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Playing a part in putting focus on funeral flowers

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

DROITWICH florist Anna Brian has shared her delight in seeing the first ever exhibit of funeral flowers at the coveted RHS Chelsea Flower Show which began on Tuesday and runs until tomorrow (Saturday).

The owner of Flowers by Anna Brian is sharing her support for The Farewell Flowers Directory which is showcasing funeral floristry at the prestigious celebration of flowers for the first time.

Anna is a member of the directory - a not-for-profit founded in 2024 with a mission to remove plastic floral foam from funeral floristry.

It was founded in 2024 by florists and flower farmers Gill Hodgson MBE and Carole Patilla and has over 190 member florists across the UK. They connect people to funeral florists which offer flowers made without single-use plastic or floral foam.

The Hanbury florist said: "We are so thrilled The Farewell Flowers Directory is bringing the beauty of funeral flowers out of the shadows and into the spotlight.

"We want people to know good funeral flowers should be anything you want them to be."

Featuring exclusively British-grown flowers and foliage and completely free of plastic floral foam, the spectacular installation will demonstrate it is unnecessary sacrifice beauty for sustainability.

The directory hopes the display will spark conversations about what funeral flowers and funerals can be.

The Chelsea installation by The Farewell Flowers Directory will take the form of an artistic interpretation of a funeral scene.

Gill Hodgson MBE, co-founder of The Farewell Flowers Directory, said: "We hope our Chelsea exhibit will help start conversations and let people know they have a choice.

"You can choose to celebrate and reflect a life with fresh, seasonal materials that are natural, beautiful and resonant with meaning.

"And you can choose for your tributes to tread lightly on the planet."

The Farewell Flowers Directory exhibit is sponsored by the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management (ICCM), Green Funeral Flowers by Tuckshop Flowers, New Covent Garden Flower Market and Workplace Bereavement.

Visit: farewellflowers.co.uk for more information.

Anna of Flowers by Anna Brian.
s



Raider sought

A SUSPECTED armed robbery at a Post Office in Holt Heath on Tuesday has prompted a police appeal to locate the raider.

Around 9.40am, a quantity of cash was stolen from the Post Office in the Cottage Stores along the A443 after a man entered the shop and threatened a staff member.

The male suspect was dressed in all black with black paint on his face and was in 'possession of what is believed to have been a handgun'.

Officers are looking to identify the man and a car seen in the area at the time of the incident.

Det Con Elle May from Worcester CID said: "Although the incident caused distress to the victim, thankfully, no one was injured.

"We are keen to identify a grey Renault Clio which was seen on the corner of School Lane at the time of the incident."

Anyone driving along the road at the time of the incident is urged to get in touch with police if they have dash cam footage.

Contact DC May via email at: elle.may@westmercia.police.uk or phone 07967 879480 to report information.

Alternatively, call Crimestoppers on 08000 555 111.

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TOP LEFT: Rifle volunteers Matthew Plumridge and Peter Francis at the Redditch Classic Motor Show. 2225002MMR3



TOP RIGHT: Formula 1 comes to the Kingfisher, with Michael Schumacher's 1992 Benetton car. 2225002MMR7



BOTTOM LEFT: Trying for size. 2225002MMR5



BOTTOM RIGHT: Finlay (seven) likes this TVR. 2225002MMR4

Pictures by Marcus Mingins

Town car show is a Classic day-out

by Ashleigh Osborne
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@bullivantmedia.com

HUNDREDS of people gathered in Redditch town centre to see classic cars on display at the annual motor show.

Around 140 vehicles parked up for the Redditch Classic Motor Show, with a special appearance from the B192 Benetton Formula 1 car raced by legend Michael Schumacher in 1992.

The famous car was on static display inside the Kingfisher Shopping Centre.

Organised by Redditch BID in association with Shakespeare Rally Promotions, the annual Redditch Classic Motor Show lived up to its reputation of being one of the premier events of its kind in the region.



Taxi anyone? 2225002MMR6

The show featured a wide range of iconic cars from different eras and visitors also had the opportunity to talk with experts, who shared their knowledge and provided valuable insights into the vehicles' historical and technical aspects.

Taking to Facebook, Redditch BID posted: "Redditch was packed for the Classic Motor Show and we just want to say a massive thank-you to everyone who turned up, took part, and showed their support."

Elaine and Alan Hipkins enjoy a cup of tea. 2225002MMR2




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See page **26**






Marion Kenyon and Margaret Richards want people to know that NewStarts is still open for those who need it. Picture by Marcus Mingins 2225009MMR © Bullivant Media

Charity remains open to help

NEWTARTS charity in Bromsgrove, which provides lifeline services to people and families experiencing financial hardship, wants people to know it is still open, despite extensive roadworks in the area.

Marion Kenyon, the charity's chief executive, said the works on Stoke Road were causing confusion and she was concerned people would think NewStarts was inaccessible.

Located on Sherwood Road, the charity continues to provide vital services to individuals and families across the district, offering affordable reused furniture, emergency food parcels for people in urgent need.

People visiting NewStarts can continue down Stoke Road despite the road closure signs. There is no need to follow the diversion up New Road. Access to Sherwood Road remains

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

open to local traffic and visitors to NewStarts.

Marion added: "We're here, we're open, and we're ready to help."

"The road signs can be confusing, but please don't be put off - just carry on down Stoke Road as usual and you'll find us."

"We'd love to see new and regular faces visit us during this period."

Among the items available are quality, low-cost reused furniture and white goods, perfect for anyone setting up or sustaining a home on a budget and there are emergency food parcels for people in urgent need.

Digital inclusion support is also available, including used IT equipment and repairs and servicing at affordable prices.

For parents, there is a uniform bank with free school uniform available to everyone and there is a community

supermarket which is open every Thursday between 2pm and 5pm.

Bromsgrove and Redditch Baby Bank is available from 10.30am to 1.30pm every Thursday, except the first one of the month, with baby clothes and items available.

And money and debt advice is accessible between 2.30pm and 4pm every Thursday or by appointment.

NewStarts is also always looking for volunteers and donations for those wanting to give back to their community.

Whether people are donating pre-loved items, picking up essentials, or just calling in for a chat, these visits help support the charity's mission of offering second chances and practical support where it's needed most.

Marion added: "Let's keep our community connected and keep NewStarts thriving, no matter what the signs say."

Visit newstarts.org.uk or call 01527 882410 for more information.

Every knife binned could be life saved

A TOTAL of 86 knives have been surrendered in Rubery in the space of three months.

Figures released by West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC), Simon Foster, show which knife bins have had the most blades and weapons deposited in them from January and March this year.

Rubery's knife surrender bin is located in the Morrisons car park on the Great Park.

In total, across the region,

1,705 weapons were surrendered in bins and this has prompted Mr Foster to double the number of containers from 32 to 64 as part of his campaign to combat knife crime.

The metal containers provide a safe location for the public to dispose of knives and weapons and Mr Foster said every knife, blade or weapon deposited in one of the bins is potentially a life saved. The knives surrendered will be destroyed.

The PCC's figures equate to 142 weapon deposits-

a-week or more than 20 per day. The recent haul included hundreds of flick knives, zombie knives, kitchen knives, knuckle dusters, machetes and even firearms.

The highest number of weapons surrendered was at the New Testament Church of God in Erdington, north Birmingham - 415 were deposited there in the three months.

Anyone wishing to apply to have a new bin placed locally can email wmpcc@westmidlands.police.uk

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Comic stars in town to join in first Rik festival

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

DROITWICH'S Rik Mayall Comedy Festival is set to be the biggest cultural event to hit the Spa town in decades and the packed programme is just a week away from launching.

The first community-run festival is taking place from next Sunday, May 31 to June 7 and there are still plenty of shows with tickets available among the 200-strong events programme.

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

Ben Elton, one of Rik's oldest friends and patron of the festival, said: "I am truly honoured to support this amazing celebration of one of the greatest ever talents of British Comedy. My hope is that this



The late Rik Mayall. Picture by Andy Hollingworth. s

festival honours his influence by becoming the testing ground for the next great comedic talents."

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

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

In a fringe style programme,

various venues across the town will be hosting smaller curated events. Among the more unusual venues are men's hairdresser Barbertown, which has a full programme of events all week, Inspire by Rachel beauty clinic, Coffee Culture – a 600-year-old shop turned cafe – and the back of Emms, a local haberdashery on Droitwich High Street.

Stuart Panruker, festival director, said: "What's been so heartening is how enthusiastically local businesses embraced this hugely exciting event and not having a conventional space to host shows hasn't put them off."

The programme will also feature theatre, comedy for children and parents, comedy workshops, panels and screenings. Free activities for families will take place around and about and a pop-up museum will feature memorabilia from Mayall's career.

A large portion of performances will be free and 'pay what you want' including stand-up, improvisation, theatre and live music.

For more information, visit rikmayallcomedyfestival.com.



Coun Richard Morris, Droitwich Spa Place Projects Officer, Gemma Ranford, artist Milan and Coun George Duffy, chair of Wychavon District Council. Picture by Marcus Mingsins 0925007MMR2 © Bullivant Media

Follow trail to find Comedy King's crown

AN ADVENTURE trail is launching in Droitwich to coincide with the inaugural Rik Mayall Comedy Festival.

Inspired by the wit and charm of the legendary Rik Mayall who was born and raised in Droitwich Spa and started his illustrious career in the local theatre, this unique trail invites families to embark on a quest to uncover hidden jokers around the town and 'reclaim the King of Comedy's stolen crown'.

The Mayall Trail has been inspired by Rik Mayall's Comedy

Emporium, an empty shop transformed into a special joke-shop style mural dedicated to the life and laughs of the comedy star.

Adventurers taking part can join the excitement and search for ten naughty jokers tucked away in shop windows throughout the town centre.

They start by collecting a booklet from Droitwich Heritage Centre from now until June 7 (except on Sundays).

With each discovery, participants will get one step closer to finding Rik's treasure. After completing the trail, children can

explore their creative side with a special craft workshop at The Crafty Cafe.

Coun Richard Morris, Wychavon Council leader and executive board member for economic growth and tourism, said: "I am so proud Droitwich Spa is holding the first-ever Rik Mayall Comedy Festival, and The Mayall Trail starts it off beautifully by inviting people to discover local shops within our vibrant town - the perfect place to unleash people's imagination."

Visit rikmayallcomedyfestival.com/events/mayall-trail for more information.

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Historic church to host open day

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

A FREE event will be held at Bromsgrove's St John's Church from 12pm to 3pm tomorrow (Saturday, May 24) as part of the project to save Worcestershire's tallest spire.

At the 'Side by Side' Open Day, people will be able to meet the Spire Project team and learn about the restoration works taking place at Bromsgrove's landmark ancient Grade I listed building.

Beforehand, at 10.30am, there will be the Cake and Coffee Concert with The Royal Birmingham Conservatoire. With the project nearing

the halfway stage, this is a perfect chance for local residents and visitors to learn about the project through a variety of activities.

In Stonemason's Corner with Lewis Allard and Michael Curry, people can learn about the materials and stone used in the project and have a go at carving a piece of sandstone.

In Engineer's Corner with Ian Cunder, they will be able to understand how the spire has remained as a landmark for the town for 500 years, using a model of the church and a fan.

Visitors can engage with architect Stephen Oliver and study the technical drawings to understand what has been happening on the spire and the plans to fully restore it.

And there will be the chance to chat with histo-

rian Simon Henderson and hunt the vicar's keys, view photos of the church's pair of peregrine falcons taken by a local enthusiast and talk to the team about how the cash has been raised and is being spent.

There will be refreshments available and a chance to have a go on the organ too.

What is the project?

The Spire Appeal Project is funded and supported by The National Lottery Heritage Fund, National Churches Trust, Garfield Weston Foundation, Rotary Club of Bromsgrove, the Bromsgrove Society, the Bromsgrove Institute Trust, Bromsgrove Court Leet and generously supported by many individuals.



The Spire Appeal Project is funded and supported by The National Lottery Heritage Fund.

Towns set to get more seats and services from Rail Hub

A RAIL project across the Midlands is set to bring 2million extra seats-a-year on trains between Birmingham and Droitwich Spa.

The Midlands Rail Hub will deliver an extra 20million seats annually with passengers across Worcestershire towns benefiting.

The project proposes building two 'chords' and over 10 further engineering interventions throughout the region to deliver a massive step change in rail transport in the Midlands.

This will see up to 300 extra trains traveling into or out of Birmingham every single day and will help create a 'turn up and go' service on the busy Cross City line.

The Cross City line will see two extra trains, in each direction, per hour, creating 5.4million new seats each year for passengers.

Worcester, Droitwich Spa and Worcestershire Parkway will see at least

2million new seats, equating to 20 more trains per day.

Redditch, Alvechurch and Barnt Green will see one extra train, in each direction, per hour and 2.7million new seats for passengers, whilst Bromsgrove will see 4.7million new seats.

Andy Clark, head of rail at Midlands Connect, said: "The benefits of the Midlands Rail Hub will be felt by millions of people across the Midlands and beyond."

"Being able to run faster, more frequent services and deliver 20million extra seats is the definition of a win-win project."

"The Midlands Rail Hub is our flagship project at Midlands Connect, and we are working to deliver massive benefits to all corners of the Midlands."

The project is co-sponsored by Midlands Connect, the Department for Transport and West Midlands Rail Executive.

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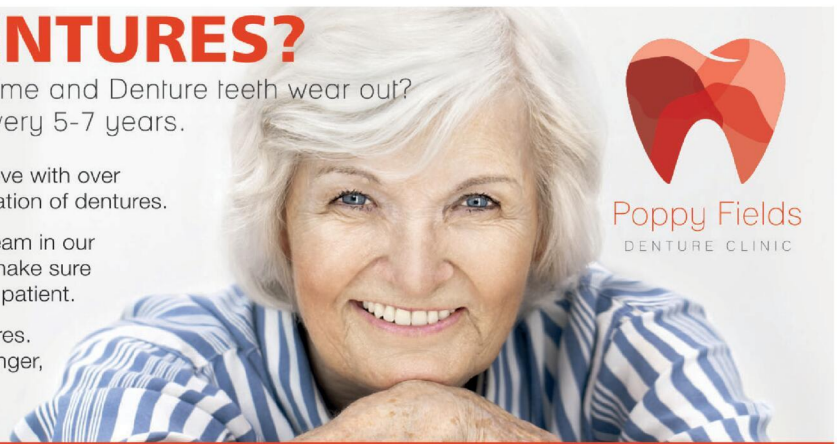
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Stride out for Memory Walk

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

THE ANNUAL Primrose Hospice Memory Walk will be back at Hanbury Hall on Sunday, July 6.

Participants will be able to walk in celebration of their loved ones whilst also raising funds for the Primrose Hospice and Family Support Centre.

People signing up will receive their very own yellow Primrose Memory Walk T-shirt and dedication sign to personalise with details of their loved ones.

Natalie Wright, who participated in 2024 and volunteers in the hospice's art group, said: "We help patients find their worth again, which makes the hospice such a positive and joyful place."

"For myself, I find it immensely rewarding, the people here are an inspiration to me."

"Last year, we walked in memory of my mum, but I also wanted to do something that I knew would benefit the people in the group."

There are two routes available - a short accessible stroll or a longer route, of approximately three miles.

The routes are suitable



Natalie Wright and her family during last year's Primrose Hospice Memory Walk. Picture by Lee Moody. s

for individuals, families and groups of all ages and abilities and dogs are more than welcome too.

Kelly Wetherall, fundraiser at Primrose Hospice, said: "The world around you changes when a loved one dies and that's sometimes hard to explain to others."

"We'd like to invite anyone who has lost a loved one to walk with us on Sunday, July 6, and be surrounded by people who appreciate

what you are going through." Registration fees are £15 per adult, £10 per child or £60 for a group ticket for six people.

Visit primrosehospice.org/events/memory-walk/ or contact their fundraising team on 01527 889796 for more information and to book places.

The 2025 Primrose Memory Walk is being sponsored by Thomas Brothers Funeral Directors.

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Golden touch that runs in the family

A GIRLGUIDE from Bromsgrove has become the third generation in her family to be awarded the prestigious Gold Duke of Edinburgh (DofE) Award.

Megan Megahey, 21, has joined her mother and grandmother on the list of recipients of the award - all who achieved the accolade through their roles in girlguiding.

Megan follows in the footsteps of both her mum and her grandmother who did the same in 1959 and 1990. Megan's grandmother Gillian Watson, 85, was one of the very first girls in the country to achieve the Gold Duke of Edinburgh's Award soon after the scheme was extended to girls in 1958.

To celebrate Megan's achievement, she recently attended a Gold Award celebration event with her mum and grandmother hosted by HRH The Duke of Edinburgh.

They were introduced to HRH The Duke of Edinburgh at the event held in the grounds of Buckingham Palace. Megan was one of just a handful of young people to personally speak to The Duke at the event.

The Duke said: "Three generations, really. Now that's quite impressive."



Afterwards, Megan shared her pride in being the third generation of her family to do this and even more so for doing it through Girlguiding.

She added: "My mum and my nan were very encouraging and it was their motivation that got me to keep pushing through."

While Megan officially joined Girlguiding as a Rainbow at the age of five, she went on her first Brownie pack holiday while her mum Hazel Megahey was pregnant with her. It was the same for Hazel, 54, who also attended meetings when her Guide leader mum was pregnant with her.

Grandmother Gillian is still involved in Girlguiding at county level in Birmingham, while Megan

is a co-leader of 188th Birmingham Brownies, a Kings Norton-based unit that her mum Hazel has run for the last 33 years.

All the family have always been part of Girlguiding Birmingham.

Hazel said: "It was an absolute honour to have the privilege of meeting HRH Duke of Edinburgh and for him to take the time to hear our story."

"We were proud to not only be three generations to complete our

Gold DofE but also to represent Girlguiding Birmingham which was the catalyst to us all gaining the award."

Gillian, from Wythall, said taking part in the DofE award scheme was just one of countless opportunities Girlguiding had given her over her lifetime.

Gillian, whose mum was also a Girlguiding leader, said: "I'm so proud Megan and Hazel have followed in my footsteps."

"Girlguiding is a way of life for me and I've enjoyed every minute of it."

(L-R) Girlguiding family - Gillian Watson, Megan Megahey and Hazel Megahey.



MP Bradley Thomas has raised residents' A38 BREP concerns with the future of roads minister in Parliament.

ROAD CONCERNS: THE GOVERNMENT'S roads minister has agreed to look at concerns raised by residents about Bromsgrove's A38 BREP scheme.

Minister for the future of roads, Lilian Greenwood, said she was 'very happy' to look at particular concerns raised in relation to the programme after the town's MP Bradley Thomas raised the matter in parliament.

Concerns surrounding the scheme relate to considerable impacts on traffic and congestion along the route as well as its detriment to the local environment due to the felling of hundreds of trees.

Mr Thomas, continuing his efforts to hold Worcestershire County Council to account over the scheme, saw him escalate residents' concerns by taking them directly to the minister in the House of Commons.

Speaking in the House of Commons, Lilian Greenwood, the Minister for Future of Roads, said: "I

understand his wish to get his constituents moving which is something we share.

"I'll be very happy to look at the particular concerns he raises in relation to the A38, and I will of course contact him with further information."

The Bromsgrove MP said he has also personally been affected by the traffic problems along the route, having been stuck in gridlock too.

He added: "I'm clear the A38 BREP scheme must deliver both a tangible improvement in keeping Bromsgrove moving and in reducing the congestion and gridlock that blights the lives of residents and businesses."

"That's why I've taken residents' concerns directly to the Transport Minister and asked her to meet with me."

"I welcome her commitment to discussing our town's concerns and I hope to meet with her soon."

Bradley Thomas - MP's

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Promoted by Bradley Thomas of Seneca House, Buntsford Park Road, Bromsgrove, B60 3DX.

Force getting better but more work is needed says key report



The report follows an inspection of the force in 2024 and identifies areas of good work and progress on challenges.

WEST Mercia Police has missed out on an Outstanding rating after His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) published its findings from a PEEL (Police Effectiveness, Efficiency and Legitimacy) Inspection.

The report follows an inspection of the force in 2024 and identifies areas of good work and progress on challenges, whilst also highlighting where further improvement is needed.

The report's gradings found West Mercia Police to be 'good' in recording date about crimes, 'adequate' in police powers and public treatments, preventing and investigating crime, and managing offenders.

The force was rated 'requiring improvement' in responding to the public, protecting vulnerable people, developing a positive workspace and leadership and force management.

Andy Cooke, HM Inspector of Constabulary, said although the force had made some improvements since its last inspection, he was disappointed the force did not always understand what support victims needed and were entitled to receive.

by Ashleigh Osborne
ashleigh.osborne@bullivantmedia.com

He said: "The force still isn't answering emergency calls as quickly as it should. But it is improving.

"The number of non-emergency calls members of the public abandon because they aren't answered is still high.

"This is something we found in our previous inspection in 2021/22.

"We also found that officers didn't attend calls for service within the required attendance time.

"The force must improve in these areas to maintain victims' confidence and maximise opportunities to solve crime."

The report outlined areas where the force must do better, such as how they identified vulnerable victims and challenges faced by its IT systems, which had required significant modernisation.

The report recognised neighbourhood policing teams were well resourced and were actively engaging with communities to resolve local issues, investigative standards have improved and that hot spot patrols had reduced serious crime by 18 per cent.

The force's dedicated online child sexual exploitation team (OCSET) was praised for its effective use of civil orders and strong partnership working to protect children, as was the processes in place for external scrutiny of the use of our stop and search powers.

Chief Constable Richard Cooper said: "We recognise the importance of independent assessments like PEEL and are using this report as one tool to guide our next steps and drive continued improvement for the communities we serve, and for our officers, staff and volunteers.

"We acknowledge the findings and are already acting on them.

"The inspection highlights both the progress we've made and the challenges we are addressing head-on.

"The results are not where we want to be, and I am clear that they must and will improve.

"As set out in the Police and Crime Commissioner's Safer Communities Plan, we remain focused on the issues that matter most

to our communities, which is providing a service that is responsive, fair and trusted."

Police and Crime Commissioner John Champion added: "I know the public have high expectations, so it's important we use the findings as a platform to drive further change.

"Together, with the new Chief Constable, action is already taking place to address concerns and it's my expectation this progress continues at pace.

"West Mercia Police is full of hardworking police officers and staff who are on the thin blue line keeping communities safe - it's on the Chief Constable and I to set them up to succeed.

"I will continue to work with and support the Chief Constable to deliver my Safer Communities Plan, by directing the resources needed to deliver the best possible service to the communities of West Mercia."

Visit hmicfrs.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk to view the report.

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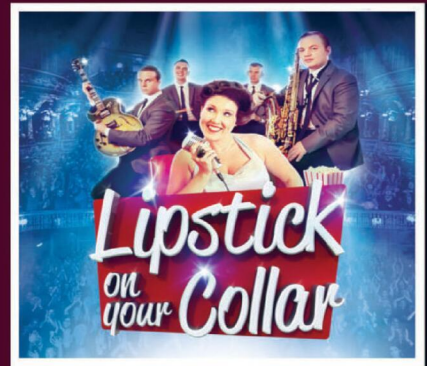
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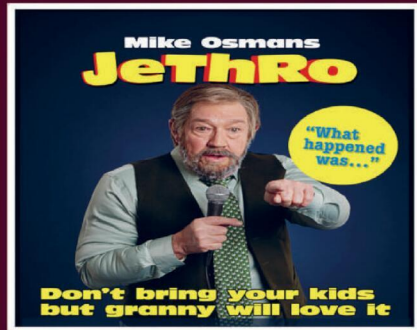
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Biker hurt after crash

A MOTORCYCLIST was taken to hospital with serious injuries after a crash in Wythall on Sunday.

Police said the collision, involving a Yamaha NMAX 125 scooter and a Honda Jazz, happened around 11.30am at the junction of Alcester Road and Middle Lane, near Becketts Farm Island.

The rider was treated by paramedics for serious injuries before being taken to Queen Elizabeth Hospital by ambulance.

The road was closed for some time in both directions while the emergency services and Worcestershire Highways officers dealt with the incident.

A 45-year-old woman was arrested on suspicion of causing serious injury by dangerous driving and of driving while unfit through drink or drugs. She has been released on bail while enquiries continue.

West Mercia Police has urged witnesses or anyone with dash cam footage of the collision or either of the vehicles in the minutes before it to email PC Dan Bate at daniel.bate@westmercia.police.uk or 07773 045712.

Have your say on town masterplan

PEOPLE in Redditch are to be consulted on the town's next phase of development.

Everyone who lives or works in Redditch will be asked to help shape how the area could grow after councillors at Monday's borough council meeting gave the go-ahead for an 'issues and options' planning consultation.

The six-week consultation started yesterday (Thursday) and will run until July 3, including special community events across the borough at dates and locations to be announced.

It marks the formal start of work to prepare a new Local Plan for Redditch, a key planning document setting out the strategy to meet the borough's future needs for housing, employment and infrastructure up to 2043.

Redditch Borough Council leader and portfolio holder for regeneration and environmental services, Coun Sharon Harvey, said: "Almost six decades on from Redditch's new town masterplan, this consultation is an early opportunity to shape the next phase of Redditch's development.

"This is the start of the process, so no development sites are proposed. That is for a later stage.

"For now, we need your views on the issues we must tackle, and

how we propose to approach those issues."

The consultation sets out background info and broad options for the key planning issues in Redditch and asks for views on them. Those include growth options, approaches to housing, the economy and the district centres, the borough's natural and historic environments, the 'design code' that will guide how things should look and climate change.

It also meets a requirement to give landowners and developers the opportunity to submit potential development sites, known as the 'call for sites'.

The council will consider all the responses it receives during the next stage of the process - drafting planning policies for another round of public consultation in the future.

This consultation also gives people in Redditch, for the very first time, a digital consultation platform to more easily have their say on the issues and options for local planning, in addition to traditional methods.

Visit redditchbc.gov.uk/redditchplan to view the consultation online, and visit the council's Customer Services at George Walk in the Kingfisher Shopping Centre, Redditch Library, and Woodrow Library for paper copies.



Himalayan Balsam can grow up to two metres tall and while it has attractive pink flowers, it can prevent native species from thriving. s

Plea to tackle invasive plant

VOLUNTEERS are being sought to do their bit to tackle Himalayan Balsam growing on the Lickey Hills.

Each year, The Lickey Hills Society organises efforts to remove the invasive plant from the country park.

The plant, native to the Himalayas, was introduced to the UK as a garden plant in 1839 but grows rapidly, can cover large areas and can prevent other species from growing.

The most effective method of removal is pulling up the plants before they flower and set seeds. The plants are shallow

rooting and easy to remove.

The first session will be next Saturday, May 31, with further efforts on Saturday mornings throughout June, July and August.

Each two-hour session will begin at 10am.

Volunteers should meet at the park's visitor centre on Warren Lane and wear appropriate clothing and footwear, including gloves. No special equipment is required.

A society committee member will be present at each session. A society spokesperson said: "We would certainly be grateful for your support."

Have your say on future development in Redditch

Redditch Borough Council is reviewing its **Local Plan**. This is an opportunity to shape where and how future housing, employment and infrastructure are delivered in Redditch Borough.

The Council is consulting on the Redditch Local Plan Issues and Options between 22nd May and 3rd July. This is called the 'Issues and Options' stage of public consultation, and it is the start of the Local Plan process.

As this is the start of the process there are no development sites proposed.

The purpose of this stage of consultation is to help define the issues the next Local Plan will tackle and inform the potential options for doing so.

To respond to the consultation, view consultation documents, see upcoming consultation events, and view the privacy notice, please visit www.redditchbc.gov.uk/redditchplan



Paper copies can be viewed at:


- Redditch Borough Council Customer Services, George Walk, Kingfisher Shopping Centre, B97 4HB (Monday-Friday, 9am-5pm)
- Redditch Library, 15 Market Place, Redditch B98 8AR (Monday-Saturday, opening hours vary)
- Woodrow Library, 25 Local Centre, Studley Road, B98 7RY (Monday-Saturday except Wednesday, opening hours vary)

If you have any queries please contact redditchplan@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk or call **01527 881272**.



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MPs listen to parents' call for action to tackle 'failing' SEND

REDDITCH MP Chris Bloore hosted a cross-party roundtable meeting in Parliament to tackle the ongoing crisis in Worcestershire's Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) services.

by **Ashleigh Osborne**
ashleigh.osborne
@bullivantmedia.com

Huddleston, Bromsgrove MP Bradley Thomas and Worcester MP Tom Collins in a rare moment of cross-party unity.

The meeting brought together parent-carer representatives and five of the county's six MPs, following a second consecutive failed Ofsted and CQC inspection which rated local services at the lowest possible level.

Representatives from SEND National Crisis Worcestershire and North Worcestershire Autism Parents Support Group travelled to Westminster to share their lived experiences with MPs.

Mr Bloore was joined by MP for West Worcestershire Harriet Baldwin, Droitwich and Evesham MP Nigel

equate placements, communication breakdowns and a lack of accountability from decision-makers.

Tracy Winchester, speaking on behalf of both parent-carer organisations, said: "This has seen a great move towards further scrutiny and accountability of our failing SEND services.

"We look forward to working collectively with our Worcestershire MPs to get some real improvements happening in SEND for our children and young people.

"After our Parent Carer Forum are not able to meaningfully coproduce as they should, and we are 'drown' in plans but not seeing any actual, meaningful improvement, we knew we needed to do something different, and something that met the significance and magnitude of the level of failure occurring.

"The meeting was posi-



Chris Bloore MP was joined by fellow county MPs and representatives from SEND National Crisis Worcestershire and North Worcestershire Autism Parents Support Group. s

itive and the Worcestershire MPs listened and seemed to understand the gravity of the situation.

"We hope they will join us in working together to seek the changes to SEND services that are so desperately needed.

"The 'stalemate' cannot continue. Too many of our children's futures are in jeopardy as it stands."

During the meeting, the five MPs heard, first-hand, passionate testimony from parent-carers, of real and frequently 'heart-breaking' experiences of education, health and social care serv-

ices in Worcestershire.

Also, all present agreed to come together again and continue to seek answers and accountability for SEND services.

Speaking after the meeting, Mr Bloore said: "SEND services in Worcestershire have been failing families for far too long.

"The meeting was a critical opportunity to bring MPs together across party lines to listen directly to the voices of parent-carers and demand meaningful change. I'm incredibly grateful to those families who came to Parliament to speak so pow-

erfully about their experiences.

"It's clear from what we heard that despite improvement plans and ministerial oversight, children across Worcestershire are still being let down.

"We must move beyond warm words – families need to see real, lasting change on the ground."

The MPs committed to continuing their cross-party work, increasing scrutiny of Worcestershire's SEND Local Area Partnership and ensuring families remain at the centre of all efforts to reform the system.



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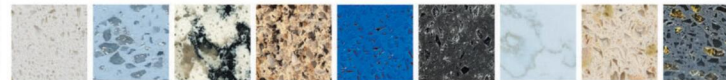
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Marathon effort nets Gill award

A BROMSGROVE marathon runner has been bestowed a High Sheriff's award for her charitable efforts which have seen her raise close to £2million for Cancer Research UK.

Gill Punt, head of PE at South Bromsgrove High School, was visited by Worcestershire High Sheriff, Ian Smith, who recognised her 'great and valuable services to the community'.

For nearly 27 years, Gill has continued to raise funds and awareness for cancer charities and to date has raised more than £1.97million for this worthy cause.

She lost her young father to bile duct cancer and the awful event inspired her fundraising adventures she undertakes on an unpaid voluntary basis.

She has organised and run various events - a pro-celebrity cricket match, coffee mornings and lots of endurance events.

She has inspired and encouraged a staggering amount of people to join her for 28 marathons (including the six World Marathon Majors - two of which she completed in one week -



London and Chicago), over 70 half-marathons, over 80 10k runs and numerous 'Race For Life' 5ks.

She gained a Guinness World Record (GWR) at the 2016 London Marathon, dressed as polar bear.

In January she achieved a second GWR as the polar bear fittingly ran the Arctic Polar Night Marathon in darkness, on ice, in sub-zero temperatures.

Each year she organises teams of runners from South Bromsgrove High School and Bromsgrove School to run the Birmingham Half and 10k too.

For just the running events alone there must have been

more than 1,000 people lacing up their trainers to join her in fighting cancer.

Gill told the Standard: "I was delighted and honoured to receive the award from the High Sheriff.

"Sadly, there is probably not a family in the country that has not been touched by cancer.

Visit: fundraise.cancerresearchuk.org/page/gills-cruk-giving-page-1 to support Gill's latest fundraiser.

Gill Punt, was visited by Worcestershire High Sheriff, Ian Smith, who recognised her 'great and valuable services to the community'. s



The Bowling Green on Shaw Lane, near Stoke Prior. s

Rescued as time was due to be called

A BROMSGROVE pub has been pulled from the jaws of closure after a last minute deal was struck just before going to auction.

The Bowling Green on Shaw Lane just outside Stoke Prior was due to go under the hammer at Bond Wolfe's livestream auction in March with a guide price of £450,000.

But Cotswold Leisure Ltd stepped in to rescue it, offering £510,000 to take it off the market. It was formerly owned by Marstons.

It was saved from potential redevelopment as a result of the deal.

George Windsor, director of Cotswold Leisure Ltd, said: "We are looking forward to restoring The Bowling Green to its former glory."

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tryside, The Bowling Green incorporates an open plan bar and lounge area, a smaller bar area, a commercial kitchen and the necessary fittings.

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Christie and Co, joint agents with Bond Wolfe and Cotswold Leisure Ltd was represented by Hexagon Commercial.

James Mattin, managing director of the agency, said everyone was delighted to have got the pre-auction deal done.

"The pub closed in September 2024 after 24 years under the same stewardship, and we are exceptionally pleased it will pass into safe hands to continue to trade as a public house."



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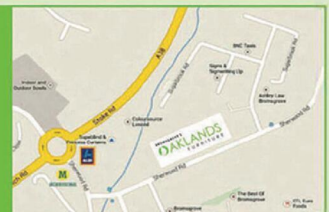
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It all adds up to a great success

REDDITCH employees are celebrating after successfully completing their chartered institute of management accountants qualifications, following three-and-a-half years of study.

Apprenticeships and trainee programmes are a part of Oakland International's employee training offer, providing a learning platform for all to develop new skills, gain valuable experience, and advance into a range of key roles within the company.

Kevin Joyce and Christian Stokes both

embarked on the training, funded by Oakland International.

Kevin said: "My CIMA qualification course was fully-funded by Oakland International, which I wouldn't have been able to do myself, so I am incredibly grateful for the opportunity and the trust put in me to succeed."

"We have a wonderful team in finance and I have had a wealth of support from them to get me through it."

"Being CIMA qualified is a massive deal, equivalent to a master's degree, accelerating me to another level on my career path."

Christian added: "I began my CIMA qualification journey in 2021, supported by Oakland International throughout, passing my final exam in April 2025."

"I wouldn't have been able to undertake my CIMA on my own, so I am very thankful and grateful for the opportunity."

"It's a massive deal for me to have attained CIMA qualification, which has now accelerated my career path."

Oakland International Group's chief financial officer Jeremy Hoare said: "The dedication and perseverance shown by Kevin and Christian exemplify the positive outcomes of apprenticeships and training programmes."

"Our congratulations once again to Kevin Joyce and Christian Stokes for their outstanding achievements and for setting a high standard for work ethic and dedication at Oakland International."



Oakland International's Financial Controller – distribution Kevin Stokes, Group Chief Financial Officer Jeremy Hoare, and Management Accountant Christian Stokes. s



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Houses sell quicker than many UK areas



Redditch is one of the best places in the country for selling homes quickly. s

REDDITCH is one of the areas in the country where homes sell the quickest once put up for sale.

According to the latest survey from property website Zoopla, homes in affordable regions such as the North West and North East, are selling the fastest, with Redditch, Manchester, Carlisle, Stockport, Gateshead, Newcastle upon Tyne and Halton in the top ten fastest moving markets

Homes in England and Wales spend an average of 36 days on the market before a sale is agreed, however, in Redditch, homes spend an average of 22 days on the market.

Richard Donnell, Zoopla's executive director, said: "It currently takes just over a month to agree a home sale across England and Wales but this varies widely across the country and by property type with smaller family homes the fastest selling.

"Metrics like time to sell and average sale price are crucial in helping would-be sellers understand the value of their home and the asking price they could secure in 2025.

"Buyers have a lot more choice of homes for sale than a year ago. Aiming too high on the asking price is likely to impact saleability and how long you may have to wait to agree a sale."

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After taking advantage of free entrance and free parking, visitors will have the chance to view an enormous range of around 50 Residential Park Homes and Leisure Lodges including the latest models from leading Manufacturers. It's a fantastic opportunity to see so many homes all on display together. It's your chance to compare models, see the latest designs and innovations, enjoy the inspirational decoration ideas, and find out more about the lifestyle from the experts on hand to help.

The show has something for everyone and of course, it's not just the homes themselves. It's the wonderful locations available across the UK and beyond. It's the extras, the fabulous range of new products and accessories. There's Ideas for

renovation and plenty of those extra touches to provide the leisure lifestyle you dreamed of.

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The 'Park Life' sponsored 'Catering Area' providing delicious home cooked meals and snacks and visitors wishing to picnic are of course most welcome.

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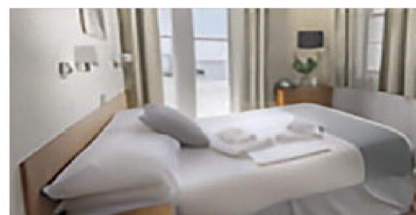


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Divas take star role at Artrix

A SHOW which was inspired by a mum's dying suggestion is heading to Bromsgrove's Artrix.

It all began three years ago when Shelley-Davina Burton's mum Davina-Ann died of ovarian cancer.

Before she died, she said to Shelley-Davina: "I have seen you in many shows - even in the West End but why darling why don't you just do your own show."

With those words in her head, Shelley-Davina said: "I did just that. Out of the amazing memory of my mum who was an absolute diva, I put this show together in memory of her and those words.

"She is always my inspiration and, like my mum was in life, this show is so much fun and larger than life.

"It's a dedication and celebration of the greatest diva of my life - my mum."

For the 'Divas and the Decades' show, Shelley has



Shelley-Davina Burton is bringing her 'Divas and the Decades' show to Bromsgrove's Artrix. s

hand-picked amazing tunes by some of the greatest divas of all time from past and present.

Among them are Tina Turner, Whitney Houston, The Supremes, Dolly Parton, Dusty Springfield, Cher, Beyonce and more.

The show is billed as a 'feel good dance and sing-along show jam-packed with amazing hits' as it celebrates the powerhouse

voices and iconic performances of the biggest divas in music history.

The talented Shelley-Davina is backed by other remarkable singers and captivating dancers.

The team behind the production pride themselves on delivering melodic harmonies, soulful renditions and high-energy choreography.

Shelley-Davina, who is from Coventry, cannot wait to be back in the Midlands when her show comes to Artrix on June 6.

She said: "Embrace your inner diva, get your divas together and book now."

Tickets are £22 for children and £25 for adults.

A percentage of the profits go to a charity started in her mum's name.

Visit divaofthedecades.com or uk.patronbase.com/_Artrix/Productions/EJ/Performances for tickets and more information.

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Free sessions set to be a knockout

A BOXING club is offering free sessions to young people, to help rehabilitate them after traumatic experiences.

Pete Martin, owner of Redditch Self Defence Association, is working with young people to improve their lives, prevent them from engaging in crime and harness the power of physical activity for their self-esteem and mental health.

The club takes referrals from a wider range of partners working with young people, including the NHS, local Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, Families First, Social Workers, School Exclusion Officers, West Mercia Police, Turnaround officers and the Probation Service.

Pete said: "We have seen some incredible results from the young people at the club. I am super proud of every single one of them. One young person was referred to the boxing club by the YMCA.

"Homeless and disengaged from sports due to poor mental health, they received free sessions and a three-month membership at a local Box England club.

"The outcome was remarkable, with the individual training to become a part-time coach, finding stable housing, and entering a healthy relationship."

Pete has been coaching in Redditch for 36 years and runs a Youth Centre in Britten Street. He also runs an anti-knife crime campaign called DroptheKnife, and says education is always our main focus to reduce knife crime.

He added: "Another young person, referred by the police after experiencing PTSD from witnessing a murder, had not engaged in any activities for years.

"Through the referral programme, this indi-



vidual received free boxing classes and mentoring, and is now an assistant coach.

"Another referred by the police due to school exclusion, social drug use, and anxiety, had no physical activity routine. They received free classes, gym membership, and mentoring."

The sessions are being funded by Worcestershire County Council's Public Health team. Visit: redditchselfdefence.co.uk for more information.

Pete Martin has been running Redditch Self Defence for 36 years. s



DAY TRIPS

Tuesday 5th August Abergavenny	£26
Wednesday 28th May Bury Market with Fish & Chips at the Olympus Fish Bar	£45
Saturday 7th June, Sunday 6th July, Wednesday 6th August, Saturday 30th August Weston Super Mare	£28 Adult, £22 Child
Saturday 14th June Weymouth	£40
Saturday 28th June or Wednesday 30th July Barry Island	£28
Saturday 5th July Welsh Ride Around & Brecon	£30
Saturday 26th July Aberystwyth	£36
Wednesday 13th August Porthcawl	£28
Wednesday 20th August Sidmouth & The Donkey Sanctuary	£40
Saturday 21st June Bristol with a Boat Cruise along the Avon & Cream Tea on Board	£55
Sunday 29th June Afternoon Tea and Cabaret/Show At Studley Castle Enjoy a Bucks Fizz on arrival, afternoon tea and a cabaret/show	£50
Tuesday 29th July Summer Ride Around with 3 Course Carvery Lunch at the Plough, Far Forest.....	£40
Saturday 2nd August The Royal Mint Experience Tour with Cream Tea	£45
Sunday 31st August Coronation Street Studio Tour	£75
Sunday 7th September Poppies at The Tower of London	£81 Adult, £74 Seniors, £63 Child
Saturday 27th September Harry Potter Studio Tour The Dark Arts	£95
Saturday 27th September 1940's Weekend at Bletchley Park	£52
Sunday 19th October Elvis Evolution : The Immersive Experience London	£99
Sunday 26th October Abba Voyage @ Abba Arena, London matinee performance	£115
Saturday 13th December Longleat Festival of Light	£79 Adult, £69 Child

HOLIDAYS 2025

Sunday 20th July 5 Days. Dunoon-Gateway to the Scenic Sights of Scotland, Dinner, bed & breakfast & Includes boat cruise and entrance to Benmore Botanical Gardens	from £695
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Thursday 21st August 5 Days. Llandudno staying at the Tynedale Hotel, Dinner, bed & breakfast & Includes excursions	from £545
Monday 1st September 5 Days. Torquay staying at the Riviera Hotel, Dinner, bed & breakfast & Includes excursions to Brixham & Paignton and Exmouth	from £349
Friday 19th September 4 Days. Babbacombe staying at the Babbacombe Hotel, Dinner, bed & breakfast & Includes excursion to Buckfast Abbey	from £299
Wednesday 24th September 6 Days. Ireland- Killarney staying at Dooleys Hotel & Killarney Towers, Dinner, bed & breakfast & Includes excursions	from £969

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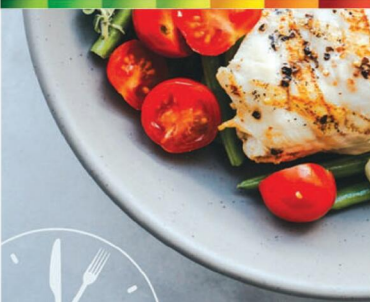
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- B** The Great British Bake off
- C** Great British Garden Retreat

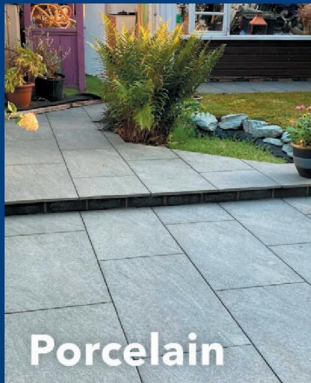
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*Competition closing date will be Sat 31st May 2025. Valid on general admission tickets only, excluding Saturday entry. Details correct at time of print. Transaction fee applies. The Gardeners' World logo is a trademark of the BBC. © BBC. The Good Food trade mark is used under licence from Immediate Media Company London Limited. Organised by Immediate Live (trading name of River Street Events Ltd).

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THE all-new, sixth-generation Nissan Micra will return to the B-segment in 2025 as a fully-connected, pure EV.

Its arrival signals the next major step in Nissan's bold product offensive in Europe, where the company will introduce four new fully electric models by 2027 as part of its push towards electrification. These include the all-new Micra, followed by the Nissan Leaf, Nissan Juke, and a A-Segment model, as well as the upgraded third generation of Nissan's unique e-Power technology to be rolled out on the best-selling Nissan Qashqai.

Designed at Nissan's Design Europe (NDE) in London, the new Micra boasts a refreshed and distinctive new exterior look – combining a premium exterior finish and a ton of attitude with an SUV-like design, simple and uncluttered surfaces, and subtle details throughout.

Giovanni Arroba, Vice

President of Nissan Design Europe, said: "In designing the sixth generation of the Micra, we've celebrated all the values that have historically made it so popular – and opened a new chapter for Micra as an EV.

"The exterior has an audacious and playful appearance on first look but has a stance which gives it a solid presence on the road. We've also been able to integrate delightful details into the design, which owners will love. We're proud to have been able to bring the Micra into the EV age."

Inside the car, new Micra's interior recaptures a theme that has been at the heart of the model across all previous generations – simple, understated elegance. Building on that legacy, this latest generation also hints to its Japanese heritage through subtle hidden design features – including a moulded outline of Japan's most famous landmark, Mount Fuji, incorporated into the storage space

between the front seats.

At under four metres in length and less than 1.8 metres wide, the new Micra punches well above its weight, and is perfectly suited for the tight turns and busy roads of urban life. A wheelbase of 2.54 metres pushes the wheels to the corners, which has the triple benefits of guaranteeing improved interior space, while providing a dynamic stance on the road and an optimum blend of agility and stability.

Available for the first time as a fully electric model, new Micra offers worry-free EV driving that's perfect for daily life. Available in two battery options – 40kWh and 52kWh – the model offers significant power and range for an urban car.

Complementing the smooth and hassle-free feel of an electric drive, the new Micra has been meticulously engineered to provide a performance that goes above and beyond previous generations

and will delight new and existing drivers alike.

For peace of mind on the highway, the new Micra is available with Nissan ProPilot assist, offering lane-keeping assistance, adaptive cruise control and emergency braking.

European sales of the new Micra will start in late 2025.

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PUBLIC NOTICES

PUBLIC NOTICES

Warwickshire County Council

ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984
Warwickshire County Council has made the following Temporary Traffic Orders:

D5495 DUNNINGTON ROAD & C103 BROOM LANE, DUNNINGTON

Order Effect: Roads closed to vehicular traffic.
Reason for Order: Footway reconstruction and associated works, weekdays only 09.30hrs-15.30hrs.
Order Commences: 27 May 2025 for up to 18 months.

Anticipated Completion: 2 June 2025.
Access & Diversion: For Dunnington Road – B4088 Salford Road, Dunnington Road and vice versa. For Broom Lane – C214 Dunnington Road, Wixford Road, Ryknild Street, Bidford Road, High Street, Broom Lane and vice versa.
Contractor: Balfour Beatty, Tel: 03452 415 302.

PUBLIC FOOTPATH AL45 WEETHLEY

Order Effect: Public Footpath AL45 Weethley will be closed to ALL traffic, between grid references SP07570-56769 and SP05557-55480.
Reason for Order: The closures and restrictions are required for the safety of the public and of the participants in the Midlands Air Festival 2025.
Order Commences: 30 May 2025 for up to 3 days.

Access & Diversion: Please use an alternative route using Public Footpaths or Public Rights of Way.
Contact: WCC Rights of Way Team, Tel: 01926 412 910.

Warwickshire County Council proposes to make the following Temporary Traffic Orders:

BURFORD LANE, SPERNALL

Order Effect: Road closed to vehicular traffic.
Reason for Order: To enable works for replacement of telegraph poles.

Order Commences: 12 June 2025 for up to 18 months.
Anticipated Completion: 12 June 2025.

Access & Diversion: Burford Lane, Sperrall Lane, Village Road, Aine End, Henley Road, Alcester Road and vice versa.
Contractor: Core Highways, Tel: 079792 966 733.

C41 PELHAM LANE, HASELOR, ALCESTER

Order Effect: Road closed to vehicular traffic between the junctions of Henley Road and Wood Lane. In addition, the weight restriction on Pelham Lane, Lower Haselor Lane, Stratford Road, High Street, Church Street, Henley Street, Kinwarton Road, Alcester will be temporarily suspended.
Reason for Order: To enable piling to brook, carriageway edge strengthening, drainage and associated works.

Order Commences: 9 June 2025 for up to 18 months.
Anticipated Completion: 22 June 2025.

Access & Diversion: Pelham Lane, Lower Haselor Lane, Stratford Lane, High Street, Church Street, Henley Street, Kinwarton Road, Captains Hill, School Road, Village Road and vice versa.
Contractor: Balfour Beatty, Tel: 03452 415 302.

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

To report any problems with these works or for further details of our current & planned roadworks visit our website warwickshire.gov.uk/roadworksmap or call us 01926 412515.

S Duxbury, Director of Strategy, Planning & Governance,
Shire Hall, Warwick CV34 4RL Date 23 May 2025

PUBLIC NOTICES

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL & REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL

Advertisement Key: ADVSTD = Wider Publicity, CA = Conservation Area, CAS = Conservation Area Setting LB = Listed Building, LBS = Listed Building Setting.

25/00236/FUL ADVSTD CA CAS
Site: Flat Above, 6 Church Green West, Redditch, Worcestershire B97 4DY.

Proposal: Extend the existing building to the rear by two storey to create two No. residential apartments.

25/00527/PIP LBS
Site: Alders Court, Green Lane, Redditch, Worcestershire B97 5GY.

Proposal: Permission in Principle for the conversion of the existing building for to up to two Residential Dwellings (C3).

25/00189/FUL ADVSTD CA LB
Site: St Stephens Church, Church Green West, Redditch, Worcestershire B97 4DY.

Proposal: Installation of 2 air source heat pumps and surrounding wrought iron enclosure.

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

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

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

PUBLIC NOTICES

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL & REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL

Advertisement Key: CA = Conservation Area, LBS = Listed Building Setting, ADVSTD = Wider Publicity, CA = Conservation Area.

25/00464/FUL CA LBS
Site: 13 New Road, Bromsgrove, Worcestershire.

Proposal: Conversion and extension of existing building to create 6 residential units with associated works.

25/00551/FUL ADVSTD CA
Site: The Golden Cross, 20 High Street, Bromsgrove, Worcestershire B61 8HH.

Proposal: Installation of new plant equipment on the rear, first-floor flat roof, adjacent to the existing plant, including a mechanical kitchen supply system complete with an 18kW electric heater battery, a new supply fan and replace the existing condenser unit.

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

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

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MISCELLANEOUS

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DEATHS

RYAN

Michael William

Aged 86 Years

Peacefully passed away on Thursday 1st May 2025 at the Alexandra Hospital. Beloved Husband to Diane.

He will be sadly missed by all of his family and friends.

Michael will be received into Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church on Monday 9th June 2025 at 5.00 p.m.

A Requiem Mass will take place on Tuesday 10th June 2025 at 1.00 p.m., followed by committal at St Bartholomew's Church, Tardebigge at 2.30 p.m.

Flowers welcome or donations if preferred to the Salvation Army may be sent to

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DEATHS

SYMONS

Jean

Aged 88 Years

Passed away peacefully on Sunday 11th May 2025

A much loved Mum to Michelle and Adrian

Jean will be greatly missed by all of her family and friends

A service to celebrate Jean's life will take place at Redditch Crematorium on Tuesday 10th June 2025 at 12.30pm. Please wear a touch of pink or lilac, Jean's favourite colours.

Family flowers only please donations if desired to the Alzheimer's Society may be sent to

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Thank you

DEATHS

TALBOT-SYKES

David Cornel

Sadly passed away on Friday 25th April 2025, aged 64 years. David will be missed by all of his family and friends.

A service to celebrate David's life will take place at Redditch Crematorium on Friday 30th May 2025 at 2.45 p.m.

Donations if desired to The Royal British Legion may be sent to:

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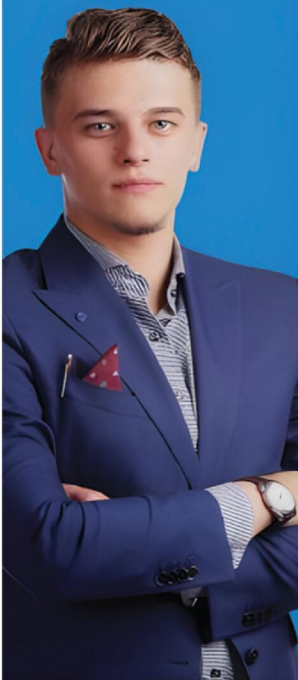


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Warriors show intent with raft of new signings

Matt Kvesic is back for a third spell with Worcester Warriors. Picture by John Coles.



by Aaron Sutcliffe
aaron.sutcliffe@bullivanmedia.com

RUGBY UNION: WORCESTER Warriors have made seven new signings as Matt Everard shapes his squad for the 2025/26 season.

Warriors made flanker Matt Kvesic the club's first new signing ahead of their return to professional rugby next campaign.

Kvesic returns to Sixways for a third spell following a four-year stint with Warriors at the start of his professional career and a two-season stay before the club entered administration.

The 33-year-old has also played for Gloucester, Exeter Chiefs, Zebre

and Coventry - spending the last two seasons with the latter club in the Championship.

Kvesic said: "I'm exceptionally excited to rejoin my first club, third time lucky. Back at a club which means so much to me, the place that gave me an opportunity as a 16/17-year-old.

"I want to be a part of their journey back to top flight rugby, albeit it slightly older and hopefully wiser.

"It was a no brainer to be part of what the club are building and I am here to support them on and off the field.

"I know there's a huge desire for professional rugby to be back in the city and it'll be an honour to put the blue and gold colours back on."

Newly-appointed head coach, Everard added: "I am delighted with

the signing of Matt Kvesic. Matt is a massive part of Worcester Warriors, and Worcester Warriors is a massive part of Matt.

"He is someone who knows and cares about the club, the city, and the fans. But not only that, he is a top-quality player who has been in environments that have won big competitions and big games.

"He knows what it takes to win, and what it looks like on a day-to-day basis."

Experienced winger Josh Bassett has also joined Warriors.

Bassett has enjoyed a prolific career in the Premiership featuring for the likes of Wasps, Harlequins and Leicester Tigers.

The 33-year-old scored 65 tries in more than 180 appearances for Wasps.

Worcester have also confirmed the arrival of Tiff Eden and Tim Anstee.

Eden spent the first three years of his career with Worcester.

The 30-year-old fly-half went on to represent Nottingham, Bristol Bears, Zebre and Saracens.

And 27-year-old flanker Anstee is a former star for Australia in rugby sevens.

Anstee also played for Western Force in Super Rugby.

Warriors have also added former Wales international scrum-half Lloyd Williams and Premiership-winning prop Fraser Balmain to their squad.

Williams represented Wales at two Rugby World Cup's as the 35-year-old makes the switch from Championship leaders Ealing Trailfinders.

And Balmain won the Premiership with Leicester Tigers back in 2012/13 with the 33-year-old spending his entire career in the top-flight.

Worcester have also swooped to sign 23-year-old fly-half Will Reed from Welsh side Dragons.

And Warriors have also appointed former Wasps and Northampton Saints hooker Tom Cruse as assistant coach.

Kruse will leave his role with Championship side Bedford Blues to take up the position at Sixways.

Hart make positive start to campaign

BOWLS: THE Hart Crown Green Bowling Club have made a strong start to the season with five of their teams occupying the top two places in their respective divisions.

Hart's A team sit top of the Heart of England League table by four points following a 150-133 home win against Baldwin A.

Wins for Pete Davenport (21-2), Paul Matthews (21-17), Cameron Cutler (21-19) and Jon Palmer (21-11) means the Hart remain unbeaten after four matches.

The club stormed to the Division One title by 41 points last season.

In the Warwickshire and Worcestershire Premier League, Hart lead the Division Four table following a 194-150 victory at West Brom FSC B.

Tony Moore, Mike Estell, Dave Mahaffey Ashley Beeston, Matthews and Cutler all won their matches.

In the South West Birmingham and District Over 60s League, Hart A won

120-87 against local rivals Alcester A.

However, the club lost 107-84 in the return fixture at Alcester to sit second in Division One, eight points behind Woodbourne A.

And Hart B top Division Five after completing the double over bottom side Woodlands B by a scoreline of 126-58.

Elsewhere, in the Northfield and District Sunday League, Hart B sit second in Division Three and are through to the Sid Stephens Cup quarter-finals.

A 168-113 success against Central Edgbaston means the B team will play Hart's A team in the last eight of the competition.

Hart's A team picked up their first win in the Yardley Wood Superleague with a 168-112 victory in Division One against Wootton Hall A.

A full house of winning cards saw Steve Jones (21-7) and Penny Moore (21-9) triumph to single figures.

Hart B were unable to match that

victory at Wootton Hall B but did take three points from the Division Three match as Manny Kawycz (21-4), Alan Asbury (21-13) and Neil Duggan (21-12) won their respective matches.

In the Heart of England League Division Three, Hart's team lost out by two shots against Hockley Heath.

Hart B picked up their first win of the year in the return fixture, winning 140-135.

Wins for Neil Laxton (21-9), Kirk Wright (21-10), Phil Hemming (21-14) and Malcolm Bird (21-18) helped lift Hart off the bottom of the table.

In the Heart of England Over 60s League Division One, Hart A only took two points from their visit to Moseley CC A as Mike Estell (21-14) and Graham Arnott (21-19) claimed victories.

And Hart B had four winners in their 106-89 win against M and B Portland Road in Division Three as Laxton, Kawycz, Neil Harrison and David Pratt all came out on top.

Comfortable victory for Fanthome in fifth pro fight

BOXING: LEO Fanthome cruised to a comfortable points victory in his fifth professional fight.

The 'Lionheart' dominated heavier opponent Dan Booth in all four rounds to claim a 40-36 points victory at the Holiday Inn at Birmingham Airport.

Manchester-based Booth (6-9) marked a step up in class for Redditch fighter Fanthome (4-1).

And Booth also had a weight advantage, tipping the scales at just over 11 stone with Fanthome weighing in at 10st six pounds.

However, 26-year-old Fanthome showed his class to come out on top in front of around 100 supporters.

Fanthome said: "I boxed a different game this time.

"I knew the guy had a lot of experience, three of his six wins had come by knockout so I knew he could punch a bit.

"I outboxed him. There were times when I could've worn him down a bit more. I boxed in and out and in phases.

"It was possibly the hardest test so far, but there was nothing I couldn't deal with.

"I kept it on the outside, I boxed up and down and at the end of the first my coach Lee Spare said: 'that's the best I've

ever seen you box'."

Fanthome's manager, Jon Pegg added: "Leo is showing improvement with every fight. We are here for the long haul."

Fanthome has put a surprise stoppage loss in just his second pro fight behind him, reeling off three straight wins including one by knockout.

And after competing in five four-round bouts, the Worcestershire fighter hopes to return to the ring soon in a longer six-round fight.

Fanthome is also targeting his first belt in the pro ranks and is eyeing up the Midlands title within his next five fights.

Fanthome added: "The next one has to be a six-rounder.

I had to renew my licence and didn't have my first fight until May, but I'm still hopeful of having five fights this year.

"I want to have two or three more fights then box for a Midlands title.

I'd like a Midlands title within 10 fights.

"I'm building up a fanbase, I'm stronger, more confident and my skill set is increasing. Maybe I need to work on my inside work a bit more.

"There's not too much that needs working on, just keep on with the basics and keeping my frame and shape."

Leo Fanthome (right) has his hand raised in victory. Picture courtesy of Campfire Stories Productions.



Late agony for Alvechurch

CRICKET: ALVECHURCH and Hopwood CC suffered an agonising two-wicket defeat against Netherton 2nds with one ball to spare in a thriller.

The home side posted 250-4 from their 50 overs at Alvechurch Cricket Ground as Mark James starred with 67 not out from 34 balls.

However, Netherton reached the required total with one ball remaining despite the best efforts of Ben Dunn and Tom Shepherd who took three wickets apiece.

The result means Alvechurch sit fourth in the Worcestershire County League Division Two table.

Church made a strong start with the bat as openers Shepherd (34) and Jack Williams (53) piled on the runs.

However, both batters fell to the bowling of Sheraz Younas (2-33) with Shepherd stumped and Williams bowled.

Nathan Buckley (35) made a useful contribution while Jack White (3) lasted just 13 deliveries as Asif Iqbal (2-26) accounted for both batters.

Alvechurch increased the run-rate in the latter stages of the innings as Dj

Budden (33 not out) supported captain James at the crease.

And James propelled Church to 250 at the end of their innings as he hit eight fours and two sixes in a stunning 34-ball knock.

Alvechurch quickly removed Netherton openers Jawad Nazir (7) and Iqbal (16) as Charlie Bannister (1-56) and White (1-35) took early wickets.

However, Danyal Rehman (70) frustrated the Church attack before Dunn (3-38) eventually trapped him LBW.

Dunn also claimed the wickets of Wasim Nawaz (32) and Basim Ishaq (23).

However, Netherton's middle order continued to score runs as Muhammad Madni (25) and Muhammad Massod (40) both made crucial contributions.

Shepherd (3-63) had Madni stumped and Massod caught before also bowling Younas (0) for a duck.

However, Muhammad Yasin (nine not out) edged Netherton to the narrowest of victories.

Alvechurch and Hopwood are next in action against Kidderminster 2nds on Saturday, May 24 with the game to begin at 12.30pm at Chester Road.

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Lap record and podium places for Team Vertu at Brands Hatch

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

BTCC: DROITWICH-based Team Vertu achieved three podium finishes in the second round of the British Touring Car Championship (BTCC) at Brands Hatch.

Title contender Tom Ingram finished third in race one and secured another podium finish in race three after finishing 11th in race two.

The Coventry driver has now achieved five podium finishes from six races in the BTCC this season.

Ingram also broke the Brands Hatch Indy circuit lap record in the third and final race of the weekend.

And teammate Adam Morgan finished second in race two to ensure the Droitwich team have finished on the podium in all six BTCC races this season.

Morgan placed fourth in race one to just miss out on the podium and 12th in race three.

Team Vertu lead the teams standings on 166 points with NAPA Racing UK in second on 143 points.

And Ingram sits second in the drivers' standings on 87 points - just five points behind leader Ash Sutton.

Ingram said: "It was a really good weekend and the car has felt beautiful. We haven't need to touch it from the start of FP1.

"It's been a dream and we've been able to score solid points once again which has allowed us to retain second in the points.

"It's a nice place to be in at this



Tom Ingram on the track at Brands Hatch. Picture by Darren Price.

stage, and it sets us up well for the rest of the season to try and carry this momentum on.

"It would have been nice to finish higher up in race two, but we didn't expect so many people to run the soft there which caught us off-guard a little.

"As it was, I feel we did a good job there to get the result that we did, and when we bolted the soft tyre back on for race three, the pace allowed us to come back through to the podium again.

"Five podiums from six shows our consistency, and whilst I want to get that win, it won't be far away with the pace we have."

Morgan added: "It was a pretty good weekend from the moment we rolled the car out of the truck as we've been on the money, and it's great to score my first podium with EXCELR8 and Team Vertu.

"We've been quick in all three races, even on the hard tyre, and have picked up solid points to move up the standings.

"Without fluffing the start, I think we could potentially have won the second race but I'm not going to come away from the weekend disappointed with a podium finish, especially with the pace we have in the car at the moment.

"Looking at race one and two and

how people had performed on the hard tyre, I knew the final race would be tough - especially with the lack of boost - but I was first car home on the hard tyre so I know we did the best we could and maximised the result."

Team Vertu driver Tom Chilton improved over the course of the weekend as he finished 22nd, 12th and seventh respectively.

And Michael Crees placed 13th, 14th and 16th to round off another successful weekend for the Droitwich team.

The BTCC season continues at Snetterton on the weekend of May 24 and 25.

Spa ease to away victory

CRICKET: JONATHAN Miles started with bat and ball as Droitwich Spa CC cruised to an eight-wicket victory against Hagley.

Miles took 3-15 with the ball before scoring 41 not out with the bat at Hagley Park.

Droitwich bowled the home side out for just 122 and needed just 25.5 overs to reach the required total.

The result means Spa sit fourth in the Worcestershire County League Division One table.

Hagley won the toss and elected to bat only for Droitwich to make several early inroads with the ball.

Max Young (1-9) bowled opener Daniel Giles (0) for a duck before Sam Smith (1-28) accounted for Christiaan Levitt (16) to leave the home side on 22-2.

And Harry Butler then ran out Umar Malik (7) while Adam Keen (3-24) claimed the wicket of Mikhail Jain (6) as Hagley slumped to 42-4.

Only Henry Deacy (30) passed the 20-run mark as Keen caught and bowled Mahroof Khan (3).

And Keen eventually claimed the scalp of Deacy as Spa took the remaining five wickets for the loss of just 35 runs.

Spa produced a 53-run first-wicket partnership in reply as Butler (27) and Sam Woolley (42) made an impressive start with the bat.

And Miles hit eight boundaries to guide Spa to a comfortable eight-wicket victory.

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