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Friday, September 26th 2025 Week 39

 droitwichstandard

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Concerns for Andrew as searches continue

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

POLICE are continuing their search for a Droitwich man who has been missing for almost two weeks in a disappearance being described as 'completely out of character'.

Andrew Philips, aged 66, has been missing since Friday, September 12 with West Mercia Police 'growing increasingly concerned for his welfare.'

Most recent details from the force confirm he was last seen at his home on Jackdaw Lane, just off Tagwell Road to the south east of Droitwich, around 7am on the day of his disappearance.

In a statement on September 15, Ch Insp Dan Pilkington said: "We are growing increasingly concerned for Andrew's welfare and continue to appeal to the public.

"Andrew's disappearance is completely out of character and no matter how insignificant you may feel your information is, it could well be the vital piece we need to find him."

"Since police issued an initial appeal and further renewed pleas, the community have come together to conduct searches of their own.

While police have taken to social media to share their appreciation for the community's efforts, they have since issued warnings to those doing so.

A spokesperson for West Mercia Police said



on Facebook: "Thank you so much for your concern and willingness to help. We really appreciate the support.

"At this moment, all searches are being carried out by trained officers and specialist teams to make sure they are thorough and co-ordinated.

"We can't release details of where has been searched, as this could impact current searches and our future search plans."

After members of the public asked how they could help with the search, police encouraged everyone to share their appeal online.

West Mercia Police's Search and Rescue Team went on to share a detailed post with practical advice to anyone searching.

It included not trespassing on private land, staying away from water, keeping a record of who was searching where, wearing sturdy footwear, not bringing dogs and not bringing children or vulnerable people to avoid them witnessing distressing scenes.

A spokesperson said: "Physical searching can be a dangerous activity for untrained persons.

"The urge to find someone and make a difference can lead to increased risk-taking, so this advice is aimed at anyone taking part in a public search to help reduce that risk.

"We recommend that searching of any off-road terrain is left to professional teams."

Anyone with information is asked to call the force on 01905 331030 or 999 if there is an immediate concern.

Andrew is a white man, around 6ft 3ins tall and of slim build. s

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FROM AWARD-WINNING 



For all the latest news and features: bromsgrovestandard.co.uk and droitwichstandard.co.uk

Renew your postal vote

RESIDENTS in Redditch Borough and Bromsgrove District, who vote by post, need to look out for official contact from the council if they need to renew their postal vote since the law has changed.

The Elections Act 2022 meant all postal vote applications must now be renewed every three years so anyone who applied before January 30, 2024, must now renew by January 31, 2026.

Postal voters are being contacted by the council via letter from today (Friday, September 26) and voters who have provided an email address will be contacted from Bromsgrove and Redditch Electoral Shared Services. The email is entitled: 'Action Required! Your Postal Vote is Expiring. Reapply Now'.

Electoral Services manager, Darren Whitney, said: "If yours is coming up for renewal, please don't ignore the email or letter, or mistake it for spam. These are secure and official messages from the council that contain everything you need to renew your postal vote quickly and easy."

Visit redditchbc.gov.uk/elections for further information or email elections@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk or call 01527 881421 for support.

Maggs opens new hub to help needy

THE WORCESTERSHIRE-BASED Maggs Day Centre homeless charity has opened a new hub in Redditch to bring vital support to those who need it.

It marks a major step forward in Maggs' mission to support those experiencing homelessness, hardship, and social exclusion across North Worcestershire, including Bromsgrove, as well as Redditch.

The hub in Church Green East will be home to Maggs' North Worcestershire and Harm Reduction team, offering a welcoming, accessible base where people can receive tailored help and guidance.

Among the services available will be drop-in sessions, housing and benefit advice, access to health and wellbeing support, clothing assistance, and personalised outreach.

These will all be designed to meet people where they are and help them take the next steps

by Isabel Matthews

towards stability and independence. Andy Price, chief executive of Maggs Day Centre, said: "This hub represents a significant step forward for our work in Redditch and Bromsgrove."

"Having a dedicated space here means we can respond faster, work more closely with Redditch Borough Council and our community partners, to ensure those who need us most can access help quickly and without barriers."

"It also gives our teams a safe space from which to meet with clients and deliver support that can be life changing."

Maggs has been working with the community in Redditch and Bromsgrove for several years but now it has a permanent base.

Lauren Ebeling, the service lead for North Worcestershire and Harm Reduction, said: "This isn't just about a building - it's about



Kate Bolton, Tracey Smith, Simone Melia and Lauren Ebeling from the Maggs' Redditch Outreach team. s

creating a base where people know they will be welcomed without judgement and where we can build relationships that make a lasting difference.

"Every donation and support helps us make that possible."

Redditch Borough Councillor, Bill Hartnett, whose portfolio covers housing, said: "Partnership with Maggs strengthens our community's resilience."

"This new hub in Church Green East, complements our joint mission to ensure help is accessi-

ble where it's needed most. We're proud to support their work and to see such an important service firmly rooted in Redditch."

The charity is inviting the community to get involved to help the hub thrive - whether it's by giving time, making a donation, or contributing resources

Visit maggsdaycentre.co.uk/our-services/redditch-bromsgrove/ for more information on Maggs' services in Redditch and Bromsgrove or to offer support for the new hub.

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See page 36

Candidates are announced for Bromsgrove South by-election

by **Tristan Harris**
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POLITICAL parties have been announcing their candidates for the upcoming Bromsgrove South by-election which will take place on October 30.

The vote is being held after Reform UK's Gaynor Jean-Louis resigned due to ill health.

She was elected to the authority at the Worcestershire County Council elections in May.

Conservatives

Former Redditch Borough Council leader and current councillor on the authority will be standing for the Conservatives.

Mr Dormer has served on the county council for five years and has been a retained firefighter for 28 years.

He has vowed to protect Bromsgrove's green belt amidst the Government increasing the district's housing target by 85 per cent.

He has also said he would ensure the A38 BREP scheme kept Bromsgrove moving and delivered on the promises made by Worcestershire County Council.

On the Local Government Reorganisation, Mr Dormer is an advocate of One Worcestershire - a single authority for the whole county.

Mr Dormer said he was honoured to be selected.

"Residents have been massively let down by their Reform county councillor and since May they've not had the representation they deserve. Residents deserve better."

"I have the experience needed to hit the ground running from day one and I would be humbled and honoured if residents placed their trust in me to be their voice on Worcestershire County Council."

Liberal Democrats

The Lib Dems have chosen Sam Ammar, who came second in the WCC poll in May, finishing just 89 votes behind Ms Jean-Louis.

Ms Ammar, who lives in Bromsgrove, said: "Since May I have continued to work for the residents of the area against the plans to build houses on our green belt in Stoke Prior and Aston Fields, working with my Lib Dem colleagues against that disastrous A38 BREP scheme and securing a new playground upgrade in Charford."

"I am out listening and engaging with local residents, I want to hear your concerns, I want to champion your concerns and I want to help solve your concerns."

Deputy Lib Dem group leader at Worcestershire County Council, Coun Josh Robinson added: "Sam is a real community champion - since being elected as a district



Sam Ammar, who finished second in the last poll in May, is billed by the Lib Dems' group leader as a hard-working local champion who will fight for residents everyday's

She began her career in the NHS and went on to spend 18 years as a project manager in healthcare.

The party says her professional background has given her a first-hand understanding of the pressures on public services and a deep commitment to protecting and improving them for everyone.

And it adds she has a strong record of public service and is committed to community values.

A Labour spokesperson said: "Since moving to Bromsgrove four years ago, Laura has been an active part of the local community."

"She's ready to be a strong voice for you at County Hall - standing up for better roads, schools, healthcare, and support for

families and older people.

"Now settled in Bromsgrove, Laura is ready to bring her experience, passion, and Labour values to County Hall - fighting for properly funded services, fairer opportunities and a council that works for all."

The Standard contacted Reform UK and the Bromsgrove and Redditch Green Party to ask for their candidates.

Visit this story at bromsgrovestandard.co.uk for the latest updates.

BELOW: Labour has selected Laura Rollins who has worked previously as a councillor and cabinet member in Sandwell and said she was committed to protecting and improving public service. s



Former Redditch Borough Council leader and current RBC councillor has vowed to ensure the A38 BREP scheme keeps Bromsgrove moving and to protect the green belt. s

councillor she has worked tirelessly for the people of Bromsgrove.

"The resident of Bromsgrove South deserve a hard-working local champion to be fighting for them everyday and it is clear Sam is the only candidate who has the proven track record and local connections to do this."

Labour

Labour has selected Laura Rollins to represent it at the by-election.

Ms Rollins moved to Bromsgrove district four years ago.

Prior to that she served as a councillor and cabinet member in Sandwell, where she championed local services, community wellbeing, and inclusive growth.

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Jodie O'Connor, breastfeeding support worker, and Rachel, breastfeeding volunteer at Holly Tree's Family Hub. s

Family Hubs can help support for you and your family. The team can help you with community groups and activities.

The Hub also offers:

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Help with breastfeeding for mums

FAMILIES in Redditch and Bromsgrove are set to benefit from enhanced breastfeeding support, with the launch of weekly drop-in groups at their local Family Hubs.

This change offers parents more regular and flexible opportunities to receive guidance and reassurance throughout their breastfeeding journey.

The groups run by Herefordshire and Worcestershire Health and Care NHS Trust, are designed to be warm and welcoming, led by experienced infant feeding support workers and supported by peer volun-

teers – mothers who have breastfed themselves and now share their own experiences to encourage and guide others.

At the sessions, families can access guidance on starting breastfeeding, expressing and storing breast milk safely, and avoiding or managing common feeding challenges.

Pregnant women and their families are encouraged to attend too, meeting the team and building a support network before their baby arrives.

The groups are held each week at the local Family Hubs, with

sessions running at Redditch's Holly Tree Family Hub on Tuesdays from 1pm to 2.30pm, and at Bromsgrove's Pear Tree Family Hub on Wednesdays from 10am to 11.30am. While sessions are run as drop-ins, families are asked to email the team before their first visit to register their baby.

Full details can be found on the Infant Feeding website or by emailing whcnhs.infantfeeding@nhs.net to get in touch.

In addition to group support, families can also contact the Telephone Advisory Service (TAS) on 01905 520032 for advice.

Lioness Hannah named as the best in world

by Aaron Sutcliffe
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STUDLEY'S Hannah Hampton was crowned the first-ever women's Yashin Trophy winner at football's prestigious Ballon d'Or awards.

Hannah is the first recipient of the prize awarded to the best goalkeeper in the women's game.

The 24-year-old saved two penalties in the shootout as England beat World Champions Spain on penalties to lift the UEFA Euro 2025 title in the summer.

Speaking on stage at the ceremony in Paris, Hampton said: "I would like to say a massive thank you to France Football for this award."

"I don't think it's an achievement for me but an achievement for women's goalkeeping, that the award is finally now taking part."

"I stand on the shoulders of so many great goalkeepers of the past. "Sitting alongside my fellow nominees, it's an honour to be part of such an incredible group and the aspiring keepers of the future generation coming through and training so hard."

"I'd love to thank my family, my brother for all the sacrifices that he made when I was growing up, driving me around everywhere so I could fulfil my dream and be here tonight."

"To all the coaches, there's so many."

"To Sarina [Wiegman] for having the faith and belief in me over the summer, with the success we've had."

"To the fans – your support does not go unnoticed and it truly means a lot."

"The women's game sadly lost the trailblazer Matt Beard recently. Matt was someone who cared an awful lot for the women's game before no one else did."

"He lit up the room when everyone was in it. Sometimes the brightest smiles in the room hide the heaviest pain. He'll be greatly missed."

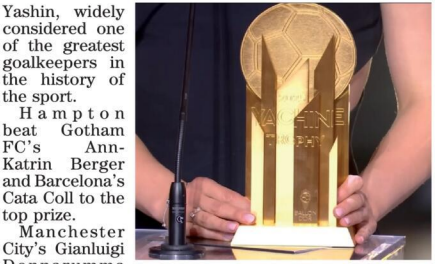
"Finally, grandpa, I love and miss you every day. I hope I made you proud. We did it."

The Chelsea goalkeeper collected the award from former England shot-stopper Mary Earps.

The award is named in honour of former Soviet Union goalkeeper Lev



Hannah Hampton (right) delivered a speech on stage after collecting her award. Below, the Yashin Trophy is awarded to the best goalkeepers in the men's and women's game.



Yashin, widely considered one of the greatest goalkeepers in the history of the sport.

Hampton beat Gotham FC's Ann-Katrin Berger and Barcelona's Cata Coll to the top prize.

Manchester City's Gianluigi Donnarumma won the men's prize for best goalkeeper.

And, in more recognition for The Lionesses, Wiegman was named Women's Coach of the Year' and five of the England squad were named in the top ten individual places for the main Women's Ballon d'Or prize.

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Town's historic tree to be felled

AN HISTORIC tree in Droitwich Spa is being felled after tests revealed it posed a potential safety risk to the public.

Work will start in the next few weeks to cut down the common lime on Greenbank, which at more than 65ft tall, is a noticeable part of the area's landscape.

A routine survey in April raised concerns about Brittle Cinder Fungus, but ivy and other growth prevented a more detailed investigation.

Once this was cleared, a second inspection confirmed the presence of the fungus, which attacks the trunk and roots of trees. This weakens them from the inside, making them prone to breaking or collapsing.

There is no treatment for this and by the time signs of the fungus are noticeable, trees are already significantly weakened.

In this case, at the time of the second inspection, between 25 per cent and 30 per cent of the tree had been affected and it is

likely to have deteriorated further since then. Specialists recommended removal, but the work was delayed until now because of bird nesting season.

Coun Beverley Hardman, Wychavon's executive board member for environment, said: "It's always sad when we have to remove a mature tree and we try to avoid doing it if we can.

"In this case, the tree will only continue to decline and that poses a significant risk to the people and property of those in the area, so we have no choice but to remove it.

"We will plant a new tree in its place and hopefully near to the site of the existing tree if it's possible and practical to do so.

Common limes, with a moderate growth rate, typically grow around 30 to 60cm a year, slowing as they mature. They can live for several centuries, while a 65ft example is likely decades old and potentially close to or beyond a century, depending on growing conditions.



The tree at the time of the April inspection.



NEW UPGRADES: A BROMSGROVE councillor has welcomed upgrades to a park in Charford which formulate part of a larger scheme to upgrade playgrounds across the district.

Liberal Democrat councillor for Charford, Coun Sam Ammar, has shared her delight at Charford Recreation Ground being one of the first in the region to benefit from improvements.

She said: "As a local councillor I have been pushing for investment into our area and I'm delighted to see spades in the ground on this improvement."

Bromsgrove District Council recently agreed a range of upgrades to parks as part

of its play improvement strategy, which aims to revamp play areas across the region over the next few years.

Tenders were put out for major refurbishments of Charford Recreation Ground and Upland Grove open space, with further improvements expected at various parks across Bromsgrove.

Foxglove Way play area and Fordhouse Road playground have had improvements, while the outdoor gym equipment at St Chad's Park in Rubery was replaced earlier this year.

In addition, ongoing works have taken place at Lickey End Park and the Oakalls.

Aston Fields Rec has had a surfacing improvement, replacing the existing grass matting with a new rubber mulch surface under much of the play equipment.

Surfacing works have been carried out at play areas at Barnsley Hall and Lingfield Walk, whilst they are due to take place soon at Arundel Road play area.

All of the projects have been made possible through UK Shared Prosperity funding.

Coun Ammar added: "Working with my colleagues we are determined to ensure playground across the area gets investment and will continue to push this as a priority for any investment."

Liberal Democrat councillor for Charford, Sam Ammar, has celebrated improvements to her local park. s

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FUN KEEPS COMING:

DROITWICH'S Rik Mayall Comedy Festival is set for a return next year, the organisers have announced.

Following the success of the inaugural event this year, which featured more than 200 performances across 30 venues, next year's festival will be held from May 29 to June 6, 2026.

The 2025 festival saw a wide range of performances, screenings, panel events and workshops, attracting comedy fans from across the country.

Three quarters of headline shows, which were held at The Norbury Theatre, sold out this year with performances from Greg Davies, Peter Richardson and Helen Lederer bringing the crowds.

Plans for the 2026 festival are already under way, with organisers aiming to expand the offerings and include more venues and activities.

The festival's official website and social media channels will provide updates and information as the event approaches.

Local businesses and venues interested in participating or sponsoring the festival are encouraged to get in touch with the organisers.

The festival aims to not only celebrate Rik Mayall's comedic genius but also to boost the local economy and provide entertainment for residents and visitors alike.

Once again, the event is expected to be a highlight of Droitwich Spa's cultural calendar, offering a week of laughter and celebration in honour of one of the UK's most beloved comedians.

Visit: rikmayallcomedyfestival.

Flags set to be removed on parish lamp posts

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

A PARISH council in Bromsgrove has made the decision to remove 'unauthorised' Union and England flags from lamp posts across the village, after Armistice Day.

At their meeting last week (September 18), Wythall Parish Council discussed the display of the flags on what they say are Parish Council lamp posts.

The authority is investigating removal costs and asked anyone who wanted a flag removing from a lamppost outside their property to inform it.

It also appealed to the group who installed the flags to come forward and engage constructively before November 11.

In a statement, the parish said: "The consensus was that the flags had been installed without choice, discussion, or democratic process - principles which the Parish Council believes lie at the heart of our community's values."

"Concerns were also raised regarding public safety, particularly where flags have been attached to lampposts using unsafe methods, creating risks for both those installing them and



the wider public.

"Following discussion, the council resolved to work towards the removal of the flags."

They have decided to keep the flags in place until after Armistice Day, when the parish council and community will come together to commemorate those who made the ultimate sacrifice.

It added: "The parish council

recognises and respects the range of public feelings on this matter.

"For residents who wish to express their pride by flying the national flag, we warmly support appropriate displays on private property - such as gardens, vehicles, and windows - where the choice lies with the individual.

"Wythall Parish Council remains committed to upholding

community choice, safety, and the respectful and appropriate display of our nation's flag."

Coun Adam Kent represents the area on Worcestershire County Council.

He confirmed that some of the lamp posts in Hollywood and Wythall were owned by Worcestershire County Council and some are owned by the parish council.

He said he did not see a problem with the flags.

"Reform UK which runs the county has already said it won't be taking the flags down on its lamp posts so the parish council can only touch the ones it owns and the others will remain.

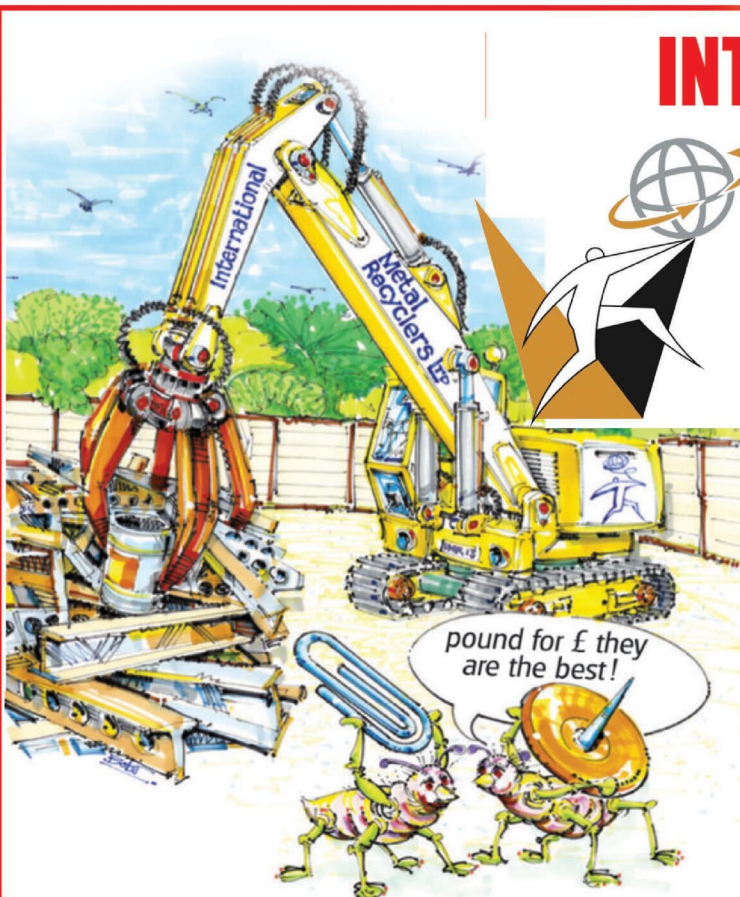
"That makes the whole exercise pointless and a waste of taxpayers' money."

"Common sense would have been to leave the flags alone and ask those who put them up to remove them when tattered.

"By announcing plans to remove flags from lamp posts after Armistice Day, the parish council has triggered anger and even abuse for parish staff.

"This decision will encourage even more people to put up even more flags."

The flags on lamp posts on Shawhurst Lane. Picture by Ashleigh Osborne.



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Lidl put in revised plan for new store



A new computer generated image of the proposed design. s

DISCOUNT supermarket giant Lidl has submitted new plans for a store in Northfield after a previous application was turned down earlier this year.

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

Despite original proposals receiving considerable support from the community, an application in April was declined by Birmingham City Council's planning committee.

Citing worries around design and landscaping, councillors voted against approval recommendations from city planning officers.

Updated plans submitted last week aim to alleviate concerns. Alterations and additions include a rotation of the store – to be located on the A38 Bristol Road and will

replace part of Northfield Shopping Centre – by 90 degrees to improve its positioning with the surrounding area.

The development also now includes a new public realm between the store and the retained part of Northfield Shopping Centre to ensure a safe pedestrian route through to Victoria Common. Various landscaping efforts also feature including ornamental shrub and tree planting.

The store's entrance would also be re-positioned to be facing the Bristol Road, with changes to the facade proposed to create a 'clear

and engaging interface with the public realm'.

Retained elements of the application include more than 100 car parking spaces, including electric vehicle charging points and bicycle provision. Alterations to facilitate access to the site are also retained.

When previous plans were submitted, the store was expected to generate 40 jobs which was considered low by a councillor on the voting committee at the time.

It was also highlighted that there were already several supermarkets within a 10-minute walk of the site. The previous application was refused after three votes for and five votes against.

In October 2023, before submit-

ting its application, Lidl held a public consultation and an in-person session to gauge public opinion.

According to the company, 88 per cent of respondents were in favour of the proposals and welcomed them.

People are now being urged to

have their say on the latest application for the supermarket.

To view the application in full, visit Birmingham City Council's planning portal online. Search for planning application 2025/04646/PA. Comments can be submitted until November 19, 2025.

Lickey litter pick date confirmed

THE CUSTODIANS of the Lickey Hills have announced the date for this year's Autumn Litter Pick.

The Lickey Hills Society will host its annual litter pick from 10am to midday next Saturday, October 4.

Participants should meet at the visitor centre on Warren Lane.

The society has been holding these litter picks

for many years to support the work of the rangers and to help keep the country park looking as clean and tidy as possible.

As in previous years, the event will be held before the majority of the leaves start to fall and hide the litter.

A Lickey Hills Society spokesperson said: "Thanks to the work of the paid litter pickers and

the vast number of volunteers, amounts of litter in the country park are generally quite low but there is always work to be done.

"Please join us for as long as you can manage."

Litter pickers will need to wear appropriate clothing and footwear and gloves. Organisers say litter pickers and sacks will be provided.

Council car parks win accolade

FIVE town centre car parks in Bromsgrove have been awarded a prestigious Park Mark status.

New Road, Parkside, Recreation Road South, St John Street and Windsor Street car parks have all been awarded the moniker in recognition of the council's commitment to safer, cleaner and more secure parking.

To achieve this certifica-

tion, each car park underwent rigorous evaluation and a comprehensive risk assessment by trained police assessors. They examined key criteria, such as crime prevention, quality management, appropriate lighting, effective surveillance and cleanliness.

Bromsgrove District Council says over the past few years, it has invested to improve district car

parks, whilst also taking steps to 'design out' crime and deter potential antisocial behaviour or criminal activity.

Council leader, Coun Karen May, said: "To receive Park Mark accreditation is the cherry on top of the cake, recognising this work and our ongoing commitment to community safety and resident wellbeing."

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Father Christmas will be heading to Bromsgrove's Primrose Hospice shop on October 11. s

Most wonderful time of the year comes early

CHRISTMAS is coming early to the Primrose Hospice's Bromsgrove shop with a special visit from Santa in just three weeks time.

People can celebrate the launch of Primrose Hospice's pre-loved Christmas collection and enjoy a festive visit from the man in the big red suit between 11am and 3pm at the store on Saturday, October 11. The shop is next to Boots on Bromsgrove High Street.

Families are invited to come along and meet Father Christmas, snap a photo, and soak up the early seasonal cheer.

The event promises to be a

special occasion for children and adults, offering a chance to get into the festive spirit while supporting Bromsgrove and Redditch's local Hospice.

Primrose Hospice will be welcoming donations on the day to help raise essential funds for its services, which support patients and families across North East Worcestershire.

Ian McRoy, Retail Manager for Primrose Hospice, said: "We know it's a little early, but we couldn't resist bringing some festive magic to Bromsgrove."

"Santa's visit is a great way to

kick off the season and remind people of the importance of supporting local hospice care.

"Every donation helps us continue our work in the community."

People are being urged to head down whether they are shopping for Christmas bargains or just stopping by to say hello to Santa.

The shop will be full of festive spirit and no booking is required. Visit: primrosehospice.org/support-us/shops/our-shops/ or call 01527 598644 for more information.

Alternatively, follow the Primrose Hospice on social media.

Gifts for all this season

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

THIS Christmas, Acts of Kindness (AoK) in Redditch is partnering with local charities and organisations to ensure that no child in the community goes without gifts during the festive season.

Through the AoK Toy Appeal, the scheme aims to deliver joy to children who might otherwise face a holiday without presents, providing toys, books, games, and clothing to those in need.

"We believe that every child deserves a little bit of magic at Christmas," said Nancy Deakin,

Wellbeing Project Manager at Acts of Kindness.

"Through this appeal, we hope to spread festive cheer and create lasting memories for families who need it most."

People can help by donating toys, books, games, or piece of clothing to help brighten a child's Christmas.

Donations can be dropped off at Number 24, Church Green East, Redditch. It opens between 10am and 1pm from Monday to Friday.

Alternatively, donations can be collected by prior arrangement.

Mrs Deakin added: "We are deeply grateful for any support you can offer."

"Together, we can bring smiles to children in our community this Christmas."

Visit wellbeing@redditch.foodbank.org.uk for more information or to make a donation.

Acts of Kindness is a local community charity dedicated to supporting people and families in through times of financial hardship or distress.

Through various schemes, such as the Toy Appeal, AoK works to create a kinder, more supportive environment for all.

Visit: aokuk.org.uk for more on Acts of Kindness and to contact the organisation.



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Behind-the-scenes look at town's blue light services

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

THERE will be plenty of fun for all the family at the Redditch Police and Fire Station from 11am to 3pm this Sunday (September 28).

The free open day will take place at the new blue light hub in Middlehouse Lane.

The extravaganza will offer a behind-the-scenes glimpse into West Mercia Police and Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service.

Families and residents can meet their local policing and fire teams, along with other local organisations as part of a fun-filled family day out.

Visitors will also be able to see police vehicles and meet police dogs and the West Mercia mascot PD Peeler.

People can also find out how to join the police and fire service and there will be plenty of interactive activities for children.

There will also be various emergency services live demonstrations, stalls, food, fairground rides, toy stalls, Samba bands and a DJ.

Other organisations attending the event include the NHS, St John Ambulance, an anti-knife campaigner and the Community Safety Team.

Insp Rich Field said it was a



great opportunity for people to take a close look at the work of our teams.

"The event is completely free and I would encourage anyone interested in policing, or anyone who wants to experience first-hand what working in the emergency services looks like to come along on the day."

Parking is available in Redditch town centre and at other local pay-and-display car parks.

Bromsgrove's Police and Fire Open Day took place on Sunday at the blue light hub in Slideslow Drive.

Between 2,500 and 3,000 people

attended the event which shone a light on the work of West Mercia Police and Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service.

West Mercia Police said: "Many children and families told us what a good time they had on the open day, and seeing so many smiling faces made it all worthwhile."

Police plea after death in car park

POLICE are investigating an incident after a man died at the Kingfisher Shopping Centre in Redditch on Saturday.

Officers are appealing for witnesses to the incident which happened around 5.25pm at Car Park 2 on Silver Street.

Police said a man was found seriously injured and, sadly, was pronounced dead at the scene.

The death is not being treated as suspicious.

Det Insp Lisa Tibbitts said: "First and foremost our thoughts are with the family of the man who has sadly died."

"To help with our enquiries into how the man suffered his injuries we are keen to speak to anyone who was in the area around the time of the incident."

"We are not treating the death as suspicious."

"We would also like to speak to anyone who may have used the car park around 5pm to get in touch, or anyone who has any dash cam footage."

Anyone with information should email Det Sgt Matt Robinson on matt.robinson@westmercia.police.uk or call police on 101.

Bromsgrove Police and Fire Station Open Day was well-attended on Sunday. s

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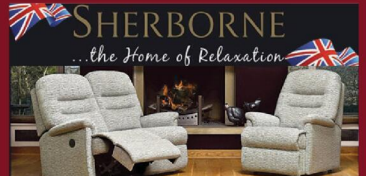


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Isaac's foodbank appeal to help those in need

by Ashleigh Osborne
ashleigh.osborne
@bullivantmedia.com

A FOOD poverty campaigner from Redditch has urged people to support those in need during Foodbank Fortnight.

Isaac Winfield, who started Friends of Isaac's Food Bank when he was nine-years-old, is urging residents to download a free app called BanktheFood that shows in real time what your local foodbank needs most.

He said the donations received by foodbanks could sometimes be mismatched. "We might get plenty of pasta but run short of basics like long-life milk or toilet-ries."

"With BanktheFood, supporters can check the list and make sure every item truly counts."

He started Friends of Isaac's Food Bank in November 2020 in a pop-up greenhouse on his driveway to help people struggling



Isaac is urging people to help those in need. s

The charity, which distributes around 5,000 to 6,000 food parcels each year, has a seventh site planned.

With the help of volunteers, two vans and a warehouse, he's built a 365-day-a-year service that makes food available to all - no referrals are needed.

Earlier this year, Isaac won the Young Person Award at Platform Housing Group's Community Heroes Awards.

His mum, Claire Simmons, nominated him for the award.

She said: "Isaac is passionate about helping others and I'm so proud of everything he's achieved."

"He's been doing this for so many years now and to see how much he's grown as a person and as a leader is incredible. His dedication to helping those in need is inspiring."

People can download the BanktheFood app from the Android Play Store or the Apple Store. They can then find their local foodbank and which items are needed there.

over Christmas. Since then, the charity has grown and now has sheds across six locations dedicated to helping combat food insecurity in the borough.

The foodbank also has a team of 10 volunteers who help run the day-to-day activities while Isaac attends to school.



The catwalk stars from last year's fund-raising fashion show for Bromsgrove and Redditch Welcomes Refugees. s

Fashion show to support refugees

A COMMUNITY charity is supporting refugees with a fundraising discount fashion show.

Bromsgrove and Redditch Welcome Refugees (BRWR) has organised a catwalk event and sale of top quality and high street store outfits for women and men. Some of the discounts on items will be as much as 75 per cent.

The event will take place 2pm on October 18 at Bromsgrove Methodist Centre, on Stratford Road.

Tickets are available to buy \$8 online or \$9 on the door. All ticket sales will go

to BRWR and will help support around 200 refugees from Syria, Afghanistan and Ukraine, who are now living in Redditch and Bromsgrove

A total of 100 friendly volunteers are set to be at the event. They will help give practical assistance to those seeking shelter as they start their new lives away from their war-torn home countries

BRWR committee member Bob Jefford said the show was one of the charity's main annual fund-raising events. He added: "This is a great way for people in Redditch and Bromsgrove to

show their support for this nation's tradition of welcoming people who have been forced to flee often unimaginable horrors in their home town countries to seek sanctuary in our communities."

"It's also a great way to snap up some fabulous clothes at bargain prices and to help BRWR continue its important work."

Visit brwr.uk to purchase tickets online and for more information on the group's work.

Alternatively, email Bob J at bobjefford@gmail.com and call 07786 246108 for more information.

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IB students are top of the class

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

BROMSGROVE School has been recognised as a Top 7 Global Co-Educational IB School and a Top 11 Global IB School following exceptional results achieved by its students this summer.

The 2025 IB results reaffirm Bromsgrove's position as one of the top-performing co-educational boarding schools in the UK and across the world.

Bromsgrove offers the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Programme alongside A-Levels and BTEC for its sixth form students.

The IB is a globally recognised qualification known for its academic breadth, focus on critical think-



ing, and emphasis on independent learning. With six subject areas and a core comprising Theory of Knowledge, the Extended Essay, and Creativity, Activity, Service (CAS), the IB equips students not only for entry into top universities,

but for success in life beyond the classroom.

Its international outlook and rigorous structure make it an ideal choice for students seeking both academic challenge and a global perspective. There are currently

103 pupils enrolled in the IB programme across both years of the sixth form and interest in the programme continues to grow.

This year's cohort of 53 students secured an average point score of 39.81, significantly above the glo-

Bromsgrove School is among the top IB schools in the world after a successful summer of exam results. s

bal average of 30.5. Almost three quarters – 74 per cent – of students achieved 40 points or more out of a possible 45. Notably, five students attained a perfect score of 45, placing them among the top one per cent of IB students worldwide.

Director of IB, Adam Hutsby, said: "These exceptional results are a testament to the determination, intellectual curiosity, and resilience of our students."

"The IB is a rigorous and demanding programme, and to see our students perform at such a high level is truly inspiring."

"We are also deeply grateful to our outstanding teaching staff, who have supported and guided each student every step of the way."

Students Alby White, Olivia Lloyd-Allum and Imogen McCann celebrate RGS Dodderhill achieving the British Council award.s



School's global outlook earns recognition

A SCHOOL in Droitwich has been awarded for its efforts to educate its students on global topics.

RGS Dodderhill has achieved accreditation with the British Council's International School Award (ISA) for 2025 to 2028 in recognition of the school's commitment to embedding international learning and global citizenship across its curriculum.

The International School Award celebrates schools which do exceptional work in international education, preparing pupils with the cultural understanding, lan-

guage skills and global awareness needed for life and work in today's interconnected world.

The accreditation has been awarded following three years of collaboration with different schools in France and Spain. Within the cultural exchanges, students from Dodderhill shared festive cards and book recommendations, recreated internationally recommended dishes and even celebrated Chinese New Year.

The project continues this year with plans to mark European Day of Languages and take part in an

online poetry workshop with a school in South Africa.

RGS Dodderhill is particularly proud to be among the first secondary schools regionally to achieve full accreditation in recognition of this sustained international programme.

Headteacher Any Page said: "We are delighted to have achieved accreditation. This is a true reflection of the creativity, dedication and enthusiasm of our staff and pupils, who embrace opportunities to connect with other cultures and communities."

WORLD'S BIGGEST COFFEE MORNING




Friday 3rd October 11am-2pm



My name is Angela Bryan. Since the loss of my brother-in-law in 2013 and sister in 2018, both to cancer, I have held a coffee morning on behalf of **Macmillan Cancer Support**. I have been very lucky in the past, in that, previous employers have allowed me to hold my coffee morning at my place of employment.

This year I have been exceptionally lucky. Alan Nolan, the co-owner of **'The Dry Spy'** Cocktail Bar, 12 Saint Johns Street, Bromsgrove B61 8QY, is not only a supporter of the Macmillan trust but has kindly allowed me to use this beautiful venue as a platform to raise much needed funds. We have a raffle, guess how many sweets in the jar and a cake baking competition to be judged by Chloe Nordigian, on behalf of the **'The Dry Spy'**.

Macmillan, provide services for people living with cancer at every stage of their cancer experience. They are there to provide emotional, practical, physical, and financial support. They are 98% funded by voluntary donations, so fundraising is



essential to make sure they can deliver the vital support people living with cancer need. Government and local grants make up the other 2%.

So I ask, if you are passing **'The Dry Spy'** or work in Bromsgrove, please stop by and support this worthy cause, **Friday 3rd October 2025, 11am-2pm**. Enjoy coffee/tea cakes, or purchase a cake to take home to the family.

Raffle prizes have been donated by local industry and the general public. They include: **'Linus' the Lion** (a collectable from the Charlie Bear collection), gin and chocolates, port and cheese, Sunday lunch for two at the Dry Spy, chocolate hamper, candy bouquet, a make up chest and a selection of toys... plus many more.

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A total of 67 people turned up to the latest Clothing Swap Shop in Redditch on Saturday. s

A successful shopping trip for all

THE FREE Clothing Swap Shop which took place in Redditch on Saturday has been hailed a great success.

A total of 67 people participated in the event at the Willow Trees Community Centre and a staggering 575 items of clothing and accessories found new homes.

This has prevented the items ending up in landfill and extended their lifecycle.

This was the second Clothing Swap Shop after the inaugural one at the Windmill Centre in June.

The event is aimed at promoting sustainable fashion and reducing waste and offers residents a great opportunity to refresh their

wardrobes without spending a penny. Organiser Katie Kendrick said she was thrilled with the response and the collective impact all the participants made.

"The event went very well - it was amazing to see so many people come together to prove that sustainable fashion is fun and impactful.

"This is a powerful testament to what we can achieve when we choose conscious style over fast fashion."

The next Clothing Swap Shop is scheduled for January.

"Watch this space for more details," added Katie.

Funds raised for mayoral charity

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

A SUMMER fundraiser organised by the Mayor of Redditch has generated more than £1,667.57 for The Primrose Hospice and Family Support Centre.

Coun Joanna Kane organised the evening of live saxophone music performed by the talented Shadow Sax.

Attendees at the event, which took place at The Boathouse Cafe in Arrow Valley Country Park, were treated to a selection of canapés on arrival, followed by a hot buffet, the music and a charity raffle.

Coun Kane said: "I would like to say a huge thank you to everyone who took part in, and contributed to, the evening."

She added the hospice and family support centre provided vital care and support and she was very proud she had chosen the Primrose as her charity of the year.

"At the end of her life, my mother-in-law received care at her home from her local hospice, so I have seen for



Mayor of Redditch, Coun Joanna Kane, with CEO of Primrose Hospice and Family Support Centre, David Burrell. s

myself the huge difference that hospice support makes to patients, their carers, and their families."

She said the cash would help go towards the continued support of patients and their loved ones.

Guests included the Redditch Borough Council leader, Coun Sharon Harvey, plus Councillors Monica Stringfellow, Juma Begum and Claire Davies, along with David Burrell, the CEO of the charity.

David Burrell, CEO of Primrose Hospice, said: "This was a wonderful evening in a stunning location raising essential funds to support our community."

"All our services are provided free to anyone who needs them.

"I am extremely grateful to the mayor for all the support so far this year and for choosing Primrose Hospice and Family Support Centre to benefit from her time in office."

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Stay vigilant urge police

THE SAFER Redditch Partnership is warning residents to stay alert following a recent rise in doorstep crime and rogue trader incidents across Redditch.

Criminals have been targeting elderly residents, falsely claiming that unnecessary repairs are required, particularly roofing work.

These individuals use high-pressure tactics to gain entry or extract money, including pretending to be from Redditch Borough Council.

One of the incidents happened over the weekend in Matchborough when three men approached a woman and, claiming to be from the council, said they had come to repair a roof.

They demanded cash up front for the work.

Insp Richard Field, from Redditch Safer Neighbourhood Team, said: "We're investigating reports of individuals exploiting vulnerable residents including impersonating council staff.

"This behaviour is deeply concerning.

"We urge everyone to stay vigilant and report suspicious activity to the police or Trading Standards."

Residents are reminded not to buy from doorstep traders or open the door to unknown callers, always use a door chain where possible and display 'no doorstep callers' signs.

Always check ID and note any vehicle or business details of people call-

ing. Any suspicious incidents can be reported to Trading Standards by calling 0808 223 1133 or the police on 101.

People should always call 999 if a crime is taking place or they feel threatened.

Anyone genuinely working for Redditch Borough Council will carry ID and be happy to confirm their department or officer contact. They will wait while residents call the council on 01527 64252 to confirm they are who they say they are.

Coun Monica Stringfellow, Redditch Borough Council's portfolio holder for community services and safeguarding responsibilities urged everyone to look out for vulnerable neighbours and highlighted the free Nominated Neighbour scheme as a way to keep people safe from scams.

The scheme helps protect vulnerable residents by allowing a trusted neighbour to speak to callers on the person's behalf.

Visit: nwesp.org or call 01527 534187 for more information on the Nominated Neighbour scheme.

Coun Ian Cresswell, Worcestershire County Council's cabinet member for environment and communities, said: "If a job needs doing, best practice is to get at least three quotes from different tradespeople, take your time to make an informed decision, and always use a reputable company that people you know and trust have recommended."



Michelle de-Torre and trustees from the Nigel Prosser Foundation. s

Scheme champions more opportunities

A COMMUNITY-LED project supporting special educational needs (SEN) children and their families across Bromsgrove has secured access to vital facilities to aid its work.

The Access Project from the Nigel Prosser Foundation, which aims to counter the growing need for inclusive support for families and SEN children, has earned itself access to leisure facilities in Bromsgrove.

It will be able to carry out its work at Everyone Active's Bromsgrove Sport and Leisure Centre thanks to the gym operator's Community Champions scheme.

Michelle De-Torre, founder of The Nigel Prosser Foundation, said: "We are absolutely thrilled to have been accepted.

"We want to say a huge, heartfelt thank you to the team for their support, it really means so much to us. This will make such a difference and we

are so excited to get started on our projects with them.

"Thanks to their generosity, we will be able to give children the opportunities, support, and experiences they deserve.

"It's moments like this that remind us just how wonderful our local community is, and we can't wait to see the positive impact this will have on the families we work with every day."

Everyone Active's Community Champions scheme supports projects which are tackling local issues and changing lives. People involved in mentoring, promoting health and wellbeing, supporting inclusivity or leading environmental or cultural projects were encouraged to apply.

Benjamin Betteridge, Everyone Active's contract manager, said: "We are hugely excited to support The Access Project, which we hope will make a real difference in Bromsgrove.

Join us for our open day at Dorothy Terry House!

Take a look around and find out more about living at our newly refurbished Extra Care scheme, designed especially for over 55s. We look forward to seeing you!



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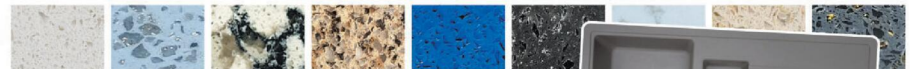


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The team at mfg Solicitors. Back row includes Claire Liddy, Lucie Couchman, Ashleigh Williams and front row includes Joanne Pickett, Oscar McCracken and Katie Stubbs. s

WELCOME DONATION: A BROMSGROVE support charity has received a welcome donation of over £1,600 from mfg Solicitors in Bromsgrove.

Staff raised a considerable sum of £605.50 for the Rose and Daisy Foundation which was then boosted by a further £1,000 from the trustees of the firm's charitable foundation.

The Rose and Daisy Foundation supports families with children in intensive care and those who have experienced neonatal loss, stillbirth, or miscarriage. The charity was founded by Jamie and Hannah Peters in memory of their two daughters, Rose and Daisy.

Jamie said: "It was extremely humbling when mfg Solicitors chose us for their office charity.

"Since then, Katie and the team have kept us updated on the huge range of fantastic events staff have been holding throughout the year."

To chip in, staff took part in a number of activities and events, including completing

10,318 minutes of activity in their Road to the Commonwealth challenge - a minute for every mile between former host cities of the games Australia and Birmingham.

The Bromsgrove team, which selected the Foundation as its 2024/25 charity, also held raffles, quiz events, cake sales, an Easter Egg decorating competition, a silent auction and braved the St Basils Big Birmingham Sleep Out last winter.

Katie Stubbs, a paralegal at mfg Solicitors in Bromsgrove said it had been a brilliant year of fundraising.

"The Rose and Daisy Foundation is a charity which touched all our hearts and the work they do to support families in need is amazing.

"This includes initiatives like their Wellbeing Box which helps aid families in grief and gives a feeling of normality.

"The donation will be put to good use and importantly, help give more support to those who need it most."

Visit: roseanddaisyfoundation.org/ for more information.

Alex set to be filled with art

by Ashleigh Osborne
ashleigh.osborne@bullivant-media.com

TOWN organisations are joining forces to create a very special art installation at the Alexandra Hospital.

The project is jointly funded by the Worcestershire Acute Hospitals Charity, Reimagine Redditch and Arts in Redditch, alongside a grant from Arts Council England.

The groups will work with both staff from across the hospital and the Woodrow

community to create the design. The artwork will be called WELCOME and aims to create a focal point at the front of the hospital, greeting the local community and patients.

Richard Haynes, Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust's director of communications and engagement, said: "We want our hospitals to feel as welcoming and inclusive as possible for all our patients, visitors and staff.

"We know that coming to hospital can be a stressful experience, so by taking a co-design approach with

patients, visitors, staff and members of our local community, we aim to revitalise the main entrance to the Alexandra Hospital and make it a more welcoming space for everyone who uses the hospital."

Sophie Burt, head of fundraising and community development for Worcestershire Acute Hospitals Charity added, "The look and feel of our hospitals has a big impact on how our patients feel when in our care.

"Thoughtful artwork has the power to reduce stress and anxiety and communicate a message of inclusivity and care."

Reimagine Redditch director Richard Bromhall said: "The way art is created is as important as what the artist makes.

"By working with a variety of people at the hospital and in Woodrow, the artwork will be shaped by local people to make the hospital a more welcoming space for everyone in Redditch."

Once an artist has been appointed, a series of co-creation workshops will be held both at the hospital and in the local community.

The installation is planned for the new year.





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Students to find out more at open day

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

AN OPEN event is being held for adult and higher education courses at Heart of Worcestershire (HoW) College.

The event will take place from 5pm to 8pm on October 22 at the Redditch and Worcester campuses.

The event provides an excellent opportunity for prospective students to explore a wide range of adult and HE courses and receive expert advice from tutors.

Whether prospective students are looking to upskill with short courses, change career paths, embark on a higher education journey or explore professional programmes, HoW College's open event will help visitors take the next step towards their future.

Visitors can drop in at any time during the event and are encouraged to register their interest at the link below.

Attendees will not receive a ticket or confirmation email upon registration - all necessary details will be emailed closer to the event date.

The Redditch and Worcester campuses will offer adult courses in ESOL, functional skills and GCSE maths and English, digital and IT, cyber security, work ready pathways and preparing to work in schools.

In addition, HE courses available at Redditch include access to HE,



accounting and book-keeping, business and management, games design and digital media and sport.

Prospective students can also explore professional courses including strategic management and leadership.

Adrian Price, manager for higher education at HoW College, said: "This event is a great opportunity to find out more about the pathways available, speak with our dedicated tutors, and

take the first step towards an exciting future."

Visit: howcollege.ac.uk/about/open-events/adult-and-he-open-event/ for more information about HoW College's adult and HE open event.

HoW College will host an open day to showcase its adult and higher education courses. s

News in brief

HEART of Worcestershire (HoW) College is opening the doors of its campuses for the first time this academic year.

The events will take place at the sites in Worcester, Malvern, Redditch and Bromsgrove for students exploring their next steps and looking for a course which supports their future goals.

Whether people are considering an apprenticeship, vocational or higher education course, T Level or an adult course, HoW Colleges' academic and business support staff will be on hand.

The events will take place simultaneously at each of the campuses from 5pm to 8pm on Wednesday, October 8.

HoW College is the largest further education college in Worcestershire.

It offers a wide range of post-16 options to suit a variety of ambitions and pathways for every career goal.

There are a variety of courses on offer - from art and design, hair and beauty and computing to public services, travel and tourism, sport and more.

AN ELECTRIFYING Women In Rock live show is heading to Redditch's Palace Theatre at 7.30pm tonight (Friday).

The powerhouse production, which is dedicated entirely to the trailblazing women who shattered the ceilings and redefined rock music forever, has been taking theatres by storm.

It pays tribute to a multitude of top musicians - from P!nk to Kelly Clarkson, the raw blues of Janis Joplin, the mystical magic of Stevie Nicks, the magnetic soul of Tina Turner and the anthemic energy of HEART, along with the fearless fire of Alanis Morissette.

Among the super songs will be Piece Of My Heart, Black Velvet, You Oughta Know, Left Outside Alone and many more.

The audience is urged to expect explosive costume changes, jaw-dropping vocals, epic harmonies and non-stop audience interaction guaranteed to get viewers singing, dancing and rocking out from the very first note.

Tickets are available from the Box Office by calling 01527 65203. They are priced at £27.50 (inclusive of a £1.50 booking fee).

Alternatively, visit: redditchpalacetheatre.co.uk or the theatre to buy tickets.



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However, for many, the thought of splashing out double-digit thousands on a totally new kitchen is

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The idea of ripping out perfectly good cabinets when it’s only the doors that need replacing is a difficult decision for many, and for good reason:

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A kitchen makeover covers all the bases. For example, a straight forward door change can be completed in about one day with additional worktop swaps taking a half day more on average.

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What our Customers say..

Our customers are the best people to tell you about our service. Here is what a few had to say

‘I am really pleased I decided to update my tired kitchen. It was trouble free’ says Avril Pitt on Google.

‘..extremely professional, and cleaned up after everything. 100% Recommended’ Says Janet Horsey on Google

‘We would highly recommend this lovely and friendly company.’ Say Therese Smith on Google

Why not call to discover what you can do with your kitchen using a modern makeover too?

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Pin a Poppy campaign at police stations

WEST Mercia's Police and Crime Commissioner John Campion is once again inviting residents to take part in the 'Pin a Poppy' tribute ahead of Remembrance Day.

Six Unknown Tommy statues will be installed outside police stations in Telford, Malvern, Shrewsbury, Hereford, Kidderminster, and at West Mercia Police Headquarters, in Hindlip, today (September 26).

Communities are encouraged to create weatherproof poppies to pin on the iron figures in tribute to servicemen and women past and present.

The statues, introduced in 2022, honour those who made the ultimate sacrifice and recognise the role veterans and serving military personnel play in keeping communities safe. Many former servicemen and women have gone on to join West Mercia Police.

On Tuesday, November 11, all six statues will be brought together at Malvern Police Station for a wreath-laying ceremony to honour fallen officers and the Armed Forces.

Mr Campion said: "The Unknown Tommy statues not only honour the sacrifice made but also bring communities together, connecting past, present and future generations in a fitting tribute to our nation's heroes."

The PCC also funds Remember Veterans, which supports ex-service personnel in contact with the criminal justice system.

Campaign's positive ways to stay fit as you get older

by Isabel Matthews

OVER 55s in Herefordshire and Worcestershire are staying active ahead of Positive Ageing Week

From Monday, September 29, to October 3, the importance of staying active and wellbeing is being showcased by residents

Across the two counties, over 55s are representing what it means to do physical activity, according to Sport England's Active Lives Survey (November 2023 to 2024)

In Worcestershire, 58.15 per cent of adults aged 55 plus achieve at least 150 minutes of moderate activity per week, whilst Herefordshire exceeds this with 62.0 per cent – both counties beat the national average of 57.9 per cent

Healthy Worcestershire sessions are a great way to take part in Positive Ageing Week. Residents can join in across 30 different venues, taking part in learning simple strength building tips to stay active, independent and strong. This will help people beat the natural loss of muscle which happens with age.

In Herefordshire, Feel Good for Life sessions offer opportunities to meet new people and get involved, with sessions including special activities such as swimming, table tennis and badminton- followed



There are plenty of exercise sessions and activities to enable over 55s to stay active ahead of Positive Ageing Week. s

with a chance to meet new people over a cup of coffee

There are many benefits for staying active – it encourages freedom, confidence and connection, reduces the risk of frailty, prevents falls, eases arthritis pain, improves sleep and boosts both mood and memory

The NHS recommends adults aim for at least 150 minutes of moderate physical activity per week, alongside two sessions of strength and balance exercises.

Dr Satinder Bell, cabinet member for health and wellbeing at Worcestershire County

Council, said: "It's fantastic to see Worcestershire performing above the national average for physical activity among over 55s.

"Positive ageing week is a wonderful opportunity to celebrate these achievements and also to encourage even more people to get moving."

Stephen Brewster, CEO of Active Herefordshire and Worcestershire, said: "Movement is for everyone no matter your age. This positive ageing week, we are proud to be highlighting activity across the two counties with our wonderful collaborative partners."

Amanda Allen, CEO of Age UK North Worcestershire, added: "It's about connection, confidence and challenging outdated stereotypes of ageing."

People can visit activehw.co.uk to find an activity that suits them.

Visit healthyworcestershire.org.uk or haloleisure.org.uk or feelgoodforlife to find out more about Healthy Worcestershire and Herefordshire's 'Feel Good for Life'.

Visit positiveageingweek.com for more information about positive ageing week.

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On-demand bus service to grow across county

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

WORCESTERSHIRE'S on-demand bus service is set for another expansion to offer more people across the county a flexible and convenient means of travel.

In November, the Worcestershire on Demand zones in Bromsgrove, Malvern, and Wychavon will be expanded to cover more areas including Hartlebury, Ombersley, and surrounding central rural communities.

A further North West zone will follow in January 2026, predominantly serving the Wyre Forest District, including Bewdley, Stourport, and Tenbury Wells.

Passengers can book journeys easily through the free Worcestershire on Demand app, available from the Apple App Store and Google Play.

The app guides users to nearby 'virtual bus stops', provides real-time updates,



and ensures efficient shared travel.

Councillor Karl Perks, Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport at Worcestershire County Council, said: "Since becoming cabinet member, I've been extremely impressed with this service and I'm really keen to roll it out to as many people as possible across the county."

"With Wychavon's recent launch and further expansions on the way, this is a big step forward in providing a sustainable, affordable, and user-friendly way to travel."

The service will also review points of interest in every zone, inviting public feedback to help shape future routes. In April 2026, work

will begin to integrate the zones, allowing some travel between different areas.

Worcestershire on Demand is powered by transport tech and operations provider Via.

"Worcestershire is leading the way in showing how modern demand-responsive transport can support local bus services," said Sam Griffiths, Via's head of UK and Nordics.

"By expanding across the county, the council is demonstrating how to adopt innovative, technology-enabled solutions that make public transport more flexible, reliable, and accessible for rural communities.

The service runs Monday to Saturday, 7am to 7pm. Fares are £2.50 per person per journey (£1.25 for additional passengers).

Concessionary cards are accepted, veterans travel free, and frequent users can benefit from discounted ticket bundles.

Visit www.worcestershire.gov.uk/WOD for more information.



Manya Gupta with a slice of cheese on toast preserved by Lea & Perrins, on display at Worcester City Art Gallery and Museum. Picture by Fabio De Paola/PA Media Assignments. s

Perfect cheese on toast preserved

THE PERFECT slice of cheese on toast has officially been immortalised in Worcestershire, thanks to famed local sauce producer, Lea & Perrins.

The iconic sauce maker has preserved a slice of cheese on toast, created in clay and resin, to be displayed at the Worcester City Art Gallery & Museum.

It showcases the only way the sauce producer feels it should be enjoyed - with Worcestershire Sauce spread directly onto the toast before the cheese, so it caramelises into the bread.

According to Lea & Perrins, more than a third of Brits put sauce on top of the cheese, losing out on maximum flavour. The preserved slice joins the Lea & Perrins archive collection on public display.

Lea & Perrins director of taste elevation, Thiago Rapp, said: "By preserving a slice in the Worcester City Art Gallery and Museum, we're making sure future generations know the only way to make delicious Lea & Perrins cheese on toast."

To mark the occasion, Lea & Perrins has also

released limited-edition bottles featuring a new label reminding people of the correct method. These are available exclusively at The Guildhall Worcester shop for £2.50, while stocks last.

Helen Large, museum audience manager at Worcester City Art Gallery and Museum, said: "Lea & Perrins has always been at the heart of Worcester, and the Lea & Perrins collection is one of our most loved displays. Adding the nation's favourite cheese on toast couldn't be more fitting."



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Choosing your child's school



THE EDUCATION GUIDE



When choosing a new school for your child, whether it's their first primary school, you've just moved into the area or you want to change schools, you will first want to contact your local council to find all the school options available to your child in your catchment area.

Then you will need to look at the admission criteria for the schools you're interested in. If there are special circumstances you can sometimes apply for places in schools in other areas but a good place to start is looking is on their excellent website at www.gov.uk. It's a good idea to look at each school's inspection and performance reports. To teach and accommodate pupils, all UK schools must meet strict quality standards set by the UK government and other education bodies. These standards cover

“...it's a good idea to look at each school's inspection and performance reports”

the quality of teaching, accommodation, pupil welfare, facilities and more. To check that schools are meeting these standards, they are inspected at least every three years for boarding, and every six for teaching quality. Between

scheduled visits, inspection bodies will respond to complaints if necessary. After the inspection, the school receives a report which shows how they performed. You can see the reports on the schools' websites, or by contacting Ofsted at www.gov.uk. Once you've narrowed down your favourite schools, it's a good idea to set up a visit or find out when their next Open Day is. This will give you a chance to see the facilities and meet some of the staff and pupils.

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THE **EDUCATION GUIDE**

Attend an
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Every UK school has its own unique atmosphere and facilities. If you can, it's a good idea to visit the schools you are interested in before you enroll.

Nearly all schools hold 'open days' – these are often held in autumn (September, October and November) but you might also find them at other times of the year. On an open day, you can meet the teachers and other staff, look around the school premises and meet other pupils.

In some boarding schools, you can even stay overnight in a boarding house and take part in a 'taster day' of classes before you enroll.



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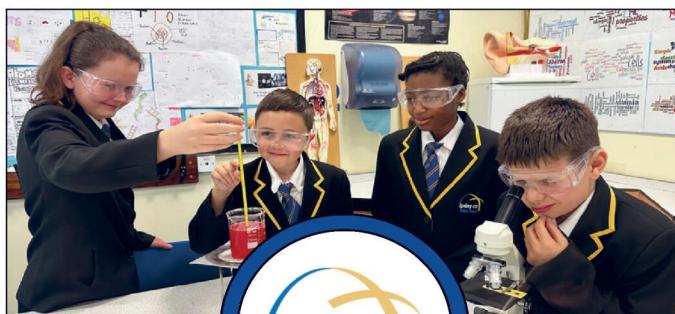


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THE EDUCATION GUIDE



Applying to a School

For independent schools, you will need to apply directly to the school. There are around 2,500 independent schools in the UK, which educate around 615,000 children, some 7 per cent of all British children and 18 per cent of pupils over the age of 16. Look on the school's website or contact them to ask about the application process. Here in the Midlands we have some exceptional independent boarding and day schools.

For state schools, applications are usually handled by the local

government so your local council will be able to help with all applications. However, do remember demand for places varies and for the most popular schools, (especially in the independent sector) you may have to apply up to three years in advance. For many, you should apply a year in advance if possible, but if you have left it later than that it is still worth enquiring. Just email or phone the admissions offices at the schools you are interested in.

It is best to start in September (the start of the academic year in the UK), so that you begin at the same time as other students and it will be easier to settle in. However, don't worry if you can't apply that far in advance or start in September – some schools are very flexible.



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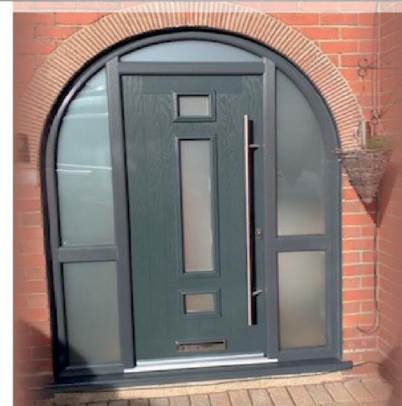
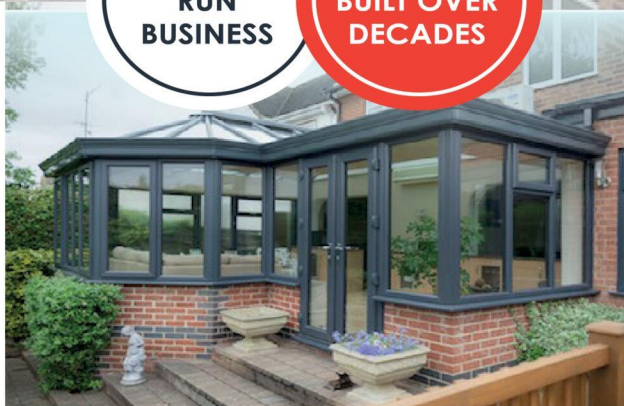


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DEATHS

LOBODA Romualda Teresa 'Roma'

Aged 101. Passed away peacefully at home on Sunday 31st August 2025. Dearly loved Mother, Grandmother and Great Grandmother. A service to celebrate Roma's life will take place at Mount Carmel Church on Tuesday 30th September 2025 at 12 noon, followed by committal at Redditch Crematorium. Family flowers only, donations if so desired to Acorns Children's Hospice.

All enquiries to Thomas Brothers, The Funeral Directors Birchfield House, 494 Evesham Road, Redditch B97 5JF Thank you

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DEATHS

GREEN Rosina 'Rose'



Sadly, passed away on Tuesday 26th August 2025, aged 71 years old. Now reunited with her beloved Husband David.

A service to celebrate Rosina's life will take place at Redditch Crematorium on Friday 10th October, 2025 at 11:45am.

Rosina's own wishes were for you to all attend and enjoy her last party.

No black clothes, please wear the brightest garment in your wardrobe.

No flowers or donations. Please buy yourself flowers, a bottle of wine or both, to enjoy in loving memory of Rosina.

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

DEATHS

GRIFFIN Valerie

Aged 79 years

Valerie passed away peacefully at home on Tuesday, 2nd September 2025.

A dearly loved Sister and Aunt to Tina, Sandie and their families, she will be deeply missed by all who knew and loved her.

A service to celebrate Valerie's life will be held at Redditch Crematorium on Thursday, 9th October 2025 at 11:45am.

Following the service, everyone is warmly invited to join the family for refreshments at Meadow Farm, Dagnell End Road, Redditch, B98 9BJ.

Family flowers only, please. Donations, if desired, may be made to The Cats Protection Society via this link:

www.justgiving.com/page/in-memoriam-val-griffin?newPage=true

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SOUTHWICK Susan Mary

Our beloved Mum Sue Southwick died on the 12th September 2025.

She is survived by her husband Simon, her daughters, Becky, Laura & Emma, grandchildren Harriet, Louis, Henry, Jake and Freddy and the family dog Chester.

Funeral will be held at Redditch Crematorium on Thursday 9th October at 2pm.

If you have a message for a loved one, call our team on 01527 588688





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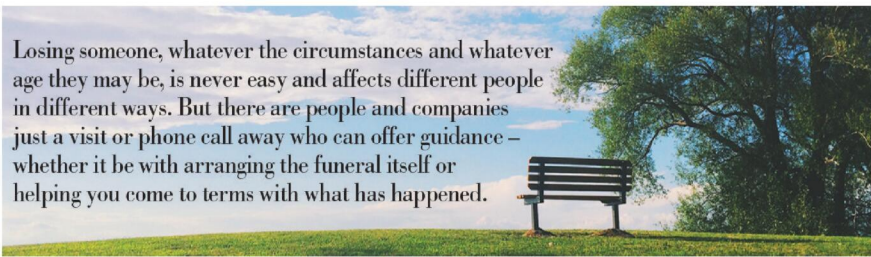
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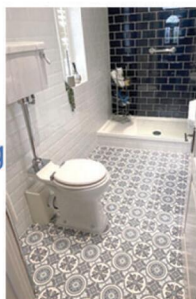
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KIA has unveiled the new Kia Stonic. The model features a bold design, advanced technology and connectivity upgrades, and an updated powertrain strategy.

Sjoerd Knipping, Chief Operating Officer of Kia Europe, said: "The new Stonic is the perfect example of how Kia brings elevated design and upper-segment technology to the mainstream market."

"The Stonic is a stylish and smart solution for drivers across Europe who want more from their compact crossovers."

Kia's 'Opposites United' design philosophy trans-

forms the new Stonic into a bolder, more expressive crossover. This visual language blends a confident stance with a playful character. Compared to the last generation, the model mostly maintains its compact dimensions. The only exception is its length, which has been extended by 25 millimetres due to its resculpted front and rear bumpers.

Additionally, the front fascia introduces several changes, including Kia's Star Map Signature Lighting, more prominent and structured front and lower grilles, and an updated front fender. The redesign continues wheels, as well as 17-inch alloy wheels exclusively for the sportier 'GT-Line' trim. The exterior palette has been updated with two expressive colours: Adventurous Green and Yacht Blue.

The new Stonic offers a 1.0 T-GDI petrol engine designed to cover a wide range of customer needs. Reaching 100 PS, the engine provides a solid ICE (internal combustion engine) solution. Alternatively, customers can opt for a 115 PS-mild-hybrid (MHEV) version. Both powertrains are available with either a six-speed manual transmission or a seven-speed dual-clutch automatic transmission.

This dual-powertrain approach reinforces the model's role as a transition vehicle that supports a range of mobility strategies across

European markets.

A brand-new feature is the panoramic dual display layout. The two high-resolution 12.3-inch screens merge infotainment and vehicle information, setting a new benchmark for B-segment crossovers.

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Spa stun leaders as Lemon nets sensational brace

by Aaron Sutcliffe
aaron.sutcliffe@bullivantmedia.com

FOOTBALL: JAMES Lemon scored a stunning first-half brace as Droitwich Spa cruised to an impressive 4-1 victory against previously unbeaten league leaders Roman Glass St George.

Lemon netted twice in the space of four minutes to put the home side in command before Reiss Taylor-Randle extended Spa's lead on the stroke of half time.

The league leaders reduced the deficit early in the second half courtesy of Louis Ward's header only for substitute Alex Dugmore to complete the scoring for the home side late on.

And the result means Droitwich sit level on points with Roman at the top of the Hellenic League Premier Division table.

Andy Crowther's side trail Roman on goal difference although the league leaders have a game in-hand on Droitwich.

Spa broke the deadlock on 16 minutes when Charlie Tilley flicked the ball up into the path of Lemon who lashed a volley into the top left corner from 12-yards out.



And Lemon netted another stunner four minutes later as he unleashed a sensational dipping volley from 35-yards out which looped over the Roman goalkeeper and into net.

The home side all but sealed the points in first-half injury time as Taylor-Randle latched onto a ball over the top and chipped oncoming Roman goalkeeper Rob Brown.

Roman reduced the deficit after the break on 51 minutes when Ward headed in unmarked from a corner.

However, Dugmore restored Spa's three-goal advantage on 73 minutes when he finished on the rebound after Brown kept out Nathan Binner's initial effort.

Droitwich are next in action against Lydney Town on Saturday, September 27 with kick-off at 3pm at Lydney Recreation Ground.

James Lemon celebrates after scoring his second of the game. Picture by Mathew Mason.



Tom Ingram stands on top of the podium for Team Vertu at Silverstone. Picture by Darren Price.

Ingram on the brink for Team Vertu after race win

BTCC: TEAM Vertu are in the hunt for both driver and team honours in the British Touring Car Championship (BTCC) after Tom Ingram claimed a vital race win at Silverstone.

Ingram claimed victory in race two and will take a 33-point lead into the final weekend of the season while also boosting Team Vertu's chances in the team standings.

Team Vertu trail NAPA Racing UK by just three points with the teams title set to go down to the final race of the season.

Ingram said: "It was a really good weekend - we did everything we needed to do and a little bit more besides.

"It was important to win race two. When you've got the soft tyres and an advantage in terms of boost - which hasn't been the case for us very often this year - you've got to exploit that.

"It's nice to be going into the final weekend with a little bit of a

points cushion, but by no means is it signed-and-sealed - far from it. "We certainly can't afford to just cruise and collect - just one bad result could throw it wide open."

The Droitwich team just missed out on a podium in race one as Senna Proctor finished fourth.

Title favourite Ingram finished seventh, just ahead of title rival Ash Sutton, with Adam Morgan 10th and Tom Chilton down in 20th.

However, Ingram roared to victory in race two although a difficult race for the team saw Proctor finish 16th while Morgan and Chilton suffered DNF's.

Ingram closed out the weekend with a fifth-place finish with Morgan and Chilton just behind in seventh and eighth respectively and Proctor 13th.

The final round of the BTCC season take places at Brands Hatch on the weekend of October 4 and 5.

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