

## STIRCHLEY HIGH STREET (AREA 4)

### JACKIE HODGSON

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There's something in the air on Stirchley High Street! Alongside an established plumbers, carpet shop, off licence, greengrocer and more, a fantastic range of food and drink places have appeared in recent years. Together with *Loaf* - the bakery and cooking school - they have created a strong sense of all things local and independent. This is a section of a major route across the city - the A441 Pershore road - but it has become a destination too, celebrated by national journalists as well as Brummies.

The arrival of Lockdown in 2020, however, threatened the survival of many of Stirchley's thriving independents. But, like so many other places, they adapted and the high street became an important focus of activity for many in our otherwise rather solitary lives. Queuing for bread at *Loaf*, meeting (and making) friends while standing in line, doorstep chats as we dropped off goodies to pals who were shielding and dared not venture out, and Saturday afternoons in our friends' garden, drinking coffee and sharing the spoils of our morning mission. Or conversations through masks with Ming and staff at *Eat Vietnam* as they noticed our attempts to bring them new business - collecting take-outs for several people along with our own, hoping this might help ensure they survived lockdown closure. Energy prices and a cost of living crisis pose fresh challenges, but the Stirchley Spirit will doubtless find a way through.

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15th January 2023