

AUTUMN 2024

It really has been a roller-coaster of a year, especially for businesses this year. We should however continue to count our blessings and stay optimistic, because we are so lucky to have such a good mixture of small, medium and large business across all sectors here in Sidcup, along with strong amenities such as our library and cinema. We are lucky too, that we are so well supported by our 'locals' - residents, students, and visitors. So, a huge and sincere 'Thank you' to everyone for all your effort and support, in helping to make Sidcup the varied and vibrant high street that it is!

From all of us at Sidcup Partners 'BID' (Business Improvement District), we wish you good luck, for an action-packed and enjoyable Christmas and our very best wishes for a successful and happy 2025!

Dominic Price, BID Chair



We are all in awe of Sue's endless hard work to help everyone in Sidcup, and especially those who are more vulnerable. Since our last newsletter, Sue's dedication has been recognised not once but twice, and we are proud to announce that she received the accolade of Highly Commended in the Kent Mental Wellbeing Awards. The Kent Mental Wellbeing Awards is an annual event to showcase the people, organisations and initiatives that help us all cope with life when it becomes overwhelming and challenging. Awareness of mental health issues and the provision of services is essential for all and Sue will

continue to work hard to keep mental health on the agenda. We are also thrilled that Sue's relentless efforts have seen her receive the fantastic award of the Freedom to the City of London. Huge congratulations to Sue from us all!



BUSINESS NEWS

- We are delighted to welcome a new addition to Station Road: Westwood Property Services officially open their doors on Monday 9th December 2024. Good luck!



- Also new to the area are Good Gym Bexley, and Murray Lifts. Good Gym help people get fit by working with community groups and organisations, encouraging walking, running and cycling inclusively and have lots of fun!



- Safety and security are number one concerns of most of our businesses, and we are always looking for ways to help. On October 14th we had a very wet and eventful day handing out 'gadget marking kits' on Sidcup High Street. Marking essential and valuable gadgets ensures they can be more easily traced in the unfortunate event of theft. Thank you to Dave, Dan, Steve, Sophie, Claire and the team for your help.



- Unfortunately we have had reports of counterfeit banknotes floating around Sidcup. Please be vigilant!
- Discussions are continuing about a new 'banking hub' for Sidcup. We are hopeful a temporary hub will be in full swing in January to assist the community with all our banking needs.
- Designer Chic held a pre-Christmas event to showcase some beautiful new stock. The event went extremely well and Sidcup Partners were delighted to support Debbie and her team by providing some goodie bags. Pop in and have a look!
- We think you will all agree that the recent jet-wash to the Travelodge has made a huge difference!



● So much hard work went into the Sidcup Partners' entry for London in Bloom this year. Our local streets, community areas and schools did us all proud, and we were awarded Silver Gilt at the London in Bloom ceremony in October. Thanks again to all who volunteered their time, expertise, knowledge and enthusiasm to make Sidcup bloom!

● A special mention goes out to Colin who has been keeping on top of the inevitable weeding and maintenance that goes hand in hand with our floral displays. Thank you, Colin for keeping Sidcup fresh, smart and weed free.



● We have now installed the long-awaited new bins on the High Street and Station Road, and also have some extra ones too!



● On 10th August we organised another litter pick day, and a van load of bin bags filled with rubbish from around our streets were removed.

● Our brilliant Storyteller Cinema are continuing their programmes of 'dementia friendly' screenings – a great boost for inclusivity throughout our community.



● Roadworks can be extremely disruptive and frustrating for everyone, and although essential maintenance must take place, please be assured that Sue and Dominic have been in talks with Thames Water and the council to ensure the continuous road closures are managed as efficiently as possible. We hope the situation has now improved.

● Poppies went up on display at the beginning of November to mark the annual armistice commemorations. Thank you again to Colin for all his help and hard work.



● The freshly refurbished British Heart Foundation shop was officially reopened by the Mayor of Bexley on 12 November. Sidcup Partners were there to offer goodie bags to attendees. The hugely successful day was down to Sally and her team - so well done and thank you! Pop in and have a look next time you're passing.



● Our Christmas Toy Appeal has had a wonderful response with many toys being donated. These toys will go to children who really need help, support and love especially at Christmas time. We're sure your kind donations will bring some much-needed joy to their lives.



● We joined the Mayor of Bexley on a visit to the 1st Footscray Scouts where they provided a delicious brunch and hosted a fundraising event. All proceeds have been donated to charities 'Mind' and 'Counselling Matters Bexley'.



● Little Recyclers continue to work alongside our local primary schools, collecting second-hand clothes and homewares. We were super impressed with the latest collection - Colin and Sue were exhausted but managed to raise a very impressive £575.00 for the schools signed up to the scheme.

● We are continuing to collect surplus food from our shops which is distributed out in our community. This reduces waste and ensures some of our most vulnerable people have the essentials they need.

● James Brokenshire, a dedicated public servant and friend, sadly passed away from lung cancer recently. His wife, Cathy along with the Roy Castle Lung Cancer Foundation, have already raised an astounding £166,000.00 to fund a three-year fellowship into lung cancer research. In Bexley, hopefully we can come together to continue this incredible work by raising further funds for another three-year fellowship in James' memory. James tirelessly served his constituency, and now we have the chance to honour his legacy and make a lasting impact. We're also excited to announce that Andrew Wallen will be running the London marathon in aid of the charity and in memory of James. Please support him and this noble cause.



Every Red Pot holds a story

In the lead-up to Remembrance weekend, volunteers from The Sidcup & Foots Cray Branch of the Royal British Legion were out in force, selling poppies throughout Sidcup. These dedicated individuals give their time to support the Armed Forces community, and behind every poppy seller, there's often a fascinating story. This year, I'd like to share one of those stories with you. Alex Harrington joined as a volunteer for the 2023 Poppy Appeal. Returning for another year, I had the chance to speak with Alex about his motivation to get involved, and his story is truly inspiring. Alex's Great Grandfather, William Hollins (known as Bill), was a young soldier in the 9th North Staffordshire Regiment. On July 13, 1917, he was severely injured while fighting in Ypres. Bill became one of the first patients treated by Dr. Harold Gillies at what was then Queen's Hospital, now Queen Mary's Hospital in Sidcup. Dr. Gillies was a pioneer in plastic surgery, and Bill required his expertise after suffering significant injuries to his chin and jaw. While recovering,



Bill Hollins (4th from left)

Bill met his first wife, a Voluntary Aid Detachment (VAD) nurse, and went on to lead a full and busy life with eight children. He spent most of his years in Sidcup. This incredible story is a reminder of the personal connections and history that often lie behind the people holding the red collection pots. It's these stories that make a Poppy Seller special. We are deeply grateful to everyone who supported this year's Poppy Appeal, from those selling poppies to those who purchased them. Every contribution helps our branch of the RBL in its mission to support a very worthy cause. In the accompanying pictures, you can see Alex Harrington and Millie Reynolds selling poppies at David Lloyd Sidcup, alongside a photo of Bill with Dr. Harold

Gillies. If you would like to volunteer to help with the Poppy Appeal or learn more about the Royal British Legion, please contact us at sidcupfootscray.secretary@rbl.community, Thank you.



Nicola Bruce
Chairman Sidcup & Foots Cray, Royal British Legion



We extend our heartfelt thanks to Merton Court School for hosting a truly beautiful and moving **Remembrance Service**. The event was a poignant reminder of the sacrifices made by so many and brought the community together in a moment of reflection and gratitude.



On Sunday, 10th November, Sidcup Partners was honored to participate in the official Remembrance Service where Sue and Robert Petty laid a wreath on behalf of Sidcup Partners.



Families had a fantastic time taking part in the spooktacular **Halloween Trail** around Sidcup! The children explored the town, searching for the pumpkins in the participating businesses windows. It was wonderful to see so many happy faces enjoying the trail.

We'd also like to give a big congratulations to our three lucky winners of The Works vouchers: Mason, Rosie, and Naeema! Well done!

Thank you to everyone who participated and made this event such a memorable success. We're already looking forward to bringing you even more exciting activities in the future!

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DECEMBER

The Sidcup Fringe Festival unfortunately was postponed due to rain in September, good news is it's been rescheduled for December - The Christmas Extravaganza and will include Live Music, Arts & Crafts, Meeting Santa, Stalls & Food, Snowboarding Experience, Snow Globe Photo Opportunities and much more.



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DECEMBER

Sidcup Partners is thrilled to sponsor the upcoming **Santa Dash**, taking place on 14th December at 11am at Merton Court Prep School. Participants can look forward to receiving a festive Santa Hat and a shiny Santa Medal upon completing the 12-mile dash. Tickets are just £2 per person. For more details and to secure your spot, visit our website!



ALL
DECEMBER

Sidcup's High Street and Station Road are getting a festive throughout December with the return of the much-loved **Elf on the Shelf Prize Draw**. Families are invited to hunt for cheeky elves hidden in local businesses.

The rules are simple: if you spot an elf, it's yours to keep! Snap a photo with your new elf, tag Sidcup Partners on social media, and share which business you found it in. Participants will be entered into a prize draw to win one of several fabulous Christmas hampers.



For more information about any of our event visit our website sidcuppartners.co.uk

UP-COMING EVENTS:

- 4 December - Business Networking
- 7 December - Christmas Extravaganza, Rose Bruford (in place of September's postponed Fringe Festival)
- 14 December - Santa Dash, Merton Court School
- All December - Elf on the Shelf Prize Draw

Thank you!

A massive thank you to all the people – residents, business owners, volunteers and service providers, who all work together so enthusiastically to make Sidcup such a fantastic community to be part of!



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