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Extra baby bank funding will be a real game-changer

Second site will now be able to open

A MUCH-LOVED baby bank supporting families across Droitwich has received a funding boost from a local housing association.

Wychbold and Droitwich Baby Bank has successfully applied to Platform Housing's Community Chest - a funding pot for Platform customers and local charities.

The baby bank - co-founded by Wychavon councillor Rick Deller - provides essential baby and toddler items, from clothing to prams, free of charge to families with

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

children from birth to three years old. The not-for-profit project, which operates out of Dodderhill Parish Hall, runs monthly drop-in sessions supporting more than 30 families each time.

Its ethos is simple:
 * reduce waste
 * reuse quality items already in circulation and
 * support local families facing financial hardship.

Thanks to the grant, the baby bank will be able to

cover a year's worth of hall hire and storage as well as vital supplies and insurance costs. The grant will also help fund the set-up of a second drop-in location in Droitwich, enabling weekly access to emergency supplies for families in need.

Rick said: "This funding is a game-changer for us. It secures the future of our Wychbold site and fast tracks the opening of our second location.

"We're passionate about helping families, particularly those escaping domestic abuse or dealing with temporary housing situations



Wychbold and Droitwich Baby Bank has been awarded essential funding from Platform Housing Group. s

and this support will make a huge difference."

In addition to distributing baby essentials, the baby bank also provides a warm, welcoming space for families to relax and connect, helping to combat loneliness in new parents.

As part of future plans, volunteers will also receive training in mental health and suicide prevention to further support vulnerable families.

Chris Colley, commu-

nity engagement officer at Platform Housing Group, said: "The baby bank is a lifeline to many and we're proud to support such a compassionate, grassroots initiative.

"This is exactly the kind of community-led support our Community Chest was designed to fund."

Visit platformhg.com and search for 'Wychbold & Droitwich Baby Bank' on Facebook for more information.

Man will face burglary charge

A MAN has been charged following a burglary at Barbertain in Droitwich on Monday January 6 this year.

Thomas Nightingale, of Mayflower Road in Droitwich, has been charged with burglary other than dwelling.

The 27-year-old is set to appear at Worcester Magistrates' Court on Tuesday July 29.

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Historic windmill back sailing



Danzey Windmill will sail again at Avoncroft Museum after an extensive refurbishment. s

DANZEY Green Windmill will start sailing again at Bromsgrove's Avoncroft Museum after five years of inactivity.

The attraction will be given a grand reopening next Saturday, July 19, following an extensive refurbishment.

To mark the opening, children will go free (two free child tickets with each full price adult ticket).

Starting at 1pm, the event will feature guided windmill tours, children's crafts, heritage talks about the mill's restoration in Guesten Hall and the ribbon cutting.

Mike Field, a millwright and miller who led its original reconstruction in the late 1960s and early

by Tilly Kellaway

1970s, will perform the ceremonial ribbon cutting. His return marks a full-circle moment in the story of the 200-year-old mill, which now proudly stands as the only working post mill in the West Midlands.

Avoncroft Museum director Zoe Willems said it was an honour to have Mike returning to reopen the windmill.

"This is a celebration of craftsmanship, community, and continuity," she added.

Originally built in 1820 in Danzey Green, Warwickshire, it is now the oldest surviving windmill of its type in Britain. In its working life it ground grains for farmers.

After facing demolition, it was relocated to Avoncroft in 1969 where it was reconstructed by Mike Field and a team of experts and volunteers. By 2019, the number of repairs needed had grown so much the decision was made to pause the mill's operation until key structural work could be carried out. Staffing and funding post-Covid delayed the repairs but despite some remaining work, the mill is now ready to return to sailing.

The restoration was made possible by the financial support from Bromsgrove Court Leet, Bromsgrove Rotary Club, Droitwich Preservation Trust and the Midlands Mills Group and donations from members of the public.

To ensure the windmill continues to operate long into the future, the milling team has trained volunteers to show visitors the power of wind-driven milling, preserving the centuries-old skills required to harness wind power and grind grain. Under Mike Field's supervision, these volunteers will continue the living heritage approach which makes Avoncroft Museum so distinctive.

Zoe added: "This isn't just about restoring a building — it's about keeping the knowledge and traditions alive."

Subject to suitable wind conditions over the summer the mill will sail every Saturday from July 19 to the end of August.

Walk on the Wildside theme for carnival with a day of family fun

THE POPULAR Astwood Bank Carnival will return on Saturday (July 13) with a number of activities and entertainment for the entire family.

The event will have a 'Walk on the Wildside' theme, celebrating the summer in a jungle adventure style and offering visitors of all ages a variety of activities and entertainment.

For younger visitors, the carnival offers an animal corner, pony

rides and fairground attractions.

For all ages, there will be a dog show, car show, performances from professional aerial performers The Vander Wheel of Death, Shaun Paul Smith Dance Academy, known for its street style, and the Lucy Jane School of Dance and Starlight School of Dance - they both teach various dance styles. Full Force Wrestling will also be there and have a float in the procession.

And there will be live music from artists including Dan Sealey, Ellie Jones, Jamie Knight, Adam Lee and bands including The Troubadours and Jack Read and The Shaders.

The procession starts at midday, with carnival queen Kaite, aged 13, princesses Florence and Alice, aged nine and eight, and rosebuds Poppy and Teddy, aged six, and Molly, aged five.

Astwood Bank Community Group Chair, Ashley Hewitt, said the event was about bringing everyone together, adding: "Whether it is the local businesses, schools, scouting groups, operatic society, Astwood Bank in Bloom or many of our worthy locally-based groups and charities, it is a real celebration of our wide community."

Refreshments will include a variety of international cuisines, as well as a bar and a Pimm's tent.

All proceeds will go to the community fund group. More than £10,000 was raised in 2024 which paid for events throughout the year.

The Sundowner takes place at 9pm tonight (Friday, July 11) with shuttle buses sponsored by Royal Motorways.

Visit astwoodbankcg.co.uk for more information.

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New cycle route plan is unveiled

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

OPINIONS are being sought on plans to extend the A38 Bristol Road cycling route from Birmingham city centre into Longbridge.

Birmingham City Council have shared details of plans for an extension of the 'blue' route, which currently runs south from the city centre but only as far as Selly Oak.

Plans will extend the route 6km from Selly Oak along the busy dual-carriageway through Bournville and Northfield into Longbridge.

The route, according to

plans, will go as far as the A38 junction with Longbridge Lane.

Most of the new cycle route will be in the central reservation. Cyclists will have priority across vehicle access gaps in the central reservation and there will be changes to where vehicles can make turns.

The council hopes the project will reduce dependency on cars and create better, safer travel alternatives whilst supporting its goal to become a carbon neutral city by 2030.

Plans also include various changes to infrastructure along the route, such as tweaks to bus stop locations, new crossings for pedestrians and cyclists, additional links

to nearby cycling routes off the A38 and occasional tree removal. Lighting and tree loss mitigation will form part of the next design stage.

The council has now opened up a consultation until July 28 to seek residents' views on the proposals.

As part of the consultation there are four drop-in sessions being held along the route for people to learn more.

Following consultation, responses will be reviewed to inform the next steps of the plans. Detailed final designs for construction will then follow.

Visit: birminghambeheard.org.uk/bcc/a38-cycle-route/ for more information.



Artistic impressions of the A38 cycle route enhancement scheme at the junction with South Road, Northfield. s



A NEW tram-train which will operate tram and rail passenger services in Wales was transported through Bromsgrove on Tuesday.

The Transport for Wales class 398 Citylink unit was heading to an East Midlands rail centre where it is believed it will undergo testing prior to entering service.

A total of 36 of the units are being built

Passing through

by Stadler Rail in Valencia for the Core Valleys Lines serving Treherbert, Aberdare and Merthyr.

The environmentally friendly three-car units can carry around 250 passengers while being powered by either battery or overhead line equipment.

The sets will be based at a new £100million depot at Taff's Well and will be integral to the South Wales Metro project being partly funded by the European Regional Development Fund through the Welsh Government.

New Stadler Rail-built Citylink class 398, number 398019, came through Bromsgrove. Picture Neil Gordon Media. s

A FREE family fun day and classic car show will take place from 2pm to 4pm next Saturday, July 19, at Cofton Park Manor care home.

The event, in conjunction with Pride of Longbridge, offers an array of activities and entertainment for all ages.

The line-up of classic cars and vintage vehicles is set to entertain car enthusiasts of all ages and backgrounds.

Other activities include a children's party bus, live magic shows, dancing displays

from the Retro Rhythm dancers and non-stop laughter from local entertainer Debbie Miles, along with a tombola, craft stalls, sweet treats and a barbecue.

The event will have something for everyone - it will be perfect for car lovers, families looking for a fun day out or anyone curious about what the care home in Cofton Hackett has to offer.

Call Cofton Park Manor on 0121 387 2722 or email: Cofton.rec@hamberley-carehomes.co.uk for more information.

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Make a beeline to this buzzing event

A NEW interactive experience about bees is coming to Redditch's Kingfisher centre for four days from next Saturday (July 19) to July 22.

'Miracle of the Bees' is a free multi-sensory experience designed to delight and fascinate visitors of all ages.

The event, based in the former FarmFoods store, has been co-created by young people from Imaan Youth Club, artists Vortex Creates and Reimagine Redditch.

The space will be transformed to connect and inspire people through bold, joyful and memorable experiences.

The event is the culmination of The Bee Creative project, a collaboration between Imaan Youth Club and Reimagine Redditch. Children at the club worked with different artists to explore 'bee' themes through graffiti, textiles, Islamic geometric patterns, calligraphy, glass painting, architecture, model making and set design.

Sadiya Ashiq, from Imaan Youth Club, said the exploration through art was a beautiful way for the young people to connect their faith with creativity.

"Surah An-Nahl reminds us of the wisdom and purpose found in nature and this project allowed our children to reflect on that in fun, meaningful ways.



"We're proud to see their ideas come to life in a public space and to share this joyful experience with the wider Redditch community."

Richard Bromhall, Reimagine Redditch's programme director, said the event urged everyone in Redditch to go along and experience something different and exciting.

"We have been on a truly exciting journey with Vortex Creates and Imaan Youth Club.

"The regular creative workshops have led to the creation of a memorable journey for everyone in Redditch and beyond."

Fiona Faizey, the Kingfisher

Centre's general manager, added: "It's fantastic to see such a creative and community-led project come to life in one of our spaces.

"We're always looking for ways to bring fresh, inspiring experiences to our visitors and this event is a perfect example of how art, culture and community can come together to create something truly special."

Visit this story on our website to click through and book tickets.

Children from Imaan Youth Club are ready to enjoy the new interactive event.

CELEBRATION TIME: THERE will be fun for all ages at Bromsgrove Carnival this weekend.

The two days of fun kick off this evening (Friday) with an outdoor screening of Moana 2 at Sanders Park - doors open at 4pm for a 5pm showing.

Then, hit film Wicked will be screened at 8pm with doors opening at 7pm.

There will be a bar, including cocktails from Bayleys of Bromsgrove, and plenty of seating, but people are encouraged to bring blankets and torches.

Carnival parade

The annual carnival parade will set off at midday tomorrow (Saturday) from North Bromsgrove High School. From there, it will snake its way through the town centre, arriving at Sanders Park around 12.45pm.

This year's theme will be 'Days of Celebration' which will be brought to life by decorated floats and walking entries from local schools, community groups and performers. These will toast everything from Chinese New Year to World Book Day.

Arena

In Sanders Park tomorrow, there will be more than 50 stalls from local traders, charities, schools and businesses, along with free sports taster sessions, emergency service vehicles, classic car displays, a vintage bus from Wythall Transport Museum, and Wilson's Funfair operating all day.

The bandstand will feature a lively programme of choirs and dance academies from 11am to 5pm, showcasing young local talent throughout the day.

On the main stage, hosted by BBC H&W, there will be live music running into the evening. The headline act will be unforgettable X Factor contestant Wagner and other performers including Jack Read and the Shaders, The Lost Boys and more.

Entry to the main stage area is free but capacity is limited, so visitors are asked to book a ticket in advance via the link on the Bromsgrove Carnival Facebook page.

A variety of food and drink will be available - from pizza, chicken and burgers to desserts and cocktails.

And an Event Hub Bar, will serve beer, cider, prosecco and more.

The carnival is a free, not-for-profit event, organised entirely by volunteers.

Everyone is urged to go along, support local businesses and enjoy one of the biggest days in Bromsgrove's calendar. Visit: facebook.com/bromsgrovecarnival for more.

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Questions over 5-year land plan

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

PLANNING inspectors have cast doubt over a new development plan's ability to deliver a five-year housing land supply across South Worcestershire.

Although initial inspections of the South Worcestershire Development Plan (SWDP) indicate it will be sound and legally compliant, inspectors' early reviews of the plan have raised various concerns.

The SWDP was subject to public examination during hearings in March, which scrutinised the plan as part of the SWDP Review (SWDPR).

In an interim letter, inspectors recommend-

ed a slight reduction in the target number of homes to be delivered by 2041 through the plan - from 21,440 to 18,852.

Inspectors then raised concerns about the viability of delivering 2,000 homes at Throckmorton by 2041, with suggestions the plan's definition of the area as a 'allocated housing site' was unrealistic.

More work needs to be done before homes can be built there, with initial recommendations suggesting the site should instead be classified as an 'area of local search'.

They have also challenged the proposed use of windfall sites - land unexpectedly coming forward for housing - outside of the official plan and cast doubt on the ability to deliver a 2,204-home section of the Worcester South urban extension south of Taylors Lane within the next five years.

While it remains an allocation in the plan, inspectors feel the outstanding part of the

site cannot be considered part of South Worcestershire's five-year housing land supply. When combined with proposed changes to windfall sites, inspectors believe the plan would not deliver a five-year land supply on adoption.

Having a five-year land supply in place would allow the councils to resist housing developments in inappropriate locations.

Positively, inspectors expressed support for new settlements at Rushwick and Worcestershire Parkway and say the plan is worthy of adoption, adding it will 'significantly boost' housing supply and meet identified needs across the plans timeline.

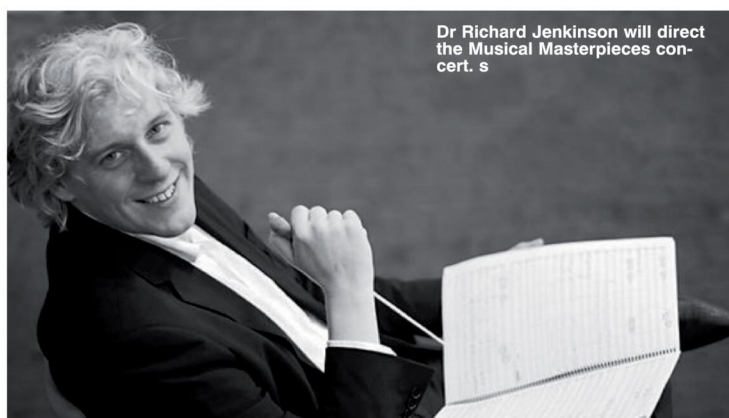
Suggested changes from inspectors will be put out to consultation in the autumn, after which councils in the region - Malvern Hills, Worcester City and Wychavon - can formally adopt the plan.

Coun David Harrison, chair of SWDPR Joint Advisory Panel, said he was pleased with the inspectors' characterisation of a sound and legally compliant plan and looks forward to a final report so council's can begin adopting its policies.

He was however 'disappointed' with conclusions regarding the five-year housing land supply.

The chair said his panel did not share the inspectors' concerns regarding Worcester South, which he pointed out 'already has outline planning permission, a committed landowner, a developer and pre-existing detailed plans for areas of the development'.

They believe the site can make a 'significant contribution' to the five-year housing land supply and are committed to providing further evidence on its viability.



Dr Richard Jenkinson will direct the Musical Masterpieces concert. s

SWEET MUSIC: THE ORCHESTRA of St John's inspirational artistic director and conductor, Dr Richard Jenkinson, will lead the much-anticipated 'Musical Masterpieces'.

The Festival Gala Concert, featuring Richard Strauss' Four Last Songs and Bruckner's 7th Symphony, will be performed at St John's Church in Bromsgrove at 7pm next Sunday, July 20.

Richard, who is directing the show, has given concerto performances with the BBC Concert Orchestra, City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra (CBSO), Irish Chamber

Orchestra and Venezuelan Symphony.

And he has performed the Elgar Concerto in the Queen Elizabeth Hall in London and the Dvorak Concerto in the Dvorak Hall of the Rudolfinum in Prague.

From 1998 to 2016, he was principal cello with the CBSO.

Tickets are £12 (£5 for under 18s).

They are available from our Decanter Spirit in Bromsgrove High Street and online at Prior Booking: priorbooking.com/e/the-orchestra-of-st-john-musical-masterpieces-3 - in advance.

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Heather Coughlin, The Primrose Hospice's head of family support services and Mel Vann-Blockley, the charity's clinical nurse specialist, took part in the podcast. s



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A difficult subject

THE PRIMROSE Hospice and Family Support Centre has been part of a podcast which aims to get people talking about death and dying in an informative and compassionate way.

Representatives from the charity were invited to feature on 'It's a death sentence', hosted by Carrie Smith and Emma Skipp.

It is believed that by talking about death in a different way, people can be better-equipped when someone they love dies.

The two staff members from Primrose - Heather, hHead of family support services, and Mel, clinical nurse specialist, recently joined the podcast to chat about their experiences.

Heather said: "I was a little apprehensive as I hadn't taken part in a podcast before, but after meeting with Emma and Carrie, my fears were all put to rest.

"They made me feel very at ease, and as usual, I'm very happy to speak about this subject.

"It was also different for me, thinking about

some of the questions they asked from a personal perspective rather than a professional one.

"It was a great opportunity for Primrose, but also myself personally."

The podcast's vision is to give people the insight and knowledge to feel empowered and confident to 'remove the cloak' and have frank, focused and friendly discussions around death and dying.

Podcast host Emma said: "We so thoroughly enjoyed interviewing these captivating ladies - hearing the story of what brought them individually to hospice care was fascinating. Their warmth and kindness is so apparent during our interview - it's palpable.

"We look forward to being back with them at the hospice in September, where we will be catching up with the team and also talking to some patients and families who are currently using their incredible and important services."

Visit this story on our website to click through to listen to the podcast on YouTube. It is also available on all the major platforms.

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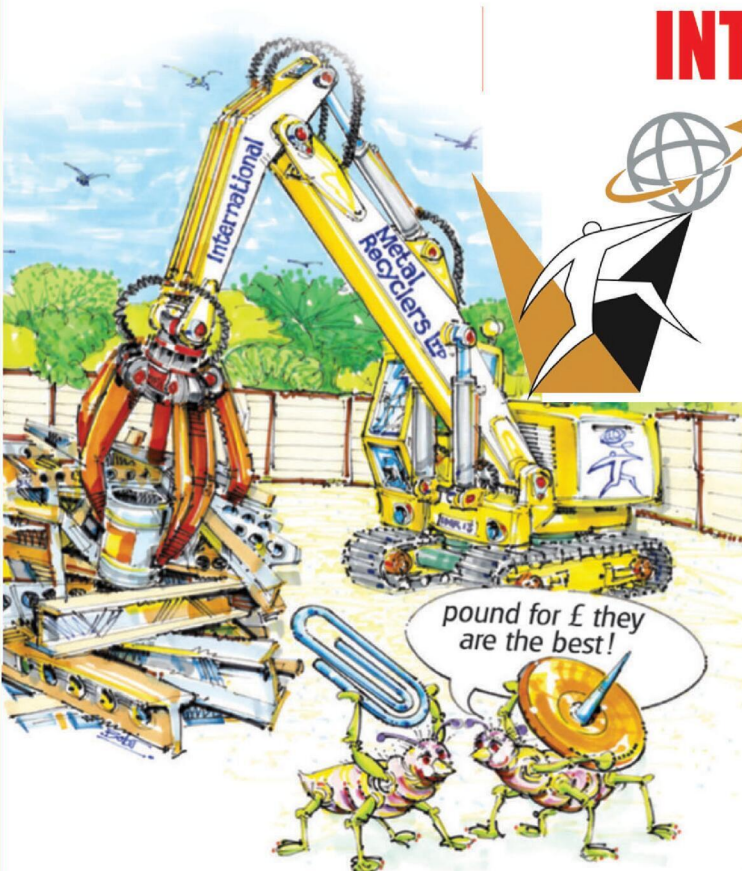
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Time to discuss future housing

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

THE FIRST of a string of drop-in sessions to help members of the public learn more about the future of Bromsgrove's planning strategy takes place from 4pm to 8pm on Thursday, July 17.

Bromsgrove District Council's first public event to gather feedback on its future planning strategy will take place at Parkside.

Following a council vote on June 19, the Draft Development Strategy Consultation for the Bromsgrove District Local Plan launched on June 30, offering residents 12 weeks to comment on where housing, employment, and infrastructure should be developed up to 2043.

Following the first session at Parkside, with many more planned in Alvechurch,

Bromsgrove, Catshill, Hagley, Rubery, and Wythall over the consultation period.

All the events will feature the same full information, regardless of location, with planners available to answer questions and provide materials, including reference copies of the consultation document.

Coun Kit Taylor, portfolio holder for planning, said: "These events are part of the important work of informing people what this consultation is all about, so residents can have their say."

"They're starting before the summer holidays and there will be more to follow in locations across the district."

"You can go to any of them, you're not limited to the ones that might be nearer to you."

"Everyone will have their own views about how to plan for future generations and the choices we will make as the plan starts to come together."

"It's important that people can take part in this process and so these events are part of our work to support residents to participate, alongside our new very easy to use online platform."

The consultation runs until September 22.

Visit: bromsgrove.gov.uk/BromsgrovePlan or people can go to their local library for more information.

Email: bromsgroveplan@bromsgrove-andredditch.gov.uk or call 01527 881211 for queries.

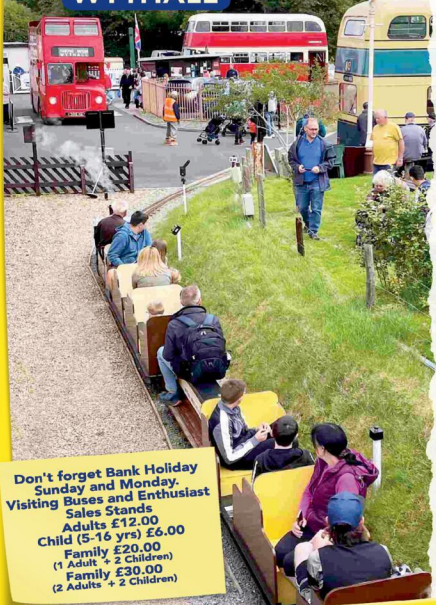
The first drop-in session relating to Bromsgrove's future planning strategy takes place at Parkside on Thursday, July 17. Picture by Marcus Mingins 1220021MMR2





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Survey shows opinions split over future for our councils

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

MORE than 4,200 people and organisations have taken part in a survey seeking views on how local councils should be reorganised.

The Shape Worcestershire survey took place in June and invited feedback on government plans to abolish Worcestershire County Council and the six district, borough, and city councils by April 1 2028.

They will be replaced by either one single council for Worcestershire running all services, or two councils – one for the North and one for the South – with each authority running all services for its part of the county.

Survey responses were gathered from residents, community and voluntary organisations, businesses,

town and parish councils, and other key partners.

Initial survey results shows that 48 per cent backed creating two unitary councils, 29 per cent supported one unitary council for the county and 19 per cent didn't support any reorganisation of local councils in Worcestershire.

Respondents from Bromsgrove District, Malvern Hills District, Redditch Borough and Wychavon were strongly in favour of the two unitary council solution.

In Worcester City, 46 per cent favoured creating one unitary council, with 42 per cent supporting the North and South option.

In Wyre Forest, opinion was split with 40 per cent backing the one unitary option and 39% supporting creating two unitary councils.

People were asked to consider a range of factors when giving their responses, including how any pro-

posed change would save money, improve local services, simplify local government, support local identity and strengthen community engagement.

The two unitary option was considered better for improving local services, supporting local identity and stronger community engagement.

It was felt the one unitary option would be better for saving money/delivering value and making local government simpler.

The local council services people said they were most concerned about being affected by reorganisation were highways, adult social care, waste and recycling collection and disposal, parks and other green spaces and planning and related services.



Experience a World-Class Tribute with Class of '55 at Artrix

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On July 26th, the Artrix in Bromsgrove will host a spectacular event that promises to be a highlight of the summer: the Class of '55, a world-class tribute to the golden age of rock 'n' roll.

This performance is set to deliver an unparalleled experience, showcasing the vibrant energy and timeless music that defined a generation.

The Class of '55 is not just another tribute act; it is a meticulously crafted homage that encapsulates the very essence of rock 'n' roll. From the moment the curtain rises, audiences will be treated to a feast for the senses,



featuring a mesmerising lighting display that complements a stunning array of AV footage. This captivating visual presentation enhances the performance, immersing the audience in the sights and sounds of an era that continues to inspire musicians and music lovers alike.

Central to this unforgettable show is the remarkable talent of Spencer Jordan and Peter Gill, whose vocal prowess and stage presence make them standout performers. Their ability to channel the iconic voices of legendary rock artists is nothing short of extraordinary. With each note, the production brings a freshness to the classics while honouring the authenticity that fans cherish. The passion for the music shines through, creating an electric atmosphere that resonates with audiences, whether they are lifelong fans or new to the genre.

The Class of '55 is a celebration of the music that shaped our culture, a chance to relive the excitement and joy that rock 'n' roll brings. With its high-energy performances and heartfelt tributes, this show promises to leave attendees with lasting memories and a renewed appreciation for the songs that have become the soundtrack of our lives.

As we count down the days to this incredible event, make sure to secure your tickets and prepare for a night filled with unforgettable music, dazzling visuals, and the spirit of rock 'n' roll.

Join us at the Artrix on July 26th for a world-class tribute experience that you won't want to miss!



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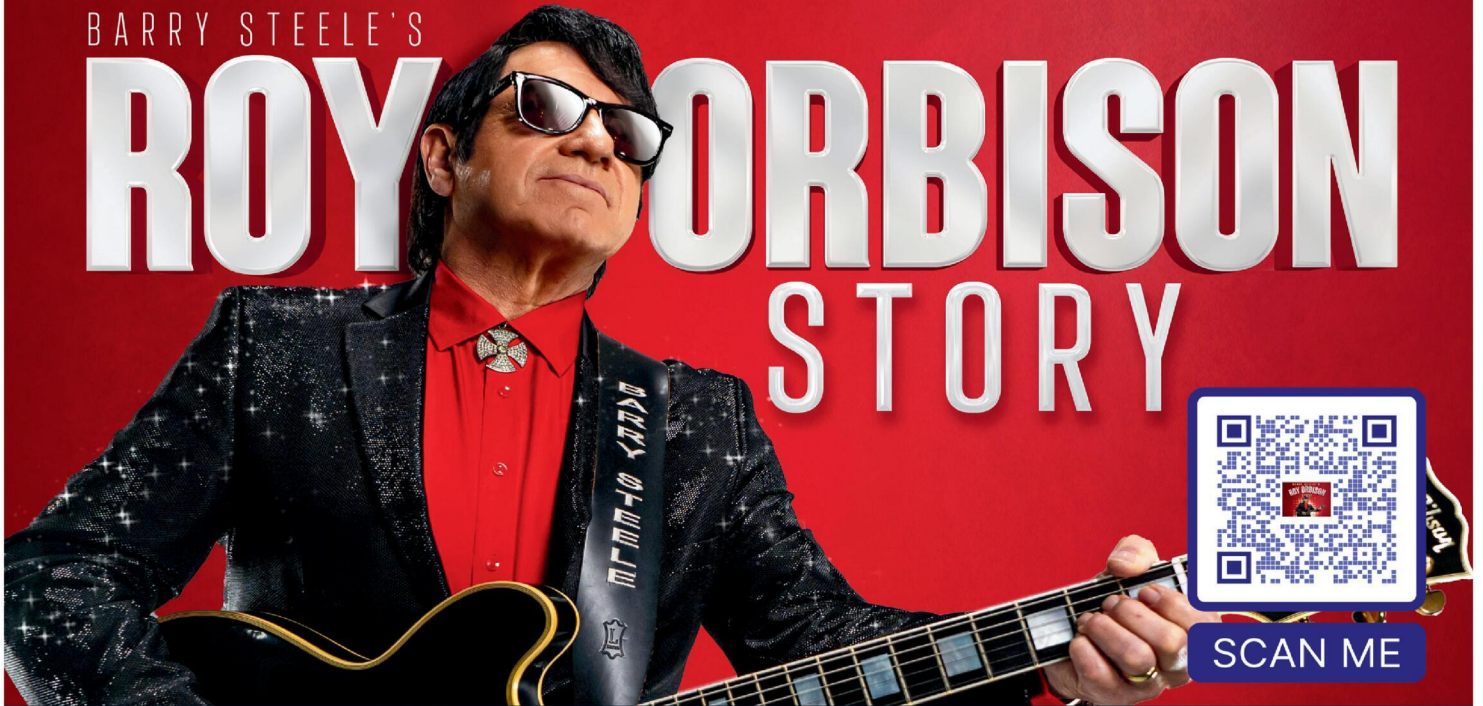


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MP backs extra trains for town

REDDITCH MP Chris Bloore has joined Midlands Connect to back plans to add more than 25 extra trains a day to the railway line into and out of the town.

The plans, part of the Midlands Rail Hub, will deliver an extra train every hour from Redditch on the Cross City Line, returning the line to a service every 20 minutes.

This means an additional 2.7million extra seats a year for passengers.

Over the past few months, MPS from across the Midlands have backed the improvements the Midlands Rail Hub will deliver to their constituencies including more frequent trains on the Cross City Line, giving five million more seats each year, and an associated upgrade of the station at Kings Norton.

When it is delivered in full, the proposals would provide a massive uplift in capacity in the railway network in the Midlands, with up to 300 extra trains into or out of Birmingham each day and many more services each day between our biggest cities in the West and East Midlands.



Chris Bloore MP at Redditch station.

New analysis has shown that 12,750 new jobs are expected to become available thanks to the Midlands Rail Hub project.

Mr Bloore said: "I'm delighted that the Midlands Rail Hub will make a massive difference to residents and commuters in Redditch. Improving transport links for Redditch is a key priority for me so hearing that we can uplift trains so significantly will be a real step change."

"Over the last few weeks I have been urging the government to fund this project and I'm delighted the government have heard the calls and delivered the cash need-

ed to progress this project. The Midlands Rail Hub will transform services for our town and boost our local economy."

Andrew Clark, head of rail at Midlands Connect, said: "It was great to have to the support of Chris for the Midlands Rail Hub."

"We are working at pace to finish the Full Business Case and deliver these much-needed upgrades to Redditch."

"Being able to deliver for residents in Redditch would make a massive difference for connections to the town This added to the 2.7million extra seats a year will deliver a massive boost for Redditch."



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More fun in festival's final week

THERE will still be plenty to do in the final packed week of this year's Bromsgrove Festival.

Music

The final Festive Classics sees French Horn Fireworks come to Avoncroft Museum's New Guesten Hall at 12pm on Wednesday, July 16. A post-show lunch takes place at 1pm. The performance sees eight French horn players from The Birmingham Horn Sound perform mostly classical works with some lighter numbers and solo pieces. People can buy tickets for just the show or lunch as well. Visit: festive-classics.co.uk or call 01527 832492 for more information or tickets.

Top Meat Loaf tribute - the Meat Loud Duo will take centre stage at Fairfield Village Hall at 8pm next Saturday, July 19. The show features the talented Andy Plimmer and Sally Rivers covering many of Meat Loaf's songs, including the Bat Out of Hell album and some Jim Steinman classics. Visit: bromsgrovearts.org.uk for more information and tickets.

The Central of England Concert



Band performs at the Jubilee Bandstand in Sanders Park at 2.30pm next Sunday, July 20. The group, which formed in the 1980s, is a warm and welcoming community ensemble which will be performing film music, hits from the musicals, marches and a more established wind band repertoire. The event is free and people are urged to take along picnics, chairs and blankets and enjoy the music in this Bands In The Park event.

The Orchestra of St John performs Haydn's Little Organ Mass at 10.45am on Sunday, July 20. At Bromsgrove's St John's Church, Dr Richard Jenkinson will be the conductor for the event which will see Hadyn's work played. It will be a precursor to the evening concert (see below).

At 7pm on Sunday, July 20, there will be the Musical Masterpieces - Festival Gala Concert at St John's

Church in Bromsgrove. The show is being performed by The Orchestra of St John with Dr Richard Jenkinson as the conductor and features Richard Strauss' Four Last Songs and Bruckner's 7th Symphony. Visit: osjbromsgrove.org or email: enquiries@osjbromsgrove.org for more information and head to priorbooking.com or Decanter Spirit in Bromsgrove High Street for tickets.

Theatre / cinema

Screenings of the National Theatre's A Streetcar Named Desire will take place at Fairfield Village Hall at 7pm on Sunday, July 13, and 7pm on Wednesday, July 16. Gillian Anderson, Vanessa Kirby and Ben Foster lead the cast of Tennessee Williams' timeless masterpiece which sees Blanche's fragile world crumble and, as she turns to her sister Stella, it leads to a downward spiral. Visit: bromsgrovearts.org.uk for tickets and more information.

Comedy

Independent Cafes and the High Street will be the setting for Bromsgrove's own comedy event



LEFT - Distinguished diplomat Sir Laurie Bristow will be Bromsgrove WORDS' next guest speaker on July 22. s

next Saturday, July 19. Comedians Carl Paskin, Av Singh and Tristan Harris will be performing their stand-up sets at various venues have around 10 minutes to make an impact and set you giggling

Other events

From 9.30am to 3pm on Sunday, July 13, there will be the Avoncroft Open Air Art Competition. The historic venue has linked up with Avoncroft Arts Centre for the event which will enable artists to pitch up where they want on the 19-acre site among more than 30 buildings from different eras. Participants can then

finish their work at home and frame it ready for a public exhibition at the New Guesten Hall during the Heritage Open Days on September 20 and 21. Visit: avoncroft.org.uk/product/avoncroft-open-air-art-competition for tickets and prices.

WORDS welcomes its second speaker of The Bromsgrove Festival to Avoncroft Museum's New Guesten Hall at 11am on July 22. The distinguished diplomat Sir Laurie Bristow, who was the last United Kingdom Ambassador to the Republic of Afghanistan in August 2021, at the time when the Taliban overthrew the government and took power. His book 'Kabul: Final Call' is a first hand account of the final days of the Republic and the evacuation of Kabul. He publishes and broadcasts regularly on geopolitics. Tickets, at \$15 each, are available by visiting: ticketsource.co.uk and type 'Kabul: Final Call' into the search bar. Visit: bromsgrovearts.org.uk for more information.

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2025

Final Gala Concert
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Bromsgrove B61 7DU
Soloists: Michael Cavanagh, Baritone
Emily Evans, Tenor Horn
Paul Richards, Soprano Cornet
 Click the box office link!



MP's community chat in visit to care home

KEY community issues were the centre of discussion when Bromsgrove MP Bradley Thomas sat down to talk to a former district councillor at a care home.

The MP was delighted to meet residents at Cofton Park Manor Care Home, including former councillor Dave McGrath, who served on Bromsgrove District Council for 20 years.

Mr Thomas said: "It's great to come here and talk to the residents about the issues that matter to them."

"It was also wonderful to meet Dave, who has given so much

service to the local community."

Dave served as a Labour councillor on Bromsgrove District Council before setting up the Bromsgrove Independent Group in the early 1990s when he became an Independent.

He was elected after serving as a medic in the Gulf War. In all, the committed community stalwart has served more than 20 years as a councillor.

The Cofton Park Manor resident also served on several committees over the years, chairing the Community Health Councils in both Bromsgrove and Redditch, as well as being a member of the local planning committee.

Father-of-two Dave said: "I got to know a lot of people and was able to help them out over the years with a whole range of issues from housing to schools."

Dave was also known to sit at the local supermarket on Rubery High Street on Saturday mornings, making himself available to support local residents.

And the busy councillor was key to raising cash to set up Rubery Leisure Centre on Holywell Lane, as well as organising the Rubery Half Marathon.

Today, Dave enjoys relaxing, chatting to his new friends and enjoying the entertainment at the Lickey Road home.



Bradley Thomas with Dave McGrath, alongside Wendy Sibley and Gail Bessent from Cofton Park Manor Care Home. s

New-look toilets mark end of council scheme



Phil Childs, Wychavon's street scene and amenities officer, in front of the revamped St Andrews Square toilets in Droitwich. s

ANSWERING nature's call just became a more pleasant experience for Droitwich residents after Wychavon District Council's latest investment.

The toilets in St Andrews Square have been given a loo-lift to completely modernise the block.

Inside, the toilets have been totally retiled and fitted with new sink units, doors, and state-of-the-art Dyson Airblade tap-dryers.

New skylights have also been added, letting in more natural light to brighten the toilet-going

experience. Outside, the block has been decorated and modernised. Previous facilities have been restored or maintained, including water-saving Propelair toilets, solar panels, nappy changing facilities and a Changing Places toilet to support people with a range of disabilities.

The refurbishment marks the end of a major investment programme by Wychavon, to modernise, rebuild or extend all but one of its 11 toilet blocks across the district. Only Abbey Park toilets in

Evesham has not been upgraded due to uncertainty over the future of the Riverside Shopping Centre. A minor refresh is being considered later this year.

Coun Beverley Hardman, Wychavon's executive board member for environment, said: "We believe in investing in public toilets and this is what we continue to do."

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Shining spotlight on frontline staff

WEST Midlands Ambulance Service is shining a spotlight on the dedicated, collaborative and compassionate natures of its frontline staff as part of International Paramedics Day on Tuesday.

The event, celebrated across the globe, provides an opportunity to thank the paramedics for their admirable service and to acknowledge the emotional resilience and mental endurance it takes to care for people in every imaginable situation.

West Midland Ambulance Service (WMAS) Chief Executive Officer, Anthony Marsh, said: "Today is a moment to reflect and say thank you for the life-saving efforts made by ambulance staff, every single day."

From life-threatening medical emergencies to responding to a serious road crashes, delivering a baby at home or providing consolation and compassion in someone's final moments, paramedics stand beside people on the most difficult and challenging days of their life.

Working on the frontline of the health-care service, the day serves as a reminder of the physically and emotionally demanding situations which paramedics dedicate themselves to in order to help others.

To mark the occasion, the WMAS Trust has released a moving video featuring paramedic, Samuel Simpson, who described his own experiences of working in the field and the importance of his job.

He said: "We don't do this for the recognition. We do this because people matter."

Mr Marsh added: "On International Paramedics Day, we recognise the extraordinary individuals who represent the very best of



what our ambulance service stands for. "Our paramedics show courage, care and professionalism in some of the most challenging situations. Their impact is felt by thousands of patients and their families and loved ones every day. I am incredibly proud of each and every one of them."

Visit this story on our website to watch the video.

Samuel Simpson describes his own experiences of working in his role in a video released for International Paramedics Day. Picture by WMAS. s



Aldi shoppers helped raise £12million for the Teenage Cancer Trust. s

Checkout this fine total

SUPERMARKET Aldi is thanking its shoppers in the West Midlands for helping it to raise £12million for the Teenage Cancer Trust.

The company started its partnership with the charity in 2027, initially pledging to raise £15million for the charity by 2017.

But it has now extended its commitments with a new target of £20million by 2031.

Funds raised through the partnership help the charity continue providing specialist care, vital support services and dedicated centres adapted to the needs of young people and teens undergoing cancer treatment across the country.

Kate Collins, chief executive of the Teenage Cancer Trust, said: "The funds raised have enabled our nurses and youth teams to improve the lives of thousands of young people with cancer and support families during their toughest times."

Aldi staff in the region have completed a

wide range of fundraising activities - from head shaves and cake sales to various endurance challenges, whilst donations have been further boosted by the generosity and kindness of Aldi shoppers across the area.

To mark the accomplished milestones, Aldi, the fourth largest supermarket in the UK, is also making an additional £12,000 donation to continue to support the charity's work with teenage cancer patients and their families.

Liz Fox, national sustainability director at Aldi UK, said the supermarket, was incredibly proud of its partnership with the charity, adding this latest milestone reflected the dedication of its staff and the generosity of its customers.

Throughout July, Aldi's Cuthbert cake will additionally feature a text code on its packaging for the Teenage Cancer Trust, giving those customers who want to donate to the charity the chance to do so.

ADVERTISEMENT

Redditch Local History Museum

Redditch Local History Museum to Honour Clarke/Wilson Fairground Legacy with New Exhibit



REDDITCH - JULY 2025 — The Redditch Local History Museum is delighted to announce a significant new addition to its collection: a tribute exhibit honouring the Clarke//Harvey family, whose longstanding contribution to local culture and community life has left an indelible mark on the town.

The Clarke/Wilson family has played a pivotal role in Redditch for generations—most notably through early fundraising initiatives for Smallwood Hospital's operating theatres and their continued tradition of bringing fun and excitement to the town with their annual fairground attractions. Their enduring commitment to community spirit and entertainment is both exceptional and deeply cherished.

At the heart of this tribute is a remarkable scale model of the family's original 1910 Showman's Wagon. Lovingly crafted by local artisan John Newey, the model has been generously loaned to the museum and stands as a striking centrepiece of the exhibit. This historic wagon holds particular significance, as Norma Harvey and her brother Len were both born inside the original wagon. Norma has worked closely with John to ensure the replica's interior layout and ornate exterior details are authentically reproduced, offering a faithful glimpse into a treasured part of Redditch's heritage.

Visitors are invited to view the exhibit in progress and experience a unique piece of local history first hand. The Redditch Local History Museum is open Thursday to Saturday, from 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM, with a modest £2 entry fee.

In conjunction with the exhibit, the museum is reaching out to the community for personal stories, photographs, and memories of Wilson's Fair. Contributions from the public will help further enrich the display and ensure the family's legacy continues to be celebrated for generations to come.

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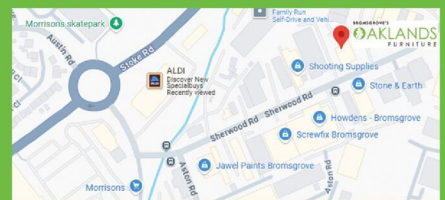
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All fired-up for the opportunity

AFTER being offered the chance to have a go at The National Standard Firefighters Test, our journalist **Tristan Harris** could not pass up the opportunity. Here is his first-hand account.

I headed to Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service's Malvern Fire Station to find out more about becoming a firefighter.

After being kitted out in full firefighter PPE - boots, trousers, tunic and helmet, I took on five of the seven tests anyone wanting to become a firefighter - wholetime or on call - would have to pass.

The first - 'Casualty Evacuation' - tasked me with dragging a 55kg fully-clothed mannequin around a 30metre course. I wrapped my arms around the casualty (under its arms) and, led by a firefighter behind me, completed the task within the allotted time.

For the 'Ladder Extension' you need to use a metal pulley to extend a triple extension ladder before returning it to its original position. The hardest thing here was finding the 'one hand over the other' rhythm. Once I got the hang of that, I was fine.

Third was the 'Ladder Lift' which tests upper body strength and control. This involves lifting a weighted pole - first to your chest before changing grip and pushing it above your head and repeating the process in reverse.

Next up was the BA (breathing apparatus) Crawl - This tests tolerance of enclosed spaces, using an L-shaped two-storey cage. As well



as the regular firefighter uniform, a 25kg oxygen cylinder and mask are added. This makes it trickier as you need to take into account the added height as you crawl through the course. At the one end of the L, I found it easier to turn around there and do the next bit backwards. I had some difficulty after dropping down to the ground level and had to think about how to get the extra equipment height through. I finished it within the time limit.

And the last task I did was the Equipment Carry, testing functional strength and endurance. This is performed on a 25m course and is

similar to a shuttle run/walk, travelling 550m in total, carrying various weights. It starts with the end of a hose being taken as quickly as possible to the end of the course. After laying that down, you run back and carry two heavy duty coiled hoses (similar to 'two bags of shopping' as the trainers reminded me) 50 metres. One of them is then lifted up to the chest and carried 25 metres.

After that, there is a long - light but awkward cylindrical pipe and another cylindrical object to be carried 50 metres before a 100m shuttle run - this time with no equipment

By this point I was out of breathing heavy and blowing hard. The most challenging was still to come so, coached by the training staff, I used the 100m to regulate my breathing and get some much-needed oxygen into my lungs.

The final 100m (four laps) was with a 30kg barbell weight, held at waist level. I really had to dig deep and was feeling the burn but was buzzing with adrenaline afterwards. The maximum time to complete the equipment carry was 5mins 47secs - I had somehow managed it in 4mins 18.

The two tests I did not under-

The BA Crawl tests people's ability to deal with enclosed spaces. Pictures by Marcus Mingins 2825001MMR

take was a Ladder Climb, testing confidence and agility at height and Manual Dexterity to assess motor skills and assembling equipment.

Having passed the others with flying colours, I feel I could have struggled with the other two. I am not the best with heights, although if I had to, I could possibly rely on my adrenaline to overcome that fear and assembling equipment is also not my strongest point although I feel it is doable with deep concentration.

How I found it

Before undertaking this challenge, I feared I may not be fit enough to pass the tests but that was not the case and the trainers were brilliant at getting me to push for the finish of each task.

As Jules Short, the Watch Commander for the training section, stated - you do not have to be super-fit to become a firefighter. A good cardio vascular fitness level and the ability to deal with confined spaces and heights, along with other attributes will get people through The National Standard Firefighters Test and into 'a very rewarding job where everyday is different'.

Recruitment for HWFRS firefighters opens from Monday, July 17, to August 8 - go to: hwfire.org.uk for more.

Visit this story on our website for more pictures of the day.

ITS ALL ABOUT YOU

Synergy

More Than a Hat Trick: Why This Award-Winning Studley Salon Is Celebrating Women Wins and World class self care

When Extra Gum approached us to collaborate on their latest campaign spotlighting the Lionesses in partnership with the FA, we were absolutely honoured.

As the owner of Synergy Hair & Beauty, I knew instantly this was about more than football. It was about recognition and resilience. And celebrating women who lead with strength — both on and off the pitch. And what made this campaign even more special? It's personal.

Hannah Hampton, England's goalkeeper, isn't just a national treasure — she's a Studley girl and a much-loved Synergy client. Watching her shine on the world stage, knowing she grew up right here in our village, fills us with so much pride. Supporting her journey, and the campaign that celebrates it, feels like a full-circle moment for our team and our community.

More Than Just a Salon - Synergy Is a Destination

At Synergy, we've spent over **30 years** earning our place as the heart of beauty in Studley. What started as a salon has evolved into a full-service destination where women come not just to look good, but to *feel* deeply seen, supported, and restored*.

We specialise in **premium hair transformations**, from bespoke colour to **luxury extensions**, and we're proud to be home to the **viral Japanese Head Spa** — a deeply relaxing, sensory treatment that's gone global for a reason.

Our clients love the convenience of our **fully stocked retail area**, featuring WOW, Redken, Dermalogica, CACI and more — making Synergy a true **one-stop destination** for all things hair, skin and beauty.

But beyond the glam, there's depth.

Hair Loss Support - A Safe Space for Confidence to Return

One of the services closest to my heart is our **hair loss support**. We offer discreet, specialist care for **women and children experiencing hair loss**, including a **private consultation room** where clients can feel safe, respected and understood.

This is more than service — it's a lifeline. And we're proud to offer a space where real transformation can begin, inside and out.

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Our commitment to excellence has earned us multiple honours, including:

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Left to right: Wildmoor Oak head chef, Peter Jackson alongside co-owners Bex Wilkins and Sarah Robinson. s

Worth raising a glass

A BROMSGROVE watering hole has been crowned West Midlands' pub of the year at a national awards show.

The Wildmoor Oak was bestowed the accolade at the National Pub and Bar Awards.

The Wildmoor Oak's co-owner Bex Wilkins said: "When we found out we'd been nominated for the awards, we were really thrilled.

"We thought we might have a chance at winning best in county but to win the crown of best in region at The National Pub & Bar Awards is just fantastic.

"It recognises the hard work of all of our team, our great suppliers and everything we've done together to help create a really special place indeed.

"We're over the moon to be bringing two

trophies back to the pub and to be celebrating with everyone who helped make it happen."

Following a change-up to previous years, 94 county winners were announced live at the awards in London, as well as highly commended venues for each area.

Regional winners were then announced for every region across the UK.

The 2025 event also introduced a brand-new accolade, which was voted for by hundreds of people from across the sector.

The Industry's Choice Award, unveiled in a Top 10 format, went to The Devonshire in Soho, following an incredible couple of years for operators Oisín Rogers, Charlie Carroll and Ashley Palmer-Watts.

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LEFT: Street performers dressed to the nines. MIDDLE: Indigo Arts kicked off the show. RIGHT: Plenty of summer fun for everyone in the audience. s

Crowds flock to summer fun

REDDITCH town centre came alive on Saturday, as Redditch BID hosted their annual Summer Fest, welcoming visitors for a day filled with music, entertainment, street food, and community spirit.

The one-day festival transformed the town centre into a lively hub of activity, with local families, shoppers, and visitors enjoying the sunshine and the vibrant atmosphere.

Summer Fest 2025's main stage was the heart of the event, showcasing a lively lineup of live music and performances throughout the day.

Attendees enjoyed a series of acts, including PLATNUM, the UK garage and dance sensation and dance duo BOOTY LUV.

Muj Rahman, Manager of Redditch BID said: "We are delighted with the response to

Summer Fest 2025. The turnout surpassed our expectations, and it was lovely to see families, friends, and visitors from near and far enjoying themselves in the centre of Redditch.

"Events like this are about more than just entertainment - they help build a sense of pride and community while encouraging footfall and trade to our local businesses.

"We're extremely grateful to everyone involved in making the day such a great success."

Local businesses reported increased footfall throughout the day, with many cafés, shops, and market stalls experiencing high trade levels.

RIGHT: Crowds flocked to the town centre for Redditch Summerfest. s



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Get set for lots of summer fun

THE SCHOOL holidays are set to be fun-filled, with a host of events taking place across Redditch and Bromsgrove parks.

Events will take place in the two towns as part of the programme put together by Bromsgrove District and Redditch Borough Councils.

Redditch's activities are held across both Arrow Valley Country Park and Morton Stanley Park. The Summer Fun kicks off with Steve Kaos Circus Workshops, on Wednesday July 23 at Morton Stanley and Thursday July 24 at Arrow Valley.

Miss Balloonist will be blowing everyone away at Morton Stanley on Thursday July 24 with three balloon shows.

Clive Chandler's Punch and Judy will be putting on a show at both parks in August, and Glamba Drumming Workshops will make a return.

Morton Stanley will be popping off on two dates across the Summer Fun programme as a bubbleologist hosts 30-minute shows.

In Bromsgrove, there will be Dragon Fly Arts and Crafts at each of the events from



Miss Balloonist is one of the acts heading to town this summer. s

July 21 to August 25 – all at Sanders Park.

Clive Chandler's Punch and Judy show is being staged at 12pm, 1.30pm and 3pm on July 29 and August 19.

Glamba Drumming Workshops return with dates in both July and August. Hula Hoop shows and workshops are also returning in August.

A Natural History Travelling Museum and a Kiddies Corner will also feature in the scheduled activities.

Redditch Borough Council's Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Recreation, Coun Juliet Barker Smith, said: "The programme of

Summer Fun is absolutely jam-packed with something for everyone to enjoy. The best bit is, all of the events are free, delivering for our communities when budgets are getting tighter every day.

"Please help us to spread the word, tell your friends and family so as many people as possible enjoy a fun-filled summer here in Redditch."

Bromsgrove District Council's Portfolio Holder for Leisure, Coun Bernard McEldowney, said: "The summer holidays can really test parents with finding things to keep their children entertained, even more so finding things within ever tightening budgets.

"This programme of events has something for everyone – and what's more, the majority of the activities are free."

There is no booking required for any of the activities; families can just turn up and enjoy the fun. The majority of summer fun activities are free this year with only a few requiring a small additional charge.

Visit bromsgrove.gov.uk/summerfun or redditchbc.gov.uk/things-to-do/events-in-the-borough/ for the full list of events and timings.



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Natural selection

A SELECTION of limited edition stamps have been released by the Royal Mail to celebrate the ecological importance of the UK's native mushrooms.

Ten stamps have been issued, showcasing the diversity of mushroom species throughout the UK.

The Royal Mail worked on the project with well-known mycologist, Geoffrey Kibby, one of Britain's foremost experts on mushroom identification. He has written and illustrated numerous books and field guides on fungi species found across Europe and North America.

Mr Kibby said: "Fungi are finally getting the attention they deserve in literature, education and on TV, and now their amazing diversity and importance to our ecology is being celebrated in this excellent set of Royal Mail stamps."

"The species illustrated show the wide variety of fungi to be found in the British countryside, emphasising their importance as a vital part of the fascinating biodiversity to be found in our islands."

An array of fungi

The mushrooms range from edible varieties, such as the Penny Bun, to the toxic Fly Agaric which has a distinctive white-spotted red cap.

They are also a variety of colours on offer within the fungi collection chosen, from the intense violet of the Amethyst Deceiver, a common species in autumn woodlands everywhere.

Many form simple cups, of which arguably the most beautiful is the Scarlet Elf Cup, while others are tough and bracket-shaped, such as the colourful Turkey Tails or the often large and striking Chicken of the Woods.

And there are common species found on oak logs - the Clustered Bonnet, known for its unusual but difficult-to-define smell which resembles paint, flour or cucumber.

The variety of fungi is extensive and their importance in the world's ecology cannot be underestimated. The mushroom species pictured

on the stamps in full are: Chicken of the Wood, Clustered Bonnet, Scarlet Waxcap, Morel, Scarlet Elf Cup, Penny Bun, Amethyst Deceiver, Collared Earthstar, Fly Agaric and Turkey Tail. These are only a handful of the 4,000 varieties of mushroom in the UK today.

Essential role

David Gold, director of external affairs and policy for Royal Mail, said: "Few people will be familiar with the breadth, variety and beauty of the fungi that are of such biological importance to our natural environment."

"Mushrooms play an essential role in the delicate balance of life around us, yet largely go unnoticed."

"In these stamps their contribution to the natural environment is duly recognised."

Stamps went on general sale on July 3 and the collection costs £13.75 for each set of ten.

Visit: royalmail.com/mushrooms or dial 03457 641 641 for more.



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LEFT: A laser show dazzled the audience after dusk. ABOVE: London Community Gospel Choir and DJ Jose Luis. Pictures by David Evans Photography. RIGHT: Concert-goers sparkle in the evening sunshine. Picture by Lise Evans



Right here, right now for classic tunes

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

CLASSIC Ibiza made a sparkling 10th return to a sunny Ragley Hall on Saturday (July 5), delighting a sold-out Warwickshire crowd with more than five hours of Balearic-infused house music.

The alfresco celebration of White Isle-inspired music had multiple generations bopping along enthusiastically to a 'best of' set that featured 50 house classics from the show's decade-long repertoire. The crowd were in sequined attire which glittered in the late evening sunshine.

Under the expert musical direction of Stephen Hussey, the 32-piece Urban Soul Orchestra



Concert-goers get into the party mood. Pictures by Lise Evans



(USO) delighted its audience of 9,000 concert-goers who polished off their picnics to a set by DJ Jose Luis, a former Pacha Ibiza resident.

Beginning appropriately with Fatboy Slim's Right Here, Right Now, USO were joined by London

Community Gospel Choir (in a debut appearance) for a spine-tingling rendition of eight classic tracks, including You Got The Love by The Source and Candi Staton and Lola's Theme by The Shapeshifters.

Their soulful and uplifting

vocals to a number of tracks during the evening added to the feast of stand-out vocal performances.

As night fell, the grounds of Ragley Hall were transformed into a magical, alfresco nightclub. Accompanied by an spectacular laser and light show, the capacity crowd partied to USO's orchestral energetic performance, featuring Galvanise by The Chemical Brothers, Cafe Del Mar by Energy 52 and Adagio For Strings by Tiesto.

Concert-goer Milly Roe, from Salford Priors, has been coming for several years with a group of friends.

She told The Standard: "What a fantastic event. We're always guaranteed a good time and is the best atmosphere for all ages.

"I didn't want to leave at the end of the night."

Before the concert drew to a

close at 11pm, the audience was treated to a fitting encore of two of Classic Ibiza's most popular tracks. Saving the best for last, USO went out on high to Insomnia by Faithless and Sandstorm by Darude.

Classic Ibiza's Lisa Ward added: "Ragley Hall, that was pure magic.

"We brought the back-to-back anthems, you matched the energy, and together we kicked off our 10th anniversary celebrations in true Classic Ibiza style.

"A huge thank you to Stephen Hussey's incredible Urban Soul Orchestra and our DJs, Goldierocks and Jose Luis - you never fail to raise the bar every year with your spellbinding performances.

"And London Community Gospel Choir, what can I say, other than 'glorious'."



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PALLETT

Anthony David



Fondly known as Tony to all that knew him
Aged 80 years

Passed away peacefully on Wednesday
2nd July 2025 at the Alexandra Hospital
Devoted Husband to Jillian
A much-loved Dad to Helen, Joanne and
Tony. A loving Grandad and Great
Grandad

Anthony will be greatly missed by all of his
family and friends

A service to celebrate Anthony's life will
take place at Redditch Crematorium
On Friday 1st August at 12.30pm followed
by a private family Committal in the
Abbey Cemetery

Family flowers only please, donations if so
desired to British Heart Foundation to

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Thankyou

DEATHS

GARBETT

Stanley (Stan) William

Sadly passed away peacefully on
Sunday 22nd June 2025 aged 103 years.
Now reunited with his loving Wife Joyce
and Son Stephen.

Stan will be sadly missed by Daughter
Jackie, Son In Law Nigel, Grandchildren,
Great Grandchildren, family and friends.
A service to celebrate Stan's life will take
place at Redditch Crematorium on
Wednesday 16th July 2025 at 11:45am.

Family flowers only please, donations if
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DEATHS

CLEVERLEY

John
(Chinkie)

left his loved ones on
June 6th 2025

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to discuss football
(up the wolves)

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xxx

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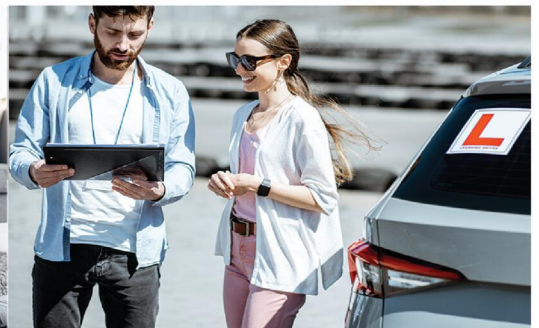
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Losing someone, whatever the circumstances and whatever age they may be, is never easy and affects different people in different ways. But there are people and companies just a visit or phone call away who can offer guidance – whether it be with arranging the funeral itself or helping you come to terms with what has happened.



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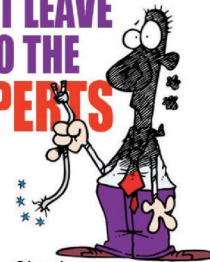
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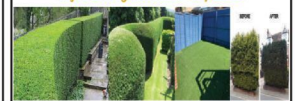
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Spa to face Racers in first-ever FA Cup tie at start of next month

by Aaron Sutcliffe
aaron.sutcliffe@bullivantmedia.com

FOOTBALL: DROITWICH Spa have discovered their FA Cup extra preliminary round opponents with the club to play in the competition for the first time in their history this season.

The Saltmen will make the trip to Step Four side Racing Club Warwick on Saturday, August 2 with kick-off at 3pm at Townsend Meadow. Spa play one level below the Racers who ply their trade in the Northern Premier League Midlands division.

Winning clubs will receive £1,125 while losing clubs will receive £375.

Should Droitwich progress to the next round, Spa would travel to either Hereford Pegasus or Lye Town in the preliminary round.

Winning clubs will receive £1,444 while losing clubs will receive £481.

FIRST SIGNING ANNOUNCED

Spa have made their first summer signing ahead of the club's first season at Step Five.

Spa have signed former Kidderminster Harriers and Worcester City midfielder Reiss Taylor-Randle.

The 24-year-old played for Studley and Pershore Town last season, playing in 38 games between the two clubs.

Spa boss, Andy Crowther said: "Reiss is a player I earmarked at the end of last season to bring in for our first season at Step Five.

"A player with a lot of experience, technically very good on the ball and he can dictate a game.

Droitwich Spa have made Reiss Taylor-Randle the club's first summer signing.



"Reiss fits in with everything that we are doing at Droitwich and I'm sure he will have a very successful spell here."

He netted five goals in 30 appearances for Worcester at Step Five in the 2022/23 season before later departing for Studley.

PLAYERS RETAINED

Droitwich have also confirmed the players who will remain with the club for the upcoming 2025/26 season.

Goalkeeper Dom Rogerson and defenders Jack Brighton, Matt Jackson and Joe Clayton

have all agreed to stay with the club.

And Lewis Phillips, Jay Sauntson, Jack Davies and Charlie Tilley will also remain with Spa.

Midfielders Cory Rudd, Nathan Binner, Sam Hurdman and Ben Tilbury have also signed on for the 2025/26 campaign.

And attacking trio James Lemon, Alex Dugmore and Josh Hurdman, who scored more than 60 league goals between them last season, will also remain at the King George Playing Fields.

Influential midfielder Perry Moss, Joe Hurdman and Harry Griffiths have also committed to the club for the 2025/26 season.

Hosts dig in with bat to stay above drop

CRICKET: DROITWICH Spa CC dug in with the bat in a losing draw against Hagley to remain above their relegation rivals in the table.

In pursuit of 215, Spa closed on 193-9 at the end of their 50 overs at St Peter's Playing Fields.

Droitwich took six points from the fixture while Hagley came away with 15 points.

The result means Spa sit just four points above Hagley in the Worcestershire County League Division One table with the latter side currently in the relegation zone.

Hagley won the toss and elected to bat only for Sam Smith (2-55) to bowl opener Thomas Higgs (0) for an 11-ball duck.

However, opener Jonathan McDonnell (34) and Daniel Giles (42) put on a 69-run second-wicket stand.

Lincoln Kellett (1-42) eventually trapped McDonnell LBW before Jonathan Miles (1-61) accounted for Giles.

The quick wickets left Hagley on 82-3 only for the away side's middle order to put the visitors back in control of the match.

Hagley captain Michael Stead (67 not out) and Pravdeep Sangha (53) both made half-centuries in a 113-run fourth-wicket partnership.

Stead and Sangha both hit eight fours apiece while the latter also cleared the rope on one occasion.

Adam Keen (1-48) eventually brought an end to the partnership with the wicket of Sangha.

And Smith returned to claim the scalp of Mikhail Jain (5) as Hagley reached 214-5 at the end of their 50 overs.

Spa made a solid start in reply but struggled to score runs at a quick enough rate.

Openers Harry Butler (27) and Sam Woolley (16) both fell in quick succession to the bowling of Stead (4-46) leave Spa on 51-2.

Kellett (53) and Miles (20) then combined at the crease to lift Spa to the 100-run mark.

However, Stead claimed his third victim in the form of Miles and struck again soon after to remove Noah Hunt (9).

The wickets continued to tumble as James Elston (2-42) removed John Phillips (10).

And Kellett eventually fell after reaching a half-century in just 50 balls as Jain (2-50) took a crucial wicket.

With Droitwich on 161-6, Tom Hodgson (15) and Keen (29) added useful runs.

However, Jain bowled Hodgson and Elston trapped Keen LBW to leave Spa on 190-8.

Joe Heywood (3) could only add a few runs to the total before he was bowled by Winston Lewis (1-34).

But Spa showed resilience with the bat at the death as Smith (2 not out) survived the final over to deny the visitors an outright victory.

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