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Crowdfunder to bring Zensory Cafe to town

A DROITWICH mum whose daughter Heidi Rose is on the pathway to an autism diagnosis has launched a crowdfunding campaign for a calm, inclusive, sensory-friendly cafe in the town.

Harley Frost wants to create the Zensory Cafe for all the families with neurodivergent children in the area after noticing there was nothing else suitable in Droitwich.

The Zensory Cafe will be a warm, welcoming environment with gentle sensory play areas, soft lighting and refreshments for parents and children.

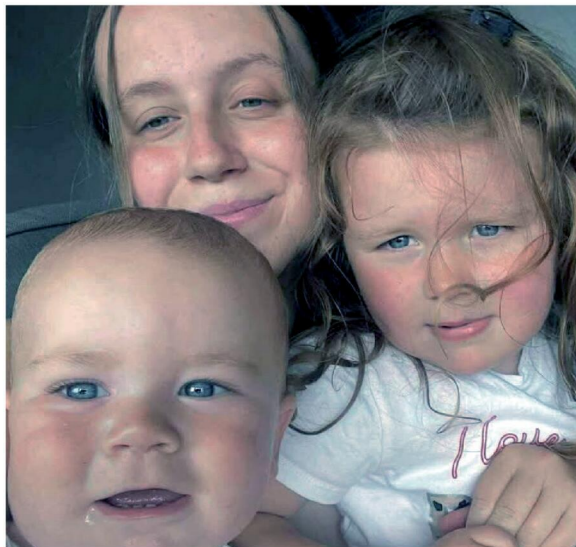
It will be designed especially for neurodiverse families who often find traditional cafes or play spaces overwhelming.

It will enable the children to relax, play and connect without fear of judgement, offering refreshments and understanding in equal measure.

She said: "As a parent, I know how difficult it can be to go out when your child struggles in busy or overwhelming spaces."

"This often means families like ours stay home.

"My goal is to change that by providing a welcoming environment built around calm, connection and



community." Harley plans to start small with pop-up sensory sessions and community events with a long-term goal

of opening a permanent Zensory Cafe in Droitwich.

She is currently raising funds through a GoFundMe page but is also appealing for help with other aspects.

On her wish-list is equipment for the sensory area - lights, textures and toys, a venue to hire for the initial pop-up sessions, help with health and safety and insurance costs and materials for inclusive play and community workshops.

Harley added: "I want to change this reality for other families like ours and even a small contribution will help make a huge difference."

"And, if there is anyone who is struggling please reach out - you are not alone.

"Together, we can build a space where every family feels comfortable and supported."

Anyone wanting further details can visit: gofund.me/3a3d26a39 to find out more and donate.

Search for 'Heidi's Sensory Zone' at: facebook.com for more and to contact Harley.

Harley Frost, pictured with son Arlo Ray and daughter Heidi Rose, is hoping to bring the Zensory Cafe for families with neurodivergent children. s

Pair held over blaze

TWO TEENAGERS have been arrested following an arson in Droitwich on Wednesday morning.

Police appealed for information after the blaze at the property in Farmers Way.

Officers confirmed yesterday (Thursday) that two men, aged 18 and 19, were being held on suspicion of arson and remain in police custody.

They were still in custody as the Standard went to press.

Det Sgt Laura Olczak from West Mercia Police CID said officers carried out house-to-house checks, gathering available CCTV and Ring doorbell footage.

She appealed for witnesses or anyone with information of footage from cameras to email her at: laura.olczak@westmercia.police.uk or call police on 101.

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Mum avoids jail for helping Cody killer try to flee

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

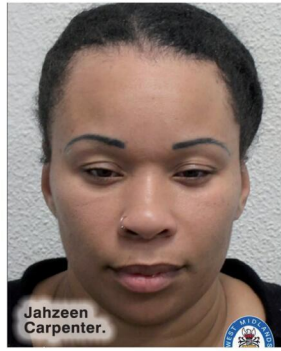
THE MUM of one of Cody Fisher's killers has avoided jail after helping her son flee the West Midlands to try to fly to Jamaica after the murder.

Jahzeen Carpenter, 40, drove to London a day after her son Kami Carpenter had stabbed Cody to death at the Crane nightclub in Digbeth, Birmingham, late in the evening on Boxing Day, 2022.

Carpenter arrived in the capital on the evening of December 27 in her Mercedes convertible, while her son was found with two suitcases of clothes.

Officers moved in and arrested them both outside flats in Lewisham, South East London, around 8.30am on December 28, 2022.

When her white Mercedes convertible was later searched, more than £5,000 in cash was seized.



Examination of her mobile phone revealed she had researched a flight from Gatwick Airport to Kingston, Jamaica. Her son had booked a seat on the flight which was due to depart at 1.20pm on the day they were arrested.

After a trial at Wolverhampton Crown Court, Jahzeen Carpenter, of Peak Drive, Lower Gornal, was found guilty of assisting an offender.

She was given a prison sentence of two years, which was suspended for two years.

Det Insp Phil Poole, from West Midlands Police Homicide team, said: "Cody's murder left his family and friends devastated and struggling to come to terms with what had happened.

"But while his loved ones were grieving, Carpenter's mother was trying to help her son avoid capture and flee to Jamaica, which would have severely hampered our investigation and delayed justice.

"We worked really closely with colleagues from the Metropolitan Police, who were able to move in and arrest both of them before Kami Carpenter could leave the country.

"It meant we were able to achieve justice for Cody's family, and our



Jahzeen Carpenter and her son Kami Carpenter when he was arrested in Lewisham. Pictures by West Midlands Police. s

thoughts remain with them to this day. The conviction just shows how many lives and families knife crime can destroy."

Last year, Kami Carpenter, now 24, and from Kings Norton, Birmingham, was jailed for life for Cody's murder and ordered to serve a minimum of 25 years before he can be considered for release.

Another man, Remy Gordon, from Rednal, was ordered to serve at least 26 years after being convicted of the same offence.

Cody was 23, lived in Studley and was a sports coach at Woodrow First School in Redditch.

The former Bromsgrove

Sporting and Stratford Town footballer had accidentally bumped into Gordon at Popworld in Solihull and the pair exchanged a few words.

But Gordon refused to forget the encounter, and set about trying to identify Cody from social media images he found of him on other nights out.

He learned Cody's name, and that he was likely to be at the Crane on Boxing Day.

Inside the Crane, just before midnight on Boxing Day, Cody was surrounded before being headbutted, punched and kicked. He was stabbed once in the chest and died from the wound at the scene.

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See page **38**

McDonald's eyes a return to town

FAST FOOD giant McDonald's has resubmitted its application for a drive-thru restaurant in Bromsgrove and people are being urged to have their say.

The outlet would be on the Stourbridge Road car park and is similar to the proposal submitted back in 2017.

The proposed restaurant is expected to employ more than 65 full and part time staff, primarily from the local area. It could bring in up to 120 jobs in total with education, training and deliveries.

As well as the restaurant and drive-thru, car-parking and landscaping to the site, on the junction of Stourbridge Road and Birmingham Road, the company has also made changes to the access to the site which differs from the previous application.

The restaurant would have a kitchen and customer seating on the same level and

the proposal includes a side-by-side drive-thru lane, two order points, canopies and an outside patio area. The children's play area, on the previous application, has been removed.

In its latest document supporting the planning application, McDonald's said its proposal conformed to what the town centre site could be used for.

And it added a traffic assessment confirmed the restaurant and takeaway would be accessible by various modes of transport - including cars, public transport, by bike and on foot. Cycle stands are included in the application.

Back in 2018, there was backlash to the proposals with several concerns highlighted - these included increased traffic on the Stourbridge Road and the Birmingham Road and the fact the fast food outlet was 'within walking distance of three schools

attended by more than 1,600 pupils'.

Back then, campaigners said the headteachers of two of the schools had voiced their opposition to the McDonald's.

Some concerns were also raised regarding the visual impact on the nearby historic buildings, including the Grade II listed Parkside and Davenham House, the Norton Collection Museum and near-by Bromsgrove Town Centre Conservation Area.

In its latest support document for the application, McDonald's said it had improved the aspect with the listed building.

People have until November 9 to have their say on this latest application.

Visit this story at: bromsgrovestandard.co.uk/news/mcdonalds-bromsgrove-plan/ and go to 'readers letters' on page eight for more.



How the new McDonald's Drive-Thru would look on the Stourbridge Road car park. S

WORKERS OUTRAGED: A BROMSGROVE firm has failed to pay the minimum wage to 89 of its workers.

The Best Connection Group Limited has been one of almost 500 employers who have been named and shamed for not paying the minimum wage to staff.

The employment group failed to pay £1,581.20 to 89 workers.

Nationally, around 42,000 workers have been repaid by their employers, with £6million put back into the pockets of employees across the country.

Firms have received fines totalling £10.2million for breaking the rules. This comes as part of a Government scheme to crack down on those who short-change their workers.

Business Secretary Peter Kyle said: "Every worker deserves a fair day's pay for a fair day's work and this Government will not tolerate rogue employers who short-change their staff.

"I know no employer wants to end up on one of these lists but our Plan to Make Work Pay cracks down on those not playing by the rules.

This ensures a level playing field where

all businesses pay what they owe, whilst workers receive the boost to their living standards they deserve.

Baroness Philippa Stroud, Low Pay Commission Chair, added: "We are pleased the Government is keeping up momentum with the publication of this naming round.

"It is vital businesses understand the mistakes which can lead to underpayment and that workers know where to go to enforce their rights."

From April 2026 the Employment Rights Bill will establish a new Fair Work Agency with more powers to tackle employers underpaying workers and failing to pay holiday and sick pay.

Employment Rights Minister Kate Dearden said: "This government is taking direct action to ensure workers get every penny they've earned, and to put an end to bad businesses undercutting good ones.

"We are proud to have delivered a strong minimum wage and enforcing it thoroughly is crucial in our mission to put pounds back in your pocket."

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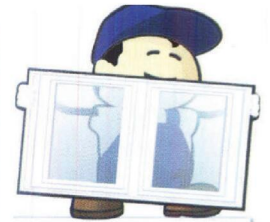
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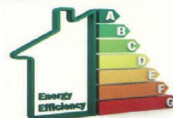
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Prison assaults on the increase say new stats

THE NUMBER of prisoner-on-prisoner and prison staff assaults at HMP Hewell is at its highest in the past five years, new figures have shown.

In 2024, the jail reported having 979 inmates, and during 2024/25 369 prisoner-on-prisoner assaults were recorded - up from 130 assaults five years earlier.

The prison population across the UK has increased annually for the last 30 years, rising from 43,000 in 1994 to over 88,000 in 2024.

Despite this, the number of uniformed officers employed to care for and protect those committed by the courts has remained almost static.

The government's 'Plan for Change' aims to build 14,000 extra prison places by 2031, and the new investment will help combat the flow of contraband, which creates unsafe environments in jails.

Legal Expert, which obtained the figures via a freedom of information request, also reported an increase on how many prison staff assaults had taken place at Hewell Prison over the past five years.

The number of assaults on staff at the prison has sky-rocketed from 77 in 2021/22 to 169 in 2024/25 - a 119 per cent increase.

Patrick Mallon, a solicitor at legal firm

JF Law said: "The Prison Service has a legal duty of care to protect individuals in its custody and, where it has failed to do so, for example by not segregating a vulnerable inmate, that individual may be entitled to seek compensation for their injuries through a personal injury claim."

"Similarly, prison officers have a right to a safe workplace.

"The employer's duty of care extends to providing adequate training, resources, and a secure environment to protect their staff from harm."

A Ministry of Justice spokesperson said: "These statistics once again lay bare the extent of the crisis facing our prisons - with levels of violence, assaults on staff and self-harm far too high.

"The Government has made it clear it will do whatever it can to protect our hardworking staff - which is why we are trialing tasers in prisons and mandated protective body armour for prison officers working with the most dangerous offenders.

"But it is clear fundamental change is needed, which is why we're also reforming our jails so they create better citizens not better criminals."

The prison said it continued to work to understand and reduce the causes of violence and challenge those who perpetrated through the use of adjudications, incentives and formal investigations where relevant.



Murder in Rehearsal is being staged by Rubery Drama Group. s

A chance to solve a murder

A NOT often seen play will be performed by Rubery Drama Group after a chance discovery.

Kay Morris from the group was sorting through her late husband Dave's library of scripts and found 'Murder in Rehearsal' by local playwright Angela Lanyon.

She realised that, although they had seen it performed by the Hanbury Players as its first production in the early 2000s - Dave must have intended to direct it with Rubery Drama Group but never got around to it.

And, whilst arranging for the licence to stage the play, the group is thrilled to find out Angela

Lanyon still lives locally and hopes to attend one of the shows.

In the interval of this traditional whodunit, the audience will be invited to guess who they think the murderer is.

Murder in Rehearsal runs from Thursday to Saturday, October 23 to 25.

Shows start at 7.30pm and tickets - which are £8 (£7 concessions) - are available on the door, by emailing: hello@ruberydrama.co.uk or via the Rubery Drama Group Facebook page.

Alternatively, call 0121 453 8733 to reserve tickets.

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John ready to put his feet up after 50 years in shop

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

A COMMUNITY stalwart who has worked at the same hardware store in Rubery for more than 53 years is retiring at the start of next month.

As well as running Kennedys Mica Hardware for more than five decades, John Horwood has also been a pillar of the community, playing a part on the Neighbourhood Watch scheme and the PACT (Partners and Community Together) committee.

Mr Horwood was born in the Black Country and attended Bournville Technical School for Boys in south Birmingham.

He had a number of jobs when he left school, including working at Huins Shoes in Northfield, before moving to Marley Tiles in Walsall. He then ended up back in Northfield with Marley Tiles.

When he started work at Kennedys as a manager for Arthur Kennedy in 1972, there were a lot of changes happening nationally, including the introduction of VAT and decimalisation.

He took over from Mr Kennedy in 1989 and has run the shop ever since.

John told the Standard: "To be honest, I never dreamed I would be here this long – it has always been



John Horwood is getting ready for his retirement at the start of next month. Picture by Marcus Mings 4325004 MMR1 © Bullivant Media

a very traditional hardware shop and has not changed much over the years.

"I saw Arthur a few weeks ago and he's still going strong at the age of 102."

John lived in Quinton when he started at Kennedys and used to cycle to work over the very steep Frankley Beeches to get to the shop.

"Back then, most of Frankley was just fields – it's changed a lot since then," he said.

John, who turns 81 in the coming weeks, said the thing he would

miss most in his retirement was the shop's loyal customers.

"I have met so many people over the years and many of them have become firm friends," he added.

"It's nice to see different faces everyday and some people I used to serve have now grown up and had children and I am serving them. I have also seen a lot of people move away from Rubery and then move back.

"When you compare it to Bromsgrove and Northfield, Rubery has an incredible community spirit."

John's last day at Kennedys will be Saturday, November 1, and he wants to catch up with as many people as he can before he departs.

"I haven't really made any big plans for my retirement – I guess I'll just see what happens.

"I'm sure certain things will crop up and I'll do what I have always done – try new things and if I can help people along the way, I will."

The shop will remain open as Kennedys Mica Hardware under the new owners.

Affordable homes plan gets go-ahead

PLANNING permission has been granted to build 35 new affordable homes in Tibberton.

The green light for the scheme, put forward by Living Space, was granted by Wychavon District Council.

The properties will be a mix of social rent and shared ownership homes.

They will be constructed on a part brownfield site where 70 per cent of it will be dedicated to green infrastructure. This will incorporate new public open spaces that will be accessible to the wider village community. The scheme achieves an on-site biodiversity net gain of 26 per cent, exceeding national requirements and contributing positively to the local environment.

Living Space will now move forward to secure an affordable housing partner to deliver this much-needed development, bringing new homes to Worcestershire and the wider region at a time of significant demand.

Paul Breen, Living Space's managing director, said the approval reflected the firm's ongoing commitment to unlocking much-needed affordable homes across rural communities.

"This scheme will provide local people with real housing choice, supported by significant green space and long-term environmental benefits."

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Race night for HB9 is a big winner

A FUN-FILLED evening at Stoke Prior Sports and Country Club raised £507 for a charity that supports grassroots sport.

The Great Charity Race Night, held in aid of the Harry Bennett Foundation (HB9), was attended by around 70 guests.

The event featured nine thrilling races shown on the big screen.

The atmosphere was electric as the crowd placed their bets and cheered on their chosen horses, greyhounds and even pigs in a bid to get them over the finish line first.

A lively raffle added to the entertainment, helping to boost the final

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

total further. The £507 generated means the club has so far raised almost £2,500 this year for the cause.

Founded in 2020, the Harry Bennett Foundation was established in memory of Harry Bennett, who tragically passed away aged just 16 from sepsis.

The charity honours Harry's love of sport and his iconic number 9 jersey, providing funding and support to help young people and teams access sporting opportunities, training and equipment they might otherwise miss out on.



Organisers with some of the sponsors at the race night in aid of the Harry Bennett Foundation. s

Stoke Prior Sports and Country Club manager Mark Goddard said: "It was another fantastic fundraising event, full of laughter and generosity."

"The continued support from our local community is incredible, and I'd like to thank the ten local businesses who sponsored the evening,

along with everyone who kindly donated raffle prizes. We're delighted to have raised more funds for such a worthwhile local cause."

The club's fundraising for HB9 continues next month with its hugely popular annual fireworks display - Let It Glow - on Saturday, November 8.

The evening will feature spectacular fireworks synchronised to a magical Disney soundtrack with 30p from every ticket and every pint sold at the outside bar donated to HB9.

Visit tickettailor.com/events/stokepriorsportscountryclub/1838623 for more information.

Police want your info on speeding

POLICE patrolling Redditch town centre and the surrounding area are urging residents to report information on speeding drivers.

Officers have received concerns about vehicles speeding in the community.

West Mercia Police said: "Speeding can have

a serious impact on road safety, quality of life, and how safe people feel in their neighbourhood.

"If you've noticed issues with speeding where you live, please let us know."

Feedback will help officers identify problem areas and take appropriate action, such

as increased patrols or working with local partners to improve road safety. Anyone with information on speeding drivers in Redditch town centre can call officers on 101 or visit westmercia.police.uk/ro/report/ to pass details on via the West Mercia Police website.

Driver uninjured hitting lamp post

A DRIVER had a lucky escape when they crashed the car into a lamp post in Bromsgrove around 10am on Tuesday.

The police and fire service attended the incident in Rigby Lane where, fortunately, there were no injuries.

The National Grid was also called in to isolate

the electricity supply and firefighters made the car safe before leaving at 1.20pm.

A DARK grey BMW was stolen in a car-key burglary in Inkberrow.

Police said thieves struck between 3am and 4am on Tuesday at

the property off Pepper Street.

The car was stolen after the raiders obtained the keys and they took several other items from the home.

Witnesses or anyone with information should call police on 101 or Crimestoppers, anonymously, on 0800 555 111.




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Celebration time as Community Pantry and Fridge has new home

THE DROITWICH Community Pantry and Fridge has officially opened its new larger premises on the Berry Hill Industrial Estate.

It marks an exciting new chapter for the charity as it continues to tackle food waste and support families across Worcestershire.

The new unit was formally opened by His Majesty's Lord Lieutenant of Worcestershire, Beatrice Grant, last Friday.

Among the guests including the MP for Droitwich and Evesham, Nigel Huddleston, the Mayor of Droitwich, Coun Chris Bowden, local supporters and volunteers.

The Pantry and Fridge, co-founded by Ashlea and Sarah Stone, is run entirely by volunteers.

Ashlea said: "It redistributes around 5 tonnes of surplus food each week across the Midlands and delivers more than 140 food parcels across the county."

Families can access food for just £5 per shop or it is sometimes free - for those who are vulnerable or struggling.

The charity also provides cages of food to local schools to help support families in need.

The move to the new site was made possible thanks to a \$19,000 grant from the National Lottery Community Fund. The cash enabled the charity to increase capacity and improve its services for members



His Majesty's Lord Lieutenant of Worcestershire, Beatrice Grant, and Droitwich and Evesham MP Nigel Huddleston were among the guests at the official opening. s

and volunteers alike.

Ashlea said: "We're so grateful to our amazing volunteers who give their time and effort to keep the Pantry running - we simply couldn't operate without them."

"We're also incredibly thankful to everyone who supports us, from those who use the pantry to the schools, organisations and other charities we work with across the

community."

Mr Huddleston said: "The Droitwich Community Pantry and Fridge is a brilliant example of local people coming together to help one another."

"Their work tackling food waste while supporting families in need is truly fantastic."

"It was a pleasure to join the Lord Lieutenant, the volunteers, and the

local community to celebrate their fantastic new premises."

Zoe Fletcher, charity coordinator, added: "The move to Berry Hill means we can help more people, store more food safely, and work with even more local partners."

"We're very thankful for the National Lottery Community Fund's support, which has made this possible."

The Droitwich Community Pantry and Fridge works closely with partners including Mindful Chef and Oakland International, which help provide surplus stock and logistical support to keep the service running.

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

Anyone interested in getting involved by volunteering or businesses with surplus food which could be redistributed should email: darren@worcestershirehomelessappeal.org for more information.

GIRL FOUND: A TEENAGER who had been missing from Droitwich for more than three days has been found safe and well.

The 15-year-old - Ebony - was reported missing on Monday and an appeal was issued by police in a bid to find her.

On Wednesday, police released further pictures and the search was stepped up.

And yesterday (Thursday), police confirmed to the Standard Ebony had been found safe and well.

Officers have thanked everyone who helped with the search and shared the appeal.

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ABOVE: Hannah McGahan, Coun Juliet Barker-Smith and Coun Ian Woodall on the lucky dip at the Apple Day on Headless Cross Green. 4325003MMR6
 TOP, MIDDLE: Gabby Allison, Luc McMullan and Amelia (six) making juice. 4325003MMR4
 TOP, RIGHT: Sofa and their homemade instruments. 4325003MMR2
 RIGHT: Bella (six) works the apple press. 4325003MMR5



Core! What a great day

THERE was dancing, music and much more as people flocked to the annual Apple Day celebration at the orchard on Headless Cross Green last Saturday.

Gallons of apple juice were pressed by youngsters, there was live music from Revolving Door, Sofa, Hedgerow Pete, Revenge of the Wrinklies and Red Vengeance.

There was also a barbecue, craft stalls, Alvechurch Morris Men, a cider bar selling locally-brewed cider and a cider competition.

Organiser Liz Jennings said a massive thank you to everyone who attended.

"The work starts months before each event and everyone plays their part," she added.

"Most of all, thank you to you, the public, who come to these events and support us whatever the weather.

"Your contributions will enable us to maintain the Green, stage further community events and give donations to local charities. Without you, we'd just be a bunch of weirdos stood around on an oversized traffic island."



Friends enjoy the cider. 4325003MMR3

Pictures by Marcus Mingins

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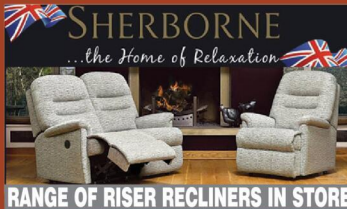
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Care home gift for church foodbanks

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

BIG-HEARTED residents and staff at **Cofton Park Manor** care home in **Cofton Hackett** have handed over a harvest festival gift to three local churches which support those in need.

The group from the home on Lickey Road has donated a generous harvest to foodbanks operated by Holy Trinity Church in Lickey, St Catherine's Church in Blackwell, and St Stephen's Church in Rednal.

Rev Colin Corke, from Holy Trinity Church, said: "I have been overwhelmed by the generosity of everyone who helped with the amount of food given."



Jo Griffin, who has worked at St Stephen's Church for 25 years, added: "We are very grateful for the donations."

The Cofton Park Manor team

Rev Colin Corke, from Holy Trinity Church, with Wendy Sibley. s

was joined by Chrissy Trickett, the community champion from the Asda store in Redditch, who helped organise the donation of goods for local families in need.

Cofton Park Manor community relations lead Wendy Sibley and wellbeing coach Gail Bessent led the distribution of the collected food items to the three churches, all of which serve the Frankley and Rubery areas.

Wendy said: "We are so pleased with the donations received and are glad the supplies will help to provide meals for vulnerable families, especially leading into the winter months. And what a lot of food we received. Our donations aren't just



Wellbeing coach Gail Bessent with Chrissy Trickett, Asda Redditch's community champion, and Wendy Sibley, Cofton Park Manor community relations lead. s

about helping someone in an emergency – our contributions during this harvest festival season can be a lifeline and make a meaningful difference for many people in need."

The scheme highlights the care home's ongoing commitment to giving back to the local community and supporting those who need it most.

Pete marks milestone in youth knife crime campaign



Pete with ex-boxer Frank Bruno. s

REDDITCH campaigner Pete Martin has marked 15 years of fighting knife crime in the borough.

Pete has campaigned against the issue since witnessing his best friend being stabbed multiple times in 2011.

He visits schools and colleges across Redditch, Bromsgrove and North Worcestershire, educating young people about the

dangers and consequences of knife crime.

He has spoken to 60,000 young people since his Drop The Knife began.

Pete has been at the forefront of anti-knife crime campaigns in the town and has recently been installing bleed kits throughout the community.

The kits, endorsed by West Midland Ambulance Service, are

used by the public in the case of a stabbing.

Pete said: "We can fight this - our area has seen a 15 per cent reduction in knife crime and a 14 per cent reduction in hospital admissions related to sharp objects which is an important figure."

"Knife crime is still far too common and the fight has only just started. We will get inci-

dents and we must do more. The negative posts on social media can create fear in our young people - let's stay positive."

Pete recently met with ex-boxer Frank Bruno, and said he was inspired by Frank's work to fight mental health issues. He is working on a new project soon in partnership with Public Health England, Redditch Police and Redditch Borough Council.

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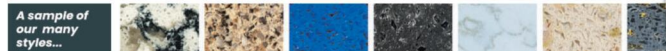
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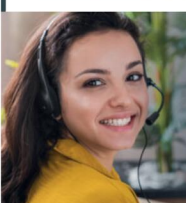
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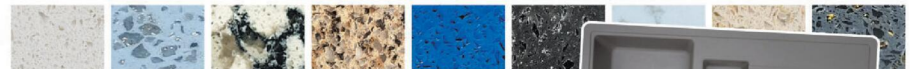


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Editor's Comment

THE NEWS McDonald's has submitted an application for a Drive-Thru restaurant for the Stourbridge Road car park in Bromsgrove has already received plenty of public comments.

Residents have strong views on the proposal - as they did when the application was last put forward eight years ago.

There is now just over a fortnight left for people to comment on the plans.

So whatever your view, visit the story on our website and click through to have your say before the November 9 deadline. And send us your views too.

Letters to the Editor

The Bromsgrove and Droitwich Standards, Webb House, Church Green East, Redditch, Worcestershire B98 8BP
Tel: 01527 588688 Fax: 01527 584371 email: editor@bromsgrovestandard.co.uk

It's been missed

I WOULD love to see the return of McDonald's in our town - it was such a when we lost the restaurant back in 2007. Many of us in Bromsgrove could never understand this as it was always busy.

As for the new proposed McDonald's being near schools the same can be said for KFC at the other end of the town.

I've missed having a local McDonald's to walk and have a burger and milkshake, the one at Wychbold has limited parking.

And if you take your food home, by the time you get back to Bromsgrove your food is cold.

This would bring more people into the town it would also create job opportunities for people in the town.

Joanna Beards
Via email

Hazards to children

AS A Bromsgrove resident and student of one of the local high schools, I do not want to see a McDonald's being built here.

I think it will become the talk of the school - children will use it as a place to hang out, possibly adding to lateness to school and causing trouble. Queuing at the drive-through may also cause hazards to children walking to school.

Anonymous
Aged 14

Creating new jobs

PLEASE, let's have McDonald's back in Bromsgrove and bring a bit of joy to the children and families in the town as well as creating jobs.

It will also utilise a car park that is rarely used which also is a litter magnet and an eyesore.

Bring it on I say.

Fiona

In the wrong place

WHAT an absolutely horrendous place to have a McDonald's.

It is gridlocked every day at these lights and the restaurant will cause more problems. I've almost been run over a couple of times at these lights.

They go to green for pedestrians but cars have got stuck in centre of the road, so still come over when their lights are on red. It's a ridiculous place to put a drive-thru in.

Carol Baker

Place to hang out

I THINK this would be a very good idea.

The McDonald's in Bromsgrove was very popular.

I believe it would also give the younger teens have a place to hang out with friends as there really isn't anywhere for them to go at the moment.

Jane Pickerill

Causing gridlock

THE PROPOSED plans to build a Drive-Thru McDonald's in Bromsgrove are ridiculous.

The traffic getting into Bromsgrove is bad enough as it is, never mind the increase in cars at the main traffic lights in the town.

Putting the entrance on the Stourbridge Road would cause gridlock because you can guarantee people would park across the junction - even if there was a yellow box installed. Also, what about all the rubbish being thrown out of cars because people are too lazy to put it in the bin or take it home.

Dave Thunder

Using a wasted space

I LOVE the new proposal.

The entry looks good in the picture and it is a perfect place to make use of the wasted parking spaces, with it being further away from the town.

I have one worry however. The entrance to McDonald's is very close to the traffic lights.

It is already a problem trying to get out of the car park, especially during the mass escape of workers trying to get home.

All of that said, I think a McDonald's in Bromsgrove is a brilliant idea. I have to take the grandchildren to either Wychbold or Longbridge.

Michele Parfitt
Fairfield

Great for the town

YES please to McDonalds in Bromsgrove. It would be great for the town, bringing jobs for people of any age, a diverse menu including salad wraps as well as the burgers all reasonably resourced.

Drive-thrus are great for on the go lunch or early dinner. We would definitely use it.

K Withers

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Angela Calder
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LEFT: Autumn leaves fallen in Wythall Park. Picture by Madie Osborne. s

RIGHT: This robin was captured by Wendy Tongue in her garden in Batchley. s

BELOW RIGHT: The fungi are out in full force in the damp conditions. Picture by Wendy Tongue. s



Autumn colours captivate

WITH AUTUMN firmly upon us, it is a great time to get out and about among nature.

Across Bromsgrove, Redditch and Rubery, there are plenty of fantastic countryside to explore and great places to visit - these green spaces will be transformed as the leaves on the trees change from green into vibrant reds, oranges and yellows.

It is a great time to go out for a stroll with loved ones, family and friends as the leaves fall and carpet the paths.

And on your return, what better way to indulge in the season by cooking classic comfort food, such as sumptuous soups and hearty casseroles.

There is so much going on at this

time of year - from harvest festivals and services to celebrate the abundance of produce coming to fruition, along with Halloween festivities and, after that, Bonfire Night.

The days are turning colder and are getting shorter, especially with the clocks due to go back an hour this weekend to signal the end of British Summer Time - remember to do that at 2am this Sunday, October 26.

If you see an autumn scene worth snapping in Bromsgrove, Redditch and Rubery or the surrounding area, send it to us via our Facebook page or email it to: editor@bromsgrove-standard.co.uk or editor@redditch-standard.co.uk we will add them to the online version of this story.





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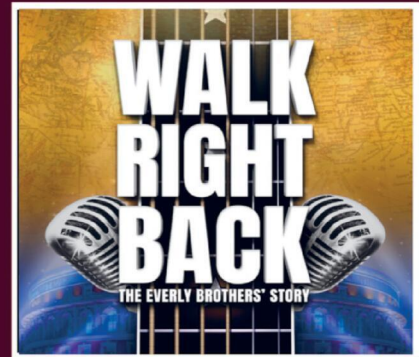
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Trevor Johnson delivers the petition to Downing Street alongside one-year old Harrison Crazie, her mum Georgia Pearson and Acorns staff.

‘A stunning victory’ as campaign to help care cash succeeds

THOUSANDS of people united and their voices were heard - as the Government announced vital funding to secure the future of children's hospice care across England.

In a 'stunning victory' for Acorns Children's Hospice, more than 36,000 people backed the charity's urgent petition to the Prime Minister to safeguard lifeline care for dying and seriously ill children.

Following months of campaigning and a huge outpouring of public support, the Government confirmed a three-year, multi-million pound plan to provide much-needed funding for children's hospices across England.

Trevor Johnson, chief executive for Acorns, said: "This is an incredible moment - a stunning victory for the children and families we support and the phenomenal community that always shows up for them and helps keep us going. The people spoke and the Government could not ignore us."

"We celebrate the power of over 36,000 voices who came together with behind one simple mission - to give dying and seriously ill children the care they deserve. Care that can only be provided with sustainable funding support from the Government.

The announcement came just one

day after the petition - containing a total of 36,718 names - was hand-delivered by hospice leaders to 10 Downing Street along with one-year old Harrison Grazier who depends on Acorns critical care.

Mum Georgia Pearson, who stood with Acorns and presented the petition to Government, said: "Acorns brings light to us. It gives us the chance to be a family. Without them, our dark times would have been so much darker. In presenting this petition we have been able to give Harrison a legacy."

"Knowing that this funding has been secured means families like ours can feel reassurance that the care we desperately need will be there for us - and we can focus on making every day with our children count."

More than £26million was received by children's hospices in England from the Children's Hospice Grant last year, with £2.2million being given to Acorns.

It was due to run out in just five months time and at a critical time in planning for the future.

The petition called for the Grant, or a sustainable equivalent, to be guaranteed for at least five years to ensure that heartbreaking decisions do not have to be made regarding the future of children's hospice care.

Acorns was forced to launch the campaign in July and - to send the strongest possible message to the Prime Minister - created an emotional portrait of him made entirely using hundreds of handprints of children who are dying or seriously ill.

Titled 'Hands for Hope', the portrait was made with handprints created during art therapy sessions at Acorns hospices, which have now become a symbol for the campaign.

Acorns Children's Hospice provides specialist care for babies, children and young people with life limiting and life threatening conditions, and support for their families.

In the past year, the charity has cared for more than 780 children across the West Midlands, and supported over 1,000 families, including those who are bereaved. Children visit Acorns for rehabilitative respite, symptom management, emergency and end-of-life care.

This care and support is provided from Acorns three hospices, based in Birmingham, Walsall and Worcester, and in the community.

Acorns needs around £35,000 each day to provide its children's hospice care, with two thirds of that amount coming from generous donations and fundraising by the local community.



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Celebrate 90 years of Droitwich Spa Lido with a new book. Picture by Marcus Mingsins 2922008MMR7 copyright Bullivant Media

Telling the story of the Lido

PEOPLE will be able to celebrate the history of Droitwich Spa Lido when a new publication is released.

The new memory book has been created to celebrate the 90th anniversary of the iconic lido which, over the years, has attracted visitors from across Worcestershire and the rest of the Midlands.

The publication has been created by the Friends of Droitwich Spa Lido and is packed with photos, stories and memories over the past nine decades.

Droitwich Spa Lido originally opened in 1935 when diluted brine was pumped from local streams and was used to keep the pool aseptic,

without the need for additional chemicals.

It was temporarily closed during the Second World War when its offices were used by the military.

The lido permanently closed its doors in the autumn of 2000, but continued to be a popular tourist attraction.

In the summer of 2007, the Lido reopened with a newly refurbished pool.

The book will cost £5 each and is available to pick up at the lido kiosk.

Those keen to buy a copy can also do so by visiting the Droitwich Heritage Centre, Churchfields or The Hive.

Frightful fun for the family at Halloween

THERE will be plenty of free family-friendly fun in Bromsgrove and Redditch when the towns' Haunted Halloween Light Trails take place.

Visitors to Morton Stanley Park in Redditch from 4pm to 9pm next Friday, October 31, will be able to explore themed Halloween zones including The Forbidden Attic and Captain Graves.

The light trail itself includes magical illuminated paths, sparkling trees, and eerie ghostly projections that light up the night.

Parking for Blue Badge holders is available in the Morton Stanley car park and alternate parking, for those who do not have a Blue Badge, is available at Walkwood C of E Middle School but both are very limited so arrive early to avoid disappointment.

The Bromsgrove Halloween trail takes place from 4pm to 9pm tomorrow (Saturday, October 25) in Sanders Park.

There will be an eerie atmosphere full of illuminations, projections and pumpkins galore, along with Halloween zones, including The Witches' Lair or Creepy Carnival.

Kidderminster Road offers parking for Blue Badge holders only, so alternative parking, public transport or travelling on foot is suggested for visitors.

The number of zones this year in both

the Bromsgrove and Redditch events have increased from four to nine, with meet and greet roaming characters throughout.

Residents are urged to put on their most gruesome costumes to help spread the Halloween fun in the numerous interactive opportunities.

The Trick or Treat Street Food Court at both events will offer various refreshments and the fabulous funfair can be enjoyed by any little monsters.

And Dragonfly Arts will provide interactive craft workshops like pumpkin carving for guests to get involved with.

Redditch Borough Council's portfolio holder for leisure, Coun Juliet Barker Smith, said: "This is another brilliant free event right in the heart of our community that residents love."

"It would be wonderful to see a big turn-out on the night, especially those who like a costume dress up."

Bromsgrove District Council's portfolio holder for leisure, Coun Bernard McEldowney, said: "This is yet another brilliant annual community event, that residents love and take part in year after year."

"It is fantastic we can continue to be able to offer the event free to all, and we hope to see as many people attend as possible, costumes or not."

Visit this story on our website to click through for more on the events.

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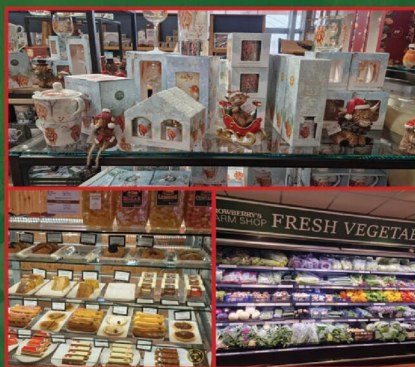
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A reminder over places

PARENTS and carers across Worcestershire are reminded that the deadline to apply for a High School place for September 2026 is fast approaching.

Applications for High School places must be submitted by midnight on Thursday October 31 2025 for children due to start High School in September 2026.

Applications are also open for children moving on to Middle School or starting school for the first time. The deadline for Primary, First, Infant, Junior and Middle School applications is January 15 2026.

Parents and carers can apply for their child's school place via the secure online portal, available at www.worcestershire.gov.uk/schooladmissions.

For families without internet access, Worcestershire Libraries offer free computer use and Wi-Fi at all library sites. Additional support is also available from schools or by contacting the School Admissions Team on 01905 822700.

Families are encouraged to include their catchment school as one of their three preferences. If an application for the catchment school is not submitted on time, the child may not be eligible for school transport.

However, a place at the catchment school cannot be guaranteed. Parents can check which school serves their area using the Worcestershire County Council School Catchment search available online.

Before applying, parents are also encouraged to consider how their child will travel to school.

Walking, cycling or using public transport can be practical and sustainable options, whereas choosing a school that is difficult to reach or involves significant transport costs may not be ideal.

Visit www.worcestershire.gov.uk/school-admissions for more information.

Plan ahead is advice as flooding threat returns

COMMUNITIES across Worcestershire are being urged to plan ahead this autumn to reduce the impact flooding may have on their homes and businesses.

In the Midlands, more than 112,000 properties are at risk of flooding, with the UK experiencing more frequent and intense extreme weather due to climate change.

Despite continuing drought conditions in the region, people are warned not to be complacent about the risk of flooding. The dry conditions of recent months mean that the ground is hard and compacted, increasing the risk of localised surface water flooding.

Members of the public can check their long-term flood risk using the Environment Agency's free service, sign up for flood warnings by phone, text or email and take steps to protect themselves from future flooding, including preparing a flood kit.

Work led by Environment Agency and its partners in the West Midlands to manage flood risk includes recently completed schemes at Beales Corner in Bewdley and Toronto Close in Worcester.

Charlie Chandler, area flood risk manager for the Environment Agency in the West Midlands, said:



Beales Corner in Bewdley. s

"We know the devastating impact that flooding can have, which is why protecting people and communities is our top priority.

"We are working to reduce flood risk by using Property Flood Resilience, Natural Flood Management and schemes like the recently completed Beales Corner in Worcestershire.

"We urge members of the public to check their flood risk, sign up

for flood warnings and to follow the advice to protect themselves from future flooding."

NFM uses natural processes to reduce the risk of flooding.

These processes protect, restore, and mimic the natural functions of catchments, floodplains and the coast to slow and store water.

Recent examples include river restoration in Gloucestershire, the installation of 'in ditch

seepage barriers' on a farm in Herefordshire and woody debris dams in Worcestershire.

In Worcestershire, ponds, scrapes and woody debris dams are being installed in the Kyre Brook catchment, this work will help reduce the flood risk in Tenbury Wells.

This work is being carried out by Worcestershire County Council and Severn Rivers Trust.

Pumpkins in Wonderland Trail
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Free rail travel for veterans & service personnel

by Sarah Mason
 sarah.mason
 @bullivantmedia.com

SERVING military personnel and veterans can get free rail travel during this year's Remembrance commemorations.

Those attending services of Remembrance across the country on November 9 will be able to travel by train for free. This includes travel to any London Terminal station on November 8 or 9, with return travel permitted on Sunday, November 9, only.

For services of Remembrance taking place outside London, free return travel will be available on November 9 only.

The offer is open to serving military personnel in uniform or carrying a current MOD90 Ministry of Defence-issued identity card, and to veterans with a Veterans Railcard, Veterans Oyster card, MOD-issued Veterans ID or other appropriate proof of service.



Jacqueline Starr, executive chair and chief executive at Rail Delivery Group, said: "As we celebrate 200 years of rail, it is only right that the industry reflects on the vital role it played in our nation's war efforts.

"The railway has always been closely connected to Remembrance, with so many rail workers themselves having given their lives during the world wars.

"Today, we are proud to continue that connection by helping serving person-



Veterans and serving personnel can travel for free on the rail network to Remembrance Sunday services.

nel, veterans, and volunteers attend the services and events that mean so much to them."

As part of this year's bicentenary of rail, National Rail is also marking the 80th anniversary of VE day, highlighting the vital role that the railway played in the war effort for soldiers and civilians alike, mobilising troops, transporting supplies, and sustaining the country during times of conflict.

Railway stations have also played a vital role. For example, during the First World War, volunteers at Preston Station ran a 24-hour buffet that offered food, shelter and comfort for those departing to and returning from battle.

In the Second World War, London Paddington served as a key evacuation hub, and welcoming Kindertransport, a rescue effort for Jewish children fleeing Nazi-occupied Europe.

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Award-winning cuisine on offer at Droitwich's Vasaanti this Christmas

FRESH from being named the 'Restaurant of the Year in Worcestershire' in the Master Chef Promotions Business Hospitality and

Excellent Awards, the team at Droitwich's Vasaanti are getting ready to add even more sparkle for visiting diners this Christmas.





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 All guest are requested to leave at the allocated finish times

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£20 per person Non-refundable cash deposit required to secure the booking. Any unattended guests will still be charged for in full on the day.

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The Indian eatery, run by owner Akbar Miah, known as Aki, manager Alamin Miah and their team, has its festive menu ready and is now taking orders. Christmas is now just over 12 weeks away and people are being urged to book their tables to beat the rush and **avoid disappointment**.

On Christmas Day itself, there will be two sittings at the venue - the first is from 1pm to 2.30pm and the second is between 3pm and 4.45pm.

There are two options on the Christmas Day menu with each having an appetiser, starter, main course, sundry item and dessert.

All this is available for just £44.95 for adults and £29.95 for children under 10 (when the starters and main courses exclude seafood). Or, customers can have option 2 (which includes seafood on the starters and main courses) for £49.95 for adults and £34.95 for children under 10.

The Vasaanti will be open everyday throughout the festive season, so you can enjoy a get-together with family or friends or a work night out.

Aki, took over the restaurant from his brother after a successful 17 years at India Spice in Bromsgrove and has been serving up curries in two towns for the past 20 years.

And since he and his team took over, the Vasaanti has gone from strength-to-strength with Aki and his team working hard to build up the restaurant's reputation.

The restaurant prides itself on the experienced staff providing honest good quality cuisine with traditional flavours.

The staff, including Baz with his renowned reputation for looking after the customers, are ready and cannot wait to welcome diners throughout the festive season.

And, after Vasaanti won 'Restaurant of the Year in Worcestershire' this month and the equally prestigious 'Best Restaurant in Worcestershire' at the TMiiCA Awards the year before, there is no better place to be celebrating Christmas.

After already having plenty of customers journeying to the eatery from the surrounding areas since he took over, Aki is looking forward to seeing many familiar faces from Droitwich, Bromsgrove, Kidderminster, Redditch, Worcester, Stourbridge and even further afield.

Alternatively, if you cannot make it to the popular restaurant, there is always the option to have the mouthwatering meals The Vasaanti has become famous for delivered as a takeaway.

So with December fast-approaching, why not book yourself and friends, family or workmates a table and give yourself a real culinary treat this Christmas?

PREPARING FOR WINTER

A guide to staying warm, safe and secure through the colder months

AS AUTUMN deepens and the evenings grow shorter, many of us begin to feel that unmistakable chill that signals winter is on its way. The golden leaves on the trees may still look beautiful, but behind that charm lies a simple truth — now is the time to get your home ready for the colder months ahead.

Preparing your home for winter isn't just about comfort; it's about protection. It's about preventing the small problems that, left unchecked, can turn into costly repairs when the weather takes a turn. A bit of forward planning now will make your home warmer, safer, and more secure when the frost arrives. Start by looking at the basics... the

physical envelope of your home. Doors and windows are the first line of defence against wind and rain. Old or ill-fitting frames allow precious warmth to escape and let draughts in. Modern double or triple glazing can make a remarkable difference to both comfort and energy bills. Even simple measures like fitting draught excluders,

weather strips and letterbox brushes can seal up those sneaky gaps that let the cold in. Replacing older doors with insulated composite versions not only improves warmth but adds an extra layer of security, keeping both the chill and unwanted visitors at bay.

A similar story applies overhead. Roofs are often out of sight and, therefore, out of mind, but a cracked tile or loose flashing can quickly lead to a leak once the heavy rain arrives. Autumn is the time to call in a professional roofer for a quick inspection and clear your gutters before they overflow with leaves. Damp patches inside the house are often traced back to blocked gutters or damaged rooflines — small issues that are easy to prevent if caught early. While you're up there, check your loft insulation. The Energy Saving Trust recommends at least 270mm for maximum efficiency. It's one of the simplest and most cost-



effective ways to reduce heat loss. As the nights draw in, home security becomes even more important. Unfortunately, burglaries and opportunistic break-ins tend to rise during the darker months. Making sure your property is properly secured gives invaluable peace of mind. Fit strong British Standard locks on all external doors and ensure window locks are in good working order. Consider installing a modern alarm system — today's

wireless, app-controlled models are easy to use and can alert you instantly if something's amiss. Motion-sensor lights at entrances and along paths serve a dual purpose: they discourage intruders and prevent slips on icy surfaces. Smart doorbells and CCTV cameras have become popular not just for security, but for convenience — giving you the ability to see who's at your door even when you're not at home.



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Preparing for Winter

Heating is another area where prevention is far better than cure. Few things are more miserable than waking up to a cold house and a broken boiler. Booking a service with a Gas Safe registered engineer before winter begins can catch minor faults early and keep your system running efficiently. Bleeding radiators and checking thermostats might sound mundane, but they make a big difference to how well your heating performs. If you haven't already, think about upgrading to a smart thermostat that lets you control your heating from your

phone, you'll save money and energy. Frozen pipes are another winter nuisance best avoided. Lag any exposed pipework in lofts, garages and under sinks to stop them freezing and bursting. It's a quick job that could save you from a major leak later in the season. Of course, not all preparation is purely practical. With the colder weather comes more time spent indoors, and this is the ideal opportunity to make your home a haven of warmth and comfort. Soft furnishings, rugs, and thick curtains don't just look cosy — they also

help insulate rooms. A new carpet can transform a chilly floor into something inviting underfoot, while a heavier duvet or layered throws add comfort to the bedroom. Winter is also a popular time for furniture upgrades, and many local retailers offer seasonal deals on sofas, dining sets and beds. It's worth taking a moment to think about safety, too. Smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors are small devices that save lives, yet many households forget to check them. Make sure yours are fitted in key areas — especially near boilers and wood-burning stoves — and test them monthly. Keep a torch, spare batteries and some basic emergency supplies in an accessible place, just in case of a power cut. Outside, your garden and driveway also deserve some attention. Overhanging branches can become dangerous in winter storms, and loose fences or panels often don't survive the first strong gale. A local tree surgeon can prune back any risky growth and keep your outdoor spaces safe. Clear leaves and moss from paths to prevent slips, and make sure sheds and gates are secure. Replacing outdoor bulbs or fitting motion sensors adds safety and security when daylight is in short supply.



Even your car deserves a little pre-winter TLC. Cold starts and icy roads take their toll on vehicles, so a pre-season check can make all the difference. Test your battery, top up antifreeze and screenwash, check tyres for tread depth and pressure, and replace wiper blades if needed. Keeping a winter kit in your boot — including a blanket, scraper, de-icer, torch and shovel — is simple insurance against unexpected weather or delays. And finally, there's the question of cost. Energy bills remain a concern for many households, but small adjustments can help ease the burden. Smart meters can show where energy is being wasted, while efficient heating controls, better insulation and thoughtful use of

lighting can reduce consumption without sacrificing comfort. Lowering your thermostat by just one degree can shave pounds off your monthly bill — and you'll barely notice the difference. Preparing your home for winter might seem like a long list of chores, but most tasks are small, inexpensive and immensely worthwhile. A weekend spent sealing gaps, servicing the boiler and checking alarms can save far more time, money and stress later on. More importantly, it turns your house into a warm, secure and welcoming place to retreat to when the weather outside is less forgiving. Winter comes around every year — but with a little preparation, you can meet it with confidence, comfort, and peace of mind.





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HoW College students will be on hand to answer questions during the event. s



PROSPECTIVE students can find out more about the courses on offer at Heart of Worcestershire College at an Open Event from 10am to 1pm on November 15.

Campuses across Worcester, Redditch and Bromsgrove will be available for the public to tour. There, visitors will be able to meet the staff and consider their next steps in education.

The Worcester campus will host a wide selection of courses across multiple locations, ranging from the performing arts, hair and beauty, computing and IT, hospitality and catering and engineering.

The Duckworth Centre for

Engineering offers a specialised centre for plumbing and automotive.

Bromsgrove offers a variety of creative subjects, such as art and design, media production and games design, as well as engineering, automotive, computing and IT.

The campus also offers a variety of apprenticeships. The Redditch campus alternatively offers courses in healthcare, science, health and social care, sports, alongside hospitality and catering, hair and beauty, public services, travel and tourism and business.

Redditch also offers unique support for adult learners, providing pathways into higher education

and inclusive learning programmes and the Alliance House unit specialises in construction.

Michelle Dowse, CEO and principal of HoW College, said exceptional tutors and courses catered to each student's passion and the open event provided a unique opportunity for prospective students to discover the skills and knowledge to bolster a brilliant future.

"Our open events are all about inspiring the next generation."

To find out more about HoW, or to apply visit howcollege.ac.uk for more on HoW College and acom/e/2snBjGqvuv to pre-register for the event.

Spotlight on key role in fostering

WORCESTERSHIRE Fostering celebrated Children of Foster Carers Week – a national campaign that shines a light on the incredible contribution made by the children of foster carers.

These young people play a vital role in their households – helping children in care to feel happier, welcome, safer, and more loved.

They are often the first to offer friendship, kindness, and understanding to children joining their family, and their impact is felt every day.

For Worcestershire Fostering, one of the most common questions from new carers is: "How will fostering affect my birth children?"

To answer that, Worcestershire Fostering has been hearing directly from some of these young people – and their words speak volumes.

Louise shared: "It's been really, really great. I've gained extra family members which I feel very grateful about."

Connie (age 17) remembered the day their first foster baby arrived: "She was dropped on the doorstep in her car seat, and it was just so joyful. I remember playing with her and learning how to be gentle and

kind – it was just another sibling. It opened my heart and taught me real empathy."

Foster carer Lindsey also spoke about how her own children have helped make new arrivals feel settled and secure: "I always think my children are a really good way to help other children settle. They're really welcoming, they like to share all their toys, and over time it's just stability and reassurance and building up that trust."

Adam Johnston, Director of Children's Services at Worcestershire County Council said: "The children of foster carers are the unsung heroes of fostering. They open their hearts and homes to others, showing empathy, patience, and understanding beyond their years."

"Fostering not only makes a difference to the children who come into their homes – but we constantly hear how it also enriches the lives of the carers' own children. They gain new siblings, new experiences, and a deeper sense of compassion that stays with them for life."

Visit worcestershire.gov.uk/BenefitsOfFostering or www.worcestershire.gov.uk/BenefitsOfFostering for more information.

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OCTOBER



Charity appeals to all to give the gift of a little time at Christmas

END OF life charity Marie Curie is calling for people in Worcestershire to volunteer to collect for its Christmas Appeal to help bring care, comfort and joy to more people this festive season.

Marie Curie believes everyone should have expert care and support at the end of life, free from unnecessary pain, with the dignity and respect they deserve, whatever their illness, wherever they are.

That's why it is encouraging people across Worcestershire to give just two hours to don a festive hat, and take to their local high street, supermarket to help raise much-needed funds to support people facing the toughest of times this Christmas.

A typical two-hour collection shift raises £85 which is enough to help fund almost four hours of care.

Marie Curie is dependent on public donations so that its Nurses and healthcare assistants can provide expert end of life care and support, whatever the illness.

Marie Curie helps people with any illness they are likely to die from including Alzheimer's (and other forms of dementia), heart, liver, kidney and lung disease, motor neurone disease, Parkinson's, and advanced cancer.

Money raised from the Christmas Appeal also funds the charity's free support line and webchat, which is



The charity has launched its appeal for Christmas. s

available to anyone with an illness they're likely to die from and those close to them. It offers practical and emotional support on everything from symptom management and day-to-day care to financial information and bereavement support.

Peter Sara, Marie Curie senior community fundraiser for Worcestershire, said: "It's thanks to our amazing volunteers and supporters that Marie Curie can continue to provide the best possible care for anyone living with a terminal illness, at home, in our hospices, or over the phone.

"Christmas is a time for giving and there's no better gift than time so why not volunteer to collect for Marie Curie and help support those living with a terminal illness and their loved ones in Worcestershire.

"Volunteering is a fantastic way to get in the spirit of the festive season and meet new people in your community - Yule be glad you did it!"

This year, Marie Curie's Christmas Appeal collections are back at Morrisons in Worcestershire between November 29 and 30.

To find out more about how you can give care, comfort and joy this Christmas visit mariecurie.org.uk/collect or contact your local Senior Community Fundraiser, Peter Sara peter.sara@mariecurie.org.uk or call 07754 747979.

Visit mariecurie.org.uk/christmas to donate.



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Every weekend this month, a single bus journey will cost no more than £1 on any route across Worcestershire (including the Worcestershire on Demand service).

Whether you're popping into town, travelling to work or visiting friends, let the bus take you there for less this October.



Motoring

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THE global unveiling ceremony of OMODA 4 has taken place during this year's Chery User Summit at Chery Group's headquarters in Wuhu, China.

While full details of the OMODA 4 are still light in the launch phase, OMODA UK can confirm it will be offering the B-segment sized OMODA 4 crossover in 2026, as part of its expanding line-up of ICE cars and New Energy Vehicles (NEVs).

The OMODA 4 is designed to offer drivers a sense of safety, security and space.

Discussing the exterior design, Richard Koo, OMODA Design Director, said: "OMODA 4 adopts the 'Cyber Mecha' design philosophy, presenting a futuristic mecha-inspired exterior.

"During the journey through the O-Universe, mys-

terious quantum fluctuations are activated, transforming into the unique "O-Universe lighting", the most recognisable visual signature of OMODA 4 and a symbol bridging virtual and real worlds."

Inside, the five-seater B-segment sized crossover transports drivers and passengers into a sci-fi and e-sports-themed interior. From the central display, which uses a 2.5K Snapdragon processor – much like a gaming screen – to the screen in front of the driver, each display has been chosen to encase the front of the cockpit.

The OMODA 4 also has a spaceship-inspired central control centre, where diamond-shaped physical buttons encase the middle of the cockpit. The engine start button is found beneath a red, pilot-style cage, adding visual drama to every journey.

Further expanding on the sci-fi inspiration, Richard Koo added: "Consumers will pay for sci-fi style, but they won't tolerate form over function. OMODA 4's dynamic contours not only reflect cutting-edge aesthetics but also resonate with the passionate mindset of the younger generation. OMODA is introducing the idea of OMODA fans becoming "Co-Creation Ambassadors", where said ambassadors become part of the launch journey, sharing vital

feedback recognition of user value but also OMODA 4's commitment to partnering with users in exploring the future of mobility. During the Chery User Summit, OMODA had its first ambassadors sign on to start the journey of co-creation and collaboration together.

Visit www.omodaauto.co.uk for more information.

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on the
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Happy Birthday Mom
Love from
Daughter Karen
xxx

DEATHS

FANNING

Martin Thomas

Sadly passed away on
Wednesday 8th October 2025, aged 49 years.
Dearly missed by all of his family and friends.
A service to celebrate Martin's life will take
place at Redditch Crematorium on
Friday 7th November 2025 at 2.45 p.m.
Please wear something red in Martin's
memory.

Family flowers only, donations if desired to
Prostate Cancer UK may be sent to

Thomas Brothers,
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Birchfield House,
494 Evesham Road,
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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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Closing date for all applications

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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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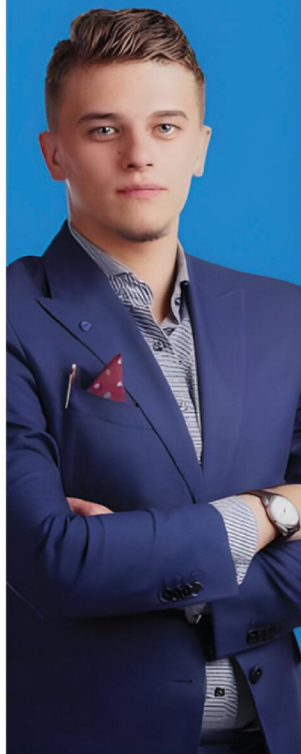


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Observer Standard

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We are looking to recruit Sales Account Managers for a number of our titles spanning Warwickshire, Worcestershire and West Midlands.

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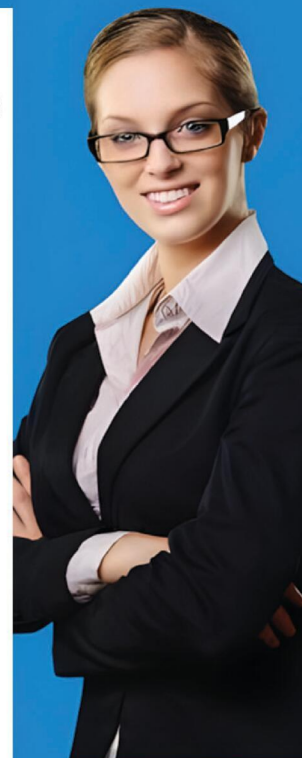
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PUBLIC NOTICES

PUBLIC NOTICES

Warwickshire County Council

ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984
Warwickshire County Council proposes to make the following Temporary Traffic Orders:

GREEN LANE, STUDLEY

Order Effect: Road closed to vehicular traffic.
Reason for Order: Gas mains replacement works.
Order Commences: 10 November 2025 for up to 18 months.

Anticipated Completion: 28 November 2025.

Access & Diversion: Redditch Road, U33257 Green Lane and vice versa.

Contractor: Headway Traffic Management, Tel: 08000 086 590.

D51390 HALL END FARM ROAD, ULLENHALL

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

Reason for Order: Carriageway patching and associated works, 08.00hrs - 16.00hrs.

Order Commences: 13 November 2025 for up to 18 months.

Anticipated Completion: 13 November 2025.

Access & Diversion: No diversion available.

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 24 Oct 2025

PUBLIC NOTICES

GOODS VEHICLE OPERATOR'S LICENCE

Newtown Packaging Limited, of 18-19 Padgets Lane, Redditch, B98 0RA, is applying to change an existing licence as follows: To add an operating centre to keep 4 goods vehicles and 0 trailers at 18-19 Padgets Lane, Redditch, B98 0RA.

To change existing conditions or undertakings applying at the operating centres at 80 Arthur Street, Lakeside, Redditch, B98 8JY and Units B2 and B4, East Moons MOT Business Centre, Oxleasow Road, Redditch, B98 0RE, by removing these operating centres.

Owners or occupiers of land (including buildings) near the operating centres who believe that their use or enjoyment of that land would be affected, should make

Written representations to the Traffic Commissioner at Quarry House, Quarry Hill, Leeds, LS2 7UE stating their reasons, within 21 days of this notice. Representatives must at the same time send a copy of their representations to the applicant at the address given at the top of this notice.

A Guide to Making Representations is available at: www.gov.uk/government/publications/a-guide-to-making-representations-objections-and-complaints-goods-vehicle-operator-licensing

PUBLIC NOTICES

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL & REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL

Advertisement Key: CAS = Conservation Area Setting
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17/01468/FUL CAS LBS
Site: Stourbridge Road Car Park, Stourbridge Road, Bromsgrove, Worcestershire.

Proposal: Construction of freestanding restaurant with associated drive thru, car parking and landscaping and associated works. Alterations to access.

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

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

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

SALES & WANTS

MISCELLANEOUS

BEDS NEW Doubles £95 Singles £59 King size £159. Second hand doubles £49 Singles £29 Fridges £49 Freezers £59 Can deliver 07703 925662

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Number Plate XL17 URA (Laura) £2000
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GARDEN Shredder Bosch AXT Rapid 2200 great condition hardly used £70 07837727454

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SMALL Wedgewood blue plate with plate stand £10 - 07947 634608

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MISCELLANEOUS

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SKETCHERS Beige Ballet style flat size 5 UK Adult Never worn, still in box Paid £40 but would like at least £20 Brenda 0789153851

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Saltmen upstaged by Radford in FA Vase ahead of top of the table clash

by Aaron Sutcliffe
aaron.sutcliffe@bullivantmedia.com

FOOTBALL: DROITWICH Spa suffered an upset defeat in the first round of the FA Vase after losing 2-1 away at Step Six Radford.

Andy Crowther's side saw their 10-game unbeaten run in all competitions come to an end at Selhurst Street.

A Charlie Tilley strike drew Spa level on the hour mark after Nashien Isman's early goal put the home side ahead.

However, Fola Fagbemi restored Radford's lead on 75 minutes to dump Spa out the FA Vase at the first round stage.

Radford play one level below the Saltmen in Division One of the United Counties League.

And the Pheasants broke the deadlock after just eight minutes as Isman fired home from close range after Spa failed to clear Takunda Mushambi's flick on at a corner.

Spa looked to draw level almost straight from the restart as Perry Moss saw his shot deflected wide.

However, Logan Dimmock-Fox spurned a golden chance to double the home side's lead as he headed wide following a counter attack.

Dimmock-Fox wasted another chance on the half-hour mark as he fired off target when well-placed to test Dom Rogerson in the Spa goal.

Spa saw their appeals for a penalty waved away by the referee later in the half after Jack Brighton's cross appeared to strike the arm of a Radford player.

Droitwich had chances to draw level before the break as both Tilley and Moss shot over.

However, the first-half ended with both Latrelle Paterson and James Lemon receiving lengthy treatment.

Spa skipper Lemon suffered a blow to the back of the head which later required stitches.

Radford almost doubled their lead when play resumed as Dennan Morgan's shot across goal hit the post following another counter attack.

Droitwich made a fast start to the second period as Radford goalkeeper Khawer Dantas Abbas twice denied Lewis Phillips and then Reiss Taylor-Randle.

However, Spa eventually equalised on the hour mark when Tilley fired

home from the edge of the penalty area.

The goal sparked Radford back into life as Dimmock-Fox saw a chip travel inches over the crossbar before Rogerson tipped the same player's effort around the post.

Radford made their pressure count with 15 minutes left to play as Fagbemi found the bottom corner from Dimmock-Fox's header.

The Saltmen came within inches of drawing level late on as Sam Hurdman's shot came back off the post.

And fellow sub Liam Livesey also went close as his sliding effort went narrowly wide.

Spa continued to search for an equaliser and saw another penalty appeal turned down in injury time after Hurdman beat the offside trap and went down under a challenge in the box.

However, the referee once again waved away Spa's appeals while Tilley saw his late volley go wide as Spa suffered a frustrating defeat to exit the competition.

Droitwich are next in action against league leaders Roman Glass St George on Saturday, October 25 with kick-off at 3pm at Oaklands Park Stadium.



Tom Blizzard has earned a place in England Golf's first-ever disability squad. Picture courtesy of Leaderboard Photography.

Blizzard makes history as part of new disability squad

GOLF: DROITWICH golfer Tom Blizzard has been named in England Golf's first-ever disability squad.

Blizzard, who plays out of Droitwich Golf Club, forms part of a 12-player disability performance squad.

And the 12-player squad for the 2025/26 season sees golfers split into four different bands.

This will determine the teams and tournament selections for the different competitions England take part in.

The bands have been put in place by EDGA (European Disabled Golf Association).

Blizzard is joined by Oliver Hirst-Greenham and Ellie Perks in the Band Four squad.

The new squad forms part of England Golf's wider strategic plan - the 2025 to 2030 disability golf plan.

England Golf hope to make the sport the leading choice for disabled people in England.

England Golf deputy performance director, Steve Burnett said: "After two successful campaigns at the European Team Championships for Golfers with a Disability, we have taken the proactive step of introducing the England Disability Squad.

"This is with a view to providing this elite group of players with the opportunities for coaching and development afforded to our existing England Squads.

"By having this squad, we hope to inspire golfers with a disability to try and reach their potential and represent their country, where they will not only get access to the best facilities and coaching, but have the opportunity to win medals."

England Golf disability manager, Tom Dobson added: "Golf is a game for everyone, and we want all aspiring players with a disability to enjoy our sport in whatever capacity they wish, and to challenge themselves to be the best they can be."

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