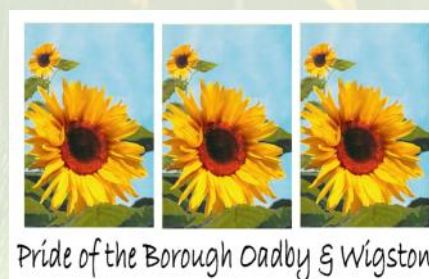


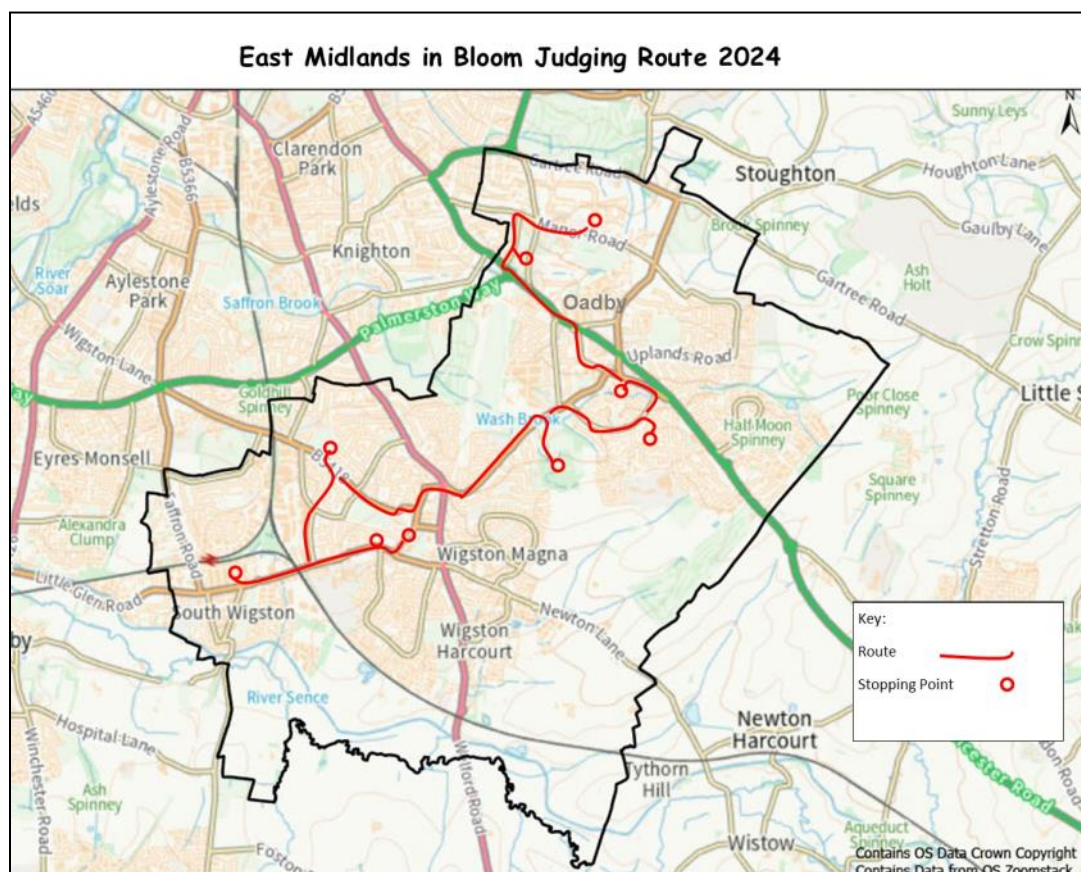
Oadby & Wigston East Midlands in Bloom 2024



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Oadby & Wigston is a small borough of just 9 square miles with Leicester to the north of us. We are more and more built up and yet have some fantastic open spaces with many verges and tree lined streets giving a largely open feel to the borough. And yet we are a unique borough with effectively 3 town centres; Oadby, Wigston & South Wigston effectively linked by only one route.



This portfolio has been created by PotB volunteers - all images from the past 12 months (except historic photos)

Achievements



Working with OWBC Clean & Green Team to ensure the borough is looking its best for the judges' visit can entail all sorts of jobs....

Volunteers in Oadby & Wigston have achieved highly over the past 20+ years that we have been entering into East Midlands in Bloom and can boast many achievements including in the past 12 months...



**UK FINALIST 2023
SILVER GILT MEDAL**



Britain in Bloom Silver Gilt Award & Certificate of Achievement for Horticultural Excellence.



**East Midlands in Bloom Gold Award,
Best Business Gold Award—Nova Laboratories
Judges Award for Leicester Botanic Garden,
RHS IYN Award—Level 5 South Wigston
Community Garden.**



Accreditation Achieved for Plastic Free Oadby.



**Green Flag Awards for Brocks Hill Country Park
& Peace Memorial Park.**

Pride of the Borough

Pride of the Borough (Oadby & Wigston) (PotB) was formed in 2003, as a constituted group with the clear aims stated as:

- Improve the environment of Oadby, Wigston and South Wigston.
- Work with Oadby and Wigston Borough Council to support the Borough's entry into East Midlands in Bloom and other such competitions.
- Encourage and support community activities that will increase pride in our Borough.



Pride of the Borough Oadby & Wigston

Whilst Pride of the Borough (PotB) continue to organise the borough of Oadby & Wigston's entry into East Midlands in Bloom, it is impossible, and arguably not right, for a group of volunteers to organise all the environmentally based activities that take place throughout the year especially as the entry reflects the work carried out by many groups and individuals. However we are delighted to reflect their valuable work in this portfolio.

Key members of the Pride of the Borough Organising/Management Committee	
Simon Lucas	Chairman
Sarah Dickinson	Treasurer & Membership
David Carter	Secretary
Irene Sibley	Wickham Road Residents
Nigel Dickinson	Website
Sue Poole	Oadby Business Contact
Graham Lamb	Committee Member
Chris Huscroft	Wigston Framework Knitters Museum Garden
Jean South	Planters & Sensory Garden
Sarah Fell	Wigston Business Contact
Sue Lobb	Friends of Peace Memorial Park
Pauline Bates	Minutes Secretary
Mark South	Committee Member
Julie Richards	South Wigston Community Garden
There are many more heroes working on our various projects!	

In 2014, inspired by a talk at an EMiB Seminar and noting judges' suggestions that we increase our contact with businesses, Graham Lamb, with the committee's approval, set about organising our Membership/Loyalty Card.

This has proved to be a tremendous achievement and a major fundraiser for us. One of the reasons this has been such a success is, of course, that members can save more than the cost of the card, which still remains just £5, by trading locally. The supporting businesses are listed on page 19.

As a result PotB have been financially secure whilst still being able to invest in projects such as the Wigston Pinfold and additional Town Centre planters.

Regular Newsletters are emailed to members keeping them informed of any changes to business offers, together with the latest news from PotB ~ some members use this information to know when the next 3rd Saturday working group is taking place.

All of this information is regularly updated on our website.

We also note that our constitution does not require members of the management team, or any volunteers, to purchase a membership card to take part.



PotB 3rd Saturday work mornings

Each month PotB members hold a work morning. This work is varied and can range from litter picking to gardening depending on what is required; often this can be giving extra help to groups. The one constant is that we always finish with tea/coffee and biscuits! This may be a bit cliched but we have learnt that it is so important to give ourselves time to talk.

For 2024 we decided to use fixed locations in the three boroughs on a quarterly basis so that potential volunteers would know where to find us. This also gives a greater opportunity to develop projects.



PRIDE OF THE BOROUGH -
WORK MORNINGS 2024

20 JANUARY
PEACE MEMORIAL
PARK, WIGSTON

17 FEBRUARY
BLABY ROAD PARK,
SOUTH WIGSTON

16 MARCH
ELLIS PARK,
OADBY

20 APRIL
PEACE MEMORIAL
PARK, WIGSTON

18 MAY
BLABY ROAD PARK,
SOUTH WIGSTON

15 JUNE
ELLIS PARK,
OADBY

20 JULY
PEACE MEMORIAL
PARK, WIGSTON

17 AUGUST
BLABY ROAD PARK,
SOUTH WIGSTON

21 SEPTEMBER
ELLIS PARK,
OADBY

19 OCTOBER
PEACE MEMORIAL
PARK, WIGSTON

16 NOVEMBER
BLABY ROAD PARK,
SOUTH WIGSTON

21 DECEMBER
ELLIS PARK,
OADBY

FROM 9.30AM - 11.30AM - MEET IN THE ASSOCIATED CAR PARK



Projects

Sunflowers

In 2023 we gave away sunflower seeds little knowing the impact and friendly 'competition' it would create! We have had several claims of 8'+ tall sunflowers!

Again, this year Thompson & Morgan generously donated 30 packets of Giant Sunflower seeds to PotB. This has enabled us to repeat last year's Sunflower Project by distributing seeds/plants to children and residents of the borough to plant and grow on to flowering, including 240 to a local Primary School.



Free at Oadby Library



Ready for the toddler group at OBC



These dwarf sunflowers looked good too

Bulb Project 2023-24

October 2023: Bulb order arrived from Taylors Bulbs and distributed to Blaby Road Park, Salvation Army, Aigburth Home, Wigston Health Centre, Fairstone Hill, Aintree Close & Wickham Green for planting by PotB volunteers.

March-April 2024: The display of our bulbs around the borough was magnificent this year, they seemed to grow bigger and stronger after a very wet winter.



The bulb order for autumn planting has already been placed with Taylors and includes Crocus, Tetes, Carlton daffodils & Narcissus, plus Tulips & Fritillaria for delivery late September 2024.



Projects

Planters

Our change to permanent planting 2 years ago has worked well, so we have not had to do much to our planters other than replace a few plants, weed and mulch.

We are now trying to encourage other groups or businesses to take on more of the care and maintenance of the planters, so far Two Steeples Medical Centre have agreed to look after the planter outside their premises, and we are negotiating with other groups.



Wigston Town Centre October 2023



Wakes Road August 2023



Wakes Road June 2024



By Epic Accessories March 2024

Community Groups

Elliott Hall for Youth & Community

Elliott Hall has been going since 2017 and is run by volunteers. It was founded by Rob & Ruth Elliott & Carl Walter after they realised that the community was struggling to provide for different groups trying to support the local community due to a lack of premises. Elliott Hall now offers groups that support all ages throughout the week.

Elliott Hall community garden and veggie plot are run by a small team of volunteers. Neil, who helps the most, is partially-sighted. All these sessions aim to support mental health and well-being. The produce is given away or used within our kitchen to make homemade soup for the winter.



South Wigston Station & Nature Reserve

South Wigston Train Station Adopters have been granted a piece of land at the station which has been given as a nature reserve to increase wildlife to the local area. South Wigston Station triangle already has protected areas further up the line due to rare grasses and butterflies.



The Station Adopters not only keep the station, including the bridge and platforms, clean and tidy, but they also help maintain the local area by emptying bins etc. In addition, they work with other groups such as Men in Sheds who have made bird, bug and bat boxes, and Serco Fosse Way Prison who supply volunteers to help with the project.



Community Groups

Wickham Green 2023-24

Volunteers continue to work and socialise on and around the green. Activities in the past 12 months have included the following:

Planted additional Carlton daffodil bulbs under one of the street signs. The display of Wickham's bulbs was fantastic in Spring 2024.

Throughout the autumn saw us pruning shrubs and weeding to prepare for winter. Mulch from local tree work was spread on the beds. Quantities of leaves were raked up, bagged and used for mulch for local allotments. From early spring we began more pruning and started the constant weeding.



The Fern sculpture was again used as a focal point for several activities and acts of remembrance. It needs some restoration once it has dried out. We plan to fill the cracks in the wood and oil it, plus paint the metal and concrete bases.



There have only been 2 grass cuts by Leicestershire CC so far this year and Peter & Bob continue weekly to run 2 push mowers around the outer perimeter of the grass and between the 8 flowerbeds. This greatly enhances the overall look of the island, as it sets off the flowerbeds with the tall grass/meadow in the middle. When it was cut, volunteers raked up over 40 bags of long grass before it killed the remaining grass.

Aigburth Care Home and Dementia Unit Gardening Club

MHA Aigburth Gardening news 2024

University of Leicester students entertained residents with a Chinese Dragon Dance on a damp Sunday in February in MHA Aigburth garden. Some hardy souls ventured into the mist but others watched from the windows, keeping warm!



In March Leicester De Montfort Rotary Club donated and planted 4 crab apple trees and 3 rowans in MHA Aigburth garden to provide blossom, fruit and autumn colour for the residents to enjoy and to offset our carbon footprint.



On a sunny morning in May, ten community volunteers had a sociable weeding session in MHA Aigburth garden

and several residents and staff came out to encourage us, then congregated near our new recycled benches in the Memorial Rose garden for a sing song. (One bench was donated by Oadby Village Hall Trust).

We are now looking to work with 'The Shed' group based at Elliott Hall to refurbish some of the older benches.



Community Groups

South Wigston Community Garden was started in 2018 when a 'less loved' section at the 'far end' of Blaby Road Park was adopted by a group of local residents. It is now being slowly turned into a much loved garden.

Volunteers meet weekly to weed, tidy, prune and plant. The work is much appreciated by park users, often unknown benefactors have added yarn bombing flags or signs. Much appreciated Thank You posts have been put on Facebook.

This was recognised with a level 5 Thriving award in the RHS IYN 2023.

A wildflower maze has been created, repurposing the embankment of a former spoil heap, by Entrust.



All the hours and the hard work which the volunteers have put into the community garden has paid off.



The Cedars Centre is part of the Leicestershire NHS Community Mental Health Teams (CMHTs) who provide services to meet the needs of service users who require the help of a specialist team.

It has been great to see the spring bulbs and perennial flowers come up this year; the weather has been terrible! The selection of colours in the back garden has been a pleasure to see. The professionals based at The Cedars Centre have enjoyed the garden and seeing it come to life.



This year the service users are going to grow more produce and continue to improve the front garden areas. They would like to add more colour to the front so that it is more welcoming and relaxing.



Community Groups



Oadby & Wigston Lions are involved in the community garden project to remember officers of all 3 emergency services who have died in service. The garden is at the front of the Wigston Police & Fire Stations; an area that can be enjoyed by all, a place to rest during a busy working day/night, a place of quiet for Staff & Students to meet, or just somewhere to rest and soak up the sun or take in the evening air.

All the work is carried out by the Lions volunteers, our motto 'We Serve'.

No litter here please



Information sign on main A6

Oadby & Wigston Wombles and other volunteers continue to regularly collect litter, leaving green bags by street litter bins which the council collect.



Staff and residents from **Boulter Crescent** clearing litter from around the flats.

Oadby Rotary continue with various environmentally based projects in Oadby.

The trees are establishing on Hamble Green with the grass below them being seeded and maintained to encourage wildflowers.

Regular checks are made on the planters in Oadby Town Centre to ensure they are looking their best.



W.I.L.E (Wombles In Litter Education)

The education group has continued to be available to all schools and youth groups in the borough. This last academic year we have seen children in Beauchamp College (2 year groups) and Meadows Community Primary school, along with scouting and youth groups, and also visited, and been seen by, over 1,000 students.

We continue to advertise our availability around the borough and look forward to more schools returning for another visit.

County-wide we have seen over 13,500 children in over 60 schools and groups.



Community Groups

Oadby Baptist Church

The garden continues to get a lot of use from various groups (despite the wet weather!). Over winter we have had leeks, garlic and cabbage growing and these are now being supplemented with spring and summer growing crops - these include tomatoes, potatoes, chillis, carrots, beetroot and various beans.

The produce is made available free of charge to the users of the garden. We have developed a bed for soft fruit which we hope will provide some juicy crops to share over the coming years.

Our flower beds have been popular and this year we have used the seeds collected last year to create some colour.

Groups that are using the garden include the ALL Languages Group which is run by the social prescribing team from the local GP surgeries. This group aims to help people who don't use English as their main language at home to practise their language skills and gain confidence in using English in social contexts (for example at doctor surgeries). Local Area Co-ordinators are also referring those suffering from mental health issues and loneliness to come down to our open sessions on a Wednesday - called A Place to Grow. Various children's and young people's groups are also using and helping with the garden, including growing sunflowers.



Sensory Garden - within the Reflective Park, Oadby

Over the past twelve months we have concentrated on planting many more plants in the middle of the garden. This section of the garden struggles with the shade cast by the large cherry trees and the dryness of the soil when the trees are in full leaf. When the garden was replanted several years ago, the trees were considerably smaller, and the plants that were put in then, such as lavender, rosemary etc had begun to struggle.

In 2022 we planted several *Teucrium hircanicum* 'purple tails' and *Tellima grandiflora*, these did well last summer, so we have planted 12 more of each of these to make large swathes across the border.



We have also planted more *Epimedium versicolor sulphureum*, *Brunnera* 'Jack Frost', Soft shield and Hart's Tongue Ferns, *Pulmonarias*, *Veronicas*, and *Woodruff*.

The whole garden has had more bulbs/corms planted, *Scilla*, *Chinodoxa*, *Crocus*, *Dutch Iris*, *Anemone Blanda*, *Cyclamen* and *Allium Bulgaricum*.



Community Groups

Wigston Framework Knitters Museum



A master hosier's house dating back to the end of the 17th century. A rare survivor of a once thriving industry in Wigston. The large garden is referred to as 'The Secret Garden'.

We are open for the National Garden Scheme, our 4th year.



Our group of friendly garden volunteers



A tucked away, neglected area of the garden has been cleared to create space for a new shed with off-roof water collection. We have created a compost bin made from pallets, instead of disposing of green waste via council bin collection, and an area to grow potted plants for sale. The museum receives no funding so these plant sales alongside craft workshops, craft fairs, music in the garden and afternoon teas, help towards our running costs.

Waterside Garden is a partnership project between Oadby and Wigston Primary Care Network's Health and Wellbeing Team (HWBT) and The Canal and River Trust (CRT).

Our objective is to facilitate a community garden, with the addition of linking individuals with groups and facilities, with the aim of long-term community-based sessions.

Our main task will be to facilitate an outdoor 'nature' targeted support group where we can provide opportunity for both mental and physical health support.

The Community Garden will be set up through the involvement of the HWBT, the CRT Well-being Coordinator and local volunteers. Twice a week, there will be the opportunity to meet at the garden at specific times and work with staff and patients to develop and expand the space, ensuring that we maximize the potential to grow plants, fruit and vegetables. During other times, patients and volunteers will be encouraged to go along to the gardens to enjoy the space in their own time. With a focus on mental health, we will



Approx location of project

also work with our colleagues from local service providers who will deliver workshops on managing well-being alongside the activities of the garden.

We are in the early stages of development (that's why there are only 'before' photos!), with the hope of allowing volunteers on site from early July.



Before.....

Parks and Open Spaces

The borough is blessed with 3 significant open spaces; Pochins Bridge in South Wigston and Oadby Grange Country Park and Brocks Hill Country Park in Oadby, along with many smaller open spaces throughout the borough. We also benefit from the Grand Union Canal running along our Western boundary from Kilby Bridge to Crow Mills.



Hedge laying at Brocks Hill Country Park



1,000 free trees were given away to residents, community groups and schools in December 2023 to help make the borough greener and encourage local people to contribute to climate change efforts.

The borough has 4 allotments totalling over 300 plots. The largest of these is on Aylestone Lane, Wigston. Plot holders can join the **Aylestone Lane Allotments Association**, which has its own shop and toilet block. An unused area was made into the first Green Gym in Leicestershire, before becoming the **Aylestone Lane Community Allotment**, meeting throughout the year.



Peace Memorial Park was endowed by public subscription as Wigston's war memorial in 1921, and over the decades since then it has become a well-loved, tranquil green space away from the hubbub and noise of the busy town centre, achieving Green Flag status since 2009.

The Friends of Peace Memorial Park were constituted in 1997 and continue to work with OWBC to keep the park well maintained, including recent work to repaint the front fence in conjunction with HMP Fosse Way.

The Memorial Wall in the Park is well-respected and used regularly by locals and visitors as a place of quiet reflection. Annually the service of Remembrance is held here, and it also saw a short service recently to honour 80 years since the D-Day landings. The carpet badge bed commemorates this historic event (ref. cover photo).

The **University of Leicester Botanic Garden** was established on its present site in Oadby in 1947. It comprises the grounds of four houses: Beaumont, Southmeade, The Knoll and Hastings, which were built in the early 1900s and are now used as either student residences or for the Garden education programme.

In addition to the formal university teaching, the grounds now host many activities including educational visits by schools, open days, and well attended events such as Asian Dancing.

Supported by The Friends of the Botanic Garden with volunteers assisting the gardeners and organising tours of the garden.

The free access allows residents to appreciate the garden throughout the year.



HERITAGE ACROSS THE BOROUGH

Oadby & Wigston has a long heritage featuring in W G Hoskins' famous 'The Midland Peasant' book charting the history of a typical Midland Village, i.e. Wigston.

Today we reflect our history in many ways, often with interpretation boards to inform visitors of the significance of a feature or space.

Following are some examples, you will note all have interpretation boards so a visit will tell you more about the story of the location.



The Bank Pocket Park Wigston also recognising the Victoria Cross Medal awarded to Wigston Man, William Ewart Boulter.



Wigston Pinfold and symbolic cattle trough (planted with herbaceous plants), bench and information board.



Peacock Place, Wigston

If you want to learn more about the heritage of Oadby & Wigston you can visit Greater Wigston Historical Society.



Railway wheels and original Station sign with information informing visitors of the local history.



Recognising the Polish crew of a Lancaster bomber who lost their lives in a crash in Wigston in 1946.

A service is held every year at All Saints School.

Art in the community



Network Rail have teamed up with the Leicestershire Craft Centre, as well as other community groups, to create and paint an art mural to prevent vandalism and trespass in South Wigston.



Peacock Place, Wigston.



Peace Sculpture in Peace Memorial Park



Wickham Fern



Reflective Park, Oadby

Two large cedars in the grounds of St Peter's Church, Oadby, had become unsafe, and were even damaging the church, so had to be felled. However they have been turned into remarkable features.



Oadby & Wigston throughout the year



News from around the borough

Promotion and publicity about 'the bloom' is not about self publicity but about informing residents of what is taking place and how they can fully appreciate the work and hopefully get involved themselves.

OWBC keep residents informed through a variety of media, including emails to subscribers, Our Borough printed newsletter, Facebook and

website news releases.



Attending events



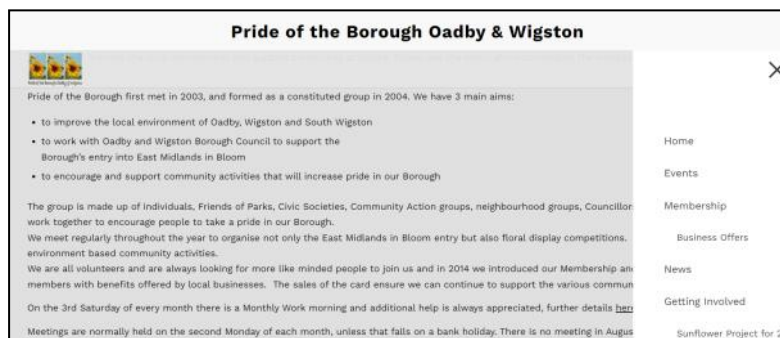
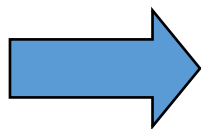
Newspaper articles



Newsletter emailed to PotB membership card holders



www.potb.org.uk



A Green Future for Oadby & Wigston

Wigston Pool to get carbon footprint boost thanks to solar panels

Published: Monday, 25 March 2024



Oadby & Wigston Borough Council (OWBC) has secured £184,000 of funding to install solar panels on the roof of Wigston Pool and Fitness Centre through the government's Swimming Pool Support Fund (SPSF).

Residents in South Wigston are being supported to make greener choices following the installation of new electric vehicle charging points in Countesthorpe Road Car Park.

Solar Together is back for residents of Oadby & Wigston!

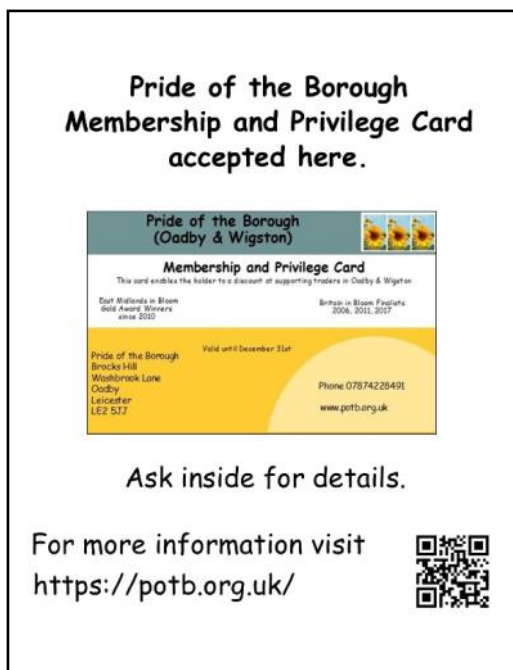
Following the success of last year's scheme, Solar Together is back for residents of Oadby & Wigston and registration is now open!

Solar Together Oadby & Wigston is an innovative scheme offering high-quality solar photovoltaic (PV) panels and battery storage. It is a collective-buying scheme, which brings households together to get high-quality solar panels at a competitive price using the bargaining power of a large group.



Business Support ~ Sponsorship

The following businesses support our membership scheme by providing offers and discounts to card holders



IN SOUTH WIGSTON:

K .Tee Motor Centre Ltd
Lords Electrical
South Wigston Cycle Centre
Treehouse Café

IN WIGSTON:

Casa Nostra
Cuisine of India
Direct Carpet Supplies
Ecigwizard
Edinburgh Woollen Mill
Framework Knitters Museum
GC Pest Control Ltd
Gift and Jewellery Centre, Leicester Rd
Gymophobics
Henry Smith & Hamylton Opticians Ltd
Man Cave Barber Lounge
Marmaris Turkish Restaurant
Millard & Greaves Hair
NG Kutahya Seramik
Pennywise Discount Store
Phillips George Estate Agents
Ponden Home Interiors
Saab's Grill
The Handmade Elephant
The Health Store
Two Steeples
Wigston Deli

IN OADBY:

Alpha Beauty Lounge
Avon Cosmetics
Black Owl Computer Support
Charlie & Alf's
Cheikho's
Chestnuts Coffee Shop
Epic Accessories
Fox Pond
Henry Smith & Hamylton Opticians Ltd
newton fallowell estate agents
Oadby Building Products
Oadby DIY Home & Garden Centre
Parklands Leisure Centre Cafe
Quality DIY & Hardware
S.I.Opticals
Serenity – Therapy, Beauty & Feet
The Deli Hub
Zeph's Cafe

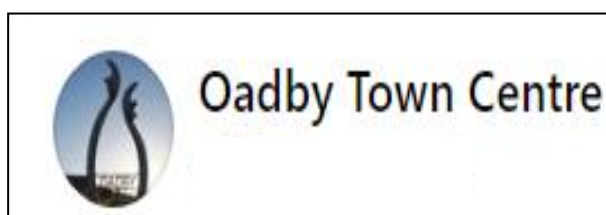
We are pleased to recognise others businesses who support in other ways



Transport providers for judging tour



Launching in mid July 2023, PotB are a participating 'Good Cause'



Oadby Town Centre Association support PotB including free attendance at the Oadby Festive Light switch on

We trust the judges will have been impressed with all they have seen and read and that other readers have enjoyed learning more of the environmental activities that take place in our borough. We hope you are inspired to want to know more and to come and join us! Our details are given below.



Pride of the Borough Oadby & Wigston

Volunteers wanted!

Join us on one of our Monthly Work mornings.

WHEN? The 3rd Saturday of the month.

WHERE? We meet on a rotating basis at:

- Peace Memorial Park, Wigston
- Blaby Road Park, South Wigston
- Ellis Park, Oadby.

TIME? From 9.30am for 2 hours.

WHAT WILL I BE DOING? This depends on the agreed task; it could be litter picking or helping to tidy up an overgrown area or bulb planting or specific projects.

HOW DO I FIND OUT MORE? Details will be on our web site.

Tea/coffee & biscuits supplied!



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