

Your home

# YOUR FORUM

Bringing our communities together

## Dudley North area

Coseley, Gornal, Sedgley,  
Upper Gornal and Woodsetton

Forums involve local people, councillors, the police and other organisations working together to come up with ideas and solutions to improve the local community and area.

Monday, 23<sup>rd</sup> June, 2025 at 6.30pm

Lower Gornal British Legion, 19 Ruiton Street, Dudley DY3 2EH

### Agenda

1. **Opening announcement to include welcome and introductions**
2. **Election of Chair and Appointment of Vice-Chair** – To elect a Chair and appoint a Vice-Chair for this meeting only.
3. **Apologies for absence** – To receive any apologies for absence
4. **Declarations of interest** – To receive declarations of interest from Members
5. **Notes** – To confirm the notes of the meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> February, 2025 as a correct record
6. **Have your say** – An opportunity for residents to raise issues in their area
7. **Police and communities together/fire service** – Discussion on local policing/fire service and related issues
8. **Date of next meeting** – Further dates have not as yet been arranged. Once agreed, details of future meetings will be available on the following link:-  
[Your Home, Your Forum Dudley North](#)

Information about Your Home, Your Forum meetings can be accessed by clicking on the following link [Your Home, Your Forum meetings](#). If you or anyone you know is attending the meeting and requires assistance to access the venue/ facilities, please let us know in advance using the contact details below and we will do our best to help you.

#### For more information about Forums:

Visit our website [www.dudley.gov.uk/council- community/your-home-your-forum/](http://www.dudley.gov.uk/council-community/your-home-your-forum/)

E-mail: [Community.Forums@dudley.gov.uk](mailto:Community.Forums@dudley.gov.uk)

#### Contact your neighbourhood policing team at:

[dudleycentral@west-midlands.pnn.police.uk](mailto:dudleycentral@west-midlands.pnn.police.uk)

<https://twitter.com/DudleyTownWMP>

To support cost-savings and a reduced carbon footprint, individual paper copies of documents will not be available at this meeting. A single large copy of appropriate documents will be available to view near the sign in desk.



## YOUR WARD COUNCILLORS

Contact information for your local Councillors is shown below

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<b>GORNAL</b>	
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Councillor	Contact Details
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Councillor	Contact Details
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**Your Home, Your Forum Meeting Notes**

<b>Forum:</b>	<b>Dudley North</b>
<b>Date and time:</b>	<b>Wednesday, 19th February 2025 at 6.30 pm</b>
<b>Venue:</b>	<b>Sedgley Community Centre, Ladies Walk, Sedgley DY3 3UA</b>
<b>Attendance:</b>	<p>Councillors: P Drake, S Ridney; D Corfield; S Keasey; I Sandall; A Aston; C Littler; B Challenor; D Stanley; S Turner</p> <p>Cllr P Harley, Leader of the Council; Sonia Kumar MP, Dudley</p> <p>Officers: H Jeavons – Liaison Officer; J Austin – Community Development Worker</p> <p>West Midlands Police: Inspector Sarah Smythe; PC E Catchpole</p> <p>Members of the public: 150</p>

<b>Item</b>	<b>Notes</b>
1. Chair's opening announcement to include welcome and introductions	<p>The chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and went through the housekeeping arrangements.</p> <p>Noted: Ward councillors introduced themselves to residents.</p> <p>Noted: Cllr Harley and MP Sonia Kumar introduced themselves to residents.</p>
2. Apologies for absence	West Midland Fire service; Cllr D Roberts
3. Declaration of Interests	None were declared.

4. Notes	Noted: Minutes of the meeting held on 24 <sup>th</sup> October, 2024 were confirmed as a correct record.
5. Have your say – An opportunity for residents to raise issues in their area	<p>Residents were invited to raise questions ward by ward.</p> <p><b>Sedgley Ward:</b> <u>The future of Sedgley Library and Ladies Walk Clinic</u></p> <p>A large number of residents were concerned about the lease for both buildings terminating on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026. The landlord, Norwich Union, had indicated that they were going to use the buildings for other purposes and therefore the library and clinic would no longer be located at Ladies Walk. Both buildings are not council owned. They are part of a PFI project.</p> <p>The following questions/points were raised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the council currently negotiating a renewal of the lease with the landlord? There seems to be no sense of urgency.</li> <li>• Sedgley has an aging population. The clinic is a vital local resource that serves all of Dudley North. Residents without transport rely on this location. There are very few accessible alternative medical facilities for Dudley North residents.</li> <li>• Sedgley library is more than just a library. Support services are accessed from the building. There is a rumour that the current landlord wants to convert the building to residential properties. Can the council stop this change in use?</li> <li>• The national government's focus is on building houses. Will this result in there being very little opposition to the current landlord's desire for residential units on the Ladies Walk site?</li> <li>• If the landlord terminates the leases for the library and clinic, is there anything in the current PFI contract to stop this change of use?</li> <li>• Ladies Walk Clinic- Is the council working with the Health Trust on a solution?</li> <li>• What can the council planning authority do to stop a change of use for both the library and clinic? The council must have some influence. Residential properties on this site would need access roads. This will impact the environment and green spaces.</li> </ul>

The points were addressed, as follows:

Responses: Cllr Keasey stated that ward councillors were all working together to find an alternative building for the library. Suitable council assets/buildings have been explored. This has been extended to include privately owned buildings. These include sites such as, Concorde market, Barclays bank, DW windows.

One building has been assessed as being unsuitable and another is currently under offer from another purchaser. The owner of the latter building is aware that the council is interested in the site, if the sale falls through.

The focus is upon keeping Sedgley library in Sedgley.

Barclays Bank is not on the market yet, but the owners are aware of the interest from the council.

Cllr Keasey and Cllr Harley stated that the Ladies Walk buildings are both privately owned. As such, the council cannot force the owner to do anything specific, including specifying the usage of the building or enforcing parameters for how the building can be used.

Cllr Harley reiterated that no libraries would close as part of the new budget proposals. If the landlord of the building where Sedgley library is currently situated withdraws the lease, another building will be found. Finding an alternative site for Sedgley library is within the council's control.

The cost of the current lease is high. There is always a risk that if the lease can be extended, this cost will rise substantially. The landowner has full control over what rent can be charged and to whom they rent.

Council officers are talking with the health trust regarding Ladies Walk clinic and alternative sites. Finding an alternative site for the clinic is within the control of the NHS, not the council. However, the council will work with the NHS.

Cllr Harley responded to the concern about the potential change of use of the building to residential properties. This is currently a rumour. A meeting with the landlord needs to be set up urgently. There have been no pre planning enquiries or planning permission applications submitted. The council cannot pre-empt any submissions or make any decisions about planning permission until it has been approached or submissions received from the landowner.

Sonia Kumar, MP stated that national government want services to remain within the community, on the high street.

The building of new homes focus targets brown field sites. The Ladies Walk site does not fall into this category. She will work with residents and councillors to ensure concerns around the future of Sedgley library and the clinic are robustly pursued and asked for the full support of residents.

Noted: Some residents were under the impression that the meeting had a single item agenda to discuss Sedgley library and Ladies Walk clinic. It was explained that the YHYF meeting agenda was an opportunity for residents to raise general issues affecting the Dudley North area; including concerns around Sedgely library and clinic. The meeting was not advertised as a single item focus.

Noted: All ward councillors, the leader of the council and MP Sonia Kumar will work together to address the concerns raised by residents around the future of Sedgley library and the clinic. All acknowledged the concerns of residents.

Noted: No formal conversation has been held or decisions made about the futures of both the library and clinic. Until a meeting with the current landowner, Norwich Union, is held, the landlord's intentions regarding the current lease, are not fully known.

**Actions:**

Cllr Keasey to contact Democratic services to arrange a bespoke meeting for residents regarding the future of Sedgley Library and Ladies Walk clinic.

Cllr Harley to share contact details of the landlord from Norwich Union, with Sonia Kumar, MP.

Sonia Kumar, MP to set up a meeting with the landlord as a matter of urgency.

**Sedgley Ward: Ceasing of pop-up tip facility in Sedgley**

A resident asked why this facility was being cut. The alternative is an 18-mile round trip to Stourbridge tip. Not all residents can use the Stourbridge facility. More fly tipping may be the result of this cut to services. North Dudley residents have already lost access to the Anchor Lane tip.

Cllr Keasey- Some Northway residents were not happy with the site of the pop-up tip. This had caused extra traffic. The budget meeting on Monday will include an amendment to the proposed closing of the pop-up tip. This will be put to a vote and so the outcome is dependent on the result of the vote.

Cllr Corfield- The council has difficult financial decisions to make. Many councils have financial pressures within Adult and Childrens social care that need addressing.

The pop-up tip was well used. It was cost effective- 60K per year. There is currently a strategic review of household waste sites with a view to centralising a facility in Dudley. This would be more accessible for Dudley North residents.

Cllr Harley- The Anchor Lane facility was not financially viable. The council were offered a 5-year lease, with costs for year 1 set at 360K. The costs for the following 4 years were not shared, meaning that the council would have been agreeing to a 5-year lease with unknown costs for years 2,3,4 and 5. This was unacceptable, as a 'risk'.

**Upper Gornal and Woodsetton Ward:**

Residents had personal concerns that they wished to discuss with their councillors at the end of the meeting.

**Coseley Ward:**

Nothing raised.

**Gornal Ward:**

Redhall Primary and the Aldi Construction site

A resident raised safeguarding concerns with the removal of trees and proximity of construction vehicles and workers resulting in pupils being visible when on the school site. The current school boundary fence was of a chicken mesh material. This is a safeguarding concern.

As part of the building project, Aldi undertook work to protect badger sets and install a 2-metre fence on the park. Aldi will not fund a new boundary fence for Redhall.

The school was not included in any planning discussions and the impact of the construction work did not include safeguarding implications for Redhall School children.

Aldi contributed £100 000 to the council via the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). Can this money be used to build a new school boundary fence?

Noted: Sonia Kumar MP has visited the school and agrees there is a safeguarding issue.

**Actions:**

Cllr Stanley to liaise with planning and follow through with this concern

Cllr Ridney to visit the school and assess the safeguarding concern.

Cllr Challenor to investigate and report back as to why the trees, which gave privacy to the site, were felled.

**Gornal Ward:**

Reinstatement of Community funding grants

A resident asked if the grants that community groups can request are being reinstated.

Response: This will be included in the budget meeting on Monday. The proposition is that it will be reinstated, but the value will be 50% of the previous allocation.

Information buddies based at libraries

Following the closure of the Dudley Council Plus building, hubs have been set up in libraries for residents who cannot use the online service. One resident, who is an 'info buddy' recently supported a person who came into Dudley library. They required support to complete a form, and this process took a considerable amount of time. Library staff cannot give this intensive support to 'walk in residents', who would have previously visited the Council Plus main office.

What information is being given to this group of service users? Are there specific days and times that Dudley Council Plus officers are available in library hubs to support residents with queries?

Noted: The whole purpose of the hubs in libraries was for council staff to be present, to help 'walk-in' queries. DC+ staff will be available to answer questions within the library hubs, possibly once a month but this has not yet been formally agreed.

Aldi and public perceptions

Residents debated whether having Aldi in Gornal was something that the majority wanted.

Cllr Turner: Following conversations with residents, opinions are mixed; but the general consensus was that the project had been through the planning process and there must have been a 'need' for such a development.

	<p><b>Councillors were invited to speak:</b></p> <p>Cllr Stanley:        Following some negative publicity in the press relating to the Youth club building in Gornal, Cllr Stanley wanted to clarify the situation.        The future of the youth club building in Gornal was decided in April 2019, when a decision sheet was submitted. The building was deemed surplus to council requirements. There were no objections to this decision.        Groups were still meeting at the site, using the building and the facilities, supported by various volunteer groups.        On Monday, Cllr Stanley and Cllr Harley visited the club and completed an asset transfer, whereby the youth club will continue to be run by organisations from the voluntary sector. Other groups also meet at this venue.        The current volunteer workers were thanked for the fantastic work they do with local groups.</p> <p>Cllr Aston:        Regarding the discussion on Ladies Walk Clinic, Cllr Aston reiterated that clinical services needed to remain in Sedgley. This facility was used by Dudley North residents. A specific meeting with NHS colleagues present does need to be held to discuss this. The NHS/Trust colleagues need to share their plans on how they are going to provide the current services that are available from this clinic. The current lease holder also needs to be in attendance.</p>
<p>6. Police and communities together/Fire Service – Discussion on local policing/ fire service-related issues</p>	<p>Inspector Smythe presented the following:        Crime across all 4 wards has decreased by 9%. 3488 reported incidents.        Vehicle crime is down by 11%, except in the Upper Gornal/ Woodsetton ward, which has seen a small increase.        Across Dudley, there has been a 16% increase in prosecutions for vehicle crime.        Robbery is down by 30%        Theft from person is down by 53%        Domestic abuse is down by 13.5%</p> <p>PC Catchpole presented information relating to neighbourhood policing and reiterated that residents can influence local priority policing.</p>

Sedgley- there has been a focus on anti-social behaviour in specific locations eg Catholic Lane, Ladies Walk and the High Street. Local businesses have been consulted and conversations have focussed on how to make certain areas less attractive as 'gathering places'. Better evidence has enabled individuals and groups of youngsters to be identified. Cameras have been requested for specific sites at the end of the High Street not currently covered by static CCTV.

Gornal, Upper Gornal and Woodsetton- car key burglaries are a focus. Patrols have been increased at specific times during the night. A change to police shift patterns has enabled this outcome. Theft from shops is also a focus. Offenders have been identified and prosecuted.

Cllr Stanley spoke about the Spar in Gornal. The windows were being smashed on a regular basis. This is affecting their trade. CCTV cameras are in the locality.

**Action:** The relevant police officer for the area will contact Cllr Stanley with an update.

Offroad bikes across all wards- residents were asked to keep reporting incidents and the location of where these bikes are housed. Pursuing bikes has risks, but locating the vehicles at offenders' homes can have an impact. The police can seize these vehicles. Bollards have been sited at various locations to stop bikes gaining access.

Multi-agency speeding operation- this is planned for May 6<sup>th</sup> and includes locations on the Straits, Sedgley Road and Tipton Road.

Noted: A resident asked for this operation to include Vicars Street. The police encouraged residents to share locations that were a concern in terms of speeding vehicles.

Despite the clear statistics that crime is on the decrease, there was a perception from a number of residents that this was not the case. Incidents posted on local community Facebook pages support this perception.

Police response: The crime statistics indicate a decrease in reported crime. Residents were asked to ensure they report incidents to the police. Reported incidents are included in the crime statistics.

Residents raised the following incidents:

- Resident explained how they had rung the police twice to report a crime and no officer had attended.
- Resident reported a car stolen and was given a crime number. No police attended.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resident contacted police on a number of occasions about a group of youths with knives in a Sedgley location. They have received no response from the police.</li> <li>• Resident attempted to contact the police about an incident. They were left on the telephone for 45 minutes, without a response.</li> <li>• Intruder at Neville House, Sedgley- 3 residents phoned the police to report an intruder. The police attended 2.5 hours later; the intruder had left the building. Residents were frightened.</li> <li>• Incident at a local secondary school where a pupil was found with a knife. The resident wanted to know what action had been taken.        Noted: The inspector explained that an update on the incident could only be provided to the people involved in reporting it.</li> <li>• A resident raised the issue of a group of men gathering outside the betting shop in Gornal, at the previous YHYF meeting. They were engaged in anti-social behaviour and were still gathering at this location.        Noted: The police had responded and increased patrols in this area. They were unaware that this was still an issue. The resident was asked to liaise with the inspector at the close of the meeting.</li> </ul> <p>Noted: In Dudley North, petty crimes are being followed through, and offenders prosecuted. Bikes are being seized and crushed. Although knife crime across the wards is not currently an issue, there is no knife bin within the area. This is being investigated, and the proposal has been escalated to the West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner.</p> <p>Noted: Sonia Kumar MP: There are 1000 less officers in the West Midlands. This is being addressed. Local constituency office: There will be an office opening soon at Bird Cage Walk in Dudley where surgeries will be held.</p> <p>Noted: A resident shared some positive news. The home office had made money available for the purchase of CCTV to be installed at All Saints church.</p> <p>Cllr Keasey asked residents to continue to report incidents to the police but to also speak to their local councillors</p>
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	<p>Noted: All residents who had raised a specific concern were asked to speak directly to the Inspector and police officer at the end of the meeting.</p> <p>The police were thanked for their attendance.</p> <p>Additional Dudley North Councillor comments (round-up):</p> <p>Cllr Keasey: Work on the installation of a soldier silhouette in Sedgley was progressing well. Planning permission had been granted.</p> <p>Cllr Ridney: There had been complaints about diverted buses in the area. This is being investigated.</p> <p>Gornal councillors thanked the community groups within their ward for their work.</p> <p>Cllr Aston reiterated that councillors are local people and try to do their best to support residents.</p> <p>Cllr Littler thanked residents for attending. It was her first YHYF meeting.</p> <p>Gornal Fun Day will be held on 28<sup>th</sup> June at Ellowes Hall School.</p> <p>Sedgley councillors thanked residents for attending the meeting and reassured them that their ward councillors were working for them and with them, particularly in respect to the concerns about the library and clinic.</p>
<p><b>7. Date of next meeting</b></p>	<p>To be confirmed at the Annual Meeting of the Council on 15<sup>th</sup> May. Dates of meetings will be available on the following link thereafter: -  <a href="#">Your Home, Your Forum Dudley North</a></p>

**Time meeting ended: 8:25 pm**