

THE BIRCHWOOD NEWS

“DO THE RIGHT THING”



At the end of last term, we hosted our very first “Do the Right Thing” Heads of Year Breakfast, celebrating students from Years 7 to 11.

To earn their place at the table, students had to complete their “Do the Right Thing” cards by Wednesday morning. Those who did were treated to a special breakfast in recognition of their positive behaviour, kindness, and commitment to doing the right thing.

This event is just the beginning — many more celebrations like this are planned throughout the year. So if your child just missed out this time, don’t worry — their chance to be recognised is coming soon!

Remember: The Right Thing is the Kind Thing.

Kindness isn’t just about small gestures — it’s about stepping up when someone truly needs help. When staff see these above-and-beyond moments, they’ll sign your child’s card!

Celebrating Languages and Cultures



Recently, we held our annual Language Day, celebrating the rich diversity within our school community. Students and Staff from around the world brought in a wonderful array of traditional foods and clothing, and took the time to share insights into their unique cultures. Well done to everyone who took part!

Miss Defay and Miss Roderick

SPANISH FILM FESTIVAL



A Level students attended the annual London Spanish Film Festival in South Kensington.

A fun comedy enjoyed with lots of laughter and an insight into Galician culture!

They also stayed for the Q&A with the director of the film, which is a special bonus of attending a film festival!
¡Enhorabuena!

Miss Roderick, Head of MFL



PEER MENTORING PROGRAMME



Mr Harlow has been running training sessions for Year 12 and 13 students to enable them to become peer mentors for our younger students. The peer mentoring programme is designed to support students who may benefit from a little extra guidance and encouragement.

A peer mentor acts as a positive role model within the school community and meets with their mentee once a week for a friendly chat. These sessions will take place every Friday in the Library, starting after half term.

DofE GOLD

Congratulations to our DofE Gold students!

They successfully completed their award with an expedition to Snowdonia, showing exceptional resilience and determination despite the appalling weather. It was a true test of teamwork, perseverance, and friendship — and they all excelled. Well done!



NORFOLK LAKES RESIDENTIAL

Year 12 had a fantastic time at Norfolk Lakes this weekend, taking part in a range of exciting activities. From team-building challenges to canoeing and archery, students embraced the opportunity to develop new skills, strengthen friendships, and create lasting memories in the great outdoors.



TALES FROM THE LIBRARY

From exciting quizzes and creative competitions to the latest updates and recommendations from our librarian, Miss Shackleton, there's always something happening between the shelves.
Keep an eye out for ways to get involved!



Congratulations to Antal Krasznai in 7CJS!

Antal is the first student this term to complete their Reading Reward Card!

Our Reading Reward Cards are a fantastic way to encourage students to enjoy reading. Each time a student finishes a book, their card is stamped, and they earn 5 house points.

Once they collect six stamps, they receive a special prize!

Miss Shackleton

Oliver Klumpler won the Bishop's Stortford Libraries Competition for this poem, celebrating 100 years of Hertfordshire Libraries.

THIS LIBRARY

They say this library's been here a hundred years.

One hundred years!

That's older than my grandad's jokes
and the ZX spectrum
combined.

I wasn't really interested in books,
But one day I came in just to chill.

Picked up a book.

Didn't really mean to.

The cover looked cool, okay?

Next thing I know -

I'm there.

In a world where aliens speak in music
and engineers save the sun
with nothing but a pen.

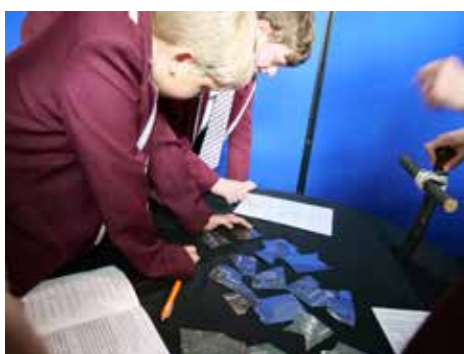
A hundred years of creativity
lined up in neat rows
and it's like

I'm starting to see
maybe there's room
for my story, too.

by Oliver Klumpler



To celebrate Halloween we held The Locked Tomb Escape Room in the Library. We based this on the classic novel Dracula by Bram Stoker. This fun and interactive event enabled the students to learn about a novel that they may not necessarily have heard of and get an idea of the story and its characters. The students had to crack codes, solve cyphers and play mysterious notes on a keyboard in order to enter Dracula's lair and work out how to defeat him! A big thank you to our fantastic sixth formers and wonderful staff including Mr Griffin, Mr Loney, Dr Allen, Miss Defay and Mrs Burgess who were great sports and played their roles superbly! Site team for making the coffin and Science Prep for the potions! The event was a huge success.

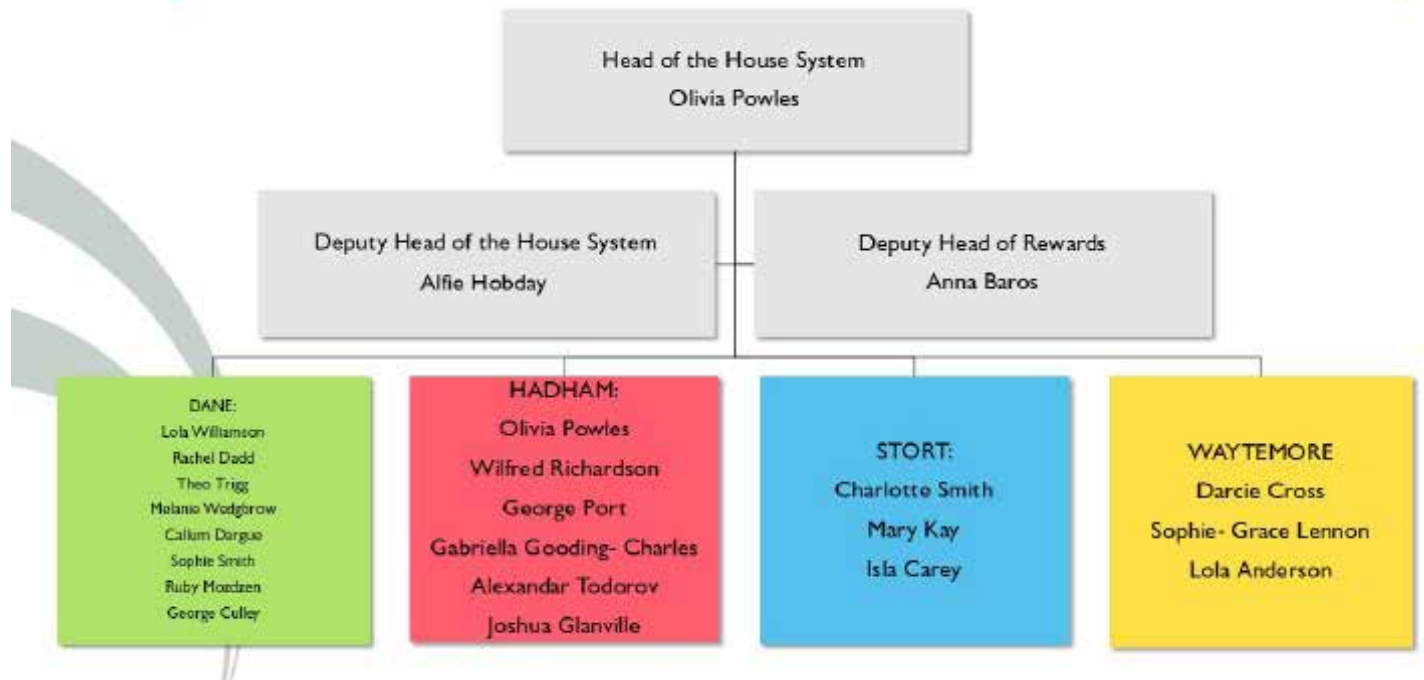




HOUSE



TEAM - 2025/2026



Esports Lunchtime Final – Rocket League

Stort and Dane Sixth Form students faced off in the inter-house Rocket League final. Dane started strong, winning the first round easily. Stort came back fighting and dominated the second round.

The third round was incredibly close, with both teams matching each other goal for goal. It went to overtime, then Alfie P scored the winning goal for Stort, making them the Sixth Form Champions!

Well played to both teams!





HOUSE



2nd



Joint 1st



3rd

House Halloween Bake Off Results!

Congratulations to Albie Gregons and Taylor Jane Macrow for winning this year's House Halloween Bake Off!

A huge well done to all the students who took part - your spooky bakes were creative, delicious, and full of Halloween spirit.

The cakes were judged by our House Captains on appearance, taste, and originality.



DISTRICT CROSS COUNTRY SUCCESS FOR BIRCHWOOD!

Birchwood fielded a strong team at the recent District Cross Country event, and there were some outstanding performances across all year groups. Congratulations to the following students on their achievements:

1st – Luca Groom (Year 9)

2nd – Scarlett Campbell (Year 10)

3rd – Ronnie Handley (Year 8)

3rd – Blake Brown (Year 10)

5th – Jess Lane (Year 11)

6th – Chloe Spencer (Year 7)

6th – Sam Spencer (Year 9)

6th – Charlie Donnelly (Year 7)

8th – Jack Evans (Year 11)

10th – Jonas Balerdi (Year 8)

Well done to all the students who took part – you've made Birchwood proud!





Congratulations to all of our sports teams for their fantastic efforts last half term! There were many wonderful wins and excellent performances across a range of sports, including stand-out achievements from Boys' Rugby, Year 7 Girls' Football, and Senior Hockey teams - just to name a few.

Well done to everyone who took part!



THE BIRCHWOOD SPORTS PARTENERSHIP (BSP)



The Birchwood Sports Partnership (BSP) has kicked off this year's primary school competitions with great energy, hosting exciting BOCCIA and Tri-Golf tournaments. Many local primary schools took part, making the events vibrant and well-attended. Our dedicated sports leaders played a key role in running the competitions alongside Miss Peet, our BSP Co-ordinator. These events provide a fantastic opportunity for the leaders to develop their leadership and organisational skills, while the primary school students thoroughly enjoy the fun and inclusive atmosphere.

BIOLOGY WEEK

As part of our Biology Week 2025 celebrations, students were delighted to welcome Dr Phil Smith MBE, a distinguished plant pathologist and passionate science communicator. In an inspiring session filled with stories, science, and humour. Dr Phil shared highlights from his fascinating career, from his school days to his journey through university, an MBE, and his current role leading a science education charity. His enthusiasm for plant science and education shone through, captivating our Year 11, 12 and 13 students. It sparked lively discussions about the wonders of biology and the many paths a scientific career can take.



Biology week

BioCraft Competition

Create a biology-inspired 3D artwork from recycled, or other, materials and send RSB a photo to enter!

#BioCraftComp

Submissions close: 12 November



With the spotlight on Biology Week, students have embraced a variety of engaging activities both in their subject lessons and during form time. Below you can see a small sample of their brilliant home learning projects — labelled cell models.



CHEMISTRY WEEK



In the last week of term, we celebrated Chemistry Week. On Tuesday, our A Level Chemistry students hosted an engaging Chemistry Quiz in the Library, sparking curiosity and friendly competition among participants. *BBC reporter Dulen said, "The quiz was very challenging, and the questions from the 6th formers were quite hard, but the students enjoyed it. They had lots of fun and even acquired some new knowledge from it!"*



Students had the chance to get hands-on and make Lava Lamps on Wednesday during lunchtime.

We were also delighted to welcome GSK, who ran an exciting workshop with Year 7 on Thursday. During the session, students explored what makes an effective tablet coating by testing different substances — jam, honey, mayonnaise, and hair spray. They coated Smarties in each substance and dropped them into lemonade to see which coating dissolved the least. The results?

Mayonnaise turned out to be the best coating!



As part of Chemistry week students had the opportunity to make Lava Lamps at Lunchtime.

“A MIND PRONE TO EVIL”

Year 11 students were invited to an event held in the Library hosted by author Paul Lynch, alongside actor Paul Bamlett, who is also one of our very own members of staff. Paul Lynch is the author of the book “A Mind Prone to Evil” which is based on the real-life battle between Hitler’s brutal Second in Command, Reich Marshall Herman Goring and the psychologist sent to study him. The book has been adapted for the stage and will open in London in 2026. Paul Lynch talked the students through the novel, while Paul Bamlett performed monologues from the script. The students left today with the message that although power can be intoxicating, in the wrong hands it can be the most dangerous drug of all.



A SPOTLIGHT ON CAREERS

This morning, Sir Nicholas Hytner, acclaimed theatre director and Founder of The Bridge Theatre, delivered a remote Q & A session for Year 11 and Sixth Form drama students. Drawing on his extensive experience in theatre and film — including his time as Artistic Director of the National Theatre — Sir Nicholas offered invaluable insights into careers in theatre, directing, and drama production. Students had the unique opportunity to hear first-hand about the realities of working in the industry, the creative process behind staging productions, and the wide range of roles available both on and off stage. The session concluded with students asking thoughtful questions about training, breaking into the profession, and the future of live performance.

Mrs Crimes, Careers





YEAR 7 ADVENTURE

Our Year 7 students have had a fantastic time at Harlow Outdoor Pursuits Centre, enjoying a variety of fun and challenging activities. From team-building exercises to outdoor adventures, it was a wonderful opportunity for bonding, laughter, and making memories. A great start to the school year!

What have our budding Birchwood journalists been researching this term?

WHAT IS DofE?



DofE (Duke of Edinburgh) is a youth achievement program in the UK for individuals aged 14 – 24 (Year 10 and sixth form). It offers three progressive levels: Bronze, Silver, and Gold, which participants can achieve by completing various activities that promote personal development and skills. The program aims to inspire young people to grow in confidence and navigate life successfully. Founded in 1956, it operates in over 140 countries and has transformed the lives of millions.

What are the benefits?

The benefits of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award include:

Personal Development: participants build self-belief, confidence, and a sense of identity.

Essential Skills: they gain skills such as resilience, problem-solving, teamwork, and communication, which enhance their CVs and job applications.

Social Connections: the program fosters friendships and social bonds, contributing to mental and physical well-being.

Community Engagement: participants learn from and give back to their communities, developing a sense of responsibility.

Future Opportunities: the DofE experience can lead to improved academic success and career prospects. These benefits collectively support young people in their personal and professional growth.

How can you sign up to DofE Bronze?

If you are in Year 10 and are interested in any of the listed benefits, please speak to Miss C LaLonge for further details and dates. One of the requirements is a DofE Acceptance letter, where you express your gratitude for the opportunity to participate in the award, your enthusiasm for the program, and how it aligns with your personal and professional goals.

Alex Burke – BBC reporter

SPOTLIGHT ON OUT OF SCHOOL CLUBS

If you're interested in aircraft, field craft or adventure, you should consider to Air Cadets. We have opportunities to fly planes or glides, shoot rifles and go on life changing camps that you can experience. Cadets also offers the chance to make friends with similar interests. It's for ages 12-18 and is sponsored by the RAF, so this can help with future jobs in the military. It runs on

Monday and Thursday evenings from 19.15 to 21.45. If you are interested contact the squadron www.stortfordaircrafts.org.

Laura Ward - BBC Reporter



At BBC Reporters we love a wordsearch. So we have made you one to try. Good Luck!

BATS HAUNTED LANTERNS PUMPKIN HALLOWEEN

VAMPIRE CAULDRON WITCH SPOOKY

TOMB CAT OMEN COFFIN BRAIN

B	A	T	S	B	Y	D	T	A	C
A	H	A	U	N	T	E	D	T	A
L	A	N	T	E	R	N	S	H	U
P	L	N	Y	K	O	O	P	S	L
U	L	C	O	F	F	I	N	A	D
M	O	T	S	T	Y	D	N	A	R
P	W	T	S	O	M	E	N	A	O
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N	N	T	S	B	W	I	T	C	H

WHAT IS HALLOWEEN?

Halloween is a holiday celebrated on October 31st each year. It began as an ancient festival where people believed the boundary between the living and the dead was thinner than usual, so spirits could cross over. Today, Halloween is mostly about fun traditions like wearing costumes, trick-or-treating for sweets, carving pumpkins, and telling spooky stories.

WHAT WAS IT CALLED BEFORE “HALLOWEEN”?

Before it was known as Halloween, the festival was called Samhain (pronounced “sow-in”), a Celtic celebration marking the end of the harvest and the start of winter. Later, when Christianity spread through Europe, the church made All Saints’ Day (also called All Hallows’ Day) on November 1st. The night before became known as All Hallows’ Eve - which over time got shortened to Halloween.

STUDENT NEWS

At Birchwood, we love celebrating the successes of our students, both in and outside of school.

Congratulations to Isaac Horwood!

Isaac recently won two gold medals at a Taekwondo InterClub Championship — taking first place in both Blue Belt Men's Lightweight Patterns and Sparring.

In addition to his martial arts success, Isaac has also achieved a major aviation milestone — completing his first solo flight in a Cessna 152! He is now continuing his training towards earning his Private Pilot Licence.

Well done, Isaac — an outstanding achievement both on the ground and in the air!



Congratulations to Jesse Rasor and Oliver Bannister!

Both in Year 11, Jesse and Oliver were part of the Bishop's Stortford Golf Club Junior Team, who won the Hertfordshire Team Junior County Championship (The Ver Shield).

An outstanding achievement — well done to both of you!



BISHOP'S STORTFORD BUSINESS EVENT

On Wednesday 22 October, Year 12 Business students attended the Bishops Stortford Means Business event at the South Mill Arts Centre. The visit provided an excellent opportunity for students to engage directly with local entrepreneurs and representatives from a wide range of businesses.

Throughout the day, students were able to ask insightful questions about business operations, marketing strategies, and career pathways, gaining a deeper understanding of how businesses function in the real world. The event also allowed students to develop their communication and networking skills as they interacted with professionals across various industries.

Several students made particularly strong impressions, with some successfully securing work experience placements as a result of their proactive approach.

Overall, the visit was both educational and inspiring, giving students a valuable insight into the world of business and helping them make meaningful connections for their future careers.



ANGLIA NEWS @ BIRCHWOOD



Recently, Birchwood students participated in a Q&A session with Anglia News and climate change expert Asher Minns. If you wish to view the programme please copy the link below-

<https://www.itv.com/watch/news/will-it-be-enough-in-our-lifetime-climate-change-questions-from-the-next-generation>

2025/26 TERM DATES

Birchwood High School Calendar

2025 - 2026

Sep 2025						
M	T	W	T	F	S	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

Oct 2025						
M	T	W	T	F	S	S
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13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

Nov 2025						
M	T	W	T	F	S	S
					1	2
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17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

Dec 2025						
M	T	W	T	F	S	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
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15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

Jan 2026						
M	T	W	T	F	S	S
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5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

Feb 2026						
M	T	W	T	F	S	S
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23	24	25	26	27	28	

Mar 2026						
M	T	W	T	F	S	S
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23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

Apr 2026						
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13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

May 2026						
M	T	W	T	F	S	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

Jun 2026						
M	T	W	T	F	S	S
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15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

Jul 2026						
M	T	W	T	F	S	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

CPD Days – school closed to students
Student holidays & occasional days
Bank & public holidays
School Open to Yr 7 & 12 only
Open Evening
Year 6 Transition Day



Design The 2025 Birchwood Christmas Card

The card will be sent to the local schools, Governors and other local VIP's.

Prizes:

1st prize £15 Amazon vouchers + 30 house points + a set of printed cards of your design.

2nd prize £10 Amazon vouchers + 20 house points

3rd prize £5 Amazon vouchers + 15 house points

All entries will be awarded a House point.

How to submit your design:

Bring your card to Miss Morrison in C23 at lunch or break.

Or give to your art teacher in lesson.

Make sure your name and form is on the back!

Submit by Monday 17 November 2025.

If you want help and access to equipment come to Art Club in C22 on any Wednesday lunchtime.

Judging will take place during the following week with Mr Griffin making the final decision.

Do

- Your design **MUST** include the Birchwood logo.
- Your card must be an original design.
- Your card can be of any festive scene.
- Your design can be made using any media.
(see the don't list) and any size or format as your card will be scanned and reproduced.
- Submit by Monday 17th November 2025.

Don't

- Make your card **too light**.
- **Include glitter.**
- **3D elements.**
- Include any writing or seasonal greeting as this will be added electronically.

Good luck and enjoy!



SPOOKY PHOTO COMPETTITION

Take a photo of your most spooky image you can find.

The winners images will be published on the School Facebook page and in the next edition of Birchwood News. There will be three winners that will receive a prize.

Deadline: Thursday 6th November

**Please send your photos to Mrs Barnard
(ibarnard@birchwoodhigh.org.uk) if you would like to
participate.**

PSFA

We have a Facebook page where you can keep up to date with events and meetings.

PRELOVED UNIFORM

If you are replacing items of branded school uniform and the old items are still in good condition, please consider donating good condition items of preloved uniform to the PSFA. Please drop off washed clean items of uniform to Reception.

HELP NEEDED!

Do you have an hour a week to help with our pre-loved uniform?

This could be during the day (DBS check needed) or after school, helping with sorting and hanging up donations and dealing with enquiries (e.g. finding sizes and bagging up orders)

Please contact birchwoodpsfa@gmail.com if you can help.

EASY FUNDRAISING

Did you know that whenever you buy anything online – from your weekly shop to your annual holiday – you could be raising free donations for Birchwood with easy fundraising? There are over 8,000 retailers on board ready to make a donation – including eBay, Argos, John Lewis & Partners, ASOS, Booking.com and M&S – and it won't cost you a penny extra to help us raise funds.

All you need to do is:

1. Go to <https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/birchwood-parents-staff-and-friends-association/> and join for free.

2. Every time you shop online, go to easyfundraising first to find the site you want and start shopping.

3. After you've checked out, the retailer will make a donation to Birchwood at no extra cost to you whatsoever! There are no catches or hidden charges and Birchwood will be really grateful for your donations.



CAMBRIDGE ART TRIP

Year 10 Art students visited two Cambridge museums to inspire them for their GCSE Art coursework project.

The students had a great day exploring the wide-ranging collection of exhibits in the Sedgwick Museum of Earth Sciences and the Museum of Zoology. The exhibits included minerals, dinosaur skeletons, fossils, and meteorites illustrating the evolution of life. In the Museum of Zoology, the students were intrigued by the vast array of animals on display. This is one of the largest and most important natural history collections in the UK and provided the students with a huge selection to record from.

The students were encouraged to record their findings through drawing and photography, making notes to refer to later. They were really engaged and produced a wide range of beautiful drawings of animals, insects, fish and fossils to inspire the development of their ideas for the coursework project of Layers.

The Art department would like to take this opportunity to say a big well done to all the participants for a fantastic trip and thank you to all staff who supported on the trip.



LEARN TO PARTNER DANCE

WITH

CEROC®

OPENING NIGHT:

THURSDAY 9TH OCTOBER 2025

SCAN HERE FOR FULL DETAILS →



BIRCHWOOD HIGH SCHOOL

Parsonage Lane, Bishops Stortford, CM23 5BD

EVERY
THURSDAY
EVENING
FROM 7:30PM

Do I need to bring a partner?

No. Most people attend on their own.

What shall I wear?

Comfortable, casual clothing, but avoid trainers.

Do I need to book?

No, just turn up any week, this is not a course.

How much does it cost?

£12 for the whole evening including two classes and over an hour of dancing.

Is there a membership fee?

Yes, just a one off £3 lifetime membership fee to pay on your first night.

