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Friday, October 31st 2025 Week 44

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# ‘Jo had so much more life to live’ say family

**THE FAMILY** of a ‘beautiful, thoughtful’ Joanne Samak (pictured) have paid tribute to her after her husband was convicted of killing her in their Droitwich home.

Mohamed Samak, 43, of Chestnut Spinney, Droitwich was found guilty of murdering the 49-year-old at Worcester Crown Court on Wednesday.

The court heard Samak stabbed his wife six times in the early hours of July 1, 2024, driving a knife through her breastbone into her heart.

He waited over an hour after neighbours heard screaming before calling 999 by which time she had been dead for some time.

Mrs Samak had prepared for the day ahead, setting an alarm on her phone for the next morning and hung out a red dress to wear – suggesting she had no indication of the violence that would follow.

In a statement Joanne’s family said: “She was loyal, kind and caring to everyone that touched her life. She was deeply loved by us, her family and her many, many friends.

“Most importantly, she was an amazing mummy. Her loss has had a devastating impact on everyone who



“Jo’s zest for life was infectious. She was generous, creative and full of fun, with a wonderful sense of style and a passion for interior design, fashion, art and nature.

“Jo had so much more life to live, and we will miss her and love her forever.”

Samak will be sentenced today (Friday) at Worcester Crown Court.

### The case

The Crown Prosecution Service used medical evidence, mobile phone data, forensic evidence and witness testimony to disprove Samak’s claims.

The prosecution’s case was based on Samak stabbing his wife to death due to financial and marital problems

and lying to cover up what he had done.

When he first called 999, Samak suggested his wife had stabbed herself and told the call handler he had found her bent over in her bed with a knife in her stomach.

He gave police the impression this had all happened minutes before he called 999, but the following day, his account changed dramatically during his police interview.

He then claimed he had woken at 3am to his wife screaming and watched her stab herself repeatedly and said he had been too terrified to call for help, admitting this had happened about an hour before he rang 999.

His story continued to change in subsequent police interviews.

The Crown Prosecution Service proved Mrs Samak had no reason to end her life and had been busy making plans for the future, including planning her 50th birthday party, and had booked a theatre trip with friends and a trip to Paris, and had set out her clothes for the next day.

The prosecution said it was inconceivable that she would fetch a knife downstairs and go upstairs to then stab herself multiple times.

Police found Mrs Samak’s blood

on clothing Samak had hidden in the loft which indicated he was trying to conceal evidence to avoid facing the consequences of his actions.

The evidence also revealed that there had been issues within the marriage. Samak’s phone showed he had been meeting and speaking with another woman shortly before he killed his wife.

Visit this story at: droitwichstandard.co.uk for more.



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# Rik festival booked for return

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

**THE ORGANISERS** of the Rik Mayall Comedy Festival have announced it will officially return for a second year – from May 29 to June 6, 2026.

And, after an incredibly successful inaugural event, local businesses are being urged to get involved in this growing celebration of comedy and community.

Opportunities include hosting events, decorating shop windows, or simply helping spread the word.

This year's festival featured 200 events and drew thousands of visitors, boosted local trade, and showcased Droitwich Spa on a national stage.

It was even mooted as being the perfect forerunner and precedent for those comics and groups considering taking shows to the Edinburgh Fringe.

Whether people own a shop, cafe, pub, gallery, beauty salon, or any other kind of business, there are many ways to get involved - big or small.

From hosting events, window dressing, right up to headline sponsorship and everything in-between,



The Rik Mayall Comedy Festival will be roaring back into Droitwich in 2026. Picture by Marcus Mingins 2325008MMR

supporting the festival is a chance to be part of something that is putting Droitwich Spa on the comedy map.

Festival director Stuart Panrucker said: "Last year's success was a massive community effort.

"It brought in visitors from across the UK and even Australia and helped locals rediscover their town.

"We'd love to see even more businesses involved for 2026 - it's a brilliant opportunity to showcase

what makes Droitwich Spa special."

Coun Richard Morris, leader of Wychavon District Council, added: "The festival exceeded all expectations, with businesses reporting best-ever takings.

"The inaugural festival featured comedy legends like Greg Davies, Shaparak Khorsandi, Peter Richardson, and Helen Lederer and was praised for its vibrant atmosphere and creative use of local venues."

With a 95 per cent recommendation rate, the festival proved to be a hit with audiences and a boost for the local economy.

The Rik Mayall Comedy Festival is a volunteer-run, annual celebration of the life and work of the legendary comedian, held in his home town of Droitwich Spa. It is endorsed by the Mayall family and patron Ben Elton.

Businesses interested in getting involved can register their interest or find out more can email contact us@rikmayallcomedyfestival.com to contact the festival team.

Anyone interested in volunteering can head over to the website at rikmayallcomedyfestival.com/ volunteer for further details.

Anyone wanting to stay up-to-date with festival updates, including early bird tickets, can visit rikmayallcomedyfestival.com to sign up to receive the newsletter.

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See page 37

# A towpath to a healthy lifestyle

**A NEW health corridor has opened along a previously inaccessible towpath on the Droitwich Canal.**

The towpath running along the Droitwich Canal from Vines Park to Ladywood Lock in Salwarpe has been completely reconstructed to provide a more accessible route for people to access nature, be active and boost their wellbeing.

Previously, the towpath was a mixture of uneven sand, silt, and stone, making it inaccessible for many residents, particularly during winter.

A new sub-base was installed, along with edging boards, to help maintain the structure and a natural compacted grey limestone finish.

Three wheelchair-friendly benches and new directional signage have also been installed along the route.

The project, inspired by Droitwich Spa Place Board, is part of a multi-million pound investment in leisure and

wellbeing in the town.

Other upgrades will include work on Droitwich Spa Lido and Droitwich Spa Leisure Centre, as well as a new pump track and skate park.

Coun Dan Birch, Wychavon's executive board member for wellbeing, social mobility and transformation, said: "Being outdoors, walking, and enjoying nature all play a vital role in supporting physical and mental wellbeing. "This new health corridor ensures those benefits are more accessible, while marking another key milestone in our investment in leisure, wellbeing, and active travel.

"It brings us closer to our vision of making Droitwich Spa a leading leisure and wellbeing destination."

Matt Nicol, Chair of Droitwich Spa Place Board, added: "It's fantastic to see the health corridor finally open.

"The upgrades create a welcoming environment that everyone can enjoy through-

out the year."

The new towpath has also improved access to the recently enhanced Coney Meadow Wetland and reed bed and visitors will be welcomed by a new owl sculpture at the entrance and an improved bird-viewing panel.

The work for the wetland was carried out by The Canal and River Trust.

Ian Lane, head of operational partnerships and fundraising at the trust, said: "The completion of the health corridor is a great example of how partnerships can bring canals to life and we are really pleased that more people now have the opportunity to use the canal all year round and realise the many benefits it offers.

"Whether that is residents enjoying their local canal for recreation or visitors exploring the waterways.

"Research has shown using our green and blue corridors and connecting with nature can really improve your physical and mental wellbeing."



Matt Nicol, Chairman of Droitwich Spa Place Board, Councillor Mark Goodge, Wychavon District Council's Chairman and Henriette Breukelaar from the Canal and River Trust open the health corridor. s



**CLIP COPPERS:** DROITWICH Police solved a cantering conundrum on Saturday when several horses in the town made a break for freedom.

The Safer Neighbourhood Team officers became 'clip coppers' as they jumped into action.

Although the old adage is 'you can lead a horse to water but you can't make it drink', this tenacious team worked together to get these nomadic nags back home safely.

There were no long faces (apart from the horses') as the officers used teamwork and patience and were in their hay day as they got the job done and made sure their subjects were not at large furlong.

Posting these pictures on Facebook, they said: "We thank the community (especially the Norris family) for slowing down to give our four-legged friends some space while we handled the 'neighbourhood patrol'".

No doubt this will be a tail they will be trotting out to their colleagues when they get back to their stable.

**They were finally taken back home by the tenacious Safer Neighbourhood Team. s**

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# Coming together to remember the fallen

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

## ARRANGEMENTS for this year's Bromsgrove Remembrance Sunday Parade and Service have been announced.

Organisations wanting to participate in the parade next Sunday, November 9, should gather outside Argos in the High Street.

Standards and flags can either stay with their organisations or lead behind the police and church representative.

The parade will muster ready to step off at 10.30am.

As it proceeds along the High Street an 'eyes left' will be given at the Odd Fellows Memorial above the EE shop where the Deputy Lord Lieutenant of Worcestershire will take the salute.

The parade will then turn into Church Street and, with the help of stewards, cross Market Street to get to the monument on Crown Close. Road closures will be in place on Market Street for the parade and service.

Toilets will be available at Amphlett Hall.

The service will start at 10.50am with The Act of Remembrance at 11am and a wreath-laying after that. It will finish around 11.20am.

At 11.45am there will be a short service, starting at St John's Church



involving a prayer and the laying of two blank wreaths - the Deputy Lord Lieutenant will lay one at the First World War memorial and the Bromsgrove Royal British Legion President will lay one at the Boer War Memorial. This will be followed by a poem by Bromsgrove Town Crier Kevin Ward and end with a blessing.

Youth organisations are advised to make sure their young people have breakfast and bring water with them.

After the service, the parade will disperse and all are invited to Artrix where light refreshments will be

provided. Any organisation's wishing take part in the parade are to contact Bromsgrove RBL chairman Jeff Evans by emailing: poppyorganiser@gmail.com or by calling.

Organisations wishing to lay a wreath should also contact Jeff Evans as soon as possible.

If the weather is wet, the service may be conducted inside St John's Church.

**Last year's Remembrance Sunday Parade in Bromsgrove was very well-attended. Picture by Tristan Harris.**



This year's Redditch Poppy Appeal was officially launched on Saturday. Picture courtesy of the Redditch Royal British Legion. s

## Gathering for town parade

REDDITCH'S Remembrance Parade will start outside the Palace Theatre next Sunday, November 9.

Those parading should muster at 10.20am and step off will be at 10.30am.

The group will march up to the war memorial outside St Stephen's Church.

The service there will be led by Rev Paul Lawlor, starting at 10.45am.

There will be the Act of

Remembrance at 11am with the wreath-laying afterwards.

The Redditch Poppy Appeal got under way last Thursday and was officially launched on Saturday.

Redditch Royal British Legion secretary, Mark Evans, said: "This year's Poppy Appeal is going really well."

"This year, there is also a new display in the Kingfisher Centre."

"Everyone is welcome to attend the Remembrance Sunday Parade and Service."

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# Town to pay its respects this Remembrance Sunday

**PREPARATIONS** are being undertaken for Droitwich's Remembrance Sunday parade.

Participants in the parade should

muster by Droitwich Police Station / Salters Medical Centre, ready to step off at 10.35am next Sunday, November 9.

Road closures will be in place to ensure public safety and the parade

will led by 2156 (Droitwich) Air Cadets and standard bearers.

The parade will reach the War Memorial in Victoria Square in good time, ready for the service which starts at 10.45am and will be led by Rev Laura Handy.

Ahead of Remembrance Sunday and Armistice Day (November 11), a poignant and commemorative poppy display has been installed at Droitwich's St Augustine's Church.

The poppy cascade will honour all those from the town and beyond who participated - and in some cases - lost their lives in the two World Wars and other conflicts.

A spokesperson for St Augustine's Church in Droitwich said: "A huge thank you to all who contributed to the process in any way.

"The hard task of creating the actual banner was completed by small groups led by Meg Richards and Jen Kenny who worked tirelessly on the project."

They added they were also grateful to Jamie from J Wyton Services Ltd Construction and Landscaping and Garden Care Services for actually hanging the banner on a very windy and rainy day.

The church members also want to thank The Crafty Cafe and The Old Cock Inn for supporting the project and providing a headquarters space earlier this year.

"Please do go and have a look and spare a thought for those commemorated."



Any organisations or people wanting a wreath should email [droitwichpoppyappeal@outlook.com](mailto:droitwichpoppyappeal@outlook.com) or call 07714 418085.

The Remembrance Sunday Parade and Service are organised by Droitwich Royal British Legion and the town council.

Everyone is welcome to attend.

**At the base, there is a poignant 'Lest we forget' message, along with two Tommy statues and a cross. s**

## Villages are set to fall silent

THERE are the times of the Remembrance Parades and Services for Catshill and Rubery next Sunday, November 11.

In Catshill, parade participants should assemble at Catshill Middle School at 10am and it will then journey to the war memorial at the junction of Meadow Road and Stourbridge Road.

There will be closures on Stourbridge Road and Meadow Road, during the hour between 10.30am and 11.30am.

Refreshments will be available at Catshill Club afterwards.

In Rubery, the Service of Remembrance, led by Rev Claire Turner from St Chad's Church, taking place at 10.45am outside the Rubery Memorial Club.

It will be followed by a parade down New Road and, for those wanting to attend, there will be 15 minutes of prayers, hymns and music inside St Chad's Church.

There will be closures on New Road and Library Way between 10am and 11.45am.

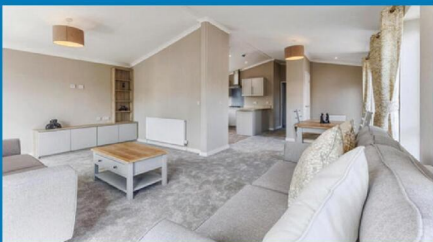
Refreshments will be available then from the Rubery Memorial Club.



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# Soldier marks Remembrance with fundraiser

by **Tristan Harris**  
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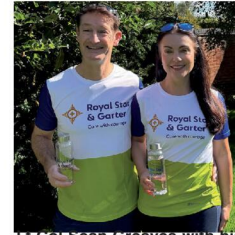
**A SOLDIER is set to run the Lake Garda Half Marathon on Remembrance Sunday for an Armed Forces charity**

Lt Col Sean Greaves, from Bromsgrove, who has served in the Armed Forces since 1985, will take part in the run in Italy next Sunday, November 9 with his wife Anwen, to raise cash for Royal Star and Garter.

The charity provides loving, compassionate care and support for veterans and their families, living with disability or dementia, through its homes in Solihull, Surbiton, High Wycombe and Worthing.

It also provides services reaching into the community, including lunch clubs, day care and a national Telephone Friendship Service.

Sean previously raised funds for Royal Star and Garter when he completed the North Pole Marathon in



**Lt Col Sean Greaves with his wife Anwen. s**

2007 with brother Rob and friend Steve, who were also in the Army.

He said he was inspired to run for the charity because of the outstanding care and support it provided the Armed Forces community.

Sean started his military career as a Weapons Engineer in the Royal Navy, serving between 1985 and 1996. In 2000 he commissioned into the Army as a dental officer and served until 2016.

Since then, he has been a reservist with 202 (Midland) Multi Role Medical Regiment in Birmingham.

During his Armed Forces career, he has served in the UK, Europe, Africa, South America, the Caribbean and Iraq.

The dad-of-two will run the half-marathon alongside Anwen, who is also a dentist and employed in the NHS.

He said: "I think it quite fitting I will be running the half-marathon and raising money for Royal Star and Garter on Remembrance Sunday.

"It's a wonderful organisation that looks after the veterans' community and, as someone who has served many years in the Royal Navy and then the Army, it is a cause very close to my heart.

"It's reassuring to know there are organisations like Royal Star and Garter which provide invaluable support to the Armed Forces family."

Visit [justgiving.com/page/sean-greaves-1](http://justgiving.com/page/sean-greaves-1) to sponsor Sean and Anwen.

Anyone else interested in fundraising for Royal Star and Garter can go to [starandgarter.org/how-you-can-help/fundraising/](http://starandgarter.org/how-you-can-help/fundraising/) for further details.



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# Major workout begins on new £12.7m leisure centre

**WORK has officially started on the massive £12.7million revamp of Droitwich Spa Leisure Centre.**

The scheme has been funded by Wychavon District Council and, following the completion of initial enabling works, the main project is now

under way.

Designed by Watson Batty Architects and delivered by main contractor Speller Metcalfe, the redevelopment promises a major transformation of the much-loved community sports and leisure centre.

The new-look centre will feature

a brand new 8metre by 12metre learner pool, housed within a modern extension which also includes a welcoming new reception and cafe area.

The addition will allow a full programme of swimming lessons to be run without impacting the main pool's timetable, helping residents of all ages to develop swimming as a vital life skill.

Gillian Dunster, Alliance Leisure's business development manager, said: "This refurbishment is about more than bricks and mortar - it's about growing confidence in the water, removing barriers to activity and futureproofing a vital community asset."

"We're proud to support Wychavon's net-zero ambitions while enhancing the experience for every visitor."

There will also be an extensive modernisation across the centre with upgrades including the renovation of changing areas, three flexible-use treatment rooms being added and improved mechanical and electrical systems.

A key focus is sustainability, with air source heat pumps and solar panels helping to boost energy efficiency and support the council's target of achieving net zero by 2030.

Coun Dan Birch, Wychavon's Executive Board Member for Wellbeing, Social Mobility and Transformation, said: "I'm delighted to see how quickly work is progress-

ing on delivering this vital upgrade to Droitwich Spa Leisure Centre.

"You can already see the foundations of the learner pool begin to take shape and I'm excited to watch the scheme develop over the coming months."

"This is part of our multi-million-pound investment in leisure and wellbeing in the town."

"We are committed to progressing these schemes at pace to ensure the full leisure offering in Droitwich is delivered in a timely manner for the benefit of our residents."

## Timeframe

The first phase of the refurbishment - covering the 'dry' side of the centre, including the gym and changing rooms - is now well.

Excavation for the new learner pool is under way, with early phases expected to be completed before Christmas.

Work will continue through 2026, with the fully refurbished centre due to reopen later in the year.

As a separate contract, the Droitwich project will also see upgrades and expansion to the car park and a new skatepark and pump track installed, further supporting Wychavon's multi-million-pound investment in leisure, health, and wellbeing in Droitwich Spa.

Visit this story at: [droitwichstandard.co.uk](http://droitwichstandard.co.uk) for more information and pictures.



Speller Metcalfe contracts manager, Richard Monk, Wychavon Leisure's managing director, Nigel Grundy, and Speller Metcalfe's project manager, Sean McDermott, at the site. Picture by Wychavon District Council.

## MESS TO OPEN:

Longbridge accommodation which houses Military Medics is due to re-open on Armistice Day.

Glenart Castle Mess was closed for maintenance works back in July and has not reopened since.

But government bosses have confirmed the mess, which opened back in 2017 as purpose-built accommodation for military medics working at the Royal Centre for Defence Medicine (RCDM) at Birmingham's Queen Elizabeth Hospital, will come back to its original use on Tuesday, November 11.

Northfield MP Laurence Turner asked the Secretary of Defence, Luke Pollard, for an update on the works in the House of Commons.

The Home Secretary said works, which involved an upgrade to the building's water system infrastructure, were progressing well and were 90 per cent complete.

The RCDM is the primary receiving unit for military patients, with all operational casualties since June 2010 being treated there. The new accommodation was named the Glenart Castle Mess, after a First World War hospital ship.



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# Tenants urged to play role in council policies

**REDDITCH Borough Council tenants and leaseholders are being urged to help shape the future of council housing services.**

They are being encouraged to become community stakeholders by contributing to the design and delivery of the services and influencing decisions which directly affect their homes and neighbourhoods.

Tenants and leaseholders can get involved in many ways, such as participating in focus groups and consultations or engaging in service reviews.

The council will provide training and resources so residents can contribute effectively.

However, participation does not require attending formal meetings, as tenants can still help to co-design housing policies and services through flexible and accessible channels.

by Taneesha Arora

The council is also establishing a Tenant Scrutiny Panel to represent the views of the wider tenant community, have a say in how housing services are delivered and provide constructive feedback to help bring about improvements.

Those voicing their opinions through joining the Housing Improvement Board will be able to ensure sufficient progress is continuing in line with the Housing Improvement Plan.

Redditch Borough Council's portfolio holder for housing, Coun Bill Hartnett, said: "We've identified gaps in how we engage with tenants and leaseholders through our recent regulatory judgement, and it is a key part of our Housing Improvement Plan going forward."

He added the range of informal engagement oppor-

tunities were being finalised but would include a scrutiny panel, task and finish groups, project or estate-based events and individual focus groups.

"Getting involved will build a community that has a collective aim to see positive change in their borough.

"Sharing experiences and views on repairs, maintenance, and safety, will only help to improve service delivery."

Coun Hartnett believes this is a big opportunity to have tenants' and leaseholders' voices heard for better contribution and involvement in the housing service.

The yearly 'Tenant Satisfaction Measures Survey' will once again be published in January to allow tenants and leaseholders to feedback and comment on the last 12 months of service.

Visit this story on our website and click through to get involved.



Blake Clarke is hoping local businesses will help him reach the top of the break dancing world. s

## Blake wants to be a break-through star

A TEENAGE Redditch break dancer is seeking support in a bid to compete against the world's best.

Blake Clarke, 14, already competes throughout the UK and has recently returned from his first international 'battle' in the Netherlands.

The St Augustine's Catholic High School pupil said: "I love breaking and want to go as far as I can.

"I'm gaining experience and am really pleased with my performances so far this year.

"In Holland, I made the top eight out of 48 under-17s - my opponents are often a lot older than me."

Earlier in the year, he won in Edinburgh and reached the latter stages of the B-boy world championships in Manchester, which featured top breaking stars from Japan.

Blake won a competition in Wales the weekend before last and made the top 16 in an adult competition in Newcastle last weekend.

Next up, he will be heading to Bradford at the end of November.

Blake was a talented junior gymnast before switching to breaking. He trains for more than 12 hours each week across four evenings.

Blake is sponsored by

Transmec, a logistics company based in Redditch.

He is now seeking additional support to enable him to participate in more competitions around the world.

His mum, Emma, said: "Transmec have been absolutely amazing and it would be fantastic if a few more local businesses could come on board to help cover the costs.

"Blake loves what he does and wants to go as far as he can.

"Every bit of support makes a difference."

Anyone who is able to help should call Emma on 07584 672169.

News and sport online: [www.redditchstandard.co.uk](http://www.redditchstandard.co.uk)

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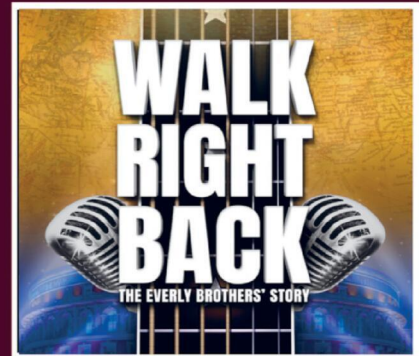
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# Players set to stage annual panto

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

**THERE will be plenty of family fun when Rowney Green Players perform their annual pantomime which this year is 'Dick Whittington'.**

The well-established, enthusiastic and friendly amateur dramatics group will be staging the show from

Thursday to Saturday, November 20 to 22.

They will be at 7.30pm each night with a Saturday matinee at 2pm.

The Friday is already sold out but there are still tickets for the other performances.

The Rowney Green Players group dates back to 1923, where it started life as a Shakespearean Society, performing many of the Bard's works in the local village hall and entering

and winning many festivals.

The group thrived in the early years, having great support from the local community.

With the breakout of war in 1939 the company took a back seat and re-emerged in 1944 with a production of 'The Farmer's Wife'.

This was the beginning of a new era as the players began to incorporate other productions apart from Shakespeare.

The last Shakespeare play to be staged was 'The Merry Wives of Windsor' performed in 1987.

The Group usually delivers two productions-a-year - performing a mix of comedy, farce, pantomime, musical and drama.

A group spokesperson said: "We pride ourselves on our sets and costumes, having a costume wardrobe with many original pieces."

In order for the group to contin-

ue, it is always on the look-out for new members - whether that be in acting, backstage or general help.

"Putting on a production is hard work but we have a lot of fun in the process." For more on the Rowney Green Players, visit: rowneygreenplayers.co.uk or facebook.com/rowneygreenplayers - alternatively, email Sue Walker at: susanjwalker@hotmail.co.uk or call her on 0121 445 1562.

## Community comes together to celebrate Sue's long service



**RIGHT - Staff came together to celebrate Sue's 40 years' service. 4225007MMR3**

**LEFT Head of Operations Mick York with Sue Broughton and the plaque unveiled in the Broughton Suite created in her honour. Pictures by Marcus Mingsins 4225007MMR2**



WILLOW Trees Community Centre in Redditch has honoured its long-serving staff member Sue Broughton who has been there for the past 40 years.

In tribute to her dedication, a room at the popular centre in Church Hill has been renamed the 'Broughton Suite'.

Sue joined YMCA Worcestershire, which runs the Willow Trees Community Centre, in 1985 and, in that

time, she has taken on a number of roles.

A special plaque was unveiled in the 'Broughton Suite' in honour of Sue's commitment to the cause.

Kellie Dean, YMCA Worcestershire's community development manager, said: "Over the time she has been here, Suet has become a pillar of the Church Hill Community, running the Willow Trees Centre.

"It's truly an honour for all of us to work alongside Sue.

"Her tireless dedication and compassionate spirit have helped shape services across YMCA Worcestershire and more recently Willow Trees into the heart of the Church Hill community it is today - and for that, we are endlessly grateful.

"Thank you, Sue. "Here's to your legacy and everything you've built with us over the past four decades."

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think independently, and develop the resilience to meet challenges with optimism. Children progress naturally – not because they are hurried along, but because they are given the time, guidance, and confidence to flourish.


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# Celebrating the community bus

by James Reid  
news@bullivantmedia.com

## DROITWICH CVS celebrated Community Transport Week 2025 with a visit from Coun Dan Birch who dropped in to show his support.

The councillor praised the CVS' outstanding work in the Droitwich community during his visit which coincided with Community Minibus Week - that ran from October 13 to 17.

This year's theme was 'More Than a Minibus', highlighting the profound impact of the service on local lives.

Coun Birch met with staff and volunteers to hear how their services transcended transportation - helping others to combat isolation whilst maintaining independence and feeling empowered.

Droitwich CVS is a local organisation, run by only a few people which provides vital services, including community transport for those across the town.

The organisation focuses its support on vulnerable groups, such as the elderly and disabled, enabling them to access to healthcare, education and employment.

Droitwich CVS ensures all in its care feel valued.

Coun Birch said "It was lovely to meet and discuss the invaluable work they do day in and day out.

"Their services go far beyond simply driving a vehicle - they provide people with the opportunity to live independently, engage in their communities, and access essential services."

He described the charity as 'an essential

pillar of the local community' and added he was proud to stand behind the Droitwich CVS team and champion the support it needed to continue its vital work for many years to come.

Coun Birch expressed his pride in advocating for the continued support of the team to ensure their work can continue.

Tonia Enderbury, CEO of Droitwich CVS said everyone was thrilled to welcome Coun Birch.

And she added: "It was an excellent opportunity to showcase how much more we are than just a Community Transport service."

"We are part of the fabric of this community, helping individuals stay connected, independent, and part of society."

She said, as the community transport service was very much in demand, it was always in need of volunteer drivers.

She urged anyone who could help by becoming a volunteer driver and spare a couple of hours each week to visit: [droitwich-cvs.org.uk/volunteer-opportunities](http://droitwich-cvs.org.uk/volunteer-opportunities) for more information and to register their interest.

### Trustees appeal

Droitwich CVS is also seeking enthusiastic residents to join its Board of Trustees and play an active role in supporting and shaping the future of the charity and its community services across the town and the surrounding villages.

The CVS is looking for those who are passionate about helping others, strengthening community connections and making a real difference in people's lives,

No formal qualifications are needed.

The organisation is particularly keen to



hear from people with experience in HR, marketing or finance, though applications from all backgrounds and experiences are welcome.

Volunteering with the CVS provides a fantastic opportunity for people to contribute their skills and ideas to a friendly, supportive team dedicated to improving the wellbeing of local people.

Tonia said: "Our trustees are at the heart of everything we do.

"By joining us, you'll be helping to ensure

that vital community projects continue to thrive and make a difference where it's needed most."

Anyone wanting to find out more or express an interest should email: [admin@droitwich-cvs.org.uk](mailto:admin@droitwich-cvs.org.uk) or call 01905 779115.

**Tonia Enderbury, CEO of Droitwich CVS, Coun Dan Birch, one of the volunteer drivers and Sarah Murray, the CVS' community services co-ordinator.**

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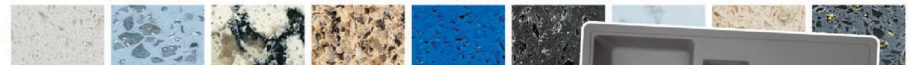


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## Reviews

# Cast on song for night of Chess

YOU COULD see staging Chess The Musical at Droitwich's Norbury Theatre would have been a massive task – there is so much in it musically, choreography-wise and in the acting.

Director Christopher Newbould – in his inaugural outing in that role – did a sterling job, ably assisted by a very talented cast for this almost three-hour show (with a 20-minute interval).

The Ensemble provided the perfect foundations – they were fantastic vocally and delivered a multitude of routines as chess fans, judges and even a press pack.

The story centres on the rivalry of American chess champion Frederick Trumper and Anatoly Serfievsky. As well as their battle, there is also the East vs West political divide and a love triangle between those two and Florence.

Kate Green was solid as the Arbitrator – a chess referee and narrator.

Jake Jones and Paul Steele as the chess players' representatives Walter De Courcey and Alexander Molokov were both brilliant in their roles and when they performed their solo numbers.

Jo Hargreaves as Anatoly's wife did not appear until the second half but it was well

worth the wait. Her voice and range was incredible.

Francis Blincoe portrayed the petulant and arrogant American Frederick Trumper well.

David Bradley was excellent as Russian Anatoly. He had a real presence on the stage.

However he night's top performance went to Amanda Blockley as Florence Vassey who captured perfectly the emotional rollercoaster her character embarked on and was pitch-perfect all night.

She also enjoyed some fantastic duets with both Bradley and Blincoe but the musical highlight of the evening was her and Hargreaves singing 'I know Him So Well'.

The Norbury orchestra was also as faultless as ever throughout the three hours.

There were not many moments of silence in this production and the band kept the action ticking over with incidental music and hit every note when called into action for all 37 numbers.

Chess runs at the Norbury Theatre until tomorrow (Saturday, November 1). The last two shows are at 7.30pm tonight and tomorrow.

Visit: [norburytheatre.co.uk](http://norburytheatre.co.uk) for more information and tickets.

Tristan Harris



The talented seven-strong Rubery Drama Group cast staged Murder in Rehearsal - by Droitwich playwright Angela Lanyon - brilliantly. s

## Skulduggery on the stage

A CLASSIC whodunnit with an extra twist was fantastically staged by Rubery Drama Group at Beacon Church Centre.

As well as the traditional fatality in the plot, once the scene was set in the first act of Murder In Rehearsal, those watching had the chance to turn detective and guess who had died and who was responsible in the interval.

Droitwich playwright Angela Lanyon, who penned Murder In Rehearsal, also attended the performance and picked the winner at the end from the correct answers.

There was a real variety of characters with different traits and grievances against each other, laying the foundations for the murder.

There was brilliant acting throughout the evening, making for a thoroughly enjoyable show.

The performance of the evening was by the murderer - which obviously I cannot reveal as this play is sure to be put on in the future.

Well done to Angela Lanyon for writing the script and Rubery Drama Group for bringing it to life...and death.

Tristan Harris



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# Burglary crackdown

by Ryan Smith  
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## **POLICE arrested suspected burglars in Redditch, Barnt Green, and Kidderminster as part of a crackdown on burglary in north Worcestershire.**

Two 19-year-old men were held on suspicion of a car-key burglary in Kidderminster, where an Audi QS7 was stolen, along with £500 cash and a designer purse.

The Audi was later recovered and both have been bailed pending further enquiries.

Two 16-year-old and one 17-year-old boy were detained on suspicion of two counts of attempted residential burglary and two counts of residential burglary in Redditch. They were bailed pending further enquiries.

In a separate case, a 29-year-old man was arrested on suspicion of residential burglary, theft of a motor vehicle, possession of a class B drug, and possession of an offensive weapon.

This followed a car-key burglary in Redditch where a BMW and a Mercedes were stolen.

He was bailed pending further enquiries.

A 62-year-old man was held on suspicion of a residential burglary in Barnt Green - there a BMW car and other valuables were stolen. He

was bailed pending further enquiries.

Officers also took part in Vehicle Crime Intensification Week from October 13 to 19, seizing cash and drugs across north Worcestershire.

Seven arrests were made and eight searches were carried out in relation to vehicle crime.

The arrests also led to four mobile phones being seized, which will be subject to digital forensics.

Drugs, including cannabis and nitrous oxide, were also confiscated, along with nearly £2,000 in cash.

And police also shared advice - via their social media platforms and Neighbourhood Matters website - on how drivers could protect their vehicles from criminals.

Det Insp Colin Berry, the vehicle crime lead in north Worcestershire, said: "This intensification week saw our officers focus on efforts to tackle some of the highest harm offenders in vehicle crime, reflecting the work West Mercia carries out every day, 365 days a year.

"Organised crime groups are often responsible for a significant number of vehicle thefts and car key burglaries, whether to export high-end vehicles overseas or to break them up for parts and use in so-called chop shops.

"Stolen vehicles can also be used in other areas of acquisitive crime as well as drug offending and modern slavery, so tackling these offences is of high importance."



According to our poll, 52 per cent of Standard readers across Bromsgrove, Redditch, Droitwich and Kidderminster want to see an end to daylight saving time. s

**READER POLL:** Figures from a straw poll we conducted on our Facebook pages over the weekend show the majority of readers would prefer daylight saving time to be scrapped.

Ahead of the clocks going back an hour on Sunday, we asked whether people were happy with the changes - forward an hour in March and back an hour in October - or whether they would prefer the country to be on British Summer Time all year round.

Almost 800 people responded across Bromsgrove, Redditch, Droitwich and Kidderminster to the survey. Overall, 411 people (52 per cent), said they would prefer to scrap daylight saving time and stay on British Summer Time indefinitely. Almost 300 (37 per cent) liked the clocks changing and the remaining 11 per cent did not mind either way.

The Bromsgrove Standard Facebook page got the biggest response with 416 people voting and it also had the largest percentage of people wanting to end

daylight saving time (at 60 per cent).

A total of 30 per cent wanted the clock-changing to stay and 10 per cent did not mind.

Similarly, 58 per cent of Kidderminster Standard readers would prefer to scrap daylight saving time, with 32 per cent wanting the changes to stay - 10 per cent were not bothered either way.

Redditch Standard readers were the most in favour of keeping the clock-changing - 50 per cent of the borough's readers wanted to keep it, with 40 per cent wanting to stay on British Summer Time and 10 per cent having no preference.

In Droitwich, 50 per cent of readers said they wanted to scrap daylight saving time, 33 per cent preferred putting the clocks forward and back and 17 per cent were easy going either way.

\* WHAT do you think about daylight saving time? Email the editor with your views?

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# Libraries now more dementia-friendly

**LIBRARIES** across Worcestershire are becoming more dementia-friendly, thanks to expert training from the University of Worcester.

by Philippa Mingins

Members of the university's Association for Dementia Studies, which specialises in helping people live well with dementia, delivered sessions with select library staff from different parts of the county. These 'dementia ambassadors' have now been tasked with looking for ways to enhance their libraries' environments and activities.

Dr Catrin Jones, senior lecturer in dementia studies, who led the training, said: "We gave staff the confidence to support people liv-

ing with dementia. This can be achieved through considering how we can make the arrangements supportive, so people feel welcome and encouraged to join in the sessions provided in the libraries.

"For us as a team it was a great opportunity to share our research and hopefully in the future develop more programmes in the community."

The sessions covered understanding symptoms, the different ways that dementia can impact on people, potential barriers to inclusion, and the importance of communication and support. Participants also heard from people who have set

up successful programmes to support people living with dementia and their carers and a writer sharing their experience of living with dementia.

Since the training, ambassadors have begun applying their learning - from visiting care homes to promote dementia resources in libraries, to launching story telling sessions for adults.

Several libraries have also requested materials created through the association's 'Crossing the Line' research, to support people providing personal care for people living with dementia, to put on display.

Stephanie Jones, manager of The Hive library in Worcester, added: "It was extremely helpful,



By the book - Staff from The Hive have received dementia training.

and the key thing we realised is this is a really sensitive and delicate part of our service that we want to grow.

"It has been valuable and useful for staff to be trained by the

experts because it means that our responses and resources has been peer reviewed to make sure our approach is consistent with the NHS and those caring for people with dementia."

**Aldi's Winter Fund will donate £10,000 to charities nationwide to support those most in need in the lead-up to Christmas.**



## Aldi fund to support charities ahead of Christmas

ALDI is inviting shoppers in Worcestershire to nominate local charities, community groups and food banks across the UK to receive a share of its Winter Fund.

The supermarket's Winter Fund will donate £10,000 to charities nationwide in an effort to support those most in need in the lead-up to Christmas.

A panel of Aldi representatives will review nominations, with the chosen organisations each receiving a cash donation to continue their vital work during the busy winter months.

To put forward a charity, shoppers simply need to email [aldiwinterfund@citypress.co.uk](mailto:aldiwinterfund@citypress.co.uk), including the name and location of the organisation, as well as a

short summary of why they need support.

Liz Fox, national sustainability director at Aldi UK, said: "We know the winter period can be an incredibly challenging time for many people across the country, and that's why we've relaunched our Winter Fund initiative.

"The response to last year's call-out was amazing, and as a result we

were able to support lots of incredible charities with their work across the UK. We're pleased to be able to help even more organisations this year as they head into the winter months."

Entries close on Monday November 10.

Visit [aldipresscentre.co.uk/terms-and-conditions-for-aldis-winter-fund-the-competition/](http://aldipresscentre.co.uk/terms-and-conditions-for-aldis-winter-fund-the-competition/) for more information.



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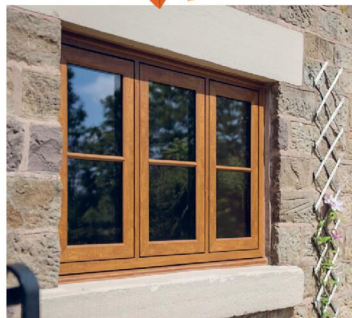
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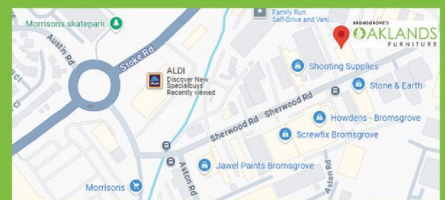
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# Stay safe this Bonfire Night

**AS FIREWORKS** season gets under way, residents are being urged to enjoy celebrations safely by following the Firework Code.

The British Fireworks Association's Firework Code offers essential safety tips for handling fireworks responsibly.

These include buying from licensed retailers, checking for the CE mark, storing fireworks securely in a closed box, and lighting them one at a time at arm's length.

Worcestershire Trading Standards is also reminding the public to only purchase fireworks from approved sellers. Most licensed outlets are permitted to sell fireworks between October 15 and November 10, although a small number can sell them year-round.

To stay safe, avoid buying from unregulated sources such as car boot sales or social media platforms.

Simon Wilkes, head of Trading Standards, said: "Licensed suppliers will sell fireworks with the CE mark or UKCA mark that comply with the current safety standards. Do not buy fireworks from unlicensed retailers. These



fireworks might be unsafe or illegal, and should be reported to Trading Standards, especially because they could end up in the hands of children."

Officers are also reminding people about when fireworks can be used.

It's illegal to set them off between 11pm and 7am, except on special occasions like Bonfire Night (until midnight), and New Year's Eve, Diwali, and Chinese New Year (until 1am).

Simon added: "Fireworks can be really tough for many people, especially those with pets, horses, or livestock, and even some former service personnel who've had dif-

ficult experiences.

"If you're planning fireworks at home or running a display at your business, please chat with your neighbours first."

Anyone concerned about firework sales or storage in Worcestershire, at retail premises or online, can contact the Trading Standards by emailing [Tsenquiries@worcestershireTS.gov.uk](mailto:Tsenquiries@worcestershireTS.gov.uk) or calling the Citizens Advice Consumer Service on 0800 223 1133.

Anyone with information about the misuse of fireworks in public places or the use of fireworks outside of the legitimate hours should report this to West Mercia Police.

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Friday 5th December – Monday 8th December	Was £295	<b>NOW £249pp</b>
Monday 8th December – Friday 12th December	Was £335	<b>NOW £275pp</b>
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Friday 30th January – Monday 2nd February	Was £235	<b>NOW £199pp</b>
Friday 6th February – Monday 9th February	Was £249	<b>NOW £204pp</b>
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# Funds raised at fashion show

by Taneesha Arora  
news@bullivantmedia.com

**A FASHION show on October 18 raised nearly £950 to help out Redditch and Bromsgrove refugees 'in style'.**

The catwalk fundraiser was organised by Bromsgrove and Redditch Welcomes Refugees (BRWR), a charity which provides practical and financial aid as well as friendship to around 200 refugees, predominantly from Ukraine, Afghanistan and Syria.

The event took place at Bromsgrove Methodist Church Centre, with the hall provided free of charge.

A total of 80 people attended the show where women's outfits from high street retailers were showcased by nine volunteer models - most were refugees from Ukraine.

Afterwards, the clothes were sold at discounts of up to 75 per cent.

Organisers of the fashion show were delighted that so many from the local community came along to support the charity fundraiser.

BRWR chair, Yvonne Rendell, said: "These are dif-



ficult times for those of us who wish to support people coming to the UK to seek sanctuary from often unimaginable experiences of war, persecution and other dangers.

"It was heartening to see the welcome, the kindness and the compassion demonstrated by so many."

BRWR provides a range of support for refugees in both Bromsgrove and Redditch to help them create new lives after fleeing their home coun-

tries.

The charity always welcomes new volunteers and funding.

Email: info@brwr.uk or visit: www.brwr.uk for more information on Bromsgrove and Redditch Welcomes Refugees and to donate to the cause.

**The catwalk models - many Ukrainian refugees - who made the fashion show event such a success. s**



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# HELPING TO SAY Goodbye



Sadly most of us will experience losing a loved one in our lifetime and, at some point, contemplate the time when we leave this earth ourselves.

Losing someone, whatever the circumstances and whatever age they may be, is never easy and effects 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.

Death and loss is something that is experienced, discussed and thought of frequently, but rarely is the information you may need available when the difficult time comes - nor is it provided in one place.

We have put together this feature including contact information for our local funeral directors, details of how to arrange a funeral and what steps to take when someone dies.

An increasing number of people now pay for their funeral in advance and make all the necessary arrangements and decisions before the day comes. This tends to comfort them, knowing it will relieve their grieving family of the worry and responsibility of organising a funeral. If this sounds like something you would like to do, contact your local funeral director today and also arrange to see your solicitor. Everybody, no matter how much or little you think you have, should have a will.

No-one will ever have all the answers to this complex and painful issue but we hope these pages will make this difficult time a little easier.



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# One Last Goodbye *Delivering a Eulogy*

# HELPING TO SAY Goodbye



If you have been asked to deliver a eulogy at a friend or relative's funeral, you should feel greatly honoured. The eulogy is an important aspect of the funeral and a special opportunity to capture the decease's personality and commemorate their life. However, it's certainly not an easy job. You may feel that summing up someone's life in a matter of minutes is a truly impossible task. What will you say? Where should you start? What if you break down in tears? Will you be a good enough orator to do your loved one justice? Here are the answers to those questions and more.

First things first, prepare beforehand by gathering information from as many of the decease's family and friends as possible. You may already know all the basic facts such as age, date of birth, occupations, surviving family members etc., but call around and ask for any special family stories or anecdotes to include in your speech. Everyone will have some memories that they want to share with you at this sad time and these will make the eulogy more personal for all in attendance. Even if you're not a natural public speaker, don't worry. As long as you speak from the heart, you can't go wrong. Once you have collected the information, sit down and sort through it. You will probably start to see a theme develop. For instance, if most of what

people have told you are examples of how the deceased always helped others, concentrate on this aspect of their personality and use anecdotes to demonstrate what a caring individual they were. Other themes might include the person's ability to put others at ease or their sense of adventure for example. Pull out as many anecdotes or thoughts that reflect the person's personality particularly well and use these throughout. Likewise, if the person you are writing about was a bit of a prankster, it's perfectly acceptable to recall a couple of humorous stories. Don't feel that just because you're at a funeral you have to be completely sombre. Not only will a touch of humour lighten the mood but after all, this should be a celebration of the decease's life and therefore it's a great idea to include a smile or two. Also don't feel you need to sum up the person's entire life. The eulogy you deliver just needs to honour the decease's memory with facets of their personality, so don't be tempted to take the congregation on too lengthy a biographical journey. Everybody is different, so just try and describe the person you knew so very well but also try to mention the important roles they played in their life, such as parent, mentor, friend etc. as this will help comfort all those in attendance. According MP Everett, daughter

of Norman Vincent Peale, the great minister of positive thinking, when delivering her father's eulogyshe stated: "Funerals are not for the deceased, who have already been released from the limitations of this world. Funerals are for the rest of us - those family and friends and admirers who are left behind. We grieve; we feel loss; we have to adjust to a new reality."

If you do break down in tears, don't panic as this is completely normal. Remember that everyone at the service is one hundred percent behind you so if at any stage you do feel like the world is caving in around you, just pause, take a few deep breaths and continue in your own time. Giving a eulogy is a noble gesture that people will appreciate and admire. Everyone will want you to do well but if you're really worried that you may not be able to get through it, have a friend on standby to take over if the need should arise. Just having this option should calm your nerves a little. Finally if you think it would also help, feel free to simply read aloud the eulogy straight from your speech cards. You don't even have to look up if you don't want to. It's the words you say during the eulogy that are important and NOT necessarily how you deliver them.




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# Floral Tributes

# HELPING TO SAY Goodbye



When someone passes away, most of us feel we would like to do something to show we cared for that person. Sending flowers and a note is a thoughtful way to do this. If you are the bereaved organising the funeral, the flowers you choose will dress the coffin and the hearse. They may be placed on top of the hearse or in following vehicles if there are too many. Timing is essential at a funeral and the flowers should be in place in the hearse in sufficient time for the cortege to set off to the ceremony, but your funeral director should see this is all in place for you.

When considering flowers, you may wish to choose your loved one's favourites but florists are also on hand to offer a wide range of styles, sprays, wreaths and arrangements. Arrangements can even be personalised by having your loved one's name made up in their favourite football team colours etc.

If you are a friend of the deceased and sending flowers to the family, remember the

purpose of flowers at a funeral is to celebrate life. Whether the floral arrangement is formal or informal, it should preferably include a hand written note to provide comfort, and help lift the spirit of the family of the deceased.

You will also want to take the faith and culture of the deceased into consideration before sending flowers. What may be appropriate for one culture may be inappropriate for another. If you aren't sure, ask the closest family member you know.



### A quick guide is as follows:

- Catholic** – Most flowers and arrangements are acceptable.
  - Protestant Christian** – Most flowers and arrangements are welcome at both the memorial service and the funeral.
  - Mormon** – Most flowers are appropriate. However, avoid arrangements on a crucifix or cross.
  - Eastern or Greek Orthodox** – Most flowers are accepted, and white flowers are favoured.
  - Jewish** – Although you may send flowers to the family members' homes, flowers at the funeral home are not typically displayed. Some of the more contemporary Jewish funerals allow flowers at the entrance of the synagogue.
  - Buddhist** – Most flowers and arrangements are appropriate.
  - Hindu** – Although floral arrangements are acceptable, garlands are more common at a Hindu funeral.
  - Muslim** – The appropriateness of flowers varies in the Islamic religion, so ask family members before sending them. If you do choose to order flowers for an Islamic funeral, keep the arrangement simple and elegant.
- A good florist will also help you. Please ask their advice as they will be used to dealing with these matters.*



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# Writing a Will *Where there's a will*

# HELPING TO SAY Goodbye



It's something many of us don't like talking about and most of us will 'put off' as we're not at 'that' stage in life yet. However, regardless of age or the state of our personal circumstances, if you care about what happens to your property after you die, you should make a will. Without one, the State directs who inherits your belongings, so your friends, favourite charities and relatives may get nothing.

According to The Law Society only one in three adults in Britain have made a will. This often leads to unnecessary financial hardship for many families when it is discovered that no will has been left by a recently deceased family member or that they simply can't find it.

If you die without a will (intestate), the intestacy rules dictate who receives your 'estate.' You may think you don't own enough or have very little savings but when you actually tot up the total value of everything you

do actually own, your 'estate' may become actually quite valuable. Especially if you own your home, add all your belongings, your car, jewellery, any insurance policies and saving accounts you may have etc. You may actually realise that you are far more affluent than you realise and I'm sure you'd prefer it to be you, rather than the state, who decides where all this goes.

Without a will, the intestacy rules will also decide who will manage the affairs of your estate, and who will be your legal representatives and what their costs may be. It is important to realise that unmarried partners may have no claim on the estate (unless 'dependant' but this can be an expensive fact to establish). Even a legal spouse may have to sell off the family home just to pay off the other automatic beneficiaries so it's important to think these through before it's too late. Also in the case of divorced or separated parents, without a will, the state will determine who the legal guardians of your children will be and again, I'm sure every parent in the country would prefer to name the person / persons they would like to act as their child or children's legal guardian/s in the sad event of their death.

The standard way to get a will drawn up is to consult a solicitor although many people still buy the 'Do It Yourself' wills available on the High Street. However, do beware of the pitfalls of DIY wills. The Consumer's Association states: "The one thing worse than not making a will at all, is

making a mess of making a 'Do It Yourself' will. Many lawyers would say that they could make more money out of poor home-made wills than they do out of drawing up wills for clients. There is probably some truth in this as there are many ways in which people who prepare and sign their own wills can go wrong. This can, later, lead to long and expensive court cases to resolve the matter, with enormous legal costs for the lawyers and this can reduce, by staggering amounts the size of the estate to which the beneficiaries are entitled." So be safe and consult a solicitor.

One of the biggest dangers of writing a will without the right legal advice is missing out on effective ways of protecting your loved ones from Inheritance Tax. Contrary to what many people think Inheritance Tax is one of the most avoidable of taxes and a diligent Financial Adviser or Solicitor should be able to ensure that their clients receive the most tax efficient way of saving their loved ones money – sometimes avoiding Inheritance Tax altogether completely within the law.

### Finding a solicitor:

Please contact one of the solicitors in this paper.

What your solicitor will need to know: Once you have appointed a solicitor, they will need the following details from you:

- (1) List all the items you have to leave e.g. house, contents, car, valuables, savings accounts, any insurance

policies and their relevant estimated values.

- (2) Consider who you would like to provide for and in what way.

- (3) Consider whether you would like to leave money or property 'in trust' for children or grandchildren until they are grown up and at what age you think they should inherit your gift.

- (4) Decide who you would like to receive your sentimental belongings. These may be of little financial value but you can pass them on to someone you know will appreciate them.

- (5) Consider whether you would like to leave anything to charity.

- (6) If you have any children that may still be under 18 when you die, you may need to name someone as their legal guardian.

- (7) Do you have any particular wishes for your funeral? Do you want to be buried or cremated? Are there any other instructions? For example, if you want to be an organ donor this can be included in your will. However, it is also a good idea to record your wishes on the organ-donor register, or to carry an organ-donor card.

- (8) Choose one or more executors to 'wind up your affairs' after you are gone. These can be spouses, family members or friends, although it is as well to get their agreement in advance. If, in the event, they find the task too onerous, as they well may, they can always ask a solicitor to take over.

### Signing the will:

Once the will has been drawn up it is not effective until it has been signed. There are several rules affecting the signature process which, if not followed correctly, will make your will invalid. For example, witnesses and their husbands, wives or civil partners cannot benefit under the will. Many people use staff at their solicitor's office to act as their witnesses to avoid this problem.

### Where to keep the will:

It is important to keep your will in a safe place and tell your executors or a close friend or relative where it is. People often ask their solicitor to store their wills for them.

### Keeping your will up to date:

You should review your will at least every five years and after any major life change such as getting separated, married or divorced, having a child or moving house. It is best to deal with any major changes by getting a new will drawn up. But it is also possible to make minor changes (codicils) to your existing will. In both cases it is best to consult a solicitor.

The Law Society has produced a series of fact sheets on will-making. For a free copy of the relevant one, state your circumstances (married, grandparent, divorced, etc.) and send a stamped addressed envelope to The Law Society, 50 Chancery Lane, London, WC2A 1SX.



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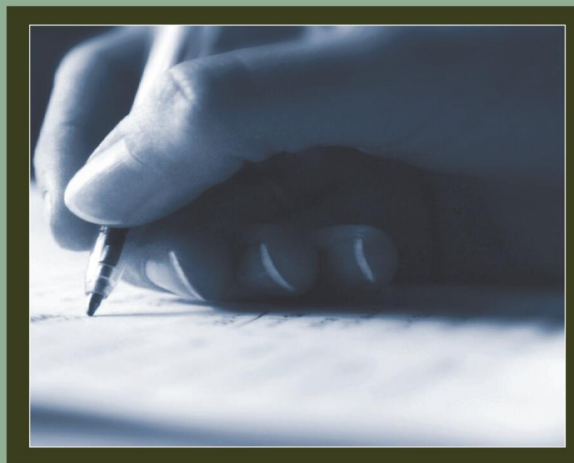
It is important to get advice when someone dies to make sure that you understand what needs to be done. For example:

- If there is a will do you understand what it means?
- If there is no will do you understand who will inherit and who is entitled to deal with the estate?
- Do you need a Grant of Probate and do you understand what this means.
- Do you need to pay inheritance tax and do you understand how to fill in the forms for H M Revenue & Customs.

- Do you know how to value the assets in the estate?
- Do you know how to deal with the deceased persons tax up to the date of their death and do you understand how to deal with the tax due during the administration period.
- Do you understand how to provide an account to beneficiaries and what they are entitled to see.

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**If you require advice on any of these issues please contact us.**



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# Cygnet Song shines light on county wellness

**WORCESTERSHIRE County Council's Public Health team has supported Cygnet Song, a breathtaking light installation that illuminates Worcester's main bridge across the River Severn.**

The wellbeing-themed installation, created with local residents, was part of the new Bridges of Light Festival.

The two-day celebration of creativity, community and collaboration showcased installations and interactive light-based artworks throughout Worcester city on

Wednesday and Thursday. Public Health's contribution enabled local community groups, including Worcester residents of all ages, to come together in creative workshops and bring the installation to life alongside professional artists, Illuminos.

Inspired by the story of the Ugly Duckling and shaped by residents' own stories and experiences the installation explored themes of resilience, strength, wellbeing and personal growth.

Significant evidence now shows that taking part in creative activities positively impacts health and wellbeing,

brings people together and can help foster a sense of community pride.

Bridges of Light involved artists working collaboratively with the city's communities to create high-quality

artwork with local resonance and relevance.

Dr Lisa McNally, Worcestershire's director of Public Health said: "Cygnet Song doesn't just light up the bridge, it lights up the stories of our communities.

"We know that creativity can have a powerful impact on health and wellbeing, and this project is a beautiful way to bring people together, whether they're contributing to the artwork or simply enjoying it."

Elaine Knight, arts director at Severn Arts, added: "We are delighted to be working with Illuminos on this new commission. Illuminos have been working with a range of groups from Brickfields and Warden East, listening to their experiences and creating artwork which will be used within the final projection.

"It's very exciting to have this projection as part of Bridges of Light and we hope everyone who sees it will go away inspired."

Visit [www.severnarts.org.uk](http://www.severnarts.org.uk) for more information.



The installation was part of the new Bridges of Light Festival.



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# Latest RSPCA campaign asks pet lovers to rehome small furrries

by Sarah Mason  
sarah.mason@bullivantmedia.com

**AN ANIMAL charity is urging pet lovers to consider rehoming smaller mammals - 'small furrries' following a surge in those being given up.**

As part of the RSPCA's annual Adoptober drive - the charity is encouraging people to visit its Findapet website and check out the 'small furry' pets, like mice, rats, chinchillas, ferrets and gerbils, as well as guinea pigs, who are in the RSPCA's care but remain overlooked, unloved and homeless.

The charity fears overbreeding of guinea pigs, combined with the ongoing impact of the cost of living crisis and a lack of owner knowledge about the species, is leading to an increase in the numbers of guinea pigs being given up.

RSPCA head of companion animals Dr Sam Gaines said: "We've seen a shocking 40 per cent rise in the number of guinea pigs coming into our care so far this year and we're urging animal-lovers to consider rehoming those and other 'small furrries'.

"From guinea pigs, rabbits and chinchillas to ferrets, gerbils, mice and rats, there are so many of these little animals in our care who are looking for new homes.

"Rabbits and other small furrries

can be very rewarding pets and given the right housing, socialising, diet and care they can become much loved members of the family. However, they can often be misunderstood as they have complex needs and need a lot of care and attention.

"Adopting may take a bit more time than buying but it is more rewarding as often you are rescuing that animal from a history of mistreatment or neglect.

"It also means we are freeing up space in our centres so more animals in need can move in to receive the care they need."

The call for more people to adopt "small furrries" comes as the RSPCA lends its support to Guinea Pig Awareness Week (GPAW) from October 20 to 24, a national campaign aimed at improving the care of one of the UK's most commonly owned, yet often misunderstood, pets.

This campaign highlights the five key welfare needs of guinea pigs: environment, diet, behaviour, companionship and health.

This year's focus is on ensuring guinea pigs are kept comfortable, receive proper care, and are given the companionship they need to thrive.

**The RSPCA is calling on animal lovers to consider adopting small furrries this Adoptober.**





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**John Meredith**

John's wife Jennifer and family would like to thank all relatives, friends and neighbours for all of their donations and cards received following Johns funeral.

They would also like to thank Thomas Brothers for arranging it for them



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DEATHS

**WHITEHEAD**  
**Elsie May (nee Mills)**

Age 98, died on 16th October 2025 at Perry Manor Care Home in Worcester.

She is predeceased by her husband of 60 years, Barrie, and her elder siblings:

Emily, Bill, and Dorothy.

She is survived by her daughter and son-in-law, Linda and Christopher Ayton; her grandsons and their wives, Alexander and Jacquelynn, Alastair and Ellie; her three great grandchildren.

A crematorium only service will take place at Redditch Crematorium on Friday, 21st November at 12.30pm.

Family flowers only please. Donations would be appreciated in her memory for Alzheimer's Society.



DEATHS

**CARDUS**  
**James Peter "Peter"**

Sadly passed away at Studley Rose Care Home on Friday 10th October 2025, aged 88. Peter will be deeply missed by all who knew and loved him.

A service to celebrate Peter's life will be held at Redditch Crematorium on Monday 17th November 2025 at 11:45am.

All are welcome to attend. Refreshments to follow at The Abbey Hotel, Hither Green Lane.

Donations if so desired may be made to Marie Curie via

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

FUNERAL DIRECTORS

DEATHS

**PESSALL**  
**Robert George "Bob"**

Sadly passed away at Worcester Royal Hospital on Tuesday 7th October 2025, aged 89.

Bob will be deeply missed by all who knew and loved him.

A service to celebrate Bob's life will be held at St Leonard's Church on Friday 21st November 2025 at 10:30am, followed by a cremation at Redditch at 11:45am.

All are welcome to attend. Refreshments to follow at The Abbey Hotel, Dagnell End Road

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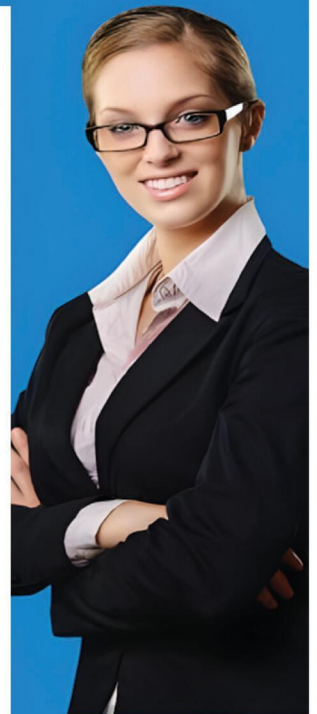
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**RENAULT** has once again dominated the Parkers New Car Awards by taking home four major honours for 2026 - including the coveted 'Car of the Year' title for the second year running.

The Renault 4 E-Tech electric was the standout performer, securing both 'Car of the Year' and 'Best Small Family Car' awards.

Joining it on the winners' podium, the Renault 5 E-Tech electric was named 'Best First Car', while the acclaimed Renault Scenic E-Tech electric - last year's overall winner - continued its success story by retaining its title in the 'Best Medium Family Car' category.

It follows Renault's four-award triumph at last year's Parkers New Car Awards, further cementing the brand's position as a leader in electric vehicles.

Adam Wood, Managing Director, Renault Group UK, said: "We're incredibly pleased and proud to retain the 'Car of the Year' title and once again lead multiple categories at the Parkers New Car Awards. It's testament to the consistency, accessibility and desirability of our electric range, Parkers recognising our line-up as being perfect for everyone from first-time drivers to families."

A modern reinvention of the icon-

ic original, the Renault 4 E-Tech electric blends distinctive character with practicality and advanced technology. With its 2.62m wheelbase it delivers impressive interior space, while the 420-litre boot expands to 1,405 litres with the rear seats folded, making it ideal for family life. Renault's OpenR Link infotainment system with a 10.1-inch touchscreen comes as standard, while a 100 kW DC charger allows charging from 15 to 80% in just 30 minutes.

As with every electric car in Renault's line-up, the Renault 4 E-Tech electric qualifies for the UK Government's Electric Car Grant, lowering the on-the-road price by £1,500 to £25,495.

Bringing another icon into the electric era, the Renault 5 E-Tech electric impressed judges in the 'Best First Car' category with its blend of style, technology, and accessibility. Featuring an agile chassis and up to 252 miles WLTP range, it's designed to make electric driving fun and engaging. After the UK Government's Electric Car Grant, the Renault 5 E-Tech electric is priced from £21,495 OTR.

The Renault Scenic E-Tech electric - last year's 'Car of the Year' - continues to shine as the 'Best Medium Family Car' for 2026. Judges praised its spacious, family-friendly interior, long real-world

range of up to 381 miles and advanced technology, reinforcing its position as a benchmark for electric family motoring. Including the Electric Car Grant, prices start from £35,495 OTR.

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## Spa beaten by league leaders with Saltmen winless in three



by **Aaron Sutcliffe**  
aaron.sutcliffe@bullivantmedia.com

**FOOTBALL:** DROTIWICH Spa suffered a 3-1 defeat against league leaders Roman Glass St George in a top-of-the-table clash. After Keith Kearney's early goal put the home side ahead, Ben Tilbury's penalty drew the visitors level at Oaklands Park. However, goals from substitute Nathan Hall and Laurent Wilson condemned Spa to just their third league defeat of the season.

And the result means Droitwich sit third in the Hellenic League Premier Division table, three points behind leaders Roman but with a game in-hand. The home side took the lead after just 10 minutes as Kearney's deflected strike from the edge of the penalty area found the bottom corner after Spa failed to clear their lines at a corner. Spa responded well to the setback as Roman goalkeeper Rob Brown smothered Lewis Phillips' effort from distance. And Perry Moss then saw his free-kick from a promising position travel wide of the post. However, the Saltmen won a penalty on 33 minutes when James Lemon intercepted a backpass and drew a foul from goalkeeper Brown. And Tilbury confidently

stepped up to convert from the penalty spot and draw Andy Crowther's side level as the first half ended all square. Droitwich made a bright start to the second period only for Roman to reclaim the lead on 51 minutes. A fine pass from deep split the Spa defence as substitute Hill fired a low effort beyond the reach of Dom Rogerson. The home side looked to extend their lead as Owen Punsellie volleyed narrowly wide of the post. And Rogerson then twice denied Wilson in quick succession to keep Spa in the contest. However, Roman stretched their lead on 74 minutes when Wilson cut in from the left and beat Rogerson at his near post with a powerful drive. Spa applied late pressure as Charlie Tilley managed his side's only shot on target in the second period. And substitute Joe Hurdman hit the woodwork in the closing stages as the home side held on to claim the points. Droitwich are next in action against FC Stratford in the Challenge Cup on Saturday, November 1 with kick-off at 3pm at the King George Playing Fields.



**LEFT TOP: Dom Rogerson smothers a home attack. Pictures by Mathew Mason.**  
**LEFT BOTTOM: Ben Tilbury scores from the penalty spot.**

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