

Edition 012

September 2025

Birkdale

A Community Magazine

BUZZ



**Sponsored by Birkdale Community Hub and Library
at the Station Master's House**

**Find out what's going on at the Library and around Birkdale
village and enjoy contributions from a range of local writers**



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The Junior Chess Club is free to join and is proving to be very successful. The two volunteers, Yvonne and Charlie (who is at Birkdale High School) have welcomed chess players, from total novices to experienced players over a range of ages, starting at age six.



Come and join us at Birkdale Community Hub and Library

Contact us on: **01704 566 992** for more details

Want to advertise in the Birkdale Buzz?

The magazine comes out every quarter (March, June, September and December) and is printed in A5 format. Adverts can be printed either in B&W or full colour.

The charge for adverts in the next edition in **December** is:

B&W adverts: 1/8 page costs £15, 1/4 page costs £25, 1/2 page costs £40.

Colour adverts: 1/8 page costs £20, 1/4 page costs £35, 1/2 page costs £55.

We also offer a discount for placing an advert in four editions: four adverts for the price of three. The deadline date for the December edition is **17th October**.

For further information and advice please email us at:

birkdalebuzz@thestationmastershouse.co.uk

Hello Readers

Welcome to the September edition of the Birkdale Buzz, produced quarterly by volunteers at the Birkdale Community Hub and Library charity.



WE'VE GONE **COLOURFUL!** Thanks to a new contract, we've managed to print the Buzz magazine in full colour at no extra cost to our previous black and white versions. We do hope that this change makes the magazine an even more enjoyable read, keeping locals in touch with people and events around Birkdale and providing an interesting read on all sorts of topics. We distribute copies to over 3000 homes in the Birkdale area.

An online version of the Buzz can be found by visiting our website. If you would like us to send an online copy to you, to forward to friends and relatives, please email us at: **birkdalebuzz@thestationmastershouse.co.uk** and we will put you on the emailing list.

Several local companies have recently offered generous help to Birkdale Library. **A1 All Clear Ltd** put in a new drain in the rear yard and supplied all labour and materials at no cost; Stephanie and Jon Greaves from **Maghull Factory Carpets** supplied grass flooring for the rear space at a discounted price; **Ian Hopkins** supplied a new side gate at cost and fitted it for free; **Master Lock and Safe Ltd** fitted a new lock on a community notice board on Birkdale Station at no cost. Grateful thanks to all.

Phil Margham, Editor



Southport Talking Newspaper

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Every week since 1987, the **Southport Talking Newspaper** has delivered local news to blind and partially sighted listeners throughout the Southport and Formby areas. This free service is a lifeline to many, and our listeners look forward greatly to receiving the next edition.

Our friendly teams of volunteers perform a wide range of duties, from news gathering, editing, reading, copying and despatching to listeners. We are always on the lookout for new volunteers, so if you would like to join us, we would love to hear from you.

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Sefton Councillor Surgeries

Lib Dem Councillors representing Birkdale Ward (i.e. Birkdale to landward of the railway line) and Dukes Ward (Shoreside Birkdale as well as Town Centre) will hold evening surgeries at the Station Master's House on the **3rd Tuesday of every month between 6 and 7 pm.**

The Labour Councillor also representing Birkdale Ward will hold midday surgeries at the Station Master's House on the **first Wednesday of every month between 1 and 2 pm.**

No need to book, just turn up to discuss any issues you may have.

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Parliamentary Update from Southport's MP, Patrick Hurley

When I was a child, our towns in the north west were thriving. In Prescott, where I grew up, the centrepiece of the high street was Lennon's Supermarket, a local chain, and the rest of the shops were overwhelmingly made up of independent businesses. There was a factory at the top of the street which employed maybe a few hundred local people.

For our cities, however, it was a different story back in the 1980s. In contrast to the town, the inner city of Liverpool, just twelve miles away, was in an awful state. Botched town planning after the war, horrid multi-storey car parks, subways and skyline corridors you'd do your best to avoid. Yet fast forward thirty years, and things have changed utterly.

Back where my mum still lives, the factory closed down, the workers all made redundant. The factory site became a retail park, with the big Tesco on it. And the big Tesco and all the other out-of-town retailers took trade away from the high street. Shuttered shop windows, buddleia growing out of the roof tiles. The youth clubs are gone; the library that helped me learn to read demolished. It's a story we'll all be familiar with, no matter which town we're from.

But the cities are transformed. We no longer tend to use the term "inner cities", with all the connotations that phrase brings. Instead, we call them "city centres" – places of economic activity, cultural events, a huge amount of residential living, places teeming with life. The skylines of Manchester or Liverpool in 2025 are a wholly different proposition to 30 years ago.

The fortunes of our towns and cities have swapped. So, the challenge now is not to continually improve the city centres. The task, rather, is to bring up to standard the hundreds of towns that have seen better days, towns like Southport. To work to reopen the youth clubs, to invest in our neighbourhoods, to bring back a sense of pride in place for the vast majority of our people.

Here in Southport, the most visible manifestation of the austerity years is the closure of our much-loved pier, a pier which we'll all be happy to know has government backing to repair and re-open. But the rot goes deeper than that. Department stores and outside investment have fled the town. Street drinkers and rough sleepers have arrived. New grot spots appear by the month, overwhelming a council and a business ecosystem and charity landscape that can't cope.

So what previous governments in the 1990s and 2000s did for our cities, it falls on my generation of politicians to do for our towns. In Southport, we've made a start. The market quarter, the marine lake events centre, recent announcements on the Town Hall Gardens, the pier and others. But the town has been declining for over twenty years. It's going to take a while yet to put it all right.

Patrick Hurley MP

House of Commons, SW1A 0AA

Email: patrick.hurley.mp@parliament.uk

Celebrating our Heritage



Heritage Open Days is England's largest festival of history and culture. This year, the Heritage Open Days festival in Southport is being coordinated by life-long resident, Heather Cook, who believes that curiosity about our local history can foster home-town pride.

"As a child, I spent hours poring over books and internet articles about Southport's history, searching for information about long-lost buildings, and fascinated by the clues of them that remained on the ground. That curiosity has stayed with me, and it is the foundation upon which my love of Southport grew".

The aim of the **Heritage Open Days** festival is to offer the public an opportunity to discover hidden places and try out new experiences. There are more events being added to the local programme all the time, with confirmed events taking place at the Atkinson, the Prince of Wales, the Lawnmower Museum, the Masonic Hall, St Philip & St Paul with Wesley Church, and more!

To view our ever-expanding festival line-up, and to book onto an event, go to: <https://www.heritageopendays.org.uk/whats-on.html> and search for 'Southport' in the location box. The festival will run from **12th to 21st September 2025**, with the full lineup of events launching in mid-August. We hope to see you there!

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Birkdale common still under threat from proposed golf ‘hitting tee’

Simon Shaw, Lib Dem councillor for Birkdale Ward writes:

Many readers of Birkdale Buzz will already be aware of a proposal by Golf's ruling body, the R&A, to take over a large part of Birkdale Common to create an extended Practice Ground in advance of next year's Open Golf Championship at Royal Birkdale. The area affected lies between (1) the public car park used by dog walkers and others accessing the path through the sand dunes between Hillside and Royal Birkdale golf courses, (2) the end of Hastings Road, and (3) the boundary of Greenbank High School.

A Consultation took place in February 2025 and I made representations including detailed constructive suggestions to seek to reduce the adverse impact of the proposed 'Hitting Tee'. Many other residents also made representations. Rather belatedly a Planning Application was submitted (viewable under reference DC/2025/00750) and this is likely to be considered by the Planning Committee in September. Most worryingly to me, is that the proposal now involves a permanent six-foot high metal fence extending over the majority of the area between the current fence to Hillside Golf Club and the Greenbank High School boundary. Obtrusive anywhere but doubly so in what is Green Belt land.

At least two petitions of objection have been submitted, and I have submitted a formal letter of objection – setting out an alternative solution which I believe meets the R&A's objectives but not with six-foot high, permanent metal fencing.

A Local Doctor writes: The Benefits of Walking Daily

Walking is one of the simplest, most effective ways for older adults to stay healthy. This low-impact exercise improves heart health, boosts mood, and enhances mobility without straining joints. A daily 30-minute walk at a moderate pace - fast enough for you to talk but not sing - meets weekly exercise guidelines.

Walking strengthens leg muscles, improves balance, and reduces fall risks. It also lowers blood pressure and supports weight management. Start with shorter walks if you're new to exercise, gradually increasing time or distance. Choose comfortable, supportive shoes and walk on flat surfaces like parks or tracks to minimize strain..

Walking with a friend or joining a senior walking group adds a social element, making it more enjoyable. Carry a water bottle to stay hydrated, especially in warm weather. If mobility issues arise, use a cane or walker for support. Explore scenic routes to keep walks engaging, or try audiobooks for mental stimulation. Consult your doctor before starting, especially if you have heart or joint concerns.

By making walking a daily habit, you'll boost energy, improve sleep, and enjoy a healthier, more active life. And of course, walking has mental and physical benefits for all ages, so why not make it a family affair?



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Anglesey, or Ynys Môn as it is known in Welsh, may only be the seventh largest island in the UK, but in terms of delights per square mile it must surely rank at the very top. My relationship with Anglesey goes back over fifty years when my parents had a caravan in Rhosneigr. We spent all our holidays there and I have been a regular visitor ever since. Even though I consider myself well versed in all things Anglesey, I am still able to find new and exciting places to visit whenever I return.

The fun begins just getting onto the island as you have a choice of two bridges, the suspension bridge built by Thomas Telford or the main road built on top of Robert Stephenson's railway bridge, both superb examples of industrial architecture. Once on the island there is so much to see in terms of history and nature that I will distil it down to my personal ten favourite places (in no particular order).

1. **Menai Bridge.** Home to one end of the original bridge and situated on the Menai Straits. Church Island has great views of both bridges while Plas Cadnant Hidden Gardens are a delight. It is also home to Dylan's Restaurant, my favourite on the island and the starting point for exhilarating rib boat rides.
2. **Newborough Beach.** Sadly, not the secret it used to be but still one of the finest beaches in the UK. A walk to Llanddwyn Island at low tide is a must.
3. **Beaumaris.** Home to Edward 1st's unfinished masterpiece of a castle and a pretty little town. It also boasts a nineteenth century gaol which is worth a visit.
4. **South Stack Lighthouse.** A stunning setting at the foot of cliffs with an optional 400 step descent for a closer look. The adjacent RSPB reserve allows amazing views of the nesting seabirds.
5. **Anglesey Sea Zoo.** A great all-weather attraction for all ages which also does important conservation work. Next door is Halen Môn which has tours showing how their famous sea salt is made.
6. **Plas Newydd House and Gardens.** A National Trust property that was once the home of the Marquess of Anglesey. It is set beautifully on the Menai Straits.
7. **Parys Mountain.** Once the world's largest copper mine, the legacy is a multicoloured landscape which has to be seen to be believed.
8. **Penmon Point.** The most easterly tip of Anglesey and a lovely spot looking out at the lighthouse and Puffin Island. The road up there passes the ruins of medieval Penmon Priory which is well worth a stop.
9. **Cemlyn Nature Reserve.** On the wild north coast of Anglesey lies this unique habitat with a lagoon created by a large shingle bank. In the summer months it is home to nesting colonies of Terns and is quite a spectacle.
10. **Rhosneigr.** Now a popular water sport centre, I include Rhosneigr in my top ten because, for me, it brings glorious memories of endless childhood holidays flooding back!

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There for you

CREAMY DHAL SOUP (sent in by Jill Jones)

INGREDIENTS

- 1 large onion
- 1 inch piece of fresh ginger
- 2 cloves of garlic
- 1 tsp of ground cumin/coriander and turmeric
- 2 carrots
- 2 parsnips
- 12 oz of red lentils
- 2 pints of stock – vegetable or chicken

To serve:

- yoghurt or cream
- mango chutney



METHOD

- Sauté the onion, ginger and garlic.
- Add spices and cook for a further two minutes
- Add carrots and parsnips and cook for a few more minutes
- Add the lentils and stir to ensure they are coated in the spices
- Add the stock and bring to the boil
- Cover and simmer for 30 mins +, until vegetables are really tender and lentils are mushy
- Puree
- Season to taste

Serve with yoghurt/cream or if you prefer mango chutney and crispy onions



For lovers of social history or media, you will love **BFI Replay** - a free-to-access, digital archive from the BFI (British Film Institute) hosting thousands of digitised videos and television programmes from the BFI National Archive, partner UK Regions and Nations Film Archives. It is only available in public and community libraries. The content, preserved from these original videotapes, uncovers stories from across the UK. Vividly captured in over 60 years of film, television and video – it is what we, our parents, grandparents and communities watched and reveal an era of rapid social, industrial, political and technological change.

To access BFI Replay, visit the computer room in Birkdale Library at The Station Master's House, click on the 'BFI Replay' icon on a PC desktop or enter 'replay.bfi.org.uk' into the web browser. Happy browsing!

Southport & Birkdale Sports Club



S&B Sports Club is the leading multi-sports club in the area. Sporting members have the option to concentrate on one sport, or take part in all five, cricket, hockey, snooker, squash and tennis. There is coaching available, for squash and tennis, either personally, or in groups, plus training for cricket and hockey with an emphasis on the development of Junior members.

During the autumn and winter the hockey section provides training for Junior, Men and Women players. The Senior teams take part in the North-West Adult leagues in various divisions and the Juniors play regular games and festivals in the South Lancashire Hockey Tournaments. Junior, Men and Women train every Tuesday (Sept to April) with an additional weekend session for Juniors on a Sunday morning (Sept to June). Why not try hockey for free before joining? We also have a scheme where U7s train for free. Contact us for more information: southporthockeyclub@hotmail.com

Alternatively, you may wish to take a social membership. This allows you to use the club facilities to have a drink, at discounted prices, watch the cricket, or take a meal supplied by the renowned D'vine catering. Watch out for the many S&B functions that will be taking place, including quizzes, wine tasting and the Christmas Party Nights.

Buzz readers will be interested to know that S&B Sports Club has been granted planning permission to create a new main entrance, with lift access to an upper floor comprising a café bar, with external terrace, toilets and a new meeting room. The members of the Birkdale Library wish S&B every success in their new project and look forward to seeing the completed works.

Contact: Claire Crew, Honorary Membership Secretary, email - clcrew36@gmail.com
S&B Sports Club, Trafalgar Road, Birkdale PR8 2HF

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YOUR Community Workshop NEEDS YOU



**A new opportunity
is coming soon.**

Birkdale Library and Liverpool Road Methodist Church have raised funds to start a **Community Workshop** in the Church's Community Hall.

There will be space and equipment to follow a range of practical interests, e.g. woodworking, use of power tools, repairs/upcycling, gardening, model making, arts and crafts and cycle maintenance or for just turning up and having a cup of tea with new friends.

Interested in gaining new skills or sharing your skills with others?

For more information contact:

Tim Hall at bmcmanager@thestationmastershouse.co.uk
or Craig Horan at hitasco@aol.com



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Pet Corner

Paul Crowther

I am a firm believer that a regular dog walk is beneficial for our physical health, and it is very good for us socially as well. I have met some of my best friends through dog-walking and am even a member of a dog-walking WhatsApp group! As a former vet, I know for a fact that our four-legged companions gain just as much as we do from exercise - plus a decent walk gives our dogs the chance to socialise, which is important for their mental wellbeing. A recent trend towards dog friendliness in many establishments means that a walk can easily be supplemented with a little light refreshment, making it all the more enjoyable.

I am reminded of a story from many years ago when Swill, a vet friend of mine, was dog-sitting for his parents in Farndon, just south of Chester. Swill is actually Steve, but when your surname is Williams, S. Williams quickly became shortened to Swill and it is how he is still known to this day. He had been left a full set of instructions for looking after Lucy, the Cavalier King Charles Spaniel, which included an hour-long walk along the River Dee every evening. On the first day, Swill set off on his walk but had only got as far as the main road when Lucy sat down and no amount of coaxing could persuade her to move. Eventually, Swill gave up and turned to head back home but Lucy began to pull him in a different direction - towards The Hare public house. Swill followed obediently as he was led into the bar where Lucy was greeted like a regular. No big surprise there, because it turned out she *was* a regular! The barman explained to Swill that Mr. Williams senior came in every evening just after six, had a pint of bitter and a bag of crisps for Lucy, and then headed home. Swill felt that it would be unfair to upset Lucy's routine, so he ordered her some crisps and himself a pint. On his parents return, Swill told his dad, with a knowing wink, that he had enjoyed his evening walks with Lucy but decided it wasn't his place to blow the whistle on the two of them to his mum.

I must admit that one of my dogs is also fascinated by pubs and, if he passes one, will try to drag anyone walking him inside. I maintain that this is because he recognises them as places where he is likely to be given treats but, sadly, very few people believe this explanation and think it is down to him learning from my habits! I do hope I have made a decent argument for the plusses of dog walking and, even if I have failed to win over the humans, then perhaps the dogs themselves could get together and form a "WhatsApp" group!

What's On in Southport

West Lancashire Yacht Club 24 Hour Yacht Race (13-14 September) Marine Lake

Southport Classic Performance Motor Show (14 September) Victoria Park

Heritage Open Days (12-21 September) see page 6 for more information

British Musical Fireworks Championship (27-28 September) Victoria Park

Southport Comedy Festival (3-19 October) Victoria Park

Jack and the Beanstalk (19 December—4 January) SDC Little Theatre, Southport

Want to Help your Birkdale Library?



Make a donation at NO cost to you!

The Birkdale Community Hub and Library charity has linked up with the **Give as You Live** (GAYL) website so that when you are purchasing online you can ensure that the library will receive a donation. How can you do this?

Firstly, download the “Give as You Live” App from your App store (Apple App or Google play). Then sign up and give the library as your Gift Recipient (charity number 1135611) You can also tick the Gift Aid box which means that GAYL automatically notify us at the year-end of the total Gift Aid that we can reclaim from HMRC.

Next: you want to buy something online. Go through the “Give as You Live” App and select your store. These include, M&S, Sainsbury, Tesco, John Lewis, Argos, Hotel.com, Trainline etc., but not Amazon.

Buy your product in the normal way and you will get an email from GAYL indicating the value of your donation. The percentage of the donation varies, depending on the store. The donation will usually be quite a small amount but all contributions help us run the charity and, as the purchase was going to be made anyway, everyone wins.

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Your Welcome Space in Birkdale Village at the Library

We host Welcome/Warm Space at Birkdale Community Hub and Library every Thursday between 10am and 4pm?

Our Welcome Space includes free hot and cold drinks, biscuits, fresh fruit, and a friendly chat. But that's not all! You are welcome to read our free newspapers and magazines – take part in our regular quizzes – and enjoy occasional guest speakers.



If you are interested in calling in, please do come and join us. You will receive a friendly welcome in our upstairs rooms, looking out over the village, which are fully accessible by lift. Our wonderful, dedicated Welcome Spaces volunteer team will always be there to greet you and offer you the drink of your choice, all free of charge.

Some of our visitors are now regulars, they have found the opportunity to make friends here and look forward to their weekly visits. As the autumn days draw in and the heating goes on, we change our name to Warm Space, but you are always guaranteed a warm welcome all year round - come rain or shine!

We do hope you will call in - we all look forward to meeting you!

Your Welcome Spaces team: Rose, Susie, Chris, Julie, Julia, Sara, Jill, Mary, Katie and Laura



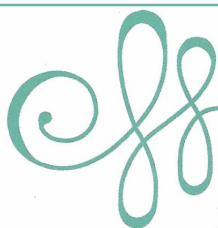
Drop-in Community Police Advice Surgeries

Luke Holden, an officer from Merseyside Police, or another officer if he is away, holds regular drop-in community police advice sessions at the Station Master's House. The surgery offers local residents the opportunity to meet the officer to discuss and receive advice on any local or neighbourhood issues and concerns. You can also seek advice on security and crime prevention measures and get guidance if you are worried about any approaches you've had that you think may be a scam.

The surgery takes place at the library every three weeks on Tuesday evenings from 5.00pm to 7.00pm. As this is a drop-in service, no appointment is needed. Please contact the Station Master's House (**tel: 01704 566 992**) for the next surgery dates.

Printing and Copying Services at Birkdale Community Hub and Library

Do you know that Birkdale Community Hub and Library offers printing and copying services at the Station Master's House? You can print from your phone or from one of the computers at the library for just 10p per page, in colour or black and white, single or double sided. Photocopying is the same price. We also offer a laminating service at 50p per page.



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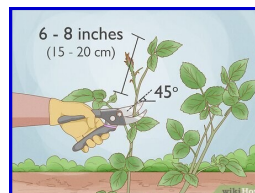
Gardeners' Corner

My name is Wendy. I am a volunteer at Birkdale Community Hub and Library. I love gardening but we never seem to know what the weather is going to throw at us and I think that is becoming the "norm".

This year I made the decision to get rid of two of my four beloved hanging baskets and to replace them instead, with deep, broad wooden planters that might give me more of a chance of producing a beautiful display for most of the year, with less watering and maintenance. I lined the planters, filling them with a mix of 80% perennials and 20% annuals, and I have even had a go at treating the planters with linseed oil to protect them.

Rose Cuttings: Autumn is a great time for taking stem cuttings of your roses. It sounds easy, according to Gardeners' World and I have tried and failed, but this year is going to be the year of success. This is what you do:-

Select green rose stems from this year's growth from the middle section of the stem, removing any flowers and leaves from the bottom, leaving a couple of leaves at the top. Make a clean cut at a 45-degree angle just below where a leaf was at the bottom, and a straight cut at the top so you know which way up it is. Dip the bottom inch of the cutting in rooting hormone powder or gel. Pot up four stems per pot around the perimeter; a tall pot is best in well-draining potting mix, burying the bottom leaf, and water.



Over-winter in a sheltered, light location and ensure the pot remains moist. Hopefully, after a few weeks the cuttings will root ready to plant out next spring. I shall let you know how I get on...

Dahlias: whether to lift, or not to lift, your dahlias. There is much debate and various RHS trials on this subject. One of the few advantages of sandy soil in Southport is that the soil is free draining. So, my advice is: yes, take the risk and don't lift. I have not been lifting dahlias for the past six years and it works. Just make a note of where they are, so you can avoid inadvertently digging them up when you don't want to.

Planting for Spring 26

Nothing is better than planting a few bulbs now to look forward to next spring. Bulbs like narcissi and muscari can be potted up for both indoor and outdoor displays and are a happy herald of spring.

Whatever you do in your garden or outside space, enjoy it. Do visit our small but beautiful outside spaces at the Station Master's House and the larger garden in front of the hall at the Liverpool Road Methodist Church library.



SEFTON NEWS

Sonya Kelly, Labour Councillor for Birkdale Ward, writes:

SOUTHPORT PIER. In the Government's recent spending review the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced support for Southport Pier. Once government confirm the funding, Sefton council can start work within eight weeks. The scheme could take up to 14 months to complete.

PIER NAME PLAQUES. I have been approached by residents about the plaques that were on the pier. The plaques were the initiative of the Southport Pier Trust, which was formed to safeguard the pier and hold the council accountable. The plaques were sponsored by individuals to help create revenue towards the cost of the pier. These plaques are held in a safe place by the council, and we are continuing discussions and engaging with the Southport Pier Trust about their future use.

PRINCESS DIANA GARDENS. Sefton council, Liverpool City Region Combined Authority and the Government have agreed funding for the area in front of Southport Town Hall and The Atkinson. The Legacy Gardens, which is led by the families of Elsie Dot Stancombe, Alice Da Silva Aguiar and Bebe King, will become a vibrant and safe place for children and families to enjoy. The three girls shared love of dance, music and the arts has inspired a vision for a community focused town square. A consultation period will launch later in the year but FAQs about this lovely project can be found at www.sefton.gov.uk/townhallgardens

FORMBY BEACH. The National Trust announced the closure of their car park at the Victoria Road area for the next few months until spring 2026. This is so the existing car park and tonnes of associated rubble can be removed and repurposed for the new sustainable car park further inland. The project aims to solve the problem of rubble spilling out onto the beach from the old Harington Barracks, which were demolished after the Second World War. The natural process of the fast-shifting shoreline has exposed more of the rubble. They are hoping to create healthier habitats where rare dune wildlife can thrive. Listen to BBC Radio 4 Open Country "Shifting Sands of Sefton".

GUM FUNDING. Sefton Council is one of 52 councils that successfully applied to the Chewing Gum Task Force, administered by the charity Keep Britain Tidy, for a government grant to clean chewing gum off pavements and prevent it from being littered again. They have been awarded £27,500 to tackle the issue to hopefully make our streets cleaner.

CHRISTMAS BIN SCHEDULE. I have already been asked about the Christmas bin scheduling over the holiday period. I have contacted the Assistant Director of Cleansing to see if anything has changed since last year, and it has not. The council will endeavour to ensure grey bin collections take place over the Christmas and New Year period.

THE SOUTHPORT PAVIORS. I am asked when highway works are carried out about the 'Southport Tile'. They are the special 19th-century block paving blue clay tile unique to Southport, manufactured in North Wales. The council will always seek to preserve and maintain the remaining paviors. Any damaged tiles should be replaced like for like but the council only has a limited stock used for maintenance purposes.

Work Experience at Birkdale Community Hub and Library

(By Chloe and Emily Kerr)

Not long ago we both thought that we'd have to spend our work experience week at our school. We tried to apply for placements with various organisations and got turned away every time. However, with the help of our school's career advisor, we got to go to an ideal placement; neither of us, nor our parents, had even thought of Birkdale Community Hub and Library and it turned out to be perfect.

Upon entering we were greeted with a warm welcome, a wide range of friendly volunteers (who take it in turns coming in at different times on different days of the week) and a lot of offers of snacks and drinks. All these remained constant throughout the week, making it a thoroughly enjoyable and relaxed place to be in.

At first we were surprised by how many people come to the Station Master's House, and how many different clubs and groups take place there. Rhyme time, chess club, shared reading, knit & natter and welcome space are all popular. In between sorting bookshelves, discussing improvements and learning about the library system, we had a chance to observe some of these and speak to the people involved, which brightened the day and provided a confidence boost.

On Wednesday we were taken to Waterstones to pick out some books we enjoyed reading for the library, and later that day we went to the Liverpool Road Methodist Church, where the library has a huge collection of books, including a large print section and a large collection of jigsaws. There we learned about how book donations are sorted, stored and sent off to be sold or turned into new books if the library can't take them. This was a whole new experience for us, and trying to move bags and boxes packed with books is a lot more fun than it sounds.

Overall, work experience at Birkdale Community Hub and Library has been fun, interesting, engaging and thought provoking and it's opened our eyes to a useful space with books, meeting rooms and computers which we'd love for more people to know about, support and enjoy.



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Computer Corner by Adam

Managing Passwords

Fed up of forgetting or losing passwords? With access to so many internet services, it can be very difficult to keep up with what login details you've used with what service. Why not consider using a Password Manager?



What is a Password Manager?

A Password Manager is a tool that stores all your passwords in one place. This could be via an app if using on your phone or tablet, or via a desktop web browser plug-in. The great thing is you only need to remember one "master password" to access them all. It can also help you generate strong, unique passwords for each service you sign up for.

What are the main benefits?

- **Saves time and stress:** No need to remember lots of passwords.
- **Improves security:** Generate strong, unique passwords for each account.
- **Easy to use:** Most have simple apps or browser plug-ins.
- **Auto-fill:** Automatically fills in your passwords on websites.

Recommended Password Managers

1. Bitwarden

- Free version available
- Simple to use
- Can use on various devices.

2. 1Password

- Industry leading
- Good customer support
- 14-day free trial.

3. NordPass

- Uses extremely strong encryption
- Can also store passkeys and credit card details
- Unlock your passwords using Face ID or fingerprint verification.

Should you write down your "master password"?

It's a good idea to write down your master password and keep it somewhere safe as if you lose this then you will lose access to all your passwords.

- **Do:** Write the master password clearly on a piece of paper
- **Do:** Store in a safe place with other important documents
- **Don't:** Keep the written password near your computer, or in your wallet or bag
- **Don't:** Give to anyone you don't fully trust.



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All about Ducks

by Hillside Birder

*"All along the backwater,
Through the rushes tall,
Ducks are a-dabbling,
Up tails all!"*

(from 'Duck's Ditty' by Kenneth Grahame)

But not all ducks dabble. The everyday, everywhere Mallard duck (*Anas platyrhynchos*) definitely does, and many people assume all duck species behave likewise to seek their food. Not so, for many ducks dive rather than dabble, completely submerging and swimming underwater using feet and sometimes wings for propulsion. In local lakes and meres, the diving duck seen throughout the year is the Tufted Duck (*Aythya fuligula*). Smaller than the Mallard, it is well-described by its common name, the male bearing a downturned tuft or crest on the back of his head. Other easy identifying features of the male are a white band around the black body, a yellow eye and blue bill. The female is a much drabber brown, usually the case among ducks.



Another dabbling duck here year-round is the big-billed green, white and chestnut-brown Shoveler (*Spatula clypeata*) while the pink-breasted, orange-headed Wigeon (*Anas penelope*) is a winter visitor.

Diving ducks to spot locally are mostly winter visitors as well, so keep an eye out over the next few months for these two: the Goldeneye (*Bucephala clangula*), a delicate but large-headed duck with a yellow eye and a white patch behind its bill, and the distinctive Pochard (*Aythya ferina*), with its bright chestnut head and orange-red eye. Both prefer brackish water, marshland and estuaries.

September I-Spy: birds to watch out for in parks and gardens this month

Swallows (*Hirundo rustica*) massing on wires and lines, chattering before their long migration south.

Thrushes - did you know there are two main species here all year? They both have light speckled chests and are omnivores but differ in other ways.

- The Song Thrush (*Turdus philomelos*) much beloved of poets for its wonderful song of repeated phrases is the smaller, mostly seen on the ground feeding on worms or snails. Its speckles resemble arrowheads, and its back is of a golden-brown hue.
- The Mistle Thrush (*Turdus viscivorus*) is much less tuneful, its loud song even heard in bad weather, leading to an old name "stormcock". It is distinctly larger, stands taller and in autumn and winter often perches high in a berry-laden tree which it will defend as its food-store. Mistletoe is a favourite - hence the name. Its speckles are much more rounded and its back distinctly grey.

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On Being a Local Councillor

Iain Brodie-Browne, Lib Dem Councillor for Birkdale

Thanks to all those who contacted me about my last piece in The Buzz and solved the mystery of where William Beveridge, the architect of the post-war health and social insurance schemes, went to school in Birkdale. It was Bingfield on Waterloo Road.

The Editor has asked me to say something about the sort of issues people contact councillors about. With my background in health and social care, I worked for Age Concern and MIND, I have always dealt with questions around care. By their nature these are private matters.

Of more general interest I have a distressing case where a resident found, after her neighbour died, there was a deteriorating abandoned property next door. Sefton has powers to buy it and sell it or rent it on. We have a problem with affordable homes, and it is regrettable that this situation is, and others like it, still unresolved.

In Birkdale we suffer very little anti-social behaviour, but I am dealing with a case where local residents have been persistently troubled by an individual. The council has a team that deals with these issues, and I have been liaising between them and the family of an elderly lady exploring remedies including a civil injunction.

The big job of any councillor is to hold to account those who make decisions and to challenge the things they do and those they leave undone. In future editions of the Buzz I want to look at areas where different choices were proposed.

Spotlight on Neurodivergence

In the May issue of the Buzz we reported on the generous donation of new books for children to Birkdale Community Hub and Library from Dowhigh, a civil engineering company based in Sefton.



The photo shows BCH&L Chairman, Phil Margham and Neil George, trustee for External Relations, receiving the books from Kay Owens, HR & Social Values Manager at Dowhigh, in the library at the Station Master's House. All of the books are new additions to our collection and so were particularly welcome. Dowhigh expressly wanted the donation to be for children who are neurodivergent.

This term may be unfamiliar. Broadly speaking, neurodiversity is a term used when someone's brain processes methods of learning and behaviour that are different from what might be considered "typical". In the past this was often considered as an illness that needed to be treated. More recent thinking is that such differences are not inherently bad, wrong or a problem but are just indicators of how varied and diverse the human population actually is.

Rather than stigmatising individuals, the new approach is to adopt a more neutral and less judgemental stance, acknowledging that we don't all think the same way in terms of our brain processes. Neurodivergence covers a range of conditions including autism, ADHD, dyslexia, dyscalculia, dyspraxia and many others, and is the subject of much research as we look to understand these conditions.

We hope that children will enjoy reading these new books and that they will, through these sympathetically written stories, learn more about themselves and their friends and classmates.

It's Sam's LEGO World

My name is Sam Selby-Weatherley and I'm the "Lego Expert" volunteering at the **Birkdale Community Library**. I have many years of experience in Lego building and now have over 100 Lego sets, ranging from cars, buses, roller-coasters and, of course, my favourite Harry Potter sets. I often display these at the Atkinson and put on an exhibition at Walker's Café in Wesley Street each year.

I love helping out with children interested in creating Lego structures, seeing how they use their imagination and the smile on their faces when they complete their build. I run a free **Lego Fun class at 10.30 every Saturday at Birkdale Community Library**. It's good to see our regular visitors and their parents, as well as new attendees who are surprised at what they can achieve in such a short time.

Why not come along and give it a try?

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Another local success: how Birkdale Library pays for itself

Birkdale Library is entirely independent of the local authority and run by volunteers of the Birkdale Community Hub and Library charity. Running costs for things such as heating and lighting, maintenance, broadband, insurance and so on all add up to over £30,000 per year.

In the last Buzz edition we highlighted the work of volunteers helping to raise Library funds through the Friends of The Station Master's House scheme and the 200+ Club, a monthly lottery offering regular cash prizes. If you are interested in becoming a Friend of the Station Master's House or joining the 200+ Club, forms are available at the front desk of the library or can be obtained from the charity website at:

www.thestationmastershouse.co.uk



The Buzz team have been finding out more about another fundraising enterprise: the Book Sales team. We are lucky to be given many donations of books, the number of which far exceeds our capacity to add them to the library catalogue. If we can't use them ourselves, our team of volunteers, based in the Liverpool Road Methodist Church, process them for sale through a number of different outlets. Some book donations are worth a few pennies, others can be quite valuable.

Thanks to the work of this book sales team the charity has built up a considerable income; in fact, over 40% of the Charity's income now comes from book sales. So **please keep those book donations coming**. All sorts of books are welcome and if we can't sell them as books they will be pulped to produce more paper for future books. If you have a large quantity of books to donate there is free parking at the Methodist Church – entrance off Sandon Road – where our volunteers there will be happy to help you unload your books. Opening times are Monday 10am - 12.30pm, Wednesday 10am—4.pm and Friday 10am -1pm.

We're Looking for Readers at Home

Birkdale Community Hub and Library runs a Home Visiting service for local residents who are unable to get to a library and would like to borrow from our extensive range of books. The service is free and working well. Our volunteers visit homes and residential establishments to find out what type of books are of interest and provide a selection from which to choose.

We are keen to expand the service to those living on their own at home who like to read, would be interested in a new range of books, but find it difficult to get out. So, if you are living on your own, or know someone living on their own who would like to receive a visit from our volunteers, please email us at:

homevisit@thestationmastershouse.co.uk or call the library on **01704 566 992**.

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New Pictures for Old?

Have you got memories locked away in old 35mm slides, VHS tapes or camcorder tapes stored in a cupboard? Well, help is at hand. One of our volunteers, Adam, has offered to unlock those memories by converting the pictures and tapes into digital files that can be stored, watched and sent around the world.



To avoid overloading Adam, the service is limited to 25 slides or one VHS tape each order, but you can repeat your order as often as you like. The charge for each order is £5.00 but you can give more if you wish, all proceeds going to the charity. Bring your slides or tape into the Station Master's House next to Birkdale Station, enclosing them in an envelope marked "Photos for Digitising". You will be asked to sign a form giving your contact details, including your email address.

When you have got your items back, why not organise a family/friends get-together and have a photo party? Ideal for a special anniversary or birthday.

Please note: we may not be able to digitise all VHS tapes as if they are degraded they may damage the VHS player we have. The camcorder tapes we are able to digitise are Sony Hi8, VHS C and Mini DV.

Ghosts and Communities

Thoughts from John Pugh, Lib Dem Councillor for Dukes Ward

Readers will recall the classic joke from "*Only Fools and Horses*" where Trigger boasts of his award for 20 years loyal service to the Council as a streetsweeper always using exactly the same brush - a real saving to the council! When the others express incredulity he produces the item and explains proudly '*This old broom has had 17 new heads and 17 handles*'.

Communities can be a bit like brooms. People arrive and depart by choice and through the workings of nature. The 'pillars of a community' change almost as frequently as broom handles and yet we talk of communities as stable and enduring things which in some sense they are.

Occasionally this can strike us as odd. I had a friend, very much part of the Birkdale community, a local dog walker and churchgoer, a scientist, a spare-time producer of excellent local gin usually labelled, Birkdale Gin, an erstwhile council candidate. One day he looked a bit out of sorts. Three days later he was not answering calls. After contacting first police, then ambulance and then fire service, his house was broken into and I found him lying dead on the landing. Now I cannot pass his street without feeling an absence.

Because I have lived in Birkdale for almost 50 years, few streets for me are without their ghosts- people recalled who were literally the neighbourhood life and soul. So I ask myself what defines a community if not the people who all too-temporarily fill those houses? My conclusion is that a community is defined by its history and its values. Starter for 10 – what are the Birkdale values ?

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Birkdale Community Library Autumn and Christmas Fundraising Events

26th September (Friday) The Return of 'The Deckchairs' -a local band for a great music evening. Venue: Southport & Birkdale Sports Club. Tickets will be available from Birkdale Community Library



30th October (Thursday) Quiz night. Venue: Southport & Birkdale Sports Club. Pay on door, but come early with your team as we usually get lots of keen quizzers!



14th November (Friday) Bingo and Games Night. Come and join the fun and win prizes with a range of games including bingo, music bingo and Irish bingo. Venue: Southport & Birkdale Sports Club. Tickets will be available from Birkdale Community Library.



5th December (Friday) Music evening - enjoy a mix of live jazz numbers and lots of other favourites in our very popular festive music night with a feature band. Tickets will be available from Birkdale Community Library



12th December (Friday) Christmas Festive Floral Workshop. Join us for an afternoon of demonstrations of creative flowers and festive decorations, including hands-on workshop. Tickets will be available from Birkdale Community Library.



All profits from these events will help to support your local charity.

September Quiz 2025—Answers on page 34

1. Which Shakespeare play features the characters Rosencrantz and Guildenstern?
2. What was the name of the lifeboat disaster off Southport in 1886?
3. What are Chester's famous unique two-tiered shopping galleries called?
4. Which French King died in 1715 after a reign of 72 years?
5. Which major Neolithic site in Cumbria predates Stonehenge?
6. Rochdale played a major role in the birth of which major social movement in 1844?
7. Which group sang "September", reaching Number 3 in the UK singles chart in 1978?
8. Which famous battle was fought in 1485, marking the end of the Wars of the Roses?
9. Who beat the Russian champion Boris Spassky in September 1972, to win the title?
10. Who carved the famous statue of David, unveiled in Florence in September 1504?
11. In September 1945, on V-J Day, where did Japan formally surrender?
12. The 1819 Peterloo Massacre occurred in which exact location within Manchester?
13. What sea captain died during the first circumnavigation of the world, 1519-1522?
14. What town was granted city status in 2002 and lies near the River Eden?
15. What was the name of the small fishing village that developed into Southport?
16. When did the Berlin Wall fall?
17. In what decade was Southport officially founded?
18. Which Pacific island group gave Charles Darwin evidence for his evolutionary theory?
19. How many times has the Royal Birkdale Golf Club hosted The Open Championship?
20. Which Frenchman possibly modelled the boulevards of Paris on Southport's Lord Street?



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Birkdale Buzz Quiz Answers September 2025

- | | |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. Hamlet | 11. USS Missouri in Tokyo Bay |
| 2. The Mexico Disaster | 12. St Peter's Field |
| 3. The Rows | 13. Ferdinand Magellan |
| 4. Louis XIV | 14. Preston |
| 5. Castlerigg Stone Circle | 15. Meols |
| 6. The Co-operative movement | 16. 1989 |
| 7. Earth, Wind & Fire | 17. 1790s |
| 8. The Battle of Bosworth Field | 18. Galapagos |
| 9. Bobby Fischer | 19. 10 times (as of 2024) |
| 10. Michelangelo | 20. Napoleon III |

The next issue of the Birkdale Buzz will be out in **December 2025**.
Advert requests, contributions, questions or feedback should be submitted to
the Editor by 17 October 2025
birkdalebuzz@thestationmastershouse.co.uk

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New books in Birkdale Community Hub and Library

For this edition of Birkdale Buzz, I thought we would show some love for a few of our brand-new purchases of non-fiction titles. For a complete list of titles or to reserve books go to <https://thestationmastershouse.slls.online//>

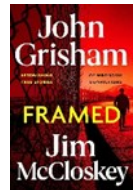
***I Haven't Been Completely Honest with You.* Miranda Hart**

Hello to you, I am with news. I have a new book. Basically, I have had an unexpectedly difficult decade - there have been surprising joys - but also challenging lows. I shall be honest about those, because what I discovered in the difficult times were my, what I call, treasures. Practical tools, values, ways, answers researched from some great scientists, neuroscientists, therapists, sociologists (all the 'ists') out there, that have led to a sense of freedom, joy, peace and physical recovery I never would have thought possible.



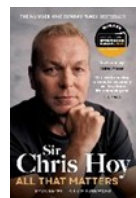
***Framed : Astonishing True Stories of Wrongful Convictions.* John Grisham, Jim McCloskey**

A fundamental principle of the American legal system is a presumption of innocence, but once someone has been found guilty there is very little room to prove doubt. *Framed* shares ten true stories of men who were innocent but found guilty and forced to sacrifice friends, families, wives, and decades of their lives to prison while the guilty parties remained free. In each of the stories, John Grisham and Jim McCloskey recount the dramatic hard-fought battles for exoneration. They take a close look at what leads to wrongful convictions in the first place, and the racism, misconduct, flawed testimony, and the corrupt court system that can make them so hard to reverse.



***All That Matters : The Inspirational and Uplifting Memoir of Hope from One Of GB's Greatest Olympians.* Sir Chris Hoy**

Chris Hoy knows better than most how life can change in the blink of an eye. In elite sport, the margin between victory and defeat is miniscule, and the pressure is immense. Chris has built a glittering sporting career on understanding these moments: how to feel for them, how to cope with them, how to make them count. Last year, he faced another life-changing moment. He found out that the ache in his shoulder was in fact a tumour, and that he had Stage 4 cancer. In this memoir, Chris shares the next phase of his extraordinary life with exceptional bravery. He looks over the challenges he has faced thus far, and the ways he has taken them on.



***Less : Stop Buying So Much Rubbish: How Having Fewer, Better Things Can Make Us Happier.* Patrick Grant**

The Psychology Of Money : Timeless Lessons On Wealth, Greed, And Happiness.

Morgan Housel

***The Book You Wish Your Parents Had Read (And Your Children Will Be Glad That You Did).* Philippa Perry**

***Raising Hare.* Chloe Dalton**

***The Siege.* Ben Macintyre**

Important Numbers and Information

Birkdale Community Hub & Library: 01704 566 992

BCHL website: www.thestationmastershouse.co.uk

Station Master's House: 2 Liverpool Road, Birkdale, PR8 4AR

Liverpool Road Methodist Church: Liverpool Road, PR8 4PD

Fire, Ambulance, Police emergency	999
Police (non-emergency)	101
NHS Health Advice	111
Out of Hours GP service	01704 395 755
Southport Police Station	0151 709 6010
Southport Community Fire Station	0151 296 6650
United Utilities (emergency)	0345 672 3723
Gas emergency (if gas smell)	0800 111 999
Sefton Council Services	0345 140 0845
National Rail Enquiries	03457 484 950
Southport Citizens Advice	0808 278 7841
Benefits Enquiry Line	0151 934 3660
Job Centre Plus	0800 1690190
Passport Advice Line	0300 222 0000
Samaritans	116 123
RSPCA Southport	01704 567 624

Defibrillators in Birkdale

- in the Merseyrail Ticket Office
- on the side wall of Samuels & Co
- on the side wall of Morrisons Daily
- St Peter's Church
- Busy Bees Nursery, Lulworth Road
- Bedford Park
- Salvation Army, Shakespeare Street
- S&B Sports Club Trafalgar Road
- The Lifeboat Shop
- Birkdale Primary School
- Between Hillside Pharmacy and the Grasshopper, Sandon Road

Social Media Links



@Birkdale Community Hub and Library



@birkdale_hub_library



Birkdale CH&L



**Birkdale
Community Hub & Library
At the Station Master's House**