

DROITWICH Standard

Friday, June 13th 2025 Week 24

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Your **FREE** edition - just pick one up and keep up with the news



Your councils are changing

Major changes are planned to councils across Worcestershire as part of the biggest shake-up of local government in more than 50 years.

The Government is requiring 21 areas of England to restructure their system of local government before 2029.

There are two parts to the Government's proposed changes:

Local government reorganisation

Where the Government is looking to replace borough/district/city and county councils with fewer councils.

Devolution

Where the Government is looking to transfer powers and funding to new Strategic Authorities (also called Combined Authorities) that cover a number of new council areas and are responsible for large projects such as transport, infrastructure and economic development. You can find out more about devolution at www.shapeworcestershire.org

Help us piece it together

The six borough, city and district councils across Worcestershire are now asking for your help to piece together how councils should be organised in future to continue to deliver the services you rely on every day. Our public engagement on local government reorganisation runs from **1 to 29 June 2025**.

Look inside to learn more and fill in our survey, or scan the QR code or visit www.shapeworcestershire.org to fill in the survey online.

If you need the survey in a different format please call 01386 565000.



Why is reorganisation happening?

The Government requires all 21 two-tier areas of local government in England to reorganise by 1 April, 2028 into one or more unitary authorities (single councils that provide all services).

Not reorganising is not an option. Our job is to recommend to the Government what should replace your current councils in the future. That's why your views are so important.

Aims of reorganisation

In its English Devolution White Paper and guidance to councils, the Government set out some key points it wants councils to take into account in their reorganisation proposals. A simple summary of these is below.

- A single tier of local government that relates to a sensible economic area and allows a smaller number of councils to work better together on large scale projects, like increasing housing supply and meeting local needs.
- Improve local services to make life easier and better for local people.
- Save money and deliver better value by cutting costs.
- Make local government simpler and less confusing for residents.
- Support local identity by creating a new local government structure that makes sense to local communities and what makes them special.
- Strengthen community engagement and empowerment.
- Larger more robust councils, but not so big they lose their local feel. The white paper suggests councils should aim to cover a population of at least 500,000 people but ministers have since confirmed this is a guide and not a target. Some councils may be smaller and some larger than this figure.

You can find links to the full guidance at www.shapeworcestershire.org

Councils in Worcestershire now

Currently in Worcestershire there are two, and in some areas three, tiers or layers of councils:

- **Worcestershire County Council** covers the whole county and provides large strategic services like adult social care, education, children's services, road and pavement maintenance, public health, libraries and waste disposal.
- **Six city, borough or district councils** each provide localised services across district areas like waste and recycling collections, deciding planning applications, access to social housing, monitoring air quality, parks and leisure centres.
- **Town and parish councils** aren't part of the reorganisation process but may need to play a greater role in future in delivering services and representing communities.

All these councils have their own elected group of councillors who represent the views of people living in their area.

Future options for Worcestershire

In March 2025, all seven councils in Worcestershire submitted an interim plan to the Government. This set out proposals to replace the county and six borough, city and district councils with one of the two options shown below.

- **One unitary council** - this would provide all services from collecting bins to school admissions across the geographic area currently covered by Worcestershire County Council.
- **Two unitary councils** - this would split the county into two new councils with one for the north of the county and one for the south of the county, as shown in the map below. Each one would be responsible for all services in their part of the county.



Both options will be simpler for residents to understand, reduce staff and councillor numbers and save money compared to the current structure. Exactly how much is not currently known, so work is underway to provide detailed information around both options to help us understand the potential savings and other benefits involved.

Other parts of the country that have already reorganised their councils have chosen to create one, two or more unitary councils depending on their local circumstances. When filling in our survey, your response should be based on what you believe will be best for Worcestershire. There is no right or wrong answer.

SCAN ME



Time to have your say

- Either scan the QR code or visit www.shapeworcestershire.org to learn more and fill in our survey.
- Or fill in the survey on the next two pages, cut it out and post it back to us at Shape Worcestershire, Malvern Hills District Council, Council House, Avenue Road, Malvern, WR14 3AF or hand it in to your district council's offices before 29 June.

Your feedback, along with other information, will be used to help work up detailed proposals on the two options to be presented to councillors in Worcestershire in autumn 2025. They will see your feedback as part of these discussions, but no other information that would allow you to be identified. Councillors will then confirm their choices before submission to the Government by 28 November 2025.

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National acclaim for pantry's volunteers

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

A TEAM OF volunteers in Droitwich have been named Community Champions as part of a national project by Aldi to celebrate unsung heroes across the UK.

The volunteer team was recognised after the supermarket giant asked shoppers to nominate individuals going above and beyond to support those in need.

Alongside their Community Champion crowns, Aldi has rewarded the charity with a £200 voucher for its supermarkets.

After being nominated by fellow Worcester locals, those working at Volunteers of Droitwich Community Pantry and Fridge were praised for their continued work, turning food donations into vital parcels for those experiencing food poverty across the town and surrounding area.

The group currently saves more than six tonnes of food a week, turning it into 226 food parcels and providing essential support to those in need.

The Community Pantry, contrary to common misconceptions, is not a



foodbank. Its aim is to help anyone in need and people do not need a referral – all they need to do is book a slot via the app (more details can be found on the Facebook page).

A spokesperson for the volunteers said: "We're thrilled to have been named one of Aldi's Community Champions.

"The Community Pantry and Fridge provides such important support for those in need across the community and the Aldi voucher will go towards making sure we can continue to provide food for those that need it."

Liz Fox, National Sustainability Director at Aldi, said: "We were so

moved by some of the entries to our Community Champions initiative, with nominations showcasing the unsung heroes within our communities.

"From supporting those in need to standing up for what's right, our Community Champions go above and beyond each day and this allows us to thank them for the incredible impact they continue to make."

Search for 'Droitwich Community Pantry and Fridge' on Facebook for more.

Volunteers of Droitwich Community Pantry and Fridge. s



Standard editor **Tristan Harris** and **Simon Berry** from Saltfest promoting the showcase event being held in Vines Park for Worcestershire businesses. Picture by **Marcus Mingins** 2425002MMR

A RALLYING call has gone out for new businesses and start-ups from across Worcestershire to attend a free showcase event being held in Vines Park on Saturday, August 23.

The event has been organised by Saltfest and Simon Berry and is backed by the Standard and Coun Richard Morris.

It will be held as part of the traditional 'Village Fete' event taking place over the August bank holiday weekend.

Between 10am and 5pm, businesses can set out their stalls to show what they do.

Tables will be provided and the organisers have paid for the public liability insurance - people

are urged to bring their own gazebos if needed.

Mr Berry said: "It costs so much these days to promote businesses and get your name out there - we want to provide a platform to showcase and celebrate these local ventures and what they do."

Coun Morris, Wychavon District Council leader and economy portfolio holder, added: "This sounds a terrific and generous offer when many businesses are struggling with costs and to publicise their new ventures."

Businesses and start-ups should email: berysimon85@gmail.com to book places and find out more.

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LEFT: People young and old marches through Redditch town centre as part of the PRIDE celebrations. Picture by MurderHouse Photography.



Samba band Someone at the Door led the parade. s



RIGHT: Mayor of Redditch Coun Joanna Kane with Leader of the council Coun Sharon Harvey enjoying the celebrations. s

Marchers make town centre full of PRIDE

REDDITCH town centre was a wash with rainbows on Saturday when the annual PRIDE celebrations returned.

The parade, led by Bromsgrove Samba band Someone at the Door, began outside the Palace Theatre, journeying through the Kingfisher Centre and to the main stage.

The afternoon featured a stacked line-up, boasting more than five hours of entertainment on the main stage, with performances from Red Vengeance, Goblin Noises, The Choir, and Bee Live.

Crowds flocked to the town to enjoy the festivities, celebrating love, diversity and community.

There were also community stalls, drag acts, street entertainers, food stalls and more to keep the whole family entertained.

This was the third annual Redditch Pride, organised by volunteers on the Redditch Pride Committee.



The parade passed through the town centre. Picture by MurderHouse Photography.

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Councillors call for action to put brake on speeding

BROMSGROVE District Councillors who represent Rubery are calling for speed reductions and improved safety measures on village roads to ease residents' concerns surrounding excessive speeding.

Councillors Esther Gray and Peter McDonald said residents voiced concerns over the issue for many years, including fears about roads near two primary schools, each with a nursery, a high school and two private nurseries.

The pair said the safety of roads surrounding these schools and nurseries should be a priority.

Coun Gray said: "Research has shown where speeds are reduced to a maximum of 20mph in built-up areas, a decline in casualties of more than 40 per cent will occur.

by **Sonny Rackham**
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@bullivantmedia.com

"With the number of schools in the area and nursery provision, we need to ensure residents going about their daily business should do so with vehicles being driven at safe speeds."

Other concerns include those living with disabilities who, the pair say, are facing daily risks due to speeding vehicles.

Personal stories include mobility vehicle users 'playing dodgems' while crossing Whetty Lane and Leach Heath Lane, while those with visual impairments struggle to judge the speed of oncoming vehicles.

The councillors say these instances are too numerous to ignore and

demand immediate attention.

The pair are now calling on the chairman of Worcestershire County Council to listen to the voices of Rubery residents and take action.

Despite the councillors' 'best efforts', they say no tangible measures have been implemented by the authority to effectively reduce the speed of traffic on these roads.

Coun McDonald said: "We already have a 20mph restriction around schools in Rubery North and since the restriction we have not had a child seriously injured by a vehicle.

"Not only does reducing speed reduce the number of accidents, but it also reduces particulate emissions from tyre and brake wear which can only

improve the quality of the air we breathe."

The pair have launched a petition to garner support for the proposed implementation of traffic calming measures and it has already amassed 150 signatures. Visit chng.it/2FqbdXBNmR to sign it.

Councillor Karl Perks, Worcestershire County Council's Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport, said: "Road safety is a top priority for us.

"We carry out road safety improvements, as we did at the shopping area on New Road, based on detailed accident investigation and analysis.

"We continually monitor the road network across the county and will consider this petition once it is presented to us."

PUBLIC NOTICES



For all your latest information on Planning Proposals, Traffic Notices, Goods Vehicle Operator Licences, Licences To Sell Alcohol and Probate Notices...

See page 34



Plenty of praise for church event

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

A WEEK of prayer in Bromsgrove has brought together churches from all across the town.

Bromsgrove District Council Chairman, Coun Sam Evans, opened the 24/7 Prayer Event in the basement of Bromsgrove Baptist Church last Sunday.

The prayer room was decorated with artwork, maps, prayer requests and information about work the people are doing in the town and around the world so others

could pray for them.

More than 100 people signed up to be in the prayer room from 5am to midnight every day of the week from June 1 to June 7. Some even signed up to pray into the early hours.

There were contributions from local schools and youth groups with some groups contributing artwork or visiting in person.

The ribbon was cut by Coun Evans and Rose Pauley, a long time 'prayer warrior' from Bromsgrove Baptist Church who spent some time as a missionary on the other side of the world.

As well as the physical room, a local business helped

harness cutting edge technology to create a virtual prayer room where people could move around the prayer space and interact with the displays.

The end of the week of prayer was marked by a big celebration in Sanders Park on Sunday morning (June 8).

The virtual prayer room is still available to view.

Visit: localchurch.uk/bromsgrove to check it out and for more information.

Go to this story at bromsgrovestandard.co.uk for more pictures of the event.



Rose Pauley, 'prayer warrior' at Bromsgrove Baptist Church with Bromsgrove District Council chairman, councillor Sam Evans.



Top Pink Floyd tribute act Darkside will be at Bromsgrove's Artrix on July 5.

TOP TRIBUTE: Renowned Pink Floyd tribute band Darkside will be returning to Bromsgrove's Artrix as part of its 20th anniversary celebrations.

Fans of the band will be treated to two complete albums - Wish You Were Here and the iconic Dark Side of the Moon, along with other hits.

The show will be performed at the venue at 7.30pm on July 5 and will feature Cariss Auburn, who creates probably the best ver-

sion of the 'Great Gig in the Sky' in the UK. Concert-goers are urged to get ready to 'enjoy outstanding music and an immersive light, laser and projection show, evoking the spirit of the 70s'.

The band has enjoyed five-star reviews and much acclaim wherever it has performed.

Visit artrixbromsgrove.co.uk or call the box office on 01527 361324 for more information and tickets, which are £26.

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Thieves take BMW

A BMW has been stolen in a car-key burglary in Redditch.

The thieves struck at the property in Weatheroak Close, Webbeath, between 1.40am and 1.55am on Tuesday. They snapped the lock on the back patio door before taking the keys and then stealing the car.

Redditch Police have appealed for witnesses or anyone with information to call them on 101 or Crimstoppers on 0800 555 111.

Blaze in substation

A BLAZE broke out in an electrical substation in Redditch.

The incident happened around 12.50pm on Monday in Birchfield Road.

The fire happened in an electrical intake in a workshop and had been put out with CO2 extinguishers before firefighters arrived.

Two Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue crews – one each from Redditch and Bromsgrove – attended, along with the National Grid who isolated the electrics.

Owners of Jinney Ring set to retire

THE OWNERS of the Jinney Ring Craft Centre in Hanbury have announced they will retire next year and be closing some parts of the business.

From early 2026, the Farmhouse Restaurant, Gift Shop and gardens will no longer be open to the public, but some craft units may continue to trade and welcome visitors.

Until the end of this year all facilities and events will continue as normal.

Anyone with Jinney Ring gift vouchers will be able to redeem them until December 31, 2025.

The Jinney Ring was originally the creation of Richard and Jenny Greatwood and opened in 1980.

They then retired in 2005 passing on the baton to Amanda and Malcolm Sunter

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

who have owned and managed it for nearly 20 years.

Over the past two decades, there have been many challenges including the internet revolution.

The Sunters have had to adapt and change and extended business activities to include concerts, outdoor sculpture trails, parties, wakes, wedding ceremonies and receptions. Managing the site, together with running the popular restaurant and gift shop, makes for a busy life and they are looking forward to a change of pace next year.

Amanda said: "It has been a wonderful experience but the time has come to retire, especially for Malcolm who is still very active in the business at almost 78 years old.



Amanda and Malcolm Sunter have owned and managed Jinney Ring Craft Centre for nearly 20 years.



The Jinney Ring Craft Centre originally opened in 1980.

"Running the restaurant and gift shop are big jobs and neither of us is getting any younger.

"It will certainly be a wrench though as this has been such a huge part of our lives.

"We have worked with so many wonderful artists and crafts people over the years, some of whom have been here longer than we have, not to mention all the thousands of customers who've visited. We will certainly miss it."

Amanda said the pair would have much preferred to sell on the Jinney Ring in its entirety to someone younger, with new ideas and energy, adding: "Indeed, we had the business on the market prior to Covid, but without success."

The EDDIEbus needs YOU!

Volunteer drivers required



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.

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This fun run is fit for everyone

THOSE WANTING enter this year's Wythall and Hollywood Fun Run with the closing date at midnight on Wednesday, June 18, fast approaching.

And this year, to ensure everyone who wants to enter can, the organisers have joined forces to help runners who are blind or visually impaired.

Wythall Community Association, Events of the North and Worcestershire County Council have been working with local charity Sensory Matters Worcestershire (formally Sight Concern Worcestershire) to make the run as accessible to those with sight loss and vision impairment.

The event, in Wythall Park on Sunday, June 22, will include a number of enhancements, including guide runners, tailored support throughout the route, dedicated spaces within the event village and a programme of inclusive sports taster sessions.

Sensory Matters Worcestershire will host an accessible support zone for visually impaired attendees, offering a secure place to leave personal items and talk

to and engage with volunteers.

It will feature a range of hands-on displays and informational materials, giving visitors the opportunity to speak with the team and explore assistive tools. These include canes used by those with sight loss and sim specs which are specially designed glasses that simulate various visual impairments.

This will raise awareness of the everyday challenges faced by people living with sight loss. Also available to try are liquid level indicators that enable people living with a visual impairment to safely pour drinks.

Millie Hayter, Sensory Matters Worcestershire's physical activities connector, said the charity was thrilled to be helping make the fun run more inclusive this year.

"By creating spaces and opportunities for blind and visually impaired participants, we're not only enabling more people to take part - we're also raising awareness of the daily challenges many face."

"It's a big step towards a more inclusive community event."

Worcestershire's Director of Public Health, Dr Lisa McNally, said: "It is extremely important to us our event puts accessibility first.

"We want everyone to be able to take part in Wythall and Hollywood Fun Run and we are delighted for the support from Sensory Matters Worcestershire whose knowledge and expertise have enabled us to make this race truly accessible to all."

Other activities

On the day, there will be three races - a 5k, 10k and family relay, along with an event village boasting food, drinks and entertainment.

There will also be the chance to try a new sport, including tennis, bowls and archery.

Attendees will also have the chance to try adapted versions of tennis and cricket, designed for people with sight loss but adapted for those without sight, giving everyone the opportunity to experience the sport.

For more on Sensory Matters Worcestershire, call 01905 723245 or pop along to visit the charity at The Bradbury Centre, 2 Sansome Walk, Worcester.

To enter the race, visit: wythallhollywoodfunrun.org.uk by midnight on Wednesday, June 18.

Visit this story on our website for the route, maps and more about the day.



Representatives from Sensory Matters Worcestershire (formerly Sight Concern) and Worcestershire County Council's Public Health with Steve Cram, Rebecca Redfern and Matt Redfern.



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THERE will be additional Bromsgrove-on-demand buses running next Sunday, which will be ideal for runners, spectators, and volunteers attending the Wythall Hollywood Fun Run.

The Worcestershire On Demand buses usually run from Monday to Saturday without the need for fixed routes or timetables.

Worcestershire County Council is adding the extra vehicles to support local travel during the popular event.

The demand-responsive service will operate with two vehicles from 7am to 3pm, covering the entire Bromsgrove zone, including Wythall, Alvechurch, Stoke Pound, and Stoke Prior.

The Sunday service is only available on

June 22 and does not include the Malvern zone.

Buses can be booked via the Worcestershire On Demand App, which can be downloaded from Play Store or Apple App.

Those catching the on-demand bus choose their pick-up and drop-off points and are then guided to a 'virtual bus stop'.

They pay a flat fare of £2.50 per person and then £1.25 for each additional passenger.

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Open days will highlight our towns' heritage

THE NATIONAL Trust and National Lottery Heritage Fund are supporting Heritage Open Days (HOD) in Bromsgrove and Redditch.

by **Jeanna Karcz**

Bromsgrove District Council and Redditch Borough Council are being backed by the two organisations to celebrate local heritage sites through the annual HOD event.

This year's theme is architecture, though events do not always closely relate to the theme.

The Redditch and Bromsgrove councils' leisure and culture teams support local event holders, with 2025 marking the third year of their support.

Bromsgrove District Council's Cabinet Member for Leisure and Climate Change, Coun Bernard McEldowney, said: "Heritage Open Days is an excellent

initiative that has run for many years, each year I am excited to see the events which are organised by people in our local communities and centres.

"Seeing all those events come together to form the Redditch and Bromsgrove Heritage Open Days booklet is always such an exciting time.

"I am grateful to all volunteers who work every year to make it possible."

Redditch Borough Council's Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Culture, Juliet Barker Smith, added: "Every year, across the country, the Heritage Open Days events give the local community a chance to explore sites of historical and cultural interest, for free.

"As a council, we are passionate about breaking down barriers to new experiences,

both for local people and those exploring Redditch for the first time, as a rich, cultural destination.

"We are very grateful to the volunteers who work tirelessly in a number of historical locations to enable these events to happen every year."

The Heritage Days will run from September 12 to 21.

Heritage Open Days ask organisers to hold free events in places which are usually charged for.

This year, organisers can apply for £350 in funding to support an event.

Visit the website at heritageopendays.org.uk/resource/micro-grants-for-new-organisers.html for more information on the grants available.

Organisers are urged to email renew@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk to let the councils know when their events are taking place and to discuss them.



The Abbots Grange Manor House and Avoncroft Museum teams celebrating their respective honours at the VisitEngland Awards.

Unsung hero Andrew takes award

A LONG-STANDING Avoncroft Museum volunteer has received a national honour for his dedication to voluntary service over the last 35 years.

Andrew Hurley, who was crowned Unsung Hero in Visit Worcestershire's Tourism Awards in March, received a Bronze award in the national event.

The stalwart volunteer was bestowed his honour at the Visit England Awards of Excellence held at Brighton Dome Corn Exchange last Wednesday (June 4).

The award is a testament to Andrew's dedication to preserving the national collection of telephone kiosks – the most exten-

sive collection of its kind in the country.

Coun Alan Amos, cabinet member with responsibility for business and skills at Worcestershire County Council, said: "I'm delighted to see Worcestershire's tourism sector recognised on the national stage."

Andrew received his accolade alongside a fellow Worcestershire based national award recipient. Abbots Grange Manor House, in Broadway, scooped the silver award in the bed and breakfast and guest house category of the year.

To earn a spot in the national award finals, Abbots Grange Manor House was crowned the

small serviced accommodation of the year at Visit Worcestershire's Tourism Awards in March.

Coun Amos added: "Congratulations to Abbots Grange Manor House and Andrew Hurley - their continued success at both regional and national levels is a fantastic achievement and a true testament to the quality of experiences Worcestershire offers."

Applications are now open for the next Visit Worcestershire Tourism Awards. The deadline for entries has been extended to next Monday, June 23.

Visit the website at visitworcestershire.org/tourism-awards/ for more information.

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Rail excursion transports pair into a reunion



TWO FRIENDS who worked together on the railway in Bromsgrove have enjoyed a reunion with a locomotive they both drove more than 60 years ago.

Darryl Lucas and Alan Spencer went on Vintage Train's Whistling Ghost from Barnst Green to Somerset last Saturday and were delighted to discover the diesel engine assisting their train, number 37240, was a locomotive they had operated in the 1960s.

Mr Lucas joined the railway as a junior porter at Bromsgrove Station in January 1962, before transferring to the steam shed where later he became an engine cleaner with Mr Spencer, who joined in February 1963.

Darryl said: "As Alan and I progressed, we began undertaking shunting duties and banking of trains up the Lickey Incline.

"This was initially on steam engines, before we began driving an allocation of six new diesel locomotives which arrived in August 1964.

"These new locomotives were numbered D6938 to D6944, including D6940 now 37240.

He added: "It was a pleasure to see 37240 on our train and to know it is the only survi-

vor from that batch of six engines.

"Credit goes to whoever saved and now maintains this locomotive."

The Whistling Ghost excursion was hauled by steam engine 7029 Clun Castle through Barnst Green and Bromsgrove last Saturday morning with 37240 on the back, as it headed to the West Somerset Railway at Bishops Lydeard.



Once at Bishops Lydeard, the train was hauled by steam engines 7812 Erlestoke Manor and 2999 Lady of Legend to Minehead, before Clun Castle returned the train back to Birmingham.

Meanwhile, Alan said: "It was fantastic to discover the locomotive on our train was going to be 37240, it looked really good.

"I have fond memories of my time working on the railway at Bromsgrove.

"My first footplate job was fireman on a steam engine aged 15.

"This was the 15 August 1963, just after the great train robbery."

Alan added: "We had a great day out together and enjoyed passing over the summit of the Incline at 37mph on our return, with 37240 once again providing banking assistance."

Neil Gordon



ABOVE: 7029 Clun Castle with the Whistling Ghost excursion at Bishops Lydeard. Picture by Darryl Lucas.

LEFT: Friends and former railway colleagues Darryl Lucas and Alan Spencer.

INSET: Darryl and Alan were reunited with engine 37240, 60 years after driving it at Bromsgrove. Picture by Darryl Lucas.

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Police salute work of vital volunteers

VOLUNTEERS with the police across West Mercia were celebrated as part of National Volunteers' Week which ran from June 2 to 8.

Across Herefordshire, Shropshire and Worcestershire, there are more than 70 volunteers who all play crucial roles in supporting various teams across the force area.

There are volunteers working alongside police staff in the cyber-crime team whilst some provide support and guidance as a force chaplain.

One is delivering expertise knowledge as a historian at the force museum and some are caring for the force's puppies to ensure they grow into crime-fighting police dogs.

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

West Mercia Police says its volunteers offer 'endless skills' and provide 'invaluable enthusiasm and expertise' to the roles they do.

The Special Constabulary is made up of 81 volunteer police officers who work alongside and uphold the same policing powers as regular officers.

They work across a variety of policing teams and carry out duties such as responding to 999 calls, patrolling on foot and in vehicles and investigating crimes and arresting suspects. They also help police major events such as festivals and football matches.

In 2024, Special Constables con-

tributed a staggering 24,000 hours in unpaid work. They attended 115 pre-planned operations, 243 shifts with Safer Neighbourhood Teams and worked 1,478 shifts on response.

Their commitment has been described as 'remarkable', with the volunteers branded as 'valued assets' across the force.

Police and Crime Commissioner John Campion said: "Volunteers are a key part of the policing family, whether they are a Special, Independent Custody Visitor, involved with their local Community Speed Watch or help services deliver support to victims.

"Every single person who gives up some of their own time to make a difference in their community



West Mercia Police celebrated its volunteers last week. s

deserves to be celebrated and I know the public share my admiration for the often unseen but yet incredible contributions they each make in West Mercia."

Visit this story on our website and click through the link for more information on the role of a special

constable. People can also watch a video from the force, showcasing the shift of special constable, Sarah Severn, who operates with the force's roads policing team in Bromsgrove.

Visit youtu.be/SUQT4iqA-jw to view the piece.

Police cadets from Wyre Forest, Bromsgrove and Redditch helped out at the Race For Life.



Cadets step up for Race For Life

YOUNG PEOPLE from across Wyre Forest, Bromsgrove and Redditch represented North Worcestershire Police Cadets at the Race For Life event in Redditch on Sunday.

Cadets helped out with marshalling, manning water stations and distributing medals

and some of them also participated in the 10k race at Arrow Valley Park.

North Worcestershire Police said: "This fantastic event helped to raise tens of thousands of pounds for Cancer Research - massive well done to all who took part and helped to

organise it."

Any young people from across Wyre Forest, Bromsgrove or Redditch wanting to find out more about becoming a West Mercia Police Cadet should visit westmercia.police.uk and search for 'Police Cadets'.

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Carl rallies to raise £5,000 for charities

BROMSGROVE cyclist Carl Knowles has raised more than £5,000 by riding 110 miles from Bromsgrove to Barmouth in one day.

Carl completed the ride last Friday to raise funds for charities supported by the Pavestone Rally, including the Teenage Cancer Trust, Variety, Crash, Rainy Day Trust and Lighthouse Charity.

The major fundraising event, organised by Midlands-based paving company Pavestone, challenges participants to cycle 110 miles with more than 7,000ft worth of ascent. The route covered Worcestershire, Shropshire, Powys, Gwynedd and the mountainous areas of the Eryi (Snowdonia) National Park including the notoriously steep pass

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

between Dinas Mawddwy and Dolgellau.

Carl was accompanied throughout the ride by his son and fellow cyclist, Ewan, and completed the journey in 9.5 hours.

The pair had pitstops at three builders merchants – TG Bridgnorth, Boys and Boden in Welshpool and Huws Gray in Dolgellau.

He was also sponsored by three Worcestershire companies – Bromsgrove’s UKF Group, a stainless steel stockholding and processing business, Upton Snodsbury-based landscaping specialists, CJC Landscaping and Supplies, and Kidderminster-based Intergas.

Carl said: “I’ve participated in the Pavestone Rally for many years and this year I wanted to do something a little different to raise funds for these charities.

“The route took has particular significance for me as it’s one I travelled – albeit by car – with my mum, dad and brother over 50 years ago for family holidays in the area around Barmouth.

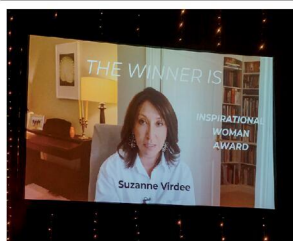
“As a result, this is a challenge that anyone of my family will tell you I’ve been talking about doing for years.

“I’m delighted to have not only completed the route but also to have raised more than £5,000 for charity and am extremely grateful for all the support I’ve received from many individuals and local businesses.”



Carl Knowles (right) with son Ewan (left) and support crew Aidan Kidson from printers Buxton Press (centre) after the completion of the Bromsgrove to Barmouth bike challenge. s

Donations can still be made for Carl’s Bromsgrove to Barmouth bike challenge. Go to this story [online at bromsgrovestandard.co.uk](https://www.bromsgrovestandard.co.uk) and click through the link to add boost Carl’s funds further.



TV journalist Suzanne Virdee has won a Special Recognition Award. s

Inspiring Suzanne delighted to collect Ladies First award

A JOURNALIST from Redditch has been recognised at the seventh Ladies First Professional Development Network Business Awards.

More than 300 people assembled at Dallas Burston Polo Club, in Southam, Warwickshire, for the glittering ceremony last week, hosted by Kirsty Leahy and Karen Jones.

The evening’s entertainment also included performances

by Birmingham’s Elmhurst Ballet School and singers Pippa Langhorne, Colin ‘Sugarfoot Mills’ and Coventry’s Ruth Kelly.

Suzanne Virdee, from Redditch, collected the Inspirational Woman Award from Ladies First.

The award-winning TV news anchor and freelance journalist has presented the ITV National News, ITV News London, Channel 5 News and BBC

Breakfast, as well as reporting for BBC Radio 4.

She’s best known in the Midlands for co-presenting the 6.30pm BBC regional news programme Midlands Today alongside Nick Owen for 11 years.

Over her career she has also been a passionate supporter and mentor to women starting out in journalism.

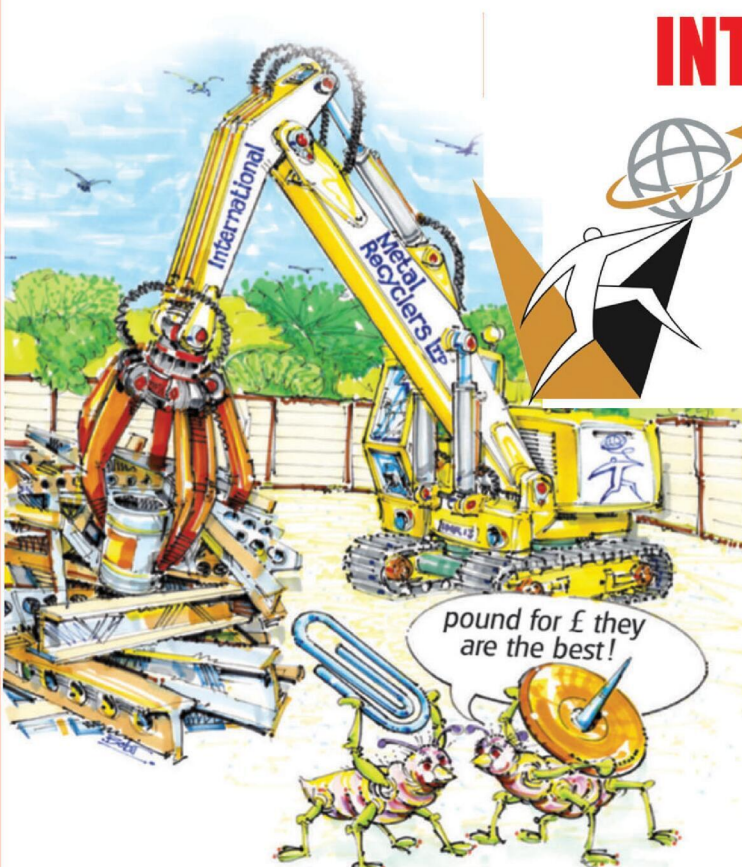
Suzanne said: “I am absolutely delighted to receive the

Inspirational Woman Award from Ladies First.

“To be recognised by a group of high achieving and downright amazing women really is an honour.”

“When women support other women amazing things happen and I can’t thank them enough for this award.”

Visit [ladiesfirstnetwork.co.uk/2025-winners/](https://www.ladiesfirstnetwork.co.uk/2025-winners/) for a full list of winners.



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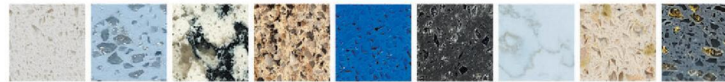
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Highs and lows in my ten years serving as an MP

I WAS first elected to Parliament ten years ago on May 7, 2015.

It has been the honour of my life to serve my constituents and a privilege to serve in government, including as Minister for Sport, Tourism, Heritage and Civil Society, Government Whip, Minister for International Trade and Financial Secretary to the Treasury (where I was cutting taxes - remember those days?).

I was proud to deliver the Commonwealth Games in Birmingham, the first major international sporting event post-pandemic.

In opposition, I've served as a Shadow Treasury Minister and now as co-chairman of the Conservative Party.

It's been quite a journey with many highs and lows. I'd like to thank everyone who has supported me along the way, especially my family and, above all, my constituents for placing their trust in me over four general elections.

There has been a lot of activity in Westminster recently:

Schools Funding Crisis - I joined Shadow Education Secretary Laura Trott and my Conservative colleagues to highlight the growing funding crisis facing our schools.



Westminster Diary

Nigel Huddleston MP writes for The Standard

Labour promised to compensate for their National Insurance hike, but schools are now facing shortfalls of up to 30 per cent.

Heads, teachers and parents across Worcestershire are already warning of job losses. These are not projections; they are happening now. Labour must put this right by ensuring schools have the funding they need to deliver the recommended teacher pay rises without having to make cuts elsewhere.

Labour's winter fuel u-turn - Keir Starmer finally bowed to political pressure and reversed his Winter Fuel Payment cut, a vindictive policy which forced some pensioners to choose between heating and eating.

Last year, Labour MPs voted to scrap this vital support despite warnings it would push an estimated 100,000 more older people into poverty and impacted 22,000 in my own constituency. The Government's own figures showed the devastating consequences.

While I welcome the U-turn, it comes too late for many who suffered last winter. Pensioners deserve certainty, not last-minute reversals from a government that cannot seem to get its story straight. I will continue to hold the Government to account to ensure no pensioner loses their entitlement.

Assisted Dying Bill Debate - Last month Parliament debated the Assisted Dying Bill. I listened to many heartfelt representations from constituents and speeches on this sensitive issue.

I previously voted against the bill and remain inclined to do so at third reading due to ongoing safeguarding concerns.

However, I believe it's important to engage constructively as the bill progresses. I've been reviewing and voting on amendments aimed at strengthening safeguards, and have voted in support of several amendments. I want to ensure - should it become law - the legislation is as robust as possible.

I also welcome further constituent's comments.

Nigel Huddleston MP for Droitwich and Evesham

Dogs found as 'bags of bones'

by Sonny Rackham
sonny.rackham
@bullivantmedia.com

AN 'APPALLED' dogwarden in Worcestershire has called for residents to help after two dogs, she described as 'bags of bones', were rescued in Wychavon.

Wilma, a Bully-type breed spent a week in intensive care and was so emaciated she could not even stand. She collapsed several times as her breathing was so bad.

When Robinson Crusoe, a Cocker Spaniel-type, was found every rib and even the fine pin bones were showing. Both dogs were found separately in Pershore last month.

Worcestershire Regulatory Services senior dog warden, Pip Griffin, said: "Heartless people intentionally starved these defenceless creatures and watched them suffer."

"It is cruelty beyond belief and these are just two of the many cases we face each week across the county."

Pip urges residents with information about the two dogs or with any concerns about the safety of other pets they have seen, to get in touch.



Robinson Crusoe, a Cocker Spaniel-type was found in an extremely underweight state. Picture by Worcestershire Regulatory Services. s

"We need to work together to stop this monstrous behaviour and to stop these cruel people being able to own animals," Pip added.

"Not only are beautiful creatures suffering, but their medical bills cost the taxpayer money."

"And please think twice before you get a pet - they are hard work and expensive - and, as always, adopt don't shop."

Anyone with concerns about dogs in the county can call the Animal Welfare Team on 01905 822799.



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Team gearing up for Molly Olly's

STAFF at a Redditch business are getting on their bike to train for a three-day cycle from Great Yarmouth to Warwick to raise funds for Molly Olly's.

The Oakland and Friends team is made up of members of the Oakland International family, including staff from the Redditch, Bardon, and Corby sites, as well as family members from Attwell Farm Park and staff from Bakeaway in Corby.

Together, they will join 30 cyclists in taking on the challenging 200-mile charity ride from June 27-29.

Oakland International supply chain director Lee Whiting said: "We are a group of ten riders, and delighted to be part of a larger team, taking on the challenge of cycling from Great Yarmouth to Warwick to support Molly Olly's Wishes, a charity dedicated to bringing comfort and memories to children facing life-threatening illnesses."

"Having supported for the past number of years, it's an incredibly hard challenge, so between now and then we have a lot of training to ensure we're fully up to speed."

Molly Olly's supports chil-



The Oakland and Friends team during last year's cycling challenge. s

dren with life-threatening illnesses and their families helping with their emotional wellbeing. The charity fulfills wishes by providing gifts to individual children, donating the therapeutic toy 'Olly The Brave' and his story books, donating and supporting bespoke projects such as funding a Paediatric Palliative Care Consultant and by furnishing the Magnolia House palliative care facility at Birmingham Children's Hospital, and so much more.

Every wish Molly Olly's grants costs around £500 and to date the charity has helped more than 19,500 children.

Family member Samuel Attwell and Molly Olly's ambassador, said: "Every mile we ride will bring us closer to granting a child's wish, whether it's a dream gift, a memorable day out or something simple that brings a much-needed smile."

"By supporting our ride, you're not just helping us reach our goal - you're helping to make these children's wishes come true. Together, we can bring hope, happiness, and unforgettable memories to those who need it most."

Visit justgiving.com/page/oakland-and-friends-5 to donate.



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More hosts needed for Ukraine families

HOSTS are still desperately needed in Bromsgrove and Redditch for Ukrainian people fleeing the war in their country.

by **Ross Crawford**

And, as an incentive, both local authorities are offering above the national monthly rate for those willing to open their homes to a guest from Ukraine.

Husband and wife team Chris and Sara Cookson, from Worcestershire Regulatory Services, have the job of finding these homes.

Chris said: "We are UK support officers, among our many hats."

"And if we could just find seven

or eight new hosts it would make a massive difference in Bromsgrove and Redditch.

"We need people to take on new guests and people who are already here."

Sara added: "Arrivals from the Ukraine now come with an 18-month visa, although it's generally believed that should the war still be continuing at the end of that period, it is doubtful if the UK would send people back to the Ukraine."

Both were keen to stress the

Ukrainians were all keen to play their part and help their hosts.

Chris said: "These are hard working people - and we must emphasise they are not refugees."

"We have teachers, lawyers and others all wanting to play their part, working as cleaners and any job they can find to help out."

Bromsgrove and Redditch are both offering hosts £350-a-month for the first six months rising to £600 from the seventh month onwards.

Email Hayley Varney at hayley.varney@worscsregservices.gov.uk for more on becoming a host.



Cafe has the perfect recipe

THE UKRAINIAN Cafe at Bromsgrove Methodist Church has sent £500 to the war-torn country and has another £1,000 ready to go.

Jenny Jones, a member of the Methodist Church who helps organise the Ukrainian Cafe at the centre, said: "We teach our Ukrainian guests English on a Thursday morning and two of the ladies said they would like to open a cafe."

"I said we couldn't use our kitchen to run a business, but if we were raising money for charity, then that would be fine."

The cafe started off small, offering tea and pancakes at first before moving on to serv-

ing up a three-course menu. Jenny added: "Ideally we'd like to send this money to the charity Hope in Action which provides medical supplies."

However, finding a bank that will send this money out to this specific charity is proving difficult, so if any banking organisation can help we would be interested in hearing from them."

The Ukrainian Cafe, fully supported by Bromsgrove and Redditch Welcomes Refugees, is open from 10am to 1.30pm on the last Friday of every month at Bromsgrove Methodist Centre and at the Ecumenical Centre in Redditch town centre. Call 01527 65952 for more.

Free film screening marks Refugee Week

A FILM billed as 'delightfully warm and comically offbeat' is being screened twice for free in Redditch as part of Refugee Week 2025 which starts on Monday and runs until next Sunday (June 16 to 22).

The 90-minute comedy Fremont tells the tale of Donya, an Afghan refugee trying to rebuild her life in San Francisco after leaving her home country where she worked as a translator for the US military.

She is working in a factory making Chinese fortune cookies until she sneaks her own personal message into one of those cookies and her adventure unfolds.

The story strongly resonates with Afghan families currently being supported by Bromsgrove and Redditch Welcome Refugees, as they integrate into local communities.

The showings are at 4.30pm on Thursday, June 19, at Redditch

Library and at 6pm on Friday, June 20, at The Ecumenical Centre at 6pm.

There will be question-and-answer sessions after each screening.

Refugee Week, which this year has the theme 'community as a superpower' is the world's largest arts and culture festival celebrating the contributions, creativity and resilience of refugees and people seeking sanctuary.

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STAFF from stroke services across Worcestershire joined forces on Saturday to take on a gruelling 240-mile cycling challenge, raising awareness of the life-changing impact of stroke.

The challenge, hosted at Abbey Stadium Sports Centre in Redditch, symbolised the 240 people in the UK who suffer a stroke every day.

From 7.30am to 7.30pm, NHS staff and members of the local Stroke Association took turns on static bikes, cheered on by colleagues, stroke survivors, friends, family and members of the public – many joining in to help clock up the miles.

The event brought together teams from the local stroke pathway, comprising of Herefordshire and Worcestershire Health and Care NHS Trust, Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust, NHS Herefordshire and Worcestershire ICB and the Stroke Association's local branch.

Together, they cycled for change, raising vital funds for stroke research and support services.

The event also supported May Measure Month, a national campaign encouraging people to check their blood pressure, the leading modifiable risk factor for stroke.

Healthcare professionals were on hand throughout the day to offer free blood pressure and heart rate checks, helping people take proactive steps towards stroke prevention.

Sarah Adderley, associate director for the Midlands Stroke Association, said "Over 88,000 people survive a stroke every year in the UK, but surviving a stroke is just the start of a long and gruelling recovery journey."

"Mums, dads, grandparents, young people, even children – anyone can have a stroke and its impact is traumatic."

Visit justgiving.com/page/sarah-hudson-5 to donate.

PICTURED: Staff joined together at Redditch Abbey Stadium to take on a gruelling 240-mile cycling challenge, raising awareness of the life-changing impact of stroke. s

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So many ways to get into the festival

MORE THAN 60 events will take place between next Saturday, June 21, and July 20 as part of the annual Bromsgrove Festival.

The extravaganza begins on June 21 with the annual Court Leet Fair Day and Street Market in Bromsgrove High Street.

It celebrates the historic charter granted to the town in 1199 by King John which gave permission for an annual Midsummer's Day Fair every year.

The event begins with a colourful traditional procession by members of the Court Leet to the High Street.

After the proclamation of the Charter by the Bailiff Mark Robinson, there will be the assize of goods, including ale, bread and flesh (meat).

Visit: bromsgrovecourtleet.co.uk or [facebook.com/CourtLeetBromsgrove](https://www.facebook.com/CourtLeetBromsgrove) for more.

The Bromsgrove Festival Lunch, featuring a variety of singers, dancers and musicians, will take place from 12.30pm to 4pm next Saturday, June 21.

The fun-filled afternoon is free for everyone to attend and follows the Court Leet ceremony.

Fancy a Tinkle will take place every Saturday from 11am to 2pm

in Bromsgrove High Street. It gives people the chance to go along and showcase their skills on the electric keyboard.

Live music

Barnet Green Choral Society will perform 'The World of Disney' at 3pm next Saturday, June 21, at New Road Baptist Church, Bromsgrove.

The society will be joined by the choir from St Andrew's School in Barnet Green as it performs a concert full of Disney favourites.

Visit barnetgreenchoralsociety.org for tickets and more information.

Also on the packed opening day will be Bromsgrove Amateur Strings Summer Concert.

Film music and works from Vivaldi will be among the pieces in the programme.

Admission is free to the event at 11am at Catshill Methodist Church with any donations going to charity.

Visit: marcodeboni.co.uk/bas for more information.

Queen - Through the Decades will perform at Artrix at 7.30pm next Saturday, June 21.

Visit: artrixbromsgrove.co.uk or call 01527 361324 for tickets or more information.

Worcester Concert Band will per-



form live at the Jubilee Bandstand in Sanders Park from 2.30pm to 4.30pm next Sunday, June 22.

The programme includes traditional brass band music, contemporary music and scores from stage and screen.

People are urged to bring chairs or a picnic blanket along to the free event.

Visit: bromsgrove.gov.uk/things-to-do for more.

At 7pm on Sunday, June 22, the Midland Concert Orchestra (MCO) will 'Swing into Summer' at Routh Hall, Bromsgrove School, Worcester Road.

The MCO will perform swing, jazz and popular music from across the decades and Droitwich singer Charlie

Green - who wowed the judges on Britain's Got Talent - will be the guest vocalist for the evening.

Visit: bromsgrove-school.co.uk/whats-on.aspx or midlandconcertorchestra.uk for more information and tickets.

Church and charity

St John's Church will hold its annual Patronal Service at 10.45am next Sunday, June 22, with the town's Court Leet.

The event will celebrate the historic church's patron saint and see the Court Leet process into the church in full regalia, along with the choir. The event is free.

Visit: [facebook.com/StJohnsChurchBromsgrove](https://www.facebook.com/StJohnsChurchBromsgrove) for more.

StJohnsChurchBromsgrove for more.

The Primrose Hospice Choir will hold an afternoon of songs as part of the charity's Go Yellow fundraising campaign.

The event takes place from 3pm to 4.30pm on Sunday, June 22, at Avoncroft Arts Society, Redditch Road.

Email: primrosehospicechoir@gmail.com or call 07846 599167 for more information and tickets.

Head to bromsgrovesfestival.co.uk for more on the Bromsgrove Festival.

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Charity calls for police dogs to have pensions

A CHARITY which supports police dogs when they retire has launched a campaign calling for pensions for all police service animals when they hang up their badges.

The Thin Blue Paw Foundation has launched a petition calling for the Government to introduce mandatory financial assistance for police dogs once they retire – or police dog pensions.

This will mean new owners are not left to face hefty vet bills for dogs who often come with health and medical conditions due to their strenuous working lives.

The Foundation supports retired police dogs across the UK and has, since launching in August 2020, provided grants totaling more than £380,000 for life-saving surgeries, vital medication, and regular therapy to ensure these canine heroes live long, happy and healthy retirements and receive the treatment they need for any medical conditions they suffer. There are around 1,700 serving police dogs operating across the UK's 45 police forces, and an estimated 100, on average, retire every year.

Future planning

While the Thin Blue Paw

Foundation will continue to support retired police dogs across the UK – the charity's trustees want to see policy change to secure the futures of these dogs and guarantee they can access the best in veterinary treatment, therapy and medication once they retire.

The charity has launched a petition and is urging the public to get behind the campaign, which would see the Government ring-fencing a budget to ensure a basic level of support to the retired dogs' new owners to ensure they are not left with the significant financial pressures themselves.

Around £5,000 of those funds have been paid for Captain, who served with West Midlands Police as a general purpose dog for three years before retiring, in 2022, when he ruptured his cruciate ligament and being declared unfit for service.

The strenuous working life had taken its toll on the seven-year-old's spine and the German Shepherd now needs major spinal surgery to repair the damage his physical career had on his body.

The Thin Blue Paw has already paid for diagnostic tests, scans and treatment to find the extent of the damage to his spine and veterinary experts have suggested he needs rehabilitative therapy to strengthen him before they can operate.

And the charity is paying for him

to have regular hydrotherapy, physiotherapy and medication, and the surgery is expected to cost a further £5,000.

The charity's chairman, Kieran Stanbridge, said: "Unfortunately, the wear and tear from Captain's working life has left its mark on his body, and he's been struggling on his rear legs for some time. Tests have shown that he's got severe damage to his spine which needs surgery so he can continue to have a quality of life.

"Captain gave years of his life to working as a police dog and now he deserves to have a long and happy, comfortable retirement, so we want to give him the very best chance at that."

Captain, who was partnered with PC Marcus Cottrell, during his career was a 'fearsome' police dog who was excellent at his job and won the Police Chief's Certificate of Achievement.

'Physical demands'

Mr Stanbridge added: "Police dogs lead physically demanding lives and, when they retire – whether due to injury or age – they often have health problems as a result of their career, which can require expensive medication, therapy and management throughout their retirement.

"Although we've worked with insur-



The Thin Blue Paw wants police dogs, like Captain, to have a pension to help cover medical costs when they retire.

ance companies over the last few years to help them launch special policies open to retired police dogs making it easier for owners to get insurance cover, it's the Government's responsibility to offer some ongoing support to these canine heroes once they hang up their harness."

The Foundation says arthritis is the most common condition it helps

owners treat and, based on an average of £200-a-month for pain-relief medication, estimates it costs around £2,400 a year more to care for a retired police dog than a normal pet dog of a similar age and breed.

Visit: thinbluepaw.org.uk/pensions-for-police-dogs for more or to sign the petition.



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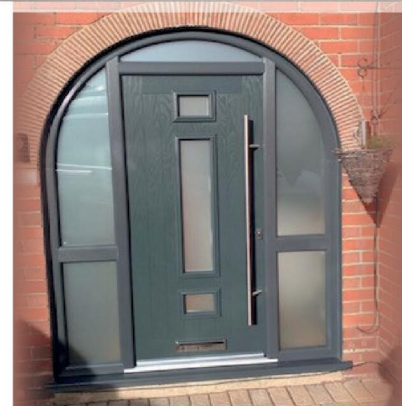
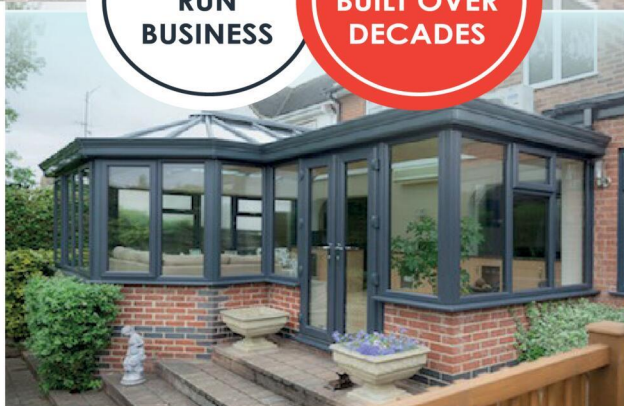


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CARING People CARING Places

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Caring People, Caring Places: The heartbeat of our community

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

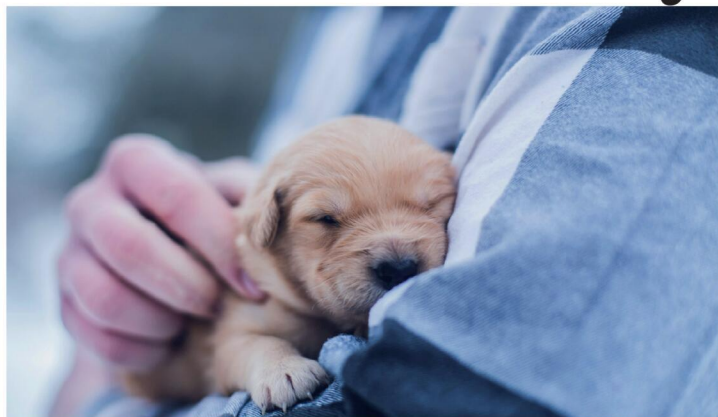
From the vet who checks on your family dog like it's their own, to the funeral director who offers gentle guidance during life's most difficult goodbyes, these unsung heroes are woven into the very fabric of our daily lives. This isn't just about care for the elderly – though they are, of course, a cherished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

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

dignity.

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

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



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



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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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



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CARING People CARING Places



The Circle of Care: How Support Travels Through a Community

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

Welcome to the Circle of Care: an invisible, ever-turning wheel powered by acts of kindness, big and small. In towns, villages, and

cities across the country, people are stepping up for each other – and in doing so, sparking a chain reaction of compassion.

It often starts with something simple. A hot meal left on a doorstep. A schoolchild giving up their seat on the bus. A stranger paying for the coffee of the person behind them in the queue. These gestures might feel fleeting to the giver, but to the person on the receiving



end, they can be transformative. Not just for what they provide – but for what they inspire. Take the story of a local couple who began cooking extra portions of their evening meals and delivering them to an elderly neighbour

during lockdown. That neighbour, once isolated, began knitting hats and scarves for a women's shelter in return. The shelter staff, moved by the gesture, started offering monthly pop-ups with free toiletries for the homeless.



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CARING People CARING Places



And volunteers at those events? Some were recipients of care themselves, now giving back in kind.

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

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

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



Local Facebook groups often help this local newspaper and help act as the new town square – offering everything from babysitting swaps to urgent appeals for missing pets. Behind each post is a person reaching out, and another person reaching back.

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

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

Let's keep it turning.



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

Businesses are joining the circle as well. A bakery offering leftover loaves to a shelter.

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

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

Even digital communities are catching on.



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By engaging with those around us and working together with local organisations, we can create an inclusive environment where everyone feels valued and supported

Ultimately, the strength of a community lies in its ability to care for one another; thus, fostering a spirit of compassion and social responsibility should remain at the forefront of our collective efforts.



Here's what we can do to help:

1 Volunteering: Dedicate some time to local charities, food banks, or community centres to lend a hand where needed.

2 Checking In: Regularly reach out to neighbours, especially the elderly or those living alone, to see how they are doing and offer support.

3 Creating Support Networks: Establish friendships among neighbours to create a reliable support system, where everyone feels comfortable asking for help.

4 Organising Community Events: Arrange social gatherings, such as street parties or community clean-ups, to foster connections and unity among residents.

5 Sharing Skills: Offer to teach a skill or hobby to others in the community, promoting personal development and creating bonds among participants.

6 Advocating for Local Needs: Be an active voice for your community by attending local council meetings and advocating for resources or services that enhance wellbeing.

7 Promoting Mental Health Awareness: Share information and resources about mental health support, encouraging open conversations within the community.

8 Supporting Local Businesses: Prioritise shopping at local stores and markets to help sustain the community's economy and create job opportunities.

9 Creating Food Shares: Set up a community food-sharing initiative where surplus food can be donated and shared among those in need.

10 Becoming a Mentor: Offer guidance and support to younger members of the community, helping them navigate challenges and build confidence in their abilities.

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Working in partnership with our people

We believe that care should be a partnership. This means we work closely with each person to develop a care plan that reflects their specific needs, desires, and goals. Whether it's through ongoing health monitoring, physical therapy, or simply providing a listening ear, we focus on outcomes that enhance quality of life.

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We offer a new type of care. We embrace the fact that the best thing for every individual is to be at home, not in a home. With this in mind, we offer a choice for people whose home support no longer works for them as an individual. The safety and security of every person who lives and works in our home is of paramount importance so we ensure they all receive training in both the local and EQ Care Group safeguarding policies and procedures.

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SUDOKU

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

EASY

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

HARD

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

PATHFINDER

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

Glastonbury headliners

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

Solutions opposite

CROSSWORD

	1		2		3		4		5		6	
7												
8									9			
10					11		12				13	
14			15				16		17			
18	19				20		21					
22												

ACROSS

- 7. Great Britain and Northern Ireland (6,7)
- 8. Taciturn (8)
- 9. Competent (4)
- 10. Mild (6)
- 12. Deed (6)
- 14. Roadway (6)
- 16. Tried (6)
- 18. Urge forward (4)
- 20. Way in (8)
- 22. Religious organisation (9,4)

DOWN

- 1. Concern (8)
- 2. Severe (6)
- 3. Lazy (4)
- 4. Divert (8)
- 5. Horrified (6)
- 6. Labour (4)
- 11. Petition (8)
- 13. Conquer (8)
- 15. Salad plant (6)
- 17. Sailor (6)
- 19. Spoken (4)
- 21. Jog (4)

Scribble pad

LADDER

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

- Ale
- Wild animal
- Droplet
- Take charge
- Burden



NINER

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

- 83412 gives a Swedish actress;
- 5249 gives a British actress;
- 42167927 gives a Romanian-born American actor.

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

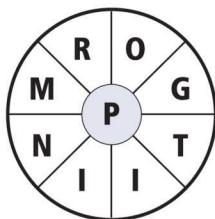
CODEWORD

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

		12		21		5	14	3	8	16	14	23	26		
A											I				
B	16	19	9	19			1		2			1	N	17	
C															
D		16			20	25	14	1	11	24		23	16	2	
E															
F	21	18	10	7						24		17		1	
G															
H					19			22	2	16	16	23	10	17	15
I															
J	18	13	19	16	11		1			18		3		14	
K															
L	13		4				19	20	11			18		5	
M															
N	8		2			12		16		6	14	12	11	25	
O															
P	2	1	18	19	10	1	18	12			22				
Q															
R	1		12							14	1	20	25		
S															
T	15	1	2			8	10	19	13	14	5		2		
U															
V	18			20		18		23			18	19	5	18	
W	5	19	11	2	10	19	11	18		5			8		
X															
Y															
Z															

WORDWHEEL

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

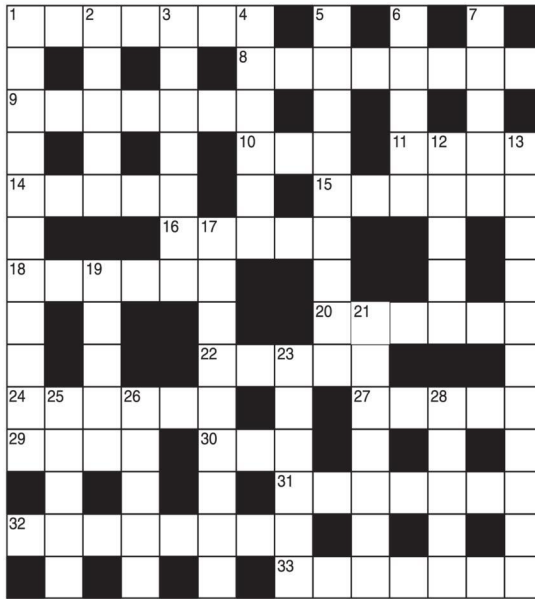


How you rate
 8 words: average
 12 words: good
 16 words: very good
 20 or more: excellent.

GENERAL KNOWLEDGE CROSSWORD

ACROSS

- 1 Cattle-breeding establishments (7)
- 8 An amulet or charm (8)
- 9 Buddhist beatitude (7)
- 10 Surname of an American general born in 1807 (3)
- 11 City famous for the Taj Mahal (4)
- 14 A geological or historical age (5)
- 15 See 18 Across
- 16 Large bird of prey (5)
- 18 & 15 Across Songwriter famous for White Christmas (6,9)
- 20 Kind of four-wheeled carriage (6)
- 22 Snooker or billiards stroke (5)
- 24 Salad plant (6)
- 27 Stocking thread (5)
- 29 Bird such as the corncrake (4)
- 30 & 13 Down Play by GB Shaw (3,3,8)
- 31 Former spelling of the South American republic of which the capital is Paramaribo (7)
- 32 HMS ---, comic opera by Gilbert and Sullivan (8)
- 33 Subdivision of a company, platoon, etc. (7)



DOWN

- 1 Instrument for estimating the distance of an object (11)
- 2 --- and Knox, 'Crazy Gang' comedians (5)
- 3 Pagan (7)
- 4 German POW camp for NCOs and men (6)
- 5 In southern England, wood hyacinths (9)
- 6 Annual cinema award in various fields (5)
- 7 A people of New Zealand (5)
- 12 Organ of the body (5)
- 13 See 30 Across
- 17 Leader of the Greeks at the siege of Troy (9)
- 19 Composer of operas including Don Carlos and Aida (5)
- 21 Old-English prose writer called Grammaticus (7)
- 23 Sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch are the five --- (6)
- 25 Lowest point of anything (5)
- 26 Work attributed to Homer (5)
- 28 Mount where Moses received the tables of the Law (5)

SOLUTIONS

ACROSS: 1 Ranches; 8 talisman; 9 Nirvana; 10 Lee; 11 Agra; 14 Epoch; 15 Berlin; 16 Eagle; 18 Irving; 20 Landau; 22 Masse; 24 Endive; 27 Lisle; 29 Rail; 30 Man; 31 Surinam; 32 Pinatoc; 33 Section. DOWN: 1 Range-finder; 2 Nervo; 3 Heathen; 4 Stalag; 5 Bluebell; 6 Oscar; 7 Maori; 12 Gland; 13 And Superman; 17 Agamemnon; 19 Verdi; 21 Aeffric; 23 Senses; 25 Nadr; 26 Illad; 28 Sinal.

General Knowledge Crossword

ACROSS: 7 United Kingdom; 8 Retiree; 9 Able; 10 Gentle; 12 Action; 14 Street; 16 Test; 18 Goad; 20 Entrance; 22 Salvation Army; Down: 1 Interest; 2 Strict; 3 Idle; 4 Distract; 5 Aghast; 6 Toll; 11 Entreaty; 13 Overcome; 15 Endive; 17 Seaman; 19 Oral; 21 Tort.

Crossword

BOARDINGS
Niner
IMPORTING
Wordwheel Pathfinder

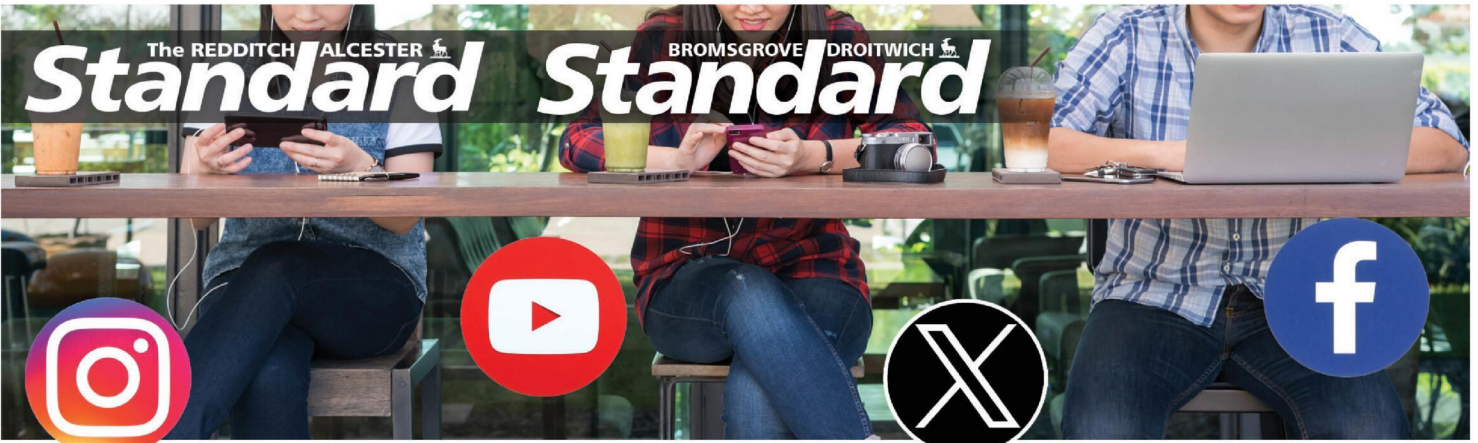
1=N, 2=U, 3=M, 4=Q, 5=S, 6=W, 7=K, 8=P, 9=Y, 10=R, 11=L, 12=D, 13=X, 14=L, 15=G, 16=L, 17=O, 18=E, 19=A, 20=C, 21=L, 22=B, 23=F, 24=Z, 25=H, 26=Y

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

Hard

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

Easy
Sudoku



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FATHER'S DAY

Roy Dalby



Fathers Day memories fond and true,
Because we all thought the world of you.
Love and God bless Dad.
Sons and Daughters
xxxxxx

THANKS



Pat Dalby

Would like to thank her many friends for cards and presents, flowers and money received on the occasion of her **90th Birthday**. The money received will be given to Air Ambulance (they need it). Not forgetting my family for spoiling me. I was overwhelmed.
xxx



DEATHS

HAWKES

Ernest Edward

Passed away peacefully aged 95 at Studley Rose care home 11th May.

Ernest will be sadly missed by all his family and friends.

Funeral service and burial at River Arrow Studley Parish Church, Castle Road Studley on 7th July at 11.30.

All welcome.

DEATHS

BAKER

Martin

Passed away Thursday 29th May 2025. Martin will be lovingly remembered by his wife, family and friends.

The service will be held at Redditch Crematorium on Friday 4th July, 2025 at 12:30pm. Donations to Cancer Research UK. Casual dress.

If you have a message for a loved one, give our team a call



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FUNERAL DIRECTORS

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* Limited choice of date and time for service and commital, excluding cremation fees. Terms and conditions apply - please ask us for details.

www.huntleysfunerals.co.uk



DEATHS

CARTER

Derek

Sadly passed away on Saturday 24th May 2025, aged 78 years. Much loved Husband to Christine and devoted Dad & Grandad

Derek will be missed by all his family and friends.

A service to celebrate Derek's life will take place at Redditch Crematorium on Tuesday 24th June 2025 at 2.00 p.m. Donations if desired to The Primrose Hospice may be sent to Thomas Brothers, The Funeral Directors, Birchfield House, 494 Evesham Road, Redditch, B97 5JF. 01527 547777 Thank You.

FUNERAL DIRECTORS

DEATHS

PREECE

John Humphrey

Sadly passed away on Friday 30th May 2025, aged 92 Years

John will be greatly missed by all of his family and friends.

A service to celebrate John's life will take place at Redditch Crematorium, on Wednesday 25th June 2025 at 12.30 p.m.

Funeral attire not required.

Family flowers only please, donations if desired to The Guide Dogs For The Blind Association may be sent to

Thomas Brothers, The Funeral Directors, Birchfield House, 494 Evesham Road, Redditch, B97 5JF. 01527 547777 Thank You.

DEATHS

ALDWORTH

Graham William

Aged 85 years

Graham passed away peacefully on Monday 19th May 2025.

Dear loved Husband to Rosemary. A service to celebrate Graham's life will take place at Redditch Crematorium, on Thursday 26th June 2025 at 12.30 pm. Family request that no black attire to be worn.

Family flowers only, donations if so desired to The British Heart Foundation & Asthma and Lung UK (ILD) may be collected on the day or via Thomas Brothers, The Funeral Directors, Greyfriars, Kings Coughton, Alcester. B49 5QF. 01789 330939.

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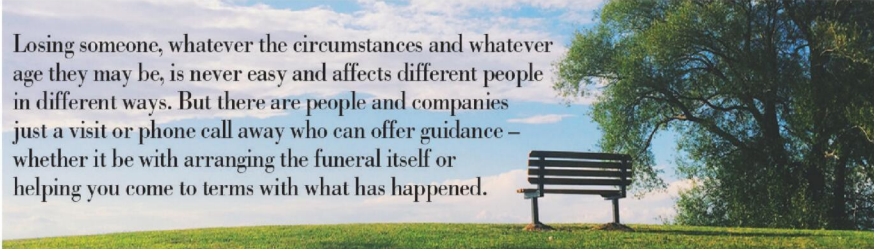
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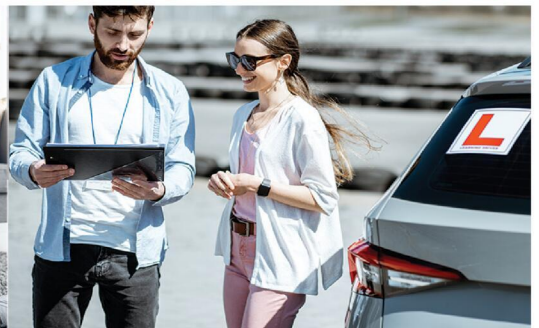
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Whatever the occasion, why not send your loved ones a message....

Call our team on **01527 588688**



PUBLIC NOTICES

PUBLIC NOTICES

Warwickshire County Council

ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984

Warwickshire County Council has made the following Temporary Traffic Orders:

MORTON BAGOT ROAD, MORTON BAGOT

Order Effect: Road closed to vehicular traffic from its junction with A4189.

Reason for Order: To enable works to replace telegraph pole.

Order Commences: 19 June 2025 for up to 18 months.

Anticipated Completion: 19 June 2025.

Access & Diversion: Morton Bagot Road, Oldberrow Road, Redditch Road, Hardwick Lane, Wootton Waven Road and vice versa.

Contractor: MJ Quinn, Tel: 01543 547 118.

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

A435 BIRMINGHAM ROAD, COUGHTON, ALCESTER

Order Effect: Road closed between the entrance to Kings Court Hotel and the Throckmorton Arms Public House.

Reason for Order: Carriageway resurfacing works, closed 20.00hrs - 06.00 hrs, Weeknights only.

Order Commences: 1 July 2025 for up to 18 months.

Anticipated Completion: 8 July 2025.

Access & Diversion: A435, A422, A441, A448, A435 and vice versa. Access/Egress to be maintained where possible to businesses and residents only.

Access/Egress to/from adjoining roads will also be restricted whilst works are in progress.

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.

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 13 June 2025

PUBLIC NOTICES

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL & REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL

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

25/00596/FUL ADVSTD FPS Site: St Kenelm's COFE Primary School, Bromsgrove Road, Romsey, Worcestershire B62 0LF.

Proposal: Remodelling of school to provide dedicated SEND facilities and extension to provide new classroom.

25/00557/FUL CA Site: 24 - 25 The Square, Alvechurch, Worcestershire, B45 7LA.

Proposal: New plant to replace existing in rear alleyway. New ventilation. New external LED lighting to replace existing. New bollards to front of store. New key klamp handrails to rear steps. New 2.4m timber hit and miss fence to infill side of store.

25/00640/FUL FPS Site: 4 Church Road, Catshill, Worcestershire B61 0JY

Proposal: Change of use of outbuilding to cattery

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

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

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

PUBLIC NOTICES

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL & REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL

Advertisement Key: LBS = Listed Building Setting, MAJ = Major Development.

25/00628/FUL MAJ LBS Site: Land South of Salt Way, The Saltway, Feckenham, Worcestershire

Proposal: Battery Energy Storage System with access and associated infrastructure

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

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

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

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RUNNER BEAN Plants. £1.75 a tray of 12 plants Phone 01905 778926

ROGERS upright piano with stool. Free. 07752 313124

TRAILER 3x4ft new tyre good lights £70 on 07930934128

TOWING mirrors pair "Milenco Aero", strap free boxed £30.00 tel 07484241355

LARGE beige crank and tilt parasol and base. Brand new. £30. Tel: 01527 450507

MISCELLANEOUS

HORNBY 00 gauge diesel locomotive (Cat ref R347) BR Class 37 with green livery and late crest. Excellent condition, test run only, complete with original box and instructions, £25. Tel: 07415322794

HORNBY OO gauge steam locomotive + tender (Cat ref R2880) BR Class 9F in BR black with late crest, engine mounted driven. Excellent condition, only test run otherwise unused. Complete with original box. £55. Tel: 07415322794

CARPET OFFCUT - brand new, berber, hard wearing, felt backed, mid brown / cream mixture, no matching pattern so could cut & piece together, size 6 foot 8 inches long x 2 foot 1 inch wide. £5.00. Tel: 07934132759

SMALL TV Wooden Corner Unit. As New £50 ono. Tel: 07879015716

MISCELLANEOUS

LADIES M&S classic fully lined summer jacket with optional hood. Light turquoise. Hardly worn. Size 12. £5.00. (1 can forward photos if interested) tel: 07934132759

PHASE EIGHT ladies soft Italian leather cropped jacket, lined. Worn twice. size 12. Cost £120. £60

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

M A H O G A N Y Sideboard. 3 drawers & cupboards. 940H x 1270L x 480D. Good Condition. £100 ono. Tel: 07879015716

SIX Oak Dining Chairs (black seats). Good Condition. £60 ono. Tel: 07879015716

SAMSUNG Surround Sound Speaker Set (6 in total) - £60 ono. Tel: 07879015716

MISCELLANEOUS

AWNING Isabella Capri Lux 975 lightweight frame. Good condition groundsheet photos available. £400. 07530531016

2 free standing overhead hair dryers £50 Telephone 07973734751

ROYAL Worcester Evesham Dales Dinner Service, 8 settings, plates, sides, deserts, cups and saucers £100 ono Tel: 01527 871856

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14 lengths of wood 9ft x 10 inches x 6 inches. Buyer to collect £120 Tel: 077935 90718

BRAND new Wooden table and 2 chairs £120 Tel: 01562 825253

PARASOL, green cloth, brand new £80 Tel: 01562 825253

MISCELLANEOUS

GAZEBO, still in box. New £25 Te; 01562 825253

2 Wooden Garden Chairs. New. £50 Tel 01562 825253

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A Friedland Warbler door bell and Sesame door bell push. £15.00. Telephone number - 01905 769944

RUNNER bean, £1.75 a tray of 12 plants. Phone 01905 778926

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MISCELLANEOUS

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DOUBLE bed metal frame in grey and silver colour along with the orthopaedic mattress (optional) fire resistant for £30 / - in good condition. tel: 077211 97331

COMPUTER desk in dark walnut with keyboard tray, home office furniture with wheels, height 72cms, width 55cms, depth 45cms. £15 / - tel: 077211 97331

LEFT hand chaise lounge, brand new plush grey sofa. £325 / - ono tel; 077211 97331

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Kia set to launch new Sportage

THE NEW Kia Sportage has been revealed in Europe in its latest iteration.

The new model features extensive enhancements in design, innovation, technology and convenience, and sets new standards in the competitive compact SUV segment.

The new Sportage offers both petrol and hybrid (HEV) powertrains from launch. The shortened wheelbase has been developed to meet the preferences of European SUV customers without compromising on interior space.

Sjoerd Knipping, COO at Kia Europe, said: "With a fully upgraded package, ready for every adventure, the most refined Sportage ever appeals to a wide variety of consumers, including our legacy customers, as it offers new levels of versatility, convenience and comfort."

Kia's 'Opposites United' design philosophy gives the Sportage a striking new look. Smooth, soft surfaces are combined with rugged forms and a powerful stance. The new front and rear bumpers

create a strong silhouette, with eye-catching LED Star Map lighting and Kia's distinctive tiger nose grille. The new wheel design is available as 17-inch, 18-inch, and 19-inch, with exclusive 18-inch and 19-inch versions for 'GT-Line' and 'GT-Line S' models.

The interior offers ample room for everyone on board. The steering wheel features a new two-spoke design, while the updated crash pad and hidden air vents create a sleek, minimalist finish. New seat covers add further comfort, with 'GT-Line' and 'GT-Line S' variants offering a stylish black and white interior in artificial leather and suede.

Together with Dinamica®, Kia has integrated a responsible fabric in the interior of the Sportage. Dinamica's premium non-woven microfibre suede is featured in the door and seat insert in the 'GT-Line' as standard and in the door inserts and seat boosters as an option.

The Sportage continues to offer a spacious interior and flexible cargo room, with more than one metre of rear legroom for passengers in the second row. Rear cargo capacity up to 587 litres, and up to 1,776 litres

with the second-row seats folded, enable customers to take everything they need for day trips and longer journeys. The dual-level cargo floor available on the HEV provides flexible cargo carrying capabilities.

Central to the enhanced driving experience in the Sportage is the Connected Car Navigation Cockpit (CCnC), featuring dual 12.3-inch curved panoramic displays and a new 10-inch head-up display (HUD). All functions and information are placed within easy access and viewing for the driver, including driver assistance systems, infotainment and turn-by-turn directions.

Connectivity and in-car options are further enhanced with wireless Apple CarPlay™ and Android Auto™. Kia Connect and OTA updates can access specific features and services, check the vehicle lock status, plan routes and more. The Sportage's Feature-on-Demand (FOD) platform allows drivers to add arcade games, YouTube, other video streaming services via the WebOS, as well as new display themes to the infotainment system.

Through Kia In-Car Payment, drivers can conveniently pay for

on-street parking directly from their car, while the available Wi-Fi Hotspot connects up to five devices to 4G LTE-based internet. Connected Routing calculates the optimal route using live and predicted traffic based on historical information to learn the preferred routes of customers. The available Digital Key 2.0 offers the ability to access the vehicle using smart devices without needing to carry a physical key, while it's also possible to share the digital key with family and friends. In addition, the vehicle features a Harman Kardon premium audio system.

The enhanced Sportage offers a choice of petrol and hybrid (HEV) powertrains from launch, giving customers a choice of hybrid powertrains that best suits their needs. Sportage offers more dynamic driving thanks to a powerful turbo hybrid powertrain, a new generation transmission, the vehicle's aerodynamic design and a low centre of gravity.

The new Sportage is expected to arrive in Kia showrooms in the third quarter of 2025. Full UK pricing and specifications will be announced

closer to its on-sale date.



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Ingram stars for Team Vertu at Thruxton with three podium finishes



by Aaron Sutcliffe
aaron.sutcliffe@bullivantmedia.com

BTCC: TOM Ingram claimed his first race win of the British Touring Car Championship (BTCC) season at Thruxton after finishing on the podium in all three races.

Driving for Droitwich-based Team Vertu, Ingram won the opening race of the weekend and finished second in races two and three.

Ingram now trails drivers' standings leader Ash Sutton by just nine points with Ingram on 172 points and Sutton in the lead with 181 points.

Ingram said: "A win and two second places, you can't ask for much more than that."

"It has been a really good haul of points, but amazingly after such a good weekend we've only clawed back six points on Ash (Sutton), which seems bonkers."

"Fairly action packed to be honest, I've not been that fussed about it but it's good to get the first win of the year."

The Team Vertu driver became the ninth different race winner in as many races after he passed pole-sitter Sutton in the opening race.

Ingram overtook Sutton earlier in the race with the safety car boards out which meant he had to give the place back to his title rival.

Sutton then slid his car into Ingram's machine at the final chicane soon after which forced both cars off the track.

However, Ingram returned to the track in the lead as Sutton began to slip back and eventually finished fourth.

Sutton's teammate Dan Cammish finished second with Josh Cook third.

Ingram then finished second in race two as Sutton blasted his way from fourth on the grid into the race lead on the opening lap.

Sutton held off Ingram for the remainder of the race while Dan Rowbottom took third after a post-race inspection revealed Cook's car failed ride height checks.

And Ingram finished second again in the final race as he deployed his boost in the closing laps to come away from the weekend with a 55-point haul.

Team Vertu driver Senna Proctor finished fourth in the final race as he placed above title contender Sutton to achieve his highest finish of the season.

Proctor also finished ninth in race one and sixth in race two while Adam Morgan finished eighth in race one, 12th in race two and suffered a DNF in race three.

Team Vertu's other driver, Tom Chilton, placed 15th in race one and eighth in race three after suffering a DNF in race two.

Team Vertu now sit second in the teams standings on 305 points just 10 points behind leaders NAPA Racing UK.

The BTCC season continues at Oulton Park on the weekend of June 21 and 22.

Team Vertu's Tom Ingram celebrates his first race win of the season. Picture by Darren Price.

Wickets galore as Spa suffer defeat

CRICKET: DROITWICH Spa CC suffered a four-wicket defeat against league leaders Bewdley in a low-scoring affair.

Spa were bowled out for just 72 runs in 28.3 overs at Lower Park.

However, the visitors had Bewdley in trouble on 57-6 before the home side eventually reached the required total.

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

Bewdley won the toss and elected to field and removed Spa opener Harry Butler (5) in the fourth over.

Spa's other opener, Sam Woolley (8), fell shortly after as Sam Wilson (4-26) claimed his first scalp.

Wilson also accounted for Xavier Ariam Thuriappah (2), Jonathan Miles (11) and Lincoln Kellett (1) with Spa in trouble on 34-5.

And Robert Crane (2-28) then removed Max Young (9) and John Phillips (5) as the wickets continued to tumble.

Noah Hunt (12) top scored for Spa as Bewdley bowler Jack Mills (0-3) took the final three wickets of the innings with

Droitwich all out for just 72.

However, Spa's bowling attack made the perfect start with the ball as Max Young (2-28) removed Austin Ball (0) with the second delivery of Bewdley's reply.

And Sam Smith (1-12) then bowled Jacob Tanser-Harvey (5) to leave Bewdley on 6-2 at the end of the fourth over.

Bewdley batters Nick Wilkinson (13) and Wilson (23) combined at the crease to frustrate Spa with a 24-run partnership.

However, Young bowled Wilkinson to break up the partnership before Thuriappah (3-15) enjoyed a prolific spell with the ball.

Thuriappah bowled James Perrett (9) before taking the wickets of both Wilson and Michael Harris (4) in the same over.

With Bewdley in trouble on 57-6, Jack Mills (8 not out) and Damon Gariff (5 not out) guided the home side to victory in 26 overs with four wickets to spare.

Droitwich are next in action against Himley 2nds on Saturday, June 14 with the match to start at 12.30pm at St Peter's Playing Fields.

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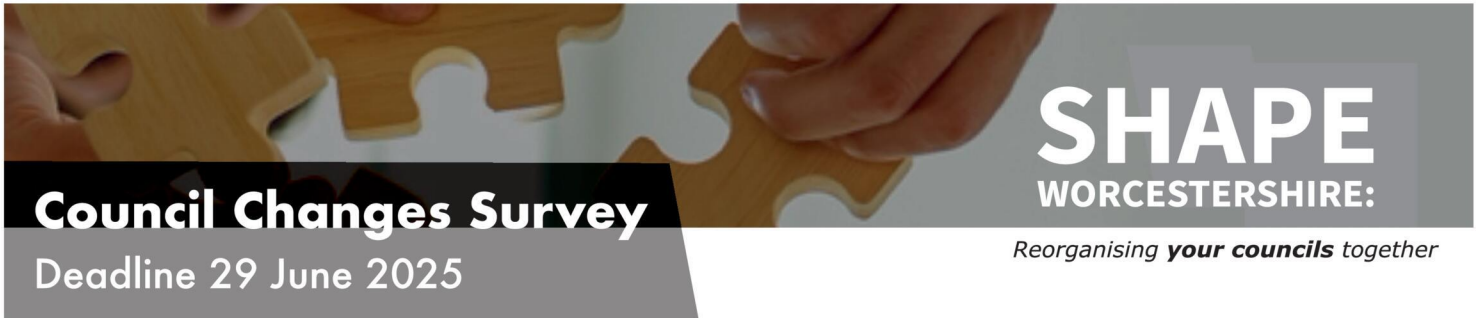
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Council Changes Survey

Deadline 29 June 2025

SHAPE

WORCESTERSHIRE:

Reorganising *your councils* together

1. What capacity are you responding in?

(If you would like to respond in more than one capacity, please complete a separate survey for each)

- Resident
 Business
 Parish/town council
 Voluntary or community sector organisation
 Other type of stakeholder – (please specify) _____

2. Which district/borough/city do you live in?

(for businesses, parish/town councils, voluntary or community sector organisations and other stakeholders please select the district your organisation is based in or does most of its work in)

- Bromsgrove District
 Malvern Hills District
 Redditch Borough
 Worcester City
 Wychavon District
 Wyre Forest District

3. How aware are you of plans for reorganising local councils in Worcestershire?

- Very aware
 Somewhat aware
 Not aware

4. How well do you understand each of the two proposed options for Worcestershire?

One unitary council covering all of Worcestershire
 Very well
 Somewhat
 Not well

Two unitary councils – one for North Worcestershire and one for South Worcestershire
 Very well
 Somewhat
 Not well

5. Based on the information provided, which option do you currently prefer?

- One unitary council covering all of Worcestershire
 I don't have a preference
 Two unitary councils – one for North Worcestershire and one for South Worcestershire
 I don't support reorganisation of local councils in Worcestershire
 I'm not interested

6. Please tell us the main reason/s for your choice

7. Thinking of the outcomes the Government expects us to consider when deciding how we restructure councils in Worcestershire, which of the potential options do you think would best deliver each?

Tick **one** option for each of the outcomes

	One unitary authority	Two unitary authorities	Both options	Neither option	Don't know
Improving local services					
Saving money and delivering value					
Making local government simpler					
Supporting local identity					
Stronger community engagement					

8. Thinking about how your current local councils are organised, which three things from the list below matter most to you?

Tick up to **three**.

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Access to local representation/ councillors to get my voice heard | <input type="checkbox"/> Impact on the local community and local identity | <input type="checkbox"/> Maintaining or improving local services and council owned facilities, such as community centres, sports grounds, arts centres, museums etc |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Availability of business support | <input type="checkbox"/> Infrastructure planning (e.g. roads, schools, health) | <input type="checkbox"/> Other – please specify |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Funding and other support for voluntary and community organisations | <input type="checkbox"/> Knowing who to contact when I have a query or complaint | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> How much Council Tax I pay | | |

9. County and district councils are responsible for a number of services. Which, if any, local services are you concerned about being affected by reorganisation?

Tick up to **five**.

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Adult social care such as support for people with disabilities, or care for the elderly | <input type="checkbox"/> Parks and other green spaces | <input type="checkbox"/> Social / council housing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Community safety and CCTV | <input type="checkbox"/> Planning and related services | <input type="checkbox"/> Street cleaning and prevention of fly-tipping |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Council-managed car parking / parking enforcement | <input type="checkbox"/> Public toilets | <input type="checkbox"/> Supporting local businesses |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Customer services / contact with council staff | <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental health and licensing of taxis, pubs, restaurants and other facilities | <input type="checkbox"/> Youth facilities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Education and children's services such as looked after children, those with special educational needs or disability (SEND), fostering and adoption | <input type="checkbox"/> Highways (potholes, footpaths, drainage, street lighting) | <input type="checkbox"/> None of the above |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Homelessness support | <input type="checkbox"/> Waste and recycling collection and disposal | <input type="checkbox"/> Other - please specify |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Libraries | <input type="checkbox"/> Sports, leisure and cultural facilities (leisure centres, community centres, theatres, museums) | |

10. Do you have any other comments, suggestions, or concerns about the proposed reorganisation?

11. Are you interested in taking part in a focus group about the issues covered in this survey?

- Yes No If yes, please provide an email address: _____

This information will only be used to invite you to a focus group session. By providing your email address, you are consenting to us contacting you for the purpose of taking part in a focus group. Spaces in focus groups will be limited, but we will do our best to accommodate all interested respondents.

About you

These questions are optional.

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- White Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups Asian or Asian British
 Black, Black British, Caribbean or African Other ethnic group

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Follow the instructions at the bottom of page 2 on how to return your completed survey. **The deadline is 29 June.**

