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## Saltmen savour that Champions feeling!

by **Aaron Sutcliffe**  
[aaron.sutcliffe@bullivantmedia.com](mailto:aaron.sutcliffe@bullivantmedia.com)

**DROITWICH Spa FC have secured a historic first-ever promotion to Step Five and qualification for next season's FA Cup after winning the Hellenic League Division One title.**

The Saltmen won 2-0 away at Shortwood United to seal the league title with two games left to play.

Goals from Nathan Binner and Alex Dugmore before half-time clinched the title for Spa at Meadowbank Stadium.

Droitwich now hold an unassailable 14-point lead at the top of the table, having lost just two league matches all season.

Spa achieved promotion to Step Five at the third attempt following successive play-off final defeats in each of the last two campaigns.

And Droitwich boss Andy Crowther said he felt relieved to have secured the title before the end of the season.

Crowther said: "There's a bit of relief after the last two years and the disappointment of the play-offs.

"We haven't got to go down that route and it's done - we're champions and we've got that promotion



Droitwich Spa celebrate after winning the league title. Picture by Mathew Mason.

at last. The players deserve it for what they've put in over the last two years.

"It could have gone either way after the disappointment of the play-offs and it's bittersweet now that we're champions and we've finally got that promotion."

Spa moved laterally across Step Six to the Hellenic League before the 2024/25 season following two campaigns in the Midland Football

League Division One. Promotion to Step Five means Droitwich will play in the FA Cup for the first time in the club's history next season.

Spa boss Crowther insists the club want to push themselves again next term, no matter what division they are playing in.

Crowther added: "It's always good to play in the FA Cup, to put Droitwich in that category, it's brilliant for the club, it's brilliant for

the town, it's a community club.

"I just hope more and more people come down and support us moving forward.

"We'll finish this season and then reassess for next season, whatever league we're in. We're going in to challenge and push ourselves as far forward as we possibly can."

\* Turn to the back page for more reaction to Spa's title win.

## Rik tickets now sold out at Norbury

TICKETS for Rik Mayall Comedy Festival events at The Norbury Theatre are now entirely sold out.

The tickets for a range of shows at the venue went on general sale on March 9 for Droitwich's upcoming community-run comedy festival which runs from May 31 to June 7.

Festival headliners set to perform at The Norbury include Greg Davies, Peter Richardson, Red Richardson, Shaparak Khorsandi, Paul Foot and Laura Smyth.

Helen Lederer who worked with Mayall on shows such as The Young Ones, Happy Families and Bottom, will also perform.

Rik Mayall, star of The Young Ones and Bottom, grew up in Droitwich and the festival aims to bring together many comedians and actors he worked with over the years and continue his legacy by supporting youth programmes at the theatre.

The programme will also feature theatre, comedy for children and parents, panels and screenings. Free family activities will be on offer and a pop-up museum will feature memorabilia from Mayall's career.

Other venues across town are part of an open Fringe and applications are open on the festival website to perform.

Visit [www.rikmayallcomedyfestival.com](http://www.rikmayallcomedyfestival.com) for more.

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# Tributes paid to codebreaker Betty, a true war inspiration

**BLETCHLEY PARK codebreaker Betty Webb MBE from Wythall has died, at the age of 101.**

by **Tristan Harris** - [tristan.harris@bullivantmedia.com](mailto:tristan.harris@bullivantmedia.com)

Territorial Service at the age of 18 and was stationed at Bletchley Park, the famous codebreaking arm of the British intelligence services.

As a German speaker, Mrs Webb was tasked with decoding and translating German 'Enigma' messages, handling some of the first intelligence messages on the Holocaust.

Upon joining the ATS – the women's branch of the military at the time – Mrs Webb signed the Official Secrets Act, which prevented her from talking about

her work at Bletchley Park until 1975.

Since then, Mrs Webb has written a memoir.

As well as being awarded an MBE, Mrs Webb was presented with the Legion d'Honneur – France's highest award – in 2021 for helping liberate our cross-Channel friends.

Her courage and dedication remain an inspiration to all.

She was awarded the prestigious Bletchley Park Trust Lifetime Achievement Award and a Fellowship from the Royal Historical Society.

And, in 2023, Betty was invited to the Coronation



Betty with her invitation to the Coronation of King Charles III. Picture by Marcus Miggins. © Bullivant Media.

of King Charles III. Modest Betty, who was 99 at the time, saw the official invitation was a royal correspondence and said: "I thought it was an early 100th birthday card."

The WRAC said in a statement: "Betty inspired women in the Army for decades and we will continue to take pride in her service during the Second World War and beyond, and as a champion of female veterans."

Wythall councillor Adam Kent described Betty as 'kind and committed'.

He said her contributions to both the local community and the wider historical community would be felt for many years to come.

"Betty was a steadfast advocate for the preservation of the history of Bletchley Park, where she devoted much of her life to ensuring the monumental contributions of its staff during the Second World War were never forgotten," he added.

"Her passion for history and her commitment to educating others were truly remarkable.

"Through her work with the Bletchley Park Trust,



Betty Webb MBE received her Legion D'Honneur from a representative of the French Government for the impact of her codebreaking work and how it helped liberate France. Picture by Tristan Harris.

Betty played a pivotal role in ensuring the stories of those who worked at Bletchley Park were shared with future generations."

Coun Kent added her accolades were a testament to her dedication to both the preservation of history and her tireless work as an educator and volunteer.

"Betty leaves behind a lasting legacy that will continue to inspire all who knew her," he added.

"She will be deeply missed by everyone in Wythall and beyond.

"Rest in peace, Betty. Your dedication to history and your kindness will never be forgotten."

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See page **38**

# Have your say on development

by **Sonny Rackham**  
sonny.rackham@bullivantmedia.com

## RESIDENTS in Bromsgrove are being urged to have their say on naming a new development in the heart of the town centre.

The site of the Former Market Hall will accommodate a commercial building, pavilion building and public realm open space.

The project also includes the re-naturalisation of a portion of Spadesbourne Brook.

A shortlist of five names have been chosen and residents can now vote on their favourite.

Anyone is able to vote on their favourite option and leave their thoughts until April 14.

### Name choices

The options include Nailers Yard, Spark Works, Birdbox, The George Exchange and Bromsgrove Connection.

Nailers Yard honours

Bromsgrove history as a centre for the manufacturing of nails.

Spark Works aims to conjure images of innovation and a place for collaborative minds to come together.

Birdbox is a nod to a previous space on the land which aimed to create a space for residents to meet, work and relax.

The George Exchange references the former George Hotel on the land and Bromsgrove Connection aims to highlight a place for residents of Bromsgrove to meet together and connect socially and professionally.

Assistant director for regeneration and property, Rachel Egan, said: "The creation of these new facilities for the people of Bromsgrove will bring a wide range of employment, cultural, and leisure opportunities for the town.

"Choosing the right name is crucial to ensure these buildings truly serve our residents and reflect the identity of our local community.

"I'd love to see as many responses as possible from

across the town, centres, and even further afield."

### Plans for the town

The 'Pavillion' building is set to be a multipurpose asset for the town.

An open plan ground floor will encourage creative exhibitions markets, and community use during the day, evenings and at weekends.

The 'commercial' building, having recently had local firm GJS Dillon appointed to manage the marketing and letting of the space, will have purpose-built spaces for food and drink venues, along with premium office space.

The buildings will be surrounded by new public realm open space aimed at creating an enjoyable place for the people of Bromsgrove.

The project is expected to be completed by early next year, ready for residents and businesses.

Visit: [smart-survey.co.uk/s/NameCCHubBromsgrove/](http://smart-survey.co.uk/s/NameCCHubBromsgrove/) for more information.



Computer generated images of the new development planned for the former Market Hall site. Picture by Bromsgrove District Council/One Creative Environment. s

## Hustings give you the chance to quiz candidates ahead of election

A HUSTINGS event ahead of the Worcestershire County Council elections on May 1 will be held in Bromsgrove next week.

The event will see candidates from each of the parties on a panel at Bromsgrove Baptist Church from 7pm on Thursday, April 10.

The debate will be chaired by minister Rev Bernice Lingard and everyone is welcome to go along and quiz those standing for office.

Questions can be submitted in advance to Sian by emailing: [admin@bromsgrove-baptists.org.uk](mailto:admin@bromsgrove-baptists.org.uk) - the deadline for questions is 2pm on Thursday.

There may also be the chance for questions on the night but that will be dependent on the time available.

The church only has a small car park so the organisers have asked for that to be available for candidates and those with mobility issues.

Car parking is available nearby at the council's Windsor Street car park which is free after 6pm.

The candidates invited to be on the panel are standing in Bromsgrove Central and include Adrian Kriss (Conservative), David Hopkins (Labour), Josh Robinson (Lib Dem), Peter John Measham (Green Party) and Chris Thomas (Reform UK), are still being confirmed.

The county council after May 1 will play a big part in determining the future of local democracy in Worcestershire.

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# Larder hailed as 'jewel in crown'

by **Tristan Harris**  
tristan.harris@bullivantmedia.com

**ALVECHURCH** Community Larder, which was set up in 2022, has been recognised by the High Sheriff of Worcestershire for its good work.

Charles Moyle JP presented the group with a certificate for all their efforts in helping so many people.

The project began three years ago when Churches Together in Alvechurch and Rowney Green ran a Lent study course called 'Life on the Breadline' which was open to the wider community.

From that group, a desire to do something for the village and the idea of a Community Larder was born.

The organisers recognised there were a number of people who, despite finding life difficult financially, did not qualify for or were unable to access the Redditch foodbank or felt ashamed to need support.

The group looked at various models to decide which one was right for the village and the Alvechurch Community Larder opened in December 2022.

It aims to work for the wellbeing of the whole community and help reduce food waste at the same time.

The Larder collects and redistributes surplus food from local supermarkets and is assisted by the charities Fareshare, Neighbourly and Foodiverse.

A spokesperson for the group



High Sheriff Charles Moyle JP presents volunteers and chairman Sue Stevens of Alvechurch Community Larder. Picture by Marcus Mingins 142509MMR

said: "We had a generous donation and funds from the parish council to get us up and running and Alvechurch Baptist Church took a leap of faith and gave us a home, possibly not realising just how much that would entail.

"Volunteers responded and they are truly our prized asset."

There are a number of roles to make the Larder operate - from food collection and sorting, reception and being a personal shopper for clients to serving hot drinks and offering a friendly ear (listener)

where needed. The spokesperson added: "We started with 20 people attending one session a week, but now routinely help 80 over two sessions every week.

"But the surprise has been the growth of the social network for everyone.

"The volunteers gain, knowing they are involved with a really useful project, and the clients have bonded together in a way that has made their visit a social occasion every week, something known to be vital for everyone's wellbeing."

The project has saved 30,396kg of CO2 by redistributing food that would have otherwise gone to landfill. And, in an added bonus, the Larder has provided placements for Duke of Edinburgh students as well as adults needing workplace experience.

The spokesperson said: "Our listeners have been able to signpost to other services and we have a number of organisations visiting regularly such as the police, fire, energy advisers and our local social housing agency."

In February 2025, the Larder hosted a forum for other social providers and charities to help them to bring more support into the small community. Several of these are going to return on a regular basis, now they are more aware of the needs the project has.

Describing the Larder as 'the jewel in Alvechurch's crown', Mr Moyles said: "This dedicated team of volunteers creates a safe and dignified place for local residents to access much-needed support.

"Moreover the Larder prides itself on two key areas.

"Firstly they minimise supermarket food wastage to the extent almost everything offered is consumed and secondly, its unique approach ensures each recipient also has the services of a 'personal shopper' to accompany them.

"This has the secondary benefit of allowing those most in need to discreetly discuss whatever their personal issues might be - and thus solutions can be found.

"An outstanding team of volunteers delivering great care in the community - Worcestershire and Alvechurch are lucky to have them."

The Larder is currently seeking charity status which will help further improve funding and services.

For more information on accessing or helping the Alvechurch Community Larder email hello@alvechurchcommunitylarder.com.

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# Tools at the ready as the town's Sheddars move into new home

**THE NEW home for Bromsgrove's Men In Sheds was officially opened last Friday.**

Members of the group and some of their sponsors came together for the official opening of the new shed which was undertaken by Bromsgrove District Council chairman, Coun Sam Ammar.

Following the relocation of the shed from Stoke Prior to a shared unit with H2o Restoration Limited in Finstall, the Bromsgrove Sheddars have been working extremely hard to set up a brand new workshop and machine room, which was properly unveiled at the opening.

The Bromsgrove Shed is a key part of Age UK Bromsgrove, Redditch and Wyre Forest's (BRWF) groups and activities.

### How it started

The concept originates from an Australian project started in the 1990s called Men's Sheds, as a way of tackling loneliness and social iso-



lation in older men where retirement can mean loss of status and contact.

Having previously visited the Sheddars at Stoke Prior, Coun Ammar spoke about the importance of the project.

She said: "There is no pressure, you don't need to talk about anything, but if you want to, it is there - you stop and you have a coffee and it is just such a lovely place."

Phil, who along with fellow Shedder Rich supported Coun Ammar with the cutting of the ribbon, spoke about the personal 'boost' the scheme had given to him

### Thanks to the sponsors

The opening was also an opportunity to thank all those whose support is so important to the shed.

Among the sponsors at the event were Ormerod Rutter Chartered Accountants, BDHT, Better Together, Broad Street DIY Ltd, Bluebird Care Bromsgrove and Redditch, Jukes Insurance brokers, FB and Sons, Lawns and Landscapes, Eaton Limited and Whiting Landscape Ltd. They were presented with their Shed Share certificates.

The charity said there was still work to do but the Shed was now back to operating six sessions a week, including a 'mixed' session on a Thursday afternoon which was open to anybody aged 50 and over.

Anyone interested in joining or supporting Men in Sheds or anyone who knows someone who might be interested can call Jo Hughes at Age UK BRWF on 01527 570490, email: jo.hughes@ageukbrwf.org.uk or visit: ageuk.org.uk/brwf/ to find out how to get involved.

**The new shed was officially opened last Friday by Coun Sam Ammar. s**



A PAGE from a nearly 600-year-old Gutenberg Bible found in an attic in Bromsgrove has sold for nearly £40,000 at auction.

It was discovered by a Bromsgrove resident among his late grandfather's possessions stored in his attic last year, in a box which had not been opened for over 50 years.

The Gutenberg Bible is regarded as the first mass-printed book in Europe that used mechanised movable type.

The family believes the bible page was originally a possession of their great-grandfather - a man who traveled to the Far East and Europe extensively during the early 1900s.

He was a keen collector of art and apparently liked to visit auction rooms around the world.

The 570-year-old manuscript, dating back to circa 1455, was sold at Chorley's Auctioneers in the Cotswolds on March 25 and was expected to sell for between

£20,000 and £30,000.

At the peak of bidding, eight people were vying for the historic Bible leaf which eventually sold for £39,000.

This particular page from the Gutenberg Bible known as the 42-line Bible, features part of the Book of Numbers, specifically from verses 8:13 to 10:23.

It highlights key biblical events such as the setting apart of the Levites, the Passover, and the Cloud above the Tabernacle.

The text is presented in Gothic type, with intricate Lombard initials in red and blue, showcasing the masterful craftsmanship and design of early European printing.

The Gutenberg Bible - produced by Johannes Gutenberg and his partner Johann Fust in Mainz, Germany, in the mid 1400s - marks the dawn of the 'Gutenberg Revolution', the catalyst for the spread of printed books throughout the Western world.

**A page of the Gutenberg Bible, has sold at auction for £39,000. s**



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# Lengthy jail terms for gang behind drug supply



Paul Bailey

Jamie Worrall

Arron Adams

Nicola Everton

Phillip Smith

Adam Nicholls

**The group of six have been jailed for almost 100 years between them. s**

A GANG of drug dealers who flooded Worcestershire with cocaine and cannabis have been sentenced to a total of 94 years and four months.

Paul Bailey, 56 of Jersey Close, Redditch, was sentenced to 20 years at Worcester Crown Court on Monday after being convicted of conspiracy to supply 10kg of cocaine and 20kg of cannabis.

His sentence is the final one in a complex and lengthy investigation by the Regional Organised Crime Unit for the West Midlands Region (ROCUWM) called Operation Pyrogenic which has seen other gang members sentenced at earlier court appearances.

The other five involved were also convicted in November of conspiracy to supply 10kg of and cocaine and 20kg of cannabis.

Jamie Worrall, 38, of Sandcliffe Close, Kidderminster, was sentenced to 17 years, Arron Adams, 39, of Boughton Avenue, Worcester, was sentenced to 22 years and Adam

Nicholls, 42, of Weyburn Close, Worcester was sentenced to 23 years.

Nicola Everton, 37, of Cummins Farm, Hindlip, Worcester, was sentenced to six years and Phillip Smith, 57, of Gregor's Bank, Worcester, was sentenced to six years four months.

Another accomplice - Shaun Carr, 39, of Woodmancote, Worcester - was given a 10-month sentence, suspended for 12 months, after being found guilty of money laundering on November 6.

Operation Pyrogenic was a ROCUWM operation into the large-scale supply of cocaine and cannabis into Worcestershire, Herefordshire and the West Midlands.

The operation - between April 2020 and July 2021 - revealed the gang operated a large-scale middle market drugs supply chain and were involved in the sourcing, distribution and selling drugs which reached as far as Lincolnshire and Devon.

This organised crime group used encrypted mobile phone devices on a platform based in France called

'Encro-chat' to organise the supply of cannabis and cocaine which were infiltrated and deciphered by the National Crime Agency (NCA).

Bailey, Adams, Nicholls, Worrall, Everton, and Smith used the devices to orchestrate the multi-kilo supply of cannabis and cocaine into the region. They continued to operate after the Encro-chat network had been infiltrated by police using other encrypted communication applications.

On July 9, 2020, Everton was arrested by police with a kilogram of cocaine in her vehicle on the M5 near junction 6 (Worcester).

On January 6, 2021, police arrested Bailey, Adams, Nicholls and Smith at their home addresses.

During searches of the addresses, imagery was found to assist in the attribution of the Encro-chat handles. Nicholls sent an image of his computer with his reflection on it over the Encro-chat under one of the user handles.

On October 27, 2020, Carr was arrested by officers at junction 2 on the M5 with £17,000 in a plastic shopping bag.

They found one of Nicholls' fingerprints on this bag. Police seized numerous mobile phones after the conspirators had been arrested.

On Smith's mobile phone, police found evidence of drug supply and conversations between him and other conspirators about the movement

of drugs.

Carr, Smith, Bailey, Everton and Worrall all pleaded guilty prior to trial. After a three-week trial at Worcester Crown Court a jury took less than six hours of deliberation to find Adams and Nicholls guilty of the conspiracy on November 6.

Det Ch Insp Peter Cooke, from ROCUWM, said it was a fantastic result after a complex investigation.

"The team have successfully taken a large number of drugs off the streets and put this group who caused misery in our communities behind bars for a very long time.

"Drugs ruin lives and poison communities and we remain dedicated to breaking supply lines through our region.

"These offenders are ruthless and think nothing of exploiting vulnerable people, putting them at risk of serious harm, while they sit back and count the money.

"These sentences send a strong message that drug dealers will be caught, and they face many years in prison.

"We will continue to strive to keep drugs off our streets and protect vulnerable people."

This investigation forms part of Operation Target - West Mercia Police's work to tackle serious and organised crime.

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| 25th May   | The Return of The King.                  |
| 8th June   | The Millenium - Its Meaning and Purpose. |
| 29th June  | The Kingdom of God                       |

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# Daughters going the extra miles for mum

**A DEVOTED family is taking on an incredible challenge in memory of their much-loved mum, Stephanie Perks, while raising money for Worcestershire Acute Hospitals Charity.**

On April 27, Steph's daughters – Hope, Hattie, Connie and Grace – alongside family friend Vicky from Hagley, will lace up their running shoes to complete the TCS London Marathon My Way and raise funds for the wards that supported Stephanie during her battle with cancer.

The family's challenge will take

by Lydia Gee

place on a 10K loop around their local area, passing the Perks' family home and finishing at Churchill Village Hall.

Each of the girls will take on at least 10K, while Vicky will run the full marathon distance of 42.6K (26.2 miles), ensuring the family's effort is a true team challenge.

Every penny raised will be split between Lauren 2 and Beech Ward, at the Royal Worcestershire Hospital helping to provide enhanced care, comfort, and support for future patients and their families.

Vicky said: "As the girls' train for their 10K, I'll be training to run four 10K legs to keep up with them.

"We'd love as much support and encouragement as possible to keep us going."

The community is invited to cheer them on and celebrate at the finish line, where there will be a licensed bar, sweets and confectionery and games and activities.

Everyone is invited to show their support.

Visit the Vicky and the Perks Girls fundraising page – [2025tcslondonmarathonmyway.enthouse.com/pf/perksgirlsmarathon](https://2025tcslondonmarathonmyway.enthouse.com/pf/perksgirlsmarathon) – for the latest updates and to pledge cash.



Vicky and the Perks Girls will be completing their running challenge later this month in memory of Steph. s

## We need to protect our countryside to focus on urban densification

THE GOVERNMENT'S Planning and Infrastructure Bill is currently making its way through Parliament, and as I made clear in the House of Commons, the identity of Bromsgrove and the villages must be protected to prevent us from becoming an extension of Birmingham.

Our constituency is 89 per cent rural, yet Bromsgrove is seeing its housing target set by Government increase by 85 per cent at a time when Birmingham's housing target is decreasing by more than 20 per cent.

The green belt must be protected. In Bromsgrove we are 89 per cent



### Westminster Diary

Bradley Thomas MP writes for The Standard

green belt, with beautiful countryside all around.

I don't believe residents of Bromsgrove are NIMBY. They just do not want the identity of Bromsgrove to be eroded or for our home to become some kind of extension of Birmingham. We must ensure the large buffer of green belt between Bromsgrove and Birmingham remains intact.

Identity underpins the fundamentals we should be talking about when it comes to house-building. It's about sense of place and a lifestyle that people identify with.

When I'm about and about speaking to constituents, many have grown up in Birmingham and moved into north Worcestershire.

In many cases, they've done so because there's an aspirational element to moving into the countryside and they want to benefit from the countryside that Worcestershire offers, while being in close proximity to Birmingham and all the services it offers.

Rather than building all over our green belt, the Government should pursue a policy of intensive urban densification. Our country faces a real opportunity if we focus on increasing the number of properties, particularly in larger urban areas, including London and Birmingham.

It's also a great opportunity to regenerate some of the larger towns across our country.

And if we get urban densification right, it could be the catalyst for the economic and social renewal of town centres which is desperately needed.

I'm urging the Government to focus on the positive role intensive urban densification can play in deliv-

ering housing where it is needed and where young people live, and in regenerating town centres undergoing a lot of change.

Bromsgrove has suffered from a lot of development in recent years, and it has not had the infrastructure to go with it. If we want to strike the right balance and enable young people to stay in the communities where they grew up, particularly rural ones, we need to have the housing there, but we also need to recognise that rural areas cannot do all the heavy lifting.

Bradley Thomas  
Bromsgrove MP



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# Local men held after incident in Liverpool

by **Tristan Harris**  
tristan.harris@bullivantmedia.com

FOUR MEN - one from Redditch, one from Hollywood and two from Birmingham - have been arrested after an assault in Liverpool city centre on Friday evening.

Police were called just before 7.35pm to a report the victim, a man in his 30s, had sustained a serious head injury after being struck to the face. He collapsed to the floor close to McDonalds at the junction of Hanover Street and Ranelagh Street.

The man, who was visiting the city, was taken to hospital where his condition was critical but stable.

A forensic examination of the scene took place, CCTV has been viewed and potential witnesses were spoken to.

Four men, believed to be known to the victim, have been arrested on suspicion of Section 18 wounding with intent and taken into custody for questioning.

Among them are a 19-year-old man from Redditch, a 26-year-old man from Birmingham, a 37-year-old man from Birmingham and a 31-year-old from Hollywood, Worcestershire.

Det Ch Insp Paul Parry said: "This assault has left the victim in a critical condition during

what should have been an enjoyable night out in Liverpool.

"People should be able to visit our city centre without any fear of being a victim of - or even witnessing - an incident such as this."

## Witnesses

He urged anyone in the area of Church Street and Hanover Street around 7.30pm on Friday who witnessed any part of the incident to call Merseyside Police on 101.

He added: "It is vital that anyone responsible for bringing violence to the streets of Merseyside is brought to justice, and we appeal to the public to assist with our enquiries into the incident. The information you have could prove vital to our enquiries."

Anyone with information on the incident can also report it online at [merseyside.police.uk](http://merseyside.police.uk), via X - @MerPolCC or on Facebook 'Merseyside Police Contact Centre'.

Alternatively, call Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

# Springing into song

REDDITCH'S four-part harmony group The Bel Canto Singers will be performing its 'New Beginnings' spring concerts.

The choir is celebrating its 35th anniversary year under the guidance of new musical director Ollie Neale who took up his post in January.

Liz Green, who had been expertly directing The Bel Canto Singers since October 2019, retired at Christmas and will be greatly missed.

Ollie is the choir master and organist at All Saints Church in Bromsgrove.

The Bel Canto Singers' first 'reflective music for Easter' concert will take place at 3pm tomorrow (Saturday, April 5) at The Methodist Centre in Bromsgrove and at 7.30pm on Monday (April 7) at St Chad's Church in Rubery.

The programmes will showcase a selection of music suitable for the occasion.

Later in the year, on September 26, the choir will be performing its 35th anniversary concert with an evening of celebratory music showing its full range of musical genre.

This concert will be in Routh Hall at Bromsgrove School, beginning at 7.30pm, and promises plenty of delights.

Each year, the choir nominates a chosen charity to support and the cause chosen for 2024/25 will be Redditch Find Your Voice, Parkinsons UK - an activity group helping Parkinsons sufferers to improve their vocal skills in a relaxed friendly environment.



Singing has been proven to increase a sense of wellbeing and The Bel Canto Singers are always looking for new members.

A Bel Canto spokesperson said: "A warm welcome awaits, should you choose to give it a go."

Anyone wanting more on the events or to book The Bel Canto Singers should visit: [belcantosingers.org.uk](http://belcantosingers.org.uk) for more information, browse the gallery and listen to the choir performing.

Alternatively, call 07985 238334 for more.

**The Bel Canto Singers' new musical director Ollie Neale took over in January. s**

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Worcestershire County Council  
Thursday 1st May

# Our Six Conservative Pledges

Either Labour or the Conservatives will lead the Council at this election, a vote for any other party will split the vote and hand Keir Starmer control of the County

**KEEP OUR COUNCIL TAX THE 3RD LOWEST IN THE COUNTRY**

Compare that with Birmingham, where Labour are set to put it up by 21%. Meanwhile, your local Lib Dems pushed for a substantial increase here in Worcestershire.

**CONTINUE TO INVEST IN OUR ROADS AND PAVEMENTS**

Our roads are some of the best in the country, but there's still work to do. That's why we are investing a further £64 million to resurface many more roads and pavements. And we'll work to tackle local congestion issues.

**CRACK DOWN ON CRIME & ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR**

We'll continue to work with our Police and Crime Commissioner to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour such as speeding, fly-tipping and criminal gangs coming over from Birmingham.

**CARING FOR THE VULNERABLE**

Whilst this Government punishes the most vulnerable by taking away Winter Fuel Payments, we have agreed a further £27 million for Children's Services and £21 million for Adult Social Care this coming year.

**PROTECT OUR COUNTRYSIDE FROM OVERDEVELOPMENT**

We oppose Keir Starmer's 85% increase in housebuilding targets which will see our countryside and greenbelt concreted over. We'll do everything in our power to oppose and mitigate these plans.

**BACK OUR FARMERS AND RURAL COMMUNITIES**

Starmer's cruel Family Farm Tax, coupled with their tax raid on pubs, will cause untold damage. Labour never have and never will understand the rural way of life. Only a Conservative-led County Council will stand up to the Government.

## VOTE Conservative

Thursday 1st May Polls open 7am-10pm

If you are unsure who your candidate is please visit the website below and enter your postcode <https://whocanivotefor.co.uk>

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f Adam4Wythall

Adam Kent Wythall



f CllrShirleyWebb

Shirley Webb Woodvale



f KitTaylor4BromsgroveEast

Kit Taylor Bromsgrove East



f karenmay2021

Karen May Clent Hills



f CllrAdrianKriss

Adrian Kriss Bromsgrove Central



f Anita Dale

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**A FINE TOTAL:** CHILDREN from Jellybabies Nursery dressed in their pyjamas to raise funds for Comic Relief.

The youngsters at the nursery, which is based at Longbridge Methodist Church, also participated in a day of events and activities, which included 'Red Nose Day' themed pizzas. Nursery and pre-school manager Jacqueline Walker said: "It was a great day and £25 was raised for Comic Relief."

# Pioneer of self-driving transport on display

A PIONEERING prototype designed to test the feasibility of self-driving mass transit solutions across the UK is now on display in Wythall.

Wythall Transport Museum recently took delivery of an Aurriigo Auto-Shuttle, an example of the world's first conventionally driven electric and autonomous purpose-built vehicle.

Aurriigo designed, developed and built this autonomous vehicle as part of its Advanced Engineering Centre in Coventry, supplying a number for evaluation in various locations across the UK including Cambridge, Milton Keynes and Solihull.

The museum is proud to have been offered this prototype for permanent display as a static exhibition now that it has completed its research and development programme.

This specific example was used by Solihull Council as part of a pioneering study into the feasibility of self-driving mass transit solutions across the UK.

The Shuttle was purchased using funding provided by the Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership (GBSLEP), making Solihull Council the first local authority in the country to own and operate its own zero-emission, road-legal, shared use Connected Autonomous Vehicle.

This Shuttle was first tested at the NEC in 2020, where it operated autonomously along a one-mile pre-mapped section of Pendigo Way between the Atrium and Resorts World, catering for more than 1,000 people during the four-week test period. It also took part in subsequent passenger trials at Birmingham Airport and Birmingham Business Park.



Aurriigo Shuttle on display in Wythall.

Carrying up to ten passengers, the vehicle uses a suite of LIDAR scanners (laser imaging and detection), cameras and sensors and sophisticated software to detect, measure and understand its surroundings, allowing it to move around safely, interacting with live traffic and street furniture with little or no operator input.

Connected Autonomous Vehicle (CAV) technology has the potential to revolutionise the way we travel around our towns, cities and rural areas as well as transport goods.

The trial was all about investigating how to practically and safely start to incorporate autonomous vehicles into the future

transport infrastructure.

The Shuttle is presented in the Solihull Council livery it carried whilst running its demonstrations in the borough (appropriately local to Wythall) with on-board audio visual displays showing its background history and test films.

The museum is grateful to Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council for its donation of the shuttle and to Aurriigo for its technical support in converting the vehicle to a static exhibit, with audio visual stories being told on screen.

For insurance and safety reasons, the traction battery has been removed.

It is now on display among the museum's wide range of buses and battery-electric vehicles from across the decades.

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The Sleeping Beauty panto is coming to Bromsgrove's Artrix over Easter. s

# Staging a classic tale

PANTO season is coming back to Bromsgrove sooner than expected with Sleeping Beauty at Artrix during the Easter holidays.

The Enchanted Group presents 'Sleeping Beauty: Happily Ever After', a modern twist on a classic tale.

In the show, which runs from April 24 to 27, Sleeping Beauty is wide awake and ready for her happily ever after.

But, when Maleficent returns with new tricks, true love's kiss won't be enough.

A shocking secret is revealed -

Maleficent's child falls for Aurora.

When Mal makes the ultimate sacrifice, the story takes a heartbreaking turn.

Desperate to save her only child from the Realm of Lost Souls, Maleficent hatches a daring plan.

The family-friendly pantomime promises loads of laughter, romance and surprises as the magical adventure unfolds.

Will love and family triumph?

Tickets, from, £20 are available by visiting: [artrixbromsgrove.co.uk/whats-on/](http://artrixbromsgrove.co.uk/whats-on/) or by calling the box office on 01527 361324.

# Business park marks a decade of successes

A DECADE of success is being celebrated at Worcester Six Business Park.

Since opening in 2015, the park has become a key location for businesses, with easy access to the M5 and recognition as one of Worcestershire's 'gamechangers'.

Over the last ten years, Worcester Six has attracted more than £300million in investment.

The park has seen the completion of 11 premises, including a new purpose-built space for global manufacturer MiTek.

Many leading companies, including Alliance Flooring Distribution, IONOS, ZwickRoell, Sierra Engineering, Kimal, Material Solutions, Super Smart Service, and Stop Start Logistics, already occupy the park, alongside big names including Kohler Mira, Siemens, and Spire Healthcare.

The park's growth has had a positive impact on the local economy, and more jobs are on the way.

Coun Adam Kent, Worcestershire County Council's economy and skills spokesperson, said: "Worcester Six has been instrumental in driving our county's economic growth over the past ten years.

"The development has attracted significant investment and created valuable job opportunities for local people.

"It's exciting to see so many businesses thriving here, and we look forward to continued growth and success in the years ahead."

Coun Richard Morris, Wychavon's executive board member for economic growth



and tourism, added: "Wychavon has been a key partner in the success of Worcester Six over the last ten years including investing £1.5million into the project and securing additional private sector investment.

"Our local economy has reaped the benefits of this through the jobs and opportunities created.

"It is a demonstration of what can be achieved when partners come together with a shared purpose - I look forward to continuing to see Worcester Six thrive in the years to come as a beacon of innovation, growth and collaboration."

Gerard Ludlow, director at Stoford, the commercial property developer behind the business park, added: "I'm extremely proud of the commercial spaces we've delivered in the last ten years and of the positive impact on the local area.

"Looking forward, it is exciting to anticipate ongoing growth, including the second phase, which is well underway with the recent addition of global manufacturer MiTek."

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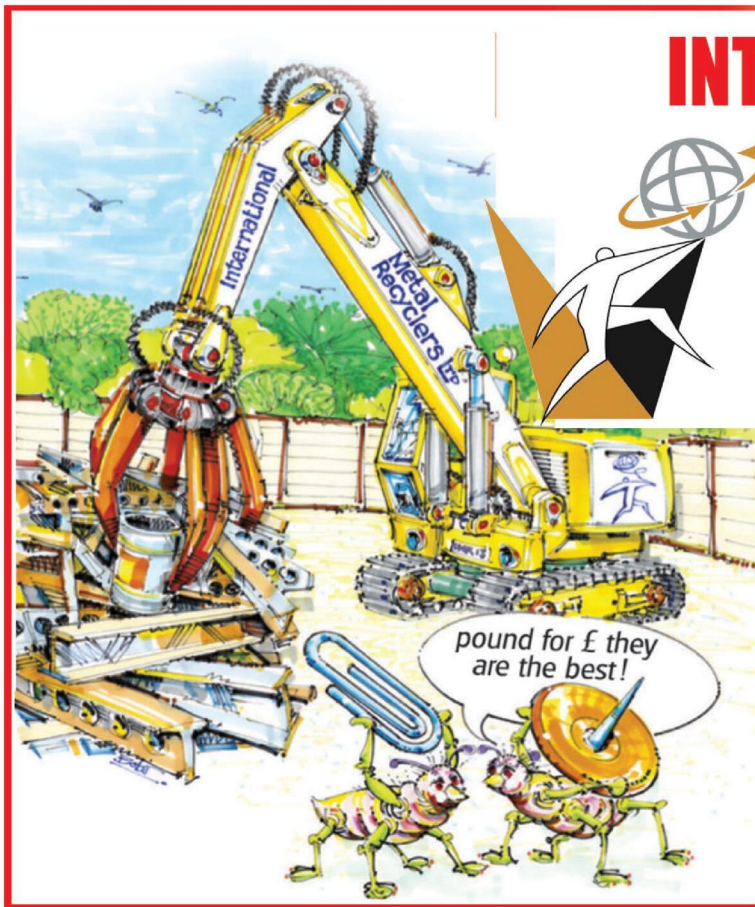
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# I've loved my wonderful journey over past 10 years

**A VICAR is more than just a church minister, they are a minister to a community.**

I have been privileged and honoured to serve the lovely town of Bromsgrove as your vicar.

I have been with you in your times of joy and sadness – when we gathered to remember some of the tragic and sad events that happened in our world or at remembrance.

I have been profoundly moved by your stories of love, duty and courage when I have conducted weddings and funerals and I have joined you, danced and blessed you at town events, whether at the Beer and Cider Festival, street parties or Market Day.

This is what lies at the heart of being a vicar.

When I was being interviewed for the job, I had to share some thoughts on the words of Jesus: 'I now call you friends'. I shared that being a friend was at the heart of all that I did, because I

**POPULAR vicar Rev Ray Khan is celebrating the tenth anniversary since his arrival in Bromsgrove.**

After arriving in the town with his wife Caroline and family, Rev Khan has become a prominent figure in the community during the last decade, whether it be giving services, leading the Remembrance Day parade or getting involved in major events in the town.

Here, for Standard readers, Rev Khan reflects on his last ten years.

knew just how much the friendship of God changed me.

I know I may have failed in this, I am not perfect.

I hope that people will know that God stretches out his hand of friendship to all, that they are valued and deeply loved by a God



**ABOVE:** Rev Ray Khan is the Royal British Legion Chaplain and has always supported the armed forces in the town. **INSET:** Rev Khan has also played The Last Post and Reveille at Remembrance and Armistice Day commemorations. **RIGHT:** Rev Khan and his wife Caroline have been celebrating 10 years in Bromsgrove. s

who gave his all for you. If I have failed then please forgive me.

I will always remember how the town came together during Covid to help and support each other. How we gathered to mourn and pray for the victims of Paris, Gaza, Ukraine and how we gave thanks for the life and ministry of our much-loved Queen Elizabeth II.

It has been lovely journeying with you in all this.

I would like to thank you all for your friendship and kindness in opening up your hearts and

homes to me. I am not planning to move, so sorry you are stuck with me.

When I first arrived in Bromsgrove, someone came up to me and said 'I hear we have a Muslim vicar!' I did assure them that the Church of England wasn't that liberal.

You may not have a Muslim vicar, but you have got a bit of a nutter, so thank you for your patience.

We may not be perfect, but love perfects the imperfect. So love. God bless you.





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📍 Avoncroft Museum, Bromsgrove, Worcestershire, B60 4JR





Millcroft resident Pat Tuckley holding a photo of her and her family. s

RESIDENTS and staff at a Redditch care home have shared advice for expectant and first-time mums after Mother's Day. Millcroft care home manager, Lynsday Shard said motherhood blended dedication, love, and resilience. "Don't be too harsh on yourself and never compare yourself to other mums. "Every journey is unique, and it's okay

to have your own pace and approach." Resident Pat Tuckley added: "Rest when you can, sleep when they sleep. "Otherwise, you're going to struggle. "You can always tidy up later." Another resident Jean Franklin added: "It came automatically - what else would you do but love them? "Your lovely child is right there to love."

# Force: 'significant progress' on crime

WEST Mercia Police has released its illegal activities and serious crime figures in response to the National Crime Agency's (NCA) threat assessment annual report.

The force says it has made significant progress in arresting criminals and seizing their assets.

### Proceeds of crime

Since April 2024, our Economic Crime Unit has frozen more than \$6 million from criminals' bank accounts - a 28 per cent increase on previous year.

West Mercia said it was in the process of bidding for a significant portion of this funding to be reinvested into the service, supporting key areas such as neighbourhood policing.

The force became the first in the UK to receive Home Office funding to create a dedicated Proactive Asset Recovery Team, which has seized more than \$2million since its launch in April 2023.

### County lines drugs

When it comes to disrupting county lines drugs opera-

tions, West Mercia Police said during its last two 'intensification weeks' targeting the issue it had made 117 arrests, seized nearly £3 million worth of drugs, and safeguarded 75 vulnerable individuals.

Since April 2024, West Mercia Police has recorded 1,206 SOC (serious organised crime) disruptions. A total of 159 of these were against organised crime gangs and 88 county lines on county lines across the force's three counties.

This includes seizing two high-value vehicles worth more than £180,000 from gang members.

### Child sexual exploitation

And since the Online Child Sexual Exploitation Team (OCSET) was established in 2016, it has identified and targeted online child sexual predators, safeguarding over 1,000 children.

In 2024 alone, the team averaged three arrests per week and protected 172 children.

Det Supt Tony Garner, said: "As this report highlights, serious and organised crime causes immense harm to communities across the UK. "Criminals will go to extreme

lengths to carry out these activities, showing no regard for the impact on innocent people's lives.

"That is why tackling this threat remains a priority for our force and something we will continue to dedicate resources to.

"We have achieved impressive results in disrupting illegal activities linked to serious and organised crime, but there is still work to do.

"We will continue to identify and arrest those intent on causing harm to our communities."

Police and Crime Commissioner John Campion said: "I am focused on ensuring West Mercia is a no-go area for serious and organised criminals who often come from neighbouring areas, devastate local communities and exploit the most vulnerable.

"The results achieved by West Mercia Police over the past year are testament to that focus, delivering on the commitment within my police and crime plan to cut crime by taking dangerous criminals off our streets.

"However, there's clearly more to do so I will continue to back the force with the resources it needs to keep making a real difference."

# S4F SILVER SHOTS



**SENIORS' SHOOTING DAY**  
WEDNESDAY 23RD APRIL 2025

## TRY SOMETHING NEW!

S4F presents: Silver Shots - a Seniors' Clay Shooting Day in Hanbury, for the over 65s.

Book your 15 minute clay shooting session, with 25 shots for just £25!

Complimentary tea or coffee. Onsite toilet facilities and ample free parking.



CONTACT MARK FOR MORE INFO: **01527 575141**

mark@shooting4fun.co.uk www.shooting4fun.co.uk



# You are welcome at your local church

Maundy Thursday - 17th April / Good Friday - 18th April  
 Holy Saturday - 19th April / Easter Sunday - 20th April

**St Leonards CofE, Church Hill, Frankley, B32 4BL**  
**07748 693408**

Good Friday, 2pm - An hour before the cross  
 Easter Sunday, 11:15am - Easter Communion

**St Chad's CofE, New Road, Rubery, B45 9JA**  
**0121 2383168**

Maundy Thursday, 7.30pm - Informal Communion service  
 Good Friday, 2pm - Quiet, reflective service  
 Holy Saturday, 9pm - 'Lighting the Fire'  
 Easter Sunday, 10am - Family-friendly Holy Communion

**Holy Trinity CofE, Rose Hill, Lickey, B45 8RR with**  
**St Catherine's CofE, St Catherine's Rd, Blackwell**  
**B60 1BN, 0121 445 1425**

Good Friday, 2pm - Service of reflection at St Catherine's  
 Easter Sunday, 10am - Easter Communion at St Catherine's  
 Easter Sunday, 10:30am - Easter Praise at Holy Trinity Lickey

**Our Lady's RC, Leach Green Lane, Rubery, B45 9BQ**  
**0121 453 3452**

Good Friday, 7pm - Stations of the Cross  
 Holy Saturday, 11.30am - Blessing of Food for Polish Community  
 Holy Saturday, 7pm - Easter Vigil  
 Easter Sunday, 11am - Mass

**Beacon Church Centre URC, Whetty Lane, Rubery,**  
**B45 9DL, 07526 250645**

Good Friday, 4pm - Reflection  
 Easter Sunday, 11am - Worship with Holy Communion

**Longbridge Methodist Church, Bristol Rd South,**  
**B45 9TY, 0121 257 2584**

Good Friday, 2.30pm - Good Friday service  
 Easter Sunday, 11am - Easter morning service

**St Stephen's CofE, Edgewood Road, Rednal, B45 8SG**  
**0121 243 4634**

Good Friday, 9.30am - Stations of the Cross  
 Holy Saturday, 7pm - New Light Service  
 Easter Sunday, 10am - Easter Morning service of celebration

**St Andrew's CofE, Sandhills Road, Barnt Green,**  
**B45 8NR with St Michael's CofE, Cofton Church Lane,**  
**Cofton Hackett, B45 8PT, 0121 447 7097**

Good Friday, 9:30am - Service of reflection at St Andrew's  
 Good Friday, 3pm - Messy Good Friday Activities and reflections  
 for all ages at St Andrew's  
 Easter Sunday, 9:30am - Family Communion at St Andrew's  
 Easter Sunday, 6pm - Easter Communion at St Michael's



**Good Friday**  
**Walk of Witness**  
 Gather at Our Lady's  
 on Leach Green Lane  
 (B45 9BQ) from 10am  
 for a 10.30am start.  
 The walk will end at  
 St Chad's with hot  
 cross buns!

**Easter Sunday**  
**Sunrise Service**  
 Join us on Beacon Hill  
 (use the Monument  
 Lane Car Park)  
 at 5.45am (yes,  
 really!) to welcome  
 the new light of this  
 new day!

Discover new life this Easter

## Aiming for something new

OLDER people in Bromsgrove, Droitwich and the surrounding areas can experience the thrill of clay pigeon shooting at an exciting new event.

Seniors - aged 65 and over - can go along to the first 'Silver Shots' session at Shooting 4 Fun (S4F) on Wednesday, April 23.

Set in the beautiful Hanbury countryside at The Oaklands Outdoor Pursuits Centre, the event offers a safe, welcoming environment for those looking to try something new.

Silver Shots is suitable for most abilities, whether a first-time shooter or someone with prior experience. Guns will be carefully selected to match age and build, helping

to minimise recoil and maximise comfort.

Participants will enjoy a 15-minute session between 11am and 4pm, during which they'll take aim at 25 flying clays.

With expert guidance and one-on-one instruction, attendees will experience the satisfaction of breaking targets mid-air.

The event promises plenty of fun, an exciting challenge and a welcoming atmosphere.

For just £25 per person, guests will receive a professionally guided clay shooting experience with all equipment provided.

Complimentary tea or coffee will be available and there is free on-site parking and toilet facilities.

Mark Treverton, owner of Shooting 4 Fun, said: "This is a brilliant opportunity for seniors to step out of their comfort zone and try something completely different.

"It's all about having a great time, building confidence and maybe even discovering a new passion."

Booking a time slot is essential and spaces are limited.

Call Mark on 01527 575141 or email: mark@shooting4fun.co.uk for more.

**Mark Treverton from Shooting 4 Fun is looking forward to welcoming participants to 'Silver Shots'. Picture by Jelly Photography. s**



# MP backs calls for skilled workers

REDDITCH MP Chris Bloore attended the Home Builders Federation (HBF) Home Building Skills Reception, to highlight the need for skilled workers to meet the Government's target of 1.5million new homes by 2029.

Mr Bloore met with Persimmon Homes apprentice Jack Anderson to discuss the importance of training opportunities in the sector.

Jack is at the start of his carpentry career and is completing his Level 2 qualification at Heart of Worcestershire College while gaining hands-on experience at Persimmon's The View site in Redditch.

Persimmon Homes works closely with local schools and colleges to showcase the range of careers available in construction and has 274 apprentices nationally.

The housebuilder has an award-winning on-site training hub in partnership with Bridgend College and has recently launched a similar partnership in Newcastle.

These schemes aim to address the high drop-out rate of around 50 per cent from construction-related courses by strengthening links between colleges and the industry.

Speaking about his apprenticeship, Jack said: "Doing an apprenticeship is a great opportunity to learn on the job while working towards my qualification.

"I'm gaining valuable experience



**MP for Redditch Chris Bloore and Jack Anderson at the reception. s**

every day, which will set me up for my future career."

Mr Bloore said: "It was great to meet Jack in Parliament and hear first-hand how much he enjoys and the skills he is developing during his apprenticeship with Persimmon.

"I was so impressed by Jack, he is on the frontline, helping to build the homes for the next generation

whilst embarking on an exciting new career.

"By working with local schools and colleges to showcase such professions, Persimmon is showcasing a range of careers they may never have considered, and their on-site training hubs mean we're building the workforce we need for the future."

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Reader travel

The Standard TRAVEL AWARDS 2024

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### ISLE OF WIGHT WEEKEND

Departing Fri 30 May '25

Let us whisk you away to the Isle of Wight for a weekend to rejuvenate. Tailored for those who seek relaxation by the sea, along with a desire to explore, this break includes a visit to the historic town of Newport and an optional 'Round the Island' tour.

#### Your break includes

- ✓ Return coach travel & ferry crossings from Redditch
  - ✓ 3 nights at the Shanklin Beach Hotel, Shanklin (JG2+ rating) with dinner & breakfast
  - ✓ 2 for 1 bar (6pm-9pm) on selected drinks
  - ✓ Entertainment every evening
  - ✓ Excursion to Newport
- Optional Round the Island tour (£15pp)

4 Days by Coach only £289

Single Supplement E50



### THE STUNNING ISLES OF SCILLY

Departing Wed 9 Jul '25

On this magical break we discover the largest island of the beautiful and unspoilt Isles of Scilly, St Mary's. From exploring the hidden treasures and incredible historic sites to enjoying the spectacular beaches, there is plenty of sights to see here.

#### Your break includes

- ✓ Return coach travel & ferry crossings from Bromsgrove
- ✓ 2 nights at a selected hotel in Cornwall (JG3 rating) with dinner & breakfast
- ✓ 4 nights at the Bell Rock Hotel, St Mary's (JG3 rating) with dinner & breakfast
- ✓ Free time on St Mary's
- ✓ Excursion to Tresco Abbey Garden

7 Days by Coach only £1749

Single Supplement E350



### TORQUAY CRUISE & DEVON STEAM

Departing Mon 11 Aug '25

Enjoy the sights of the beautiful English Riviera and the welcome of Torquay on this great-value break that features a packed itinerary of excursions, a delightful heritage railway journey, a scenic cruise on the River Exe and much more!

#### Your break includes

- ✓ Return coach travel from Redditch, Bromsgrove
  - ✓ 4 nights at the Burlington Hotel, Torquay (JG2 rating) with dinner & breakfast
  - ✓ Entertainment some evenings
  - ✓ Heritage train journey on the South Devon Railway
  - ✓ Cruise on the River Exe
  - ✓ Free time in Exmouth
  - ✓ Excursion to Buckfast Abbey & Buckfast Butterfly Farm & Dartmoor Otter Sanctuary
- Optional excursion to Teignmouth (£11pp)

5 Days by Coach only £389

Single Supplement E75

For more information, or to book, please call

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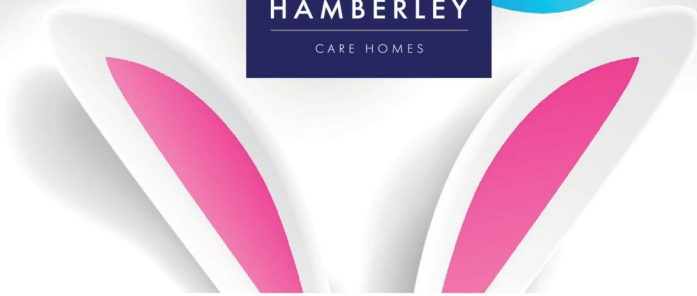
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# King explains why communities need strong local media

by **Tristan Harris**  
tristan.harris@bullivantmedia.com

**HIS MAJESTY** The King has delivered a message to everyone who works in the media industry at a special reception at Buckingham Palace last Wednesday at an event attended by two of our journalists.

Journalists, editors, news editors and other staff attended the prestigious reception for regional media.

Among them were Bullivant Media Group Ltd's very own Ashleigh Osborne, the news editor on the Redditch Standard and reporter on the Solihull Observer, and Sonny Rackham, news editor on our Evesham and Pershore Observer, and writer for the Bromsgrove and Droitwich Standards and Malvern Observer, and finance director Ian McGahan.

Ash said: "It was an absolutely amazing day.

"As well as getting to meet The King and Queen and see the inside of Buckingham Palace, it was great for the local media and our papers



and websites to be recognised by His Majesty."

Sonny added: "Rubbing shoulders with royalty, would you believe it?"

"It was a night to remember and a good chance to celebrate local media."

In the address, King Charles said: "I have long believed that regional media, in all its forms, has a unique and vital role to play in society, perhaps even more so in these uncertain times.

"As I said in a speech to mark the tercentenary of Britain's first daily national newspaper, back in 2002, the Press, alongside other

long-standing institutions, is at the forefront of 'defining, describing and celebrating the more profound values of our nation'.

"Two decades on, when too much focus is given to that which divides us, that role for your whole industry is more important than ever – and it starts from the ground-up, at local level, in your hands.

"Your reporting, and the work of all those who support you, helps amplify and reaffirm the rights and responsibilities we all share.

"It shines a light in dark corners, exposing injustice and wrongdoing. Above all, it helps strengthen



Bullivant Media journalists Ashleigh Osborne and Sonny Rackham at the Buckingham Palace gates which were crafted by the Bromsgrove Guild. s

our communities, in times of joy and at moments of sorrow.

"You won't always get it right. A free media is one that will and does make mistakes. But at its best, it is a cornerstone of our democracy."

He spoke about the commercial pressures and changing technologies which has had a significant impact on the media industry.

"But as the media landscape has changed, so too many of you have adapted and innovated, finding ways of sharing your journalism and engaging audiences in new and creative ways. It is in everyone's interests that you should succeed.

"For without a thriving and financially robust regional media, we would all be the poorer."

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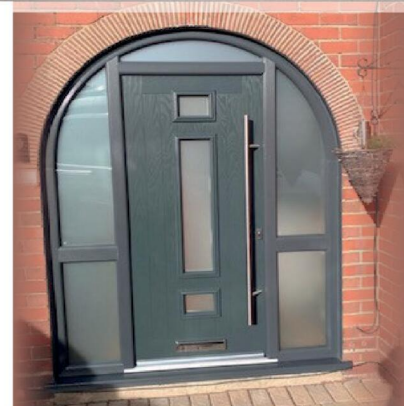
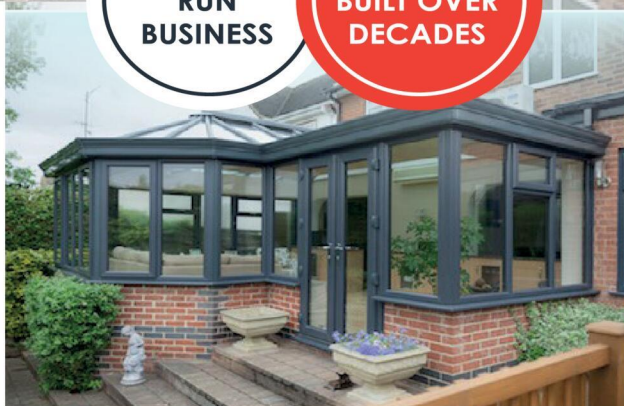


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# CARING People CARING Places

*Because caring isn't something we do, it's who we are.*

## Caring People, Caring Places: The heartbeat of our community

**In every corner of our towns and villages, there's a quiet network of people and places who make care their calling.**

From the vet who checks on your family dog like it's their own, to the funeral director who offers gentle guidance during life's most difficult goodbyes, these unsung heroes are woven into the very fabric of our daily lives. This isn't just about care for the elderly – though they are, of course, a cherished part of this picture – but about the many ways compassion shapes our communities, across all ages and walks of life.

At its heart, Caring People, Caring Places is a celebration of humanity. It's about those who dedicate themselves to the wellbeing of others – people who don't just do a job, but perform a service rooted in empathy, patience, and

dignity.

Take, for instance, the local solicitor who offers free advice sessions on will writing, ensuring peace of mind for families at any stage of life. It's not just about legalese and paperwork – it's about offering reassurance, answering difficult questions, and helping people plan with clarity and care.

Veterinary clinics also tell a powerful story of compassion. Ask any pet owner and they'll say the vet is a lifeline during tough times – when the dog has eaten something it shouldn't, when the cat needs emergency surgery, or simply when a furry friend is nearing the end of their life. These clinics often extend their care beyond animals, understanding how closely our emotional health is tied to our pets. Many offer grief support and work closely with rehoming charities to give abandoned animals a second chance at love.



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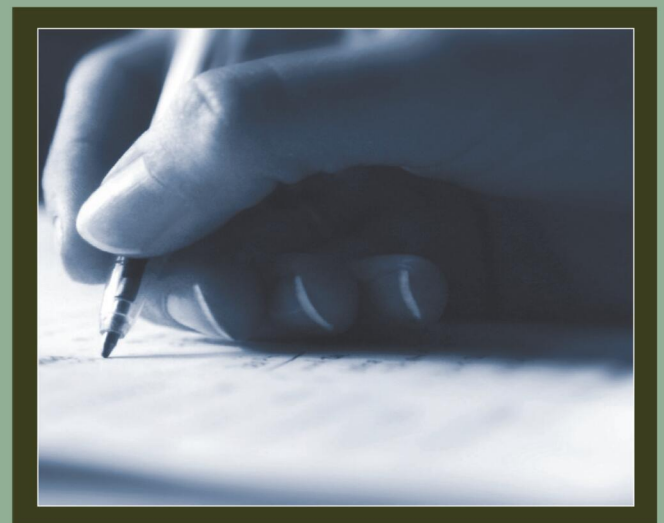
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# CARING People CARING Places



Speaking of second chances, fostering and adoption services are a profound example of care in action. Across our region, there are families opening their doors – and their hearts – to children who need stability, support, and love. Social workers, carers, and support staff



dedicate their careers to making sure that vulnerable young people find not just shelter, but a sense of belonging.

And while we're on the subject of homes, care homes and supported living facilities continue to provide more than just a roof and regular meals. Many of these places are hubs of life and activity, staffed by people who understand that dignity, independence, and companionship are vital at any age. Increasingly, intergenerational projects and pet therapy schemes are breathing new life into care spaces, offering residents laughter, stimulation, and purpose.

But care doesn't stop at the front door. Funeral directors – some of the most quietly compassionate professionals in our communities – play a deeply important role in helping families navigate loss with grace and respect. Alongside them, stonemasons craft lasting tributes that honour lives lived, with each inscription carved in memory and love. These trades might not often make headlines, but their impact is profound and lasting. And let's not forget the smaller, sometimes overlooked services that make a world of difference. The kennels and catteries that provide safe havens for pets when families are away; the hearing aid specialists who reconnect people to the sounds – and conversations – they've been missing; or the volunteers who give their time to animal shelters and community centres, ensuring no one is forgotten.

These people and places aren't glamorous, and they rarely seek the spotlight. Yet they form a backbone of care and community that deserves



recognition. Their work is local, personal, and essential. They remind us that "care" isn't a service – it's a value. One that's practiced every day in countless acts of kindness, patience, and professionalism.

It might be easy to picture care as something reserved for our oldest citizens – and yes, their needs are crucial – but Caring People, Caring Places shines a light on the broader picture. From children finding safe new homes, to pets being lovingly rehomed, to families finding comfort and support through life's major

transitions, this is a celebration of care in all its forms.

So next time you pass the hearing clinic, walk past the vet's office, or drive by the local foster services banner, pause for a moment. Think of the people inside – doing quiet, tireless work to make someone else's life a little easier, a little warmer, a little more human. Let's support these people, these businesses and these organisations.

Because caring isn't just something we do. It's who we are.



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## Fire Walking At The Oaks

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All proceeds go to support The Care Workers' Charity, helping those who care for us.


24th April

4pm

The Oaks Care Home,  
150 Rubery Lane,  
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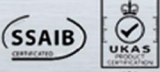
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# CARING CARING

People Places  
 Because caring isn't something we do, it's who we are.

## More than a job: Everyday

**Behind every strong community is a web of quiet miracles – people whose compassion isn't always seen but is always felt.**

Care doesn't always wear a uniform. It doesn't always carry a job title. Sometimes, care looks like a retired teacher offering literacy lessons at the local library. Sometimes it's a neighbour knocking on a door because the curtains haven't opened by lunchtime. Sometimes, it's a teenager patiently explaining a smartphone to a grandparent at a tech drop-in session. These acts might not make headlines – but they shape lives.



Across our towns and villages, community care is alive in places you might not expect. The barista who remembers how you like your coffee after a hard week. The postie who notices the mail piling up and alerts someone. The bus driver who waits that extra minute because they know one of their regulars can't walk quite as fast these days. These are the moments that quietly stitch care into the everyday.

Take a walk down any high street, and you'll find more than just shops – you'll find anchors of empathy.

In the corner café, a "pay-it-forward" board lets strangers buy a coffee for someone in need. In the hair salon, stylists lend an ear as much as a comb, becoming trusted confidants. In the local pharmacy, staff take the time to explain medication in a way that reassures and empowers. These are frontline caregivers, even if they'd never call themselves that.

Then there are the "accidental carers" – friends, neighbours, even children – who step into roles not because they have to, but because they care. A teenager helping an elderly neighbour with groceries. A colleague offering lifts to medical appointments. A community rallying to fundraise for someone's life-changing operation abroad or football kit for the U12s. These aren't isolated stories. They're a pattern. A culture of looking out for one another.



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**VIP Day Centre Redditch The Barn**  
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 ☎ 01527 375014 ✉ [redditch@vipdaycentre.co.uk](mailto:redditch@vipdaycentre.co.uk)

**VIP Day Centre Bromsgrove Amphlett Hall**  
 Crown Close, Bromsgrove, B61 8DW  
 ☎ 01527 375015 ✉ [bromsgrove@vipdaycentre.co.uk](mailto:bromsgrove@vipdaycentre.co.uk)

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# CARING People CARING Places

Because caring isn't something we do, it's who we are.

## care, extraordinary impact

And let's not forget the community hubs that give this care a home. Food banks, warm spaces, baby banks, repair cafés, men's sheds, mutual aid groups – many run entirely by volunteers who ask for nothing but offer everything. These places aren't just practical lifelines. They're emotional ones too. They say: you are not alone.

There's also a powerful movement growing around mental health care in the community. From peer support groups and walking clubs to drop-in counselling services and crisis cafés, these spaces are doing what the larger system can't always manage: providing timely, accessible, person-to-person support. No long forms, no waiting lists. Just presence. Just listening.

We live in a world that moves fast, values productivity, and often forgets to pause for one another. But these everyday examples prove that care hasn't disappeared. It's just gone local. Grassroots. Personal.

And it's not all about grand gestures. It's the consistent ones that matter most. The weekly phone call. The check-in text. The smile that says "I see you." These are small acts with seismic impact – especially for the isolated, the grieving, or the quietly struggling.

So what if we measured success in empathy? What if we valued a kind heart as highly as a sharp mind? What if we recognised care not as a soft skill, but as a superpower?



Because here's the truth: Care isn't just something that happens to us when we need it. It's something we give, something we build. It's a culture we grow, day by day, in homes, in workplaces, in playgrounds and pavements and park benches.

And the more we celebrate those who care – not just professionals, but everyday people – the more we nurture that culture. The more we say: this matters. These people matter. So let's keep telling these stories. Let's keep spotlighting the gentle, powerful work of caring people in caring places.

Because they aren't just holding others up – they're holding the whole community together.



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# CARING People CARING Places



## The circle of care

*How support travels through a community*

**Care has a quiet momentum. It doesn't shout. It doesn't seek credit. But when one person chooses to help another, something remarkable happens – it spreads.**

Welcome to the Circle of Care: an invisible, ever-turning wheel powered by acts of kindness, big and small. In towns, villages, and cities across the country, people are stepping up for each other – and in doing so, sparking a chain reaction of compassion.

It often starts with something simple. A hot meal left on a doorstep. A schoolchild giving up their seat on the bus. A stranger paying for the coffee of the person behind them in the queue. These gestures might feel fleeting to the giver, but to the person on the receiving end, they can be transformative. Not just for what they provide – but for what they inspire. Take the story of a local couple who began cooking extra portions of their evening meals and delivering them to an elderly neighbour during lockdown. That neighbour, once isolated, began knitting hats and scarves for a women's shelter in return. The shelter staff, moved by the gesture, started offering monthly pop-ups with free toiletries for the homeless. And volunteers at those events? Some were recipients of care themselves, now giving back in kind.

This is the Circle of Care in motion. It grows not by obligation, but by invitation. It says: You've helped me – I want to help someone else.

At the heart of this cycle is connection. Care doesn't exist in a vacuum. When we see someone doing good, we're often reminded of our own power to contribute. It's why communities respond so passionately to fundraising pages, food drives, or community clean-up days. They aren't just supporting a cause – they're continuing a story.

And it's not always the obvious moments that carry the most weight. A listening ear. A ride to a doctor's appointment. Watching a neighbour's child for an hour so they can rest. These are small acts – but they build trust, dignity, and belonging. They lay the foundation for a community where people feel safe to both give and receive care.

In schools, children are learning this too. Many are now taking part in kindness challenges – writing positive notes for classmates, helping with litter picks, or raising funds for local charities. Teachers report that once a culture of kindness takes hold, it becomes self-sustaining. "One child brings in a tin for the food bank, and suddenly the whole class is donating," said one headteacher. "They inspire each other."

Businesses are joining the circle as well. A



bakery offering leftover loaves to a shelter. A taxi firm giving discounted rides to cancer patients. A florist donating unsold blooms to a hospice. These aren't marketing stunts – they're reflections of what it means to be rooted in community.

But the beauty of the Circle of Care is that you don't need to wait for permission to enter it. You only need to ask: What can I do, right now, with what I have? And that answer will look different for everyone. For some, it's time. For others, it's resources. For many, it's simply attention – noticing when someone is struggling and showing up.

Even digital communities are catching on. Local Facebook groups often help this local newspaper and help act as the new town square – offering everything from babysitting

swaps to urgent appeals for missing pets. Behind each post is a person reaching out, and another person reaching back.

And when care flows in a circle, no one is left behind. Those who give today may need help tomorrow. Those who receive today may be the first to offer it next time. It's not a straight line. It's a cycle. A rhythm. A shared responsibility.

So if you've ever wondered whether a small act of kindness really makes a difference – know this: it does. Not just to the person you helped, but to the person they go on to help. And the one after that. And the one after that. Because care is contagious. And once it's set in motion, it rarely stops.

*Let's keep it turning.*



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*Piano*



Alcester Male Voice Choir



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The High Sheriff of Warwickshire presented Mrs. Judith Land BEM and the choir with a certificate recently in recognition of great and valuable services to the community. The award also recognizes the appreciation of the residents and people within the county of Warwickshire for the activity and contribution in enhancing the life of the community.

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# Prime Minister hails importance of local news at media reception

**PRIME Minister Sir Keir Starmer paid tribute to the local and regional media at a special reception at 10 Downing Street on Monday.**

Around 100 journalists from across the UK attended the prestigious event, including Tristan Harris, the head of editorial at Bullivant Media Group Ltd and the editor of the Bromsgrove, Droitwich and Redditch Standards.

After a welcome, Sir Keir spoke about the journalists he had met

whilst on the campaign trail across the country.

"There's a sort of mixed feeling because I've always felt that - and I say this to Cabinet members - you may think answering questions in Parliament is the most difficult thing you're going to have to do, just wait until you get in front of regional media because somehow you always ask us the question that we've been secretly hoping was the one that wouldn't get asked."

"But there is a really serious point that underpins this because

nobody knows your local areas and issues in the way that you do and I don't think there's any other sort of media outlets, interrogators, interviewers who can put the questions in the way that you do because you understand what's happening on your patch the way nobody else does.

"And in a sense, I think because you're able to translate it into what matters where you are, it makes it more meaningful."

He added it was important for politicians to understand what mattered to local communities.

"There's no one more committed to shining the torch on those issues."

He also praised the local media for running campaigns on issues, such as knife crime, which, he said, had always been an important part of the job.

Sir Keir also said of local media: "It's such a force for good, and I think respected by millions and I strongly feel people go to their local regional media as a trusted source in a way that they don't quite believe they can get to a trusted source elsewhere."

He added he and his colleagues always tried to reserve space for local and regional media when out and about.

He said the reach of local regional media going up was 'a good news story' but added he understood the pressure and the challenges coming

up at the same time was huge.

"Keep advocating for your regions, because, obviously here in Downing Street is where we have a laser focus of communities that you're advocating for delivering on their priorities, and you must hold us to account for that."

He thanked the local media for all it did and added: "Thank you for all of the work that you do holding us to account."

"But as uncomfortable though it is it is really important and

it's really important we're open about that because particularly at the moment, we have to remind ourselves what living in democracy really is, where politicians can't just say things and get away with it.

"They've got to say things, and then they've got to face questions of what they've said and particularly when it's put in the context of local communities, local areas and local regions."

Tristan said: "It was heartening to hear from the Prime Minister about the value he places on local media and papers and websites like ours."



"And it was great to get the recognition for what we do - my team works extremely hard and these are tough times for our industry - but it is in everyone's interests to have a strong local press which supports and champions its local communities whilst also holding those in power to account."

**ABOVE - Standard editor Tristan Harris attended the local media reception at 10 Downing Street.**



**LEFT - Sir Keir Starmer addressed around 100 local and regional journalists.**

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## Councils in open invite to green fairs

ECO warriors who can inspire and encourage a greener future are being urged to help make stalwart events in Bromsgrove and Redditch even bigger and better than ever.

The Green Fairs have been held in Redditch Borough for more than a decade and in Bromsgrove District for almost five years.

The councils are set to give them a fresh start to proactively promote sustainability, biodiversity, climate and health and wellbeing.

Organisers want to hear from inspirational businesses, groups and traders to take part in the Redditch event, at Arrow Valley Country Park and the Bromsgrove one at Sanders Park – both events attract hundreds of people over the weekend.

Redditch Borough and Bromsgrove District Councils' assistant director for leisure and cultural services, Ruth Bamford, said: "We want to hear from inspirational people about how they can help us to celebrate sustainability and promote a greener tomorrow."

The councils are looking for people who can offer eco-friendly artisan and organic food stalls, recycled art and crafts and health, wellbeing and mindfulness activities.

Email [events@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk](mailto:events@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk) by Friday April 18 to get in touch.

# Big shout-out to Kevin's 40 years as a town crier

by **Tristan Harris**  
tristan.harris@bullivantmedia.com

**BROMSGROVE Town Crier Kevin Ward will give a presentation entitled 'Plenty to Shout About' at 7.30pm next Tuesday, April 8.**

The talk is for the 38th Bromsgrove Lecture and will take place at Routh Concert Hall at Bromsgrove School.

The event will also feature a fabulous musical introduction from Alastair Moseley and David Coulson who will be performing songs befitting to the evening, including 'The Yeomen of England' by Edward German from his Operetta, 'Merrie England', and 'The Bellman's Song'.

Bromsgrove's much-loved and long-standing town crier Kevin will take a look back at his crying heritage and at 40 years in the role in what promises to be a lively and entertaining evening.

Kevin's role was somewhat written in the stars, given that his three-greats grandfather Jacob Wilson (1779 to 1879) was the last Town Crier of Birmingham. Jacob claimed the position had been in the family for 350 years, so it came as no surprise that Kevin would continue this tradition into the next century.

In this landmark year, the Bromsgrove Society is delighted to



welcome Kevin as the speaker at the 2025 annual lecture and everyone is looking forward to hearing about the history of town crying and some of the highlights from his last 40 years.

Tickets for the event are \$7.50, which includes a pre-presentation drink. They are available in person from Foto Factory in Bromsgrove High Street (cash only please) or online at [bsoc.co.uk](http://bsoc.co.uk) or [Kevin Ward will be talking about his 40 years as a town crier in next week's Bromsgrove Lecture.](http://bromsgrove-</a></p>
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school.co.uk/boxoffice or from the Bromsgrove School Box Office.

Anyone unable to get to Routh Hall on Tuesday can still enjoy the music and the lecture online via a live stream link. You can buy the link from the Bromsgrove School Box Office for just \$5.

To celebrate 40 years as town crier Kevin will also be hosting the Ancient and Honourable Guild of Town Criers National Championship in Bromsgrove on Saturday, June 14. There will be two rounds of crying on the day to identify the National Champion.

In the morning, the competition will be in the High Street while the market is on and the street is busy and bustling with people. Each Crier will cry about their hometown.

After the formal competition, the criers will stay in the town, lunching at town centre cafes and restaurants, giving shoppers an opportunity to meet them.

In the afternoon, the group will move to Avoncroft Museum of Buildings where the second round will take place on the lawns outside Guesten Hall.

The two different locations will test the criers' ability to adapt to different surroundings.



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# A great time to start planning

**GREEN-FINGERED** expert Sara Milne from The Gardening PR and Member of the Garden Media Guild gives her advice about what should be done on plots throughout April.

**A**PRIL is a great time for people to reacquaint themselves with their gardens, take some time out and sit for a few minutes with a cuppa, having a think about their plans for the upcoming growing season whilst listening to the birds.

And, if the sun is shining, there is even more to smile about.

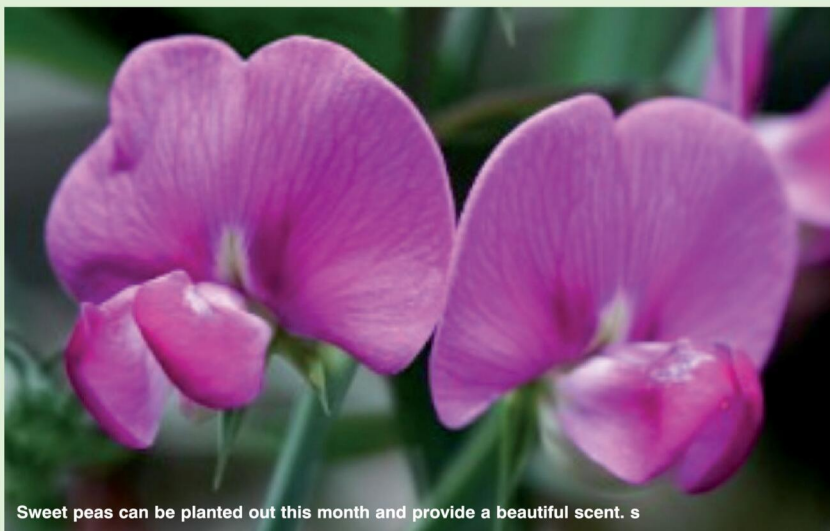
In addition to it being the month when colourful tulips are in full bloom, it is also a time of heady action in the garden - summer bulbs can be planted, herbaceous plants will need to be supported and seedlings pricked out.

Planting generally is in full swing, particularly plants bought in containers. The soil is now relatively warm and rain is normally fairly frequent. Trees, shrubs, roses and perennials planted in the ground now will have plenty of time to establish their roots before summer.

In the vegetable garden it's time to plant hardy herbs, grow pumpkins, asparagus, tomatoes and beans.

If sweet peas were sown in the autumn or have been bought in pots from the local garden centre, then now is the time to plant the seedlings out.

Sweet peas can be planted straight in the ground or in deep pots filled with compost. Good light is essential to stop young plants becoming weak and lanky. Pinching out the growing tips when the seedlings reach 10cm tall will encourage stronger and multi-flowered plants.



Sweet peas can be planted out this month and provide a beautiful scent. s

Sweet peas are perfect for picking and are easy to grow in pots or in the ground, training them up a frame for a beautiful display. Planting sweet peas near a seating area gives you the benefit of their sent as you sit and relax in the garden - one of the best smells of the summer.

They come in a variety of colours and sizes, for example: Lathyrus vernus 'Alboreuse' is a hardy perenn

ial bush-forming sweet pea that has tiny pink and white flowers in April, reaching 35cm in height and spread, Lathyrus odoratus 'Matucana' is a hardy annual that is a hugely popular old-fashioned sweet pea with scented two-tone purple flowers in summer, ideal for picking and Lathyrus odoratus 'Lord Nelson' is a hardy annual grown for picking with blue flowers and a highly rated scent in summer

with a reach of 2m.

Another summer smell - and taste - is mint which will be showing new growth from its winter die back this month.

It's one of the best herbs for attracting pollinators such as hoverflies, lacewings, bees and butterflies into the garden.

Keeping it controlled is essential as mint tends to take over pots and

beds with its robust root system, so now would be a good time to thin out any existing mint plants to let new shoots flourish. Apart from being a useful culinary herb mint also makes a great herbal tea.

Peppermint leaves contain several essential oils that are released when steeped in hot water, including menthol, menthone and limonene.

Collectively, these give peppermint tea its' refreshing, cooling, minty taste. Peppermint tea can aid digestion and may also relieve an upset stomach.

In some cases, it has been seen to relieve symptoms of irritable bowel syndrome (IBS). If growing mint, make sure it's planted in moist but well-drained soil in full sun to partial shade.

It's an exciting month to get back into the garden and start to sow outdoors, but look out for frosts and keep any tender plants indoors for now.

Top tips from the RHS for this month include keeping weeds under control, start sowing seeds outdoors, plant or sow sweet peas outside, plant out main crop potatoes, plant new pond plants, divide waterlilies and sow new lawns or repair bare patches.

Also, lightly cut back lavender to stop it getting too leggy or woody, divide bamboos, protect fruit blossom from late frost and this is the last chance to prune climbing or rambling roses.

And finally, as Thomas Tusser said in 1557: "Sweet April showers, do spring May flowers."

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Anonymous



# Family Notices

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### DEATHS

## CONNELL Jacqueline Jacqui

Aged 89 years  
Passed away peacefully on  
Monday 17th March, 2025.  
Now reunited with her beloved Husband Bill.  
Dearly loved Mother to Stuart and Fiona,  
Jacqui will be sadly missed by all of her  
family and friends.  
A service to celebrate Jacqui's life will take  
place at Redditch Crematorium on  
Wednesday 9th April 2025 at 2.45p.m.  
Family flowers only please, donations if so  
desired to Diabetes UK and  
Cancer Research UK  
may be sent to:  
Thomas Brothers,  
The Funeral Directors,  
Birchfield House,  
494 Evesham Road,  
Redditch,  
B97 5JF.  
01527 547777  
Thank You.

### DEATHS

## RUSSON Lee Thomas

Aged 45 years.  
Passed away at home on  
Sunday 16th March 2025.  
Lee will be missed by all of his family  
and friends.  
A service to celebrate Lee's life will take  
place at Redditch Crematorium on  
Thursday 17th April 2025 at 11.45 a.m.  
Family flowers only please, donations if  
desired to Leukaemia Care may be sent to:  
Thomas Brothers,  
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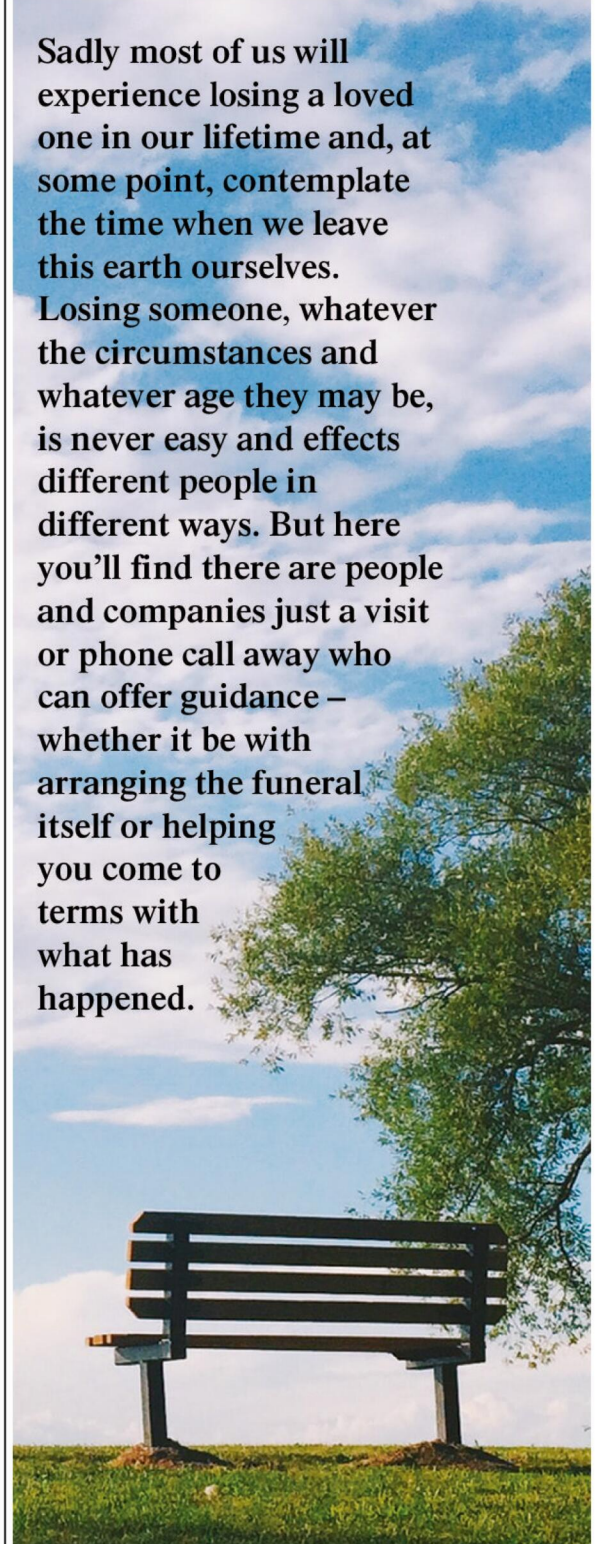
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## PUBLIC NOTICES

### Warwickshire County Council

**ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984**  
 Warwickshire County Council has made the following Temporary Traffic Orders:  
**D51570 BRICKYARD LANE, STUDLEY**  
 Order Effect: Road closed to vehicular traffic from Johns Close to Green Lane.

**Reason for Order:** To enable Drainage and associated works, 09.30hrs - 15.30hrs.  
**Order Commences:** 7 April 2025 for up to 18 months.  
**Anticipated Completion:** 9 April 2025.  
**Access & Diversion:** Green Lane, Redditch Road, High Street, Station Road, The Slough, Kin Close and vice versa.  
**Contractor:** Balfour Beatty, Tel: 03452 415 302.

For all of the above temporary orders, pedestrian access to and egress from properties and land situated adjacent to the length of road to be closed will be maintained at all times. Vehicular access will be maintained where possible.

**To report any problems with these works or for further details of our current & planned roadworks visit our website warwickshire.gov.uk/roadworksmap or call us 01926 412515.**  
**S Duxbury, Director of Strategy, Planning & Governance,**  
 Shire Hall, Warwick CV34 4RL Date 4 April 2025

## PUBLIC NOTICES

### BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL & REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL

Advertisement Key: CAS = Conservation Area Setting  
 FP = Affects Footpath, FPS = Footpath Setting,  
 LB = Listed Building, MAJ = Major Development.

**24/01341/FUL MAJ CAS**  
 Site: Land Lying North of Brockhill Lane Tardebigge, Worcestershire B97 6RB

**Proposal:** Installation and operation of a ground mounted solar farm on two separate land parcels with internal access tracks, security fence, access gates, other ancillary infrastructure and landscaping and biodiversity enhancement.

**25/00216/FUL CAS FPS**  
 Site: Dodford Nursery Childrens Holiday Farm, Warbage Lane, Dodford, Worcestershire B61 9BE

**Proposal:** Extension and remodelling works to existing farmhouse, with associated landscaping and accessibility improvements.

**25/00118/FUL MAJ**  
 Site: Unit 1 Brook Retail Park, Sherwood Road, Bromsgrove, Worcestershire B60 3DR

**Proposal:** Change of use from bulky goods retail to a mix of convenience and comparison goods retailing.

**25/00360/S73 FP**  
 Site: 376 Alcester Road, Burcot, Worcestershire B60 1PP

**Proposal:** Variation of condition 2 (plans) of planning permission 23/01155/FUL for proposed replacement dwelling.

**25/00032/FUL FPS**  
 Site: 46 Swan Street, Alvechurch, Worcestershire B48 7BP

**Proposal:** Double Storey Rear Extension & changes to retaining wall and steps.

**25/00277/LBC LB**  
 Site: 112 High Street, Bromsgrove, Worcestershire B61 8EZ

**Proposal:** Proposed signage removal and ATM removal on a listed building.

**Application forms and plans may be inspected online https://publicaccess.bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk/online-applications**

**Comments can be submitted online, via email to newplan@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk or in writing Planning Services, Redditch Town Hall, Walter Stranz Square, Redditch B98 8AH.**

**Comments should be made within 17 days of the date of this publication. The Council does not acknowledge comments but will make these available for inspection online.**

**Bromsgrove District Council**  
 www.bromsgrove.gov.uk

**PUBLIC NOTICE – LICENSING ACT 2003 APPLICATION TO VARY A PREMISES LICENCE OR CLUB PREMISES CERTIFICATE UNDER THE LICENSING ACT 2003**

Name of applicant/club: The Dodford Inn  
 Postal address of premise/club premises or description: The Dodford Inn, Whinfield Road, Dodford, Bromsgrove, B61 9BG

The applicant proposes to vary the following licensable activities or qualifying club activities on or from the above premises/club premises as follows:

- Removal of all non-standard timings**
- Amendment to permitted alcohol sales hours:**
  - o Permit the sale of alcohol from 10:00 on Sundays, Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays (currently 11:00), aligning with Fridays and Saturdays.
  - o Permit the sale of alcohol until 00:00 on Sundays, Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays (currently 23:00), aligning with Fridays and Saturdays.
- Removal of Annex 3 (3):**
  - o This condition currently restricts the use of the outside patio area by customers after 23:00. We request its removal to allow continued monitored use of this area.
  - o The area will be closely monitored by staff to mitigate any potential nuisance from customers congregating near the car park.
- Extension of the licensed area in accordance with the attached drawings.**
  - o Representations by interested parties or responsible authorities should be made in writing to Worcestershire Regulatory Services, Wyre Forest House, Finepoint Way, Kidderminster, DY11 7WF or enquiries@worsregservices.gov.uk by 25/04/2025. The record of the application is available for inspection by appointment.
  - o Please call us on 01905 822799 for an appointment.

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## Spa achieve historic promotion

Spa celebrate after Alex Dugmore doubles Spa's lead. Pictures by Mathew Mason.



by **Aaron Sutcliffe**  
 aaron.sutcliffe@bullivantmedia.com

**FOOTBALL:** DROITWICH Spa boss Andy Crowther believes past play-off final heartbreak inspired his players to win the league title this season.

Spa clinched the Hellenic League Division One title and a first-ever promotion to Step Five with a 2-0 victory against Shortwood United last weekend.

The promotion comes after the Saltmen twice fell at the final hurdle in the previous two campaigns - losing successive play-off finals.

However, Crowther insists his squad used those experiences to their advantage as Spa sealed the title with two matches left to play.

Crowther said: "The drive we've had comes from the play-off final defeats, we've topped the league from the first game of the season.

"The experience has helped, it's been nice that we're not chasing this time around.

"The pressure has been on everyone else, we've been consistent and the lads have used their past experience well.

"I've kept the core of the group, we added three or four new players and it helped us having a lot more experience in the team.

"The fans have been like the 12th man, they've been unbelievable all season."

Droitwich broke the deadlock on 31 minutes as Nathan Binner placed a shot into the top-right corner from six-yards out from Perry Moss's pass.

And Spa doubled their lead three minutes before the break when Alex Dugmore powered home Binner's corner from the left.

Chances were at a premium after the break as Spa comfortably held onto their lead to seal a seventh successive victory and the league title.

Droitwich are next in action against Clanfield 85 on Saturday, April 5 with kick-off at 3pm at Radcot Road.

● **Turn to the front page for more reaction from Spa's title win.**

James Lemon leads the celebrations at full time.



Droitwich boss Andy Crowther celebrates with his players at full time.



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