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‘Rik Mayall Festival has a fantastic future’

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

THE ORGANISERS of Droitwich’s inaugural Rik Mayall Comedy Festival say they have been ‘blown away’ by the response to the event, adding it had gone ‘way beyond their expectations’.

Artists have been comparing it to established festivals, including Brighton and Edinburgh, and some have suggested it has the potential to become the ‘go-to’ place in May/June ahead of them performing at the internationally-renowned comedy festival in Scotland in August.

Festival Director Stuart Panrucker told the Standard: “From the start, we wanted this to be a kind of warm-up for Edinburgh - a place where comedians could try out material before heading up north.

“This week has shown that’s not just possible, it’s already happening.”

The festival, launched last Saturday morning in Victoria Square, has boasted more than 200 events at 30 local venues.

Stuart added: “Venues have been packed, some local businesses have had their best weekends ever, and the feedback from artists and audiences has been fantastic. It’s exactly what we set out to do.

“For a first go, it has all been pretty incredible - we’ve welcomed visitors from all over



— all over the UK and Ireland, even from as far as Australia — some staying for the full eight days. “It has truly bought tourism back to Droitwich.”

The Rik Mayall Comedy Festival continues today and tomorrow with more than 60 events still to catch.

And, lucky viewers, may even be able to grab tickets for some of the final Norbury shows, including Rachel Fairburn WIP (tomorrow, 6pm) and Verbal Diary (tomorrow, 3pm).

Stuart said: “We’re finishing strong too, with a full day of free entertainment in Lido Park on Sunday, and the after-party with the hKippers at the Working Men’s Club.

“The Norbury team have been brilliant - show after show sold out - and huge thanks go to all the local businesses who’ve got behind it and to the performers who took a punt on something brand new.

“I really want to thank our amazing volunteers - many of them came from all over the country just to be part of this.

“People who’ve never been to Droitwich Spa have met each other here and formed lasting friendships, it’s lovely to see.

“This week has already put Droitwich Spa on the comedy map - and that’s down to a huge amount of work from an absolutely brilliant team that I’m proud to be a part of.”

Visit: rikmayallcomedyfestival.com for all you need to know on the final events.

Top comedian Helen Lederer with BBC Hereford and Worcester’s Andrew Easton at the Norbury Theatre. Picture by Jimmy Hill Photography. s

HAVE YOUR SAY: A NEIGHBOURHOOD plan guiding town centre development in Droitwich Spa is opening to public scrutiny as proposals reach the latter stages.

A draft of the new Droitwich Spa Neighbourhood Development Plan is being published by the town council alongside a public consultation which seeks residents’ views on the proposals.

The plan, when completed and if approved by voters, will inform planning and development within the town until 2041 and set out a vision, objectives and policies for Droitwich Spa.

The draft plan has been prepared by a steering group of town councillors, Droitwich Spa Civic Society representatives, and other volunteers.

It is being published for public consultation and residents can have their say from Monday, June 9, until 5pm on July 22.

Once the consultation is completed, Droitwich Spa Town Council will revise the plan, taking comments into account, and it will be submitted to Wychavon District Council for further consultation and an independent examination.

The final step is a referendum - if more than 50 per cent of voters in Droitwich Spa back the plan, it will be finalised and used by the district council to inform planning applications locally.

Visit: droitwichspa.gov.uk to view and comment on the plan.

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Students' art is rail-y impressive

A COLLECTION of 30 pieces of art done by students from six schools, including Woodrush High School in Hollywood, went on display at Birmingham's New Street Station this week.

The designs - installed as part of this year's Railway 200 celebrations - highlight famous Birmingham businesses, brands, and historical figures and show how important the railway was to their development and ambitions.

From the city's founding fathers of the city - Boulton, Watt and Murdoch - to internationally famous brands such as Cadbury, Dunlop and HP Sauce, each piece was specially created to celebrate the past, present, and future

of the railway and its role in the towns, cities, and communities it serves.

The artwork was unveiled by students from the colleges and schools involved in the project.

Denise Wetton, Network Rail's Central route director, said it was fantastic for local schools and colleges to showcase their brilliant Railway 200 artwork.

"The station is at the heart of the city centre and plays a big part in the local community and, with more than 100,000 people using it every day, I hope the pupils' and students' creativity gets the recognition it deserves."

"It was a pleasure to see the artwork on display and to help unveil it with the schools and colleges."

J a y Barber, from Woodrush High School, said: "For our young artists to have been

granted creative licence by Network Rail to research, draft, and produce work for public display, is applied learning at its very best.

"Using historic archives, iconic logos and distinctive colour palettes, our young people have creatively reimagined the spirit of our industrial heritage."

The artwork is the latest in a series of celebrations marking 200 years of the railway in Britain.

Next month, the West Midlands will be the first two stops for a special train, named Inspiration, which will tour stations and locations across Britain over the next 12 months.

Tickets for the Inspiration train are free but must be booked in advance.

Visit: railway200.co.uk/inspiration for more.

The artwork - celebrating Fort Dunlop - was created by students at Woodrush High School. Picture by Network Rail.



Coun Peter Whittaker is getting on his bike to raise funds for Primrose Hospice. Picture by Marcus Mingins 2325019MMR

Pedal with Peter for the Primrose

A TARDEBIGGE councillor is setting off on a 35-mile cycle ride with three friends to raise funds for the Primrose Hospice and he wants other riders to join them.

Coun Peter Whittaker, who is 74, wanted to undertake a challenge to raise funds for the charity and will set off on June 22 from the Primrose Hospice in Bromsgrove in a 35-mile circular route around south Worcestershire.

He said: "Mindful of my own mortality and not having been on my bicycle for some nine years, I was considering doing a challenge as a means of attaining a level of fitness with a sense of achievement."

"In my role as a Bromsgrove District Councillor, representing the good people of Tardebigge Ward, I was invited to The Primrose Hospice in Aston Fields earlier this year to an awards ceremony honouring numerous volunteers who had given their time over many years."

"I was humbled by the stories of many volunteers and as I spoke to various people I was informed and reminded about the problems the hospice has regarding fundraising."

The hospice needs to raise £1.93million-a-year to provide the services it does for the people of Bromsgrove, Redditch, Rubery and the surrounding areas and receives less than 15 per cent from the NHS.

Coun Whittaker added: "I decided that if I could, I would like to try and raise some much needed funding for the Hospice, hence the proposed charity ride."

"I then worked out a route which is challenging enough but not too onerous, keeping away from main roads as much as possible."

"I wanted to attract cyclists who have a bike in the garage but who haven't used it for a while and who want to raise funds for the hospice and get fitter by doing some training - something akin to Couch to 5K

as a running analogy.

"I would like potential cyclists to make contact with me asap with the expectation they will raise at least £200 each for the hospice."

Anyone who can boost the councillor and his team's coffers should visit: justgiving.com/page/peter-whittaker-2 and pledge cash there.

Anyone wanting to join them should call Coun Whittaker on 07966 275154 for more information.



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See page **30**

Channel swim to aid survivors

AMAN from Bromsgrove is gearing up to join a relay swim across the English Channel to raise vital funds for survivors of modern slavery and human trafficking.

Jared Hodgson, CEO of national anti-slavery charity Hope at Home, will join his organisation's relay team on the gruelling 21-mile open-water swim.

Weather conditions play a major factor in the timing of a channel crossing attempt meaning the team has a one-week window (June 16 to 22) in which they can embark on their challenge.

Jared said: "People fleeing war, persecution and trafficking are often left with no safe options. Many are exploited along the way or forced into

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

unsafe journeys just to survive.

"Swimming the Channel is a physical challenge, but it's nothing compared to the journeys our guests have made.

"Each person we support is someone's sister, brother, son or daughter and I often think, what lengths would I go to in order to support my kids if they were in such a situation?"

Hope at Home is the UK's only charity dedicated to hosting adult survivors of modern slavery.

It has recently reached a powerful milestone - more than 13,000 nights of safe

sleep have now been provided through its network of volunteer hosts. The charity is now set to expand its provision into housing solutions in the near future.

Helping survivors

Hope at Home supports survivors like Francisco, who was street homeless after escaping exploitation.

After moving in with a host through Hope at Home, he found work, began saving for private accommodation and now looks forward to a future free from fear.

The funds raised by the Channel Swim will allow the charity to expand its hosting model and wellbeing support package, covering trauma recovery, therapy, fitness and community reintegration, so more survivors can rebuild their lives in safety.

Hope at Home urgently needs more support to meet growing demand and Jared's swim is both a fundraising mission and a call to action.

He said: "This isn't just about swimming.

"It's about standing up for dignity, for compassion and for the right to be safe.

"We hope this challenge inspires people to donate or even consider becoming a host themselves."

So far the swim relay team - which includes Jared, Hannah, Sue, Alex, Mithil, and Benjamin (pictured) - have received nearly £3,000 towards their £7,500 goal, thanks to 60 generous donors.

Visit: justgiving.com/campaign/hopeathomechannelswim to donate.

Go to: hopeathome.org.uk for more information.

Jared with his channel swim relay teammates - Alex, Sue, Benjamin and Hannah. s



Jared practicing in open water for his channel swim.



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Tennis coaching proves a big hit

by Jeanna Karcz

THE ORGANISERS of the Lido Park Tennis sessions have been celebrating a smashing success – the 1,000th participant since it was founded in 2018.

The Droitwich group made its mission to make tennis more affordable and accessible to people within the community, offering low-cost tennis sessions which cater to a diverse age range and skill level, also accommodating players with disabilities. Participants now range in age from two years old to 90.

Lido Park Tennis also runs an extensive outreach programme dedicated to providing access to the sport for individuals with a range of disabilities or personal challenges.

This scheme ensures that everyone, regardless of their circumstances, has the opportunity to engage in physical activity and



benefit from the social and health advantages which tennis offers.

The programme is tailored to meet the specific needs of participants, offering adaptive equipment and personalised coaching to ensure an inclusive experience.

Neil Bates, from Lido Park Tennis, said: "We are thrilled to have reached our 1,000th participant and it is incredible to see how far we've come since we started in 2018.

"Our aim has always been to make tennis accessible to everyone, and this milestone is a clear indication that we are succeeding in getting people active.

"We are grateful to all our participants, volunteers, supporters and a special mention to Wychavon District Council which has been behind us right from the very start supporting everything we are trying to achieve."

Visit facebook.com/letsplaytennisdroitwichspa for more on tennis sessions in Lido Park.

Wayne on Coach of Year shortlist

THE HEAD coach at Redditch Hockey Club has been shortlisted for Coach of the Year at this year's England Hockey Awards.

Wayne Beard has been in his role for more than 15 years, coaching Under-12 and U14 juniors, supporting the development squad (a mix of new and veteran players), and managing the men's first team every

Saturday. Beyond the club, Wayne also coaches at the Talent Academy and mentors other coaches, sharing his wealth of experience to support the broader hockey community.

He gives his time selflessly, always putting players first and creating an inclusive, encouraging environment.

A spokesperson for the club said: "Wayne is not only

a fantastic coach but also a mentor, leader, and role model. His long-standing commitment, combined with his passion for developing players of all ages and abilities, makes him an outstanding candidate for Coach of the Year."

The winner will be announced tomorrow (Saturday, June 7) at a ceremony in Leicester.



Wayne Beard has been nominated for Coach of the Year. s

Have-a-go session

PEOPLE can have a go at tennis at a special event in Bromsgrove.

The event, open for all ages, abilities and experience, takes place between 11am and midday next Saturday, June 14, at Bromsgrove Tennis Club.

All equipment will be provided.

Visit the website at bromsgrovetennisclub.co.uk or email jgtennisltd@gmail.com for more information and to book the free places.

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Record sum for hero's medals

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

A MODERN-DAY British war hero from Bromsgrove who became the youngest recipient of the Military Cross since the Second World War has sold his gallantry medals at auction for a record-breaking sum.

L/Cpl Alexander Kennedy, aged 34, was rewarded for his bravery after his platoon was ambushed by the Taliban in Afghanistan in 2009 when he was just 18 years old.

His actions were widely recognised as 'one of the most outstanding acts of bravery by a British soldier in the modern era' and earned him the Military Cross.

The veteran, a Private when the ambush happened, now lives with PTSD and made the 'difficult' decision to part with his gallantry medals as he 'grapples with' the 'profound emotional significance' associated with them.

Kennedy's collection of medals and memorabilia which included his battle-damaged helmet and personal congratulatory letters from senior British military figures sold for £33,800, including fees, at Aubrey's Auctioneers last Wednesday.

The sum is believed to be an auction record for a modern Military Cross trio.

Kennedy, of the 2nd Battalion, Mercian Regiment, had just six months military experience when his platoon came under fire from at least nine enemy fighters in Helmand Province.

The 'ferocious' attack left his platoon commander, Cptn Andy Bell, severely wounded and resulted in Kennedy himself being struck - with his light machine gun's handle shattered by enemy fire, sending shrapnel ricocheting into his helmet and goggles, temporarily blinding and deafening him.

Despite the chaos, Kennedy displayed remarkable coolness under fire, crawling to his wounded commander and administering life-saving first aid before assuming responsibility for radio communications.

Fully aware the Taliban were targeting radio operators, Kennedy calmly transmitted an accurate report to get armoured vehicle support.

He then returned to the fight, engaging enemy forces with his damaged weapon, providing vital cover for his commander's rescue and allowing his section to secure a safer position. His actions undoubtedly saved multiple lives and altered the outcome of a highly perilous engagement.

The awarding of Kennedy's Military Cross was formally announced on March 19, 2010. His bravery was further acknowledged in Parliament and honoured at a civic reception hosted by Bromsgrove District Council.

He received the prestigious decoration personally from HRH The Prince of Wales at Buckingham Palace on July 9, 2010.

Some proceeds from the auction will support charitable causes close to Kennedy's heart. Beneficiaries include wildlife conservation efforts, specifically projects aimed at protecting Africa's iconic 'Big 5' species.

The sale will also enable Kennedy to pursue further education and studies, with his aims for the future including writing an autobiography to further inspire and support others experiencing similar challenges.

He is actively engaged in veteran support networks and is passionate about promoting mental health awareness among former service personnel.

Today, Kennedy is living a significantly happier and healthier life, successfully managing his PTSD and dedicating his time to raising awareness and providing guidance for fellow veterans.



Bromsgrove veteran, Lance Corporal Alexander Kennedy's brave actions in Afghanistan aged just 18 earned him the Military Cross which sold at auction alongside other medals and memorabilia for almost £34,000. s

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The production, set at Maplin's Holiday Camp, features a host of colourful characters, comedy galore, lots of laughs and fantastic 1950s music from a wonderful live band.

It is being staged by Jigsaw Players with

performances at 2pm and 7.30pm next Saturday, June 14, and 7pm next Sunday, June 15.

Tickets, at £15 each, are available by emailing: jigsawplayers15@gmail.com by calling Su Fletcher on 07772 645722 or 07919 505764.

Discounts are available for bookings of 10 or more.

For all the latest news log onto www.bromsgrovestandard.co.uk

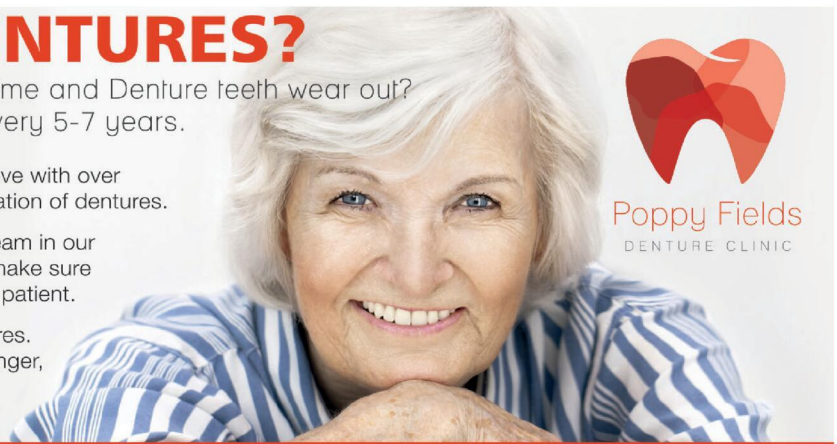
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The Primrose Choir is looking for more people to join its ranks as it celebrates its 25th anniversary. Picture by Tony Slade. s

Choir tunes up for anniversary

THE PRIMROSE Choir is celebrating its 25th anniversary this year, having raised more than £200,000 for the Primrose Hospice since its launch.

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

The choir, which began in 2000, continues to perform a wide variety of music at concerts, community events, and hospice memorial services and also attends funerals when asked.

The photo marking the anniversary includes several key figures from the choir's story.

Among them are the Primrose Hospice CEO David Burrell, choir patron Rod Laight, musical director Ruth Hadley and founder of the choir Kay Hadley.

To mark the 25th anniversary the choir is inviting new members to join its ranks.

Rehearsals take place every Wednesday at 7pm at the Primrose Hospice, St Godwald's Road, Bromsgrove.

No audition is required – just a love of singing, having fun and a desire to make a difference to people's lives.

Anyone who wants to see or hear the choir in action can check the group's performance in conjunction with the charity's Go Yellow campaign.

The Primrose Choir will hold a tea party at 3pm on June 22 at the Avoncroft Arts Society, Redditch Road, Stoke Heath, Bromsgrove.

Visit the website at primrose-hospice.org/support-us/volunteering/primrose-choir for more.



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Daring deeds to raise BCH funds

A GROUP of thrill-seeking colleagues from a Bromsgrove company will take on some daring feats for charity this summer.

Ethan Patterson, Barney Ledwidge, Madeline Cull, Olivia Vivien and Sophie Round of AFH Wealth Management will be skydiving this summer to fundraise for Birmingham Children's Hospital.

The group will take the leap this month, jumping from 13,000ft in Brackley, Northamptonshire.

Madeline said she was so pleased to be raising cash for an amazing charity as every single donation helped.

"A skydive is something I have always wanted to do so I can't wait for the big jump."

In August, another courageous group from the company will take on a bungee jump in support of the hospital.

Halim Mohammed, Sian McGarvey, Simon Robson and Steffi Catell will leap 160ft over Cliff Lakes Waterpark in Birmingham.

Halim said: "In all honesty I am absolutely bricking it already - I can feel my legs shaking in advance of being up in that crane.



"But it's a good opportunity to do some fundraising and help those in need."

AFH has plenty of other events and challenges planned throughout 2025, such as sponsored runs, an employee vs adviser football match and a place in the sought-after Dragon Boat race in Brindley Place, Birmingham this September.

These courageous feats are part of the firm's annual efforts to support charities and good causes.

AFH has agreed if its original target of £12,000 is met by the end of the year, they will match it.

AFH's customer and

employee experience lead, Jenny Read said: "We had no idea we had such a thrill-seeking bunch of people working for us.

She said she was proud of her colleague's courage and determination.

Jacintha Spragg, Birmingham Children's Hospital Charity's regional fundraiser, added: "We wish all challengers the best of luck.

"The funds they raise will have an incredible impact on our hospital and the experiences of the 100,000 children it treats every single year."

Visit: justgiving.com/team/skydive-2025 to sponsor the skydiving team which has so far raised £1,850 towards its £3,000 goal.

Go to: justgiving.com/team/afh-bungee-jump to sponsor the bungee jump team which has a £1,500 target to reach.

Halim Mohammed, Sian McGarvey, Steffi Catell and Simon Robson will be taking on a bungee jump.

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120 streets join up for county's Big Garage Sale

'THE BIG Worcestershire Garage Sale' which is now in its third year is going from strength-to-strength and already has 120 streets signed up to take part.

The event is the brainchild of estate agency Nicol and Co and this year's event takes place next Saturday, June 14.

The Big Worcestershire Garden Sale gives people who have items they no longer need and use to declutter and offer them for sale. At the same time, people who need items for their home can pick up some bargain items.

Matt Nicol, managing director of Nicol and Co, has also just recorded a new podcast with Kath Holmes from Uncluttered by Kath, giving expert tips on how people can declutter in advance of the garage sale. The popular event, which brings communities together from across the county, was launched by Nicol and Co in 2023, and last year around 500 householders took part from a total of 125 streets.

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

Mr Nicol said: "There was a loud cheer across our offices when we confirmed the latest tally of 100-plus streets taking part on Saturday, June 14.

"There are already hundreds of householders busy decluttering for what will be another great day of bargain hunting, treasure finding and charitable giving – all from the comfort of their own driveways.

"They will be offering everything from antiques and collectibles to clothing, toys homeware and other unwanted goodies.

"Lots of householders are returning for what will be the second or third year running, although plenty of first-timers new to the concept have also signed up.

"It's with first-timers in mind that we've recorded our new podcast with Kath Holmes, a professional organiser who lives and breathes decluttering.

"Whether your loft is bursting or



Matt Nicol, managing director of Nicol and Co, has recorded a podcast with Kath Holmes from Uncluttered by Kath to provide some expert tips. s

your spare room's become a storage unit, Kath's got the tips to help you clear the clutter and turn your unwanted items into cash."

Visit this story on our website and click through the link at the bottom to listen to the new Just Local podcast episode with Matt and Kath.

Mr Nicol added: "The Big Worcestershire Garage Sale is a fun and sustainable way to make space in your homes, meet neighbours and find amazing bargains, and we're hoping for the biggest turnout ever for this year's event."

Everyone taking part in 'The Big Worcestershire Garage Sale' has the option of donating a portion of their sales or making a direct contribution to St Richard's Hospice.

Nicol and Co has a fundraising target of £25,000 towards the £12million St Richard's Hospice needs to raise every year to provide free care.

The estate agency already makes regular donations to St Richard's via its community fund, with the total donations to date already over £23,000.

The £25,000 the company aims to

raise from 'The Big Worcestershire Garage Sale' would be in addition to this.

Also, any quality unsold items can be dropped off at the end of the day at designated collection points from where Warren's Removals, which has kindly donated its vans to help, will deliver to St Richard's charity shops across Worcestershire.

Visit nicolandco.co.uk/the-big-worcestershire-garage-sale/ for more on the event and to see a map showing which streets are taking part.



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- If there is no will do you understand who will inherit and who is entitled to deal with the estate?
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- Do you need to pay inheritance tax and do you understand how to fill in the forms for H M Revenue & Customs.

- Do you know how to value the assets in the estate?
- Do you know how to deal with the deceased persons tax up to the date of their death and do you understand how to deal with the tax due during the administration period.
- Do you understand how to provide an account to beneficiaries and what they are entitled to see.

We can do as much or as little as you need to help you through what is a difficult and stressful time.

If you require advice on any of these issues please contact us.

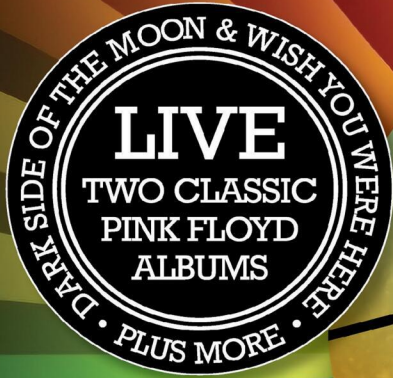


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Nightstop needs more volunteers with need rising

A HOMELESSNESS charity in Redditch is appealing for more volunteers, to help with increased need for its services.

Redditch Nightstop was established in 1997 to prevent youth homelessness and has evolved to now deliver a comprehensive homelessness prevention support service for 16 to 35-year-olds.

The charity works together with young people for as long as is needed to bring about lasting change and break the cycle of homelessness.

There are many volunteer roles needed to make the

charity's work happen; hosts who provide accommodation in their homes, trustees ensuring Nightstop runs effectively and lawfully, social media and event support, and drivers.

Nicola Harwood, executive director of operations from Depaul UK, said: "Homelessness poses extraordinary risks.

"Exhausted, uncertain, and with few options, young people can become easy targets for abuse and exploitation.

"Anything may seem better than sleeping rough – young people who have nowhere to go, may accept an offer to stay with someone they've

just met, only to find themselves among much older and sometimes predatory people.

"Nightstop provides emergency accommodation and offers a lifeline to many young homeless people in crisis.

"We help those sleeping on the streets tonight and ensure others who have run out of options never have to sleep in unsafe places. It's vital young people know that they're not alone, that this is temporary and that they have their whole lives ahead of them."

For more information, visit redditchbc.gov.uk/residents/living/staying-healthy/5-ways-to-well-being/



Chairman of Bromsgrove District Council, Councillor Sam Evans, visits the office of the new civic charity, The Basement Project.

Mayor gives Basement Project a lift

BROMSGROVE'S newly-elected chairman has chosen prominent youth homeless support charity The Basement Project as his civic beneficiary for the year.

The Basement Project is an independent local charity supporting young people under 25 with any issues or problems they are experiencing.

Chairman of Bromsgrove District Council, Coun Sam Evans, said: "The Basement Project plays

a vital role in supporting some of the most vulnerable members of our local community, and I look forward to working closely with them to raise awareness and much-needed funds.

"I hope residents across the district will join me in supporting this important cause."

The chairman will now begin helping his year of fundraising for his chosen charity at civic events all across the district.

CEO of The Basement

Project, Caleb Mallard, said: "We're incredibly grateful to Coun Evans for choosing us.

"This support means so much – not only does it help raise vital funds, but it also shines a light on the challenges young people are facing and the importance of supporting their mental health and wellbeing.

"We're looking forward to working together over the coming year to make a real difference in our community."

Repair cafe returns after a break

RESIDENTS can have their household appliances fixed for free at the Droitwich Repair Cafe on June 28.

Volunteers will be at the Droitwich Arts Network Hub in Victoria Square from 10am to 2pm, doing their best to fix for free any items people take along.

The Repair Cafe was set

up to help people save cash, reuse, repair, recycle and keep items out of landfill.

Items fixed at the repair cafe in the past have included clocks, stereo speakers, chairs, lamps, tools and even a 1950s teddy bear.

Bromsgrove and Droitwich Makerspace, which organises the event,

is always looking for new volunteers who can help out with repairs or meeting and greeting attendees.

The Repair Cafe is returning in June after a hiatus in April due to illness.

Donations are welcome to help the project continue. Visit bdmakerspace.org.uk/ for more information.





Redditch Cat Rescue

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Tombola, Raffle, Bottle Stall, Crafts, Table Top Sale,
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Entry: Donation of Cat Food

Sunday 15th June 12 noon to 4pm

Beoley Village Hall, Holt End, Beoley, B98 9AN

Come and Support your small local cat rescue!

website: www.redditchcatrescue.co.uk

Charity Number 1163874





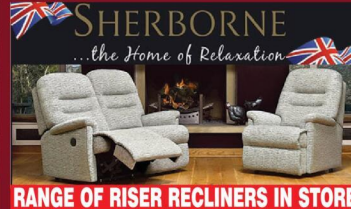

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School praised for fostering world outlook

A REDDITCH Middle School has been awarded Intermediate level of the British Council's prestigious International School Award in recognition of its work to bring the world into the classroom.

The International School Award celebrates the achievements of schools which do exceptional work in international education.

St Bede's Catholic Middle School's international work includes a pen pal exchange with a French partner school, a German taster morning hosted by student ambassadors from the University of Warwick and an annual International Day of Languages.

Headteacher Lloyd Roberts said: "We are delighted the British Council has recognised the rich, broad, and challenging curriculum our school offers.

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

"This acknowledgment highlights the exciting and impactful work of our Modern Foreign Languages (MFL) leadership and teaching team, whose dedication continues to inspire our pupils.

"We believe learning languages is not just about communication – it nurtures essential life skills, deepens cultural understanding, and sparks curiosity about the wider world.

"While the benefits of language learning may not always be immediately visible, they are profound and long-lasting, equipping our pupils with the tools to thrive in an interconnected global society.

"We look forward to building on this success and further developing our MFL provision to ensure every learner has the opportunity

to explore, connect, and grow."

Shannon West, head of UK Schools for the British Council, said: "St Bede's Catholic's Middle School's international work has earned the school well-deserved recognition with the British Council International School Award - Intermediate Certificate.

"We are proud and delighted to work with this great school."

She thanked everyone at the school for their commitment to developing international work and sharing excellent classroom practice and resources.

"This is enriching education for its pupils, and their excellent collaborative projects with partner schools overseas are bringing the world into their classrooms," she added.

"International work is key support for developing skills young people need to be globally aware citizens of the future."

We must make global warming and nature loss the priority

WHILE we were all disappointed to see the rain arrive in time for half-term, there is no doubt Bromsgrove's farms and gardens needed it.

The lack of rainfall this spring caused by a blocking weather pattern constitutes a meteorological drought.

The UK has had the sunniest spring on record and one of the driest.

Readers will recall 2024 was the world's hottest year on record, with climate change mainly responsible for the higher temperatures, according to the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). This has been caused by human activities, in particular the widespread use of fossil fuels.

When fossil fuels burn, they release greenhouse gases (mostly carbon dioxide CO2) which trap the extra energy in the atmosphere causing the planet to heat up. This led to the collapse of part of a Swiss glacier wiping the village of Blatten off the map just last week!

Locally, climate activists have taken peaceful actions to raise aware-



Eco Action



ness of this existential threat to our planet.

More than 400 trees have been planted in Sanders Park, some with the young Scouts.

But this is not enough. Today World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) warns of 'unpredictable consequences' – or what scientists call 'tipping points'.

Ocean circulation systems may break down triggering what the UN calls: 'abrupt, irreversible and dangerous impacts for humanity'.

By the time our children are adults, many UK coastal villages like Fishbourne may have disappeared due to ice-melt.

Flooding could be a big problem in Worcestershire. We have to make global warming and nature loss the UK's number one priority so we save the day.

On April 26, activists were in Bromsgrove High Street publicising the climate and nature crisis in the town.

Activists gave away

20 trees to members of the public, mostly young families, to raise youth awareness of the fossil fuel threat, strengthen sup-

port for green issues like using active transport and encourage residents to cut their carbon footprint.

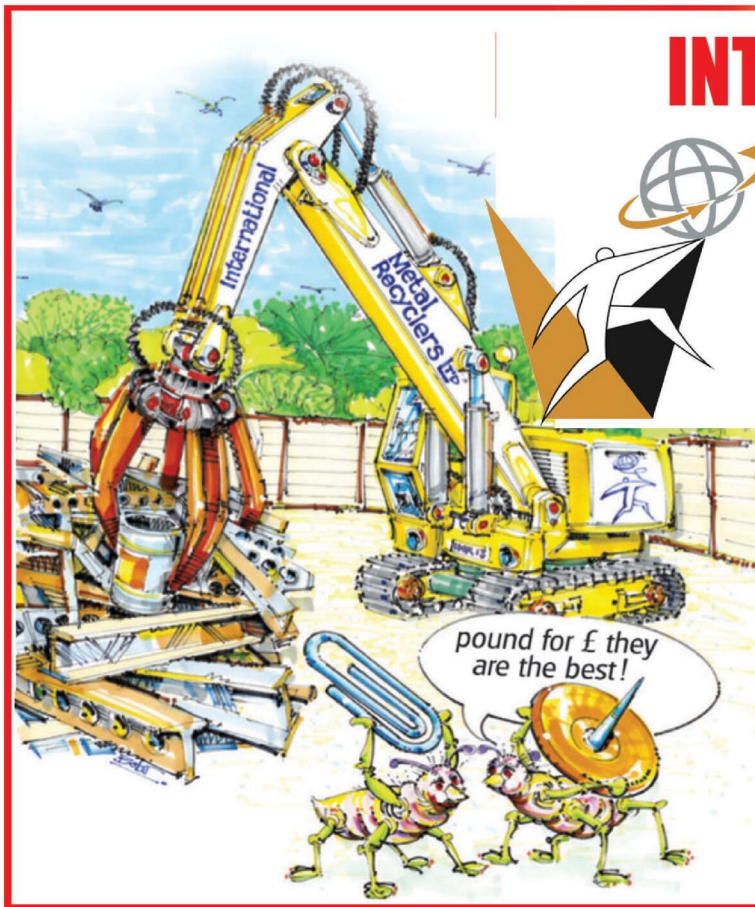
Earlier this spring Bromsgrove activists joined together with Malvern and demonstrated outside the offices of an insurance company which insures damaging fossil fuel projects.

Conversations on the High Street, placards and leaflets made it clear without insurance cover the fossil fuel industry would stutter to an abrupt stop.

The next market stall in Bromsgrove will be on July 4 when it is expected the number of trees given away will pass the 250 mark. These, together with the 400 more mature ones already planted in Sanders Park, partially compensate for those lost in the town's BREP project.

Search for bromsgrove @extinctionrebellion.uk on Instagram to find and follow the group.

Column brought by Bromsgrove Extinction Rebellion



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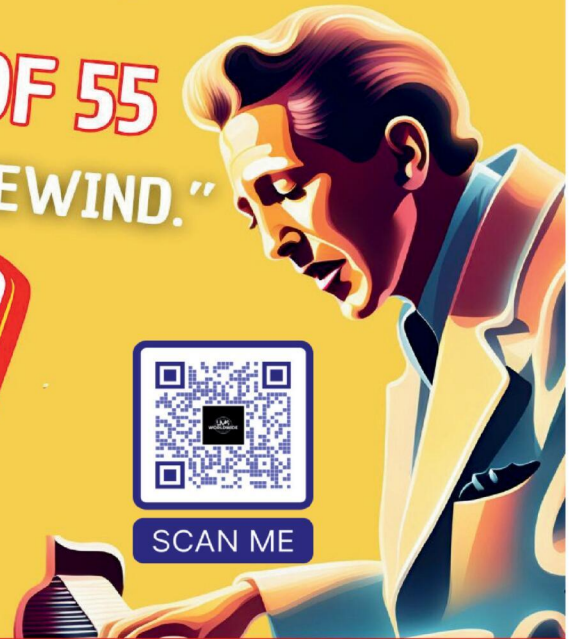


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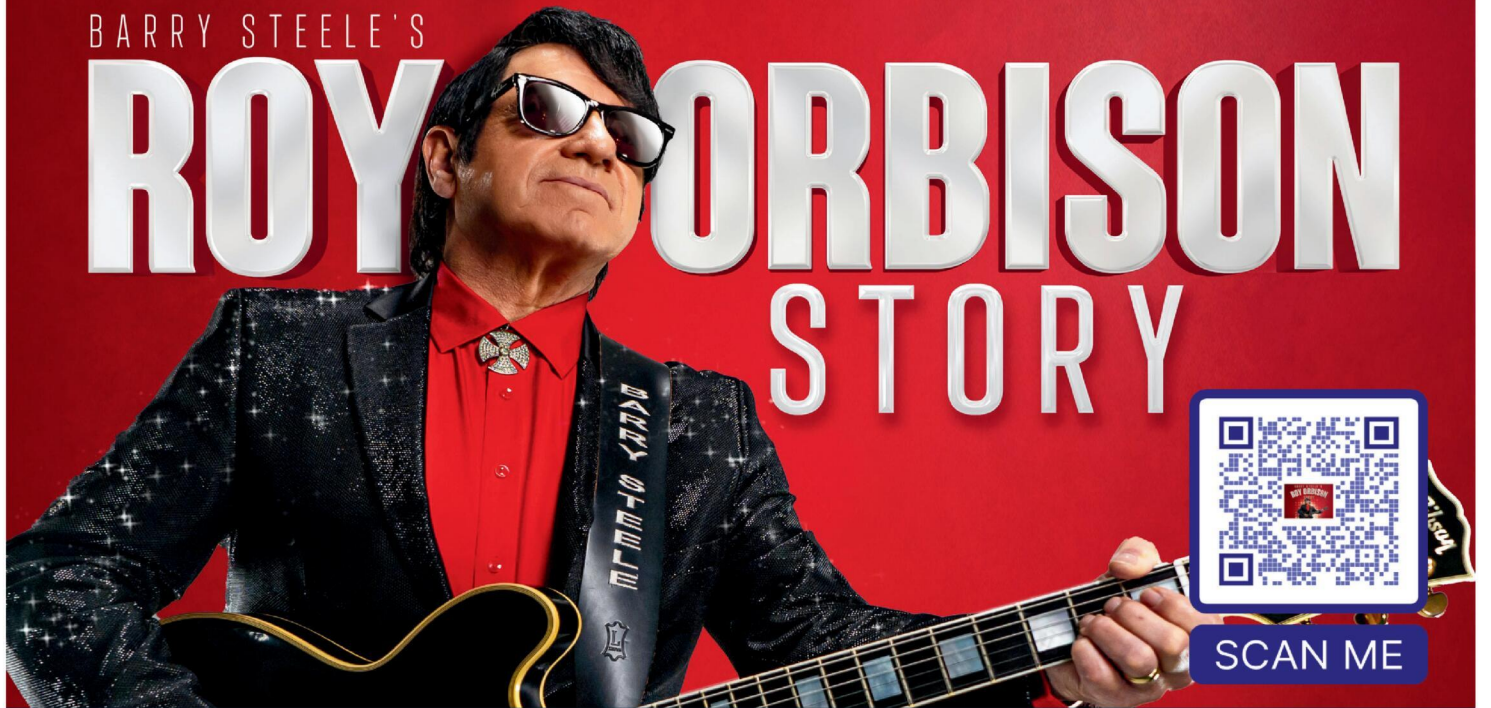


SCAN ME

THE CLASS OF 55 : A FOOTSTOMPING CELEBRATION OF BUDDY HOLLY, JERRY LEE LEWIS, JOHNNY CASH AND THE HISTORY OF ROCK

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The Class of 55 - The Artrix Bromsgrove July 26

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Jobs opportunity is the key for MP

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

GIVING opportunities for everyone regardless of age or preferred career path was the focus for Bromsgrove MP Bradley Thomas' inaugural jobs fair last Friday.

Speaking to the Standard at the event in Bromsgrove School's Sports Centre, Mr Thomas highlighted the importance of securing a job, whether young or old, in whatever industry worked for an individual.

He spoke of his pride in being able to continue his predecessor, Sajid Javid's Bromsgrove Jobs Fair.

Mr Thomas discussed the importance of a range of opportunities for both youngsters and even those who may be considering transitioning careers.

Around 40 employers both national and local, were on hand to meet visitors and discuss opportunities for employment across a range of industries, skills and career paths.

Organisations, such as the



Bradley Thomas MP at the fair. s

national Civil Service and local medical equipment supplier, Kimal, discussed the opportunities on offer within their organisations when it came to vocational routes or apprenticeships.

Claire Gilkes, schools advisor for the Civil Service in Worcestershire, said: "I'm very passionate about what I do and I want to make a difference. It's about supporting people to grow confidence and understand the world of work."

Data centre manufacturing firm Excool spoke about its graduate programme and apprenticeship opportunities with last year's job fair proving a success, as its global marketing manager, Grace Williams, shared her pride in finding a new recruit at the event.

She said: "The jobs fair is

a great initiative started by Sajid Javid and now continued by Bradley."

Organisations at the event also extended beyond conventional employers with group Smart Work on hand to speak with visitors about its work supporting women to secure a job in the form of coaching, clothing and confidence.

Other companies present included West Mercia Police, the British Army, Citizens Advice, Primrose Hospice and many more.

Mr Thomas added: "I'm pleased we've got employers from local and national names offering something for everyone. Very simply the best opportunity in life is the security of a well-paid job and as a Member of Parliament it's my job to bat on behalf of residents.

"We don't talk broadly enough about the roles the economy requires to be resilient in the future. If we want the economy to be resilient, we need investment in industry and manufacturing.

"That's why we're encouraging businesses to invest in local area and make sure people have employment opportunities."



Cofton Park Manor care home celebrated Pride month. s

Care home's Pride to support event

A CARE home in Cofton hosted its very own Pride event as June marks the beginning of a month-long celebration of the contributions of the LGBTQ community.

While thousands of people descended on Birmingham city centre for its famous Pride event, local care home residents at Cofton Park Manor on Lickey Road had their very own celebrations.

Residents joined family and friends for their Pride event, offering a chance to celebrate differences.

The Birmingham Pride Festival 2025 is a chance for the LGBTQ community and its allies to come

together in pride, remembrance and protest in the city.

Cofton Park Manor home manager Kerry Hill said everyone had a stunning time.

"We consider our home to be one that fosters the inclusivity that Age UK's 'Safe to be me' initiative acknowledges," she added.

"It is important to us to celebrate Pride and support everything it stands for. We've had a great party this afternoon.

"The Birmingham Pride event is a huge affair, and we're happy to support it by celebrating from our own home."

Just like in the city centre, residents wore a

colourful array of costumes, giving the event a true carnival-like flavour with upbeat music performed by local entertainer Debbie Miles.

Resident Kathleen Postings, aged 91, said: "My granddaughter is gay, I think it's a good thing to celebrate Pride.

"I think she has now found her perfect partner - love is love."

Fellow resident Molly Giles, aged 88, added: "My grandson is gay, and I am so proud of who he is."

Birmingham Pride launched in 1997 as a free community event and has grown into one of the city's largest festivals with music and a parade.



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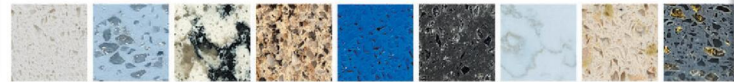
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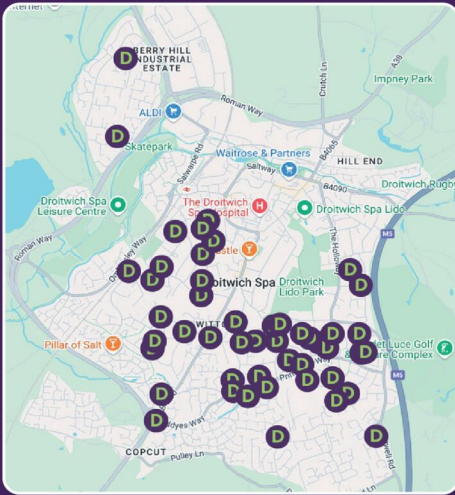
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 Dovecote Rd
 Droitwich Rd
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 Fabricius Avenue
 Greenbank
 Grosvenor Way

Hawthorne Walk
 Henley Drive
 Henry Road
 Holly Close
 Laurelwood Rd
 Lilac Close
 Manning Road
 Monnow Close
 Mulberry Tree Hill
 Newland Road
 Nightingale Close
 Oakland Avenue
 Old Coach Road
 Oxslip Row
 Pilgrim Road
 Ploughmans Rise
 Ripple Road
 Shire Way

Shirley Road
 St Richard's Gardens
 Stalls Farm Road
 Steynors Avenue
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 Suffolk Way
 Tagwell Road
 The Dale
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 Woodedge Drive
 Willow Drive
 Worcester Road
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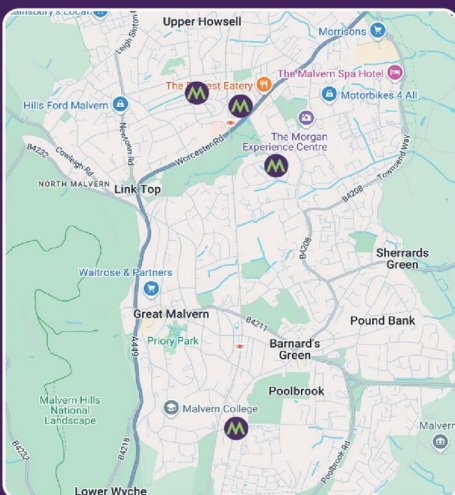
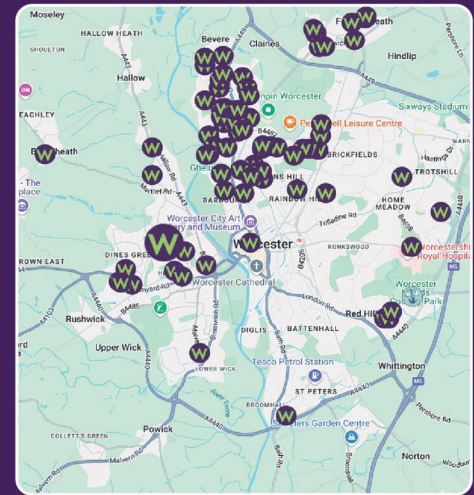
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| Saturday 7th June, Sunday 6th July, Wednesday 6th August | |
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| Saturday 14th June Weymouth | £40 |
| Saturday 28th June or Wednesday 30th July Barry Island | £28 |
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| Saturday 26th July Aberystwyth | £36 |
| Wednesday 13th August Porthcawl | £40 |
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| 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 26th October Abba Voyage @ Abba Arena, London matinee performance | £115 |
| Saturday 13th December Longleat Festival of Light | £79 Adult, £69 Child |

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| | |
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| Friday 19th September 4 Days. Babbacombe staying at the Babbacombe Hotel | from £299 |
| Monday 27th October 5 Days. Weymouth staying at The Royal Hotel. Dinner, Bed & Breakfast & includes excursions, a scenic ride around the Jurassic coast, Bridport, West Bay & Portland Bill | from £395 |
| Friday 14th November 4 Days. Tribute Weekend. Torquay staying at the Riviera Hotel. Dinner, Bed & Breakfast. Tribute acts Gary Barlow, Madonna & Iwas of the 60s | from £205 |
| Sunday 30th November 2 Days. Christmas at Kew staying at the four star Leonardo. Bed & Breakfast, entry to illuminated Kew Gardens & free time in London. | from £199 |
| Saturday 6th December 4 Days. Christmas Spectacular staying at the four star Prom Hotel. Dinner, Bed & Breakfast, ticket to matinee show and free time in Great Yarmouth | from £420 |
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Raising a glass for Primrose at beer festival

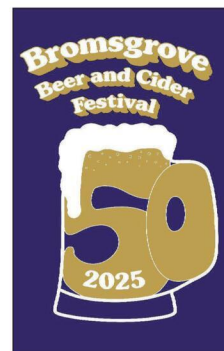
by **Tristan Harris**
tristan.harris@bullivantmedia.com

THE DATES of this year's Bromsgrove Beer Festival have been announced, along with the chosen charity for the event.

The Redditch and Bromsgrove branch of the Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) will partner with the Primrose Hospice to raise funds at the event, which runs from July 3 to 5.

The event, at Bromsgrove Rugby Club's Finstall Park HQ will feature 102 real ales, along with a selection of cider, perry and keykeg beers.

This year's festival commemorates 50 years of Redditch and Bromsgrove CAMRA and a special commemorative glass, kindly sponsored by Fownd Brewery



of Kidderminster, has been commissioned for the event.

The festival launches with a members' preview afternoon from 1pm on the Thursday, July 3, alongside brewers and licensees. It will open to the public at 5pm that day.

On the Friday the doors

open at 11am and live entertainment kicks off on that afternoon with a performance from Got2Sing Choir at 4pm. Rock cover band The Kemastree Set will be playing from 7.30pm to entertain the evening visitors.

On the Saturday, the festival opens again at 11am and will showcase Blackwell Concert Band at 1pm for a performance of festival favourites, followed by singer-songwriter Clare Portman who will be playing a mixture of her own music covers inspired by Alanis Morissette and Roy Orbison.

The Alvechurch Morris Men will also make an appearance.

The festival, run by volunteers, enables real ale, perry and cider connoisseurs to try new brews, breweries to gain recognition and support.

Visit the website at bromsgrovebeerfestival.org.uk for more information.

Tell us your news: Email editor@redditchstandard.co.uk

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Time to share your views on future of local councils

A PUBLIC consultation has launched for residents in Worcestershire to have their say on the future of local government reorganisation within the county.

Under Government proposals, all seven councils in Worcestershire will disappear by April 1, 2028.

A four-week public engagement exercise is running until June 29 to gain feedback to help councillors decide what should replace them.

The Government wants to replace this system with a single council – known as a unitary council – which provides all services.

The aim is to make local government simpler for residents, while improving services and saving money.

Redditch Borough and Bromsgrove District Councils' chief executive John Leach, said: "Major changes are planned for councils across Worcestershire and we want our residents to help us piece it together."

"We are urging the public, businesses, and community groups to learn more about the Government's proposals and to have a say on who should deliver the

services we rely on every day."

There are currently two options proposed for Worcestershire including one unitary authority replacing all six district, borough and city councils or two unitary authorities separating the north and south of the county.

Either proposal will unify service delivery across the county from collecting bins to school admissions, however a split county would mean separate organisations would be responsible for service delivery depending on location.

Under proposals, town and parish councils will remain but may have a greater role in the future in providing some services and representing local communities.

A dedicated website has been created with more information about the proposals and a survey so people can give their views.

Feedback will be used to help decide which of the two options to develop in detail and put to the Government.

Final plans need to be submitted by November 28 this year.

Visit shapeworcestershire.org for more information.

MP joins calls for urgent action on heart disease

REDDITCH MP Chris Bloore has joined a major cross-party call urging the Government to develop a National Cardiovascular Disease (CVD) Action Plan to address the deepening heart health crisis facing the UK.

In a letter sent to Health Secretary Wes Streeting MP and co-ordinated by the British Heart Foundation (BHF), more than 60 MPs and peers warn that progress in tackling heart disease – a leading cause of death and health inequality – is stalling.

Despite medical advances, cardiovascular disease still causes around a quarter of all UK deaths, with the most deprived communities disproportionately affected.

Mr Bloore said: "Heart disease continues to devastate families in Redditch and across the country. I'm proud to stand with the British Heart Foundation and colleagues from across Parliament to demand urgent action."

"This crisis won't fix itself - we need a bold plan to cut waiting times, prevent avoidable deaths and tackle the root causes of poor heart health."

The letter urges the Government to include a dedicated and ambitious CVD plan within its forthcoming 10 Year Health Plan.

Such a strategy would build on past successes and set out clear goals to transform heart care, expand access to research and treatment and address key risk



factors such as obesity, smoking, air pollution and lack of early diagnosis.

Dr Charmaine Griffiths, chief executive of the BHF, said: "It is both tragic and unacceptable that so many lives continue to be changed and ended prematurely by heart attacks and strokes every day."

"We cannot continue like this. I am extremely grateful to Chris Bloore MP and all those who have joined this vital call for a dedicated cardiovascular disease plan to steer us out of this heart health crisis."

The campaign has already secured widespread public back-

ing, with more than 46,000 people signing the BHF's pledge calling on the Government to act.

Mr Bloore added: "This campaign reflects the priorities of people across Redditch and the Villages."

"It's time to match public concern with political commitment. A national plan to tackle cardiovascular disease is essential if we're serious about building a fairer, healthier Britain."

Chris Bloore MP is calling for urgent action to tackle heart disease. Picture by Danny Fitzpatrick / DFphotography

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The EDDIEbus is a Bromsgrove based Charity which was established in 1985 and is celebrating 40 years of service in June 2025.

We are looking for additional volunteer drivers to drive the EDDIEbus.

The EDDIEbus takes groups of elderly people in the Bromsgrove District for days out. The bus can be driven with a normal car driving licence.

For details and more info contact

- GEOFF on 07805 400180 or
- ROBERT at theeddiebus@gmail.com
- Website theeddiebus.org.uk

Everyday Drives for Disabled Independent and Elderly.

James striding out for charity on D-Day walk

by Ashleigh Osborne
ashleigh.osborne@bullivanmedia.com

A REDDITCH man has today (June 6) set off on his epic walk across the D-Day beaches to fundraise for The Grace Kelly Childhood Cancer Trust (GKCCT) and SSAFA – The Armed Forces Charity.

James' daughter Emilia went through a diagnosis of Aplastic Anaemia and the family was given help and support by The Grace Kelly Childhood Cancer Trust.

He said: "I couldn't think of two better causes – The Grace Kelly Childhood Cancer Trust made a real difference for us as a family."

"As a veteran with many friends still serving in the Royal Air Force (RAF), I am in awe of the support that SSAFA offers to serving members of our armed forces, veterans and their families."

James will be walking more than 80km as part of a group



James will be walking more than 80km as part of a group marking 81 years since D-Day.

honouring the sacrifice made 81 years ago on D-Day.

The battlefield expedition is being organised by Challenge The Wild and James will be joined by Ant Middleton from Channel 4's SAS: Who Dares Wins, Andrew Jenkins from the BBC's The Traitors, Fia Tarrant from Heart Radio and Toby Tarrant from Radio X.

James' daughter Emilia had a stem cell transplant in September 2023 and James and the whole family all had various forms of invaluable support from the GKCCT whilst going through this dif-

ficult time. As a family they took the decision early on to share Emilia's story and help other families by also raising awareness and funds for various charities including the GKCCT.

James added: "I'm looking forward to the challenge and will take with me the pride in supporting such wonderful charities that are so close to our hearts."

Anyone who wants to donate can visit gofund.me/db6ac3b3 and search for 'ChallengeJim' on YouTube.com to follow his progress.



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RIGHT - The Red Arrows paid a visit to Ragley Hall. Pictures by Marcus Mingins 2325013MMR1

LEFT - Enjoying the spectacle. 2325013MMR5



Daring displays and much more



Gyro Air Displays. 2325013MMR13

THE MIDLANDS Air Festival 2025 welcomed thousands of visitors to the Ragley Hall estate in Alcester last weekend for three days of the finest air displays and family fun.

Audiences watched in awe as the RAF Red Arrows showcased their finest manoeuvres and skills marking the start of their summer display season.

A definite crowd pleaser was the incredible Austrian

by **Lise Evans**
lise.evans@bullivantmedia.com

skydiver and BASE jumper Felix Baumgartner who performed stunts for the aeronautic acrobatic team, the Flying Bulls that truly thrilled visitors.

This was followed by a 'meet and greet' that saw a queue of more than 300 people line up to meet the daredevil legend widely known for jumping to Earth from a

helium balloon in the stratosphere in 2012.

Organiser Trevor Graham said: "Every year we work hard to fill our programme with aviation highlights and crowd-pleasers - whilst also bringing something new that is rarely seen and this year - I think we did just that.

"It was great to see generations of families coming together to enjoy a day out and we are already thinking about next year's programme."

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 QUALITY AT HOME CARE

Food for thought at Ukrainian Cafe

IT'S lunchtime at the Ukrainian Cafe in Bromsgrove, and the place is buzzing.

by **Ross Crawford**
ross.crawford@bullivantmedia.com

And no wonder – the food on offer would delight even the most jaded palate and it is all at a price that will not break the bank.

For instance, your reporter has just eaten a bowl of borscht that has to be the best soup he's ever tasted.

Of course there's a serious side to these culinary delights. Independent Ukraine was invaded by its neighbour Russia just over three years ago, sparking a desperate battle for the country's survival.

Britain is standing shoulder-to-shoulder with the Ukrainian people, offering a sanctuary to those fleeing the war and both Bromsgrove and

Redditch have opened their arms to welcome them.

The Ukrainian Cafe in Bromsgrove, situated at the Methodist Centre on Stratford Road, offers local residents not only an opportunity to try the cuisine of the country but also raise vital funds to send humanitarian aid to the frontline.

Svitlana Hlovatska is a trained accountant working in Kyiv but now helps lead the team of Ukrainian women in the kitchen at the Methodist Centre, as well as working as a cleaner in a local school.

She said: "We are so grateful to the English people for helping us, and sharing their homes with us."

"And we want so much for people in Bromsgrove and Redditch to enjoy our wonderful Ukrainian food and learn more about each other's culture."

Svitlana's husband Miroslav is a first responder in Kyiv and she fears for the danger he faces under their barrage of Russian missiles and drones.

She said: "I don't know what he is doing from day to day or the risks he is taking but it is all for our people."

Serhii Umanets came to the UK three years ago when the Russians invaded, over-running his town, Vasilievka, in the Zaporizhzhia region. Ironically he did his military service with the Soviet Army and now finds himself on the opposite side.

He said: "My family has been



Svitlana Hlovatska, second left, with fellow Ukrainian chefs, at the cafe at the Methodist Centre in Bromsgrove. s

completely broken up by the war. Some of them are now in Poland, some in other parts of Ukraine and some in occupied territory.

"I miss my flat in Vasilievka, but we are so grateful to the people of

Bromsgrove and Redditch for offering us shelter until the day we can return."

Search for 'Ukrainian Cafe in Worcestershire' on Facebook for more information.

Anti-social order issued

A MAN has been issued with a dispersal notice and will be dealt with for a public order offence after reports of anti-social behaviour in Redditch town centre.

Officers will also be making referrals for support due to alcohol abuse to try and prevent urinating in the town centre continuing.

In a post on Facebook,

Redditch Police said: "We will not tolerate this kind of behaviour and will act robustly to ensure we have a safe and pleasurable town centre for people to work and visit."

If anyone witnesses this kind of behaviour within contact michael.moore@westmercia.police.uk to report it.

Police recover stolen van with cloned plates

A VAN which was stolen and on cloned registration plates was recovered by police in Redditch on Monday.

PCSO Holly Preston, from Redditch Police Safer Neighbourhood Team, was on patrol when a member of the public approached them on Barnwood Close, Church

Hill. The resident had conducted checks using the 'vehicle smart' app and noticed the van's colour was different on the app to how it was in reality.

It was then that PCSO Preston carried out further checks which revealed the vehicle had been reported stolen and

had been cloned. Police said the van has now been seized for forensic examination.

PCSO Preston said: "If you have a suspicion about a vehicle that looks like it has been left/dumped on a road then please report it to 101 or using our online reporting system."

"You can also use DVLA website to check the registration plates are registered to the correct vehicle."

Visit westmercia.police.uk for more crime prevention tips and gov.uk/get-vehicle-information-from-dvla to check a vehicle using the DVLA's system.

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Open Studios to be biggest ever

A POPULAR community arts festival in Worcestershire is set for a triumphant return as it celebrates its 10th anniversary.

Worcestershire Open Studios invites artists and craftspeople to welcome the public into their creative spaces to showcase their work and is set for a record number of participating creatives this summer.

Dubbed the biggest ever countywide celebration of arts and crafts, Worcestershire Open Studios' Art Week will feature 167 artists across 105 venues from August 16 to 25.

The 10-day event offers the rare chance to step inside working studios, meet local creatives, and delve into the inspiration and techniques behind their work.

From painters, ceramicists and sculptors to jewellers, textile artists, and printmakers, the line-up reflects a rich diversity of artistic expression. Over the past decade, Worcestershire Open Studios has grown a loyal following, drawing visitors from across the Midlands and beyond.

Gemma Griffiths, who is part of the new, volunteer organising team, alongside



Left to right: Worcestershire Open Studios' organisers, Mary Brittain, Gemma Griffiths and Anna Cumming.

fellow artists Mary Brittain and Anna Cumming, said: "We know people are always on the lookout for something special to do around the August Bank Holiday period.

"And what could be better than exploring the county whilst discovering local artists and makers and getting behind the scenes of how and why art is made?"

In addition to open studios, many venues will host workshops, exhibitions, demonstrations, and offer original art and handmade items for sale, including paintings, prints, ceramics, jewellery, cards, and unique gifts.

Gemma added: "If you've

never visited Art Week before, this is the year to give it a try. And even if you think art isn't really your thing, you might be surprised.

"There's so much talent here in Worcestershire, and something to delight just about everyone."

This year, the county has been divided into five sections to help simplify the visitor experience when deciding which studios or events to visit. Visitors can access an interactive digital guide and map to make the most of their experience.

Visit worcestershireopenstudios.org for more information.



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Giving hospitals a helping hand



HOSPITAL staff and patients are saying a huge thank you to the hundreds of volunteers who help keep health services running smoothly this Volunteers' Week.

As well as hosting a series of thank you lunches for the 309 volunteers who give up their time to provide vital support across the Alexandra, Kidderminster and Worcestershire Royal Hospitals, a series of 'appreciation stations' are being set up across the sites to celebrate their huge contribution.

The week is also an opportunity to encourage and invite more people to give their time to make a difference at their local hospital, with two new rewarding volunteering opportunities available at Worcestershire Acute

Hospitals NHS Trust.

At Worcestershire Royal Hospital, a new Peony Volunteer Service is being launched, focused on supporting people nearing the end of their life. The service is possible thanks to the support of Worcestershire Acute Hospitals Charity.

Rachel Colthurst, Peony volunteer coordinator, said: "We're really proud to be working in partnership with the Anne Robson Trust charity to set up and run a team of specialist volunteers to provide bedside companionship to patients in their final days and hours, and emotional support to the patients' visitors."

"The work these volunteers do will be vital in supporting people facing the end of their life and those around them."

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THE TOYOTA Aygo and Suzuki Swift have been ranked as the most reliable used superminis by UK used car warranty provider Warrantywise.

In its latest Reliability Index, which uses data from 2022-25, Warrantywise has named the Toyota Aygo and the Suzuki Swift as the most reliable used superminis, each earning a score of 88.6 out of 100.

In a used car market shaped by rising costs and ageing vehicles, the supermini class is proving to be a haven for sensible buyers. These small cars offer low running costs, accessible pricing, and, in many cases, impressive longevity. From first-time buyers to city dwellers and downsizers, superminis are a go-to option for drivers who want dependable transport without the hefty bills – and this new data proves they're right to feel confident in their choice.

Warrantywise's rankings are based on the frequency of faults, average age and mileage at the time of repair, and how long those repairs typically take to complete. For consistency, Warrantywise has also categorised the supermini in line with Euro NCAP classifications (The European New Car Assessment Programme) – a widely recognised standard across Europe that helps ensure comparisons

are made between like-for-like vehicles.

The Kia Picanto took third place, followed closely by the Citroën C1 and Peugeot 108. The Renault Clio also secures joint sixth place with the Ford KA. In eighth is the Hyundai i10, followed by the Dacia Sandero in ninth, and in joint tenth are the Hyundai i20 and MINI Cooper.

Antony Diggins, Managing Director of Warrantywise, said: "Our latest data backs up what many drivers already know – superminis are one of the safest bets you can make in the used car market. They're affordable, efficient, and, as our research shows, can be remarkably reliable. At a time when people are being more careful with their money, it's reassuring to know that you don't have to spend big to get a dependable car."

Over 60 per cent of the vehicles in the top ten don't show any faults until they're at least eight years old. Standouts include the Suzuki Swift and the Ford KA, averaging 8.7 years and nine years, respectively, before their first repair. It's proof that superminis – often seen as entry-level or short-term cars – are more than capable of delivering long-term value.

Of course, no car is immune to problems, and even high performers can hit drivers with an unexpected bill. Warrantywise's data shows that electrical issues account for over half of

supermini repairs, with engine faults making up just over 30 per cent. Repair costs can vary widely, with average bills ranging from £420 up to \$1,118, and as high as \$1,297 to \$9,224, depending on the model and nature of the fault.

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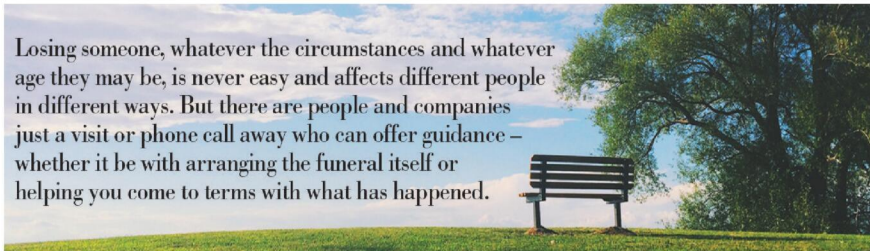


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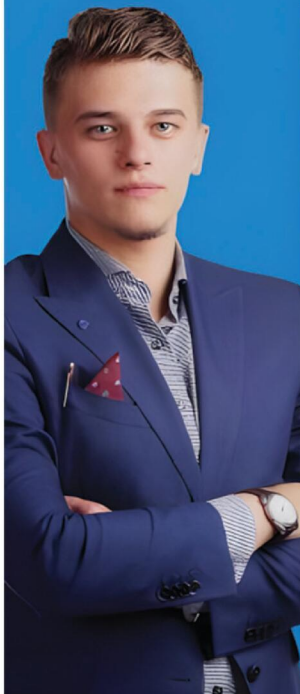
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SUE PATRICIA BOOTH (Deceased)
Pursuant to the Trustee Act 1925 any persons having a claim against or an interest in the Estate of the above named, late of The Mill House, A422 Kings, Worcester, WR7 4DS, who died on 19/09/2024, are required to send written particulars thereof to the undersigned on or before 07/08/2025, after which date the Estate will be distributed having regard only to the claims and interests of which they have had notice.

APS Legal & Associates Ltd.
Assured Probate Services, The Workshop Turbine Centre, Shireoaks Triangle Business Park, Coach Close, Worksop, Nottinghamshire, S81 8AP

PUBLIC NOTICES

SUZANNE PENELOPE MORGAN Deceased
Pursuant to the Trustee Act 1925 anyone having a claim against or an interest in the Estate of the deceased, late of 278 Exhall Close, Redditch, Worcestershire, B98 9JD, who died on 10/04/2025, must send written particulars to the address below by 07/08/2025, after which date the Estate will be distributed having regard only to claims and interests notified.

Michael Wadsworth c/o Wadsworth Solicitors, 325 Stratford Road, Shirley, Solihull, B90 3BL, Ref: MW/MORGAN

PUBLIC NOTICES

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL & REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL
Advertisement Key: CA = Conservation Area, CAS = Conservation Area Setting LB = Listed Building.
25/00160/FUL CAS
Site: 14 Plymouth Road, Barnt Green, Worcestershire B45 8JA.
Proposal: Replacement, new build dwelling, New side and front boundary treatment including gates.
25/00042/FUL LB CA
Site: 47 High Street, Bromsgrove, Worcestershire B61 8AW.
Proposal: Replacement of 3No. External AC units on flat roof. Refurbishment of second floor front elevation windows.
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.

Goods Vehicle Operator's Licence
David Griffin trading as Our Dave Transport Ltd of 20 Hasely Close, Redditch, Worcestershire B98 0BN is applying for a licence to use H Gittins Transport Ltd, 27 Aston Fields Industrial Estate, Aston Road, Bromsgrove, B60 3EX as an operating centre for 2 goods vehicles and 0 trailers.
Owners or occupiers of land (including buildings) near the operating centre(s) who believe that their use or enjoyment of that land would be affected, should make written representations to the Traffic Commissioner at Quarry House, Quarry Hill, Leeds, LS2 7UE, stating their reasons, within 21 days of this notice. Representatives must at the same time send a copy of their representations to the applicant at the address given at the top of this notice. A Guide to Making Representations is available from the Traffic Commissioner's office.

Warwickshire County Council
ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984
Warwickshire County Council has made 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, Spermall 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.
Warwickshire County Council proposes to make the following Temporary Traffic Orders:
UPPER SPERNALL FARM ROAD, SPERNALL
Order Effect: Road closed to vehicular traffic.
Reason for Order: Works to replace telegraph pole.
Order Commences: 23 June 2025 for up to 18 months.
Anticipated Completion: 23 June 2025.
Access & Diversion: Upper Spermall Farm Road, Spermall Lane, Burford Lane and vice versa.
Contractor: M J Quinn, Tel: 01543 547 118.
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 6 Jun 2025

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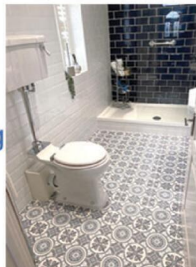
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Spa boss Crowther looking forward to Step Five challenge

FOOTBALL: ANDY Crowther is looking forward to testing himself at Step Five following Droitwich Spa's promotion as champions.

Crowther led Spa to the Hellenic League Division One title in 2024/25 with Spa to play at Step Five for the first time in the club's history next season.

And Crowther is looking forward to the challenge ahead for him and his players at a higher level.

Crowther said: "With moving to the Hellenic League Premier Division, it brings some local derbies.

"It will be good to see the progression that we've made over the last few years, and finally pit ourselves against some top teams with us playing at our highest level.

"As a management team we are all looking forward to the new challenge ahead and also visiting a lot of new grounds.

"Between the group we will set our targets and push as much as we can, but the main thing is that we all enjoy it, and enjoy the ride that we have been on, and continue it to our highest levels."

Crowther also revealed the club have held discussions with prospective new signings but wants to ensure the Saltmen sign players who will fit in well with the current squad.

Crowther added: "Currently all first team management and coaching staff are continuing in 2025/26 and meetings have taken place with the majority of the players.

"It's all looking very positive at the moment.

"Obviously Perry Moss is currently on his travels until around November time, and there are a couple more chats to be had, but all in all



Droitwich boss Andy Crowther celebrates after winning the league title. Picture by Mathew Mason.

I am happy with where we currently are.

"On the subject of new signings, there are some discussions that are ongoing, but again the players have to fit into our ethos and what we are about, so nothing will be rushed or announced until pen has been put to paper."

The club's management team and players are currently taking a well-deserved break following their promotion as champions.

And Crowther wants his players to push each other on their return to the club for pre-season.

Crowther said: "We are all taking a break from football and enjoying some well earned family time, even though it's hard to switch off.

"The lads had their end of season trip to sunny Benidorm, and what a trip it was. There were a lot of laughs from a top group and a few stories for a rainy day.

"The lads are all due back at the end of June, which seems an eternity from when we finished in the middle of April, but I'm sure they are all chomping at the bit to get going and testing themselves all over again, this time at Step Five.

"Pre-season games are virtually all booked in, with just one date to fill at the moment.

"Like any pre season, the games are all about getting the time into the legs and for the lads to push each other and push for that shirt to start the season."

Miles stars with bat and ball in narrow home win

CRICKET: JONATHAN Miles scored a half-century and took three wickets as Droitwich Spa CC claimed a 13-run win against Barnards Green.

Miles lasted 98 balls at the crease as Droitwich posted 171 all out at St Peter's Playing Fields.

And Spa bowled the visitors out for 158 as Miles took the final three wickets.

The result means Droitwich sit second in the Worcestershire County League Division One table.

Barnards Green won the toss and elected to field as Droitwich's top order took the hosts past the 100-run mark.

Openers Harry Butler (24) and Sam Woolley (35) put on 76 runs for the first wicket.

And Miles (53) then hit a half-century only for Droitwich to lose their final eight wickets for the addition of just 66 runs.

None of Spa's remaining eight batters managed to reach double figures with Droitwich bowled out for 171 in 43.4 overs.

Max Bentley (4-50) starred with the ball while Elliot

Hennessy (2-23), Jack Mackintosh (2-31) and Adam Witt (2-34) all took a couple of wickets each.

However, Droitwich made the perfect start with the ball as Max Young (2-50) trapped Elliot Hennessy (0) LBW with the first ball of the Barnards Green reply.

And Sam Smith (4-34) then ripped through the away side's top and middle order.

Barnards Green slumped from 31-1 to 48-6 with only Rufus Lapsley (21) making double figures of the away side's first five batters.

However, the visitors had their lower order to thank for keeping them in the contest.

Battling knocks from Joshua Everett (35), Bentley (34 not out) and James Styles (23) took Barnards Green past the 150-run mark.

However, Miles (3-10) bowled a superb spell to ensure Spa went home with the points.

Droitwich are next in action against Bewdley on Saturday, June 7 with the game to begin at 12.30pm at Lower Park.

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