



**SANDWELL
CULTURAL FORUM**

January 2026 Newsletter

THE Smethwick Puppetry Festival

The Smethwick Puppetry Festival 2026 programme is officially LIVE - and booking is now open! 🌟😊

Join us this February half-term for a magical celebration of community, creativity and puppet theatre. Expect breath-taking puppetry shows, hands-on workshops, a unique exhibition and more, all taking place across your favourite community venues in Smethwick. 🍷🎭

Whether you're a seasoned puppetry lover or brand new to it all, the festival is an invitation to explore, play and be swept away by the magic of puppetry.

Check out the full line-up and grab your “pay what you can” tickets by clicking on the button below. Tickets are limited, so book now to avoid disappointment!

[Book here](#)



JOIN OUR ROCK BAND!
a friendly group for adults that sing
or play an instrument

no need to read music notation	guided by professional leaders	rehearsals, gigs and socials
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YOUR FIRST SESSION IS FREE



Mondays from 7:15PM - 8:45PM
during term times.
Great Bridge Library
40 Sheepwash Lane, DY4 7JF
call: 07305 043160
email: hello@misfitsmusic.org.uk
website: misfitsmusic.org.uk/trc




Sandwell Poetry Laureate Scheme Update!



The Sandwell Poets Laureate Programme has taken its first steps forward with an initial steering group! The first meeting to discuss the project plan was well attended and incredibly fruitful, shaping the next two years of the project with expertise and creative input.

If you would like to get involved with the planning of this incredible initiative for the arts in Sandwell, becoming a partner or stakeholder for the scheme, please let us know: charlottemcdermott@live.co.uk



Misfits Music Institute to host an evening with the award-winning author

To Be Young, Gifted and Black - A talk with Kadiatu & Mariatu Kanneh-Mason

- Misfits Music Institute are hosting 'To Be Young Gifted and Black – a talk with Dr Kadiatu Kanneh-Mason' on Wednesday 18 February 2026.
- Kadiatu Kanneh-Mason will be in conversation with celebrated orchestral clarinettist Anton Clarke-Butler.
- The evening will include a special live performance from cellist Mariatu Kanneh-Mason and will culminate in a book-signing.
- Taking place at The Royal Birmingham Conservatoire, tickets are available via <https://www.bcu.ac.uk/conservatoire/events-calendar/kadiatu-and-mariatu-kanneh-mason>

Join Misfits Music Institute for an inspiring evening at The Royal Birmingham Conservatoire on Wednesday 18 February, with the award-winning Dr Kadiatu Kanneh-Mason in conversation with Anton Clarke-Butler (Freelance Clarinettist). Together they will reflect on the challenges and celebrations of creating art as Black musicians. This fascinating discussion will be provoked by Kadiatu Kanneh-Mason's highly reviewed book *To Be Young, Gifted and Black*.

The evening will include a special performance by cellist Mariatu Kanneh-Mason, showcasing her extraordinary talent. The backdrop to this fascinating discussion will be provided by Kadiatu Kanneh-Mason's latest book *To Be Young, Gifted and Black*. Afterwards there is an opportunity to stay for a book signing, with The Heath Bookshop (Independent Bookshop of The Year 2025). You can purchase your copy of the book at the event too.

ARTIST OPPORTUNITY



Spectra is expanding its shadowing artist programme for learning disabled and autistic creatives who would like to develop their leadership skills and gain more experience in running creative workshops.

This is a paid opportunity that offers:

- Working with Spectra artists to run community workshops
- Learning about the ideas behind our work and why these are important
- Training in planning and running workshops
- One-to-one mentoring
- Support with travel and access costs

For further information about this programme, email kerry@wearespectra.co.uk. More information is coming soon via www.wearespectra.co.uk and [@spectraartscompany](https://www.instagram.com/spectraartscompany).



VOLUNTEER WITH US AT

SANDWELL ARCHIVES

Visit Sandwell Archives
Smethwick Library, High Street, Smethwick B66 1AA
Email archives_service@sandwell.gov.uk
Call us 0121 569 4985



Opportunities

Volunteering

Current Opportunities

Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays any time between 10am- 4pm.
Volunteer travel expenses are covered.

Archive Champion:

As an Archive Champion, you'll be part of a team that carefully handles, repackages, and records Sandwell's history. Your work will ensure important documents remain safe for future generations to explore.

Family History Buddy:

Whether you're helping someone trace their lineage or discovering long-lost family stories, your support will bring history to life for others.

Develop these skills:

- Historical research skills
- Communication
- Teamwork
- Time management
- Organisation
- Archive-specific skills

Visit Sandwell Archives
Smethwick Library, High Street, Smethwick B66 1AA
Email archives_service@sandwell.gov.uk
Call us 0121 569 4985



FREE DANCE PERFORMANCES IN SANDWELL



Join ME Dance as they present The Chrysalis 'Moments Between Movements', an exciting performance of new work in collaboration with De Montfort Dance Students and ME Dance Company Artistic Director Marcia Edwards.

Also see ME Dance Youth perform their new piece choreographed by Emily Cox as well as their own creative work.

ME Dance prides itself on making dance accessible to all and we hope that you will be inspired to keep smiling and moving.

[Book your free ticket here!](#)

ADD YOUR EVENTS TO VISIT SANDWELL TODAY

If you have an event in Sandwell, PLEASE add it to Visit Sandwell by clicking [here](#)!

We want more Sandwell events on Visit Sandwell - if you need any help with adding events, please contact Stacey!

A support video to add events on Visit Sandwell is here!

Join the Sandwell Cultural Forum

NOW

Do you know someone who wants to join the Sandwell Forum?

Email Stacey via:
stacey_bagdi@sandwell.gov.uk



Collecting Oral Histories: Chance Migration Stories

CALLING EX-EMPLOYEES OF CHANCE
BROTHERS GLASS WORKS, SMETHWICK.



Did you migrate to England to work for Chance in the 1960s-1980s, or know of someone who did?

Would you like to share your story? Then we would like to talk to you!

For more information, please contact Karen Davies, Project Archivist, at Karen_TracyDavies@sandwell.gov.uk



Call to action!

Yam from Here: Migration and the Making of the Black Country is a multi-year arts and heritage project funded by Heritage Lottery exploring the identity of the region.

We are looking for communities and partners to engage in our **free arts workshops**.

Our workshops are led by local artists who utilise the mediums of **painting, textiles, photography, and performance** to explore questions of home, journey, and community in the Black Country.

We would like to work with you!

Our audiences include:

Community groups and organisations interested in local arts, heritage, and history.

CIC's working with first-generation migrants and community groups and organisations interested in stories of migration.

We can organise venues in your borough through partners or come directly to you! We will organise the workshop for free.

You don't need to bring anything, just yourselves and your community.

Email: Piotr.kardynal@ewacic.com or Luccadivirgilio@ewacic.com to register interest!





Featured Events Listing



Click on the text below to find out more about the events and to book

Sandwell Museums:

Haden Hill House

- [Lots of exciting family fun events at Haden click here for the full list!](#)

Wednesbury Museum and Art Gallery

- [Lots of history talks and family summer fun at Wednesbury Museum and Art Gallery](#)

Oak House Museum

- [There's a ton of activities happening at Oak House this summer - click here!](#)

Bromwich Hall

- [Check out the amazing events happening at Bromwich Hall](#)

Sandwell Libraries:

- [Lots coming up, book via Ticketsource <-click here](#)

Sandwell Valley:

Cultural Forum Members List

1. 1000 Trades
2. Anthony McFarlane (Artist)
3. Black Country Touring
4. Bear Bookshop
5. Bearwood Community Hub
6. Bearwood Promoters
7. Big Bear Music
8. Birmingham Opera
9. Blue Sheep Books
10. Birmingham Music Archive
11. Canal & River Trust
12. City of Birmingham Orchestra
13. Chance Heritage Trust
14. Curl Girl Productions
15. Creative Black Country
16. Drama AND SOME cic
17. The Art Yard
18. Powered by Can
19. Kickstarts Dance
20. Outside Left
21. Wild Lives Forest School
22. Learn with Lolonyo
23. Luke Perry (Artist)
24. ME Dance
25. Method in Motion
26. Midlands Metro Hospital
27. Multistory
28. Fantastic Journeys
29. Quennie Lim (Artist)
30. SAFS
31. Sandwell College
32. Sarah Cole, writer
33. SCVO
34. SIPS
35. Smethwick Heritage Centre
36. Stan's Cafe
37. SWEDA
38. The Parakeet
39. The People's Orchestra
40. We are Spectra
41. West Midlands Heritage Building Trust
42. Women & Theatre
43. Rage Arts
44. European's Welfare Association

& Sandwell Council Officers



Next meeting date:

Wednesday 11th February 2026 1-3pm

Speaker: Hayley Pepler,
Head of Culture, Creative Industries and Digital
Roadmap, West Midlands Combined Authority
Sandwell Valley Visitor Centre

