

### FESTIVE GIFT EVENT SPREADS JOY ACROSS OUR SCHOOL COMMUNITY



We were delighted to welcome around fifty families to a special festive gift event at our school. Thanks to the wonderful generosity of **Aldwickbury School** in Harpenden, we received hundreds of donated toys, which brought lots of smiles and festive cheer to our children and families.

We are very grateful to Aldwickbury School for their kindness and support.

The event took place after school over two afternoons

in December, giving families the chance to choose a gift for each child. Parents attended between 3:00pm and 6:00pm with their children. While parents selected presents, the children enjoyed a range of fun festive activities, creating a warm, happy and memorable experience for everyone.

We would also like to say a big thank you to **all staff** for their fantastic support throughout the event. Their hard work and dedication helped make this celebration truly special.



### LUTON SMILES CHRISTMAS SUPPORT

This Christmas, St Matthew's was proud to work with Luton Foodbank through the Luton Smiles campaign to help support our families during the festive season. With the kindness and dedication of the Foodbank staff and volunteers, we shared 113 freshly prepared halal and vegetarian Christmas meals, along with toys for the children, supporting over forty families in our school community. We would like to say a huge thank you to everyone involved for helping to spread happiness, care and festive cheer this Christmas.



### HYGIENE PACKS

We have partnered with, and been supported by, Luton Hygiene to provide essential support to families affected by the rising cost of living. Through this partnership, we have distributed over seventy hygiene packs, along with laundry products, sanitary hygiene items, and other essential supplies, to families in need. This support has made a meaningful difference in helping families access basic necessities during a challenging time.



### YOUNG CARERS

If your child helps to care for someone at home, please know that you are not alone and support is available. I would warmly encourage you to get in touch with me so we can better understand your family's needs and look at how we can support your child in school.



All conversations will be treated with care and sensitivity. Please feel free to email me at [shaheenhanif@smps.uk](mailto:shaheenhanif@smps.uk) if you would like to talk or have any questions.

### TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION

If your family is currently living in temporary accommodation, please feel free to get in touch with me. Sharing this information helps us to understand your circumstances and allows us to explore whether there may be any additional support or guidance we can offer. Any conversations will be treated sensitively and in confidence, and our aim is always to support the wellbeing of both children and families.



## READY FOR RAMADAN?

Ramadan is likely to begin on **18th February**.

*Ramadan Mubarak* to all who will be observing the month of fasting.

Please note that fasting is permitted for **Year 5 and Year 6** pupils, only with written parental consent.

Thank you for your cooperation.



## UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM

We recently took part in a study called “**School MOVES**” with researchers from the **University of Warwick** and the **University of Birmingham** on the impact of school moves for children.

The researchers are hoping we can learn more about the experiences of new pupils and their families, share what we do at St Matthew’s and learn more about what works or helps children when they move schools.

The researchers visited St Matthew’s on Wednesday 14th January 2026.

Thank you to all the families who spoke about their “**School MOVES**” experiences to the researchers.



## COOKING CLUB

We had ten children on the cooking register last term, and the sessions were well attended by all. The children engaged well and thoroughly enjoyed each session.



This term, we have started a cooking club again with nine children. We have cooked up several delights that the children have made and then taken home to share with their family.



## MEET OUR FAMILY WORKER MRS SHAHEEN HANIF

Hello, my name is Shaheen and I am the Senior Family Worker at St Matthew’s Primary School. I work closely with our families to offer support as part of our whole-school approach. I am available to help with a wide range of things, from advice about benefits or parenting support, to supporting families through more challenging situations. My aim is to make sure every family feels listened to, supported, and connected, so that our pupils — your children — can flourish both in school and at home. Please feel free to get in touch at any time — no concern is ever too small.



**SHAHEEN HANIF**  
Senior Family Worker  
01582 723970 ext 2028  
[shaheenhanif@smps.uk](mailto:shaheenhanif@smps.uk)

To book an appointment <https://calendly.com/shaheenhanif-smps/30min>

# KINDNESS IS ALWAYS IN FASHION

Thanks to everyone who supported our clothing giveaway



Our Clothing Giveaway, which took place on Saturday 31st January, was a HUGE SUCCESS! As you can see from the photos above we had a wide range of clothing for children and adults as well as many items of school uniform.

It was a really successful event; with over seventy families coming along and dropping in during the morning.

Thank you to everyone who donated items of clothing.



# LUTON REPAIR CAFÉ?

## What is Luton Repair Café?

**Luton Repair Café** is a charitable project where volunteers help fix broken items to prevent them from going to landfill. This not only reduces waste but also saves people the cost of replacing things. We've seen everything from TVs to kettles to sewing machines brought in – and more!

I'm part of the sewing repairs and alterations team, and in recent sessions I've worked on parasols, a tent, and many garments. All repairs and alterations are done in return for a suitable donation — but please don't worry if you're not in a position to contribute. Everyone is welcome. If you'd like to book in a repair, please contact us via the Facebook page: **Luton Repair Café on Facebook** or email [Lutonrepaircafe@gmail.com](mailto:Lutonrepaircafe@gmail.com).

As you may be aware  
The Repair Café now has  
a new home — at **High  
Town Social Club, Oxen  
Road, Luton.**

Join us on **the last Friday  
of every month between  
1:30pm and 4:30pm** to  
bring your broken items,  
learn repair skills, and  
help reduce waste.

Next session:

**Friday, 27th February  
2026**

Venue: **High Town Social  
Club, Oxen Road, Luton**

Time: **1:30pm – 4:30pm**

We look forward  
to seeing you at the  
**Repair Café!**



**LUTON  
REPAIR CAFE**

We fix broken things for free (donations appreciated)

**Friday 30th January 2026  
1:30pm to 4:30pm**

The Hight Town Club  
25 Oxen Road, Luton  
LU2 0DZ

**Refreshments Drop in and see us**  
To book a slot, email:- [lutonrepaircafe@gmail.com](mailto:lutonrepaircafe@gmail.com)

Luton Repair Cafe is affiliated to the International Repair  
Cafe Foundation which consists of 4084 cafes worldwide



# What's on in Luton during February half term?

It's been over 10 years since Luton's Full House Feb Fest began and this February half term has an amazing line-up of engaging shows and creative workshops for children and families with some of the UK's best children's performers, as well as the popular 'Imagination Station' of free drop-in craft activities.



Family

## Feb Fest: Imagination Station



Family / Workshop

## Feb Fest: Clay Play Workshop



Family / Theatre

## Feb Fest: Shakespeare in a Suitcase – Hamlet



Family / Music

## Feb Fest: Big Red Bath Bubble Disco



Family / Dance

## Feb Fest: Tales that Dance



Family / Workshop

## Feb Fest: Circus Skills Workshop

[www.culturetrust.com/FebFest26](http://www.culturetrust.com/FebFest26)

# Energise Luton Holiday Camps

**Energise Luton Holiday Camps** is Luton's Holiday Activity and Food programme, funded by the Department for Education. It's designed for school-age children up to 16 years old **who are eligible for income-related free school meals.**

Children on Free School Meals - **FREE!** (You will need the code from your school, please get in touch with me on the details below or the front office)

Paid for Spaces - £17.90 non-members

£15.90 members (Use code ALM26)



<https://www.activeluton.co.uk/energise-luton-holiday-camps>

# HOUSEHOLD SUPPORT FUND

**There is still time to apply if you have not already done so.**

Luton Borough Council has been allocated funding from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to support households in Luton between April 2025 and March 2026 with food, energy bills and other essentials.

Support may be provided in a number of ways including vouchers which can be used in supermarkets, and for gas and electricity payments.



## Who will the scheme help?

They've identified the following groups for targeted support:

- families with children eligible for free school meals (FSM)
- care leavers

An application scheme will also be available to Luton residents. Details of the eligibility criteria are provided below. You may still be eligible for support under the application scheme even if you have received targeted support.

## Applying to the HSF application scheme

You may be eligible for support through the HSF application scheme if you live in Luton, have less than £6,000 in savings and either:

- you receive one of the eligible benefits
- your household income is less than £34,100

How much support you receive will depend on whether:

- you're in receipt of any of the eligible benefits
- you need to use electrical medical equipment or devices for your long term illness or disability
- you need support with your gas or electricity bills

<https://m.luton.gov.uk/Page/Show/Benefits/support/Pages/Household-support-fund.aspx>

You can apply for the HSF from October 2025 until March 2026. Only one application per household will be accepted. They'll assess and check the claims using the information submitted and available. Awards will be made based on the:

- applicant's personal circumstances
- conditions of the scheme
- availability of funds

As such, LBC reserves the right to amend, withdraw or substitute support offered under the scheme at any time. There is no appeal process for this scheme. If you need support to apply for this fund please contact me for an appointment (term time only):

<https://calendly.com/shaheenhanif-smps/30min>

# THE COURTNEY FOUNDATION

We're really excited to share a new project with you - the **Raise Up Cafe** - in partnership with **The Raise Up Foundation**. The cafe will be home to our children's clothing support, available by referral or by dropping in during opening times.

A referral (eg. by a family worker) is not necessary but will help us prepare the clothes in advance. [The Raise Up Cafe](#) will be opened on Tuesday 13th January.

Location: Raise Up, 5 All Saints Close, off Solway Road North, Luton, LU3 1FA.

Opening times: Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 10:00 - 14:00.

Free refreshments, baby & children's clothes, information & support, and stay & play activities are available during opening times.

More information about the kinds of support we offer can be found here: [General Support - The Courtney Foundation](#). Finally, a reminder of our Support Links pages, which can be found here: [Support Links - The Courtney Foundation](#)

Opening  
13th Jan

## Raise Up Cafe

RAISE UP, 5 ALL SAINTS CLOSE (OFF  
SOLWAY ROAD NORTH) LUTON, LU3 1FA  
on the number 10 bus route

TUES & WEDS  
10:00 - 14:00

Activity, opening  
& donation details

raiseupluton.co.uk/cafe

**What you'll find at your free community cafe:**

- Free Refreshments
- Stay & Play
- Baby & Kids Clothes
- Info & Support

thecourtneyfoundation.org/support

**Donations welcome**

- Teas, coffee, biscuits
- Vegetarian baked goods, tinned soup
- Clean baby/kids clothes
- Sponsors/donations

Contact: [raiseupcafe@raiseupluton.co.uk](mailto:raiseupcafe@raiseupluton.co.uk)

# Free baby & children's clothes



Opening  
13th Jan



Part of the new  
Raise Up Cafe

RAISE UP, 5 ALL SAINTS CLOSE, OFF  
SOLWAY ROAD NORTH, LUTON, LU3 1FA  
on the number 10 bus route

TUES & WEDS  
10:00 – 14:00



THE COURTNEY  
FOUNDATION

Charity number: 1187689 (England and Wales)  
[thecourtneyfoundation.org](http://thecourtneyfoundation.org)  
[lutonclothingbank.org](http://lutonclothingbank.org)