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‘Hospital’s treatment was a sight to behold’

by **Sonny Rackham**
 sonny.rackham@bullivantme-
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A DROITWICH hospital has been credited with restoring a woman’s eyesight after years of her struggling with her vision.

Louise Hatch, aged 40, from Bromsgrove has spoken of the joyful moment she regained her eyesight after cataracts surgery at The Droitwich Spa Hospital.

She described the experience as feeling like ‘Christmas morning’ and recalled telling staff at the hospital where she was treated: ‘I can see again.’

The foster parent had been living with sight problems for many years but said it became a major concern when her right eye turned cloudy and she lost all vision in it.

Louise said: “Day-to-day things were okay but driving, turning corners or parking became really challenging.

“The sight in my right eye became so bad that I lost all vision in it.”

Louise Hatch, 40, from Bromsgrove, has credited Droitwich Spa Hospital with resolving her eyesight problems. s



Louise was diagnosed with cataracts – a condition that causes the lens of the eye to become cloudy, leading to blurred or distorted vision.

She was told she needed surgery on both eyes and was referred to Consultant Ophthalmologist

Yajati Ghosh at The Droitwich Spa Hospital.

She said: “He was so honest and clear with me.

“Because my cataract was very cloudy, Mr Ghosh couldn’t see the back of my eye, so he quickly referred me for extra tests and

got everything moving.”

Following the tests, Louise underwent cataract surgery.

The outcome, she said, exceeded expectations.

As well as restoring her vision, the squint caused by the cataract also improved.

Louise said the operation had made a huge difference to her everyday life.

She said: “When the bandage came off, it was amazing.

“Sight is a precious thing and being able to see again has meant I can drive and experience life without fear.”

Speaking about her time at the hospital, she said ‘everyone was lovely, from the nurses to the reception staff’.

“I can’t thank or recommend Mr Ghosh enough.

“Regaining my sight has given me a new lease of life.”

And Louise has advice for people who have any concerns about their eyesight.

“I would encourage anyone worried about their sight or cataracts to go and get their sight checked regularly.

“Having mine done has changed my life.”

EFFORTS are under way to stabilise and safeguard the Raven Hotel after it was devastatingly damaged by fire.

The building’s owner is progressing plans to carefully demolish unsafe sections whilst ensuring the protection of listed elements, an update from Coun Richard Morris has revealed.

Wychevton District Council, Historic England, conservation architects and structural engineers were all present at a further meeting where urgent topics on the building’s future were discussed.

Due to the presence of asbestos, works must be carried out under strict health and safety conditions, with the Health and Safety Executive already aware.

A conservation engineer has been appointed to oversee the dismantling of precarious structures, while method statements are urgently needed to guarantee both safety and the preservation of the building’s listed features.

Tree management and the recovery of significant artifacts are also being considered as part of the process.

The owner has assigned a dedicated liaison to work with neighbouring businesses as the controlled programme of works moves forward.

Safety and the protection of heritage remain the top priorities as urgent timelines are balanced with the need for care and oversight.



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Matt Green, Palace Drum Clinic founder and Chris Bloore MP, s.

MP supports town culture campaign

REDDITCH MP Chris Bloore has thrown his support behind a campaign to raise £150,000 to fund a new community and live performance hub in the former Farmfoods building in the Kingfisher Centre.

"The Cave" will be aimed at supporting cultural provision in Redditch and further afield by providing a permanent professional performance, recording and rehearsal space.

Those behind the venue have partnered with the Kingfisher Shopping Centre and the venue will be accessible for all live performances in the arts and a diverse range of community and arts groups.

A crowdfunding page has been launched for people to donate.

Mr Bloore said: "Redditch has a proud cultural history and a wealth of local talent."

"Matt and the team at Palace Drum Clinic have an inspiring vision to create a space where music and creativity can flourish."

"A venue like this could bring huge ben-

efits to our community – not just for artists, but for young people, families and residents of all ages.

"I look forward to working with local partners to see how we can help make this vision a reality."

Among the many events planned for the venue will be music nights and monthly clubs, such as jazz, blues and the spoken word.

There will be three recording studios within the venue to attract many musicians and artists back into the area.

There are also plans for comedy nights, race nights, gaming festivals and for groups to meet there in the daytime, such as mum and baby get-togethers and regular events to combat loneliness and offer mental health support.

Visit: crowdfunder.co.uk/p/the-cave-community-hub-and-live-performance-area for more on The Cave and to donate to the cause.

'We need bigger police presence'

POLICE chiefs have been urged by the Bromsgrove MP to step up patrols in Wythall and Hollywood after his recent survey highlighted key issues with crime and disorder in the village.

Bradley Thomas conducted a survey on residents' views around crime and anti-social behaviour with Wythall residents raising concerns around burglary, car theft, fly tipping, speeding and drug dealing.

Following the survey, the MP brought West Mercia Police's Chief Constable, Richard Cooper and Police and Crime Commissioner, John Campion, to discuss issues with residents.

Last Monday, when the pair joined the politician for a chat with residents, Mr Thomas urged the force to 'step up patrols' and 'deter criminality' in the area to 'ensure residents feel safe.'

Further highlighting the



need for increased police presence were three shop break-ins across the two villages on the day of the police visit.

Mr Thomas said: "Police visibility is key. Increased patrols and reducing crime is a key part of my plan for Bromsgrove and I'm keeping my promise to work with the police to ensure our constituency remains a safe place to live and work."

Mr Cooper said he 'enjoyed patrolling Wythall and speaking to retailers'.

He added: "The local neighbourhood team have achieved many good results by working with stores and targeting repeat offenders."

"I expect us to continue focusing on the places and people most involved in crime, just as our communities expect of their police service."

Mr Campion said he was committed to ensuring concerns raised by local communities were listened to and acted on.

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High school woe for town pupils

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

PARENTS of children applying to Bromsgrove's oversubscribed high schools have spoken of their frustration at both having to send them to Rubery and the transport arrangements to get them there.

The Standard was contacted this week following the offers and subsequent unsuccessful appeals by mums who live close to the North and South Bromsgrove High Schools.

For September 2025, the demand for year nine places in Bromsgrove, was higher than the number of places available.

Worcestershire County Council's Education

Sufficiency and Place Planning Team have been working with both high schools and North was able to offer an additional 30 year nine places for this academic year and South an additional six year nine places.

Lisa Collins is one parent whose son has been offered Waseley Hills High School, despite them living in Sidemoor just 2.1 miles away from South Bromsgrove High, where she applied to.

Her son, who has ADHD, anxiety and other needs, still did not get in, despite a supporting letter from St John's Middle School where he attended until this year.

She lost an appeal and tried to get her son into North but the original placement stood.

He is currently 43rd on the waiting list for South and also on the waiting list for North.

Mrs Collins was also unable to get school transport for her son and is now facing

a £175-a-term public transport bill.

And, because of the public buses' times not coinciding with school start and finish times, he will have to leave earlier in the morning and not be able to get the return service from Rubery until after 4pm.

Mrs Collins has two other children with SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) and, because they are at separate schools, has had to change her job and cut her working hours.

She said she had been told the number of new pupils having to journey from Bromsgrove to Rubery for school was, this year, more than 30 - a whole new class size.

Another parent, Anita Arscott-Brookes, who lives on Brene Park - less than a mile from South Bromsgrove High - has also been allocated Waseley Hills High for

her son.

He attended Catshill Middle, rather than St John's, as he could not get his first choice middle school four years ago.

Mrs Arscott-Brookes' son has been offered school transport but it means her driving 3.7 miles to Marlbrook each morning and afternoon to drop him off at the stop and pick him up.

She said: "Our views are no reflection on Waseley Hills High as it looks a great school but it is just the distance.

"It will add two hours onto my son's day and it's a shame he will not have the same walking to school experience and that new independence that others have.

"The situation is already bad but what is it going to be like when these new homes get built?"

Coun Dr Stephen Foster, Worcestershire

County Council Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Education and SEND, said he understood how frustrating it was for families unable to secure their first place school.

"Both North and South Bromsgrove High Schools are popular schools and are oversubscribed for year nine places for September 2025.

"Despite Worcestershire County Council's extra investment to increase capacity, the pressure on school places still remains.

"School transport is allocated in line with our policy to ensure fairness, but we do take each pupil's individual circumstances into account."

He added the council would keep engaging with schools and speak directly to concerned families so support could be offered where possible.

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Charlie Thompson, as Elsa from Frozen, will be among those performing at the Rubery Festival.

Festival returns

THE ANNUAL Rubery Festival returns next Sunday, September 7, starting with the parade at midday from Legion Way to St Chad's Park.

In the park will be the live music stage and arena, along with 30 stalls from charities and community groups.

Performances will feature plenty of singers, including Jasmine Nicholson, Stephen Law, Scott Smith Cartwright, Michelle Black, Charlie Thompson as Elsa from Frozen and many more.

There will also be dance performances from Excells Dance and other groups.

The event is completely free to attend and there will also be children's rides, a bouncy castle, face painting, pony rides, vintage vehicles and classic cars and food and ice cream.

Anyone wanting more information should call organiser Tony Maslen on 0121 457 9308.



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Aiming to create a better future



THREE Ukrainian creatives displaced by the war, are appealing for funding to secure the future of a new children's activity club they have launched in Redditch.

Friends Tetiana Volikova, Yana Tyshyna and Svitlana Vasylieva established and run Creative Carousel with the support of Redditch and Kingfisher Rotary Club.

But now the team needs to boost its depleted \$9,900 Redditch Borough Council grant which initially funded the first four months.

It is hoped a free Heritage Fun Day between 11am and 2pm on September 13 at St Laurence Church and the Ark in Alvechurch will also help showcase the club which, they say, offers a unique blend of UK and Ukrainian teaching methods and after-school care.

Members of the team will be on hand to talk about the club.

There will be a host of family fun on offer, including church and tower tours, prize draws, games, live performances, face painting and food stalls.

The three ladies all resettled in Redditch a few weeks after the war broke out. They were forced to flee with their children to Poland and Turkey, before finding sponsor families in Worcestershire.

After meeting through the BRWR (Bromsgrove and Redditch Welcome Refugee Group) they realised their passions and skills as a vocal coach,

artist and choreographer aligned and so set about building Creative Carousel.

Tetiana said she felt there was a need for something like this in the area so appealed for help from Rotary to organise the project and apply for grants.

The group hopes Creative Carousel will become a business at some point in the future.

Rotary bought materials to help the group get up and running and Tetiana, Svitlana and Yana said they could not have done it without that assistance.

This is a return to the work they loved but were forced to leave behind in their homeland.

Tetiana, who fled Khmelnytskyi with her two children aged six and 17 just days, has over 30 years of experience as a performer, vocal coach, and international competition judge and had been running her own successful vocal studio for 12 years before the war broke out.

She said: "Being in UK I previously contributed to projects funded by the National Lottery and the Arts Council, including the renowned Eurovision Refugee Choir project in Liverpool and the European Youth Music Refugee Choir.

"These experiences were deeply inspiring, instilling a desire to create another project that fosters international cultural exchange through music."

She added she witnessed the transformative impact that culturally

diverse, inclusive arts projects could have on communities and it strengthened her commitment to making arts more accessible and meaningful, especially for refugees and immigrants.

Yana is a choreographer and production ballet master and director of the Mriya dance ensemble in Birmingham, which includes over 50 dancers from various countries.

In Ukraine she worked at the Kyiv College of Culture and Arts in the Department of Choreographic Arts before fleeing to the UK with her seven-year-old twin sons, who are themselves, excellent dancers.

Professional artist Svitlana Vasylieva, resettled in Redditch after fleeing Dnipro with her two sons aged two and 11.

She has exhibited in the UK and won the Art in Redditch Graham Award in May 2025.

She is highly regarded for her work with children - frequently invited by cultural centres, holiday clubs, and community organisations to lead art workshops for young audiences.

The clubs

From September the club will run three classes a week.

The first at The Bridge Church (former St Luke's Church), Headless Cross, from 4.30pm to 6.30pm on Mondays for six to eight-year-olds and at the same times on Wednesdays for nine to 11-year-olds.

In Alvechurch - at St Laurence

Church and The Ark, School Lane - there will be a group from 4pm to 6pm on Thursdays for seven to 11-year-olds.

The cost of each session is £10, including teatime, with a special offer of just £2 for the first session.

Sibling discounts are available and families enrolling with multiple children receive a 20 per cent discount.

Visit: [gofundme.com/with-running-costs-a-new-development-club-for-](http://gofundme.com/with-running-costs-a-new-development-club-for-children)

children for more on the fundraising and to donate to the cause.

And go to: creativecarousel.co.uk or email Tetiana and the team at: creativecarouseluk@gmail.com for more information and to pledge sponsorship.

Svitlana Vasylieva, Yana Tyshyna and Tetiana Volikova launched the Creative Carousel and are hoping for funding so it can flourish. s



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For further information, please visit: www.studleychristadelphians.org

It's all about the results for exam hopefuls



LEFT: Students at Droitwich Spa High School congratulate each other on a strong set of results. RIGHT: A celebrating student at RGS Dodderhill. s

AFTER a hard fought two years, Droitwich's GCSE students arrived at schools last Thursday to collect their results and find out if all their hard work has paid off.

Pupils were hoping to get the grades they need to progress onto sixth-form, college or other training and employment opportunities.

GCSE results are graded from level 9 to 1 rather than the previous alphabetical grading of A to E. RGS Dodderhill shared its delight in cel-

ebating the 'exceptional achievements' of its year 11 pupils in this year's GCSE exams.

Results include a 92 per cent pass rate from grades 9 to 4, with 47 per cent achieving grades 9 to 7. A total of 68 per cent of students also achieved grade 8 or 9 in at least one subject.

Leaders have highlighted the successes of three students in particular - Holly, Leah and Connie - who have all achieved a full set of grades

between 9 and 7.

Holly even secured four Grade 9s and looks forward to joining Sixth Form at RGS Worcester.

Headmaster, Mr Tom Banyard said: "We are thrilled to celebrate the incredible GCSE results.

"These outcomes reflect not only outstanding academic achievement but also the dedication, resilience and spirit of our pupils and our school."

Mr Banyard also praised his 'ded-

icated staff', extending a 'heartfelt thanks' for their 'support and expertise' which he says has been 'instrumental' in helping pupils thrive.

Another school sharing its pride in its students was Droitwich Spa High School and Sixth Form. The students were praised for their 'hard work and determination', having grown into 'strong dedicated young people' with a range of talents and interests.

The atmosphere on the day was described as 'really special'. After a strong set of results, many of the students will be welcomed back in September to begin their A-Levels.

A spokesperson said: "Congratulations, Year 11 - you have made us proud, and we couldn't be happier to celebrate with you.

"It was a joy to see the kindness in the room as students shared in each other's achievements."

Further views sought in planning for future

PEOPLE in Bromsgrove are again being urged to share their local knowledge in a consultation on the town's future development strategy.

Nearly 3,000 responses have already been submitted during consultation on the Bromsgrove District local Plan but the area covers an adult population of more than 80,000.

Launched in June, the consultation offers residents an extended 12 weeks to provide thoughts on already identified areas for prospective development within the town.

Of the proposed sites, just under a third of the future homes are in Bromsgrove (roughly 3,000). Another third are spread across surrounding villages including Bart Green, Catshill, Wythall, Alvechurch, Hagley, and Stoke Prior - each is allocated 340 to 600 homes.

And the final third, another 3,000 homes at a single large site in Frankley,

adjoining Birmingham. The proposals are prompted by Government house-building targets imposed on Bromsgrove and would the 9,000 homes developed over the years up to 2043.

As well as providing advanced online consultation tools, the council has put on officer-led drop-in information sessions in a bid to hear from as many people as possible on the best places for these homes to be built.

Bromsgrove District Councillor Kit Taylor, whose portfolio covers planning, said: "No development is not an option and we need to pull on local knowledge to help us to get this right before the future of our district is taken out of our hands.

"I want to thank those people who have spent time to fill in our consultation and come along to our drop-in sessions, because it's so important we work together on this.

"For example, where landowners have suggested sites for us to consider for the future development, this process means we can all look at the implications of that together, in this very open and transparent way.

"Local knowledge is key to making sure we deliver what Government has told us to, with the district, our residents and each other in mind."

Another drop-in session has also been added to the calendar of consultation events, bringing the total to 19 across 15 district locations. That is set for Alvechurch Village Hall from 3pm to 7.30pm on Thursday, September 4.

The consultation runs until September 22, with materials available at: bromsgrove.gov.uk/BromsgrovePlan or at local libraries.

Contact bromsgroveplan@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk or 01527 881211 for queries.

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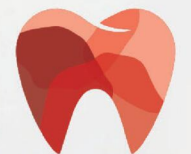
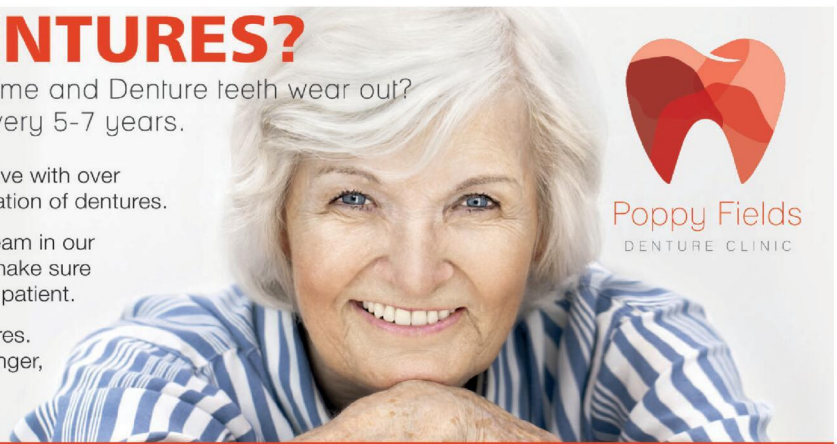
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Corsa taken by thieves

A RED Vauxhall Corsa GS was stolen from Alvechurch.

Police said the raiders struck in Coopers Hill Farm, Coopers Hill, between 8pm August 17 and 1.25am on August 18.

They took the partial registration number 'DP73'.

Computers and personal items were in the car at the time.

BURGLARS broke into a shop in Hollywood overnight between August 18 and 19.

The thieves targeted the store in Drakes Cross Parade when the raiders gained access by smashing a panel in the shop door.

Once inside, they stole the till which contained a small amount of cash.

It was later found discarded on the Alcester Road at 8.57am on Monday.

SHEEP were stolen from a field in Rowney Green.

The thieves struck last Thursday and took all 20 of the animals.

The incident was reported at 2.20pm so the theft would have happened before that.

Police said the thieves would have needed a vehicle to take them away.

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

Nationwide hosts clinics to put focus on dementia

HELP will be at hand for dementia patients and their loved ones at Redditch's Nationwide branch.

Dementia specialist Admiral Nurses will host free face-to-face clinics at the Station Road building society and will offer specialist support in a safe, comfortable and private space for people to discuss any aspect of dementia.

The clinics on September 16, 17 and 18 will offer practical and emotional advice on all aspects of dementia – from worries about memory problems, understanding a diagnosis and how the condition can progress to help with financial and legal issues.

Ahead of the appointments, Dementia UK, the specialist dementia nursing charity, has shared some of the common signs and symptoms of dementia people should look out for in themselves and others.

Dementia is often associated with memory problems, but the first symptoms of dementia are not

by Sarah Mason
sarah.mason@bullivantmedia.com

always memory-related, meaning sometimes people don't recognise the early signs.

Other signs can include changes in cognitive ability – for instance difficulties with decision-making, a loss of interest in previously enjoyed activities and problems understanding time and place and communication issues for example struggling to find the right words, confused or rambling speech and calling people and items by the wrong name.

If someone is concerned about having symptoms of dementia, it is important to book an appointment with your GP as soon as possible.

Charlotte Kensett, director of customer experience and social impact for Nationwide, said: "Dementia impacts millions of families and that's why we're incredibly proud to have brought life-changing support into 200 of our branches and helped more than



Specialist dementia nurses, known as Admiral Nurses, will be heading to Nationwide branches to help those living with dementia.

30,000 people through our partnership with Dementia UK.

"As a mutual we believe we have a role to play in strengthening the communities we serve and supporting those most in need. Through our social impact strategy, Nationwide Fairer Futures, we're committed to changing hundreds of thousands of lives for the better."

The clinics are part of Nationwide's social impact programme, Fairer Futures, which addresses four of the UK's biggest social issues through charity partnerships – family poverty (Action for Children), youth homelessness (Centrepoint), dementia

(Dementia UK) and cancer (The Royal Marsden Cancer Charity). Nationwide is funding 30 dementia specialist Admiral Nurses and is hosting clinics in 200 branches across the country.

Sarah Cooper, admiral nurse at Dementia UK, said: "Our clinic programme, in partnership with Nationwide Building Society, has now been running for over a year which has enabled us to reach thousands of people across the country who need the support of a dementia specialist Admiral Nurse."

For more or to book an appointment visit Dementia UK's website.



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

A TENACIOUS 12-year-old from Bromsgrove has been walking an incredible 15,000 steps-a-day throughout August to raise funds for the Motor Neurone Disease Association (MNDA).

Evie Marsh wanted a challenge for the summer holiday so decided to take part in the MNDA fundraiser.

Her dad, Chris, was diagnosed with Motor Neurone Disease in 2022.

Evie has raised cash before for MNDA by selling her toys on the front drive, but has never done anything like this.

Her proud grandma Mary Marsh said: "15,000 steps every day in August is a huge challenge for adults let alone a 12-year-old."

"I don't know how many people nationally or even locally are doing this challenge."

"Evie's set herself a target of raising £150 sponsorship but has smashed that with over £1,500 to date."

She started fundraising a couple of days before August 1 and



won an MNDA bucket hat. Mary added: "I and all her family are so proud of her for doing this."

"She is very determined and goes out walking several times a day to reach the target."

"Her sister Freya walks with her every day and other people walk with her as well to keep her company."

Evie said on her fundraising page: "My dad was diagnosed with this horrible disease and I want to help other families to deal with it."

"MND takes everything away from the sufferer not just being able to walk and talk."

"Help me to help others and together let's try and find a cure so no more families have to suffer."

"It's not just about the money (but that helps) - I want to raise awareness of this 'rare' disease."

"Right now, around 5,000 people in the UK are living with MND and every step I take is for them."

Visit: socialsync.app/fundraiser/cr-pz314mqzo9pr for more on Evie's fundraiser and to donate.

Evie Marsh has raised more than £1,500 for the MNDA after being inspired by her dad's battle.

News in brief

MAINTENANCE work on the M5 will see lengthy closures in both directions at the Bromsgrove junction over the next couple of months.

National Highways is carrying out safety works between Junctions 2 and 3, including resurfacing and renewing road markings, to provide a clearer and safer carriageway for road users.

There will be full overnight closures in both directions on separate occasions, with southbound journeys affected between Junctions 3 (Quinton) and 4 (Bromsgrove) from Monday, September 1, to October 14.

Northbound journeys between the same junctions will also be affected overnight from October 15 to December 11. The northbound closure will not be in effect between December 1 and 5.

A further overnight southbound closure between Junction 3 and 4 will take place on December 12. Closures will take place on weeknights between 8pm and 6am for works to be carried out.

Some trees - in small sections along the side of the northbound carriageway - will also be removed as part of the scheme. Removal will only take place where essential to maintain safety.

To ensure the safety of road workers and users, the road will be closed while the work takes place. It will be carried out in phases to minimise disruption.

Visit: nationalhighways.co.uk/our-roads/west-midlands for more.

A MOTORIST was arrested on suspicion of drink-driving after a crash in Wychbold.

Officers from West Mercia Police were called to the collision on A38 Worcester Road at Wychbold in the early hours of Sunday morning.

A Ford Fiesta, travelling from Droitwich, left the carriageway and collided with a post around 12.10am.

The driver was out of the vehicle on police arrival and was then arrested on suspicion of driving whilst under the influence of alcohol.

Shortly after the arrest, the 33-year-old man became unwell and was taken straight to hospital where he underwent treatment.

No one else was involved in the collision.



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Royal defends itself after report criticises car park body storage

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

WORCESTERSHIRE Royal Hospital has been criticised by regulators after inspectors found human bodies were being stored in outdoor fridge units in a car park.

The Human Tissue Authority (HTA), which regulates mortuary services, carried out an unannounced inspection of the hospital in May and issued five major and four minor shortfalls against national standards.

Inspectors raised concerns that the location and access arrangements of the external fridge bank in the car park did not sufficiently safeguard the "dignity of the deceased".

They concluded that "under the current set-up, the use of this area for body storage is deemed unsuitable. Staff were advised not to use two of the fridge units, as the pods had failed Health and Safety risk assessments due to uneven ground in the loading bay.

Despite this advisory, they were left powered on and used "when necessary" - posing a risk of accidental damage to bodies.

The report also highlighted further serious failings including not obtaining formal confirmation when babies were transferred to other hospitals for post-mortem examinations, risk-



Inspectors found human bodies were being stored in outdoor fridge units in a car park.

ing a loss of audit trail.

Out-of-hours CCTV coverage was also branded "insufficient", with "a significant risk of a serious security breach" being found at the Alexandra Hospital.

Other issues included out-of-date mortuary procedures and risk assess-

ments, poorly structured governance meetings, and maintenance problems such as unclean fridges, damaged flooring and a leaking ceiling at Alexandra Hospital.

Although the hospital was deemed suitable to continue operating under its licence, this is conditional on

urgent corrective and preventative action.

The HTA gave the Trust 14 days to submit a detailed action plan addressing the failings. The HTA report was issued in July.

The report also advised the hospital to explore alternatives to the out-

door fridge bank, improve maternity protocols for body identification and release, reinstate staff consent training, and take steps to make mortuary viewing suites more comfortable for grieving families.

A statement from the Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust said the fridges were not located in a public car park.

A spokesperson told the Standard/Observer: "A temporary specialist additional body store facility was commissioned as part of the trust's response to the Covid pandemic.

"With the demand on mortuary services continuing to grow, this facility has been maintained to provide the additional capacity and resilience required to deliver a safe and effective service if needed.

"While the facility is separate from the mortuary building, it is adjacent, in an area that has been converted from a small, barrier-controlled and non-public car park. Access is controlled and monitored by CCTV to ensure security.

"Additionally, it is important that all our facilities provide the necessary dignity and respect required.

"We are committed to providing empathetic and dignified care to our patients and families and are pleased that in its latest inspection the HTA found we were meeting the majority of standards."

A follow-up inspection will be carried out at the hospital in due course.



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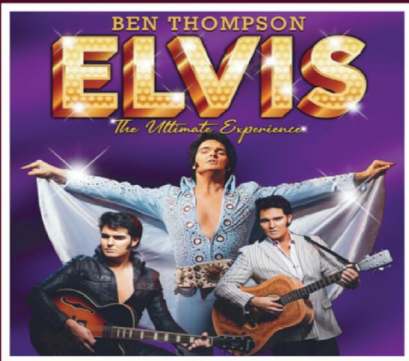



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Appeal after motorcyclist dies in crash

A MAN in his 20s has died after a serious collision in Northfield on Monday.

The incident happened on Norrington Road around 4pm.

Two ambulances and a MERIT trauma doctor, with a Critical Care Paramedic attended.

The man received specialist trauma care at the scene before being taken to Birmingham's Queen Elizabeth Hospital. He had since died from his injuries.

West Midlands Police's Serious Collision Investigation Unit (SCIU) is currently working to establish exactly what happened.

Sgt Rich Evans from the SCIU, said: "This is a tragic incident, where a young man has lost his life and our thoughts remain with his family and everyone who knew him."

"We have specially trained officers supporting his family and are continuing to investigate exactly what happened."

He appealed for anyone who witnessed the incident or anyone who had dash cam or doorbell footage to call police on 101 or Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

Housing on former church site is nearing completion

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

AFFORDABLE homes that were set to be built on a former church site in Redditch have now been completed.

The new housing scheme in Winyates is known as St Gregory's in recognition of the catholic church which once stood on the site and closed its doors in 2005.

GreenSquareAccord (GSA), a housing association serving the West Midlands, is leading on the St Gregory's development which will deliver 12 homes for social rent while 13 properties will be made available under a shared ownership scheme once construction is complete.

Mike Nolan, the GSA's head of development, said: "I am pleased to say construction is progressing well with significant progress made since the start of the year."

"The first stage of construction included the demolition of the church building followed by clean-up and levelling of the site."

"Highways and utilities infrastructure has been installed and more recently exteriors have been finished for most of the homes."

"As well as providing much needed social homes, we are creating opportunities for would-be homeowners to take their first step on the



property ladder by releasing some of our homes in Winyates through a shared ownership scheme."

The St Gregory's scheme is being built by GSA's in-house construction team, using prefabricated timber panels supplied by LoCaL Homes.

Mike Doolan, sales and partnership manager at LoCaL Homes, said: "It is brilliant to see the majority of the homes now erected at the St Gregory's development."

"The future residents of this affordable housing scheme will ben-

efit from many of the features of living in a modern, energy-efficient home.

Now the exterior of the homes have been completed for 21 of the 25 homes at St Gregory's, the internal works will follow shortly.

Redditch MP, Chris Bloore visited the St Gregory's development last autumn and recently returned to the site to be briefed on construction progress.

The first handovers to customers are set to take place at the scheme

in early 2026.

Mr Bloore said: "I'm delighted to see St Gregory's in Winyates transformed from a site that once symbolised neglect and anti-social behaviour into 25 high-quality, affordable homes."

"This will give local families the dignity, security and lower heating bills they deserve, while helping tackle the climate crisis."

The new housing scheme in Winyates is set to be completed. s

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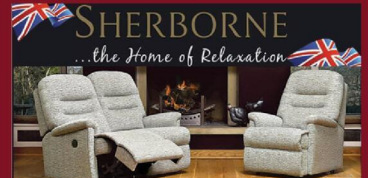
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Excellent results across courses gives college reason to celebrate

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

HEART of Worcestershire (HoW) College has been celebrating over the past fortnight after notching up outstanding exam results at both vocational and T Level programmes and GCSEs and Level 2 vocational courses the week before.

Across the four campuses, HoW College had a 100 per cent pass rate from students who received results from various BTEC courses, including Level 3 UAL Extended Diploma in Creative Media Production and Technology (TV and Film), Level 3 BTEC National Extended Diploma in Business and Level 3 BTEC National Extended Diploma in Health and Social Care.

There was also a complete pass rate in Level 3 BTEC National Extended Diploma in Sport and Level 3 Diploma in Women's Hairdressing.

The college said the results reflected its commitment to delivering high-quality teaching and support across its vocational curriculum.

Repeating the success of the 2023/24 academic year, where all T Level Education students who completed achieved passes, merits, and distinctions, HoW College has reported an increase in percentage of students achieving a Merit or higher from 42 per cent to 100 per cent.



Students undertaking the Level 3 Diploma in Women's Hairdressing were among the success stories this year. s

T Level students in Digital Production, Design and Development also showed positive performance with seven students achieving passes and merits during a strong year.

Then, last week, HoW College toasted the success of students receiving their GCSE English and maths and Level 2 vocational quali-

fications results.

Many students secured the qualifications they needed to progress to their next stage in education in line with their chosen career.

An impressive 91 per cent of students who completed their studies at HoW College achieved a minimum of a pass grade in their Level

2 qualifications

And there was an impressive 100 per cent pass rate for many courses across the four campuses, including plumbing, plastering, media skills, beauty therapy, engineering and public services. The students' achievements ensure they have what they need to progress to Level 3, an

apprenticeship or take the step into employment to begin their chosen career.

In addition to the excellent Level 2 vocational results nearly 200 learners have achieved their GCSE English at grade 4 or above and almost 150 achieved their GCSE maths as a result of the support, guidance and teaching from the College.

Michelle Dowse, Principal and CEC of HoW College, said everyone was delighted with the students' achievements and proud of their outstanding results.

"The 100 per cent pass rates and rising grades reflect the hard work, ambition, and support that define Heart of Worcestershire College.

"These achievements are not just numbers - they represent futures being built and dreams being realised, with several of our students heading off to universities across the country."

The MPs from Bromsgrove, Bradley Thomas, Redditch, Chris Bloore and Worcester, Tom Collins, all congratulated the students - visit this story or our website for more.

Visit: howcollege.ac.uk for more or HoW College and qualifications.



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Editor's Comment

“ JUDGING by the number of people who have contacted us, the dust clouds plaguing those living near the Perryfields development needs addressing.

Maybe the developer is compliant with regulations and requirements but if it is having a detrimental impact, something needs to be done to negate it.

Surely it is good practice for companies building properties to go the extra mile to minimise disruption and distress for those already living in the area they are operating in.

This is clearly not happening here.



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Letters to the Editor

The Bromsgrove Standard, Webb House, Church Green East, Redditch, Worcestershire B98 8BP
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Fly flags with pride, but not jingoism

I DO NOT write to the papers, but this time feel compelled to do so.

I, for one, was delighted to see the flags suddenly appear, as it seemed the councils had totally overlooked VE Day and especially VJ Day commemorations.

The excuse that flags on lamp posts was dangerous overlooks the fact Birmingham City Council does this on a regular basis, celebrating commonwealth Games, and other events. Granted they must be erected safely but those I have seen so far are high enough to out of harm's way.

As for the traffic islands, it's an interesting development, maybe a step too far, but born from frustration at the council's stance.

A little more pride in our great nation will not go amiss, as long as jingoism does not creep in.

Kerry J Parkes

Being tolerant is a true British value

UNFORTUNATELY, the St George Cross flag has been hijacked by far-right groups and can be seen as racist so its meaning can be misunderstood. Its use should be used with care, and if the idea behind all of this is the meaning of being patriotic then maybe you should be flying the Union flag.

It should be presented the right way up and most of the Union flags I have seen are flying upside down.

Notwithstanding this there are rules and laws on what you can and cannot do with regards street furniture and painting on roads. You should not be breaking these rules and laws as doing that in itself is not being very patriotic.

So, I think it can be seen as being racist and I think they probably are meant in that way.

I feel there are lots of ways of showing you are patriotic that don't involve you having to break the any rules and laws or being misunderstood.

I feel one of the things that make the United Kingdom a wonderful place to be a part of are our rules and laws.

I am proud to be British and proud to be a citizen of the United Kingdom and being inclusive and showing tolerance and being aware of other people's feelings, I think is a part of being British.

Perry

Signs of prejudice and intimidation

I WISH to express my view that all these English St George's flags are very disturbing.

They express to me prejudice rather than pride. They must be very intimidating to non-British/English people.

John Cochrane, Barnt Green

These 'patriots' only causing real offence

I CONDEMN the flags that have been put up in Blackwell because they are a clear demonstration of the racist xenophobia that has been displayed outside many hotels housing asylum seekers.

These flags taint our strong and friendly village community and intimidate those who want to speak out, who want to remove the flags, but are too scared to do so.

The suggestion that the flags are benign patriotism is laughable.

If the people putting up the flags were genuine patriots who wanted to bring hope to their communities, they would

appreciate the extreme offence caused and remove them. Instead they relish the disharmony, seek confrontation and take pleasure in intimidating the kind, tolerant people who actually try to make our local communities lovely places in which to live.

Name and address supplied.

Activities are intrusive to my community

I WRITE regarding your August 29 article 'St George Crosses painted on Bromsgrove and south Birmingham mini roundabout'.

My view is strongly against the guerrilla campaign of anonymously attaching flags to lamp posts and painting mini-roundabouts in my community.

If members of the community wish to fly flags, they can do so on their own property or in their cars.

The campaign of attaching flags to lamp posts has been done anonymously by persons unknown, for motives undeclared.

They do not represent my community and I view their activities as intrusive.

W A Welch, Blackwell

Council should act and take them down

I LIVE in the village of Blackwell and regularly travel through Bromsgrove and Barnt Green.

I'm horrified by the appearance of the flags and can see them as nothing but racist, xenophobic and anti-migrant.

It sent a chill through me to see so many flags flying, knowing abhorrent views they represent. I feel very strongly the council should act and take them down.

The painted roundabouts are nothing but mindless vandalism.

The flags used were hijacked many years ago by the far right and, sadly, will always be associated with that movement.

I think it is naive to think they can be seen in any other light. It is more than a coincidence the flags appeared hot on the heels of the Epping Forest hotel protests, where people were draped in both the St George Cross and the Union flag.

Many people in our villages and town are equally appalled by the flags and hopefully their opinions will be expressed in future coverage of the actions.

Name and address supplied.

Putting flag outside my house in my decision

I AM very proud of being English and British. I wave my flag proudly when England play sport, when the Olympics is on and on Remembrance Sunday etc.

In relation to the flags on lamp posts and traffic islands I can't say whether I support the sentiment or not. I don't know who is erecting and painting the flags, nor what their motive is.

If I were engaged in raising the profile of the flag for pure national pride, I wouldn't hide my identity or be silent on my reasons for doing so.

Regarding the act of painting traffic islands, I don't support it. It is dangerous to all road users.

In relation to flags on lampposts, if the erector wants to do it outside their own house, that's just about OK. But not outside my house. That's my and my neighbours' decision to make.

Erecting flags on lamp posts is also dangerous to other road users. Ladders can slip and flags can blow down in the wind and cause accidents. A couple of cable ties and a pair of scissors isn't how the local council and Highways Agency erect road signs.

Let's see why people are doing this first and then we can all make an informed assessment of how we feel.

Tony

Matthew J. Elmes & Co.

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Chris Bloore MP with manager Victoria Phillimore and her team.

Age UK shop toasts its first year

THE AGE UK shop at the Winyates Centre has celebrated its first anniversary. Since opening its doors in 2024, the shop has become a valued part of the local community, offering a wide range of quality items at affordable prices. With donations regularly coming in from residents, local businesses and even leading high street retailers, the store has quickly built strong links across Redditch. The shop's 12-month anniversary is a milestone in Age UK's ongoing commitment to supporting older people across Worcestershire. Proceeds from the Winyates store go directly towards the charity's services, ensuring older residents have access to the

help, advice and support they need. Redditch MP Chris Bloore recently visited the store. He said: "It's a fantastic example of how charity shops can provide quality, affordable items while supporting vital work for older people. "Victoria and the team are doing an incredible job and I want to thank them for their dedication. "On my visit, I was even delighted to find a childhood favourite board game – Super Striker – showing just how diverse and exciting the stock can be. "I'd encourage residents to pop in and support this brilliant local resource."

PD Indy scent off for training

A WEST Mercia Police dog is currently undergoing training for one of the most demanding roles in policing. PD Indy (pictured) is set to become a Victim Recovery Dog (VRD). The training will enable her to

learn to detect human scent beneath the surface of the water. It is a skill so rare that only a handful of dogs in the UK are qualified to do it. Once trained, she will be able to assist officers in searching lakes, rivers and other bodies of water

for missing people, helping bring answers and closure to families during heart-breaking times. She will join fellow VRDs PD Lupo, PD Jabba and PD Maggie whose incredible noses can pick up scent from a submerged body - even in deep or fast-moving water.



From the edge of a boat or a river bank, they alert their handler and guide divers to the exact location. West Mercia Police said: "This is one of the toughest disciplines in the police dog world and Indy's progress is a huge credit to her dedicated handler and trainers." Such will be Indy's skill-set, she will not just serve West Mercia - she will support other forces across the country too. The force added: "We're so proud of her and the vital work she'll be doing."

A MAN in his 70s was assaulted on his doorstep by a robber who forced his way in and stole a gold ring. The vicious attack happened around 9pm on Thursday and left the victim needing hospital treatment.

Police officers located and arrested a 28-year-old man on suspicion of robbery the following day - on Friday. Following the incident, the force is now appealing for help in recovering the stolen ring.

Visit this story at bromsgrovestandard.co.uk to see a picture of the ring. Witnesses or anyone with information should email caitlin.allen@westmercia.police.uk with what they know.

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Exam results reflect hard work

A TOTAL of 66.3 per cent of students from across Worcestershire achieved grade 4 or above in their GCSE results.

The figure is above the West Midlands regional average of 62.9 per cent and just short of the national average for England – that stands at 67.1 per cent.

Initial data, provided voluntarily to Worcestershire County Council by 20 of the 35 state-funded schools, shows 40.2 per cent of students achieved strong passes (grade 5 and above) in English and maths.

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

More than 60 per cent of students – 61.9 per cent – achieved a standard pass (grade 4 or above) in both English and maths.

Students also averaged a pass grade of 4.06 across their English Baccalaureate (EBacc) subjects, with 13.7 per cent achieving strong passes across all EBacc areas.

Adam Johnston, director of children's services at Worcestershire County Council, said: "Congratulations to all stu-

dents receiving their GCSE results. "These results are the outcome of real perseverance and commitment and I want to acknowledge the important role of school staff and families who have supported our students along the way.

"GCSEs mark a key milestone and I hope results day gives young people the confidence to move forward positively into further study, training, or employment.

"We wish them every success for the future."

Anyone gaining results and wanting careers, training, skills or fur-

ther education information can do so from the Careers Worcs 16 to 24 Careers Hubs.

The hubs are a collaboration between Worcestershire County Council and the Department for Work and Pensions, working in partnership with local training, education, work, and wellbeing providers to support Worcestershire's young adults.

These dedicated spaces are for anyone aged between 16 and 24 looking for employment, education, training, and skills advice/support to help kickstart their future.

The supportive team can help young adults explore their options and find the right path, no matter their grades on results day.

Careers Worcs 16 to 24 hubs are located at The Hive, Worcester; inside Heart of Worcestershire College, Peakman Street, Redditch; The Point at Kidderminster College, Market Street, Kidderminster; Seetec Pluss at Parkside, Market Street, Bromsgrove; and Workpays, Victoria Square, Droitwich.

Visit careersworcs.co.uk or call 0300 666 3 666 for more information.

Growth Hub aims to help firms flourish with tailored support

THE Worcestershire Growth Hub is offering tailored support to help businesses across the county grow and succeed.

Funded by Government, Worcestershire County Council and local district councils, the Hub provides help in key areas including Talent and Skills, Business Advice and Finance, and Innovation and Growth.

Councillor Alan Amos, cabinet member with responsibility for business and skills, said: "The Worcestershire

Growth Hub is here to help every business in Worcestershire succeed.

"Whether you're a new start-up or a long-established company, I strongly encourage you to get in touch with the Hub and explore the opportunities on offer.

"The advice, funding and connections available could make all the difference in helping your business achieve its ambitions."

The Hub hosts and promotes a range of events throughout the year, supporting networking and giving busi-

nesses access to expert insight. It also shares tender opportunities and maintains a directory of co-working spaces available across the county.

Support is available for businesses looking at research and development grants, boosting productivity, cutting costs, or accessing help with recruitment and staff training.

More information is available on the Worcestershire Growth Hub's Facebook and LinkedIn pages, or by signing up to its monthly newsletter.



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The programme is set to start next month. s

Campaign to get more to report issues

A CAMPAIGN to help encourage victims to report non-contact sexual offences has been launched across the West Mercia policing region.

The social media campaign, launched on Wednesday (August 20), aims to raise awareness of crimes such as indecent exposure, voyeurism, revenge porn and uskirting.

These crimes have historically been overlooked as forms of violence against women and girls, with victims often not believing they are serious enough to report.

West Mercia Police is concerned that these crimes, which can wrongly seem like low level criminality, can often lead to much more serious crimes such as rape and sexual assault.

In recent years, the murders of three women covered extensively in the media of Sarah Everard, Zara Aleena and Libby Squire were carried out by men with histories of non-contact sexual offending.

West Mercia Police's campaign aims to encourage victims to report these offences so police can take action against the perpetrators before the offending escalates.

Detective Superintendent Emma Whitworth for vulnerability and safeguarding said: "By raising awareness, we hope it will encourage people to report these incidents."

"Many women may have brushed it off

as something that happens to all women, or [not] realise it is a criminal offence. Our message is it does not have to be brushed off and when it happens we want to know."

"If you do report one of these offences to us, we will investigate and do our utmost to get those perpetrators put before the courts."

"Reporting will also allow us to better understand patterns of offending to assist with locating those that commit such crimes. It really does matter."

The force's police and crime commissioner John Campion said he was committed to playing his part in ensuring sexual offences in all forms are 'eradicated from society'.

He added: "That's why tackling the offenders who cause the most harm is one of my central priorities within my Safer Communities Plan."

"But whilst these crimes sadly exist, its vital victims get the support they need to cope and recover."

Support for victims is available via the PCC's Victim Support Gateway. Visit <https://www.victimsupport.org.uk/resources/west-mercia/> for more information.

To contact police, search Report West Mercia Police online. Always call 999 in an emergency.

Alternatively, contact Crimestoppers anonymously online or via 0800 555 111.

Time to boost your skills

A NEW year of Adult Learning Worcestershire courses gets under way this September, giving adults across the county the chance to gain skills for everyday life and to boost employability.

Adult Learning Worcestershire, part of Worcestershire County Council's Learning Services, deliver courses in friendly, supportive settings across the county including their dedicated learning centres at Fairfield in Warndon, Worcester, Willow Trees at Church Hill in Redditch, within Worcestershire libraries, and also online.

This year's courses include, creative and digital skills, English and maths, hair and beauty and school support.

Councillor Alan Amos, Worcestershire County Council's cabinet member with responsibility for business and skills, said: "Adults deserve as many routes as possible to build their skill-set and secure good jobs."

"I am already spearheading the drive for more adults to look at apprenticeships and Skills Bootcamps to support them into employment, and any course that helps adults gain skills and confidence for life and for work is a real boon for them and for Worcestershire's economic future."

Anna Lee, manager of learning services for Worcestershire County Council, added: "I'm really excited to see what the new academic year brings, and looking at our range of courses starting in September I know that our learners will gain so much from them."

"Our Adult Learning offer helps people build confidence and practical skills that make a real difference at home, in the community, and at work. Whether you're upskilling for employment or learning something new for life, there's a course for you."

Visit www.worcestershire.gov.uk/courses or call 01905 728537 to book.



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Trip to the opticians helps Janet keep an eye on blood pressure

THE IMPORTANCE of regular eye tests have been highlighted by a Worcestershire woman whose dangerously high blood pressure was discovered by her optician.

Janet Salisbury, 86, visited Specsavers in Evesham for a routine two-year appointment and was seen by store director and optometrist, Amit Rana who carried out a full eye examination.

This included an optical coherence tomography (OCT) scan which allows for a more detailed examination of the back of the eyes.

The examinations showed a small bleed at the back of Janet's left eye, which can be a sign of more serious conditions like high blood pressure and diabetes, so was referred to her GP for further tests.

She visited her GP a few days later and had her blood pressure measured, which was dangerously high at 200/110 mmHg. For a person her age it should be 150/90mmHg when measured by a healthcare professional. It was then that her doctor discovered her current medication wasn't working as it should be.

"My blood pressure has been high in the past, so I take medication and check it regularly," Janet said. "Had it not been for this eye test, I wouldn't have known that I needed a different prescription. Fortunately, I was able to try an alternative medication so it's now under control."



Amit Rana, optometrist and store director at Specsavers Evesham. s

"When Amit showed me the results of the scan, I was quite worried. My mum had experienced a burst blood vessel behind her eye which eventually caused her to lose her sight, so I was grateful to Amit for spotting the bleed when he did," she added.

Amit said he was delighted to hear that Janet's blood pressure has been reduced and that it is being closely monitored.

"Lots of people don't realise that an eye test isn't just about assessing your vision and her story really helps demonstrate that," he said.

"We recommend that everyone has their eyes tested at least every two years, unless you are experiencing any symptoms or issues with your vision, in which case you should visit your optician sooner."

Undiagnosed high blood pressure or hypertension is known as the 'silent killer' as it often presents with no noticeable symptoms.

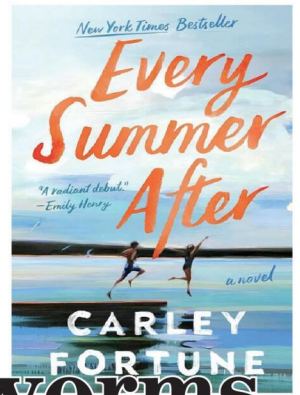
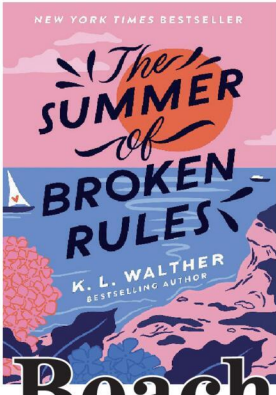
If not treated it can increase risk of serious conditions such as stroke, heart disease, vascular dementia and kidney disease.

According to Government figures it is estimated that up to 4.2m people living in England and Wales may be living with it.

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Beach essentials for bookworms

ALTHOUGH the weather is still clinging onto summer, Autumn is just around the corner.

But for those who are yet to have their annual holiday or who are eking out the last of the sunshine, what better way to relax than to devour a good book.

Here are five of the best books to keep the summer vibes alive.

Slow Burn Summer by Josie Silver

If you're in the market for a heartfelt romance to lounge with by the pool, Josie Silver's *Slow Burn Summer* is exactly the kind of novel that will keep you turning pages long after your sunscreen wears off.

Set against the golden haze of a sun-soaked English summer, Silver's latest weaves together grief, friendship, and the healing power of unexpected love. The story follows Clara, a woman reeling after a painful loss, who retreats to a sleepy

seaside village to recalibrate her life. There, she meets Jake, the local boat repairman with a complicated past and zero interest in summer flings - or so he says.

What unfolds is a true slow burn - long walks, hesitant conversations, simmering chemistry, and emotional revelations that sneak up on you like a sunburn you didn't see coming. Silver excels at writing relationships that feel earned, tender, and emotionally rich, and Clara and Jake's journey is no exception.

Same Time Next Summer by Annabel Monaghan

This is your "childhood sweetheart returns" fix - but make it emotionally intelligent and satisfyingly grown-up. Sam the boy who once owned Alice's heart, shows up unexpectedly when she returns to her family's beach house to plan her wedding.

Alice's current life is practical,

polished, and perfectly on track - but being around Sam forces her to remember who she used to be.

The narrative flits between past and present, exploring first love, heartbreak, and the question: do people really change, or do we just forget who we were?

It's wistful, deeply romantic, and perfect for those who love a second chance love story with a sharp edge of longing.

Every Summer After by Carley Fortune

This one takes the classic summer love story and layers it with regret, emotional reckoning, and a ticking-clock structure.

Persephone spent every summer at her family's lake house, where she fell in love with neighbor Sam.

Something happened between them - something big and the story toggles between those golden summers and a reunion years later,

when Sam's mother dies and Percy returns.

It's atmospheric and raw in the best way. Perfect for fans of nuanced characters and stories about timing, forgiveness, and enduring connection.

The Summer of Broken Rules by K.L. Walther

Set on Martha's Vineyard, this young adult new adult crossover has the feeling of a Nancy Meyers movie mixed with a Taylor Swift bridge.

The plot revolves around Meredith, grieving the loss of her sister, who joins a massive family wedding where they're playing a traditional game of "Assassin."

She meets Wit, a groomsman who quickly becomes her unexpected ally - and possibly more.

This book balances emotional undertones with playful banter and sunshine-soaked romance.

It's heartfelt but not heavy, with

beach bonfires, big family energy, and the kind of love story that feels like catching your breath after laughing too hard.

One Italian Summer by Rebecca Serle

This is not your typical love story - it's more about self-love and reconnection through grief.

After her mother dies, Katy takes the trip to Positano they were meant to do together.

Once there, she meets a woman who seems uncannily like her mother - only thirty years younger.

What follows is part ghost story, part time slip, part magical metaphor, but all wrapped in Italian beauty: sun-drenched cliffs, lemon groves, and cobblestone alleys.

The writing is lyrical, and while there's a touch of romance, the emotional payoff is more spiritual than sexy. Ideal for readers who want depth with their beach read.



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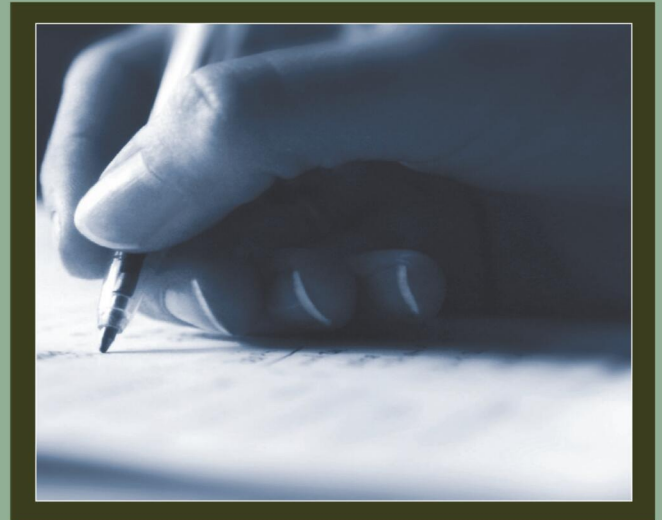
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SUDOKU

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

HARD

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

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

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									23		

ACROSS

- Wander (4)
- Fraud (8)
- Muddle (4)
- Adherent (8)
- Shows (12)
- Attack (6)
- Coma (6)
- Student of insects (12)
- Lift (8)
- Greet (4)
- Scatter (8)
- Refuse (4)

DOWN

- Curative (8)
- Adopts (7)
- Genial (6)
- Magnetism (10)
- Result (5)
- Firearms (4)
- Animate (10)
- Cruelly (8)
- Secret (7)
- Spongy (6)
- Wants (5)
- Loan (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.

DAWN

Mend by knitting

Mountain lake

Move on an axis

One from Ankara, e.g.

Elephant's prong

DUSK

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.

- 6284237** gives a bird;
454 gives a second bird;
189 gives a winged creature.

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

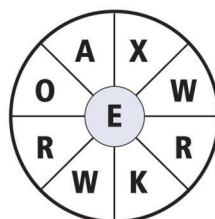
CODEWORD

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.

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

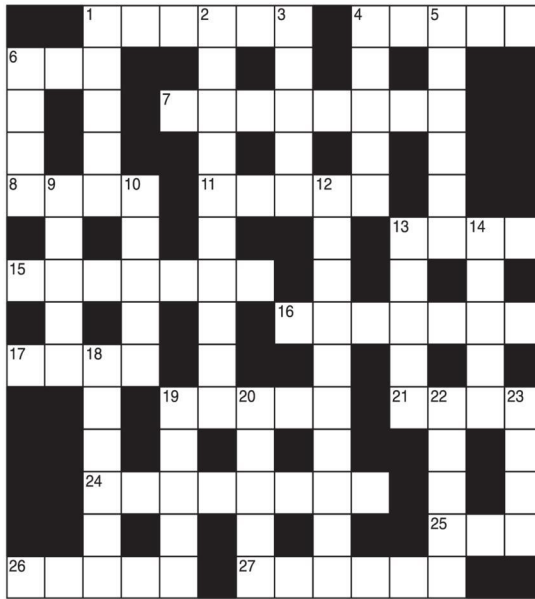


How you rate
 6 words: average
 9 words: good
 12 words: very good
 15 or more: excellent.

GENERAL KNOWLEDGE CROSSWORD

ACROSS

- 1 A shoal of fish (6)
- 4 A sound: a,e,i,o or u (5)
- 6 & 19 Across Cricket trophy (3,5)
- 7 Liliaceous plant, immortal in Greek mythology (8)
- 8 Chimpanzees, gibbons, orangutans and gorillas (4)
- 11 City and province of northern Italy, famous for its violets (5)
- 13 Small vipers of southern Europe (4)
- 15, 25 & 24 Across Opera by Glinka, from a poem by Pushkin (7,3,8)
- 16 & 17 Across Shrewd Chinese detective, played on screen by Peter Ustinov and others (7,4)
- 17 See 16 Across
- 19 See 6 Across
- 21 Bird that flies high as it sings (4)
- 24 See 15 Across
- 25 See 15 Across
- 26 Very deep place; a chasm (5)
- 27 Greek goddess of wisdom, war and industry (6)



DOWN

- 1 The river which flows through Paris (5)
- 2 The gullet (10)
- 3 Surname of the composer of The Land of Smiles and The Merry Widow (5)
- 4 Strong Russian alcoholic spirit (5)
- 5 See 18 Down
- 6 Low-pitched brass musical instrument (4)
- 9 Silk or cotton cloth with a long nap (5)
- 10 Common Indian antelope (5)
- 12 Antediluvian Hebrew-patriarch of immense age (10)
- 13 According to Longfellow, the month "in Seventy-five" of Paul Revere's Ride (5)
- 14 Monastic officer (5)
- 18 & 5 Down Character loved by Scarlett O'Hara in Gone With the Wind (6,6)
- 19 The great mountain system forming the western fringe of South America (5)
- 20 Principal port of Israel (5)
- 22 Seaweeds, vegetal plankton, etc. (5)
- 23 Scottish-born pirate, known as 'Captain', hanged in 1701 (4)

SOLUTIONS

ACROSS: 1 School; 4 Vowel; 6 The; 7 Aspidochelone; 8 Apes; 11 Parma; 13 Asp; 15 Russian; 16 Charlie; 17 Chan; 19 Ashes; 21 Lark; 24 Ludmilla; 25 And; 26 Abyss; 27 Athens.
 DOWN: 1 Seine; 2 Oesophagus; 3 Lohan; 4 Vodka; 5 Wilkes; 6 Tuba; 9 Pius; 10 Sasin; 12 Methusalem; 13 April; 14 Prior; 18 Ashley; 19 Andes; 20 Haifa; 22 Algae; 23 Kidd.

General Knowledge Crossword

ACROSS: 1 Room; 3 Cheating; 8 Mess; 9 Partisan; 11 Demonstrate; 13 Assault; 14 Stupor; 17 Entomologist; 20 Elevator; 21 Halt; 22 Disperse; 23 Deny; Down: 1 Remedial; 2 Assumes; 4 Hearty; 5 Attraction; 6 Issue; 7 Guns; 10 Invigorate; 12 Brutally; 15 Private; 16 Porous; 18 Needs; 19 Lend.

Crossword

WORDWHEEL Pathfinder Sampha, Skepta, Benjamin Clementine, Young Fathers, James Blake, Alt J, PJ Harvey, The xx, Speech Debelle, Elbow, Klaxons, Ms Dynamite, Badly Drawn Boy, Talvin Singh, Gomez, Roni Size, Pulp, FURTYVELY Portishead, M People, Suede, Primal Scream.

Niner

17=N, 18=Z, 19=W, 20=O, 21=Y, 22=L, 23=T, 24=S, 25=U, 26=V

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

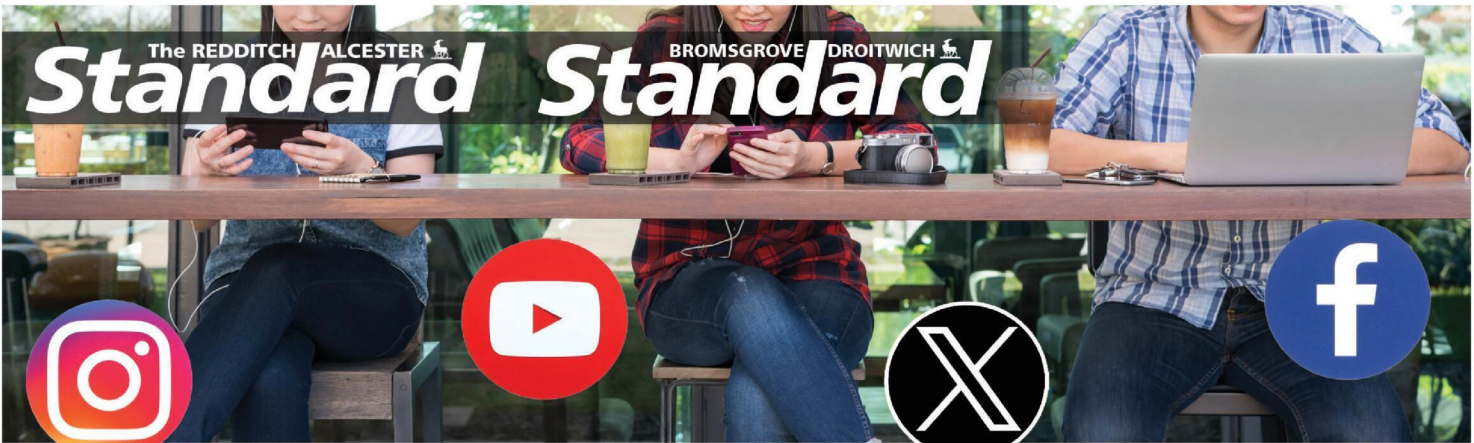
Codeword

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

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8	3	6	2	7	1	5	4	9

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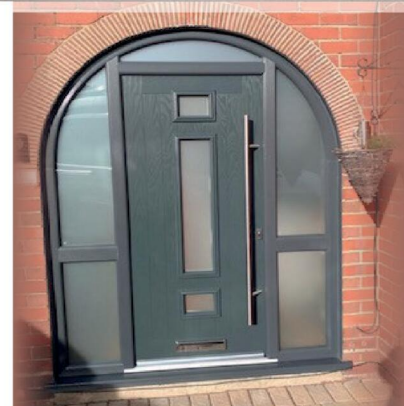
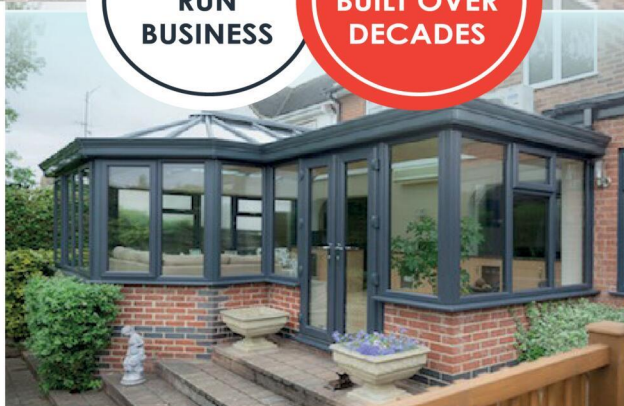


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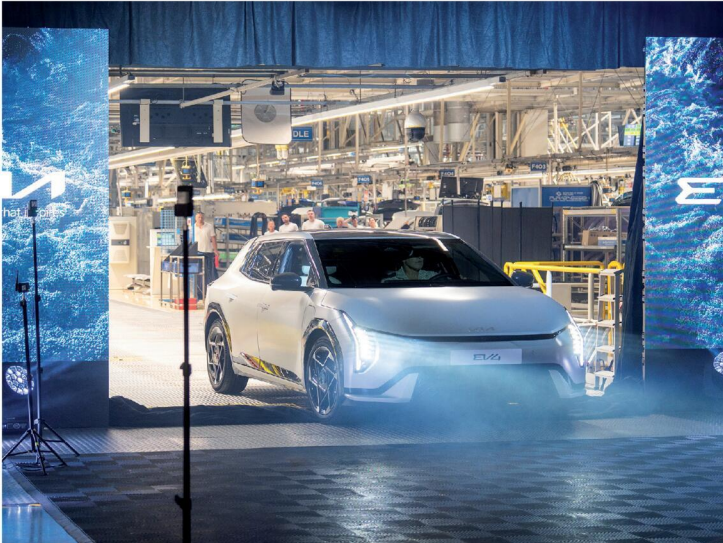
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Motoring

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THE five-door Kia EV4 is the brand's first fully electric vehicle to be manu-

factured in Europe, as Kia begins series production of the new model.

The start of production follows extensive updates to Kia's European manufacturing facility in Slovakia and represents a major step forward in Kia's electrification strategy for the region.

An electric hatchback designed specifically for the European market, the EV4 is assembled exclusively at Kia AutoLand Slovakia.

Marc Hedrich, President and CEO of Kia Europe, said: "The start of EV4 production is a huge milestone for us."

"It demonstrates the technical capability and flexibility of our European operations."

"Slovakia will build fully electric cars alongside models with hybrid and internal combustion powertrains. Through the expansion of our production capabilities, we are supporting our diverse European customer base even more."

Built on Hyundai Motor Group's Electric Global Modular Platform (E-GMP), the EV4 delivers a balance

of performance and efficiency.

It is available with two battery options: a 58.3kWh battery and a larger 81.4kWh variant, offering a range of up to 391 miles on a single charge.

The EV4 boasts advanced energy innovations, such as Vehicle-to-Load (V2L) and Vehicle-to-Grid (V2G) capabilities.

The model features an aluminium bonnet to reduce weight and enhance handling, as well as the choice of five eye-catching exterior paint finishes.

The EV4's design combines bold, sharp lines with Kia's award-winning 'Opposites United' philosophy.

It was first unveiled globally in February 2025 and is tailored to meet the needs of customers seeking innovation, performance, and electric mobility.

Kia's manufacturing facility in Zilina, Slovakia, is a cornerstone of the company's European operations. Opened in 2004, the two-square-kilometre plant is strategically located for serving key European markets. It employs around 3,700 people and operates with more than 600 advanced robots.

The plant is capable of producing multiple model variants simultaneously across five main production areas: press, body, paint, engine, and assembly.

Following a 108-million invest-

ment, the production lines have been modernised with new technologies, including an EV battery conveyor at the chassis line in the assembly shop.

The Zilina plant produces other models such as the Kia XCeed and Kia Sportage.

This includes hybrid and plug-in hybrid variants, which have accounted for 25 per cent of the facility's total annual output as of 2024.

With an annual capacity of 350,000 vehicles and 540,000 engines, the facility has produced more than five million units

since opening, which are exported to 83 countries.

These figures account for approximately 11 per cent of the company's global vehicle output.

Kia has integrated sustainability measures into the plant's operations.

Since 2014, Kia Slovakia has reduced electricity consumption per vehicle by 11 per cent, water usage by 28 per cent, and CO2 emissions by 13 per cent.

The factory currently runs entirely on renewable electricity.

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Anonymous



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DEATHS

MORGAN Geoffrey 'Geoff'

Aged 88 years.
Passed away unexpectedly on
the 14th August 2025.
A much loved Husband to Jill, Father,
Grandfather and Great Grandfather.
Geoff will be greatly missed.
A service to celebrate Geoff's life will take
place at Redditch Crematorium on
Wednesday 10th September 2025 at 2pm.
Family flowers only please, donations if so
desired to Wythall Animal Sanctuary
may be sent to :
Thomas Brothers,
The Funeral Directors,
Birchfield House,
494 Evesham Road,
Redditch B97 5JF
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Thank you



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DEATHS

FARRELL Sybil Margaret

Aged 84 years.
Passed away peacefully on
Friday 15th August 2025.
Now reunited with late Husband Tom.
A much-loved Mom to Richard and
Mother-In-Law to Donna.
A devoted Nan to Niamh and Natalie.
Sybil will be greatly missed by all her family
and friends.
A service to celebrate Sybil's life will take
place on Thursday 11th September 2025
at Redditch Crematorium at 11.45am.
Family flowers only please donations if so
desired to Acorn's Children's Hospice to:
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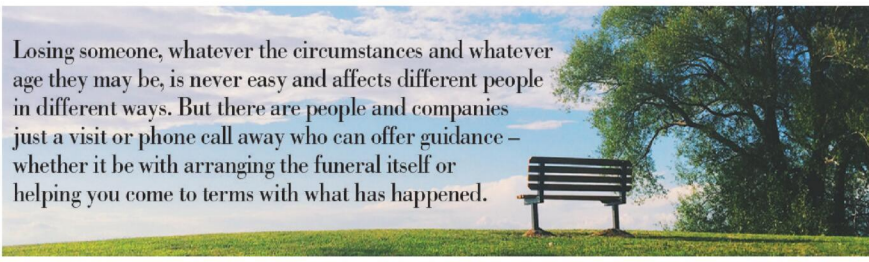
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Losing someone, whatever the circumstances and whatever age they may be, is never easy and affects different people in different ways. But there are people and companies just a visit or phone call away who can offer guidance – whether it be with arranging the funeral itself or helping you come to terms with what has happened.




Whatever the occasion, why not send your loved ones a message.... *Call our team on* **01527 588688**



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Apprenticeships are funded by the UK Government and there are some rules which we need to consider to establish eligibility for this opportunity. In particular:

- You will have been a resident in the UK for the last 3 years prior to the start of the apprenticeship or fit the criteria of eligible residency status in the Apprenticeship Funding Rules.
- You do not already hold the same or similar qualifications.

Please visit our website: Stratford-on-Avon District Council - Current Vacancies or email hr@stratford-dc.gov.uk to see the full recruitment information pack and to apply.

For an informal chat about the role, please contact Macer Nash, Democratic Services Manager at macer.nash@stratford-dc.gov.uk or Ann Banks, Senior Democratic Services Officer at ann.banks@stratford-dc.gov.uk

Applications will close at midnight on Sunday 14 September. Interviews will be held week beginning 29 September.

The Council is committed to equality of opportunity and aims to create a welcoming, inclusive workplace where we are all able to bring our whole selves to work and perform at our best.

WWW.STRATFORD.GOV.UK

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We seek a personable individual to provide a professional welcome to school visitors, assist with deliveries and provide security assistance.

Full details and application forms are available on the School website:

www.bromsgrove-school.co.uk

Closing date for all applications 1 September 2025.

The School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. Applicants must be willing to undergo child protection screening including checks with past employers.



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WINTERFOLD SCHOOL NURSERY ASSISTANT

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We seek a qualified (Level 3), professional and personable individual to carry out this role in our Woodhouse Nursery, situated within the grounds of Winterfold House School.

Working hours are Monday to Thursday 8.00 a.m.-4.00 p.m., Friday 8.00 a.m.-6.00 p.m., term time only plus 6 weeks of holiday club during school holiday periods.

Full details and application forms are available on the school website: www.bromsgrove-school.co.uk
Informal discussions with the Deputy Head of EYFS, Mrs. Belinda Miles 01562 777234

Closing date for all applications is Monday 8th September 2025.

The School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people.

Applicants must be willing to undergo child protection screening including checks with past employers and the Disclosure Barring Service.



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Hours & Pay

- **Term time only**, plus some additional hours during peak periods or non-term time.
- **Up to 921 hours per year**, we are happy to consider a range of working patterns and hour combinations. Hours are typically worked at a regular weekly rate during term time. Please tell us your preferred hours in your application
- **Annual salary:** £13,268 (based on 921 hours) – Full-time equivalent: £24,305.

About the Role

You'll play a key part in providing high-quality catering for students and staff. This is a fast-paced, rewarding environment where teamwork and a positive attitude really matter.

We're looking for someone who:

- Has a **cheerful, can-do attitude** and enjoys working with people.
- Is **reliable, punctual, and flexible**.
- Works well as part of a team in a busy kitchen.
- Is **well-organised and hardworking**.
- Has **previous experience in commercial catering** (preferred, but not essential).

Why Join Us?

- Be part of a **welcoming and happy team**.
- Contribute to a **successful and valued** part of the school.
- Enjoy school holidays off (with some peak-time work).
- Opportunities to develop catering skills in a supportive environment.

Apply Today!

This is a rolling vacancy, and applications will be reviewed as they are received. Interviews may be conducted, and appointments made, at any time, so don't wait to apply.

To find out more or to download an application form, visit our job vacancies page on our website at <https://website.droitwichspahigh.worcs.sch.uk/>

We look forward to hearing from you!

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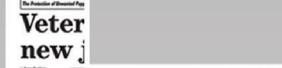
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PUBLIC NOTICES

PUBLIC NOTICES

Warwickshire County Council

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

CLEEVE ROAD, MARLCLIFF
Order Effect: Road Closed to vehicular traffic.
Reason for Order: To enable works for repair/ replacement of manhole frame and cover.
Order Commences: 31 August 2025 for up to 18 months.

Access & Diversion: Clevee Road, Honeybourne Road, Salford Road, Norton Lenchwick Bypass, A46, Badsey Road, Birmingham Road, Blackminster Station Road, Main Street, Evesham Road, The Green, Bidford Road and vice versa.
Contractor: Customer Solutions Plus, Tel: 07918 298 599.

GREEN LANE, STUDLEY
Order Effect: Road closed to vehicular traffic.
Reason for Order: To safely enable works to install new hydrant.
Order Commences: 1 September 2025 for up to 18 months.

Access & Diversion: Redditch Road, High Street, Station Road, The Slough, Kiln Close, Brickyard Lane, Cycleway from Brickyard Lane To County Boundary and vice versa.
Contractor: Chevron Traffic Management Ltd, Tel: 03300 080 820.

HARDWICK LANE, STUDLEY
Order Effect: Road closed to vehicular traffic from Henley Road to the crossroads.
Reason for Order: To enable works for installation of a rising main and connection to sewer.
Order Commences: 1 September 2025 for up to 18 months.

Access & Diversion: Will be signed.
Contractor: RA Dalton Ltd, Tel: 07384 462 528.

SCHOOL ROAD, SALFORD PRIORS
Order Effect: Road closed to vehicular traffic.
Reason for Order: To safely enable manhole repair works.
Order Commences: 5 September 2025 for up to 18 months.

Access & Diversion: Evesham Road and vice versa.
Contractor: Sapphire Utility Solutions, Tel: 08009 992 266.

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

COCK BEVINGTON ROAD, SALFORD PRIORS
Order Effect: Road closed to vehicular traffic.
Reason for Order: Works to repair washout chamber.
Order Commences: 15 September 2025 for up to 18 months.

Access & Diversion: No diversion available.
Contractor: Chevron Traffic Management Ltd, Tel: 03300 080 820.

C39 SPERNAL LANE, SPERNAL
Order Effect: Road Closed to vehicular traffic from Fork Hill to the A435.
Reason for Order: Carriageway patching and associated works, 08.00hrs-16.00hrs.
Order Commences: 16 September 2025 for up to 18 months.

Access & Diversion: A435, Arden Road, Tything Road West, Kinwarton Farm Road, Kinwarton Road, Captains Hill, School Road and vice versa.
Contractor: Balfour Beatty, Tel: 03452 415 302.

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

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

S Duxbury, Director of Strategy, Planning & Governance, Shire Hall, Warwick CV34 4RL Date 29 Aug 2025

PUBLIC NOTICES

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

Name of applicant/club: Caribbean Flavour Restaurant and Bar
Postal address of premises/club premises or description: 76 Ipsley Street, Redditch B98 7AE
The applicant proposes to carry out the following licensable activities or qualifying club activities on or from the above premises/club premises:
Restaurant serving food; Licensed bar sale of alcohol; Music; Late night refreshment
Representations by interested parties or responsible authorities should be made in writing to Worcestershire Regulatory Services, Wyre Forest House, Finepoint Way, Kidderminster, DY11 7WF or enquiries@worscsregs.gov.uk
From 22/08/2025 to 19/09/2025

The record of the application is available for inspection by appointment. Please call us on 01905 822799 for an appointment.
IT IS AN OFFENCE, LIABLE ON CONVICTION TO AN UNLIMITED FINE, UNDER SECTION 158 OF THE LICENSING ACT 2003 TO KNOWINGLY OR RECKLESSLY MAKE A FALSE STATEMENT IN, OR IN CONNECTION WITH, AN APPLICATION

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Manual recline chair £60
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Can deliver 07703 925662

BEDS NEW/Doubles £95
Singles £59
King size £159
Second hand doubles £49
Singles £29
Fridges £49
Freezers £59
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CHAIR Black gas lift desk chair good condition / instructions height 77.5 - 89.5 £10
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DINNER set including plates, bowls, teapot, mugs, cups & saucers, 'Sunny Days' VGC £30
01527 524412

SLEEPING bags Coleman Xylo pair of with hoods & colotherm insulation unused £45
01527 524412

MISCELLANEOUS

CAMPING mats pair of Gelert single self inflating mats used once £20
01527 524412

GILET LunaRider Reflective wear child's gilet size 8-10 new with tags. £10
01527 524412

GENERATOR 240 / 12 volts boxed 20 hours use only £150
07837056866

MOUNTAIN Bike £40
folding mountain bike £80
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AMICA Double Oven Electric Cooker good working order £80.
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ROMAN CRINKLE BLOUSES, cap sleeve. Polyester / cotton. One white, one pink-same design. Size medium 12 / 14. £3.00 each or both for £5.00. (I can forward photos if interested) Tel: 07934132759

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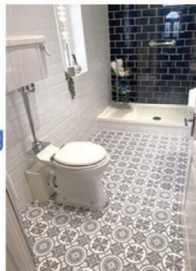
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Derby delight for Saltmen as Tilley and Hurdman down Plums

Charlie Tilley heads Spa into the lead. Picture by Mathew Mason.



Perry Moss curls a shot towards goal. Picture by Mathew Mason.



by Aaron Sutcliffe
aaron.sutcliffe@bullivantmedia.com

FOOTBALL: DROITWICH Spa returned to winning ways with a 2-0 victory against Worcestershire rivals Pershore Town.

Goals from Charlie Tilley and Josh Hurdman in the space of four minutes at the end of the first half helped Spa to victory at the Community Stadium.

That came after Droitwich played out a goalless draw with Highworth Town as Spa recovered from a six-goal drubbing against Slimbridge to record successive clean sheets.

The results mean Spa sit second in the Hellenic League Premier Division table, level on points with leaders Slimbridge who have two games in-hand.

Andy Crowther's side made a positive start as Hurdman tested Pershore goalkeeper Joe Cunneen in the opening few minutes.

However, the Plums responded with a couple of chances of their own as Archie Thurston went close before Dom Rogerson denied Raheem Spencer.

At the other end, Hurdman almost took the ball past Cunneen only for the Pershore goalkeeper to stick out a hand and gather the ball.

Spa thought they had won a

penalty on 23 minutes when Alex Dugmore drew a foul in the box and the referee pointed to the spot.

However, following consultation with his assistant, the referee reversed his initial decision as play continued.

Spa remained on top as Hurdman shot over before Cunneen turned Dugmore's effort behind at the near post.

However, Droitwich eventually broke the deadlock on 40 minutes when Perry Moss chipped the ball into the path of Tilley who headed home from close range.

And the Saltmen doubled their lead four minutes later as Hurdman pounced on a loose ball in the penalty area to volley home.

Pershore almost halved the deficit early in the second half only for Yuri Quintas to head off target.

Spa almost sealed the points when Hurdman charged down Cunneen's attempted clearance which ricocheted behind.

Hurdman then went close with a solo effort which came back off the woodwork.

The pressure continued from Spa as Cunneen made a fine one-handed stop to deny Hurdman from close range.

Droitwich are next in action against Hallen on Saturday, August 30 with kick-off at 3pm at the King George Playing Fields.

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