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| **Tuesday 12th February, 2019**  **£100,000 of National Lottery funding up for grabs to celebrate community spirit in the West Midlands**  Following the huge success of the first Mayor’s Community Weekend last year, communities across the West Midlands are being given double the cash to host celebrations this summer.  Grants of up to £500 will be on offer to groups across the region including Birmingham, Coventry, Dudley, Herefordshire, Sandwell, Shropshire, Solihull, Staffordshire, Stoke-on-Trent, Telford, Walsall, Warwickshire, Wolverhampton and Worcestershire.  This is thanks to a partnership between the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) and The National Lottery Community Fund, the largest funder of community activity in the UK.  ***Mayor of the West Midlands Andy Street faces a barrage of wet sponges at a Mayor's Community Weekend event in Hockley Heath, summer 2018***  This year, the Mayor’s Community Weekend will take place on Saturday 29 June and Sunday 30 June 2019, with £100,000 of National Lottery funding up for grabs for communities to hold over 200 celebratory events across the West Midlands.  For the Mayor’s Community Weekend in 2018, more than 100 events took place across the region. Festivities included a 1940s tea dance in Sutton Coldfield, cardboard box wars in Birmingham city centre and a dragon boat festival in Kenilworth.  The aim of the Mayor’s Community Weekend is to bring people and communities together, to celebrate the experiences they share and make new memories. It will encourage people from all walks of life to build stronger community bonds and embrace community spirit by holding events such as a street party, a sports festival or a picnic in the park.  Mayor of the West Midlands Andy Street, said: “The Community Weekend was a real highlight of last year and I am so pleased that The National Lottery Community Fund is doubling its commitment to real community-led events over this weekend again.  “Last year we saw neighbourhoods eating, playing sport and being creative together and moments like this are what make communities stronger.  “I would encourage new groups to come forward to organise an event in their local area for this year’s Mayor’s Community Weekend.”  Dawn McCarthy, Commercial Operations Manager at Age Concern Birmingham, said: “It was fantastic taking part in the Mayor’s Community Weekend last year. Our café has become a real part of the community and we wanted to get people together to celebrate this. It’s a space open to everyone, young or old, to socialise and meet new people.  “A group of veterans, who loved the event, gather here weekly and they’ve become a really close knit group of friends. Our 1940s style tea dance was the first of event if its kind we’ve held in the café and we’ve continued to expand our offering and hold special gatherings like this since.”  Matt Poole, Senior Head of Regional Funding for the Midlands at The National Lottery Community Fund, said: “We’re really excited to build upon the success of last year’s Mayor’s Community Weekend.  “Thanks to National Lottery players, we’ll be bringing people together again to celebrate being part of their community and make something amazing happen in their local area.  “Doubling the National Lottery funding up for grabs will provide even more opportunities for communities to get creative, whether it’s an established organisation or a group of people planning an event together for the first time.  “We hope the weekend will help communities to thrive across the West Midlands, creating memorable experiences, boosting wellbeing and sparking new friendships.”  The National Lottery Community Fund distributes money raised by National Lottery players for good causes. Last year it awarded over half a billion pounds and supported over 11,000 projects across the UK for health, education, environment and charitable purposes. 90% of the grants it makes are for under £10,000.  Communities can apply for funding from 9am on Friday 22 February 2019 to hold an event during the Mayor’s Community Weekend. Applications close at 9pm on Sunday 17 March 2019.  To find out more [www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/funding/programmes/mayors-community-weekend](http://tracking.vuelio.co.uk/tracking/click?d=xhfGJFjQdzddWZYIvl0jRxDRZynSzvsOKRa4JiPtuT3uvhUhHPuw1Hg22BQTBMig64Q0RwEyHZQ-IzMY8FOtkN_3n_jg7TFFFxgBOkHQi_DM5YLdzIe_w0N7isBS6KZQew7OQ3U4EIX0qrZ6Z-qS6oEuspVHwAHbUFWo-J9C5c50LjU8PTS0XGibuHByGlXBkA2) and [www.wmca.org.uk/MCW](http://tracking.vuelio.co.uk/tracking/click?d=ekCl2HZwPK77oZbridiTeH7owaS6mPyJtKJO195YCz-qY8Fpo2GbR7yfeML-kRvi2eijLOUwaQoMXGq-jaIlFp_5Sai2ZtUPhi3G0jYG1nsPfGoClDMoirUYD1qkafKcHw2)    **About The National Lottery Community Fund**  We are the largest community funder in the UK – we’re proud to award money raised by National Lottery players to communities across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Since June 2004, we have made over 200,000 grants and awarded over £9 billion to projects that have benefited millions of people.  We are passionate about funding great ideas that matter to communities and make a difference to people’s lives. At the heart of everything we do is the belief that when people are in the lead, communities thrive. Thanks to the support of National Lottery players, our funding is open to everyone. We’re privileged to be able to work with the smallest of local groups right up to UK-wide charities, enabling people and communities to bring their ambitions to life. |