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Max aims to get the most from his latest challenge

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

A YOUNG Droitwich rugby player is set to take on another sporting challenge to raise funds for his club after the success of his previous athletic feat a year ago.

Max Fenton, aged 14, from Earls Common has set himself the goal of cycling 100 miles in seven hours on an exercise-bike to raise funds for his team, Droitwich Rugby Football Club.

His previous challenge, a half-

marathon, saw him set an elite level time (1hr 38mins) for his age and secure £700 in funding to support his club.

To make Max's cycling challenge even more of a feat, the RGS Worcester scholar has recently recovered from a significant hip injury which saw him spend months recovering and therefore unable to train or participate in his usual sporting activities.

Any funds Max raises will help support his team's tour to the west coast of Devon, in the hope of bringing home a cup trophy, as they did in last year's tournament.

Initially he had an eight-week training plan scheduled but due to his injury this has been cut short.

A couple of weeks ago he was given the thumbs up by his physio-therapist to jump back on the bike and recommence his usual athletic and rugby training.

After being given the green light, he will have had less than four weeks to train.

Max said: "Despite these obstacles, I'm more motivated than ever to prove to myself I can overcome it and complete this ride."

"I know it's going to be tough, but every penny raised will make a huge difference, and I'm incredibly grateful for any support I can get as I take on this challenge."

Max will kick off the challenge on Easter Sunday (April 20).

Max's mother, Louise Fenton told the Standard: "When the going gets tough during training and the official challenge, which it will, we will remind max of all the encouragement he has received, which will go a long way."

"All the support received will provide any extra drive and encouragement he may need ahead of his challenge."

Visit: [justgiving.com/crowdfunding/max-fenton-1](https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/max-fenton-1) to support the cause.



Picture by Matthew Mason. s

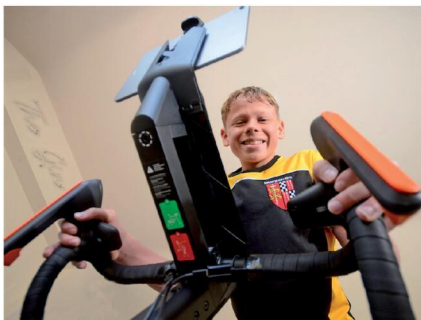
THE ONLY WAY IS UP: DROITWICH Spa FC got to lift the league title shield after an impressive 5-0 win over Tytherington Rocks last Saturday.

The Saltmen have gained promotion to step five of the footballing pyramid - the highest level they have achieved in their history.

And, in another first, they will get to play in the qualification rounds of the FA Cup.

Turn to the **back page** for more on last Saturday's match and the end-of-season awards.

Max Fenton, aged 14, is planning on cycling 100 miles on a spin bike to raise funds for his rugby club. Picture by Marcus Mingins 1625009MMR



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Egg-citing things to do

THERE will be plenty of egg-citing activities at Bromsgrove's Avoncroft Museum over the Easter holidays.

Visitors to the popular attractions between now and April 21 and on April 23 and 24 will be able to explore the great outdoors and more than 30 buildings which span 700 years of history.

There will be a free historical trail relating to traditions and customs associated with Easter and an egg hunt.

Trail sheets are available for £3 as participants track down the Easter eggs hidden in the buildings. In return for completed sheets, there will be a prize from the Easter Bunny left around the site.

Easter craft sessions will be just £2 per person and, as part of a special offer, two children go free with each full-price adult ticket.

Visit avoncroft.org.uk for more on the Easter event.

Hospice will benefit from Garage Sale

THE BIG Worcestershire Garage Sale is hoping to raise £25,000 for St Richard's Hospice.

The popular event, in its third year, will bring communities together from across the county for a day of bargain hunting, treasure finding and charitable giving – all from the comfort of residents' own driveways.

This year's event will take place on Saturday June 14, with hundreds of householders hosting garage sales at their homes offering everything from antiques and collectibles to clothing, toys, homeware and other unwanted goodies.

Matt Nicol, managing director of organisers Nicol and Co which has offices in Droitwich, Malvern and Worcester, said this year's event was supporting St Richard's

by Philippa Mingins

Hospice, with everyone taking part having the option to donate a portion of their sales or make a direct contribution to the charity.

As an added bonus, any quality unsold items can be dropped off at the end of the day at designated collection points to be distributed to St Richard's Hospice charity shops across Worcestershire by Warren's Removals who have donated their vans to help.

Mr Nicol said: "The Big Worcestershire Garage Sale is all about community spirit.

"Whether you're looking to declutter, discover hidden gems, or simply enjoy a day out in the neighbourhood, this event is the perfect way to get involved.

"It's a fun and sustainable way to



Bargain hunting – Matt Nicol, MD of Nicol and Co, with Ria Simons, community fundraiser at St Richard's Hospice.

make space in your homes, meet neighbours and find amazing bargains – all while supporting a fantastic cause.

"Our charitable target this year is to raise £25,000 towards the £12million St Richard's Hospice needs to raise every year to provide free care.

"We can't wait to see Worcestershire buzzing again for the third year running with garage sales on the day."

Ria Simons, community fundrais-

er at St Richard's Hospice, added: "We are thrilled to be a part of this brilliant event, which not only brings local communities together but also supports our vital care services.

"Every donation, big or small, helps us continue providing compassionate care for patients and their loved ones across Worcestershire."

To take part in The Big Worcestershire Garage Sale, email marketing@nicolanco.co.uk before the deadline of May 31.

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Visit www.showcoachtours.co.uk for the full programme

Breath of fresh AIR to bring art back to pop-up

ARTS in Redditch (AIR) has announced its latest event for local artists and art lovers following a year-long break,

The Spring 2025 Pop-Up gallery, which runs from May 1 to May 11, will occupy Unit 10, Walford Walk in the Kingfisher Shopping Centre, opposite Next.

The gallery will showcase the huge variety of creative talent at work in the Redditch area, and

encourage others to get involved.

More than 50 artists will be exhibiting their work, which will include original paintings, drawings, ceramics, needlecraft, jewellery and photography and all work will be available to purchase.

Philip Roberts, trustee of Arts in Redditch, told the Standard: "Last year we celebrated 10 years since we opened our first pop-up gallery, but



The gallery will be open from May 1.

the lack of suitable premises meant we were unable to open for Christmas 2024.

"We are delighted to be back with probably our best line-up of local artists, with a fantastic selection of over 500 pieces of original work for sale.

"Once again, we

are indebted to general manager Fiona Faizey and her team at the Kingfisher Centre, without whose support

these events could not happen."

The gallery will be open from 10am until 4pm.

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Range Rover Velar stolen

A RANGE Rover Velar has been stolen from Redditch.

The 4x4 was taken from a property on Defford Close, Webheath.

Thieves struck around 5.25pm last Friday and West Mercia Police are investigating.

An attempted burglary took place in Redditch around 2.25am on Monday.

Thieves broke into the home on Yvonne Road, Crabbs Cross. They accessed the property via a side door

but were disturbed before they could steal anything.

Witnesses or anyone with information on either of these incidents should call police on 101 or Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

For your latest news and sport:
www.redditchstandard.co.uk

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See page
36

MP calling for rail hub backing

by **Sonny Rackham**
sonny.rackham@bullivantme-
dia.com

BROMSGROVE MP Bradley Thomas has urged the Government to continue backing the Midlands Rail Hub ahead of its Spending Review.

In a letter to transport secretary Heidi Alexander, the local MP urged her to support the £1.75 billion project's 'strong' business case.

Mr Thomas said: "A key part of my plan for Bromsgrove and the villages is to improve local transport.

"It's clear the Midlands Rail Hub will bring benefits to rail users across Bromsgrove and the villages, and it therefore has my full support.

"The Government claims its mission is to deliver economic growth – and to achieve this they will need to back projects like the Midlands Rail Hub.

"I've therefore written to the Transport Secretary to urge her to support the Midlands Rail Hub's strong business case and to continue backing this project just like the previous Government did."

The Midlands Rail Hub will allow for an additional Cross City train to run each hour to and from Bromsgrove, giving a regular three trains per hour on the Cross City service from Bromsgrove into Birmingham.

Bromsgrove will also continue to be served by faster trains to Birmingham that have originated in Hereford or Worcester.

And Barnet Green and Alvechurch will benefit from the proposals with an additional Cross City service to and from Redditch, which the Midlands Rail Hub provides extra capacity for.

The project was supported by previous MP Sajid Javid who, when Chancellor, gave £20 million to support the early development of the scheme.

In February 2024, the previous Government announced funding to deliver the Full Business Case for the Midlands Rail Hub moving the project forward to the delivery phase.

The 2025 Spending Review is a two-part process. The first phase concluded with the Autumn Budget in October 2024, setting departmental budgets for 2024 to 25 and 2025 to 26.

The second phase, which focuses on allocating the total funding envelope, is expected to conclude and be published in late spring of 2025, on June 11, 2025.

Left to right: Mal Drury Rose, Executive Director of West Midlands Rail Executive, Strategic Partnerships Lead, Midlands Connect Sarah Spink, Bradley Thomas MP and Integrated Transport Programme Lead from Midlands Connect Andy Clark.



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Exhibition sheds light on life in the Spa during the Second World War

AN EXHIBITION showcasing what it was like to live in Droitwich Spa during the Second World War will be on display in May to mark VE Day 80.

The Heritage and Information Centre's Droitwich at War exhibition showcases local wartime memories and gives an insight into how Droitwich Spa was affected during World War II.

It explores the lives of ordinary people living in Droitwich Spa and puts a lens on the well-known Droitwich Family, 'the Machins' - former owners of H.R. Machin Ironmongers in the High Street.

The exhibition, from May 1 to May 15, has been a collaborative effort between Droitwich Spa Heritage Staff and members of the local community.

Heritage Manager Rebecca Butler said: "It's been fascinating creating this exhibition.

"We hope our visitors enjoy discovering more about how World War II affected the lives of ordinary families.

"Ultimately, we're hoping Droitwich's community of today connect with the town's shared and important history."

The exhibition will be viewable from 10am to 4pm from Monday to Friday and from 10am to 1.30pm on Saturdays.

There will be extended opening hours on VE Day (May 8 from 10am to 7pm).

Visit this story at droitwichstandard.co.uk for more information on Droitwich Spa Town Council's VE Day events programme.



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Staff in line for top award after work on garden



NHS STAFF in Bromsgrove have been shortlisted for a prestigious award for their involvement in an innovative dementia garden.

Two employees on Meadow Ward, ward manager Sarah Taylor and occupational therapist Clare McFayden, have been named as finalists in the People's Choice category of the Design in Mental Health Awards 2025.

Located in New Haven at the Princess of Wales Community Hospital in Bromsgrove, they created 'Meadow Green' as a thoughtfully designed, therapeutic outdoor garden which offers real, functional environments that encourage safe interaction and meaningful activity for patients with dementia.

They said: "We are delighted to have received this wonderful nomination which is a reflection of the of the entire Meadow Ward team and their collective commitment for continual quality improvements for our patients."

The garden has some stand-out

features, one being its adaptable buildings which can be transformed into a barbershop, hair salon, cafe or post office using props and decorations, as well as a potting shed that creates a series of spaces that encourage engagement and routine.

Sarah added: "For people living with dementia, simple activities like going to the shop or gardening can have a really positive impact on their wellbeing, but these are rarely possible during a hospital stay."

"Meadow Green changes that." Growing evidence shows these active spaces can be far more effective in supporting care goals and improving patient outcomes, unlike traditional dementia-friendly spaces that use false building facades.

Jonathon Emery, landscape architect at DSA Environment and Design, said: "Emails are generally not memorable, but the one inviting us to this project was."

"Sarah and Clare's enthusiasm and determination warrants

The team at Bromsgrove's Princess of Wales Hospital have been shortlisted for their innovative dementia garden. s

undoubted recognition for the life-changing impact Meadow Green is having on countless patients."

The garden was named 'Best Outdoor Space' in 2024 and it is hoped that it will now further be recognised this year through the People's Choice Awards.

Voting is open to everyone now and closes on Monday, April 28, with the winners being announced at the ceremony in June.

People can visit: surveymonkey.com/r/9KJCKD2 to cast their vote or visit this story on our website to see all of the shortlisted nominees.

Offering a chance to get active out on the water

WATER activities have returned to Arrow Valley Visitor Centre.

After a successful first year, visitors again enjoy exploring the lake on the swan pedalos, sport pedalos, kayaks and this year - rowing boats.

A spokesperson from Rubicon Leisure said: "Whether you're after a calm sojourn across the lake in the late afternoon on our swan pedalos, or like your exploration more on the sporty side with our kayaks, our offering has extended to suit all of our visi-

tors' tastes.

"We are also delighted to announce that paddleboards will also be available to hire to take out onto the lake this summer with the option to book becoming available soon."

The water activities officially launched last weekend and will be fully operational every day during the school holidays, and on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays during term time.

Visit: arrowvalley.co.uk/water-activities/ for more information.

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Lidl store plans turned down by city planners

PLANS for a new Lidl supermarket in Northfield have been refused by Birmingham City Council's planning committee.

The proposal was for part of the existing Northfield Shopping Centre to be demolished and the supermarket to be built, along with access, parking and landscaping.

There would be access to the 67.2metres by 38.2m building from the Bristol Road South / A38 and a link would have been maintained from the road to Victoria Common so the park could still be accessed in the same way it is now.

The store was expected to bring 40 jobs to the town.

Car parking

There would also be 124 car parking spaces at the proposed store, which included nine parent and child spaces and seven spaces for people with mobility issues, and two electric vehicle charging spaces. And there would be 12 bicycle spaces provided via the installation of six Sheffield cycle stands to be positioned under cover of the store canopy, and alongside the customer car parking.

A new 'pedestrian walkway'

and associated public realm improvements are proposed between the retained part of Northfield Shopping Centre and the proposed Lidl store to connect Victoria Common and Bristol Road South.

Birmingham City Council planning officers, who said during the meeting that extensive discussions had taken place between the authority and Lidl, had recommended it for approval.

During discussions some councillors expressed concerns about it being the right development for that part of Northfield.

Coun David Barker said he felt the car park encroached on too much of Victoria Common at a time when people were being encouraged to walk more and be fit and healthy. And he said the supermarket was not making the most of the space and the number of jobs for that space seemed low, compared to other uses.

It was also highlighted that there were already four supermarkets within a 10-minute walk and the Lidl was not needed.

Coun Colin Green said: "Why are we knocking down a supermarket to build another supermarket?"

Speaking in favour, Coun

Gareth Moore said he supported it – there had recently been a Lidl built in Erdington and it had been very successful.

When it was put to the vote, five councillors voted against and three in favour, meaning the application was turned down.

At the end of 2023, when the idea for the supermarket was first mooted, Lidl held a pop-up information session at Northfield Shopping Centre and a wide-ranging public consultation.

Proposals

It said, from the responses received, 85 per cent of people said they were in favour of the proposals for the new Lidl and welcomed them.

At the time Lidl said respondents had recognised the important investment for Northfield Shopping Centre, improved choice that a new discount supermarket would bring and the 40 new jobs.

The next nearest Lidl supermarkets for people in the area are in Sturchley, Kings Heath and Halesowen.

One of the artist's impressions of how the Lidl supermarket in Northfield would look. s





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Firefighters tackle building blaze

FIREFIGHTERS from Bromsgrove extinguished a building blaze on Crown Close around 3pm on Sunday.

The crew used a backpack and buckets of water.

There were no casualties.

Meanwhile, water jets were used to put out a fire at a recreation ground in Blackwell.

It started around 8pm on Sunday in the area

near St Catherine's Road.

Firefighters from Bromsgrove who attended dampened down the area afterwards to ensure the flames did not reignite.

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Doctor steps up for marathon challenge

A DEDICATED Worcester doctor is swapping her scrubs for running shoes as she takes on the 2025 London Marathon to raise funds for vital equipment at Kidderminster Hospital.

by Mia Whitehouse

Dr Jo Marriott, who lives just outside Bromsgrove, will take on the 45th London Marathon on Sunday April 27, tackling the 26.2 miles from Greenwich to Westminster, to help enhance care for Worcestershire's youngest patients.

Dr Marriott, a consultant anaesthetist at Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust, aims to raise the cash for a child-friendly MRI service that she has been working tirelessly towards for the past two years.

She said: "Running the London Marathon has always been on my bucket list, and after securing a ballot place, I want to make every mile count by raising funds for this much-needed MRI-compatible trolley."

The service is set to open this summer, and additional equipment such as the £8,160 MRI-compatible trolley will be essential to making it as comfortable and efficient as possible.

By Dr Marriott running in support of the Worcestershire Acute Hospitals Charity, a difference can be made for the patients, families, and staff at the county's three hospitals, the Alexandra Hospital in

Redditch, Kidderminster Hospital and Treatment Centre and the Worcestershire Royal Hospital.

Laura Gregory, the community and events fundraising officer at Worcestershire Acute Hospitals Charity, said: "We are absolutely delighted that Jo has chosen to take on the incredible challenge of the London Marathon in support of Worcestershire Acute Hospital Charity."

"Her dedication to improving care for young patients perfectly reflects our mission to enhance hospital experiences for patients, their families, and NHS staff."

"Every step she takes will bring us closer to providing the very best acute hospital care for our community and we're proud to support her fundraising efforts."



Dr Jo Marriott will take on the London Marathon to fund vital equipment at Kidderminster Hospital. s

Every donation will help to make this vital service a reality and to ensure we go the extra mile for young patients in Worcestershire.

Visit Jo's JustGiving page at [justgiving.com/page/lauren-dolan-1737986260040](https://www.justgiving.com/page/lauren-dolan-1737986260040) to support and donate.



The Acting Bishop of Worcester, Martin Gorick. s

How I followed in the footsteps of Mary Magdalene

AN EASTER Message from the Bishop of Dudley and Acting Bishop of Worcester, Martin Gorick:

A FEW years ago, I went on pilgrimage to the Holy Land. It was my first time in Galilee and Jerusalem, and I shall never forget it.

Visiting holy sites, seeing the mountains that Jesus knew.

Praying with Palestinian Christians and staying with Christians from around the world.

And on the Sunday, very early in the morning, I went to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Priests were chanting in Aramaic, the ancient language of Jesus.

I was longing to go into the sepulchre itself, a tiny chapel built over the site where Jesus

had been buried after his death on the cross.

Even at that time I had to queue, and it was touch and go whether I would get in at all with services about to start.

But then it was my turn, and I stooped to go inside, through the tiny entrance door.

Just as Mary Magdalene and the others had done that first Easter Day.

I had a few seconds only, to take in the stone slab, and the icons and flickering candles inside.

And then I heard the words sound clearly in my mind, 'He is not here. He is Risen!'

Risen to reign as Lord and King. Risen to go before those first disciples to Galilee. Risen to go before us into every situation.

Happy Easter! Jesus Christ is Risen today. Alleluia!



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700 new homes with a focus on sustainability

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

WORK is under way on the development of nearly 700 homes on the site of the former Austin Rover factory, 20 years on from its closure.

Birmingham's leaders joined Vistry, a provider of mixed-tenure homes, to celebrate the beginning of a 688 home development, alongside the developer's partners, Bromford and Sigma.

The site will play host to much needed homes with Vistry working alongside housing association Bromford to deliver 250 of the homes, ensuring more than 40 per cent of the development will be offered in affordable tenures.

Sigma Capital Group has also partnered

with Vistry to take on 215 private rental properties.

The remaining 197 will be available on the open market, and the final 26 will be offered as First Homes.

Michael Moore, managing director of Vistry North West Midlands, said: "Like many major cities, Birmingham has a severe shortage of affordable homes - that's something we're aiming to address by going the extra mile to deliver affordable and social rent homes over and above what is required of us and delivering them at pace.

The homes will be built with a focus on sustainability, featuring air source heat pumps and PV panels for renewable electricity, whilst wastewater recovery systems will minimise water usage.

They will be manufactured off-site using open panel timber frames from the



Vistry Works East Midlands factory in Leicestershire.

Each home built, using these panels, emit 14,460kg CO₂e less than a traditional brick-and-block house.

The scheme will also stimulate economic growth through on-site employment, as well as creating designated spaces for community use and public open space.

Laurence Turner, MP for Northfield, said: "The redevelopment of one of the final parts of the Austin site comes at a symbolic moment - 20 years on from the collapse of MG Rover.

"It is positive that the symbolism of the site will be retained with the preservation of the industrial heritage."

LEFT - A mock-up of how some of the development's homes and open spaces will look. s

ABOVE - Northfield MP Laurence Turner joined other Birmingham leaders on a visit to the former Austin site alongside the developers and their partners. Photo by Emma Lowe. s



GOOD NEWS: BROMSGROVE MP Bradley Thomas has welcomed the news there has been a good uptake on the extra GP appointments being made available at the district's doctors' surgeries.

Mr Thomas found out about the extra face-to-face appointments during a visit to the BHI Parkside practice where he met the management team.

This followed Mr Thomas' campaign and letter to the Chief Executive of NHS Herefordshire and Worcestershire back in November, urging him to increase the number of GP appointments.

In response, NHS Herefordshire and Worcestershire added nearly 7,000 additional appointments across the two counties as part of a Winter Plan for 2024/25 for residents to access over the coming year.

Mr Thomas said: "A key part of my plan for Bromsgrove and the villages includes improving GP access, so it was great to hear there has been a good uptake in the extra face-to-face appointments that have been made available."

He added he also discussed the GP contract the BMA negotiated with the Government.

"Given the government has just hiked up employer National Insurance contributions for GP practices, the contract really is not as good as the government is claiming it is."

Visit bradleythomas.org.uk for further details.

CHARGED: A MAN and two boys from Worcestershire have been charged after reports of disorder between two groups at Kempton Court in Bromsgrove on Friday evening.

Jacob Colston, 18, of Meadow Road, Catshill, Bromsgrove was charged with conspiring to commit a robbery.

A 17-year-old, who cannot be named for legal reasons, has been charged with conspiring to commit a robbery, being concerned in the supply of a class A drug, possession of a class B drug and being concerned in the supply of a class B drug.

A 15-year-old boy has been charged with conspiring to commit a robbery and possession of a class B drug.

All three appeared at Kidderminster Magistrates' Court on Monday.

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Bromsgrove Deserves Better. It Is OK to Vote Reform UK

I am Chris Thomas, 46 years old, a businessman of 25 years, father to two young girls, a keen runner and a passionate advocate for our community. I also had the privilege of serving as a magistrate from 2018 to 2020, which gave me a deeper understanding of the challenges people face every day.

After years of watching politicians talk but fail to deliver, I have decided to stand for election.

Bromsgrove deserves better. Better leadership. Better ideas. Better results.

Worcestershire County Council is facing a serious financial crisis and is now scrambling to fill a £33 million black hole. At the same time, business rates and council tax continue to rise, our high street is declining, and our roads remain congested. These problems are not separate or unfortunate coincidences. They are the consequence of short-sighted decisions and a complete lack of joined-up thinking about our future.

Reform UK offers a fresh alternative. I am not a career politician. I am someone who has built businesses, created jobs and helped people succeed. Now, I want to bring that real world experience into local government.

If elected, I will prioritise three key areas:

- Regenerating our high street and bringing life back to the heart of Bromsgrove
- Making our streets safer by pushing for more visible policing and action on antisocial behaviour
- Bringing fresh, practical thinking to solve our traffic congestion problems

It is OK to feel let down. It is OK to want something better. And it is absolutely OK to vote Reform UK.

Follow me on X.com

@_christomas_uk and feel free to DM with your concerns and questions!



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PCC backs action on laughing gas

WEST Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) John Campion has welcomed the Government's announcement to make the possession of laughing gas a criminal offence.

Mr Campion has repeatedly called for tougher legislation to combat the damage nitrous oxide was causing in our communities.

"As a recreational drug mostly used by young people, I welcome this clamp down by the Government to make possession of laughing gas a criminal offence," he said.

"Locally, I have seen first-hand how easy it is to purchase nitrous oxide, the damage it causes to communities and its impact on public spaces with places often littered with canisters."

Mr Campion led the 'Combating Drugs Partnership' to tackle the impact substance use had on communities.

"So I understand the importance of educating our young people about drug use, intervening with support when substance misuse happens and having strong enforcement in place to give the police the powers they need to take drugs off our streets," he added.

Mr Campion thanked Mark Garnier, the MP for the Wyre Forest, who worked closely with the PCC on toughening legislation, adding: "He has been a loud and prominent voice on this issue in Parliament and his constituency of Wyre Forest."

Marathon effort to help find a cure for diabetes

A BROMSGROVE mum whose daughter has Type 1 Diabetes is running the London Marathon to raise money for a charity that is trying to find a breakthrough cure.

Anne-Louise Pridden will take on the 26.2mile course on Sunday, April 27 for Breakthrough T1D.

Her daughter, Caitlin, was diagnosed with Type 1 Diabetes at just nine years old after contracting Covid in 2020.

After spending a week in hospital following her daughter's diagnosis, they met the Breakthrough T1D bear Rufus who helped to give them support and introduced them to the charity.

There has been a huge increase in the number of children being left Type 1 diabetic after contracting Covid and Caitlin was devastated at potentially not being able to compete in her triathlons with her brother and friends.

Anne-Louise said: "I ran my first Marathon in 2023 in London to

by Mia Whitehouse

put all my anger, sadness and efforts into finding a cure to keep doing something positive and raise awareness.

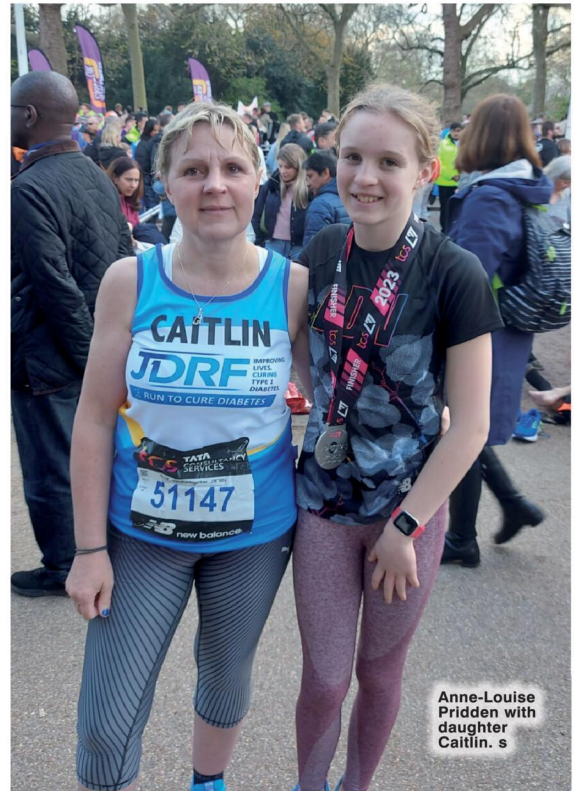
"This will be my last marathon because of time and being a carer for Caitlin.

"We now want to share our story to give other families hope, encouragement and the most important message that we understand just what life is like and we all have to move forward."

With hard work and determination, Caitlin is now a national triathlete for the Midlands Academy Triathlon team. She runs for Bromsgrove and Redditch Athletics Club, swims at Worcester swimming club and cycles for Wyre Forest Cycle Club.

She has also become a Breakthrough T1D Ambassador.

Anne-Louise said there are a lot of people to thank for Caitlin's care, her assistance dog Molly being especially important, provid-



Anne-Louise Pridden with daughter Caitlin.

ing love and care when her bloods have been too high or too low.

Caitlin has a parent-managed Instagram account, @caitlin_athletic_diabetic for promoting Type

1 in sport.

Go online to 2025tcs.londonmarathon.enthuse.com/pf/anne-louise-pridden to donate to her fundraising.

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The departments will be on hand throughout the evening to provide comprehensive information and guidance about the courses on offer and how they can kickstart your future. Whether you're looking to advance in your career, change your career path, gain important skills, or pursue a passion, the teams will be on hand to help navigate your future.

At the Worcester campus, you'll have the opportunity to explore a diverse selection of higher education and adult courses, including ESOL, Access to HE, Human Resources, Cyber Skills, and more. Meanwhile, at the Redditch campus, you can delve into courses such as Business, Accounting, Functional Skills/GCSEs, and additional exciting offerings.

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Children's hospice set to benefit from fun run

by Mia Whitehouse
news@bullivantmedia.com

THE CHARITY Partner for this year's Wythall and Hollywood Fun Run has been announced.

The popular event organised by Worcestershire County Council is set to take place on Saturday, June 22, and will raise funds for Acorns Children's Hospice.

The fun run gives participants the chance to take on 5k, 10k or Families on Track relay race.

Every year Acorns cares for more than 780 children who have been diagnosed with a life limiting or threatening condition and helps around 1,000 families, including those who are bereaved.

Sophie Boreham, Acorns Children's Hospice's events manager, said: "We're thrilled to be the charity partner for this year's event, which will see a welcome spotlight on our life-changing care for seriously ill children and their families across our region.

"The timing couldn't be better as the fun run coincides with national Children's Hospice Week - from June 16 to 22 - when all eyes will be on children's hospices and the vital care they provide."

She added events like this were so important as the charity relied on community support to raise the majority of the funds needed to continue its care.

"Help can't wait for these families. So it would be amazing if anyone signing up could join 'Team Acorns' and raise crucial funds that will enable us to continue to be

there for families caring for children with life limiting and life-threatening conditions when they need us most."

Olympic medalist Steve Cram, who is endorsing the fun run, said: "I visited Acorns hospice last year and it was amazing to find out more about the truly phenomenal work that goes on there, and to meet the team and some of the amazing children that benefit from their care.

"The work Acorns does makes such a difference to children and young people and their families in this area. If you need an extra incentive to get running this summer, fundraising for this charity is a very good reason."

Dr Lisa McNally, Director of Public Health for Worcestershire County Council, said: "Acorns is a charity that means a lot to many people in the West Midlands, and I'm delighted we can come together to help make a difference."

Those who sign up will receive a running vest, training support, a fundraising



pack, access to a private Whatsapp group, and a medal and tote bag for finishers.

Visit: wythallhollywoodfunrun.org.uk to book fun run places and: acorns.org.uk/acornsevent/wythall-hollywood-fun-run-2025 to find out more about fundraising.

Iain Gillett, Libby and Connor from Acorns Hospice with Steve Cram. s

RESIDENTS are being reminded to make sure they choose the best-placed healthcare option for them this Easter bank holiday weekends.

For cuts, grazes, wounds, sprains, minor eye injuries and minor burns, people can attend their local Minor Injuries Units (MIUs).

Unfortunately, the units cannot treat illnesses. People needing treatment are advised to contact NHS111 either via the website - 111.nhs.uk - or by calling 111.

Trained advisers will assess symptoms and then recommend the most suitable course of action which could include a visit to an MIU.

Alternatively, people can walk into their local MIU which are open during usual opening hours over bank holiday weekends.

In North Worcestershire, the MIU at Bromsgrove's Princess of Wales Community Hospital is open from 8am to 8pm everyday (last admission at 7.30pm), or Kidderminster Hospital's which opens between 8am and 10pm.

Accident and Emergency departments - like those at the Alexandra Hospital and Worcestershire Royal - should only be used in absolute emergencies.

Local pharmacists can also give expert confidential advice, as well as medicines for a range of minor ailments.

On Good Friday (April 18), in Morrisons Pharmacy, Buntsford Park, Bromsgrove, is open from 9am to 5pm. Hollywood Pharmacy, May Lane, is open from 9am to 7pm, and Boots, St Andrew's Square, Droitwich, from 9am to 5.30pm.

In Redditch, Boots in the Kingfisher Centre is open from 9am to 6pm and Tesco Extra, Coldfield Drive, from 10am to 4pm.

On Easter Sunday (April 20), Knights in Market Street, Bromsgrove, opens from 12pm to 3pm, and Church Green Pharmacy in Redditch opens from 1pm to 4pm.

And on Easter Monday (April 21), JHoots Pharmacy, BHI Parkside, Bromsgrove, opens from 12pm to 3pm., Boots in the Kingfisher Centre, Redditch, is open from 10am to 4pm, and Tesco Extra, Coldfield Drive, Redditch, opens between 10am to 4pm.

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Change in diet must be on menu

Article by **Chris Cooke** from Bromsgrove Extinction Rebellion.



Eco Action



ALMOST exactly a year ago AXR wrote a piece about food and farming for this column now published at - ourclimateconversation.uk/blogs/Food-Farming/ - promoting small local and community farms.

Not a lot has changed since - except that prices of everything have increased and we have suffered the second-worst harvest on record due to the high rainfall and one of the most devastating years for the decline of our pollinators. Since 2004 insect abundance has dropped by more than two thirds.

The UK food system has undergone years of intensification, industrialisation and increased use of pesticides and fertilisers in a rush to produce food whatever its environmental costs. It is the biggest cause of biodiversity loss and one of the largest contributors to climate change. We face catastrophic consequences if things do not quickly change.

The UK has an environmentally destructive and very inefficient mode of agriculture in the UK which uses 85 per cent of available land (for grazing and feed) to produce meat and dairy that provide just a third of the calories and less than half of the protein we consume.

We have to reduce our meat-eating habit by switching our diets to eat more vegetables and pulses (beans and peas) that grow well in our climate. This will improve our nutrition and gut micro-

biome so we are all healthier, and also free up a lot of land for nature and biodiversity enhancement. We do, though, need to provide financial support so farmers can become climate and nature heroes, helping us store more carbon and protect biodiversity on their land by adopting regenerative methods, whilst also feeding the nation.

Then there is the issue of food waste at each stage in the process from farm to plate. Each day in the UK an estimated 19million meals of edible food never makes it off the farm even. A third of all food produced is wasted through the supply chain and this has an enormous impact on the environment.

I am happy to eat 'wonky' vegetables and fresh produce surplus to supermarket requirements that can be purchased (for a donation) from NewStarts on Thursday afternoons.

Last September I visited the famous Long Table in Brimscombe Mill, Stroud, which provides nutritious food on a 'pay what you can afford' basis. They source the ingredients from local farms - there is enormous potential for such community restaurants and they could usher in a new age of enjoyable social eating and community renewal.

Visit: bromsgrove@extinctionrebellion.uk for more.



All the fun of the Fayre at Headless Cross Orchard. s

Live music and lots of fun

HEADLESS Cross Community Orchard will once again be hosting an annual May Fayre - from 11am to 4pm on bank holiday Monday, May 5.

There will be live music throughout the day with Arrow Valley Brass, Goblin Noises, Debbie and Garth, Found In A Field, Alan Sheward and Turvey.

This year will also feature the fayre's Freestyle Maypole Dancing, promoting audience participation.

Dancers of all ages can have a go at tying the ribbons around the Maypole.

To add to the family fun, there will be an array of games to enjoy including The Amazing

Human Fruit Machine, Splat The Rat, tug-o-war and sack races.

Meanwhile the cider bar will serve home grown cider, made by the Orchard volunteers.

Orchard volunteer Gabby Hemming said: "This is a fantastic free family event."

"It brings the whole community together to celebrate this wonderful green space."

"I look forward to it every year."

Headless Cross Community Orchard was planted in 2010 by volunteers who continue to maintain the green space.

The orchard is host to many Worcestershire varieties of fruit tree, including the Redditch Doddin apple.

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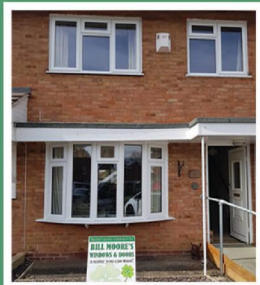
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Easter activities aplenty at farm

by Mia Whitehouse
news@bullivantmedia.com

CHURCHFIELDS Farm in Droitwich has plenty on offer for local families to do during its egg-cellent Easter event this bank holiday weekend.

Running until Easter Monday, April 21, children can enjoy personal meet and greets with the Easter Bunny and other seasonal characters and receive a complimentary treat.

Regular live interactive Scarecrow shows featuring characters Rusty and Sunny will run throughout the weekend which are guaranteed to captivate and inspire young imaginations.

Gillian Kerter, owner of Churchfields Farm, said: "Our team love to create fun events to provide magical Easter memories your chil-

dren will cherish.

"With activities running daily from 10am to 5pm, there's loads of family fun to be had."

More entertaining events take place on the farm over the Easter holidays, including an Egg Heads Easter Trail, animal paddocks with calves and baby goats, Easter crafts and games, an adventure playground, go-karts, giant bouncers and a zip line.

And there are experiences with an extra cost, such as the lamb bottle feeding experience (running twice-a-day), which needs to be pre-booked at £1.50 a ticket, and - weather dependent - Highland tractor tours at an additional £2 per person.

Wristband entry allows multiple entry/exit through-



out the day, with advance booking being recommended by visiting: churchfields.farm/events/easter-trail-fun-farm-plus-easter-eggstravaganza/ to buy your tickets.

There will be plenty of colourful characters to meet at Churchfields Farm in Droitwich this Easter. s



Rob Barratt will be performing his show 'Brain Tickling and Word Mangling' after a successful outing at last year's Bromsgrove Folk Festival. s

Rob bringing his WORDS to town

COMIC, poet, humourist and singer Rob Barratt is heading back to Bromsgrove for the latest WORDS event.

After playing a very well received gig at the The Bromsgrove Folk Festival last summer, he will be the guest speaker at Bromsgrove Library at 7pm next Tuesday, April 29, with his show 'Brain Tickling and Word Mangling'.

Rob has appeared at folk, literature and arts festivals all over the British Isles and Australia and his performance combines

clever word play, verse and song with satire, parody and audience participation.

He deals with a variety of important topics, such as squid, data driven education, neanderthal politics and the weather in Scotland - but beneath the humour lurk serious issues.

Tickets for the talk are £12 and can be booked by via Ticket Source by visiting: ticketsource.co.uk and typing 'Brain Tickling and Word Mangling' into the search bar.

A SPATE of registration plate thefts have been stolen from Littlebrook, Himbleton. The thefts occurred between 11.30pm on Sunday and 8.30am on Monday. Police are investigating and have urged

witnesses or anyone with information to call officers on 101 or Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

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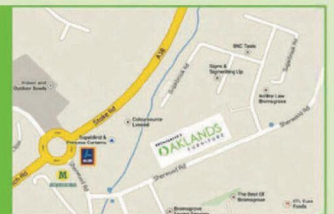
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Significant finds as police raid barbershops across the county

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

MORE THAN £500,000 has been seized by police in West Mercia as dozens of barbershops were raided as part of a national crackdown on criminal gangs using the businesses as fronts for fraudulent activities.

The campaign, known as Operation Machinize, saw efforts from forces across the nation to

tackle criminals using barbershops as fronts for fraud, money laundering, and the sale of illicit goods.

As part of the operation, 33 warrants were executed across West Mercia, focusing on gangs exploiting barbershops to conceal illegal cash flow. While these businesses appeared legitimate, they were, in reality, tools for financial crime.

Working alongside Trading Standards, West Midlands Fire and Rescue, Home Office Immigration, and Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs, the force seized over £500,000 in illegal funds and £16,000 in cash and arrested four

individuals.

Additionally, Trading Standards carried out three warrants, and Home Office Immigration questioned three individuals about their immigration status.

Proceeds of crime

West Mercia Police's Economic Crime Unit is leading the force's efforts nationally in tackling financial crime. Since April 2024, more than \$6million in criminal assets have been seized, disrupting the financial networks that support organised crime.

Det Insp Dan Fenn, from our Economic Crime team, said: "Organised crime groups are opportunistic and exploit legitimate businesses, such as barbershops, to hide their illegal cash flow.

"The high cash turnover of these businesses makes them ideal for disguising illicit activities.

"Our work during Operation Machinize sends a clear message to these crime networks - we will not tolerate criminal activity in our communities.

"Following these warrants, 34 intelligence reports have been submitted, helping to build a stronger intelligence picture and supporting future operations.

"Community intelligence played a key role in this operation.

"Some of the information used to plan these raids came from public



Premises were searched for signs of fraudulent activity. s



More than £500,000 was seized across the West Mercia Police force area. s

tip-offs.

"That local support is invaluable, and we encourage anyone with information about businesses involved in money laundering to report it."

Visit: westmercia.police.uk/ro/

report/fo/v2/report-fraud-bribery-corruption/ to report information regarding fraudulent businesses.

Alternatively, contact Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111.








Raids were carried out on dozens of barbershops as part of the national crackdown. s

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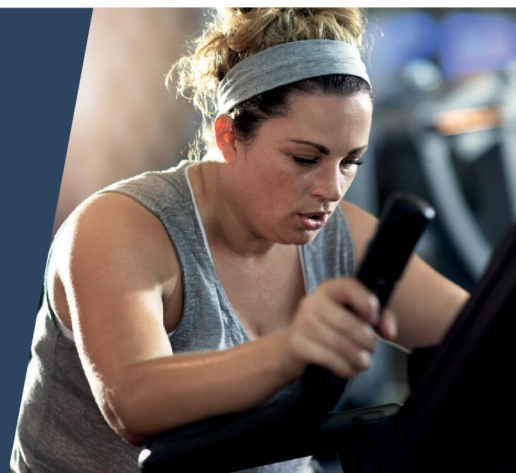
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The children met the donkeys. s

POPULAR VISITORS: A REDDITCH church has welcomed two reception classes, giving them a memorable experience of church, Palm Sunday, and the Easter story.

St Philip's Church in Webheath hosted 60 children from Webheath Academy.

A highlight of the visit was a surprise appearance by three donkeys - Dolly, Nessie, and Jono - courtesy of The Animal Pantry, based in Astwood Bank.

The donkeys were extremely well-behaved, much to the delight of the children, who were thrilled to meet them up close.

A spokesperson for the church

said: "We're especially grateful to Harriet Mayne, teacher at Webheath, and Carole, Beth, and Sam from The Animal Pantry for making the visit possible."

"Inside the church, the children learned about the events of Palm Sunday, taking turns to be part of a joyful procession or to cheer it on."

"Their visit ended with a wonderfully energetic rendition of 'He's Got the Whole World in His Hands', filling the church with song and smiles."

"It was a joyful day for all involved—a celebration of learning, community, and the wonder of Easter."



The donkeys were brought to the church by The Animal Pantry. s

First resident Joyce is enjoying settling in



A WOMAN and 'local legend' has shared her story as she becomes the first ever resident at Mount Croft Care Home since it opened in February this year.

Joyce Elliot was born and raised in Bromsgrove during the 1930s and has deep roots in the community.

She dedicated her youth to working at Brighton Shoe Shop on Bromsgrove High Street where she left an everlasting impression on customers, before going on to become a head waitress who was adored

for her outstanding service.

By 1949 she had met Maurice, who became her husband within six months. The pair went on to have two wonderful children, Sally and Peter.

Joyce also faced some challenges, losing Maurice at a young age being one of the worst for her.

She later went to work at Westmead Hotel, where fate introduced her to the owner, James, who she shared some amazing experiences of love, loss and travel with before

he too unexpectedly passed away.

With her strong desire to be close to family, she moved back to her hometown, Bromsgrove, where she is now starting her joyful new chapter as a resident at Mount Croft.

Joyce is excited for shopping excursions and meeting new neighbours in her new home and cannot wait to settle in.

Joyce Elliot, Mount Croft's first resident, with home manager Liza Dews. s

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Food for thought

THERE has been a significant step in tackling food waste, with new legislation requiring businesses across England to separate food waste from general waste.

As businesses adjust to these new regulations, Worcestershire County Council is encouraging residents to take a closer look at their own food waste habits.

To support this, the council is relaunching #FoodSavvy a campaign designed to help residents save cash and reduce food waste.

A recent poll revealed that one-third of Worcestershire residents throw away edible food more than once a week, often due to cooking too much or allowing food to expire. Additionally, 40 per cent admitted they discarded food simply because they lacked knowledge about proper storage or creative ways to use leftovers.

In Worcestershire, more than a third of household black bin waste consists of food, with over two-thirds of it classified as 'avoidable', meaning it could have been eaten.

To help, the county council is sharing top tips and practical advice on its social media channels to help residents waste less and make the most of their food.

Worcestershire County Council's waste prevention project manager said: "We know people waste food for all sorts of reasons - they buy too much, don't store it correctly, or aren't sure how best to use up leftovers.

"#FoodSavvy aims to provide simple and effective solutions to help people plan better, store food properly and get creative in the kitchen.

"Reducing food waste isn't just good for the environment; it also helps families save money.

"With the average family now wasting up to £1000 worth of perfectly edible food every year, it is more important than ever that families take a good look at what they do with their food."

The Food Savvy scheme focuses on key themes, such as planning meals and shopping, storing food correctly so it lasts longer and eating all food bought.

Visit: letswasteless.com/foodsavvy for practical tips and more information.

Time to prove you are top with the tourists

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

TOURISM and hospitality businesses across the county can now apply to be considered for the 2025/26 Visit Worcestershire Tourism Awards.

Organisations have until June 9 to put themselves forward for the accolades which will be announced in March 2026.

The awards are given for acclaimed attractions, hospitality venues, and innovative new tourism products, whilst also giving the chance to businesses to represent Worcestershire at the VisitEngland Awards for Excellence where, in 2025, Worcestershire secured two national finalists.

Lorna Robinson, visitor economy and destination manager at Visit Worcestershire, explained the importance of the awards.

She said: "These awards not only recognise the outstanding businesses that make our visitor economy thrive but also provide incredible PR and exposure, with finalists gaining local and national recognition.

"We can't wait to see this year's applicants and uncover more brilliant businesses showcasing Worcestershire's excellence in tourism and hospitality."

Among the accolades are the Accessible and Inclusive Tourism Award, Business Events Venue of the Year, Camping, Glamping and Holiday Park of the Year,



Experience of the Year, Festival and Event of the Year, Large Hotel of the Year and Large Visitor Attraction of the Year.

Others include the New Tourism Business of the Year, Pub of the Year, Regenerative Tourism Award, Self Catering Accommodation of the Year, Small Hotel of the Year/Small Serviced Accommodation Provider of the Year, Small Visitor Attraction of the Year, Taste of Worcestershire Award and the Unsung Hero Award.

Last year's winners have seen significant benefits including increased visibility, new business opportunities, accredited quality assurance and boosted staff morale.

Businesses will find out if they have been shortlisted for the awards by the end of August this year.

To support the applicants, Visit Worcestershire have provided a range of helpful tools and guidance to simplify the process on the Tourism Awards page - go to: visitworcestershire.org/trade/tourism-awards/ for more.

Last year's winners in the Visit Worcestershire Tourism Awards. s

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Community Benefit Society



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Stockwood Business Park lies in the beautiful Worcestershire countryside within easy reach of the main travel routes that stretch out from the Midlands and around the UK. A busy yet peaceful hub of activity set within the working organic and biodynamic Rush Farm.

Rush Farm is at the heart of the Stockwood Community Benefit Society mission. Surrounding the business park with lush green fields, streams and woodland there is a network of footpaths and bridlepaths for members, tenants and the public to enjoy. Thanks to regenerative biodynamic farming practices, Rush Farm sequesters over 3,400 tons of CO2 per year which is offsetting the equivalent of about 420 UK households. With 9 bird species on the RSPB red list and 8 on the amber list, Rush Farm provides a haven for birds and wildlife alike, while producing delicious, healthy and sustainable food. Members of Stockwood Community Benefit Society are able to be part of the life of Rush Farm through our fortnightly members newsletter, farm walks and volunteer days, as well as having direct access to our pasture fed beef and lamb and our organic vegetables.

We are excited to get going. Our question to you is will you help, would you enjoy this journey as much as we do? If so please do join us for the next exciting chapter of Stockwood Community Benefit Societies journey.

You can find out more by scanning the QR code, following us on social media or emailing us using the details below – we'd love to hear from you!



When it comes to businesses we are alive with a diverse variety of companies. From refrigeration and bait boats, interior design and therapy hubs all the way to accountants and stationary design. An eclectic mix of trades and wonderful people. Stockwood business park has been under the leadership of Stockwood Community Benefit Society for the last past 10 years with over 400 very loyal investors. During this time we have installed a large solar array on the top of one of our warehouse barn buildings and we have a huge ground source heat plant that keeps us all warm during the harsh winters. We have paid 5% interest to our investors every year until 2022. We pride ourselves on doing all we can to become a centre of sustainability. We thrive to work with integrity at every step of the way doing our utmost to be of support to our tenants, the aim to build a community here at Stockwood where the businesses and farm work side by side towards a carefully curated future.

Our aim of course is to become more sustainable, in as many ways as possible. In order to do this we need, to put it bluntly, pay off our mortgage so that we can become wholly community owned. We are halfway there but with such hikes in interest this year, well, you know the rest! We are eager to, for example, improve our buildings, make them more environmentally friendly and invest in a plant where we can burn our rubbish to create energy. So many ideas and

This advert is a bit of a plea. Raising capital is tough in these times when the media brings us such frightful news day after day, hour after hour. The thing to remember is that there is so much hope. So much we can do to make the future a truly positive one. Not because you are using the right phone or driving the newest flashiest electric vehicle but because the sun will shine and the rain will fall, and the soil is cared for and brings us truly nutritious food – not a lab grown lettuce that has never felt the sun's rays or the rain against its leaves. The animals will thrive on the nutrients generated by the mycorrhizal activity in the soil meaning that they don't produce such harmful levels of methane talked of in the news. The bees pollinate our crops giving us the sweetest honey. Animals from cows to shrews, birds and insects, all do their bit together in maintaining the ecosystem and your investment protects them. Rain falls to feed the farmland, sunlight provides power, the earth warms our on-site buildings, waste is turned into electricity and there we have it. This most beautiful space in Worcestershire is transformed into a sustainable place to work, learn and be. The most incredible thing about all this is not just that it's happening here at Stockwood but that you can be part of it, part of our journey. It's easy to invest. Scan the QR code, write to us or follow us on social media to find out more – and tell your friends too

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Rangers pass a key milestone in visits



SEVERN Trent's project manager James Strumidlo says having sufficient water capacity for customers is more important than ever. s

SEVERN Trent has marked a significant milestone with its River Rangers reaching 10,000 visits to rivers and waterways across the region.

This highlights the essential work the River Rangers have been doing since their launch in 2022 to monitor water quality, protect local rivers, and engage with and contribute towards in their local communities.

The team of 11 River Rangers have been at the forefront of Severn Trent's efforts to improve river health and environmental protection across a range of rivers, streams and brooks.

Areas in focus for the rangers include Worcestershire, Birmingham, Black Country, Coventry, Warwickshire, Leicestershire, Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire, Shropshire, Staffordshire and Sutton Park in Sutton Coldfield.

Their work includes regular inspections, testing for ammonia, phosphate and chlorine, and taking part in conservation activities to support the local wildlife and habitats.

Lauren Quinn, a Severn Trent's Senior River Ranger, said: "From inspecting outfalls to engaging with the public, every day provides me with a new challenge and an opportunity to make a real difference."

"It's rewarding to know the work



SEVERN Trent's River Rangers have now notched up 10,000 visits across the region. s

we do is having a direct impact on the quality of local rivers, as well as raising awareness about the importance of conservation."

Lauren, from Coventry, who has previously worked in environmental laboratory testing and site monitoring across the Midlands, is passionate about rivers, and maintaining habitats for local wildlife.

The River Rangers also play an important role in educating people about water quality and encouraging participation in conservation activities. The team regularly engages with residents, citizen science groups and public officials to raise awareness about the importance of keeping rivers clean and healthy.

Gareth Mead, Severn Trent's River Ranger Manager, added: "Reaching 10,000 visits while meeting more

than 2,400 customers is testament to the dedication and hard work of our River Rangers.

"These visits and inspections are not just about gathering data - they help to ensure we are working quickly to resolve any potential issues that may impact the region's rivers.

"Our team of River Rangers have become an important part of our approach to environmental protection, and we are proud of the difference they are making."

As Severn Trent moves forward, the River Rangers will continue their important work in protecting water quality, engaging with local communities, and supporting the broader efforts that help maintain the health of rivers for future generations.

SEVERN Trent is building a new £15million distribution service reservoir to boost water supplies in Worcestershire.

Work has begun on the scheme in Bournheath, Bromsgrove, to construct the huge new storage facility, which will offer an extra two megalitres (2million litres) of water for the area.

Other planned projects to secure water supplies in Worcestershire include drilling new boreholes, a £14million scheme which is due to be completed later this year.

James Strumidlo, 26, is Severn Trent's project manager for the new service reservoir scheme.

He said: "Having enough water storage for when customers need it is more important than ever, as we face the increasing demands of climate change and population

growth.

"Distribution service reservoirs are a vital part of our water network, as they help us to meet extra demand in areas like Worcestershire when needed."

The water resilience schemes follow Severn Trent receiving the green light from regulator Ofwat in December to invest some £15billion in sector-leading plans for the region over five years.

This includes a £320million investment programme for Worcestershire to improve service for customers, boost water supplies, improve river health and create 7,000 new jobs across the region.

Benefits for customers in Worcestershire include investing £65million to increase capacity at the Strensham water treatment works.



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Colleagues from Platform Housing Group with Anita Hill from the NSPCC. s

Housing group backing NSPCC

STAFF from Platform Housing Group are gearing up for a year of fundraising in support of children's charity NSPCC.

From the start of this month to March 31 2026, the NSPCC (National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children) will be the organisation's official corporate charity, with colleagues rallying together to raise funds through a variety of creative and challenging activities.

Anita Hill, corporate partnerships manager at NSPCC, added: "We are delighted to become the charity of the

year partner of Midlands based Platform Housing Group this year. Their 2025 fundraising plans are already well under way and I am personally excited to work with the team at Platform to see what creative ways they will raise vital funds for the NSPCC.

"Working together we will help keep children safe."

The NSPCC has been fighting for every childhood and to prevent child abuse since 1884.

Their mission is to protect children, prevent abuse, and support those who need it most.

Platform Housing Group

is proud to stand alongside them in their vital work. Clare Durnin, executive director of corporate resources at Platform Housing Group and member of the fundraising committee, said: "As a social housing provider, supporting our communities is at the heart of everything we do.

"Each year, our colleagues nominate a corporate charity that aligns with our values and the communities we serve.

"We're thrilled to be partnering with the NSPCC this year and can't wait to see the weird and wonderful ways our teams will fundraise for this vital cause."

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LEFT: Severn Trent teamed up with the National Trust to plant thousands of trees. s



RIGHT: Treflach Farm in Oswestry, Shropshire, received wetlands and biodiversity funding. s

Nature given a Great Big Boost

NEW WILDLIFE habitats are being created across the Midlands by the region's water supplier.

Severn Trent has been boosting biodiversity by creating new habitats across the area.

In 2020, the company launched its Great Big Nature Boost commitments, planting 1.3million trees and helping to improve and enhance 5,000 hectares of habitat – and the latest figures have revealed that more than 11,500 hectares is now thriving across the region.

Severn Trent has released photos showing how the schemes, including projects with the National Trust and Wildlife Trusts, have created improved habitats for fauna and flora, trees and wildlife.

They include sphagnum moss, planted to aid peatland restoration across Combs Moss moorland in the Peak District. As well as restoring nature-rich habitats the project, led by Moors for the Future Partnership, helps reduce potential flooding and boosts water quality.

Severn Trent also teamed up with the National Trust to plant thousands of trees across Derbyshire to create new Clough Woodlands.

Other biodiversity projects have included helping fund the reintroduction of families of beavers to Willington Wetlands in Derbyshire and the Idle Valley Nature Reserve in Nottinghamshire for the first time in 800 years.

The schemes, run by Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire Wildlife

Trusts, have seen the cute mammals create dams to slow flow from waterways and onto wetlands, to help prevent flooding.

Bryony Harrison, senior biodiversity project manager at Severn Trent, praised her team and partners for delivering the projects.

She said: "We're delighted to have helped create so many wonderful new habitats, including many with our partners and community groups.

"Our team are very proud of delivering these projects – but making sure we are doing the right thing for nature.

"I've always been passionate about the environment from childhood so, this has been the dream job for me."

Other projects have included creating flower rich road-side verges in Shropshire and reinstating meadows in Warwickshire to boost populations of wildflowers, fungi, bees, butterflies and bats.

Severn Trent has also supported farmers across the region to make biodiversity improvements on their farms, helping to reduce the use of pesticides, planting hedgerows and to improve river water quality.

And the water company has also helped fund flower-rich mini-meadows on farmlands across the region, which support bees and butterflies. The meadows improve water quality by acting as a natural filter to help with flood prevention.

Bryony's award-winning team also help with ensuring Severn

Trent capital projects have a positive environmental impact, with the aim of boosting 'biodiversity net gain' at each site.

Bryony looked back over the past five years to recall her favourite moments, adding: "I was there the day they released the beavers at Derbyshire, who are great for helping biodiversity. The beavers just looked back at us – then swam off.

"I also love how we have helped so many smaller community groups with our Boost for Biodiversity grants.

"Schemes have ranged from seeding projects to creating pond links to boost habitats for amphibians and birds. Helping communities with these schemes has been really rewarding."

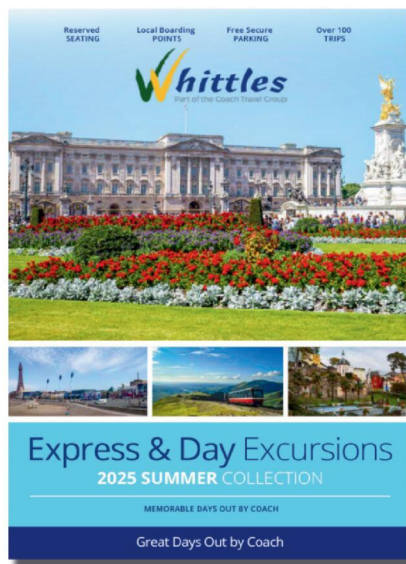


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Busy Bees opens a forest school at the Droitwich nursery. Photo by Richard Grange/United National Photography (UNP). s

Exploring the great outdoors

A NURSERY in Droitwich has shared its excitement in opening a brand-new forest school in a bid to ignite a love of nature to support children's learning and development.

Busy Bees Droitwich, on Worcester Road, officially opened its forest school this week and is available to pre-school children currently attending.

Led by a trained forest school practitioner, the school offers a range of enriching outdoor activities to engage children in hands-on learning experiences, using only natural resources from the surrounding environment.

From bird watching and plant identification to learning about fire safety, the environment emphasises the importance of problem-solving and understanding of the world in a fun and educational way.

The forest school is located just a few minutes' walk on the grounds of Dorset House Nursing Home, where the nursery and home work closely together to foster a sense of community.

The nursery is managed by Centre Director, Lucy Price, who has a passion for the environment and sustainability. She said she was 'excited for the new space which she felt would prepare children for the outdoor world and for school'.

Lucy said: "We believe children flourish

when they are encouraged to connect with the world around them.

"I believe this outdoor space will provide our children with invaluable life skills.

"Not only will they learn about nature, but they'll also develop resilience, confidence and independence."

"Our families are thrilled about the school, as the children love spending time outdoors and exploring nature.

"We can't wait to invite our families to visit and experience this wonderful space themselves."

In addition to the Forest School, Busy Bees Droitwich has launched an energy efficiency scheme, a collaborative effort involving both the children and the nursery team.

Since August 2024, the entire nursery has been actively participating in switching off the lights at 10am and 2pm when rooms are not in use, teaching the children the importance of sustainability and energy conservation.

Lucy and Sam, assistant centre director, are also members of the Busy Bees Eco Ambassadors Network which plays a key role in shaping sustainability efforts.

The nursery also has an Eco Committee where the pre-schoolers share their sustainability ideas.

Visit: busybeeschildcare.co.uk/nursery/droitwich for more information.

New art exhibition at the library

A NEW exhibition has launched at Redditch Library, showing art created by 40 people in 20 different prisons across the UK and America.

The We Roar exhibition is a the first of its kind to tour nine prisons consecutively in 2024. Library visitors can see the free exhibition at Redditch Library for the month of April, as well as joining free events, such as art workshops, poetry performances and film screenings.

The exhibition offers a rare insight into mass incarceration in the US and UK, with artwork and poetry by the different prisoners.

All exhibitors were sent a poem and

two paintings as an inspirational starting point for the project and were given creative mentoring, led by artist Faye Claridge partnering with Novus (UK) and the Prison Creative Arts Project (USA).

Faye said: "The public doesn't usually have access to prison experiences directly from incarcerated people so it's really powerful to share these artworks and poems.

"Each also has a statement and some mention ambitions for the project to help 'the world to become a less judgemental place' and 'to convey the fact that all prisoners are human'. They're emotional and inspiring."



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Taking steps to Walk This May

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

WALKING groups across Worcestershire and Herefordshire are collaborating to launch a campaign towards a healthier lifestyle for residents across the regions.

Worcestershire Health Walks and Herefordshire's Wellbeing Walks groups are encouraging people to get involved in the Walk This May Challenge.

The challenge invites people to see how many times they can collectively walk 53 miles, the length of the border between the two counties.

Whether participants are seasoned walkers or new to physical activity, this challenge is designed to bring people together and promote getting active.

The event runs from Monday, May 12, to Sunday, May 25, and offers an opportunity to meet new people, increase physical activity and reap the numerous health benefits of walking.

Stephen Brewster,



Active Herefordshire and Worcestershire CEO said: "We are really excited to offer this new challenge for regular walkers and new joiners this May."

"If you've been looking for a new challenge or way to get moving more, we are ready to welcome you."

The 'Walk This May Challenge' is a joint project led by Active Herefordshire and Worcestershire, Herefordshire Council, and Worcestershire County Council.

Zoe Clifford, Director of Public Health for Herefordshire Council said:

"This month, we're inviting everyone to take part in our Walk This May Challenge."

"Joining these organised walks is a fantastic way to be active, have fun, and enjoy quality time with friends both old and new."

Visit worcestershire.gov.uk/HealthWalks and herefordshire.gov.uk/walkthismay for more information.

A Worcestershire Health Walk from The Land Oak Pub, off the Birmingham Road, Kidderminster for National Walking Month 2025. s

Fire Walking At The Oaks

Join us for an exhilarating evening of Firewalking to support **The Care Workers' Charity**.

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

24th April

4pm

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Film set to drive audiences wild

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

A SCREENING of the 25-minute film 'Save Our Wild Isles - Hungry for Change' will take place at 7.15pm on Tuesday, April 22, at Millfields and District Social Club in Bromsgrove.

The event has been organised by Bromsgrove Climate Action, a subgroup of Friends of the Earth.

Places are free but people need to book them beforehand and drinks will be available from the bar from 8pm.

There will also be a discussion after the film which is about bringing nature back into the food production system and moving to a model of agriculture where better meat is produced and consumed.

Bromsgrove Climate Action says if people can reduce their meat consumption by 30 per cent, it would make a significant difference to greenhouse gas emissions and to nature.

A number of issues are explored through the film.

One is financial support for farmers so they can be



climate and nature heroes by storing more carbon and protecting biodiversity on their land whilst feeding the nation.

Another is about a more regenerative model of agriculture where nature is brought back to farms and wider landscapes, including wildflower verges, hedgerows, trees and ponds - all vital habitats for our wildlife.

And reducing food waste is another key factor.

In the UK, \$603million per year comes from contribution of pollinators to the value of food produced but, since 2004, insect abundance has dropped by 64 per cent.

The UK food system has

undergone years of intensification, industrialisation and increased use of pesticides and fertilisers. It is the biggest cause of biodiversity loss in the UK.

Email: hungryforchange@creativeedge.uk for further details.

Search for 'Save Our Wild Isles' and 'Bromsgrove' as the location at eventbrite.com to find the event and book tickets.

People can also scan the QR Code on the picture to book.

The screening of 'Save Our Wild Isles - Hungry for Change' takes place in Bromsgrove on Tuesday. s



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Group's classic prison comedy was certainly one to remember

RUBERY Drama Group's Jail Birds was not only very traditional British situation comedy at its best, but was also one of the funniest plays I had seen this year.

Playing to a packed Beacon Church Centre, the talented cast were tasked with portraying a group of characters who had clearly known each other for a long time (think 'they could finish each other's sentences'). And they rose to the challenge.

The comedy by Colin Barrow takes place in the communal area of HMP Con-em-all and centres on the inmates, prison officer, governor and a hapless - and often outrageous - nurse.

The first act set the scene well with plenty of great comedy and one-liners and then, in the second, that level of humour was taken to a new level.

Every member of the cast played their part.

Cast performances

These included Wendy Pardoe as Emma, the sometimes grumpy but genius painting forger, Paula Hogarth as technology wizard Jane, Vicky Routh as the matriarchal Sandra, Jayne Jones as horticultural expert Sonia and Charlotte Murphy as 'adult chat line operator' and former brothel owner Jenny.



Among the rest of the Jail Birds was Jo Anscombe as Angela and Sharon Lawrence who played the bizarre 'flatulent' Mary - she did not say a word during the whole production, just shuffled about breaking wind.

Each of those characters had obviously been caught breaking the law on the outside but were being far more successful under the nose of the - now complicit - governor (excellently played by Paul Harris)

and Officer Parker (David Smith) - he played the role well too, resembling a 'Blakey' character from ITV's On The Buses.

Ian Kimberley Ryan was as solid as ever in the role of Lewis who, a former locksmith, used his skills to slip his all-male wing to get to the women's section which was a lot cushier.

If you had to choose one stand-out performance, it would go to Helen Watton as Nurse Dawson. Her hap-

less character and her anecdotes of people she had (mostly unsuccessfully) treated, the methods used and the unfortunate outcomes had the audience in hysterics. In a Victoria Wood-esque northern accent, you were captivated by her crazy tales that - even in these days of a struggling NHS - made your eyes water. I have watched Helen in a number of different roles over the years but this, by far, was her funniest. She was made for the part.

Social comment

There was also a degree of social comment - presented in a comedic way - in this production about prison life being 'luxurious'.

The inmates - with a sense of entitlement more associated with the upper middle and upper classes - had both the governor and the officer wrapped around their little fingers and in the palms of their hands. So much so, that rather than vying for parole, they would not want to be anywhere else.

Well done to director Diane Trueman and this talented cast which certainly delivered for her - this two-hour show felt like you had binge-watched four episodes of a new - but classic - British sitcom.

Remembering Dave Morris

The production was dedicated to founding member and long-time director and performer Dave Morris who passed away recently. Everyone involved did him proud - he would have loved this show and the way it was staged. It epitomises what Rubery Drama Group is all about and what it has become renowned for since its inception.

Tristan Harris

The cast put on a memorable production of Jail Birds. s

★★★★★ Trustpilot

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As we step into spring, expert issues a wildflower warning

AN EYE-watering £5,000 fine - or even a six month prison sentence - could be faced by anyone who feels the urge to pick a flower or two on their way home.

With spring upon us and bursts of colour appear in many of the region's parks and village greens, people may feel the urge to take home daffodils or bluebells - but by doing that, they might be breaking the law.

As daffodils and other wildflowers begin brightening up the landscape, it is important to admire them without disturbing their natural habitat.

What the law says

Under the 1968 Theft Act and the 1981 Wildlife and Countryside Act, it is illegal in the UK to 'pick, uproot or destroy any wild plant without permission from the landowner or occupier'.

This applies to flowers from any park, roundabout or verge that is maintained by a council or community organisation.

Julian de Bosdari, CEO at plant nursery Ashridge -

ashridgetrees.co.uk - said: "With the weather getting warmer as we head into spring, daffodils and other lovely wildflowers, such as bluebells and primroses, are once again coming back into season.

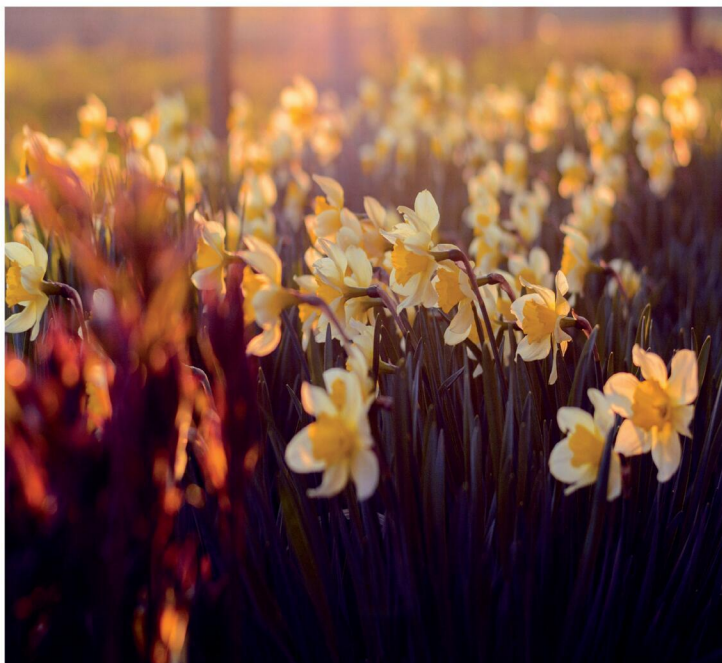
'Don't be tempted'

He added: "It may seem tempting to gather them while spending the day outdoors, especially if you are on a romantic outing, but doing so can harm the environment and lead to serious legal consequences.

"Respecting wildlife laws not only prevents you from breaking the bank and ruining your month but also helps preserve the beauty of the UK's landscapes, ensuring they remain enjoyable for everyone—and for a long time."

Besides daffodils, flowers such as bluebells, snowdrops, primroses and wild orchids, are also protected under the law, so people are urged to keep their hands off them this spring.

The gardening expert warns that, while these flowers should be left on the ground no matter where, the



areas where picking flowers is prohibited include council-owned parks, National Trust properties and nature reserves and Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

Picture perfect

Mr de Bosdari added: "Instead of picking the flowers, a better way to immortalise the moment is to take a photo of the landscape - hundreds or thousands of flowers blooming together will certainly look more beautiful than a single, withering flower in your hand.

"If you really want to bring spring home, consider planting them in your garden or in indoor vases.

"You can find and purchase different seeds, bulbs, and even bare-root species online or in physical shops - this way, you help preserve the environment for everyone while bringing colour and life to your home."

Picking wildflowers can lead to a £5,000 fine or even a six month prison sentence. s

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SUDOKU

Complete the grid so that every row, every column and every 3 x 3 box contains every digit from 1 to 9.

EASY

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 6 | | 8 | | 9 | | | | 2 |
| | 2 | | 1 | 8 | 6 | | | 4 |
| | | 9 | | | | 1 | | 6 |
| 3 | | 7 | 5 | | 2 | | | 8 |
| 1 | 5 | | | 7 | | | | 3 |
| 8 | | | 6 | | 4 | 7 | | 1 |
| | | 5 | | 4 | | 9 | | |
| | 8 | | 3 | | 7 | | 1 | 4 |
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HARD

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| 3 | | 5 | | 7 | | | | 9 |
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| 1 | 2 | | 9 | | | | | |
| | | | | 8 | | 4 | | |
| 6 | | | 7 | | | | | |
| | 9 | | | 6 | 7 | | | 2 |

PATHFINDER

Beginning with the top highlighted letter, follow a continuous path of words associated with the given subject. The trail goes through each letter once, twisting up, down and sideways, but never diagonally.

Makeup bag contents

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

Solutions opposite

CROSSWORD

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|----|----|----|--|---|----|----|----|--|----|--|----|
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| 20 | | | | | 21 | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 22 | | | | | | | | | 23 | | |

ACROSS

- Quote (4)
- Crusade (8)
- Harmful (7)
- Morning reception (5)
- Ingrained habit (6,6)
- Foreign (6)
- Anew (6)
- Irrational belief (12)
- Distort (5)
- Raise (7)
- Maim (8)
- Exceedingly (4)

DOWN

- Box (8)
- Poisonous (5)
- Agree (6)
- Lowest RAF commission (5-7)
- Upside down (7)
- Requirement (4)
- Agreeing by chance (12)
- Stormy (8)
- Eye-specialist (7)
- Declare (6)
- Angry (5)
- Separate particular (4)

Scribble pad

LADDER

Using the clues provided, fill in each step of the ladder with a new word, changing one letter at a time.

- Terrible
- Goad
- Time period
- Moderate
- Chew



NINER

Each number from 1 to 9 represents a different letter. Solve the clues and insert the letters in the appropriate squares to discover a word which uses all nine letters.

- 6347 gives a bird;
- 9728 gives a second bird;
- 651172 gives a third bird.

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

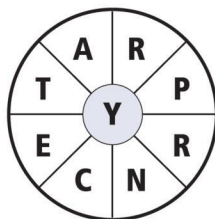
CODEWORD

This puzzle has no clues. Instead, every number printed in the grid represents a letter, with the same number always representing the same letter. For example, if 8 turns out to be a V, you can write in V wherever a square contains 8. Using your knowledge of words, complete the puzzle.

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
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| A | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| B | 20 | 25 | 16 | 14 | | 20 | 12 | 24 | 20 | 15 | 23 | | 15 | |
| C | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| D | | 25 | | | 8 | 23 | 3 | | | 22 | | 24 | 18 | 18 |
| E | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| F | | 18 | | | | 23 | | 19 | 21 | 20 | 15 | | 24 | 6 |
| G | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| H | 13 | 11 | 18 | 5 | 11 | | | 14 | | | | | | 25 |
| I | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| J | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| K | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| L | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
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| Y | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Z | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

WORDWHEEL

You have 10 mins to find as many words as possible using the letters in the wheel. Each must use the hub letter and at least 3 others. Letters may be used only once. You cannot use plurals, foreign words or proper nouns. There is at least one 9-letter word to be found.

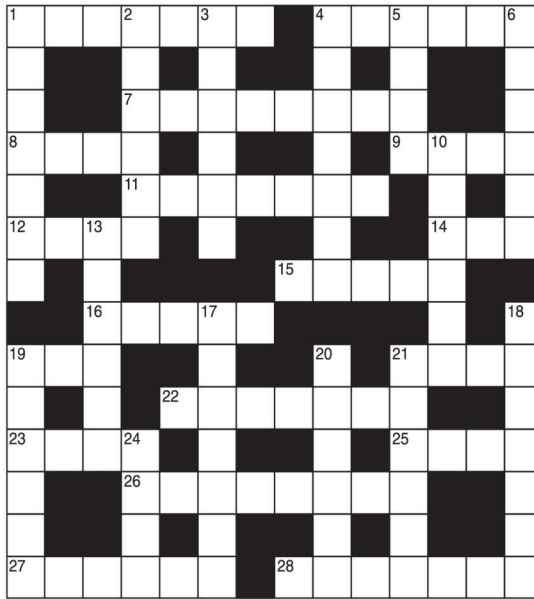


How you rate
 15 words: average 25 words: very good
 20 words: good 30 or more: excellent.

GENERAL KNOWLEDGE CROSSWORD

ACROSS

- 1 JRR ---, philologist and novelist whose works include *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* (7)
- 4, 19 & 8 Across Howard Spring novel published in 1940 (4,2,3,4)
- 7 Fee paid to a barrister, etc., for a right to their services if required (8)
- 8 See 4 Across
- 9 & 20 Down Author of the *Famous Five* and *Secret Seven* series (4,6)
- 11 Of Spain and Portugal as one country (7)
- 12 & 16 Across Constellation also known as the Great Bear (4,5)
- 14, 19 & 5 Down British statesman who refused to take the oath of supremacy to Henry VIII as head of the Church and was executed for high treason in 1535 (3,6,4)
- 15 Surname of the second president of the US (5)
- 16 See 12 Across
- 19 See 4 Across
- 21 In the Bible, the twin brother of Jacob (4)
- 22 Angela ---, Irish television presenter (7)
- 23 Inland departement in Normandy, noted for the powerful Percheron horses bred there (4)
- 25 King of the Greek gods (4)
- 26 An ornamental textile fabric made by passing coloured threads among fixed warp threads (8)
- 27 Short lyrical poem (6)
- 28 Short, devotional exercise in honour of the Incarnation, repeated three times daily (7)



DOWN

- 1 The duke of Athens in A Midsummer-Night's Dream (7)
- 2 Hardy shrub, with bright yellow flowers in spring (6)
- 3 Dish served at dinner between the chief courses, or as a substitute (6)
- 4 Republic in north-eastern Europe whose capital is Helsinki (7)
- 5 See 14 Across
- 6 In snooker, a rest with long legs, used to raise the cue above a ball (6)
- 10 In Greek mythology, a centaur who carried travellers across the Euenus for a small fee (6)
- 13 In Acts 13, a Christian teacher at Antioch 'called Niger' (6)
- 17 The back of the head or skull (7)
- 18 Edible bivalve molluscs found in clusters attached to rocks (7)
- 19 See 14 Across
- 20 See 9 Across
- 21 Any one of a large class of protein substances produced by living cells, which act as catalysts in chemical changes (6)
- 24 Town opposite Windsor, with an old public school (4)

SOLUTIONS

ACROSS: 1 Tolkien; 4 Fame Is; 7 Retainer; 8 Spur; 9 Enid; 11 Iberian; 12 Ursa; 14 Sir; 15 Adams; 16 Major; 19 The; 21 Esau; 22 Scanton; 23 Orme; 25 Zeus; 26 Tapestry; 27 Sonnet; 28 Angelus. DOWN: 1 Theses; 2 Kerria; 3 Entree; 4 Finland; 5 More; 6 Spider; 10 Nessus; 13 Simeon; 17 Occiput; 18 Muscels; 19 Thomas; 20 Byron; 21 Enzyme; 24 Eton.

General Knowledge Crossword

ACROSS: 1 Tolkien; 4 Fame Is; 7 Retainer; 8 Spur; 9 Enid; 11 Iberian; 12 Ursa; 14 Sir; 15 Adams; 16 Major; 19 The; 21 Esau; 22 Scanton; 23 Orme; 25 Zeus; 26 Tapestry; 27 Sonnet; 28 Angelus. DOWN: 1 Theses; 2 Kerria; 3 Entree; 4 Finland; 5 More; 6 Spider; 10 Nessus; 13 Simeon; 17 Occiput; 18 Muscels; 19 Thomas; 20 Byron; 21 Enzyme; 24 Eton.

Crossword

ACROSS: 1 Cite; 3 Campaign; 9 Noxious; 10 Leave; 11 Second nature; 13 Exotic; 15 Afters; 17 Supposition; 20 Twist; 21 Elevate; 22 Mutilate; 23 Very. DOWN: 1 Canister; 2 Toxic; 4 Assent; 5 Pilot-officer; 6 Inverse; 7 Need; 8 Coincidental; 12 Thunder; 14 Occultist; 16 Assent; 18 Rate; 19 Item.

Wordwheel Pathfinder

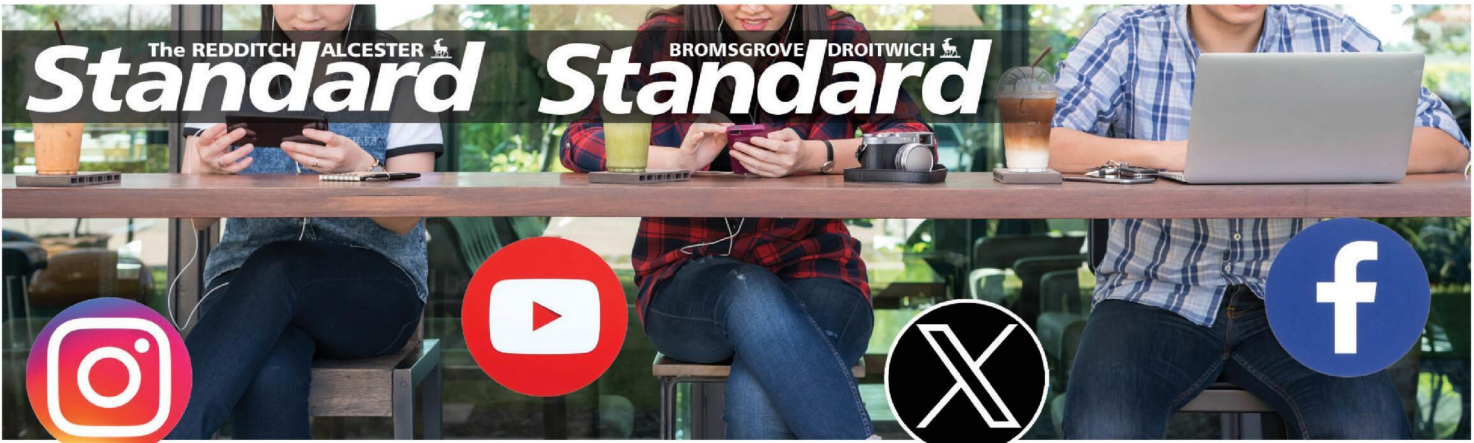
Wordwheel Pathfinder: Lipstick, powder, tissues, cotton buds, bushy, eyeshadow, Kohl, primer, mascara, lip liner, concealer, eye liner, foundation, rouge, bronzer, eyelash curler, false eyelashes, eyebrow pencil, lip gloss, cream, eyelash glue. PROVIDENT: nail polish, brushes, emery board, cleanser, tweezers, contour. Niner: primer, mascara, lip liner, concealer, eye liner, foundation, rouge, bronzer, eyelash curler, false eyelashes, eyebrow pencil, lip gloss. Wordwheel Pathfinder: Lipstick, powder, tissues, cotton buds, bushy, eyeshadow, Kohl, primer, mascara, lip liner, concealer, eye liner, foundation, rouge, bronzer, eyelash curler, false eyelashes, eyebrow pencil, lip gloss, cream, eyelash glue. PROVIDENT: nail polish, brushes, emery board, cleanser, tweezers, contour. Niner: primer, mascara, lip liner, concealer, eye liner, foundation, rouge, bronzer, eyelash curler, false eyelashes, eyebrow pencil, lip gloss.

Ladder Codeword

Ladder Codeword: 1=G, 2=Q, 3=X, 4=F, 5=W, 6=L, 7=D, 8=L, 9=U, 10=L, 11=N, 12=C, 13=K, 14=Y, 15=M, 16=P, 17=Y, 18=O, 19=L, 20=E, 21=H, 22=R, 23=A, 24=Z, 25=S, 26=B. Dirt, Dire, Dare, Date, Bate. Bire, Bike. Wordwheel Pathfinder: Lipstick, powder, tissues, cotton buds, bushy, eyeshadow, Kohl, primer, mascara, lip liner, concealer, eye liner, foundation, rouge, bronzer, eyelash curler, false eyelashes, eyebrow pencil, lip gloss, cream, eyelash glue. PROVIDENT: nail polish, brushes, emery board, cleanser, tweezers, contour. Niner: primer, mascara, lip liner, concealer, eye liner, foundation, rouge, bronzer, eyelash curler, false eyelashes, eyebrow pencil, lip gloss. Wordwheel Pathfinder: Lipstick, powder, tissues, cotton buds, bushy, eyeshadow, Kohl, primer, mascara, lip liner, concealer, eye liner, foundation, rouge, bronzer, eyelash curler, false eyelashes, eyebrow pencil, lip gloss, cream, eyelash glue. PROVIDENT: nail polish, brushes, emery board, cleanser, tweezers, contour. Niner: primer, mascara, lip liner, concealer, eye liner, foundation, rouge, bronzer, eyelash curler, false eyelashes, eyebrow pencil, lip gloss.

Easy Sudoku

Easy Sudoku: 6 1 8 4 9 5 3 7 2; 7 2 3 1 8 6 5 4 9; 5 4 9 7 2 3 1 8 6; 3 6 1 5 4 9 7 2 8; 8 9 2 6 2 6 3 4 7 5 1; 8 9 2 6 2 6 3 4 7 5 1; 2 3 5 8 4 1 9 6 7; 9 8 6 3 5 7 2 1 4; 4 7 1 2 6 9 8 3 5.



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Sharon, Linzi
& all your
Grandchildren and
Great Grandchildren
xx

BIRTHDAY MEMORIES

RAY DALBY

21-4-2025

Memories last longer than dreams
Love and God Bless to someone special
Pat, Daughters, Sons and Families

XXXXXXXX

Our day Dad, wish we could still open
our cards together

Love you lots

Jacky

xxx

DEATHS

CARRIER Iris Ann

Sadly passed away at home on
Saturday 5th April 2025 aged 90 years
Iris will be deeply missed by all of her
family and friends

A service to celebrate Iris's life will take
place at Redditch Crematorium on
Thursday 8th May 2025 at 12.30pm
Please feel free to wear a splash of pink
Iris's favourite colour

Flowers welcome or donations if so
desired to St Chad's Church, Rubery
& The Primrose Unit at
The Princess of Wales Hospital may be
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12.4.2016

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Diane, Rob

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PUBLIC NOTICES

PUBLIC NOTICES

Warwickshire County Council

ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984
Warwickshire County Council proposes to make the following Temporary Traffic Orders:

A4023 COVENTRY HIGHWAY, MOONS MOAT, MAPPLEBOROUGH GREEN

Order Effect: Road closed to southbound vehicular traffic between northbound slip road for A435 and southbound slip road for A435

Reason for Order: Carriageway resurfacing, weeknights only, 20.00hrs-06.00hrs.

Order Commences: 6 May 2025 for up to 18 months.

Anticipated Completion: 10 May 2025.

Access & Diversion: A435 Northbound slip road, A435 Northbound, Ullentail Lane and back onto the A435 Southbound. Access/Egress to/from Amazon Depot (Redditch Gateway North & South) will be maintained.

Contractor: Balfour Beatty, Tel: 03452 415 202.

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 18 Apr 2025

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL & REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL

Advertisement Key: ADVSTD = Wider Publicity, FPS = Footpath Setting.

25/00290/FUL ADVSTD FPS

Site: Whiting Landscape, Wildmoor Lane, Catshill, Worcestershire B61 0RJ.

Proposal: Erection of single storey ancillary extensions to existing commercial offices.

Application forms and plans may be inspected online <https://publicaccess.bromsgrovedredditch.gov.uk/online-applications>

Comments can be submitted online, via email to newplan@bromsgrovedredditch.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.

APPLICATION FOR A PREMISES LICENCE OR CLUB PREMISES CERTIFICATE TO BE GRANTED UNDER THE LICENSING ACT 2003

Applicant: **Station Sticks Bromsgrove Ltd of Part Unit 2, Station Street, Bromsgrove, B60 2BS**

The applicant proposes to carry out the following licensable activities or qualifying club activities on or from the above premises/club premises: **Supply of alcohol at an indoor golf simulator venue**

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@worcesterservices.gov.uk By 14/05/25

The record of the application is available for inspection by appointment.

Please call us on 01905 822799 for an appointment.

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DOROTHY JANE HALL

Deceased
Pursuant to the Trustee Act 1925 anyone having a claim against or an interest in the Estate of the deceased (late of 4 Galton Way, Hadzor, Droitwich, Worcestershire, WR9 7EY, who died on 01/11/2024, must send written particulars to the address below by 19/06/2025, after which date the Estate will be distributed having regard only to claims and interests notified.
Zoe Smith
c/o Mortimers Solicitors,
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WV16 4QP.
Ref: Z2847-0001

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GARDENING Encyclopedia 7 bound volumes all aspects covered in colour new £15 0121 445 2293

SPACE saver wheel & tyre "Hankook S300 T125 70R1696M" tubeless new never used £10 ono 07541576100

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SET of 14 LH Golf Clubs Bag / Accessories Good Condition Taylor Made, Galloway, King Cobra £180 ono 07819015716

SMALL Counter / Cupboard Fridge H 20" x W 17" x D 19" As New £75 ono. 07879015716

SMALL TV Wooden Corner Unit As New £50 ono 07879015716

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KIA ranked top at awards

THE KIA EV3 has been hailed the outright winner at the 2025 World Car Awards. Revealed during a live announcement at the World Car Awards ceremony at the 2025 New York International Auto Show, the Kia EV3 secured the prestigious title of 2025 World Car of the Year.

Ho Sung Song, President and CEO at Kia, said: "It is an immense honor for everyone at Kia that the EV3 has been awarded the 2025 World Car of Year title.

"This award highlights Kia's global leadership in providing designed, technologically advanced, sustainable mobility solutions and how the EV3's class-leading attributes redefine the user experience for customers worldwide."

The 2025 World Car Awards were judged by a panel of 96 highly respected international automotive journalists from 30 countries. The EV3's victory brings Kia's total of wins at the World Car Awards to six since 2020.

The EV3 brings the cutting-edge innovation of Kia's flagship EV9 to a wider audience than ever before, setting new standards in the compact electric vehicle (EV) SUV segment. The EV3 boasts a bold, progressive exterior and an innovative, practical interior that maximises space, functionality, and comfort.

The EV3 has a segment-leading range of up to 375 miles and can charge from 10-to-80 per cent in 31 minutes, delivering impressive usability. The vehicle's innovative interior design optimises space, comfort, and accessibility, while Kia's AI Assistant, advanced driver assistance systems (ADAS), and Over-

the-Air (OTA) updates enhance the ownership experience with cutting-edge technology.

The Hyundai car has been honored with the title of 2025 World Electric Vehicle at the 2025 World Car Awards ceremony.

This momentous achievement marks the fourth consecutive year that a model from Hyundai Motor Company has led one or more categories in the World Car Awards.

Jose Munoz, President and CEO of Hyundai Motor Company, said: "The Hyundai INSTER has been a winner with customers since we introduced it. It's very gratifying that the experts on the prestigious World Car Awards jurors feel the same way.

"The combination of compelling design, range, enjoyable driving characteristics, intuitive infotainment and technology that customers appreciate is emblematic of

Hyundai's approach of delivering exceptional value to our customers. The fact that our global portfolio is successful both commercially and critically speaks to the hard-working people throughout the Hyundai value chain who are delivering some of the best vehicles on the road today."

The 2025 World Electric Vehicle award recognises INSTER's extraordinary value in the EV segment and underscores Hyundai Motor's dedication to advancing EV technology and sustainability.

As a sub-compact EV, INSTER leads its segment with a distinctive design, impressive driving range and cutting-edge technology. INSTER's rapid charging capability enables a 10-to-80-percent charge in around 30 minutes, with the 49-kWh long-range model providing a range of up to 370 km.



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The Droitwich Spa team and their families with the shield after being crowned champions. Pictures by Matthew Mason.



Alex Dugmore was presented with the golden boot award by Mayor of Droitwich Spa Alex Sinton.

Salute to the champions!

by **Tristan Harris**
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FOOTBALL: DROITWICH Spa were officially crowned UHlsport Hellenic League Division One champions on Saturday after a 5-0 demolition job of mid-table Tytherington Rocks at the King George Playing Fields.

An impressive 600 spectators watched on during a carnival atmosphere as the Saltmen took to the field.

Droitwich started nervously on a difficult surface but took the lead on 19 minutes, with their first meaningful effort. Nathan Binner latched onto a through-ball, rounded Rocks goalkeeper Peter Dykes and tucked the ball away into the far corner from a



Lewis Phillips was among the scorers for the Saltmen. s

tight angle. After a scare from the visitors when George Box fired wide, Lewis Phillips found himself one-on-one with Dykes, but his shot was well saved by the

legs of the onrushing 'keeper.

Alex Dugmore thought he had doubled Spa's lead after heading in a pinpoint cross from Hurdman, but the referee spotted

an infringement and the effort was disallowed.

Spa kept probing until the half-time whistle but the game remained at 1-0.

The Saltmen started the second half well, and on 55 minutes Josh Hurdman was brought down in the penalty area. Captain James Lemon stepped up to convert the spot-kick, and from then on it was one-way traffic.

Dykes saved well to deny Binner his second from a free-kick, then Jay Sauntson's header at the back post went just wide.

It was 3-0 on 70 minutes when top scorer Alex Dugmore added to his tally in style. He broke the offside trap and chipped the ball over Dykes as he raced off his line. It secured Dugmore's title as Division One golden boot winner with 30 league goals in the regular season, and 36 overall in 38 appearances.

Ten minutes later Dugmore was denied by a great save from Dykes, but Phillips tapped home the rebound from close range for his first Saltmen goal of the season after 41 appearances, and his first Spa goal since 2020, to make it 4-0.

Substitute Perry Moss headed just wide after good work from Dugmore before Josh Hurdman rounded off the scoring to cap a 5-0 win. It meant the Saltmen ended the season 11 points clear at the top of the table.

The players were applauded off the pitch by the partisan crowd before returning to receive the end-of-season club awards.

League winners medals were then presented and the Saltmen got to lift the UHlsport Hellenic League Division One trophy – a historic moment on a day that will live long in the memory for everyone connected with the club.





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