join us with their families.



GRANTS

»»» LOOKING FOR FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES?



The Birmingham Voluntary Service Council (BVSC) provides comprehensive information on grants, funding opportunities, procurement, fundraising support and funding advice through its Funding and Procurement Hub. Visit [BVSC Funding and Procurement Hub](#) to access the latest funding information, resources and support for community and voluntary organisations.

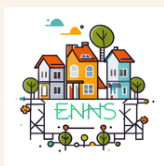
GET INVOLVED

»»» MAKING YOUR VOICE HEARD

There are lots of ways to get involved with Edgbaston NNS and help shape the future of your neighbourhood. Citizens can join our Steering Group to help guide priorities and decision-making, share their ideas for new community projects, and have a direct voice in how local funding is used. You can also take part in our Grants Panel, helping to review applications and support projects that make a positive difference in Edgbaston. By getting involved, you can play an active role in creating a stronger, more connected community.

»»» LET'S GET SOCIAL

Stay connected and never miss an update! Join our Community WhatsApp group or follow us on Facebook and Instagram to keep up to date with upcoming events, training opportunities, news, and community activities. It's the best way to stay informed, get involved, and be part of everything happening in our community. Like, Follow and Connect!



CONTACT US

If you are interested in applying for a grant with us, have a question, a project idea or wish to share a complaint or compliment, please get in touch via email:
nnsedgbaston@ageukbirmingham.org.uk

