

The Civic

Welcome to a new issue of 'The Civic', an occasional newsletter from Stretford Public Hall. Read on to find out more about the events and activities coming up at the hall. We've also got information and advice for anyone worrying about energy bills this month.

Weekly Warmers

Friends of Stretford Public Hall & Friends of Victoria Park are running free 'Weekly Warmer' sessions.



The sessions run every Tuesday in February and March, from 12pm – 4pm. Sessions alternate between Stretford Public Hall and the Community Room in Victoria Park, providing a space where you can come and get warm and enjoy a bowl of hot soup and a brew, for free. It's a chance to have a chat with others, or to sit quietly and read a book or newspaper, whatever you fancy. You can also use the free WiFi. There's no need to book, just drop in on the day.

Issue #4
March
2022



Weekly Warmers will take place between 12pm - 4pm on:

Tuesday 1 March - Victoria Park

Tuesday 8 March - Stretford Public Hall

Tuesday 15 March - Victoria Park

Tuesday 22 March - Stretford Public Hall

Tuesday 29 March - Victoria Park

Jazz Tea Dance

On Sunday 13 March, we are pleased to be holding a Jazz Tea Dance in the ballroom at Stretford Public Hall, from 2.30pm. Join us for tea and cake, accompanied by live jazz from the Ben Playford Trio. The trio are a vocal-led piano ensemble that play well known jazz and blues standards, including some tunes that are rarely heard today. From ballads to bossas, and blues to up-tempo swing numbers, they provide the perfect backdrop for a relaxing afternoon.



Doors will open at 2:30pm, with the Ben Playford Trio starting at 3pm. Events at the hall are run on a pay-what-you-can basis, so you can pay what you can afford. Free tickets are available. Visit the What's On section of our website www.stretfordpublichall.org.uk, call 0161 989 1689 or pop into the hall and speak to a member of staff.

Preparing for the fuel price rise

Are you worried about your increasing fuel bills? Gas and electricity prices are going to rise sharply over the next few months so you're not alone if you are worried. The Office for National Statistics has found that two thirds of adults in Britain have experienced an increase in the cost of living since Christmas, with nearly 80% of people blaming increasing energy costs.



Emma Finn works at the community hub at Stretford Public Hall. She explains: *“We have been hearing from local residents that they have struggled over winter with their heating bills and they are worried about the lifting of the energy price cap this spring.*

Since November last year, we have been providing support for residents who contact the hall for a bit of support. We can help in lots of different ways. We run Winter Warmer afternoons with Friends of Victoria Park where residents can sit in the warm and have some free soup, tea and coffee and independent advice on energy saving. We’ve also been giving out winter warmer packs which include gloves, hats, torches, flasks, and other useful items. We can advise on repairs to boilers and give emergency financial support too.”

Services & support available

Trafford Assist is Trafford Council’s welfare support service. If you’re struggling to make ends meet, Trafford Assist can offer support with food, fuel & other essentials. You can apply online on the council’s website or visit Stretford Public Hall to complete a paper application form.

Household Support Fund

The Household Support Fund is a pot of money available to support residents this winter. The fund is being distributed by Stretford Public Hall and anyone who needs a bit of help can apply. We can help with things like white goods (cookers, fridges), warm winter clothing, and essential furniture. Contact the hall for information on 0161 989 1689 or email emma@stretfordpublichall.org.uk

Heating repairs scheme

Thanks to funding from Trafford Council, financial help is available if you have urgent heating or hot water repairs that need doing. Stretford Public Hall has a pot of money to support residents with this. The application is simple and straightforward, and open to anyone. Call Emma on 0161 989 1689 (Monday to Friday, 10am - 2pm) for more information.

Local Energy Advice Partnership (LEAP)

LEAP is a free service that is helping people to keep warm and reduce their energy bills without costing them any money. If you’re on a low income, receiving Universal Credit or other benefits, or if you have a health condition, you are likely to qualify for support from LEAP. They can also help anyone who has recently been bereaved. To apply for support, visit their website www.applyforleap.org.uk or call free on 0800 0607567.

Citizens Advice Trafford

Citizens Advice Trafford have a team of trained advisers who can help you resolve your legal, money and other problems by providing information and advice. They won't tell you what to do but will explain your options and the possible outcomes of the different courses of action. They can help with everything from getting your house repaired, to accessing benefits and helping to save money.

The advice line is open Monday to Friday, 8.30am - 5.30pm, excluding Bank Holidays. 0808 278 7803 www.casort.org

Citizens Advice Trafford also have monthly drop-in info & advice sessions at Stretford Public Hall, on the last Tuesday of the month 12pm - 2pm. No need to book.

Not online? If you don't have Internet access or can't get online, the team at Stretford Public Hall can assist you to access digital services. We can help you fill in forms online, or fill in the forms for you, or make referrals on your behalf. Call 0161 9891689 to make an appointment, or just pop in between 10am - 4pm.

Energy saving tips

Groundwork is an environmental charity. Their 'Green Doctors' are energy-saving experts. Here are some of Groundwork's top tips for saving energy:

Adjust your hot water temperature

- If you have a combi boiler, there will be a dial on the front which controls the water temperature. It usually has a tap on it. Ideally, your hot water should be just hot enough to use without adding cold water. If your hot water is too hot, turn the dial down on your boiler.
- If you have a hot water tank, it will have a thermostat on it that controls the water temperature. Turn this down to 60°C. This will ensure that the water is at a safe temperature but no hotter than it needs to be.

Draught proofing

Installing draught proofing is a cheap and simple way to reduce energy loss through cracks in windows and doors. There are lots of different options available:

- Draught excluder (or 'door sausage'!) - a long padded cushion is a simple way to stop draughts under doors.

- Door brush strips - these are good for wooden doors, and can be nailed to the bottom of doors to prevent draughts.
- Double glazing film - this can be stuck to single glaze windows with sticky tape, providing an extra layer of insulation.
- Foam strips - self-adhesive foam strips can be stuck around the inside of doors and windows, to stop draughts from small gaps.
- Curtains. Heavy curtains are an effective way of stopping draughts from doors and windows.

If you need a hand to install draught proofing, contact Stretford Public Hall and we can put you in touch with local services that can help.

Radiator foil

Installing radiator foil takes about five minutes per radiator and can save you between £60 and £120 on your energy bills. You can buy radiator foil from DIY stores but ordinary foil also helps to keep the heat in. It works best on external, outer walls.

You can find out more on their website www.groundwork.org.uk/greendoctor/

Help with your fuel bills

Warm Home Discount

A one-off discount of £140 off your winter energy bill from now until the end of March 2022. You are eligible for this discount if you receive the Guarantee Credit element of Pension Credit.

You might also be eligible if you are on a low income and meet your energy supplier's individual criteria for the scheme. Check with your supplier to see if they participate in the scheme.

Cold Weather Payment

Extra money to help with energy costs when there's very cold weather.

You will get a £25 payment each week where the temperature drops below zero degrees celsius for 7 consecutive days, from now until 31st March 2022.

Most people are enrolled automatically, but you should still check if you're not sure if you qualify: www.gov.uk/cold-weather-payment/how-to-claim

For more advice on support with your energy bills and for impartial advice on energy suppliers and different types of energy contract, visit the website Uswitch.com or speak to one of their advisers in person at Stretford Public Hall's Weekly Warmer sessions.

Information & advice drop-ins

Every Tuesday, 10am - 12noon, Stretford Public Hall hosts drop-in information and advice sessions, which offer support on a variety of day-to-day issues that you might need help with.

The sessions take place each month as follows:

First Tuesday of the month:

Age UK Trafford - Free and confidential advice session for people over 50, their families and carers.

Second Tuesday of the month:

Get online - Come and find out about our digital loan scheme, borrow a tablet or laptop, or find out more about getting online in Trafford.

Third Tuesday of the month:

English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) - Monthly conversation cafe, to practice English speaking & conversation.

Work and skills advice - Help for anyone who has lost their job or is considering a new start for any reason.

Fourth Tuesday of the month:

Citizens Advice - Confidential and independent advice with legal, debt, consumer, housing and other problems, with advisers from Citizens Advice Bureau.



All sessions are drop-in so there's no need to book. If there is a delay in being seen, you can enjoy a free brew while you wait.

This newsletter has been produced by Friends of Stretford Public Hall, the community co-operative that runs Stretford Public Hall. The newsletter has been kindly funded by Trafford Council.