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# Standard

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# Heart drama prompts advice to cherish life

*by* **Ryan Smith**
ryan.smith@bullivantmedia.com

A DROITWICH councillor has thanked those who saved him following a heart attack and is looking to remind people about how precious life is.

On October 3, Wychavon District Council leader, Coun Richard Morris, woke up early and went on his usual dog walk when he began to feel unwell and started sweating.

When he arrived home, he stood in the kitchen and reached for an orange juice and the next thing he remembered was waking up in hospital.

He had collapsed in the kitchen as his heart had stopped but, luckily, his brother was on hand to call 999 and give him CPR.

He said: "A flashback to an emergency vehicle was my only knowledge that something had happened.

"I did not know what pandemonium I had caused - my brother saved my life before the first responders, ambulance, and air ambulance did their magical work.

"I feel totally blessed and fortunate, as I could have collapsed in the middle of the dog walk or a little later when I would have been driving to Evesham."

Coun Morris came around in the hospital, asking why he was there and spent the next week in care and had an MRI scan and two stents fitted before continuing his recovery at home.



'Life is precious'- Coun Richard Morris has thanked those who saved his life after a heart attack. s

He added: "Now I attend weekly cardio rehab and am gradually getting back to some kind of normal, but accepting I must not rush things and find a suitable balance - as I'm a give-all kind of guy.

"There is a history of heart issues in the family.

"I had walked 10,000 steps or more daily for five years, and did morning exercise but it seems genetics can be the dominating factor."

He thanked all the emergency services and the great Worcestershire Royal cardiology Team - nurses, cleaners, porters, food preparation and doctors - who were really terrific, as well as the excellent Cardio Rehab Team.

Coun Morris now wants to set up a local support group for anyone who has experienced or is experiencing cardio issues.

He added: "As a new year dawns and plans are made, I urge everyone not to take life for granted - it is a gift to us, and we need to live with love, respect and integrity.

"I empathise with anyone who has had a heart condition as it makes you feel so vulnerable and the fragility plays with your mental health, but trust in our medical professionals and their care gives us strength, along with family and friends.

"I would like to thank everyone who has taken the time to send me cards and messages, as they have meant a lot and helped my recovery.

"I'm alive and give thanks.

"Please do cherish every day with your family and friends, as you never know what is around the corner - live, love and laugh."

Anyone interested in starting a cardio support group should email: richmoz@hotmail.com for more.

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Mayor of Bewdley, Coun Nicole Harper, with Paul Markell from the Worcestershire Prostate Cancer Support Group. s






ABOVE LEFT: The 'Best Dressed Tractor' award went to this one. RIGHT: The Boxing Day Tractor Run organiser Ray Attwood has hailed another successful event. Pictures by Colin Hill. s

# Festive charity drive

MORE than 130 tractors journeyed from the Far Forest Showground to Bewdley town centre for the annual Boxing Day Tractor Run.

And, although the final fundraising total is not yet known, it is thought the popular event will have raised more than £4,000 for the Worcestershire Prostate Cancer Support Group and Worcestershire Acute Hospitals Trust charities.

Hundreds of people came out to see the impressive vehicles and cheer on the drivers on a beautifully sunny, crisp winter day.

Ray Attwood, who has been running the event for the last 15 years, told the Standard: "It all went very well.

"The weather could not have been better and the crowds certainly turned out for the occasion.

"It gives people something to do on Boxing Day, out in the fresh air and people of all ages love it - especially the younger visitors."

En route to Bewdley, the tractors passed by several places, including Rock, Abberley and Stourport.

The event was also supported by the Mayor of Bewdley, Coun Nicole Harper, and the Mayor of Stourport, Coun John Thomas.




Important messages were conveyed along the way. s

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## Did you see?

A MAN was seen trying car doors in Jay Park Crescent, Kidderminster, around 2am on Monday morning.

The suspect was wearing a balaclava with a grey top or jacket, was approximately 5ft 8ins tall and was believed to be in their early 20s.

Officers from West Mercia Police are keen to hear from anyone who may have any information relating to this incident or who may have been in the area around the time and heard or saw anything suspicious.

Police are now appealing for anyone who can help to call officers on 101 or Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111. Anyone witnessing a crime in progress should always call 999.

## A big thank you

REPRESENTATIVES from The Carpet Museum Trust would like to express a huge thank you to all those who have visited the museum in the past month since the announcement that the venue would have to close.

In an email to the Standard, Geoffrey Gilbert, Chair of the Board of Trustees, said: "Trustees, volunteers and staff have been very heartened by the outpouring of public support.

"We acknowledge as well the support and advice offered by town, district and county councils and councillors.

"Our thanks, too, to our local press, BBC Hereford and Worcester and BBC Midlands Today for reporting on our situation and raising awareness of our position."

And he confirmed that, in response to this, trustees and volunteers would be meeting in early January to discuss options for the museum in 2026.

"An announcement about any developments will be made as early in January as possible," added Mr Gilbert.

## Site incident

THERE will be an increased police presence in Stourport over the coming days following an incident at the caravan site on Watery Lane on Sunday.

Police were called to the site around 12pm over concerns of disorder there.

Officers attended and conducted enquiries and searches throughout the day in a bid to establish exactly what happened.

Initial enquiries suggest the incident was connected to an earlier call from Kidderminster Hospital where a man had attended with injuries which required treatment.

His injuries are not thought to be life-threatening.

It is believed those involved in the incident are known to each other.

Police said they were stepping up patrols and introducing a greater presence in the area as officers carried out further house to house and CCTV enquiries over the proceeding days.

Anyone with any information on the incident should email Det Insp Lisa Tibbitts at: lisa.tibbitts@westmercia.police.uk or contact Crimestoppers by calling: 0800 555 111 or by visiting: crimestoppers-uk.org to report details.

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See page 36

# Restoration project is theme of next talk



The next Droitwich History and Archaeology Society talk will centre on the Willow Court Restoration Project. s

THE NEXT talk in the Droitwich History and Archaeology Society's programme will centre on the Willow Court Restoration Project.

The presentation will be given by Tim Cornah at 7.30pm on Wednesday, January 7, in the John Corbett Room of Droitwich Spa Community Hall, Heritage Way.

It will focus on the historical farmhouse at Westlands, which for many years lay derelict and unloved, but desperately in need of saving.

Then came the Willow Court Restoration Project and the whole site was shrouded in scaffolding before the recent grand reveal.

Not only was the building brought back into use, but memories of the building were collected and an archaeological survey was undertaken to take the story right back to the beginning with documents from 1456 and evidence of a building from the late 16th century.

Tim, the guest speaker, is the archaeologist who worked on the site and he will provide an in-depth story about the site, the project, and what it means for the people of Droitwich Spa.

Everyone is welcome. Admission is £3 for members and £5 for friends and visitors.

# Ideas for debut novel came to author in the form of dreams

A SOFTWARE consultant from Bromsgrove has turned his nightmares and other vivid dreams into a terrifying five-star rated debut novel.

Thomas Guise has spent more than a decade compiling notes of his dreams, following regular disturbing nights.

And much of what kept his mind active during the witching hours has found its way into the pages of Echoes of the East.

The 34-year-old said: "I have had a habit of writing my dreams down for many years as I've always found them to be quite entertainingly vivid.

"Prior to starting to write Echoes of the East I had a scary amount of scattered notes, short snippets and events jotted down, along with the extensive log of nightmares and other dreams I've had over the years.

"Echoes of the East is the first project I have seen through to completion when it comes to writing - so far, that is."

Echoes of the East is a first-person horror novel set within a post-apocalyptic landscape.

Mysterious explosions lead two loyal soldiers into a forbidden wasteland in search of their sniper comrade - but what they encounter goes well beyond nightmares.

Thomas takes all the classic hallmarks of classical horror fiction and darkens them beyond recognition with his unique and relentless taste for the unsavoury.

Perfectly paced with building tension and terrifying twists, this masterful thriller explores moral boundaries and the depths humanity will sink to in order to survive.

Thomas, who admits Stephen King was his gateway into a horror addiction, added: "What begins as a rescue mission transforms into a nightmarish journey of discovery when they encounter horrors far worse than the undead hordes that plague their world.

"As they push deeper into this blood-soaked territory, they forge uneasy alliances with other survivors whilst uncovering dark secrets that challenge everything they thought they knew about survival in this brutal landscape.

"Echoes of the East is written in the first person, to hopefully absorb the reader into the story as the protagonist."

Thomas has built up his software development business over the past 10 years and England's air ambulance service among his clients.

Although he has no plans for a sequel to his first book, he is working on drafts of similar frightening novels.

Visit Amazon.co.uk and search for 'Thomas Guise' or go to: echoesoftheeast.co.uk for more and the audiobook.

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## Jack's back for Norbury pantomime

THE FESTIVE fun will continue into this month when the Norbury Theatre in Droitwich stages its traditional pantomime.

This year, the show will be *Jack and the Beanstalk*, which will run from the middle of January.

As it follows Dame Trott and her sons, Jack and Jez, the show is packed with laughter, lively songs, colourful characters, comedy, one-liners and, of course, plenty of audience participation.

The dame and her sons' fortunes change dramatically thanks to a handful of magic beans.

Before they know it, Jack is climbing high into the clouds and discovering golden treasure, unexpected friendships and a giant who may not be quite what he seems.

Performances take place from January 15 to 18, 22 to 25 and 29 to 31 at 7.30pm each evening and at 2.30pm weekend matinees.

A spokesperson for the theatre said: "The Norbury Players are known for their warm, family-friendly productions and *Jack and the Beanstalk* promises to deliver feel-good entertainment and traditional panto magic in abundance.

"It's the perfect way to brighten a winter's day and start the new year with a smile."

Visit: norburytheatre.co.uk or call the box office on 01905 770154, between 11am and midday or 7pm to 8pm on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays.

# Nannies join forces to bring kids' roleplay cafe idea to life




Sarah Atkins and Kate Hughes are opening the Little Daydreams Roleplay Cafe on Monday. Picture by Miriam Cunliffe Photography. s

*by* **Tristan Harris**
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**TWO MUMS and professional nannies will realise their 'daydream' of opening a new child's role-play cafe in Ombersley.**

Little Daydreams Roleplay Cafe is the brainchild of Sarah Atkins, of Lusley, and Kate Hughes, of Great Witley, and the duo will open their venue on board a double-decker bus on Monday, on the site of The Farm Shop at Ombersley, on Holt Fleet Road.

The pair are both mums to boys who have known each other for 30 years.

They met professionally when they both worked as nannies, sometimes for the same families.

Kate's role has evolved from a nanny into a maternity rota nanny, working for clients around the world.

Sarah began her own business Little Guests - a nanny and babysitting service - which has pivoted to a unique, wedding nannies and creche service.

This, they say, makes them ideally placed to use their knowledge and passion for childcare to welcome on board visitors when they officially open. The idea of working together had been on their minds for years, they were just waiting for the opportunity to find the right place.

The pair decided to create a space that was not only clean and safe but also bursting with inspiration and diversity.

The idea of the bus appealed to their sense of fun, with a monthly competition to find the best 'mini-driver' due to start.

As well as the bus, which used to be a Thai takeaway, there is a play village which includes an ice cream shop, sandpit, car wash, vets and a separate area for messy play as well as a unique baby room. They also have a 40ft eco container and classroom ideal for business hire.

Other plans include a little-forest retreat and in the spring they will be opening The Little Bump track.

Little Daydreams encourages youngsters to use their imaginations and start new friendships.

The pair's ethos is a child-led philosophy, empowering children to explore, discover and grow at their own rhythm through captivating 'flow-play' sessions.

Adults can grab a cuppa from the nearby Magnolias Cafe.

Visit: littledaydreams.uk for more details.






# New plans set for 2026 for Bromsgrove Rovers

*by* **Neil Gordon**
news@bullivantmedia.com

**THE NEW chairman of Bromsgrove Rovers AFC has unveiled an ambitious five-year plan for the club's future development both on and off the pitch.**

Kristian Rock recently took over as chairman of Bromsgrove Rovers AFC and has already stated he wants the first team to switch to playing non-league football.

Rovers AFC's new chairman also wants to establish a long-term base for Rovers AFC in their home town.

And Mr Rock told the Standard he wanted to build on the solid foundations already in place at the club after the tireless work done during the past four-and-a-half years since the club formed.

Mr Rock said: "Many people, including founder members Mark Whitehouse and Bryn Davies, have worked extremely hard to launch the club and then deliver the excellent progress now coming to fruition.

"We intend to build on these foundations by switching the first team over from regional to non-league football, while also establishing a long-term base for ourselves in the town.



Bromsgrove Rovers AFC's new chairman Kristian Rock has announced his plans for the club. s

"We have an excellent relationship with Bromsgrove District Council and remain optimistic we can establish a home at Charford.

"For now, our first and reserve teams have switched to playing home fixtures at Studley Sports and Social Club due to the costs of using our previous base, coupled to our desire to play on grass."

The club's first team currently play in Division One of the Birmingham and District Football League, following two consecutive close-season promotions from Division Three.

Mr Rock remains assistant boss to first team manager Spencer Machin and has held the role since the club formed in 2021.

He added: "We are eager to join the Midland Football League and playing at Studley enables us to do that, as the set-up there meets the relevant criteria.

"Should the opportunity arise at the end of this season for us to enter that league then we will take it.

"Our plans will cost money to realise and we need to ensure we remain sustainable.

"The club receives a modest but vital amount of income from sales of merchandise to our growing band of supporters.

"I also encourage anyone who has heard of us, but not yet watched us, to come and see us in action."

Other funding the club receives comes from businesses through sponsorship, with Mr Rock also appealing for new sponsors to come forward and help the club achieve their ambitions.

He said: "We are also receptive to welcoming new talent onto the committee, should people have the relevant skills and experiences, or can financially back the club."

**READY TO REPAIR:** THE NEXT Bromsgrove Repair Cafe takes place at All Saints Church Hall, Burcot Lane, from 2.30pm to 5pm tomorrow (Saturday, January 3).

People can take along their household items to be repaired in return for a donation to help fund the project and its monthly sessions.

The repairers can fix electrical and electronic items (PAT tested after repair to check their safety), mechanical items, tool sharpening, jewellery, clothing, stringed instruments, toys, turntables/audio equipment, wooden furniture and clocks. They can also repair bikes by appointment.

Visitors can enjoy coffee and home-made cake while their items are fixed.

At the last repair cafe on December 5, all customer donations for repairs were passed on to NewStart's pop up toy shop which ensured every child had a present to open on Christmas Day.

Julie Robinson, the repair cafe's co-ordinator, said: "The Repair Cafe isn't just about fixing broken things - it's about strengthening the community around us.

"Month after month, we've been welcomed, supported, encouraged, and cheered on by the people of Bromsgrove.

"Our customers popped in with their broken household items, enjoyed a cuppa, a chat, and the cosy pre-Christmas buzz and where able, left a small donation towards the shopping fund which we used to buy toys and selection packs which we dropped into New Starts a day or two later."

Anyone wanting to find out more about the Bromsgrove Repair Cafe can email: repaircafebromsgrove@gmail.com or call 07818 045881.

Alternatively, visit: facebook.com/repaircafebromsgrove - the event's Facebook page.

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MP Chris Bloore alongside Minister for the Armed Forces Al Carnes. s

# Regiment welcomes visitor

THE MINISTER for the Armed Forces has visited the 37 Signal Regiment in Redditch.

Town MP Chris Bloore joined the Minister Al Carnes at the Redditch-based Army Reserve unit, where they met soldiers, officers and civilian staff and learned more about the Regiment's vital role in delivering robust communications and command-and-control capabilities in support of Defence operations.

The visit also provided an opportunity for open discussions on key issues including personnel, training and modernisation, ensuring the Regiment remains relevant, employable and deployable in an increasingly complex defence environment.

Mr Bloore praised the dedication of those serving with 37 Signal Regiment and the contribution they make both nationally and locally.

He said: "It was a real privilege to welcome the Minister for the Armed Forces to Redditch and to visit 37 Signal Regiment together.

"The professionalism, commitment and expertise of everyone at the Regiment is clear to see and I am immensely proud of the role they play in keeping our country safe.

"Our Armed Forces personnel and reservists in Redditch give so much, often alongside their civilian lives, and it is vital that their voices are heard when it comes to training, equipment and modernisation.

"I was pleased the Minister took the time to engage so positively with the team and hear directly about their experiences."

# Contractors invited to apply to join framework

EXPERIENCED contractors can now apply to join a new framework that will deliver vital home adaptations helping disabled and older residents live safely and independently in their own homes.

Wyre Forest District Council is hosting a new Worcestershire Home Adaptations Service from April 2026.

The Council is working in partnership with Bromsgrove District, Redditch Borough, Malvern Hills District, Worcester City and Wychavon District councils.

The service will provide adaptations including level access showers, ramps and extensions, enabling people to remain in their homes for longer rather than moving into residential care.

Contractors who join the framework will be carrying out work that makes a real difference to people's lives, helping them maintain their independence and quality of life.

The council is looking for skilled professionals who can deliver high-quality installations and are committed to supporting residents.

Multiple contractors will be appointed for each type of work to ensure flexibility and timely delivery across the county.

Successful contractors will need to meet quality standards, demonstrate technical expertise, provide case examples of previous work, and agree to the council's code of conduct.

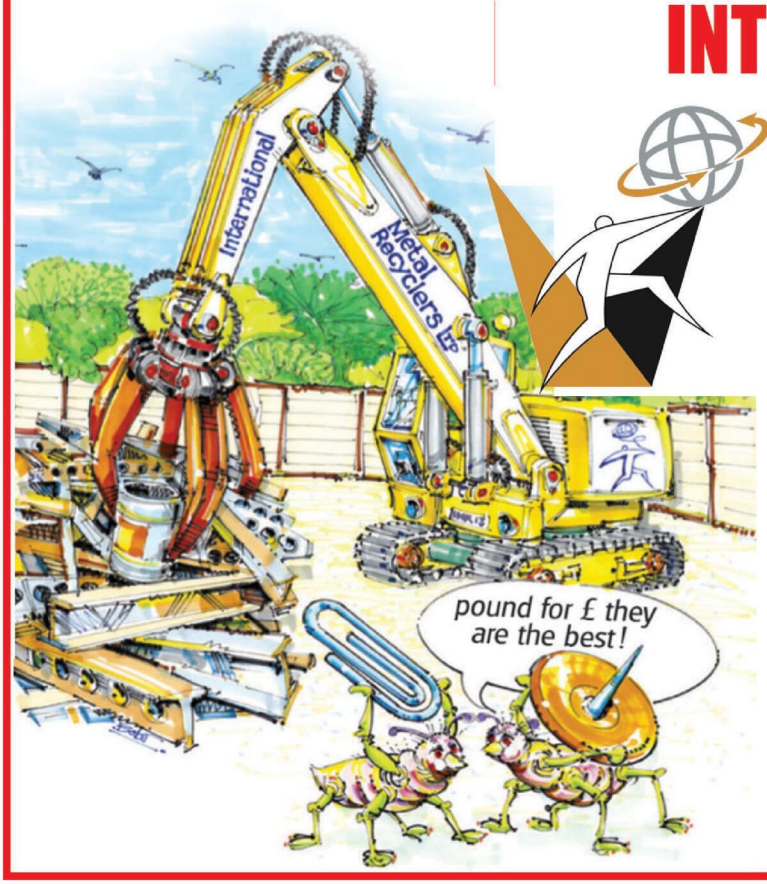
A set price schedule applies for level access showers, ramps and associated works, while larger projects such as extensions and conversions will be quoted individually.

Redditch Borough Council's executive board member for housing, Coun Bill Hartnett, said: "By pooling resources we can ensure we provide a quality and efficient service to help our more vulnerable residents live independently for as long as possible."

Contractors interested in joining the framework should email wyreforest.procurement@wyreforestdc.gov.uk to request the registration link.

They will receive a guide on how to register and submit details for consideration.

The closing date for submissions is 12pm on Monday January 19.


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# ‘Family Farm Tax threshold rise does not go far enough’ - MP



Bromsgrove MP Bradley Thomas with Worcestershire Farmers. s

*by* **Ryan Smith**
ryan.smith@bullivantmedia.com

**THE MPs for Bromsgrove and Droitwich have both called on the government to ‘do the right thing’ and scrap the planned ‘Family Farm Tax.’**

Bradley Thomas (Bromsgrove) and Nigel Huddleston (Droitwich and Evesham) both voted against the new inheritance tax laws, which would impact more than 75 per cent of farms across the country.

Currently, farmland is exempt from inheritance tax under a policy called ‘Agricultural Property Relief’ (APR). Chancellor Rachel Reeves has announced she will end that exemption.

But, prior to Christmas, the Government rowed back on its initial plan which would have meant, from April 2026, a 20 per cent tax would apply to agricultural assets over £1million. That threshold has now been increased to £2.5million.

The government said the number of estates claiming agricultural property relief (including those also claiming business relief) affected by the reforms in 2026/27 would now halve from 375 to 185.

But Mr Thomas claimed the tax would still be devastating for family farms and pose a serious risk to domestic food security and food prices.

He added the Government’s political choice to target farmers was a cruel blow to the industry and said, whilst the increased threshold was welcomed, it did not go far enough.

“After over a year of pressure from farmers across the country and MPs from across the House of the Commons the Government has finally done a partial U-turn on the Family Farm Tax.

“Official figures show the UK has 6,270 fewer farms since this disastrous policy was announced and this shows the devastating impact that Labour is having on the farming sector.

“Announced just before Christmas the timing of this is deliberate and it has almost certainly been announced now to prevent scrutiny during the busy Christmas and New Year period. But this isn’t enough.

“The whole tax needs to be axed

“Inheritance tax is wrong.”

Mr Huddleston said the Finance Bill implemented sweeping changes to Agricultural Property Relief (APR) and Business Property Relief (BPR) and, despite clear warnings from farmers, the ‘tax’ would now move to the next legislative stage.

He added the Conservatives have campaigned strongly against the Family Farm Tax but the party’s ‘reasoned amendment to stop it which Labour rejected.

Mr Huddleston MP called the legislation a ‘cruel and unnecessary blow to farmers, rural communities, and food producers across Worcestershire and beyond’.


Droitwich MP Nigel Huddleston at a farmers’ protest. s

“This tax threatens family farms, undermines food security, and will push up prices for consumers.”

He pointed out there were 738 farms in Wychavon District and thousands more across the country and warned the policy could lead to irreversible damage.

We contacted Mr Huddleston, as soon as the Government announced it was raising the threshold to £2.5million. But he had not got back to us at the time of going to press.

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# Community fund has seen £100k given to projects

A COMMUNITY fund set up by a Worcestershire estate agent has now donated £100,000 in the last five years to local good causes across the county.

Nicol and Co, with offices in Droitwich, Worcester and Malvern, began the scheme in March 2021 where for every property it sells, the company donates £100 to the seller's choice of school, charity or local community organisation.

More than £12,000 was raised in its first year alone, leading to the establishment of the Nicol and Co Community Fund, and the popularity of the scheme has seen another £88,000 donated since then.

Matt Nicol, Nicol and Co managing director, said: "The scheme continues to surpass all our expectations and everyone at the company is so proud that we've now passed the £100,000 figure.

"That means 1,000 donations of £100 have now been made to local charities and community organisations, which is a staggering figure to contemplate.

"The lovely thing about our Community Fund is that it's our customers who get to choose where each £100 goes.

"Yes, Nicol and Co exists to help people buy and sell homes, but I've always wanted to make sure the company is rooted in the community we serve in other ways, making a positive difference wherever possible.

"Most of all, we want to say a big 'thank you' to all our clients who have put their faith in us in the last five years to sell their homes."

Of the £100,000 raised, more than £28,000 has gone to St Richard's Hospice in Worcester.

The hospice said: "This is the most incredible milestone that you can all be so proud of.

"What a difference you are making in your community.

"And we are so grateful to be one of the charities who benefits – thank you from all your friends at St Richard's."

Coun Sue Brazier, the deputy mayor of Droitwich Spa Town Council who supports many charities in the area, posted: "Fabulous, you're making a big difference - long may it continue."

And a spokesperson from Worcestershire Breast Unit Haven thanked the estate agent for its support over the years, calling the Community Fund a 'great scheme'.

As well as sellers' nominations, some vendors leave the choice to Nicol and Co which is urging less well-known organisations and causes to put themselves forward by emailing: community@nicol-andco.co.uk or by visiting the nicolandco.co.uk website.




Nicol and Co's Community Fund has now contributed £100,000 to good causes across Worcestershire. s

# Bid to rejoin Erasmus is welcomed

THE UNIVERSITY of Worcester's vice chancellor has welcomed the UK's decision to rejoin the Erasmus student exchange scheme from 2027, ending a six-year absence.

The move will give UK students the chance to study, train, or volunteer across Europe once again.

Professor David Green said: "This is a wonderful opportunity for young people in the UK. Going overseas as part of their university, further education or apprenticeship journey is generally a hugely positive and even transformative experience.

"Our biggest trading partner is the EU, which also includes some of our closest democratic allies. The greater understanding and closer links that will result from many more EU students coming to Britain and young British people studying in Europe will be invaluable for the years ahead."

Joe Dipple studied abroad as part of his degree at the University of Worcester, travelling to Sweden and New Zealand.

He said: "Studying abroad was an experience of a lifetime for me. I was able to study new things I was interested in, see so many beautiful places and try so many new activities that I had never done before.

"It was such an enriching experience that I would have never been able to do without the support from the university. Rejoining the Erasmus Programme would be a fantastic opportunity to enable even more people like me to take part in such an incredible opportunity."

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**LEFT: T-level students at Heart of Worcestershire College are guaranteed interviews on their Adult Nursing BSc course for the first time. ABOVE: The students from Worcester Sixth-Form College have been undertaking placements at the trust's hospitals. s**

# They're ready for the next level

WORCESTERSHIRE Acute Hospitals NHS Trust (WAHT) has welcomed its first group of T-Level students from Worcester Sixth Form College (WSFC) and Heart of Worcestershire College (HoW) to gain practical experience in healthcare.

The course combines classroom learning with industry placements, preparing students for careers in healthcare or further study, including university.

Over the two-year T-Level in Health course, the equivalent to three A Levels, students spend a significant amount of time in hospitals as part of an industry placement.

A total of 29 students will be spendomg nine weeks across the trust's hospitals – Worcestershire Royal, Alexandra in Redditch, and Kidderminster Hospital and Treatment Centre.

During their placements, they will learn about different healthcare roles and day-to-day work in the NHS.

The programme is being supported by the WAHT Education Academy and Widening Participation Team.

Abi Wardlaw, first-year student at HoW College, said: "Over the last few days I've been shadowing a healthcare assistant on the frailty ward, and the ward manager has arranged for me to spend time with a physiotherapist so I can see more of what they do.

"It's been really inspiring, and it's exactly why I chose the T-Level route - it gives you the chance to experience different roles and find the one that feels right for you."

Khadeeja Qubra, student at WSFC, has undertaken her placement so far at the Worcestershire Royal Hospital and said: "I chose to do a T-Level because we get to apply our learning from college in a real hospital setting.

"The staff are so welcoming, and I feel like I'm already part of the team.

"My favourite part of the placement is speaking to the patients – I love it."

Both colleges involved in the programme have praised the placements.

Rachel Briggs, the WSFC course lead, said: "We are delighted and very grateful to have the opportunity to work in partnership with the trust in supporting our T-Level Health students.

"These placements allow students to work alongside experienced and specialist NHS staff to gain valuable practical experience, helping to bridge the gap between theoretical study and real world application which best prepares them for future employment within their chosen fields."

Mo Haran, HoW College vice principal, added: "It's been excellent to launch the new T-Level course which is helping to bridge the skills gap in the health industry.

"We are so proud of the students enrolled on the course and are blown away by their dedication and commitment to their studies and future careers - all of the students have settled so well and been ingrained into their teams which is fantastic to hear."

By offering T-Level placements, WAHT is nurturing local talent and building a strong, sustainable talent pipeline for the years ahead.

The trust is also supporting the wider effort to address the skills shortage in healthcare and helping students make informed decisions about their future careers.

Hayley Flavell, chief nursing officer for WAHT, said: "These placements provide an excellent opportunity for students to see a wide variety of healthcare roles and experience the NHS in action.

"It is a fantastic way for the trust to support the next generation of healthcare professionals and we welcome this opportunity to widen participation and engage with our local community."

T-Levels are a crucial stepping stone for students, paving the way to permanent employment or further study.

For the first time, the University of Worcester has offered guaranteed interviews on their Adult Nursing BSc course for HoW and WSFC students upon successful completion of the T-Level, helping to retain local talent within the county.

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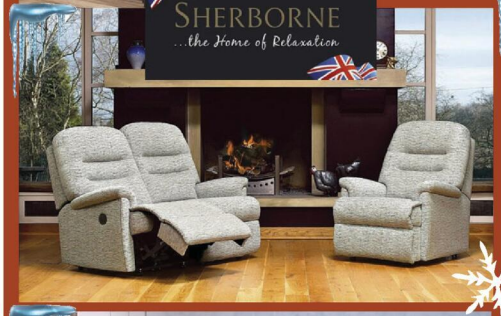
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# Stratford care home gets a makeover

WCS CARE
Every day well lived

***A Stratford care home has been given a new lease of life, thanks to a major refurbishment and development programme.***

The Limes, a 31-bedroom home on Alcester Road run by local charity WCS Care, has added a café, outdoor patio and hair salon, and several ensuites have also been upgraded to wetrooms to support comfort and independence.

Set in quiet, private grounds near the town centre and train station, The Limes supports both privately and socially funded residents.

### Supporting wellbeing every day

WCS Care's aim is simple – that every day is well lived.

At The Limes, this includes regular activities and trips out in the Memory Maker minibus, helping residents and families revisit familiar places and make new memories.

Music is a big part of life too, with regular sessions from WCS Care's dedicated community musicians. Research shows music can help reduce pain and anxiety, support speech and memory loss, and even improve balance and appetite. It also helps families connect with loved ones.

### Sleeping well at night

In many care homes, night checks disturb sleep. Staff often open doors every one or two hours, which can leave people feeling tired the next day.

At The Limes, a night-time acoustic monitoring system offers a quieter approach. Used with consent, it listens for unusual sounds like someone calling out or moving and alerts staff who respond straightaway. Sleeping residents are left undisturbed.

This system has been shown to reduce falls and improve wellbeing. People who sleep better are more alert, steadier during the day, and often eat and drink better too.

The Limes is currently the only home in Stratford-upon-Avon using this technology – another way WCS Care supports people's dignity and comfort.

### A consistent and caring team

The home benefits from a long-standing, dedicated team who were recently recognised with Investors in People Platinum – an accreditation achieved by just 5% of accredited organisations.

Manager Karen Hall has been with WCS Care for over 20 years.

*'I'm incredibly proud to be the manager here,'* says Karen. *'The Limes has a real family feel. Our small lounges and dining rooms help people connect. The café and hair salon have brought something new to daily life and we're already planning lots of social events to welcome the community into our home.'*




New café



New hair salon



Karen Hall
Care Home Manager


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# Funding helps support project

YOUNG people at Vale of Evesham School are experiencing new opportunities to learn, grow, and thrive thanks to funding from Worcestershire County Council.

The school, which supports children and young people aged 4 to 19 with a wide range of learning difficulties, used a public health community grant to purchase adapted balance bikes and expand their sessions, fostering independence, confidence, and wellbeing.

Headteacher Mr Brian Thomas described the impact of the initiative as 'incredible' and said: "Parents have been amazed by the success of the bikeability programme. Some have previously said they could never imagine their child riding a bike, but now thanks to the school sessions, children are riding bikes safely out in their community which is just brilliant to see.

"I'd like to thank Worcestershire County Council for giving us this grant that has enabled us to purchase bigger balance bikes, safety equipment, and role play resources to accompany these such as a zebra crossing set.

"Cycling and role play improves our student's physical health, their mental wellbeing and allows them to practice safe cycling in a calm environment."

The addition of adapted balance bikes, helmets, and role play equipment ensuring that children of different ages and abilities can take part and learn practical road safety skills in a supportive environment before taking them into the wider community.

Councillor Satinder Bell, cabinet member for health and wellbeing praised the programme during a recent visit. "It was wonderful to go and see the children enjoying their new adapted balance bikes at the Vale of Evesham.

"They clearly love the bikes and value their time on them which is now built into their week. Keeping children active, mobile, and enjoying the outdoors is vital for good physical health and mental wellbeing," she said.

Visit: www.worcestershire.gov.uk/communitygrants for more information or to apply for a community grant. Contact bikeability@worcestershire.gov.uk about free learn-to-ride sessions in the area.



Councillor Satinder Bell with pupils. s



**THREE HELD:** THREE men have been arrested on suspicion of being in the UK illegally during a joint operation involving Evesham officers and Immigration Enforcement.

Officers from Evesham Safer Neighbourhood Team were joined by Immigration Enforcement officers during a visit to a logistics company on Briar Close, last Monday.

Three men were arrested on suspicion of being in the UK illegally and another two men, also suspected of being in the UK illegally, are now subject to further enquiries.

The owner of the premises could now face fines of up to £45,000 per illegal worker which could result in fines totalling £135,000.

The Home Office Immigration Enforcement will be responsible for any future prosecutions.

Wychavon Safer Neighbourhood Team's Insp Dave Wise, said: "Three men were arrested and a further two are being subject to further enquiries following this visit with our partners at Immigration Enforcement.

"The premises' owner could now face substantial fines which shows we are working with Immigration Enforcement and taking concerns around those suspected of working in the UK illegally seriously and will always act on information gathered around this issue."

Police and Immigration Enforcement officerrs swooped on the logistics company on Briar Close. Three men, suspected of being the the UK illegally were arrested. s




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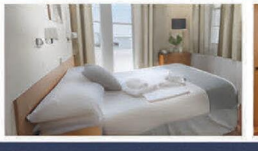
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| Monday 26th January - Friday 30th January | Was £249 | NOW £199pp |
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| Monday 9th February - Friday 13th February | Was £249 | NOW £204pp |
| Monday 16th February - Friday 20th February | Was £259 | NOW £209pp |
| Monday 23rd February - Friday 27th February | Was £265 | NOW £215pp |
| Monday 2nd March - Friday 6th March | Was £265 | NOW £219pp |
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| Friday 27th February - Monday 2nd March | Was £259 | NOW £219pp |
| Friday 13th March - Monday 16th March | Was £265 | NOW £219pp |
| Friday 20th March - Monday 23rd March | Was £269 | NOW £222pp |
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# New service is all set to pull in

**NEXT year - 2026 - will be a massive year for the nation's railway services.**

The new Great British Railways brand was unveiled earlier this month as landmark legislation was debated in the commons.

The aim is to get one railway brought back into public ownership to deliver a more reliable network.

Those who have been a regular rail commuter or even just used trains for leisure, will have had your fair share of delays, cancellations and extortionate fees to get where you need to be.

Hopefully all that will change.

A new GBR ticketing app will allow people to buy tickets without booking fees - and this comes after the government's freeze on rail fares to put money back in passengers' pockets.

The GBR ticketing app will be a one-stop shop for passengers to check train times and buy tickets at the best prices across the rail network without any booking fees.

Disabled passengers will also be able to use the app to book Passenger Assist when buying tickets, creating a seamless experience.

Up and down the country, the consensus is clear - the railway needs to improve.

That is why the government is bringing train operators back into public ownership to reform a fragmented system.

Seven major train operators are already in public hands, covering a third of all passenger journeys in Great Britain.

The logo and train livery for GBR will be rolled out from spring 2026 to trains, websites, stations and more - bringing the railway together under one brand owned by the public, delivering for the public, not for private shareholders.

**The new brand**

The design features a red, white and blue colour scheme and sharp angles to create a striking and memorable design mirroring the Union Flag.

The GBR logo has also been revealed, featuring the iconic double arrow symbol in a nod to Britain's proud railway heritage.

The landmark Railways Bill follows the government's decision to freeze rail fares for the first time in 30 years to put money back in passengers' pockets and ease the cost of living for hard-working people.

The bill will create Great British Railways, which will bring together 17 different organisations, cut through the frustrating bureaucracy and lack of accountability that continues to plague the railways and instead run Britain's railways as a single organisation for the first time in decades.

GBR will maintain and improve the railways, accountable to passengers, freight customers and taxpayers.

Fares and ticketing will be brought into the 21st century (including with the new app), a strengthened passenger watchdog will investigate poor service and demand improvement, and GBR will be empowered to build a railway that supports the government's missions to drive economic growth and opportunity by unlocking jobs and housing.


How the new Great British Railway trains will look. s

**A railway for everyone**

Transport Secretary Heidi Alexander said the future of Britain's railways was under way

"I'm immensely proud to unveil the new look for Great British Railways as we deliver landmark legislation to nationalise our trains and reform the railway so it better serves passengers.

"This isn't just a paint job – it represents a new railway, casting off the frustrations of the past and focused entirely on delivering a proper public service for passengers.

"With fares frozen, a bold new look and fundamental reforms becoming law, we are building a railway Britain can rely on and be proud of.

Jacqueline Starr, Executive Chair and CEO of Rail Delivery Group, said: "The Railways Bill presents an opportunity to bring the industry together with a single focus on delivering for our customers and we are determined to play our part in getting it right.

"As the industry evolves, our priority remains supporting the rail network to keep people moving and making sure we are delivering a better railway for everyone across the country, now and in the future.

"We welcome the government's commitment to improving the services our customers depend on every day and we will continue to work closely with industry partners to support a smooth transition to Great British Railways."





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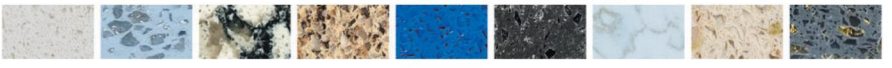



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New Year Feature

# What's on the menu for 2026?

**THE TOP 100 Restaurants in the UK, alongside 2026 dining trends have been revealed.**

With dining in the UK up four per cent on the previous year in 2025, and Brits set to dine out on average six times a month in 2026, dining out is on the menu for the year ahead and restaurants are front and centre.

Gen Z are particularly enthusiastic, planning to dine out nine times a month, second only to Millennials at ten.

These are the dining trends that shaped 2025 and what's on the menu for 2026, based on OpenTable data and consumer research.



**The more the merrier**

Almost half of diners say they'd prefer eating with others over going solo in 2026.

Group dining also grew by five per cent in 2025, with the most popular days for group dining on Mother's Day weekend and major sporting events, including rugby matches.

Looking ahead, the appetite for togetherness shows no sign of slowing down, with more than a third of Brits wanting to see more group and private dining in 2026.

OpenTable's new private and group dining marketplace (www.opentable.com/private-dining) is helping to make those shared moments even easier to plan and enjoy.

**Happy hour and strategic spenders**

Brits are also adjusting how and when they dine. In 2025, dining between 4pm–5pm rose by six per cent.

When it comes to spending, nearly half of Brits plan to spend more on dining out in 2026 vs 2025, rising to 70 per cent of Gen Z and Millennials.

Despite this, 54 per cent of Brits want to see more happy hours and value promotions in 2026.

Sasha Shaker, Senior Director at OpenTable, said: "Dining has become about far more than what's on the plate this year. It's about connection and creating unforgettable moments together, with new research showing that 79 per cent of Brits say eating out helps them feel more connected to others.

"With Brits set to dine out six times a month on average in 2026, we're confident that restaurants will remain at the heart of the UK's social scene in the year ahead."

**Bold flavours and retro favourites**

When it comes to taste, 2026 is shaping up to be a year that blends global cuisines with nostalgia. Mediterranean, Greek and Contemporary Asian cuisines saw the biggest year-on-year dining increases in 2025, reflecting a growing appetite for bold, vibrant flavours.

However, nostalgia is also making a comeback, with Gen Z diners championing retro comfort classics like bangers and mash and prawn cocktail as dishes they'd love to see on menus of restaurants in 2026.

One of the most surprising food trends for next year? Sharing plates are becoming less popular as 56 per cent of Brits prefer individual servings.

Brits expect to see fried chicken, gourmet burgers, protein-packed dishes, and espresso-based drinks taking centre stage in 2026.

**Top 100 Restaurants in the UK for 2025**

OpenTable's Top 100 Restaurants in the UK 2025 list is here to inspire diners where to eat next and to highlight industry dining trends.

The list is compiled by analysing more than 780,000 diner reviews, ratings, reservation demand and percentage of five-star reviews among other factors, featuring a list of restaurants perfect for any occasion.

Sasha said: "From exciting new names like Nina in London to much-loved local favourites such as Opheem in Birmingham and Higher Ground in Manchester, the list celebrates the fantastic spots that the UK has to offer. Whether diners are after a happy hour menu, a certain cuisine type or spot for group dining, there's a place to match every taste and occasion."

Visit www.opentable.co.uk/c/top-restaurants/top-100 to see the list.

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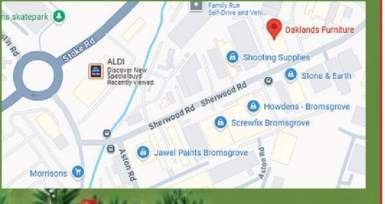





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# New Year, New You



**New Year resolutions are a great idea at the time and it is extremely easy to make a whole raft of them. However, sticking to your New Year resolutions and making them happen are two completely different challenges!**

Regardless of whether you are already a committed fitness fan, or you are new to the world of wellbeing and exercise, knowing how to help your body recover from the festive excesses is really important. Taking a little time to think about what you want to do and also what you want to achieve will elicit better results from your hard work and efforts in the gym. That is why the team at your Vital Health and Wellbeing Club is here to help you with a few top tips on preparing for your New Year health kick.

Let's take a closer look:

**1** It is a proven fact that making a smaller, more achievable, New Year resolution will mean your chances of sticking to it and making it happen are far greater. Aim for specific goals that you can measure and pitch against a time frame. For example, "I want to lose 4 pounds in 4 weeks". That is easily achievable and you can monitor your progress, too, which means you are more likely to succeed.

Also, don't be swayed or influenced by other people, celebrities or role models. Remember, this is your New Year resolution, your body and your health kick. What works for one person won't necessarily work for another. So be your own person, make a plan, and focus on what you want to achieve.

Regularly remind yourself of the benefits you will enjoy if you stick to, and achieve, your resolution. Try keeping a checklist of the positive life changes associated with your New Year resolution. Note your progress in a diary as it makes everything seem so much more real. And don't give yourself a hard time if you have the occasional day of relapse; you can't be perfect all the time. However, just remember to get back on course as quickly as possible.

**2** New Year resolutions are very personal. However, for many people the most common ones include:

***Losing weight***

Portion control is paramount here. So fill up on low calorie foods that are high in dietary fibre, such as vegetables, pulses, legumes and wholegrain carbohydrates. And be mindful of foods which contain hidden sugars, salt and fat.

***Eating a healthier diet***

It's easy to get your 5-a-day portions of fruit and vegetables. Add a banana and glass of apple juice to your breakfast, chop up a salad or make some soup for lunch, and then add a couple of portions of steamed vegetables to your dinner. Plus, a mid-morning and mid-afternoon snack of a piece of fruit or some carrot sticks and houmous means you'll exceed the recommended 5 portions.

***Giving up smoking***

There is a lot of support out there if you are serious about giving up smoking. You don't need to do it alone, so why not make it your New Year resolution to see your GP for advice on getting started.

***Doing more exercise***

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**0797144160**

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**9.30am and 11am**
The Sacred Heart Parish Hall,
Worcester Road
Droitwich
WR9 8AZ
**Call Tracey**
**07971446160**

**Tuesdays**
**9.30am,3.30pm,5pm and 6.30pm.**
Bromsgrove Rugby Club,
Finstall Road,
Bromsgrove
**Call Gaynor**
**07876700072**

**Wednesdays**
**9.30AM**
Lickey End Social Club
17 Alcester Road
Lickey End,
Bromsgrove
**Call Paula**
**07900997303**

**Wednesdays**
**7pm.**
Catshill Village Hall
Golden Cross Lane
Catshill
**Call Carol**
**07553792592**

**Thursdays**
**9.30am**
Catshill Village Hall
Golden Cross Lane
Catshill
**Call Carol**
**07553792592**

**Thursdays**
**7pm**
Droitwich Baptist Church,
Ombersley Street East
Droitwich
WR9 8DE
**Call Helen**
**07443883521**

**Fridays**
**9.30am**
All Saints Church Hall
Burcot Lane
Bromsgrove
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**Call Helen**
**07443883521**

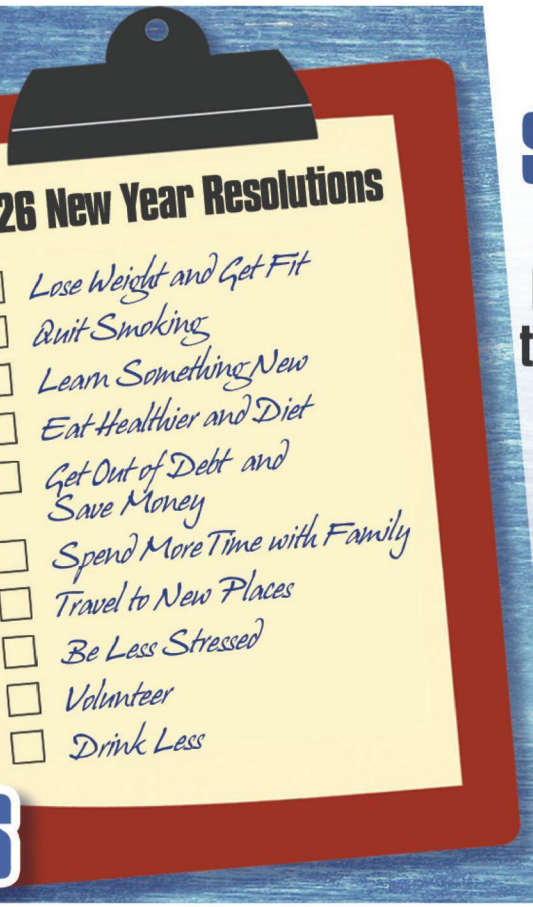
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Droitwich
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**Call Helen**
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# 10 MOST COMMONLY BROKEN NEW YEAR RESOLUTIONS




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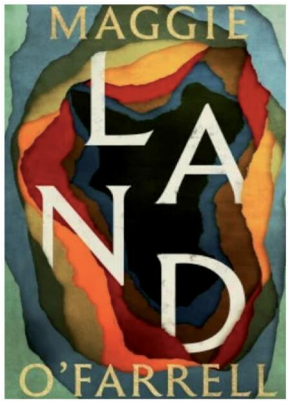
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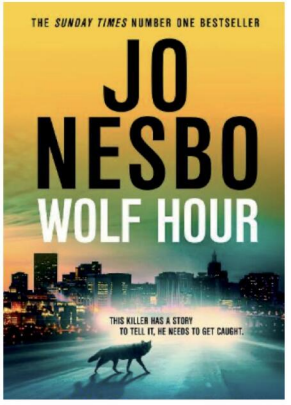
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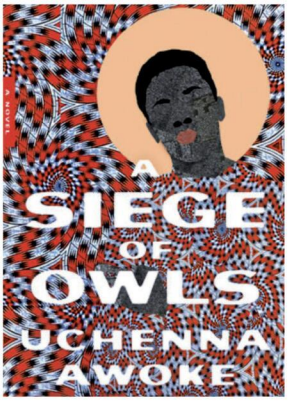
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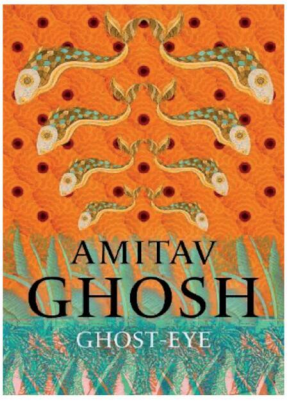
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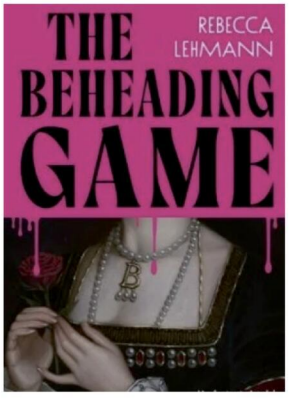
# Expand your to be read in 2026




**THERE is nothing I enjoy more than reading. And even if my to be read pile is starting to tumble off my bookshelf and out the door I still can't stop myself from looking at the newest books up for release.**

There is nothing better than knowing you're only months away from getting your hands on a story you've been waiting for.

So this is the most exciting books coming out in 2026.

### Land by Maggie O'Farrell

A much-awaited return from the author of Hamnet, Land is set to release in mid-2026. It tells the story of a father and son in mid-19th-century Ireland, working on the British-run Ordnance Survey shortly before and after the Great Famine - promising a powerful blend of personal drama, historical upheaval, and emotional depth.

Land is expected to deliver both literary quality and a sweeping, haunting story - perfect for readers who appreciate big, immersive historical fiction.

### Wolf Hour by Jo Nesbo

Set to be published in paperback in early in 2026, Wolf Hour brings Nordic noir to the new year with a dark, gripping thriller. The novel follows a detective and a crime writer investigating parallel murder cases six years apart - a structure that promises tension, twists, and moral complexity.

For fans of crime fiction and gritty mysteries, this one delivers. Nesbø is widely regarded as a master of the genre - and Wolf Hour could easily dominate 2026's thriller charts.

### A Siege of Owls by Uchenna Awoke

Set for release in May 2026, A Siege of Owls is a coming-of-age novel set in rural Nigeria, exploring youth, violence, and hope in a changing society.

The book has already drawn attention as a deeply human, urgent, and earnest story.

With its vivid setting, contemporary themes and emotional realism, this novel has the potential to resonate widely - offering a powerful and timely voice that goes beyond escapism.

### Ghost-Eye by Amitav Ghosh

Coming in mid-2026, Ghost-Eye is being described as a novel that blends past and present - possibly involving reincarnation or haunting memory.

Ghosh's reputation for sweeping narratives and thoughtful prose means expectations are high for something layered, ambitious, and evocative.

If you enjoy literary fiction with philosophical undercurrents, history, and a touch of the uncanny - this one might be one of 2026's standout reads.

### The Beheading Game by Rebecca Lehmann

This reimagining of a familiar historical horror - set to be published in March 2026 asks: what if a woman sentenced to execution didn't die, and instead came back for revenge?

It's a bold, provocative premise that promises tension, dark themes, and perhaps a sharp commentary on justice and identity.

For readers wanting something bold, unsettling, and different - mixing historical settings with speculative twists - The Beheading Game could be one of 2026's most talked-about novels.

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**There's never been a more exciting time to be part of Slimming World. With the biggest update to our Food Optimising plan in our history, members across Team Redditch are discovering a way of eating that's more flexible, more family-friendly and more enjoyable than ever. The best part? You never have to give up the foods you love. From hearty home favourites to quick midweek meals, the new plan makes it easier to build healthy habits that fit real life.**

And of course, the magic truly happens in group. Week by week, our members get personalised support, practical strategies, and the encouragement needed to make those deep-down behaviour and mindset changes that lead to lasting success. It's the power of people coming together - and nowhere is that more evident than in the incredible journeys happening right here in Redditch.

Tiffany loses 11st one in under two years at Batchleys Slimming World Group.

One member who embodies this is Tiffany, aged 34, who attends our Redditch Borough Community Sports & Social Club group in Batchley with her Consultant, Stacey, who has proudly supported members for over 10 years.

When Tiffany's GP explained that losing weight could help manage her Poly Cystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS), she knew she needed support - and she found it in Stacey's group. Just under two years later, Tiffany has lost over 11 stone, transforming not only her health but her confidence, her energy and her everyday life.

Tiffany embraced the new way of eating with open arms, discovering delicious favourites like Slimming World's Chicken Tikka Masala and the ever-popular Marry Me Chicken. Alongside her food changes, she gradually built up her activity and now walks at least 10,000 steps every day.

She's loving her new clothes, feeling fantastic in her own skin, and enjoying a confidence she never imagined she'd have.

Stacey shared that Tiffany was quiet when she first joined - sitting back, listening, taking everything in. Now, she's one of the voices that lifts the whole room. She speaks up, shares her ideas, and supports other members to make the same positive changes she has. The difference in her confidence is nothing short of remarkable.

Together, Tiffany and Stacey are incredibly proud of the determination she's shown, especially during the trickier weeks that every member faces. Her commitment has helped her significantly reduce her PCOS symptoms and lower her risk of conditions such as heart disease and type 2 diabetes. Her journey is a powerful reminder of what's possible with the right support, the right plan, and a community that believes in you.

Stacey's Slimming World groups run on Tuesdays from Redditch Borough Community Sports & Social Club, Batchley, B97 6PB at 9am, 11am, 5pm and 6.30pm.

Alcesters Sparkling Duo Transforming Together

At Alcester Slimming World, we're lucky to have some truly inspiring members, and few shine brighter than the fabulous duo Annabel and Sally. Not only do they work together, helping brides-to-be feel beautiful in Annabel's stunning bridal boutique, but they decided to slim together too, joining group with the shared goal of feeling happier and more confident in their own skin.

Annabel, aged 35, came to group with a very special dream. As the owner of her gorgeous boutique, she wanted to feel amazing trying on every bridal gown she stocked, to step into each dress with confidence and pride. She knew that meant making long-term changes to the way she ate and drank, and she threw herself into Food Optimising from day one.

Very quickly, Annabel discovered a love of cooking. She shared her creations in group each week and documented her journey on Instagram, inspiring others with her delicious meals and unwavering commitment. Even through school holidays, busy days out and the usual life juggle,

she stayed focused. Her dedication paid off and she lost 3st 5lbs in just 23 weeks and has been confidently maintaining her target since September 2025. A truly incredible achievement.

Sally's journey has been just as remarkable, though far from straightforward. While she and her husband have been completely renovating their home, she's had no functioning kitchen at all.

Most people would have put weight loss on hold, but not Sally. With nothing more than a camping gas stove, a slow cooker and an air fryer, she's lost over 2st. As a family, they've embraced slow-cooker favourites like curries and chilli, proving that healthy, delicious meals are possible even in the trickiest circumstances.

Sally, ages 34 says she now wakes up feeling confident, energised and excited for the day ahead.

She's buying clothes that make her feel good rather than hiding away, and she's finally living the life she'd put off for too long. She's incredibly proud that she didn't wait for the "perfect time"

As their Consultant, Becky shared how wonderful it's been having Annabel and Sally in group each week. They bring ideas, family-friendly meals, tips for navigating busy lives and a warmth that lifts the whole room. Watching them transform, not just physically, but emotionally, has been truly beautiful.

From busy mums putting themselves last to sparkly, happy women embracing their new bodies, Annabel and Sally are living proof that with support, determination and a plan that works, anything is possible.

Becky's Slimming World groups run on Thursdays from The Eric Payne Community Centre, St.

Faiths Road, Alcester, B49 6AG at 9am, 10.30am, 5pm and 6.30pm.

Team Redditch is bursting with stories like these. Stories of strength, resilience, and real-life transformation. And with our newly updated plan, there's never been a better moment to start your own.

Here's to more milestones, more confidence, and more members discovering just how incredible they can feel in 2026 and beyond.














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**07817 480251**

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Studley Baptist Church,
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**Call Kerry**
**07928 172121**

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**Call Kim**
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**07301 024556**

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South Redditch Sports and Social club, Greenlands,
B98 7RS
**Call Carolanne**
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**5.30pm & 7pm**
Crabbs Cross Methodist Church,
Crabbs Cross Lane
B97 5LD
**Call Kim**
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**Call Carolanne**
**07913 608423**

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**Call Kirstie**
**07814 794920**

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**Call Kirstie**
**07814 794920**

**Saturdays**
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New Year Feature

# Different ways to ring in 2026

**FANTASTIC firework displays have become synonymous with New Year celebrations around the world.**

As the clock ticks down to the start of the new year many find themselves looking out for seeing the spectacular displays put on by other countries before turning their attention to the banks of the river Thames and the skies across London.

In many countries the stunning firework displays are a new addition to celebrations and many traditions still remain in place.

Just across the border in Scotland they celebrate Hogmanay.

This is celebrated with several different customs, such as first-footing, which involves friends or family members going to each other's houses with a gift of whisky and sometimes a lump of coal.

Edinburgh, the Scottish capital, hosts one of the world's most famous New Year celebrations.

The celebration is focused on a major street party along Princes Street. The cannon is fired at Edinburgh Castle at the stroke of midnight, followed by a large fireworks display.

There is also a Hogmanay festival and the country has a bank holiday on January 2.

In Japan New Year's Eve is used to prepare for and welcome Toshigami, the New Year's god.

The Japanese clean their homes and prepare Kadomatsu or Shimenawa to welcome the god before New Year's Eve.

Buddhist temples ring their bells 108 times at midnight in the traditional Joya no Kane.

The rings represent the 108 elements of bono, mental states that lead Japanese to take unwholesome actions.

New Year's Eve in Colombia is a vibrant and diverse celebration, blending traditions, superstitions, and family customs to welcome the upcoming year with positivity and hope.

New Year's Eve is a time for personal gatherings and community revelry. Many Colombians host house parties, where friends and family come together to share in the festivities.



Buddhist temples ring their bells 108 times at midnight.



In the tranquil countryside, communities come alive with vibrant street-party-style celebrations.

A hallmark tradition involves the creation of El Año Viejo, a scarecrow symbolizing the old year, which is placed atop a bonfire filled with fireworks and as the effigy burns, it signifies the cleansing of the past and welcoming new beginnings. Colombia's New Year's customs are steeped in superstitions and age-old traditions, each carrying its own symbolism and significance.

In Spain they eat grapes at the stroke of midnight.

Tradition has it that people have to eat them one by one, in time with the striking of the clock at midnight on December 31.

Those who manage to eat all the grapes in time, are said to be in for a year of prosperity and good luck.

In many towns and villages people go to a central square or an iconic place where there is a large clock, to eat the grapes together and share the last minutes of the old year.

**In Spain tradition says those who eat 12 grapes in time with the striking clock are in for a year of prosperity and good luck.**


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New Year Feature

# A healthy start to the New Year

**THE ADAGE New Year, New Me is often heard at this time of year.**

For many it means the start of a health kick, with a new diet and joining the gym to get into shape after a festive season of enjoying a few extra treats which have seen the scales tip slightly.

For others it could be creating a bucket list of things to do in a year and ticking them off from travelling to picking up a new hobby and increasing personal wellbeing.

So here's a few ideas to add to the bucket list.

**Gardening**

Gardening does not mean having a big space and fancy equipment – it could start with a few plants in a small space like a window box.

For the novice gardener start with plants or flowers that are easy to grow, your favourites, or even edible ones like strawberries, salad leaves or tomatoes so you can see how with your care and attention they grow.

Watching the plants grow is a good choice of a hobby as it can help clear the mind, especially after difficult days.

**Music**

Music can stir up emotions and being back memories. Listening to it can also reduce stress and anxiety.

The benefits of music continue beyond just listening to it. Anyone can achieve a sense of accomplishment and fun from learning how to play an instrument. These excellent hobbies boost mental health as it helps process emotions, express feelings, and connect with others.

**Cooking or baking**

It can often be hard to find the time and energy to cook from scratch, but the benefits of a home-cooked meal go beyond just nutrition.

Time spent in the kitchen provides countless opportunities for introspection and meditative practice, which benefits both the mind and the body.

By cooking food that's nutritious and nourishing – or event a little treat – you're sending yourself the message that you're worth caring for, and that you're important.

**Volunteering**

Life is busy and it can be difficult to find the time or energy to add more to the schedule.

But volunteering doesn't have to be a big act it can be something small like being a phone befriender for the elderly or using the skills from your day job to help others who are struggling.

One of the best ways to get the most out of volunteering is to commit your time to a cause you're truly passionate about by doing something you enjoy.

As well as improving self-esteem, acts like giving gifts or volunteering allow people to connect with others on a deeper level. It also creates a sense of belonging in a community.

**A spot of gardening can help keep you active and well.**




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**HOLIDAYS 2026**

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**27th March** Spring Weekender in Tenby Staying at Cliffe Norton Hotel, Dinner Bed & Breakfast. Also includes excursion to Laugharne & Saundersfoot ..... 4 Days from £289
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**23rd April** Coastal Escape to Cornwall Staying at The Falmouth Hotel, Dinner Bed & Breakfast. Also includes a Peninsula Tour and a half day excursion to Truro ..... 5 Days from £599
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**5th June** Northumbria Coast with Puffin Cruise & Seabirds Staying at the Copthorne Hotel, Newcastle, Dinner Bed & Breakfast. Includes Boat Cruise ..... 4 Days from £355
**12th** June Potters - Hopton on Sea FULLY INCLUSIVE Fully Inclusive. Also includes day excursion to Cromer and Sheringham ..... 4 Days from £545
**22 June** Island Getaway in Ryde, Isle of Wight Staying at The Royal Esplanade Hotel, Dinner Bed & Breakfast. Also includes excursion to either Osbourne House or Cowes and a Scenic Island Tour ..... 5 Days from £495
**3rd July** Norfolk – The Magical Waterland and Royal Retreat. Staying at Wensum Valley Golf and Country Club Hotel, Norwich. Includes Dinner Bed & Breakfast and an exclusive tour of Sandringham House, a trip on the Bure Valley steam railway and a leisurely Broads Cruise ..... 4 Days from £525

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# Looking back at gym trends of old

**AFTER an indulgent Christmas, many people want to get fit in the New Year.**

And, believe it or not, exercising is far from a modern phenomenon. From prehistoric times when it was a matter of survival, through the Renaissance when fencing and horse back riding were all the rage, to early 20th century "fitness for the masses", people have always been intent on keeping trim.

A more in depth look into how different eras approached exercise may help inspire that illusive New Year fitness regime.



**Prehistoric Era (Before 3000 BCE)**

Fitness was all about survival and functionality.

Activities would have included hunting, gathering, climbing, running and lifting heavy objects.

**Ancient Civilizations (3000 BCE to 500 CE)**

Egyptians were into military training, swimming, and dancing. Physical fitness was often tied to religious or ceremonial practices.

Greeks had a highly formalized approach to fitness. There were gymnasiums for wrestling, running, discus and javelin.

The focus was on balance of mind and body.

For the Romans, fitness was focused on being soldiers and gladiators. Training included marching, weight training, swimming, and combat skills.

**Middle Ages (500 to 1500 CE)**

Fitness was functional for work or combat. Activities included sword fighting, horseback riding, archery and heavy manual labor.

The nobility focused on training for tournaments, while for peasants' daily work, such as farming, maintained fitness.

**Renaissance and Early Modern Period (1500 to 1800)**

There was a resurgence of physical culture inspired by classical Greek ideals. Activities included fencing, dance, gymnastics and horseback riding.

The philosophy of fitness was linked to education, beauty, and discipline.

**19th Century**

Fitness was impacted by the Industrial Revolution: Sedentary lifestyles increased and urbanization reduced manual labor.

There was, however, a rise in organized sports such as track and field, gymnastics, swimming and rowing, as well as fitness pioneers like Friedrich Ludwig Jahn, the father of modern gymnastics.

**Early 20th Century (1900 to 1950)**

Fitness movements like aerobics, calisthenics, and gymnastics gained popularity. Physical culture magazines popularized weight training.

Notable figures were bodybuilding pioneer Eugen Sandow and Jack LaLanne, known for "fitness for the masses".

There was also a public health focus as Governments encouraged fitness for military readiness and public health.

**Mid to Late 20th Century (1950 to 1990)**

Fitness became recreational, not just functional.

There was an aerobics and cardio



explosion, while running, cycling, and swimming became mainstream.

Jane Fonda's aerobics videos in the 1980s popularized home workouts. Weight training became widely popular for both men and women.

Fitness as lifestyle gained traction with gyms, health clubs, and group classes becoming commonplace.

**Late 20th Century to Early 21st Century (1990 to 2010)**

There was a real diversification of fitness trends. Yoga and Pilates became popular for flexibility and core strength, CrossFit, boot camps, and functional training for high-intensity workouts.

Running and cycling marathons became social and community events.

**Modern Era (2010 to present)**

Fitness is now seen as a lifestyle. There is an emphasis on holistic wellness, mental health, nutrition, and recovery.

Inclusivity and diversity is at the forefront with programs for all ages, body types, and abilities.

Influencers and online communities drive trends.




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# So you've solved Christmas, now how about these riddles?

WITH THE groaning Christmas table now a distant memory replaced by the gentle groaning that follows New Year overindulgence, many will be heading to the nearest armchair to grab a spot of rest.

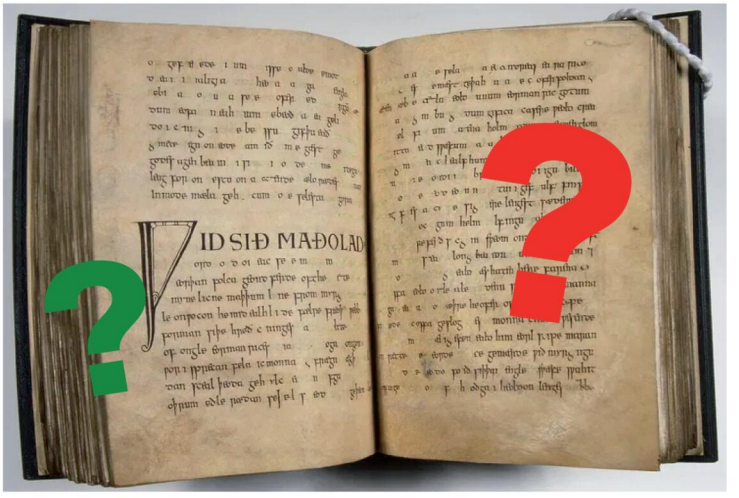
Feet up, eyes closing and brain definitely in the lowest gear you can find - the last thing you need is something to distract you from the hard graft of just simply relaxing.

But for years we've seen this post-feast period of physical and mental downtime as being the perfect time to fire up the mind and get the reasoning machinery in order.

Festive murder mysteries, TV whodunits, puzzling board games and winter quizzes all fight for attention as the sherry and tinsel are put away for another year.

Oldest of all festive teasers is, perhaps, the common riddle. Way back in the 900s the monks of Exeter Cathedral were amusing themselves and baffling others by collecting brainteasers. Their tenth century Book of Riddles features a few religious posers and a smattering of conundra we'd recognise today. Sometimes shrouded in flowery poetry, occasionally coded, sometimes a simple question, they all seem to be asking the same thing - what am I?

Not all of the following selection can claim to be as old as a cathedral, but - just because you can't resist - why not dust off your powers of logic and see if you can solve a few. Here's twenty to test your powers. Set the little grey cells in motion and see if you can unravel these. The answers are at the bottom.



1. The poor have it, the rich need it and if you eat it you'll die. What is it?
2. What always runs but never walks, often murmurs, never talks, has a bed but never sleeps, has a mouth but never eats?
3. At night they come without being fetched. By day they are lost without being stolen. What are they?
4. He who makes it, sells it. He who buys it, never uses it. He who uses it never knows that he's using it. What is it?
5. The more you have of it, the less you see. What is it?
6. What has a head, a tail, is brown, and has no legs?
7. I know a word of letters three. Add two, and fewer there will be!
8. Until I am measured I am not known, Yet how you miss me when I have flown.
9. I drive men mad for love of me, Easily beaten but never free.
10. Each morning I appear to lie at your feet, All day I will follow no matter how fast you run, Yet I nearly perish in the midday sun.
11. What starts with a T, ends with a T, and has T in it?
12. My life can be measured in hours, I serve by being devoured. Thin I am quick, fat I am slow. The wind is my foe.
13. You heard me before, yet you hear me again, Then I die, 'till you call me again.
14. It cannot be seen, it weighs nothing, but when put into a barrel, it makes it lighter. What is it?
15. Say my name and I disappear. What am I?
16. A box without hinges, lock or key, yet golden treasure lies within. What is it?
17. Forward I'm heavy, but backwards I'm not. What am I?
18. Reaching stiffly for the sky, I bare my fingers when it's cold. In warmth I wear an emerald glove and in between I dress in gold
19. I'm full of holes, yet I'm full of water. What am I?
20. The more you take, the more you leave behind.

## Here are the answers

1 Nothing. 2 A River. 3 Stars. 4 A Coffin. 5 Darkness. 6 A Coin. 7 Few. 8 Time. 9 Gold. 10 Your Shadow. 11 A Teapot. 12 Candles. 13 An Echo. 14 A Hole. 15 Silence. 16 An Egg. 17 Ton. 18 A tree. 19 A Sponge. 20 Footsteps.


# Browse the Winter Edition of Seasons




As winter's chill begins to settle across our three counties, there's a certain kind of beauty that only this time of year brings.

This, then, feels like the perfect moment to launch **'Seasons'** – our brand-new glossy magazine, created to celebrate the people, places, and stories that make Worcestershire, Warwickshire and the West Midlands such a wonderful part of the world

**Pick up a copy locally for free, or simply browse on line**

**www.seasons-magazine.com**




**For even more details call 01527 588688**

*'Seasons' magazine is brought to you by your local 'Standard' Newspaper team*

## Seasons

Each quarter, Seasons will follow the rhythm of the year – from the crisp calm of winter to the first buds of spring, the brightness of summer and the richness of autumn – highlighting the very best of local life, from independent shops and community ventures to countryside walks, home inspiration, and hidden gems worth discovering.

Our first Winter edition is all about warmth – in every sense of the word. You'll find features that reflect the spirit of the season: comforting food, inspiring people, caring places, and ways to make the cold months glow with local charm.

This magazine is for you – our readers, neighbours and local businesses – and we can't wait to share the year ahead with you, one beautiful season at a time.


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## SUDOKU

Complete the grid so that every row, every column and every 3 x 3 box contains every digit from 1 to 9.

### EASY

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

### HARD

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

## PATHFINDER

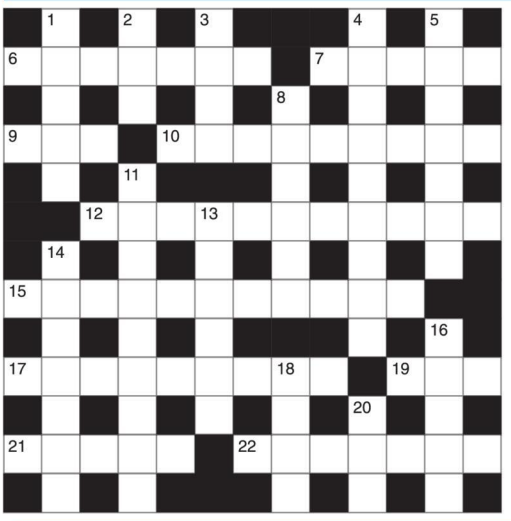
Beginning with the top highlighted letter, follow a continuous path of words associated with the given subject. The trail goes through each letter once, twisting up, down and sideways, but never diagonally.

### Quiz shows

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

Solutions opposite

## CROSSWORD



**ACROSS**

6. Small crown (7)
7. Sum (5)
9. Cover (3)
10. Unwise (9)
12. Speak without notes (11)
15. Proceeded to argue (6,5)
17. Crisis (9)
19. Little devil (3)
21. Join together (5)
22. Set free (7)

**DOWN**

1. Droll (5)
2. Fish eggs (3)
3. Appear (4)
4. Marvellous (9)
5. Serious (7)
8. Searches blindly (6)
11. Free from blame (9)
13. Endows (6)
14. Praise (7)
16. Entertain (5)
18. Head cook (4)
20. Favourite (3)

Scribble pad

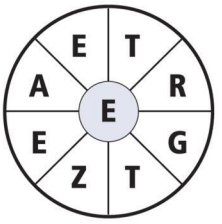
## LADDER

Using the clues provided, fill in each step of the ladder with a new word, changing one letter at a time.

HEAD
Guide
Burden
Rich soil
Become visible
Observe
LOCK

## WORDWHEEL

You have 10 mins to find as many words as possible using the letters in the wheel. Each must use the hub letter and at least 3 others. Letters may be used only once. You cannot use plurals, foreign words or proper nouns. There is at least one 9-letter word to be found.




**How you rate**
10 words: average
15 words: good
20 words: very good
25 or more: excellent.

## NINER

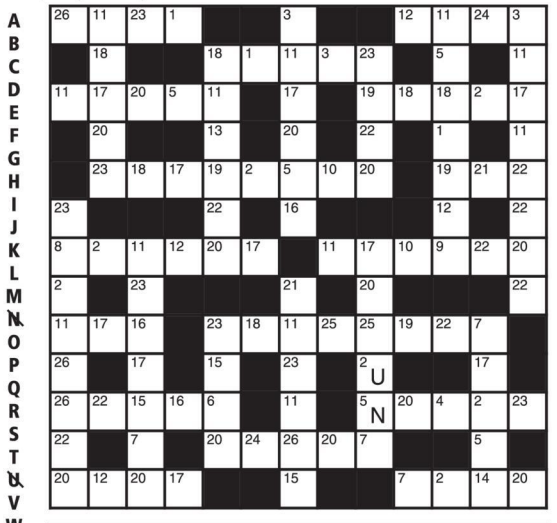
Each number from 1 to 9 represents a different letter. Solve the clues and insert the letters in the appropriate squares to discover a word which uses all nine letters.

**67447447117** gives an American river;
**87932** gives an African river;
**523** gives an English river.

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

## CODEWORD

This puzzle has no clues. Instead, every number printed in the grid represents a letter, with the same number always representing the same letter. For example, if 8 turns out to be a V, you can write in V wherever a square contains 8. Using your knowledge of words, complete the puzzle.



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

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | U | | | N | | | | | | | | |
| 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | |

# GENERAL KNOWLEDGE CROSSWORD

## ACROSS

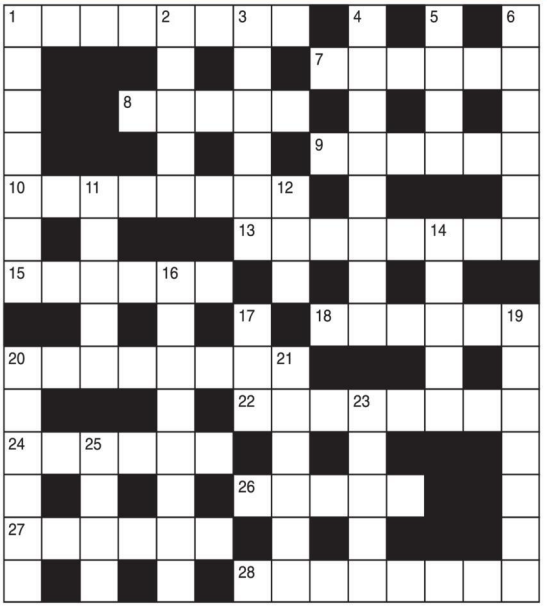
1. South American tree or shrub with medicinal bark (8)
7. A single proviso in a treaty, contract, or other document (6)
8. Wading bird, with a long, straight bill, frequenting marshy places (5)
9. Explosive mixture of ammonium nitrate and TNT used in bombs (6)

10, 14 and 5. 1948 novel by William Faulkner, about a man wrongfully accused of murder (8,2,3,4)

13. Head of a religious house, order, etc. (8)
15. A picketing rope or lasso (6)

18 and 27. Austrian composer whose works included the song cycle Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen (6,6)

20. According to the Bible, one of the two ancient cities destroyed by God because of wickedness (8)
22. The American name for paraffin (8)
24. County town of Rutland (6)
26. Dean ---, manager of Aston Villa, appointed October 2018 (5)
27. See 18
28. A place where horses are bred (4,4)



## DOWN

1. --- cable consists of an inner insulated core of stranded or solid wire surrounded by an outer insulated wire braid (7)
2. A member of a religious and social system of India (5)
3. A port in Italy, capital of Campania region (6)
4. Large, ceremonial, burning torch (8)
5. See 10
6. Organ in certain animals for testing by touch or for searching for food (6)
11. Fringe of warp threads left on a loom when the web has been cut off (5)
12. Spirit distilled from the products of sugar cane (3)
14. See 10
16. Airfields used as headquarters of operations for military planes (3,5)
17. Tree of the genus Quercus whose fruit is the acorn (3)
19. Country in south-east Asia whose capital is Hanoi (7)
20. People employed to clean and look after horses (6)

21 and 25. First post-unification Chancellor of Germany (6,4)

23. In mathematics, a series of eight (5)
25. See 21

# SOLUTIONS

**Sudoku**

Easy

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

Hard

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

**Ladder**

Head, lead, load, loam, loom, look, lock

**Codeword**

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

**Wordwheel Pathfinder**

GAZETTEER

Beat the Nation, Pointless, The Million Pound Drop, Eggheads, The People Versus, Blockbusters, Fifteen to One, University Challenge, Only Connect, Ask the Family, Who Wants to Be a Millionaire, Telly Addicts, The Chase, Take It or Leave It, Mastermind, Going for Gold, The Weakest Link.

**Niner**

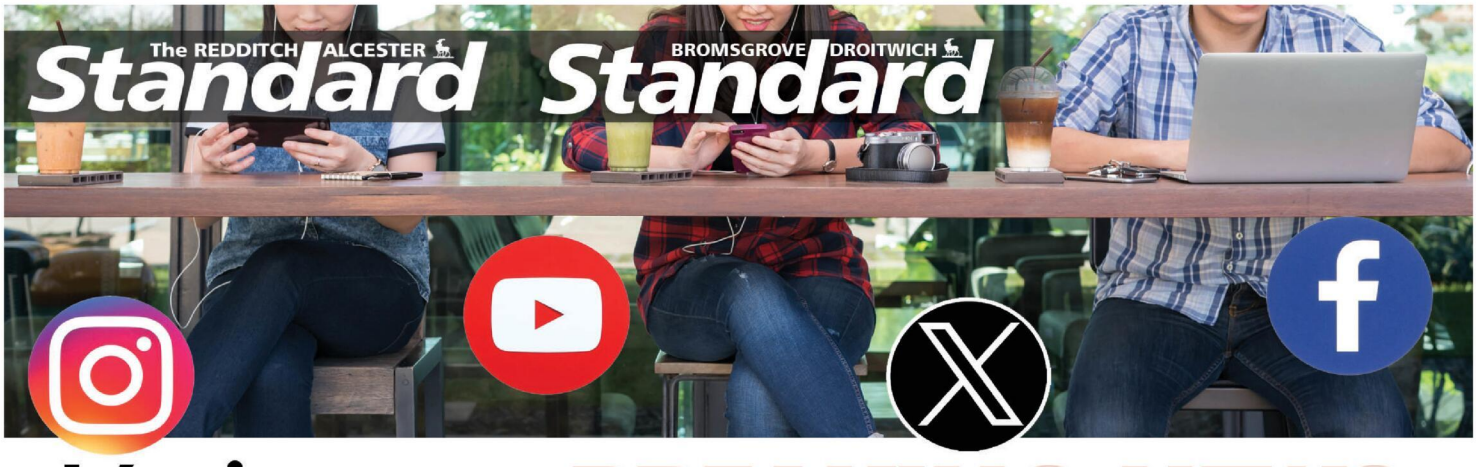
PRESUMING

**Crossword**

Across: 6 Coronet; 7 Total; 9 Lid; 10 Imprudent; 12 Extemporise; 15 Joined issue; 17 Emergency; 19 Imp; 21 Unite; 22 Release. Down: 1 Comic; 2 Roe; 3 Seem; 4 Wonderful; 5 Earnest; 8 Grapes; 11 Exonerate; 13 Endues; 14 Commend; 16 Amuse; 18 Chef; 20 Pet.

**General Knowledge Crossword**

ACROSS: 1. Cinchona; 7. Clause; 8. Snipe; 9. Amatol; 10. Intruder; 13. Superior; 15. Lariat; 18. Gustav; 20. Gomorrah; 22. Kerosene; 24. Oakham; 26. Smith; 27. Mahler; 28. Stud farm. DOWN: 1. Coaxial; 2. Hindu; 3. Naples; 4. Flambeau; 5. Dust; 6. Feeler; 11. Thrum; 12. Rum; 14. In the; 16. Air bases; 17. Oak; 19. Vietnam; 20. Grooms; 21. Helmut; 23. Octad 25. Kohl.


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# 2026 HOLIDAYS

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### YORK & SCENIC YORKSHIRE

**Departing Mon 23 Mar '26**

Join us on this idyllic break to beautiful Yorkshire, where we combine the rolling hills and panoramic landscapes with charming Haworth and Skipton Market. With a visit to historic York too, this lovely break is the perfect contrast of city and country!

**SO MUCH INCLUDED...**

- ✔ Return coach travel **from Redditch**
- ✔ 4 nights at the Britannia Hotel, Leeds Bradford Airport (JG2 rating) with dinner & breakfast
- ✔ **2 for 1 bar** (6pm-9pm) on selected drinks
- ✔ Excursions to York, Skipton Market & Haworth

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### ISLE OF WIGHT WEEKEND

**Departing Fri 6 Mar '26**

A long weekend by the sea beckons on this lovely escape to the Isle of Wight. Beloved since Queen Victoria's reign, follow in the footsteps of royalty and relax at our base in a popular seaside resort and discover other highlights during an optional trip!

**SO MUCH INCLUDED...**

- ✔ Return coach travel & ferry crossings **from Bromsgrove**
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### WICKED THE MUSICAL EVENING SHOW & LONDON

**Departing Thu 26 Feb '26**

Wicked is the sensational musical that hits stages like a twister with its electrifying score, stunning sets and a story that turns Oz on its head. Full of memorable songs such as No Good Deed and Defying Gravity, this is guaranteed to leave you spellbound!

**SO MUCH INCLUDED...**

- ✔ Return coach travel **from Redditch, Bromsgrove**
- ✔ Overnight stay at a selected hotel outside London (JG3 or JG4 rating) with full English breakfast
- ✔ Stalls or Dress Circle ticket (evening performance)

▶ **SAVE £10 - Quote OSG - Book by 16 Jan 2026**

**2 Days** by Coach *only* **£179**
Single Supplement £45



### NORFOLK COUNTRY MUSIC BREAK

**Departing Mon 16 Mar '26**

Enjoy live music and toe-tapping performances from crowd favourites on this country music break at the Warner Corton Coastal Village! With excursions to pretty Aldeburgh and Norwich also included in the price, it's enough to make you holler yee-ha!

**SO MUCH INCLUDED...**

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*Learn from yesterday, live for today, hope for tomorrow.*
*Anonymous*





# Family Notices

## IN MEMORIAM

**John Anthony Smith**

**05/01/2006**

Dearest John

20 years have passed and I miss you

*Always loved*

*Always remembered*

*Alison*

*xxx*




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# PUBLIC NOTICES

## PUBLIC NOTICES

### Warwickshire County Council

**ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984**

**Warwickshire County Council has made the following Temporary Traffic Orders:**

**PUBLIC FOOTPATH SD207 IN THE PARISH OF HENLEY IN ARDEN**
**Order Effect:** Footpath closed to all traffic between Grid References SP1532465978 and SP1538565953.
**Reason for Order:** To avoid the likelihood of danger to the public because of the excavation works on or near the path.
**Order Commences:** 5 January 2026 for up to 6 months.
**Access & Diversion:** No diversion route available.
**Contractor:** WCC County Highways Street Lighting, Tel: 01926 412 459.

**C76 WOOD STREET, STRATFORD UPON AVON**
**Order Effect:** A One-Way Traffic flow in an easterly direction will be imposed between High Street/Bridge Street roundabout and Meer Street – closed to westbound traffic.
**Reason for Order:** Footway reconstruction and associated works.
**Order Commences:** 5 January 2026 for up to 18 months.
**Anticipated Completion:** 16 January 2026.
**Access & Diversion:** One-way diversion: High Street, Chapel Street, Church Street, Chestnut Walk, Rother Street and Wood Street.
**Contractor:** Balfour Beatty, Tel: 03452 415 302.

**CLOPTON LANE, MICKLETON**
**Order Effect:** Road closed to vehicular traffic.
**Reason for Order:** To enable duct laying works.
**Order Commences:** 6 January 2026 for up to 18 months.
**Anticipated Completion:** 19 January 2026.
**Access & Diversion:** Colemans Hill, Meon Hill, Admington Road, Main Street, Back Lane, Goose Lane, Tailors Lane, Campden Road, Stratford Road and vice versa.
**Contractor:** BethMar Ltd, Tel: 07736 993 275.

**C74 SAWBRIDGE ROAD, LOWER SHUCKBURGH**
**Order Effect:** Road closed to vehicular traffic from A425 Shuckburgh Road to Flecknoe Station Road.
**Reason for Order:** Carriageway patching and associated works, 08.00hrs-16.00hrs.
**Order Commences:** 8 January 2026 for up to 18 months.
**Anticipated Completion:** 8 January 2026.
**Access & Diversion:** C74 Sawbridge Road, C74 Willoughby Road, C74 Sawbridge Road, C74 Moor Lane, C74 Main Street, A45 London Road, A45 Daventry Road, B4429 Daventry Road, A426 Southam Road, A426 Rugby Road, A426 Southam Road, A423 Southam Bypass, A425 Daventry Road, A425 Shuckburgh Road, and vice versa.
**Contractor:** C R Macdonalds Ltd, Tel: 01527 518 989.

**BROOKHAMPTON LANE, KINETON**
**Order Effect:** Road Closed to vehicular traffic.
**Reason for Order:** To enable exploratory works prior to pipe installation.
**Order Commences:** 9 January 2026 for up to 18 months.
**Anticipated Completion:** 11 January 2026.
**Access & Diversion:** No diversion available.
**Contractor:** Sunbelt TM, Tel: 01543 375 121.

**DARLINGCOTT ROAD, TREDINGTON**
**Order Effect:** Road closed to vehicular traffic.
**Reason for Order:** To enable telegraph replacement works, 09.30hrs-15.30hrs.
**Order Commences:** 6 January 2026 for up to 18 months.
**Anticipated Completion:** 6 January 2026.
**Access & Diversion:** Darlingscott Road, Darlingscote Road, Campden Road, Norgren Crescent, Fosse Way and vice versa.
**Contractor:** Sunbelt Rentals, Tel: 08700 500 792.

**C72 BRIDGE STREET, WELLESBOURNE**
**Order Effect:** Road closed to vehicular traffic between its junctions with Church Street/School Street and Chapel Street.
**Reason for Order:** Footway reconstruction and associated works, 09.30hrs-15.30hrs, weekdays only.
**Order Commences:** 5 January 2026 for up to 18 months.
**Anticipated Completion:** 16 January 2026.
**Access & Diversion:** Clockwise: Bridge Street, Stratford Road, A429, B4086 (Charlecote Road, Warwick Road). Anti-clockwise: B4086 (Church Street, Warwick Road, Charlecote Road), A429, Stratford Road, Bridge Street.
**Contractor:** Balfour Beatty, Tel: 03452 415 302.

**STRATFORD ROAD, HAMPTON LUCY**
**Order Effect:** Road closed to vehicular traffic.
**Reason for Order:** To enable works for installation of a new pressure relief valve,
**Order Commences:** 5 January 2026 for up to 18 months.
**Anticipated Completion:** 13 March 2026.
**Access & Diversion:** Stratford Road, Warwick Road, Hatton Bank Lane, Snitterfield Road, Snitterfield Street, Bridge Street, Vine Cottages, Church Street and vice versa.
**Contractor:** Sunbelt Tm, Tel: 01543 375 121.

**STRATFORD ROAD, WOOTTON WAWEN**
**Order Effect:** Road closed to vehicular traffic.
**Reason for Order:** To enable works for servicing of pressure relief valve.
**Order Commences:** 8 January 2026 for up to 18 months.
**Anticipated Completion:** 9 January 2026.
**Access & Diversion:** Stratford Road, New Road, Henley Road, Hunger Hill, Oldberrow Lane, Oldberrow Road, Redditch Road, Birmingham Road, Priory Square, Alcester Road, Haydon Way, Coughton Hill, Willoughby Close, Alcester Bypass, A46, Bearley Cross and vice versa.
**Contractor:** Chevron Tm Ltd, Tel: 03300 080 820.

**COMMON LANE, CLAVERDON**
**Order Effect:** Road closed to vehicular traffic.
**Reason for Order:** Works to install new ducting.
**Order Commences:** 6 January 2026 for up to 18 months.
**Anticipated Completion:** 8 January 2026.
**Access & Diversion:** Common Lane, Lye Green, Lye Green Road and vice versa.
**Contractor:** Sunbelt Rentals Ltd, Tel: 03700 500 792.

**NEW ROAD, ALDERMINSTER**
**Order Effect:** Road closed to vehicular traffic.
**Reason for Order:** Works to replace a telegraph pole, closed 08.00hrs-18.00hrs.
**Order Commences:** 9 January 2026 for up to 18 months.
**Anticipated Completion:** 9 January 2026.
**Access & Diversion:** New Road, Banbury Road, Stratford Road, Halford Road, Old Halford Road, Fosse Way, Shipston Road, Old Road and vice versa.
**Contractor:** Go Traffic Management, Tel: 01613 515 370.

**D6089 JUSTINS AVENUE, STRATFORD UPON AVON**
**Order Effect:** Road closed between A3400 Birmingham Road and Clopton Road.
**Reason for Order:** Carriageway patching works, closed 08.00hrs-16.00hrs.
**Order Commences:** 9 January 2026 for up to 18 months.
**Anticipated Completion:** 9 January 2026.
**Access & Diversion:** Clopton Road, A3400 Birmingham Road, and vice versa. Vehicular access & egress will be maintained where possible and safe to do so for businesses and residents only.
Access/egress to/from Hodgson Road, Maple Grove, Woodlands Road, Elm Road via Justins Avenue may also be restricted whilst works are in progress.
**Contractor:** Balfour Beatty, Tel: 03452 415 302.

**D5344 MILL LANE, ASTON CANTLOW**
**Order Effect:** Road closed to vehicular traffic between its junctions with Brook Road/ Wilmcote Lane and Wood Lane
**Reason for Order:** Carriageway patching and associated works, 08.00hrs-16.00hrs.
**Order Commences:** 10 January 2026 for up to 18 months.
**Anticipated Completion:** 10 January 2026.
**Access & Diversion:** Wilmcote Lane, Wood Lane and vice versa.
**Contractor:** Balfour Beatty, Tel: 03452 415 302.

**BURFORD LANE, ASTON CANTLOW**
**Order Effect:** Road closed to vehicular traffic.
**Reason for Order:** Works to renew water meter.
**Order Commences:** 5 January 2026 for up to 18 months.
**Anticipated Completion:** 7 January 2026.
**Access & Diversion:** Burford Lane, Alcester Road, Henley Road, Village Road, Alne End, Spernal Lane, Spernall Lane and vice versa.
**Contractor:** Chevron Traffic Management Ltd, Tel: 03300 080 820.

**NUTHURST ROAD, BEAUDESERT**
**Order Effect:** Road closed to vehicular traffic.
**Reason for Order:** To safely enable works to install new water connection.
**Order Commences:** 7 January 2026 for up to 18 months.
**Anticipated Completion:** 9 January 2026.
**Access & Diversion:** Nuthurst Road, Bushwood Lane, Liveridge Hill and vice versa.
**Contractor:** Network Plus, Tel: 01332 820 920.

**PUBLIC FOOTPATH CLOPTON ROAD TO HODGSON ROAD, STRATFORD UPON AVON**
**Order Effect:** Footpath closed to all traffic.
**Reason for Order:** To avoid the likelihood of danger to the public while development works are in progress.
**Order Commences:** 7 January 2026 for up to 6 months.
**Access & Diversion:** Maple Grove, Justins Avenue, Hodgson Road and vice versa.
**Contractor:** Haywards Developments Ltd, Tel: 07768 008 821.

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

**D6345 DOVEHOUSE DRIVE, WELLESBOURNE**
**Order Effect:** Road closed to vehicular traffic between both junctions with Loxley Road.
**Reason for Order:** To enable adjustment of manhole covers, patching and associated works, 08.00hrs-16.00hrs.
**Order Commences:** 20 January 2026 for up to 18 months.
**Anticipated Completion:** 20 January 2026.
**Access & Diversion:** Vehicular traffic to remain on Loxley Road. Access/Egress to/ from all adjoining roads may be restricted whilst works are in progress.
**Contractor:** Balfour Beatty, Tel: 03452 415 302.

**MILCOTE ROAD, WESTON-ON-AVON**
**Order Effect:** Road Closed to vehicular traffic
**Reason for Order:** Works to provide overhead fibre cabling.
**Order Commences:** 20 January 2026 for up to 18 months.
**Anticipated Completion:** 20 January 2026.
**Access & Diversion:** Weston Sands, Station Road, Milcote Road, Clifford Road, Main Street, Campden Road, Long Marston Road, Welford Road, Pear Tree Close and vice versa.
**Contractor:** Sunbelt Rentals Ltd, Tel: 03700 500 792.

**SAND BARN LANE, SNITTERFIELD**
**Order Effect:** Road closed to vehicular traffic.
**Reason for Order:** Works to install new water connection.
**Order Commences:** 21 January 2026 for up to 18 months.
**Anticipated Completion:** 23 January 2026.
**Access & Diversion:** No diversion available.
**Contractor:** Go Traffic Management Limited, Tel: 01158 965 832.

**C40 SCHOOL ROAD, SNITTERFIELD**
**Order Effect:** Road closed between Smiths Lane/Bearley Road and Bell Lane.
**Reason for Order:** Carriageway patching works, closed 09.30hrs-15.30hrs.
**Order Commences:** 21 January 2026 for up to 18 months.
**Anticipated Completion:** 21 January 2026.
**Access & Diversion:** Wolverton Road, Norton Lindsey Road, Wolverton Fields, Ward's Hill, Main Street, Snitterfield Lane, Church Road, Smith's Lane and vice versa. Vehicular access & egress will be maintained where possible and safe to do so for businesses and residents only.
**Contractor:** Balfour Beatty, Tel: 03452 415 302.

**RADWAY ROAD, LOWER TYSOE**
**Order Effect:** Road closed to vehicular traffic.
**Reason for Order:** To safely enable works for mains installation.
**Order Commences:** 19 January 2026 for up to 18 months.
**Anticipated Completion:** 23 January 2026.
**Access & Diversion:** Lower Tysoe Road, Lane End, Tysoe Road, Banbury Road, Radway Road and vice versa.
**Contractor:** Chevron Traffic Management Ltd, Tel: 03300 080 820.

**CAMPDEN HILL, ILMINGTON**
**Order Effect:** Road closed to vehicular traffic.
**Reason for Order:** To safely enable works on sewer lining.
**Order Commences:** 22 January 2026 for up to 18 months
**Anticipated Completion:** 23 January 2026.
**Access & Diversion:** Front Street, Windmill Close, Mickleton Road, Park Lane, Admington Lane, Colemans Hill, Ebrington Hill, Nebsworth Lane, Campden Pitch, Campden Hill and vice versa.
**Contractor:** Sapphire Utility Solutions, Tel: 08009 992 266.

**D6089 JUSTINS AVENUE, STRATFORD UPON AVON**
**Order Effect:** Road closed between Elm Road and Woodlands Road.
**Reason for Order:** Carriageway patching works, closed 08.00hrs-16.00hrs.
**Order Commences:** 21 January 2026 for up to 18 months.
**Anticipated Completion:** 21 January 2026.
**Access & Diversion:** Justins Avenue, Clopton Road, A3400 Birmingham Road, Justins Avenue and vice versa. Vehicular access & egress will be maintained where possible and safe to do so for businesses and residents only.
**Contractor:** Balfour Beatty, Tel: 03452 415 302.

**C202 TRAITOR'S FORD LANE, SUTTON UNDER BRAILES**
**Order Effect:** Road closed to vehicular traffic between Holloway Hill & Traitor's Ford Lane.
**Reason for Order:** Carriageway patching & associated works, 08.00hrs - 16.00hrs.
**Order Commences:** 20 January 2026 for up to 18 months.
**Anticipated Completion:** 20 January 2026.
**Access & Diversion:** Traitor's Ford Lane, Whichford Road, Brightwell Road, Sharps Hill Road, Ascott Road's Ford Road and vice versa.
**Contractor:** Balfour Beatty, Tel: 03452 415 302.

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

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

**S Duxbury, Director of Strategy, Planning & Governance, Shire Hall, Warwick CV34 4RL** **Date 02 Jan 2026**

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## PUBLIC NOTICES

### Warwickshire County Council

**ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984**

**Warwickshire County Council has made the following Temporary Traffic Orders:**

**SAMBOURNE LANE, COUGHTON**
**Order Effect:** Road closed to vehicular traffic.
**Reason for Order:** To enable works for the repair/ replacement of a manhole cover and frame.
**Order Commences:** 8 January 2026 for up to 18 months.
**Anticipated Completion:** 8 January 2026.
**Access & Diversion:** Sambourne Lane, Wike Lane, The Green, Middletown Lane, Bromsgrove Road, Alcester Road, Birmingham Road, Haydon Way, Coughton Hill and vice versa.
**Contractor:** Customer Solutions Plus, Tel: 07918 298 599.

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

**C38 WHITEMOOR ROAD/WHITEMOOR LANE, SAMBOURNE**
**Order Effect:** Road Closed to vehicular traffic from B4090 Alcester Heath to Sambourne Lane/The Green.
**Reason for Order:** Carriageway patching and associated works, 09.30hrs - 15.30hrs.
**Order Commences:** 22 January 2026 for up to 18 months.
**Anticipated Completion:** 22 January 2026.
**Access & Diversion:** The Green, Middletown Lane, A448 Bromsgrove Road, A435 Haydon Way/ Birmingham Road, B4090 Alcester Heath and vice versa.
**Contractor:** Balfour Beatty, Tel: 03452 415 302.

**MOAT FARM LANE, ULLENHALL**
**Order Effect:** Road closed to vehicular traffic.
**Reason for Order:** Works to replace existing telegraph pole.
**Order Commences:** 23 January 2026 for up to 18 months.
**Anticipated Completion:** 23 January 2026.
**Access & Diversion:** Moat Farm Lane, Ramshill Lane, Danzey Green Lane, Well Lane, The Green, Vicarage Hill, Broad Lane, Alcester Road, Alderhanger Lane Layby, Gorcott Hill, Ullenhall Lane, Ullenhall Street, Henley Road, Barrells Park, Mount Pleasant Lane, Moat Lane and vice versa.
**Contractor:** M J Quinn, Tel: 01543 547 118.

**POPLAR CLOSE, ALCESTER**
**Order Effect:** Road closed to vehicular traffic between its junction with Elm Drive.
**Reason for Order:** Works to clear blockage on the network.
**Order Commences:** 21 January 2026 for up to 18 months.
**Anticipated Completion:** 26 January 2026.
**Access & Diversion:** No diversion available.
**Contractor:** Quantum Traffic Management, Tel: 01724 786 286.

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 2 Jan 2026**

## PUBLIC NOTICES

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**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.**

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**BLACK** wrought iron ornate slimline wall mirror. Decorative frame with glass / wrought iron leaves. 39" long x 12" wide approx: £5.00. Tel: 07934132759

**FIVE** Minton Bellemeade salad plates (8") blue flowers, bone china, very good clean condition. £3.00 for all. Tel: 07934132759

**CARPET** Offcut - brand new, berber, hard wearing, felt backed, mid brown / cream mixture, no matching pattern so could cut & piece together. size 6 foot 8 inches long x 2 foot 1 inch wide. £3.00. Tele: 07934132759

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**BLACK** wrought iron ornate slimline wall mirror. Decorative frame with glass / wrought iron leaves. 39" long x 12" wide approx: £5.00. Tel: 07934132759

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### PETS WANTED

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# Motoring

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**DELIVERIES of the new Lamborghini Temerario are set to start in January 2026.**

The successor to the Huracán, the all-new Temerario's hybrid powertrain combines a twin-turbo V8 engine with three electric motors, providing a total power output of 920 CV and the first and only production super sports car able to reach 10,000 rpm. Completing a fully hybridized three-strong model line-up from the Italian super sports car manufacturer, Temerario is launched as a coupé with an additional lightweight Alleggerita version available.

The second Lamborghini High Performance Electrified Vehicle (HPEV), Temerario joins the V12 Revuelto HPEV and plug-in hybrid Urus SE to deliver the Italian marque's take on electrification: emissions reduction combined with heightened performance across the range.

Davide Sfrecola, who took over as head of Lamborghini UK in 2025 said: "Lamborghini enters 2026 in this market with the most comprehensive hybridized super sports car offering in our segment.

"Importantly, Lamborghini's appeal with our clients, for our models' infamous design and benchmarking performance, is enhanced by our hybridization programme, with technologies making our cars easier and more fun to drive but as emotionally charged as ever.

"This year has witnessed new products, important customer and public events, and expansion of our UK network, and 2026 will see an exciting evolution of the same."

The UK consistently maintains its place in Automobili Lamborghini's top five global markets, along with the USA, Germany, Italy and Japan currently and, endorsed by an average 12 months' lead-time across its products in the UK and beyond, always retaining exclusivity as a core principle.

This is exemplified by the Urus SE, for which UK deliveries started at the beginning of 2025 and now maintains benchmark residual values in its segment, while in its first full year of production the iconic Revuelto won accolades in 2025 with major automotive media.

The opening of Lamborghini Mayfair in London's most prestigious district marks the UK's twelfth showroom location, with expansion of aftersales facilities in Leeds and Pangbourne. 2026 will see further new dealership representation, serving a growing number of owners with access to sales and aftersales.

In a year of Lamborghini UK events and activities, the Temerario made its UK dynamic debut running up the hill at Goodwood Festival of Speed in July, where the Temerario GT3 race car was unveiled to the world: the first Lamborghini competition car to be entirely designed, developed, and built at the Sant'Agata Bolognese factory.

UK clients experienced the first opportunity to drive the new road-going V8 HPEV during September's Lamborghini Day UK at Millbrook Proving Ground, at which the already-sold 'few-off' Lamborghini Fenomeno, of which only 29 will be produced for clients worldwide, also made its UK debut.

Lamborghini's heritage was celebrated in the UK with historic cars at events including the Hampton Court Concours d'Élegance and Salon Privé.

In the year that the Polo Storico heritage department marked its own tenth anniversary since embarking on official restorations, authentication and certification of historic models.

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# Derby delight for Spa as Dugmore at the double in Raiders victory

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

**FOOTBALL:** A BRACE from Alex Dugmore inspired Droitwich Spa to a 4-2 derby win against Worcester Raiders.

The Saltmen returned to winning ways in a six-goal thriller as Ben Tilbury's early penalty put Spa ahead at the King George Playing Fields.

Raiders responded soon after courtesy of Prince Henry's penalty only for Dugmore to restore the home side's lead before the break.

A goal from Josh Hurdman extended Spa's lead early in the second period before Lincoln Hunt kept Raiders in the contest.

However, Dugmore struck again late on to seal the points for Andy Crowther's side as the club ended the year on a high.

The result means Droitwich sit third in the Hellenic League Premier Division table, five points behind leaders Roman Glass St George with three games in hand.

However, second-placed Slimbridge have two games in-hand on Spa and five games in-hand on table toppers Roman and currently sit one point above the Saltmen in the table.

Spa exacted revenge on Worcester after suffering defeat against Raiders in the Worcestershire Senior Cup earlier this season.

And the Saltmen made the perfect start when Raiders goalkeeper Charlie Emery brought down Hurdman in the box and Tilbury converted the resulting penalty after just two minutes.

However, Worcester equalised five minutes later with a penalty of their own as Henry converted from the spot after the ball struck a Droitwich arm in the box following a corner.

The teams traded chances soon after as Emery denied Jack Brighton while Joe Stockton kept out Cam Monteith's effort at the other end.

Spa reclaimed the lead on 35 minutes when Dugmore planted a trademark header into the net after he rose highest to meet a corner.

The home side went close to another goal before the break as Hurdman saw his free-kick travel narrowly wide.

And Emery then tipped Cory Rudd's drive from 20-yards out around the post to keep Raiders in the contest.

The hosts extended their lead three minutes after the break as Hurdman rounded Emery and finished into an empty net.

Worcester responded on 70 minutes when Emery's long kick looper over the Spa defence and substitute Hunt rolled a shot into the bottom corner past a hesitant Stockton.

However, Spa made sure of the points on 82 minutes as Dugmore headed in his second of the game after good work from James Lemon down the left.

Droitwich are next in action against Hallen on Saturday, January 3 with kick-off at 3pm at the Hallen Centre.



# County players to feature for West Midlands region

**GOLF:** A TOTAL of six golfers from Worcestershire have earned a place in England Golf's West Midlands regional squad.

The six players – Hayden Sarfo and Harry Evans (both Worcester), Amelia Bryan and Maisie Whittall (both Gaudet Luce), Oliver Badger (Hagley) and Niamh Bush (Droitwich) – form part of a 20-player squad.

The squad comprises 10 boys and 10 girls.

England Golf's regional coaching programme aims to provide youngsters with a pathway in the sport from county to national level.

England Golf deputy performance director Steve Burnett said: "England Golf aims to support a strong, aligned and inclusive performance pathway from club to national level, in order to identify, recruit, develop, support and retain world-class golfers capable of performing and winning at the highest levels of amateur golf.

"The Regional Performance Programme is a vital part of the pathway and it bridges the gap for young players showing promise at county level to push on and improve sufficiently to go on and play for England in the near future.

"The regional squads have helped produce a large number of world-class male and female golfers while creating life-long affiliations with the game. At every level of the pathway we aim to provide fun, engaging and individualised opportunities to help the player as a person and a golfer."

The West Midlands won the girls' region of the year for 2024/25, with the area recognised for a season of hard work, impressive results and outstanding player development.

Throughout the year, West Midlands players achieved significant handicap improvements and produced standout performances on the national stage.

**Maisie Whittall, from Worcestershire, has been included in the squad. Picture courtesy of Leaderboard Photography.**

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