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Spa driver is jailed over fatal crash while drugged

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

A DROITWICH man whose driving whilst on drugs resulted in the death of a man has been jailed.

Ben Woodland, 25, of Ploughmans Walk, has been sentenced to eight years and three months for causing death by dangerous driving while under the influence of drugs.

Woodland was found guilty at Worcester Crown Court following a fatal collision on Monday April 29, 2024.

Around 10.25pm, Woodland was driving a VW Golf along the A4538 Pershore Lane near junction six of the M5, towards Spetchley.

He failed to negotiate a left-hand bend, causing the vehicle to travel on to the wrong side of the road, colliding with a Honda Civic, driven by a 57-year-old man.

Woodland's dangerous driving caused fatal injuries to the Honda driver and serious injuries to his own passenger.

Woodland then failed a roadside drug wipe, testing positive for cocaine.

At court, he was further disqualified from driving for five years with an extension of five years and six months and a re-test and his licence was further endorsed with ten penalty points.

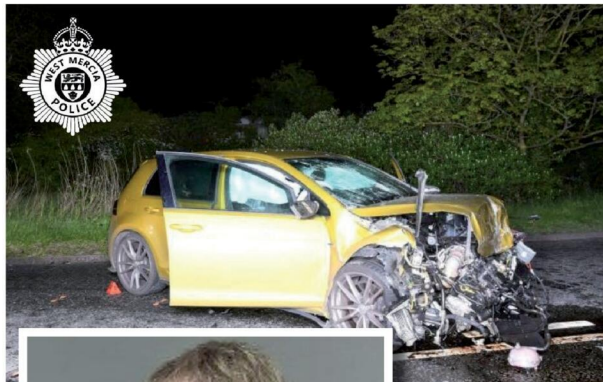
Det Con Keyte, from West Mercia Police's Serious Collision Investigation Unit (SCIU) South said: "We are pleased to get this conviction and sentencing for Woodland whose dangerous driving was exacerbated by his use of cocaine while behind the wheel.

"His appalling driving resulted in the tragic death of a man and no doubt put many other motorists at serious risk of harm.

"It is quite right he was also given an extended ban from driving with a re-test too.

"No sentencing will ever compensate for the sad loss of life here, but we hope it will provide the chance for the victim's family and friends to begin to move on with their lives now.

"We hope it also teaches a sobering lesson to anyone even thinking about driving a vehicle while under the influence of drink or drugs. "This was a tragedy that could have been avoided."



This is the site following the crash on the A4538 Pershore Lane. Ben Woodland (LEFT) has been jailed for eight years. Picture by West Mercia Police.

New homes plans due

PLANS to build 91 homes on a major Droitwich road are expected to be submitted in the coming weeks.

Persimmon Homes South Midlands has completed the purchase of land on the Kidderminster Road, with the aim of starting construction at the site next year.

This site already has outline planning consent, and a reserved matters planning application will be submitted to Wychavon District Council early this year.

As part of the application, a more than \$2million Section 106 package has been put together which, according to Persimmon Homes, would include improvements to infrastructure, education and healthcare.

Steve Lambley, Persimmon Homes South Midlands' land director, said: "This development will not only generate significant job opportunities throughout the lifespan of the project but will also leave a lasting legacy of community benefits for the people of Droitwich and the surrounding areas."

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An historic shake-up for councils

by Ashleigh Osborne
ashleigh.osborne@bullivantmedia.com

THE GOVERNMENT has launched a public consultation exercise to gather the views of partner organisations and residents about how local government is organised and structured.

The seven-week consultation follows a Whitehall announcement the government will dissolve all remaining two-tier local government arrangements.

The move is part of wider plans for devolution and giving more power to local areas.

Last year, Worcestershire County Council – and the county's six district, borough and city councils – were invited to submit proposals for a new local government structure.

Services are currently delivered by Worcestershire County Council alongside Bromsgrove, Malvern Hills, Redditch, Worcester City, Wychavon and Wyre Forest authorities.

Worcestershire County Council, working with Wyre Forest District Council, put forward the 'One Worcestershire' proposal, for a single, unitary county authority.

That would bring all local govern-

THE ALTERNATIVE PLAN: Council leaders in Redditch, Bromsgrove and Wychavon have urged residents to have their say on local government reorganisation.

The three authorities, plus Worcester City and Malvern District councils, back the Transforming Worcestershire plan for two unitary authorities.

Under that model, one authority would serve the north of the county (Bromsgrove, Redditch and Wyre Forest), and another would cover the south (Malvern Hills, Worcester City and Wychavon).

Key priorities for that proposal include shifting services from crisis-response to prevention, empowering communities by keeping decision-making local,

and driving long-term financial sustainability.

A final decision from the government is expected in July.

Elections for a new 'shadow' authority – or authorities – would take place in May 2027, ahead



Coun Sharon Harvey said Transforming Worcestershire would deliver a strong future with better outcomes. s



Coun Karen May said views are needed from people who rely on council services every day. s

ment services under one council, replacing the county and district bodies.

Proponents of One Worcestershire say it would provide clearer accountability, stronger financial sustainability and simpler services.

The proposal is backed by partners including health, emergency services, business and voluntary sector bodies, most of which already operate on a county-wide level.

Councillor Joanne Monk, leader of Worcestershire County Council, said: "This is a good opportunity

for people to have their say, to government, on how local services are delivered. The county council supports One Worcestershire because a single council offers less disruption for residents, provides greater financial sustainability, better value for money and easier access to services. I encourage all those who want their voice heard by government to look at both options and share their views during the consultation."

The consultation will run until Thursday, March 26.

Visit www.gov.uk/government/consultations/local-government-reorganisation-in-worcestershire for more information.

A decision is expected in July, with elections for a 'shadow' authority – or authorities – to run alongside current councils, planned for May 2027. New council/s would 'go live' on April 1, 2028.



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See page **30**





This is what the new development could look like. s

Latest plan set to see 85 new homes on site

A PLANNING application has been submitted for up to 85 homes to be built on green belt land in Lickey End.

The application for Alcester Road has been submitted to Bromsgrove District Council by Mac Mic Strategic Land Limited.

Public open space, play areas, landscaping, a sustainable drainage system and access from the highway have also been proposed as part of the application.

Of the 85 homes proposed, at least 50 per cent would be affordable housing.

The site lies to the south of existing homes off School Lane and Alcester Road, and it is close to the A38 Birmingham Road and the Lickey End Recreation Ground.

The land is currently fields with hedges, trees and a public right of way running through it.

The applicants have committed to preserving the site's existing public rights of way.

The proposals have been brought under the Government's 'grey belt' route, which enables new housing applications for sites 'already influenced by development or do not strongly contribute to the purposes of the green belt'.

Planners argue, to tackle the housing crisis, national planning policy allows the green belt to be suitable for new homes where it can deliver clear public benefits.

The homes would be limited to the north areas of the site, next to the existing properties, to create a natural extension to the settlement and to avoid flood-risk areas.

The development would be arranged into a series of perimeter blocks to create private back gardens and frontages which look out onto streets and public spaces.

Planning documents claim the development would be safe and accessible for all.

The applicants documents added: "The proposed scheme would not bring about any adverse impacts that significantly and demonstrably outweigh the identified benefits, which are numerous and tangible."

It also claimed it would bring significant benefits with regard to sustainable development.

"Importantly, Bromsgrove Council cannot demonstrate a five-year housing land supply with a very substantial shortfall.

"On this basis, the presumption in favour of sustainable development should be applied."

It concluded by saying it believed planning permission should be granted for the proposed development, securing the delivery of much-needed residential development.

People can visit the planning portal at: bromsgrove.gov.uk and search for application '26/00015/OUT' for more information and to have their say.

Appeal follows vandalism spree

VANDALS have wreaked havoc in and around Droitwich town centre, causing substantial damage to properties and vehicles.

Several buildings were targeted in the early hours of Saturday morning, including properties on Camp Hill, Lower Meadow, Shepherds Way, King Kebab Burger on Ombersley Street, Robert Ellin Opticians on Ombersley Street East and Match Foster Care on Ombersley Street West.

The Standard received reports of windows being smashed on the buildings.

Vehicles were damaged on Shepherds Way, Ombersley Street East, Waitrose car park, Oakham Place, Covercroft Day Centre on Colman Road, Trimmel Green and Burrish Street.

Two men, aged 18 and 19, were arrested on suspicion of criminal damage and have since been released on bail.

Droitwich Safer Neighbourhood Team Inspector Lisa Hornberger said: "We appreciate the concern this amount of damage in the town will have brought to the community and we are appealing for members of the public to check doorbell and CCTV footage to see if they captured any of the incidents on Saturday morning.

"We have arrested two men on suspicion of causing the damage, and they are now on bail whilst our enquiries continue."

Witnesses or anyone with information should email details to: droitwichtown.snt@westmercia.police.uk or call officers on 101.

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Refreshing opportunity

VOTING has opened in the race to become Bromsgrove's Pub of the Year.

The contest is run by MP Bradley Thomas and is celebrating the contribution pubs make to the economy and communities.

For the past four weeks, pubs from across Bromsgrove have been nominating themselves for the public vote - 24 in total are now in the running for the prestigious title.

Voting is open until 5.30pm on Friday, March 6.

Each resident can vote only once and voters must live in Bromsgrove.

Mr Thomas said: "Pubs in Bromsgrove and the villages are at the heart of our communi-

ties where we eat, drink and meet friends and family.

"It is vital we celebrate the contribution they make, not just to our economy, but to our communities too, so please vote for your favourite pub as they compete to be crowned Bromsgrove Pub of the Year 2026.

"Good luck to all of the pubs taking part." Visit: bradleythomas.org.uk/bromsgrove-and-villages-pub-year-competition for the full list of nominees and to vote.

Bradley Thomas is running his annual pub of the year contest. s



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MP welcomes change to leasehold system

REDDITCH MP Chris Bloore has welcomed major new government reforms to the leasehold system, describing them as a 'long-overdue win for leaseholders' that will cut costs, protect people's homes and give homeowners greater control over where they live.

The reforms, set out in the draft Commonhold and Leasehold Reform Bill, will cap ground rents on existing residential leases at £250-a-year, with rents falling to a peppercorn after 40 years.

The changes are expected to save many leaseholders hundreds of pounds a year and thousands over the lifetime of their lease, while helping to unlock stalled house sales caused by punitive ground rent clauses.

The legislation will also abolish unfair forfeiture powers, ending the practice that can currently see leaseholders lose their home and all their equity over relatively small debts.

In addition, almost all new leasehold homes will be banned, with a clear and simpler route created for existing leaseholders to move to commonhold ownership, giving residents a direct stake in the ownership and management of their buildings.

Mr Bloore said: "Too many people in Redditch have been stuck in an outdated and unfair leasehold system that drives up costs and puts their homes at risk.

"Since I was first elected, constituents have raised this with me time and again and they were right to be angry.

"After years of talk and too little action, real reform is finally happening.

"Capping ground rents at £250 will cut bills and unlock home sales, while ending unfair forfeiture powers means no one should ever lose their home over a few hundred pounds of debt."

More than 5million leaseholders and future homeowners across England and Wales are expected to benefit from the reforms.

The draft Bill will now move into pre-legislative scrutiny, with further engagement planned with leaseholders, industry and consumer groups.

Subject to Parliamentary timings, the ground rent cap could come into force later this decade.

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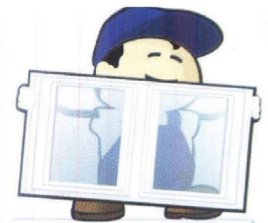
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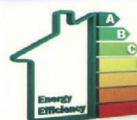
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Murderer rammed victim into a wall

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

A MAN who drove into a young father in Rednal, pushing him into a house before creating a web of lies to hide his actions, has been found guilty of murder.

Lee Baker, 28, was killed on July 21 when a BMW was deliberately driven into him, causing traumatic head injuries.

Baker and his brother were walking along Ormscliffe Road, after an argument with three men, unaware 29-year-old Michael Povey was intent on finding them.

At around 5.10pm, Povey drove towards the back of the shops off Ormscliffe Road, where he was seen on CCTV picking up two friends before driving off to find Lee and his brother.

Within seconds, Povey spotted the pair and deliberately drove the BMW at them.

The 29-year-old mounted the pavement and hit Lee with the vehicle. Mr Baker's brother managed to get out of the way just in time.

After hitting Lee, the BMW continued forward through a hedge and into the front wall of a property on the road.

A post-mortem found Lee died due to a serious head injury.

Povey, in the car with two oth-

ers, quickly got out and ran off into the street to avoid being caught.

Minutes later, Povey walked past the scene of his crime, having removed a high-visibility vest.

He returned to his Ryde Park Road address, changed - to disguise his appearance - and called the police, claiming his car had been stolen.

Povey told the call handler: "My car's just been stolen and it's been used to run someone over by the looks of it, or put through someone's house."

"I've gone round there, one of the yobs has jumped in my car, I don't know which one".

He then said he was 'panicking', adding: "There's a large crowd gathered there. I'll be honest, I'm scared to go back around there because someone's been hurt."

Detectives unravelled Povey's lies. Body-worn footage showed Povey as he approached officers at the scene, maintaining the lie that his car had been stolen.

CCTV footage later revealed Povey, after fleeing the scene, returned to the back of the Ormscliffe Road shops and was heard shouting: "I've just rammed them with my car."

Povey was found guilty of murder at Birmingham Crown Court on February 6. He pleaded guilty to perverting the course of justice at the start of his trial.

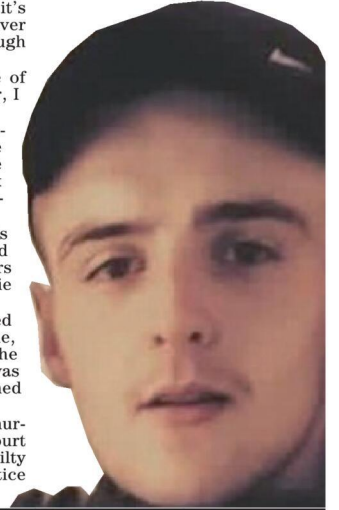
He will appear at Birmingham Crown Court on April 10 for sentencing.

A tribute by Lee's family said: "Lee was a loving son, father, brother and nephew. He was everything to us and will be sadly missed. He was loved by everyone."

■ Lee Baker was a 'loving father.' s



Guilty: Michael Povey. s



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Reform member deserts party

A REFORM UK county councillor has announced he is quitting the party over the authority's plans to raise council tax.

Councillor David Taylor, who represents Redditch East, said he is leaving the party and will continue sitting as an independent member.

His decision follows Worcestershire County Council's warning it is facing 'effective bankruptcy' and has applied to the government for permission to potentially increase council tax by up to 10 per cent from April.

Coun Taylor said, in a statement, he supported a rise while serving in the cabinet but not at that 'unaffordable' level.

"I also have to say, it has been incredibly difficult to speak up, at times," he said. "The pressure to fall in line, to mute my own concerns and to prioritise local party unity over honest conviction has often felt overwhelming.

"There were moments when raising my voice came with real consequences: political, personal and relational.

"Now, without the constraints of the local party whip, I can finally express my views openly."

Coun Taylor reaffirmed this commitment to the people of Church Hill, Winyates, Matchborough and Ipsley, adding: "These communities aren't just names on a map to me, they are home.

"I grew up in Matchborough West, lived in Matchborough East and bought kids up in Winyates, plus lived on both sides of Church Hill.

"These neighbourhoods are full of workers, volunteers and families who deserve a councillor that fights for them every single day. I will continue to stand up for my residents, challenge decisions which short-change our area and push relentlessly for Redditch to finally receive the fair share of investment it has been denied for far too long."

County nears bankruptcy

by **Ryan Smith**
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REFORM UK-led Worcestershire County Council has claimed it is on the verge of bankruptcy.

At a specially-called press conference, the national party's deputy leader, Richard Tice, said the authority's cash problems were the most 'dire' of any Reform-controlled council in the country.

It was revealed, the county council could be just weeks away from having to issue a Section 114 notice, declaring effective bankruptcy.

Council documents have shown the remaining budget gap, heading into the 2026/27 financial year, is £74.3million.

Bosses have applied for £71.9m-million of exceptional finance support from the government to help plug that gap.

If that is refused, they council will be unable to balance the 2026/27 budget and will have to issue a section 114 notice.

Worcestershire has also asked the government to give it powers to be able to raise council tax by up to 9.99 per cent for the next financial year, five per cent above the maximum limit.

Approved savings, in areas such as changes in pension contribu-



Council leader Coun Jo Monk and cabinet member Coun Justin Bowen say they are trying to 'fix the mess' Worcestershire County Council is in. s

tions, highways reorganisation and the decommissioning of County Hall should see £8.975million saved in 2026/27.

Mr Tice said: "We can't kick the can down the road.

"I speak to the council leader here at least once a week.

"We want to bring our added national expertise to the significant expertise we already have here, to try to sort this issue out.

"We're going to try and bring a significant transformation plan for savings. We can manage the pension scheme much better, for example.

"Some of this is difficult, some is sensitive and some of it is uncomfortable but the easy thing

to do is to pretend but we want to be honest."

Council leader, councillor Jo Monk, said: "If a Section 114 notice is issued, councillors would no longer be able to make decisions and we would be given the minimum amount of money to cover the essential services.

"Effectively, the government will bring in commissioners who will make all the decisions in terms of council tax setting and spending on services."

The Reform group was elected to run a minority administration in May.

Coun Monk blamed the previous, Conservative administration for the position the authority is

in and claimed Reform was taking responsibility for the 'mess' it had been left.

Coun Monk previously served as a Conservative on Worcestershire County Council but claimed, as a backbencher, she was unaware of the scale of the situation until recent months.

Several Conservatives have responded to that claim.

Taking to Facebook, Conservative group leader Coun Adam Kent said anyone stepping into local government quickly discovers the scale of pressures councils are facing, adding, the council has faced a 'significant overspend' since May, when Reform came to power.

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Refurb needs £300k more



More cash is needed to restore Willow Court Farmhouse. s

by Ryan Smith
ryan.smith@bullivantmedia.com

AN ADDITIONAL six-figure sum is needed to refurbish Willow Court Farmhouse, after the project was affected by 'unforeseen works'.

Wychavon District Council's executive committee is expected to recommend councillors approve £300,000 from the body's capital receipts to complete the project.

Council documents, seen by the *Standard*, indicate the budget for the Willow Court refurbishment has been affected by unexpected works which only became apparent after the building's dangerous structure

had been stabilised. An assessment of the interior showed key supporting walls lacked foundations and the central chimney required work to prevent a collapse.

There was also the surprise discovery of a hidden basement filled with rubble, raising questions as to the nature of the material and its stability.

The assessment, scoping and timing of the specialist works required to address those matters have caused a significant delay to the programme. It was due to be complete in September last year but the deadline has been extended to next September.

The project has been funded by a £2.3million National Lottery Heritage Fund grant but the coun-

cil, which owns the property and is promoting the refurbishment, is expected to identify additional funding to complete the works.

The council has previously approved capital funding of £940,000, plus a recent request for £580,000 of forward funding to assist cash flow.

The forward funding will be refunded to the council when a later capital contribution is made to the project.

Documents warn that even with the additional cash, the project may require more funding if any further unforeseen works present themselves over the next nine months. That is considered a low risk, however.

The grade II-listed farmhouse

is being restored and transformed into six affordable rental homes.

A faithful restoration of the 16th century property is the final phase of a multi-stage project which included making the site secure and developing plans to save the building.

Those involved in the restoration work climbed the scaffolding recently to take part in a 'topping out ceremony', to celebrate reconstruction of the property's historic, star-shaped chimneys.

Councillor Rick Deller, Wychavon's member for housing and regulatory services, said: "I'm delighted that with the support, we have been able to rescue this historic building and use it to make a real difference to people's lives."

Lido will open on March 2

THE OFFICIAL opening date for Droitwich Spa Lido has been announced.

The popular outdoor pool – one of the few remaining saltwater lidos in the country – will open on March 2, which will be its earliest opening to date.

Bosses at the pool are planning to heat the water to 20C.

Posting on the Lido's Facebook page, the Friends of Droitwich Spa Lido said: "An early opening means longer days, lighter evenings and that first proper outdoor swim feeling – all a little sooner than normal.

"More updates will be coming soon. We can't wait to welcome you back to the lido."

Visit the Friends of Droitwich Spa Lido Facebook page for the latest updates and more information.

Get Wombling

RESIDENTS in Rubery, Frankley and the surrounding areas are being urged to show some love for their local spaces with a litter-pick on Valentine's Day tomorrow (Saturday).

Those taking part will meet at the entrance to Waseley Hills Country Park, opposite Boleyn Road.

The clean-up has been organised by the Rubery Wombles.

The group said: "Please come and join us and help us clean up this lovely lane."

Visit the Rubery Wombles Facebook page for more information.



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Residents of May Lane in Wythall have reported severe flooding. s

Safety warning for drivers

AS RECORD-BREAKING rainfall continues to batter Redditch and Bromsgrove, the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) is urging drivers to take extreme care on water-logged roads.

Heavy downpours have left the ground saturated, rivers overflowing and many routes at heightened risk of surface flooding.

With further rainfall expected in the coming days, the charity is calling on motorists to adapt their driving, plan ahead and avoid unnecessary journeys to help prevent serious collisions and keep themselves and others safe.

RoSPA is also warning about the risk of aquaplaning.

Also known as hydroplaning, it occurs when a layer of water builds up between a vehicle's tyres and the road surface, causing a dangerous loss of traction.

This can leave drivers unable to steer, brake, or accelerate effectively, significantly increasing the risk of accidents.

Caitlin Taylor, RoSPA's Road Safety Manager, said: "Driving in wet weather can be challenging and hazardous, especially when aquaplaning occurs."

"It is essential drivers understand the risks and take the necessary steps to prevent aquaplaning, ensuring safer journeys for everyone."

Driving too fast through standing water can overwhelm the tyres' ability to channel water away, leading to a loss of grip.

RoSPA has told drivers the best way to stay safe on the road is to reduce speed, ensure tyres have adequate tread depth (at least 3mm is recommended for optimal performance), maintain correct tyre pressure and avoid driving through large puddles or flooded areas.

Hike in council tax sparks row between MPs

A ROW has broken out between the MPs of Bromsgrove and Redditch following the Government's decision to allow Worcestershire County Council to raise council tax by nine per cent.

The decision comes just days after the Reform UK-led authority announced it was facing bankruptcy.

Bromsgrove MP Bradley Thomas has accused the county council and Government of being 'in cahoots' over the rise.

As Reform UK revealed its potential bankruptcy, council leader Coun Jo Monk blamed the previous Conservative administration, which ran the county council for two decades, for leaving a financial 'mess'.

Mr Thomas said: "This inflation-busting increase is a far cry from the promises the new administration made to you when they wanted your vote last year."

"At a time when the cost of living is still biting for many of my constituents, a council tax rise almost three times the rate of inflation will be hard to stomach for many."

"My constituents should not be punished for the administration's financial choices."

"The administration should change course and pursue a sustainable alternative that will be more affordable for local residents."

He said the situation had come about as the new administration had not found the waste it promised to find and had 'lost

control of the council finances'.

And he added, as Coun Monk - previously a Conservative - was part of the last administration, she would have been aware of the pressures the council faced.

She claimed, although she and her team knew the council faced financial difficulties, they did not know the full extent of the issues.

Mr Thomas added: "The Government's decision is subject to the approval of the House of Commons to allow the administration to do this."

"Should I get the opportunity to I will be voting against allowing this eye-watering increase."

Redditch MP Chris Bloore hit back at Mr Thomas' criticism of the Government's decision to allow the council tax rise.

He said: "Bradley Thomas and local Conservatives should be apologising, not pointing fingers."

"The financial wreckage at Worcestershire County Council is as much their responsibility as the current Reform administration's."

"After 20 years in charge, they ran the council's finances into the ground and allowed vital services (especially SEND and adult social care) to collapse on their watch."

"To now see Conservative county councillors attempting to shift the blame, having sat around the cabinet table just twelve months ago, is frankly embarrassing."

WHAT'S ON AT ARTRIX

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- 21ST FEB: MOTHERSHIP LED ZEPPELIN
- 27TH FEB: ABBA GOLD
- 28TH FEB: THAT BRITPOP BAND
- 4TH MARCH: THE TAP CHAPS
- 6TH MARCH: BEATLEMANIA
- 7TH MARCH: NEARLY DAN - THE SOUND OF STEELY DAN
- 15TH MARCH: THE SPICE PARTY - 30 YEARS OF THE SPICE GIRLS
- 19TH MARCH: TINA TURNER EXPERIENCE
- 20TH MARCH: FLEETWOOD UNCHAINED
- 21ST MARCH: FEARLESSLY TAYLOR (TAYLOR SWIFT TRIBUTE)
- 28TH MARCH: THE ARMED MAN - BARNET GREEN CHORAL
- 2ND APRIL: SMOOTH CRIMINAL - MICHAEL JACKSON EXPERIENCE
- 4TH APRIL: ELECTRIK LIVE ORCHESTRA
- 9TH APRIL: K-POP SUPERSTARS
- 10TH APRIL: THE RADIOHEAD PROJECT
- 11TH APRIL: THE ANNIE LENNOX & EURYTHMICS SHOW
- 12TH APRIL: SHANIA TWAIN - BY SHANIA LIVE
- 17TH APRIL: ONE NIGHT OF ADELE - NAOMI JOHNSON
- 23RD APRIL: WILD BOYS OF THE 80S
- 2ND MAY: GIVE ME THE NIGHT (GEORGE BENSON TRIBUTE)
- 3RD MAY: THE SABRINA CARPENTER TRIBUTE
- 4TH MAY: CASSIDY JOHNSON SINGS CAROLE KING
- 8TH MAY: AND FINALLY PHIL COLLINS
- 9TH MAY: OASISH
- 14TH MAY: ELTON'S SONG - BEYOND THE YELLOW BRICK ROAD



EVENT CINEMA:

- 2ND MARCH: NATIONAL THEATRE LIVE: THE AUDIENCE
- 3RD MARCH: ROYAL OPERA LIVE: GISELLE
- 31ST MARCH: ROYAL OPERA LIVE: SIEGFRIED
- 20TH APRIL: NATIONAL THEATRE LIVE: ALL MY SONS
- 21ST APRIL: ROYAL OPERA LIVE: THE MAGIC FLUTE
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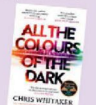
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Helping to keep everyone up with the latest news



Christine Kings is one of the residents who enjoys the Redditch and Bromsgrove Talking Newspaper. s

CARE home residents are able to stay more informed on current affairs in their area, thanks to the Redditch and Bromsgrove Talking Newspaper (RBTN).

Those living at Millcroft Care Home in Redditch, who struggle to read or hold a physical copy of the newspaper, have the weekly edition delivered straight to them on a USB stick which can then be played on a simple-to-use free issue player provided by the charity.

The broadcast is then played out for the residents to listen to, enabling them to remain informed on local news, sports and community events.

The sessions add to community life by stimulating conversation and debate.

One resident, Yvonne, said: "It is a great addition to our week, keeps us updated with the local news and even has a quiz which we enjoy taking part in."

Another, Edna, added: "I think it's a very helpful service to use as I struggle to read the paper newspaper, so being able to listen to it is amazing and it keeps me up-to-date with all the news going on around the area."

With each section introduced by a unique piece of identifiable music, the local news, including stories from the Bromsgrove and Redditch Standards, is supplemented by a variety of other features. These include an array of poetry, historical and naturalist pieces, a nostalgic look back with newspaper articles from the past, a weather forecast, sport and a weekly quiz.

Hedley Brook-Carter, chair of The Redditch and Bromsgrove Talking Newspaper, said: "As we celebrate 50 years distributing local news to the sight impaired, we are delighted to have

residents of care homes among our many listeners.

"The support which we receive from care organisations is invaluable in assisting to promote the service which we seek to provide to the wider disabled community.

"Millcroft not only provides care for a wide range of complex needs but also endeavours to empower residents to enjoy the fullest life possible.

"The talking news service is a significant contributor to this process."

Lyndsay Sard, Millcroft Care Home manager, said: "For our residents, staying informed and feeling part of the wider community is vital for everyone's well-being, and this service is a fantastic way to break down barriers.

"Our residents can easily listen to local news, events, and features, which has already sparked wonderful conversations and helped them feel more engaged with what's happening outside our doors.

"We are always looking to provide a more holistic and engaging environment for all residents, and this partnership is a testament to that dedication."

The weekly editions are available over the Internet and is regularly heard by listeners from Redditch, Bromsgrove, Alcester, Droitwich and the wider Worcestershire area.

The Redditch and Bromsgrove Talking Newspaper is always looking for volunteers in various roles and, currently specifically, requires a cuttings editor.

Anyone wanting to find out more about the charity and its roles, support its work or listen to the latest edition can visit: redditch-bromsgrovetalkingnewspaper.co.uk - the RBTN website.

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A38 snarl-ups and high streets trouble voters

I AM continuing to work hard on the issues that matter most to you.

One such matter is the continuing impact of the A38 Bromsgrove Route Enhancement Programme (BREP) on residents and businesses.

Since being elected, I've been holding Worcestershire County Council to account over BREP.

I recently met with county councillor Sam Evans and a small group of residents to discuss their concerns over changes made to Regents Park Road.

As part of BREP, changes were made to traffic flow at the entrance to the estate from Slideslow Island into Regents Park Road, with the creation of a new priority-give-way area.

These changes have made journey times far worse. The county council says it is listening to residents' concerns.

If so, it would immediately reverse the Regents Park Road changes. Following my meeting with residents, my next step is to get the county council's cabinet member with responsibility for highways and transport down to the Oakalls to see, first-hand, the impact of the changes.

As I have said before, if this project does not lead to tangible improvements in keeping Bromsgrove moving, and in reducing congestion, after all the money that has been spent and after all the frustration caused, we will all be asking the same question: What was the point?

Another big issue I have continued to focus on has been the future of our high streets, in town and village centres.

A key part of my plan for Bromsgrove and the villages is to ensure our town and village centres are fit for the future.

We all want to see new investment in our high streets, businesses too.

That is what I discussed at my recent meeting with Jon Hinton, from the Hinton Group.

Based in Bromsgrove, Jon and his team deliver commercial, retail and hospitality investment.

You will have seen their work as the Hinton Group developed the Waitrose store in Bromsgrove.

Jon is Bromsgrove born and bred and wants to see his hometown thrive. So do I.

I look forward to working with Jon, the business community and partners to drive new investment into the area.

Bradley Thomas, Bromsgrove MP



Westminster Diary

Bradley Thomas MP writes for *The Standard*

Meningitis days inspire Emily's marathon bid

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

A DROITWICH woman who suffered from meningitis as a teenager is now giving back to the charity that supported her recovery, as she gears up to run the London Marathon.

Emily Newman will be braving the gruelling London event on April 26, to raise funds for Meningitis Now.

The charity is important to Emily as she contracted viral meningitis at the age of 16.

Emily wants to raise £2,500 for the charity, in its 40th year of fighting the devastation caused by meningitis.

She said: "This challenge is about far more than the miles and I'm incredibly proud to be raising funds and awareness for such an important cause."

"This charity is very close to my heart."

"My recovery was long, with several bumps in the road and I will be forever grateful to the charity for the support and guidance they provided my loved ones and

me during that challenging time. As my road to recovery continued, Meningitis Now helped me feel less isolated and worked with me to come to terms with my new normal.

"Some years ago, when I struggled to even stand up straight, running a marathon would have felt impossible. Yet here I am, ready to take on this challenge."

"I am incredibly grateful for the opportunity to support this wonderful charity that means so much to me."

Emily has been on her running journey since last summer and took part in her first long race, the Worcester City Runs half-marathon, in September.

She said that had given her the confidence needed to intensify her training plan and push forward to complete the London marathon.

Emily has already raised more than £900 via a JustGiving page.

Read more on this story at droitwistandard.co.uk, where you can click through to Emily's fundraising page and donate.

Emily Newman will be braving the London Marathon for a cause close to her heart.



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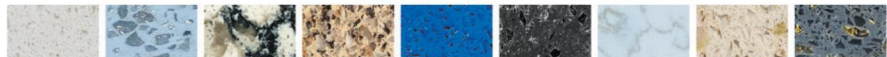
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Luke Heeney, the Primrose Hospice's deputy shop manager and van driver, Hannah Gibbard, the operations director of Kingswood Mobility Group, Ian McRoy, the hospice's retail manager and Jeremy Rolph, Kingswood's CEO. s

SITTING PRETTY: THE PRIMROSE Hospice and Family Support Centre has had brand new sofas donated from Kingswood Mobility Group, the parent company of Willowbrook.

The sofas will go on to be sold to help raise vital funds for local patients living with life-limiting illnesses and families in need.

The latest donation continues a long-standing partnership between Primrose Hospice and Kingswood Mobility Group, which began in 2020.

Over the past six years, they have donated approximately 40 brand new sofas, all of which have been sold through Primrose's Headless Cross and Bromsgrove Home stores.

Ian McRoy, the Primrose Hospice's retail manager, said everyone would like to say a huge thank you to Kingswood Mobility Group for their recent donation.

"The sofas which have been donated will not only help patients and families in our community, but

also provide new furniture for homes throughout our local area."

Jeremy Rolph, CEO of Kingswood Mobility Group, added: "We're incredibly proud to support Primrose Hospice with ongoing furniture donations.

"The work they do for patients and families in our community is truly inspiring and if our furniture can either help create a more comfortable, welcoming environment during such an important time, or be used to help generate additional donations to the hospice, then we're honoured to play a small part.

"Primrose Hospice supports around 1,000 people each year through its clinical and family support services - all provided free of charge.

Contributions from local businesses play a critical role in enabling the hospice to continue offering this vital care. Visit primrosehospice.org for more on the Primrose Hospice, how to support its work, where to donate furniture or to locate its charity shops.

Courses aim to help more take control of finances

OASIS Christian Centre in Redditch, which partners with debt help charity, Christians Against Poverty (CAP), is offering free debt help and Money Coaching courses in 2026 to help people beat the winter blues and take control of their finances.

This comes as the charity has revealed that 5.3million UK adults felt Christmas piled extra financial pressure on already stretched budgets, leaving many anxious about the year ahead.

CAP's Redditch Debt Centre Manager Emma Marshall, said: "Winter often brings extra financial pressure and anxieties, and with household bills continuing to squeeze incomes, unfortunately many people will face a harsh financial reality.

"We know that 33 per cent of adults in the West Midlands have daily anxiety about their finances, and the post-Christmas period can really add to the financial

pressure.

"But we want to offer the people in our community some hope - you do not have to face this alone. Whether you need a full debt solution or just some help to talk through and plan a budget that actually works, free help is available.

"So many people appreciate this face-to-face support - it gives us the chance to sit down, chat, and properly understand what you are going through. Whether you're facing a mountain of unopened letters or just don't know where to start, we can help you gather everything needed to put a plan in place."

"Please, don't let fear stop you from making that call. You do not have to carry this worry alone. There are friendly debt advisors at CAP who are ready to listen and help you change your life."

To learn more about CAP's free services and resources, visit capuk.org or call CAP's free helpline on 0800 328 0006.



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Capital challenge is in memory of Finlay

A BROMSGROVE woman will run this year's TCS London Marathon in memory of Finlay Church who died at the age of 11 in 2015 from glioblastoma.

Sue Warman 45, was inspired to line up in the world famous race on April 26 as her son Ethan, 19, is best friends with Finlay's brother, Kenzie, 20.

Her feat will raise funds for Brain Tumour Research, a cause which has deeply touched her family.

Her commitment follows the Church family's inspirational fundraising, including last year's charity ball held in Finlay's memory on what would have been his 21st birthday.

Sue and her husband Mark sponsored the event through their accountancy business.

Sue began running during the Covid pandemic but never imagined she would run a marathon.

After joining a local running club, she completed the Manchester Marathon in 2025 - a milestone she describes as 'the best day'.

Sue said: "I knew I wanted to push myself again.

"Seeing the London Marathon, I knew how hard it would be to get a place, but I also knew that if I ran it, it had to be for a cause that had truly touched my heart.

"Choosing Brain Tumour

Research felt right.

"Training has gone well with my local running group, the Redditch Community Runners.

"I'm injury-free, and while it will take me out of my comfort zone, I'm ready to give it my best shot.

"Brain tumours are devastating and once you start talking about them, you realise just how common they are."

During his illness, Finlay, from Alvechurch, dedicated himself to fundraising, becoming a Guinness World Record holder for the longest line of teddy bears.

Another world record was set in his memory when friends and family created the longest line of hats on what would have been his 12th birthday.

Since Finlay's death, his mum Penny and her family have worked

tirelessly alongside Brain Tumour Research, raising more than \$250,000 and campaigning for increased funding to improve treatments and find a cure.

Brain tumours are the biggest cancer killer of children and adults under 40, but just one per cent of the national spend on cancer research has been allocated to brain tumour research since records began in 2002.

Penny said: "It means more to us than words can say that Sue is running the London Marathon in Finlay's memory, 10 years after we lost him.

"Knowing people continue to remember Fin and fight for change keeps his spirit alive.

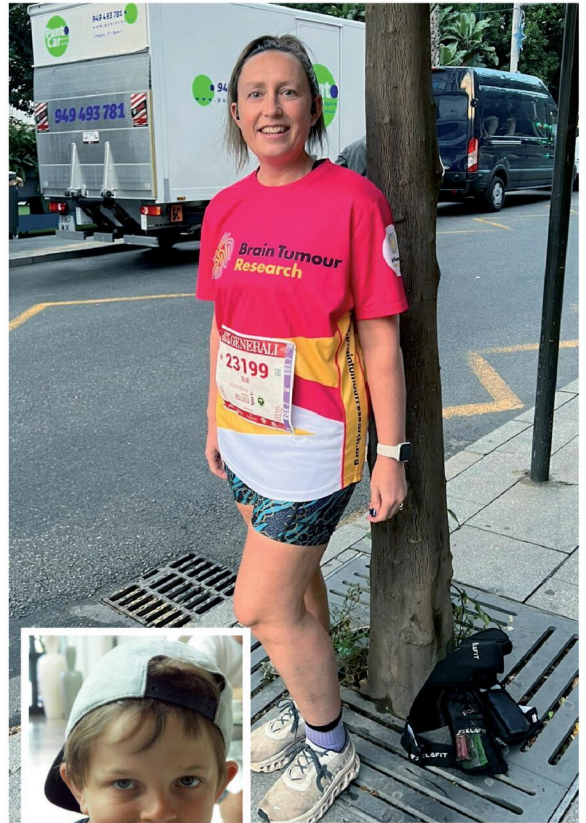
"The funds raised are vital, they help drive the research that could spare other families the heartbreak we've lived through."

Carol Robertson, Brain Tumour Research's national events manager, said: "Sue's determination to take on the London Marathon in Finlay's memory is incredibly moving.

"Community supporters like Sue, and families like the Church family, are the reason progress is possible."

Sue set herself a target of \$3,500 and has already raised more than \$6,000.

Visit justgiving.com/page/sue-warman-2 for more information and to donate to the cause.



Penny and Wayne Church at the Wall of Hope. s

Sue Warman will be lining up in the London Marathon in memory of Finlay Church (LEFT). s

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More urged to go the distance

WALKING enthusiasts across Wythall are being urged to lace up their boots and map out a course to success - and join an incredible Walk 100 Miles in March challenge.

Acorns Children's Hospice is asking people to take on the challenge step-by-step and do something amazing to help seriously ill children across the area.

The hospice provides specialist palliative care for babies, children and young people with life-limiting and life-threatening conditions, and support for their families.

In the past year, the charity has cared for more than 800 children across the West Midlands, and supported over 1,100 families, including those who are bereaved.

Sophie Boreham, Events Manager at Acorns, said: "It's time to Spring into action! Whether you walk a little every day, use the treadmill at the gym, or take on longer distances at the weekend in beautiful countryside, each step you take will mean so much.

"Not only will you get fitter and feel as fresh as a daisy, but every with every mile you'll make a huge difference to children with life-limiting conditions and their families."

The challenge takes place every single day throughout March, giving participants 31 days to complete the goal - and it's free to take part.

Sophie said: "We're asking each walker to be brilliant and raise £100 - that's a pound for every mile walked. This will help us continue



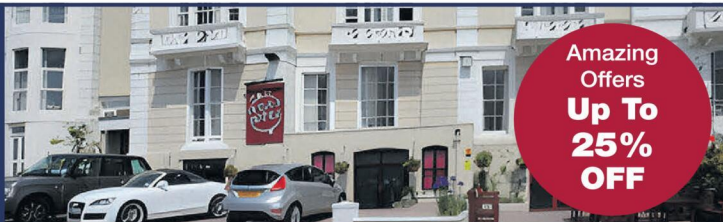
to support children and families through the most difficult times in their lives.

Visit www.acorns.org.uk/100 for more information.

Sophie Boreham, events manager at Acorns is encouraging people to take on the challenge.

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Monday 9th March - Friday 13th March	Was £269 NOW £225pp
Monday 23rd March - Friday 27th March	Was £279 NOW £236pp
Monday 30th March - Friday 3rd April	Was £285 NOW £240pp
Monday 6th April - Monday 10th April	Was £295 NOW £247pp
Monday 13th April - Friday 17th April	Was £295 NOW £247pp
Monday 4th May - Friday 8th May	Was £309 NOW £258pp

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Friday 20th February - Monday 23rd February	Was £259 NOW £212pp
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
Friday 27th March - Monday 30th March	Was £269 NOW £230pp
Friday 3rd April - Monday 6th April (Easter)	Was £315 NOW £269pp
Friday 17th April - Monday 20th April	Was £279 NOW £240pp
Friday 24th April - Monday 27th April	Was £279 NOW £240pp



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Man arrested after town crime spree

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

A MAN arrested for theft in Redditch is also believed to be linked to two burglaries in Droitwich and Drakes Broughton.

A 21-year-old man was held in connection with the house burglaries, where key safes were broken into.

The man was held on suspicion of theft of a motor vehicle in the early hours of Wednesday, in Bordesley, Redditch.

It is believed he may have also carried out the two earlier bur-

glaries in Droitwich and Drakes Broughton, during which two cars were stolen.

Both cars have now been recovered by police and, as the *Standard* went to press, enquiries were continuing and the man remained in police custody.

Det Insp Dave Knight said: "We are continuing to appeal for anyone who may have seen anything suspicious in Droitwich or Drakes Broughton, in the early hours of Tuesday morning, to contact us, particularly those who may have captured footage on CCTV, dash cam or doorbell cameras."

Det Insp Knight said, while the 21-year-old has been arrested, officers believe other people were

involved in the crime spree.

"My message to them is that my team are doing everything to bring them to justice.

"We would still advise people to remove keys from outdoor key safes or reposition them somewhere well-hidden and difficult for criminals to locate. Thieves are exploiting these opportunities to gain easy access to properties, so it's important people do all they can to keep their homes and belongings secure."

People can email droitwichtown.snt@westmercia.police.uk to report any information and submit CCTV, dash cam or doorbell footage.

Alternatively, call 0800 555 111 or visit crimestoppers-uk.org to report information anonymously.



Snowdrops have started appearing in Alcester. Picture by Marcus Mingsins 0626007MMR

Is spring finally on the way?

STUNNING snowdrops have begun to carpet roads around Alcester.

The bright, white plants, which boast more than 2,500 varieties, offer the first signs of spring, indicating the latest change of seasons is on its way.

The little bulbs, best seen in February, often represent hope or purity and are historically linked to Candlemas.

Victorians, however, considered them unlucky, and associated snowdrops with death.

Why not email us at editor@redditchstandard.co.uk or editor@bromsgrovestandard.co.uk with your signs of spring floral pictures, and details of where they were taken?



The Alvechurch FC minibus was stolen while the team played at Tamworth. s

AN APPEAL has been launched to find Alvechurch FC's minibus, which was stolen in Tamworth on February 3.

"Church' had lost a Birmingham Senior Cup tie, 2-1, when the minibus was stolen.

The theft occurred in Tamworth's car park at 8.58pm with the vehicle - a white Ford Transit with partial registration YS64 V - driven off at 9.03pm.

Tamworth FC said, on social media, the club were disappointed Alvechurch FC were targeted.

The thieves arrived in a black Hyundai hatchback and both vehicles left the ground together.

Tamworth added: "We are asking for supporters leaving the ground, and residents on Kettlebrook Road and Glascoate Road, to check any cameras, and doorbell cameras, to see if they pick up the vehicles leaving." Anyone who saw anything suspicious should call Staffordshire Police on 101 or Crimestoppers, on 0800 555 111.

The EDDIEbus needs YOU!

Volunteer drivers required



The EDDIEbus is a Bromsgrove based Charity which was established in 1985 and recently celebrated this year 40 years of service.

We are urgently looking for additional volunteer drivers to drive the EDDIEbus.

The EDDIEbus takes groups of elderly people in the Bromsgrove District for days out. The bus can be driven with a normal car driving licence.

For details and more info contact

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Saturday 25th April	Weston Super Mare.....	£28 Adult £22 Child
Saturday 9th May	Harry Potter Studio Tour.....	£95 Adult £90 Child
Sunday 17th May	RHS Garden Bridgewater with Cream Tea.....	£58
Saturday 20th June	BBC Gardeners World Live/Good Food Show.....	£52 includes entrance to both shows
Sunday 2nd August	Liverpool – The Beatles Story.....	£46
Monday 10th August	Highclere Castle.....	£58
Saturday 19th September	Andre Rieu.....	£135
Sunday 18th October	Westlife 25 The Anniversary World Tour bp pulse LIVE Birmingham.....	£139

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HOLIDAYS 2026

13th March	Springtime in Bognor Regis for Mothers Day. Staying at the Royal Norfolk Hotel, Dinner Bed & Breakfast. Also includes excursion to Worthing.....	4 Days from £245
3rd April	Easter at the Seabank Hotel, Porthcawl, Dinner Bed & Breakfast. Also includes excursion to the Mumbles and Swansea.....	4 Days from £255
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
8th May	May on the English Riviera Staying at the Belgrave Sands, Dinner Bed & Breakfast. Also includes an excursion to Plymouth.....	4 Days from £395
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	All Inclusive 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 Osborne 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
20th July	Warners Alveston Hall, Dinner, Bed & Breakfast and excursions to Nantwich and Chester.....	5 Days from £520

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DURING National Apprenticeship Week, the Government is reminding school leavers the legal age for people to start training to become a train driver will soon be lowered from 20 to 18.

The law change, which comes into force on June 30, will give school-leavers new opportunities to enter rail industry with fantastic chances for progression.

It comes at a pivotal time for the industry, as the government establishes Great British Railways.

The move will open doors for younger people to enter a highly skilled profession at a pivotal time for the industry - by 2030, a quarter of all train drivers are expected to reach retirement age.

With half of train operators now back in public ownership, this new generation of train drivers will help unlock the railway's full potential for passengers and businesses - including freight - that use the network.

This is a key step ahead of the creation of Great British Railways.

Legislation has been laid in Parliament during National Apprenticeship Week, reaffirming the Government's plan to get young people into rewarding industries while tackling

youth unemployment and driving economic growth.

There is a lack of diversity within the rail industry, fewer than four per cent of train drivers are under 30 and only 11 per cent are women.

Rail Minister, Lord Peter Hendy, said lowering the minimum age for train drivers was a 'significant step forward'.

"This change will open doors for those wanting to move straight into the workplace, giving a younger generation the chance to build rewarding careers in the railway, whether that's in freight or passenger services.

"It's a move that will help secure the future of Great British Railways and the wider rail industry and ensure the workforce reflects the energy, talent and ambition of the next generation."

Less than 13 per cent of train drivers are from a minority ethnic background.

It is also hoped lowering the age will create opportunities for young people from different backgrounds.

And it brings the UK in line with other countries, such as Switzerland, Germany and Australia.

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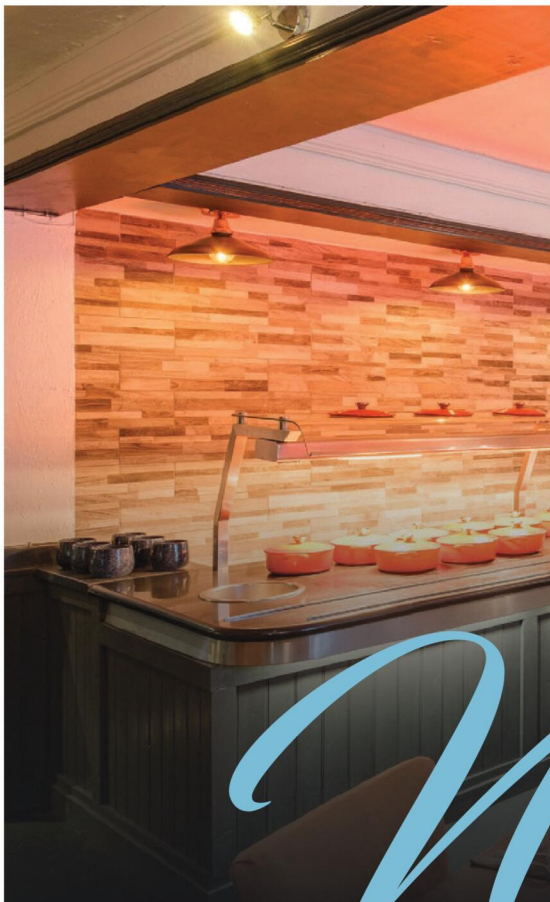
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SUDOKU

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

EASY

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

HARD

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

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.

Illustrators

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

Solutions opposite

CROSSWORD

1		2		3		4		5		6	
7						8					
9								10			11
						12	13				
						14					
15						16					
										17	
18						19		20			
21								22			

ACROSS

- 7. Soil (5)
- 8. Small field (7)
- 9. Rice cooked with cheese and onions (7)
- 10. Pungent (5)
- 12. Infirmary (10)
- 15. Voters (10)
- 18. Perpendicular (5)
- 19. Take prisoner (7)
- 21. Hopelessness (7)
- 22. Move unobtrusively (5)

DOWN

- 1. Go back (10)
- 2. Forward (5)
- 3. Close (4)
- 4. Self-possession (6)
- 5. Lying near (8)
- 6. Messenger (7)
- 11. Lawless (10)
- 13. Outside (8)
- 14. Opposite (7)
- 16. Register (6)
- 17. Odd (5)
- 20. Be approved (4)

Scribble pad

LADDER

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

- Gap
- Spy
- Masculine
- Brewing grain
- Pole



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.

- 782 gives a female bird;
- 3546 gives a young horse;
- 75129 gives a dog.

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.

	2	22	4	5		12			15	14	16	5			
A															
B															
C		1				22	12	22	15	16		7			
D	12	22	2	15	19			10			15	17	11	5	
E															
F			14					3		22		12		5	9
G															
H															
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Z															
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13		
	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26		
		I									N				

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.

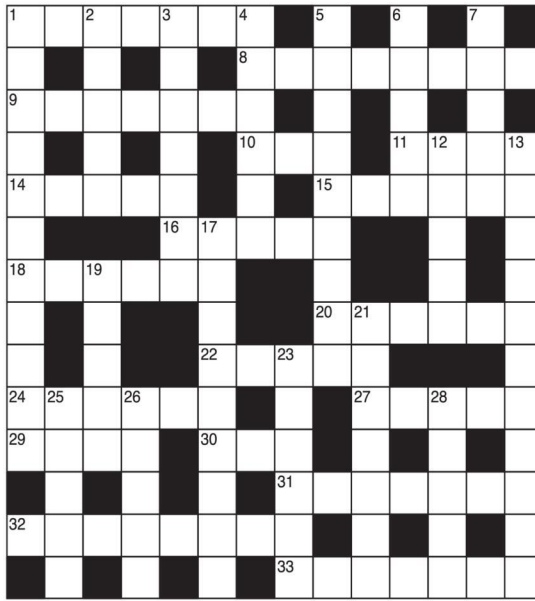


How you rate
 10 words: average 20 words: very good
 15 words: good 25 or more: excellent.

GENERAL KNOWLEDGE CROSSWORD

ACROSS

- A type of mechanical keyboard instrument also called a player piano (7)
- Crossbred dogs, especially of greyhounds with collies (8)
- Country of north-west Africa, bounded on the north and west by the Mediterranean Sea and the Atlantic Ocean (7)
- Small block of metal, etc., for adjusting or tightening a bolt (3)
- A straw or wicker beehive (4)
- Humpless, woolly-haired beast of burden related to the camel (5)
- Gilded bronze used for the mounts of furniture, etc., especially in 18th century France (6)
- The powerful current caused by conflicting tides around Shetland and the Orkneys (5)
- Groups of notes sounded together (6)
- Alkaline substance, e.g. crude potassium carbonate (6)
- A turntable used to traverse a heavy gun (5)
- City of Portugal chiefly famous for the export of fortified wine (6)
- Latin poet whose unfinished epic Pharsalia deals with the civil war between Caesar and Pompey (5)
- French military cap with horizontal peak (4)
- A type of rummy in which a player whose unmatched cards count ten or less may stop a game (3)
- Fishing net consisting of fine net hung loosely between vertical walls of coarser net (7)
- Large crested parrot of the Australian region (8)
- Italian dish of rice cooked with onions and cheese, or in savoury stock (7)



DOWN

- Joe Gargery's uncle in Great Expectations (11)
- The main vessel in the arterial network (5)
- "While the chaffinch sings on the -- bough in England -- now!" (Home-thoughts, from Abroad by Browning) (7)
- In The Tempest, the king of Naples and father of Ferdinand (6)
- The original model from which anything is copied (9)
- A deep fissure, cleft or gap (5)
- Large, wicker basket for containing fish (5)
- Tailless arboreal marsupial of Australia, feeding almost exclusively on the leaves of the gum tree (5)
- Full name of the hooked-nosed, hunched-backed hero of countless puppet shows (11)
- A member of a branch of an East Germanic people who in the 5th century overran Italy under their leader Theodoric the Great (9)
- Lowest deck of a ship which has four or more decks (5)
- Capital of the Loiret departement on the Loire river, France (7)
- The leader of the singing in a church choir (6)
- Superior kind of scented, black tea picked when the leaves are young (5)
- Stacks of hay, corn, etc., especially those regularly built and thatched (5)
- Celestial body with star-like nucleus and "tail" of light (5)

SOLUTIONS

ACROSS: 1 Flanola; 8 Lurchers; 9 Morocco; 10 Nut; 11 Skip; 14 Lama; 15 Omoju; 16 Roost; 18 Chords; 20 Potash; 22 Racer; 24 Oporto; 27 Luan; 29 Kelp; 30 Gin; 31 Tammie; 32 Cockatoo; 33 Rissotto. DOWN: 1 Pumblichehook; 2 Aorta; 3 Orchard; 4 Alonso; 5 Prototype; 6 Chasm; 7 Creel; 12 Koala; 13 Punchedillo; 17 Ostrogh; 19 Orlop; 21 Orlean; 23 Cantor; 25 Peko; 26 Ricks; 28 Comet.

ACROSS: 7 Earth; 8 Paddock; 9 Rissotto; 10 Acri; 12 Feebleness; 15 Electorate; 18 Sheep; 19 Capture; 21 Despair; 22 Steal; Down: 1 Retrogress; 2 Brass; 3 Shunt; 4 Aplomb; 5 Adjucent; 6 Courier; 11 Disorderly; 13 External; 14 Reverse; 16 Record; 17 Queer; 20 Pass.

ACROSS: 1 Flanola; 8 Lurchers; 9 Morocco; 10 Nut; 11 Skip; 14 Lama; 15 Omoju; 16 Roost; 18 Chords; 20 Potash; 22 Racer; 24 Oporto; 27 Luan; 29 Kelp; 30 Gin; 31 Tammie; 32 Cockatoo; 33 Rissotto. DOWN: 1 Pumblichehook; 2 Aorta; 3 Orchard; 4 Alonso; 5 Prototype; 6 Chasm; 7 Creel; 12 Koala; 13 Punchedillo; 17 Ostrogh; 19 Orlop; 21 Orlean; 23 Cantor; 25 Peko; 26 Ricks; 28 Comet.

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Wordwheel Pathfinder
Raymond Briggs, Tove Jansson, Anthony Browne, Roger Hargreaves, Maurice Sendak, Axel Scheffler, Bruce Ingman, Dr Seuss, Nick Sharratt, Quentin Blake, Kate Greenaway, Shirley Hughes, Chris Riddell, Babette Cole, Kory Paul, Beatrix Potter, Jan Pienkowski, Eric Carle, Janet Ahlberg.

Niner
UNCLOTHED

General Knowledge Crossword

ACROSS: 7 Earth; 8 Paddock; 9 Rissotto; 10 Acri; 12 Feebleness; 15 Electorate; 18 Sheep; 19 Capture; 21 Despair; 22 Steal; Down: 1 Retrogress; 2 Brass; 3 Shunt; 4 Aplomb; 5 Adjucent; 6 Courier; 11 Disorderly; 13 External; 14 Reverse; 16 Record; 17 Queer; 20 Pass.

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

Ladder
Hold, Hole, Mole, Male, Malt, Mast, Fast.

Hard

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

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

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

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.

For even more details call **01527 588688**
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managing director of Nissan GB, said: "This survey uses feedback from real-world customers about the reliability of their cars, and it shows consistently strong performance from the Nissan LEAF."

"For customers new to this technology and perhaps considering an electric vehicle purchase for the first time, knowing it is going to be reliable is very reassuring."

"We know our customers love LEAF, so it's great to see this reflected in this."

The ground-breaking Nissan LEAF was first launched in the UK in 2011, with UK production starting in Sunderland in 2013.

The second-generation model, featuring more technology and increased range, arrived in 2018. This means there's plenty of choice of used models for customers, making it an accessible route into EV ownership.

Meanwhile, the all-new model - featuring a range of up to 386 miles on a single charge - arrives in Nissan showrooms across the UK imminently.

Proudly built in Britain, the new car also qualifies for the full Electric Car Grant discount of £3,750.

Martin Binney, Operations Director of Warranty Solutions Group comments: "The LEAF's long-

established electric drivetrain, straightforward engineering and proven track record for durability have all contributed to its standout reliability, continuing to translate into dependable ownership and fewer faults."

Warranty Solutions Group (WSG) is the UK's fastest-growing warranty and aftersales specialist, providing bespoke warranty, insurance and data solutions for dealer groups, independent dealers and OEMs.

Martin added: "While some EVs are proving extremely reliable, when faults do occur the cost of repair can

be significant - particularly for premium models and vehicles

"For consumers, this means looking beyond fuel savings and factoring repair severity into the total cost of ownership."

"For dealers and warranty providers, it reinforces why EV warranty cover is no longer optional, but essential to protect customers and maintain confidence as electric adoption continues to grow."

James Taylor,

THE NISSAN LEAF has again been named the UK's most reliable used electric car, following a comprehensive study of electric vehicle (EV) repairs across the country.

The analysis by Warranty Solutions Group took in a sample of 1,000 real-world repair claims paid by the company on EV warranties issued between January and December 2025.

The resulting data highlights significant differences in both fault rates and repair costs across the UK's most popular electric models - offering valuable insights for drivers and dealers alike.

The Nissan LEAF topped the reliability rankings with an impressively low claim rate of just 1.52 per cent, making it a reassuring choice for EV buyers seeking peace of mind.

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VALENTINE'S DAY



To the Lady of The Manor

After 40 years I love you very much.
Happy Valentines Day
Lots of Love
From, *Geordie, Meka & Limpy*
xxx

DEATHS

DAVIS Brian

Aged 91 years
Passed away at Tutnall Hall Nursing Home on 14th January 2026.
A much-loved Husband, Father, Grandfather and Great-Grandfather.
Brian will be greatly missed by all of his family and friends.
A service to celebrate Brian's life will take place at Redditch Crematorium on Wednesday 25th February 2026 at 1.15pm.
Donations if so desired to British Heart Foundation may be sent to Thomas Brothers, The Funeral Directors, Birchfield House, 494 Evesham Road Redditch, B97 5JF.
Tel: 01527 547777
Thank you

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DEATHS

KING

Ann Gweneth (nee Rickards) "Anni"



14/10/1967 - 13/01/2026

Ann very sadly passed away on 13th January 2026, aged 58 years.
She will be dearly missed by her husband Alan, daughters Rianne and Lucy, son Owen, grandchildren Maeve and Bailey. Her sisters Denise, Tracy and Sue, brother David, niece Kelly, nephews, Paul, Mark, Ollie, Alfie & Theodore, all her family and everyone who had the pleasure of knowing her.
Anni courageously fought Ovarian Cancer for 3 years, (despite multiple setbacks), head on with positivity, humour, love and to make as many daft and enjoyable memories for me and our children Rianne, Lucy & Owen.
Ann's sheer bloody stubbornness to spend time with us meant she was with us for a year longer than the prognosis, meaning she got to meet, play, spoil and spend time with our two grandchildren Maeve and Bailey, we will be forever grateful for this additional time.
Ann deteriorated extremely quickly and passed away as she wanted at home surrounded by her family and with no pain.
To celebrate Ann's life & say our final farewells, the family would be honoured by your presence on Monday 16th February at Midday (12pm), Waseley Hills Crematorium, New Inns Lane, Rubery, B45 9TS.
We would love for you to join us afterwards for refreshments and to share memories of Ann at Hillscourt, Rose Hill, Lickey, B45 8RS.
(Please feel free to share details with anyone who knew Ann or the family).
Flowers are welcome or if preferred donations can be gifted to Ovacone (Ovarian Cancer) details will be available on the day.

DEATHS

ADAMS

Brian Thomas

Sadly passed away on Thursday 15th January 2026, aged 85 years.
Dearly loved and missed by his wife Dorothy, his children Linda and Michael and all of his family.
A service to celebrate Brian's life will take place at Redditch Crematorium on Monday 23rd February 2026 at 1.15 p.m.
Donations if desired to Crohn's and Colitis may be sent to Thomas Brothers, The Funeral Directors, Birchfield House, 494 Evesham Road, Redditch, B97 5JF.
01527 547777
Thank You.

DEATHS

HALL Olive Louise

Aged 86 Years
Passed away on Saturday 31st January 2026 at The Alexandra Hospital.
Reunited with her beloved Husband Albert. Loved and Loving Mother of Richard, Philip and James, Mother in Law to Louise and Rachel. Grandmother to Kimberley, Matthew and Joshua. Great Grandmother to Lacey, Cobey, Sonney, Louie, Lucy and Charlie.
Sadly missed by family and friends
The funeral service for Olive will take place at Emmanuel Church, Redditch on Thursday 26th February 2026 at 1.30 p.m followed by committal at Westall Park Burial Ground.
Family flowers only please, donations if desired to The Garden Suite at The Alexandra Hospital and Cancer Research UK, may be sent to Thomas Brothers, The Funeral Directors, Birchfield House, 494 Evesham Road, Redditch, B97 5JF
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Thank You

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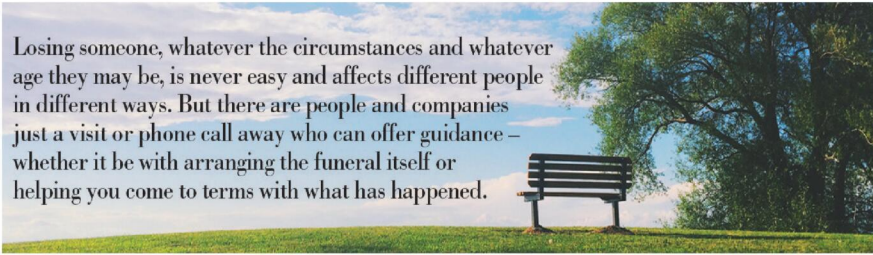
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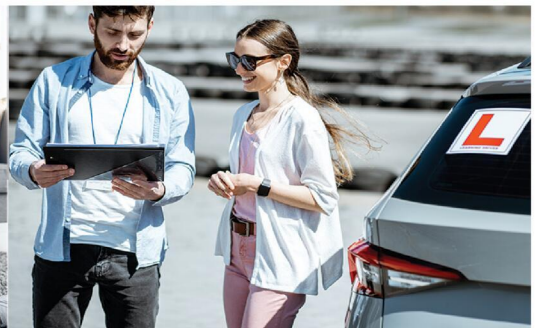


Losing someone, whatever the circumstances and whatever age they may be, is never easy and affects different people in different ways. But there are people and companies just a visit or phone call away who can offer guidance – whether it be with arranging the funeral itself or helping you come to terms with what has happened.



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Further details and application forms are available on the School website

www.bromsgrove-school.co.uk

Closing date for all applications

23rd February 2026

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

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Monday to Friday 8.30 a.m. - 3.30 p.m., term time only. Fixed term ends 31.08.32.

Full details and application forms are available on the school website: www.winterfoldhouse.co.uk

Closing date for all applications is Friday 13 February 2026.

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

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- Standard CoventryObserver.co.uk
- Evesham Observer
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The ideal candidate will have retail experience, strong leadership and organisational skills, and a passion for creating a welcoming customer experience.

Closing date: Sunday 1st March 2026

Interviews: Tuesday 10th March 2026

To apply, please email your completed application form to hr@stratford-upon-avon.org

or post to: **Hon HR Officer, Holy Trinity Parish Centre, Old Town, Stratford-upon-Avon CV37 6BG.**

Application forms and further details are available here: <https://www.stratford-upon-avon.org/staff-vacancies>

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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:

B4090 ALCESTER HEATH/SALT WAY, ALCESTER
Order Effect: Road Closed to vehicular traffic from Coughton Lane to the County Boundary.

Reason for Order: Carriageway patching and associated works, 09.30hrs-15.30hrs.
Order Commences: 20 February 2026 for up to 18 months.

Anticipated Completion: 21 February 2026.

Access & Diversion: B4090 Salt Way, A441 (The Ridgeway, Evesham Road), A422 (Arrow Lane, Main Street), A435 Alcester Bypass, B4090 Alcester Heath and vice versa.
Contractor: Balfour Beatty, Tel: 03452 415 302.

REDDITCH ROAD, STUDLEY

Order Effect: Road closed to vehicular traffic from Redditch Rd to High St.

Reason for Order: To safely enable gas replacement works.
Order Commences: 16 February 2026 for up to 18 months.

Anticipated Completion: 2 March 2026.

Access & Diversion: Redditch Road, Studley Road, Washford Drive, Old Forge Drive, Ickfield Street Drive, Birmingham Road, Priory Square and vice versa.
Contractor: Headway TM, Tel: 07850 517 067.

GREEN LANE, STUDLEY

Order Effect: Road closed to vehicular traffic.

Reason for Order: Lining works to repair defects in sewer line within manhole chamber.
Order Commences: 16 February 2026 for up to 18 months.

Anticipated Completion: 16 February 2026.

Access & Diversion: Green Lane, Brickyard Lane, Cycleway from Brickyard Lane to County Boundary, Kilm Close, The Slough and vice versa.
Contractor: Sapphire Utility Solutions, Tel: 07775 714 473.

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

A435 BIRMINGHAM ROAD, COUGHTON, STUDLEY

Order Effect: Road Closed to vehicular traffic between the entrance to the Kings Court Hotel and the entrance to the Throckmorton Arms Public House.

Reason for Order: Carriageway resurfacing and associated works, overnight 20.00hrs-06.00hrs weeknights only.
Order Commences: 3 March 2026 for up to 18 months.

Anticipated Completion: 11 March 2026.

Access & Diversion: A435, A422, A441, A448, A435 and vice versa. Access/Egress to/from adjoining roads will be restricted whilst works are in progress.
Contractor: Balfour Beatty, Tel: 03452 415 302.

D5394 BLEACHFIELD STREET, ALCESTER

Order Effect: Road closed to vehicular traffic from Stratford Road/Swan Street to Flax Close.

Reason for Order: Drainage maintenance and associated works, 09.30hrs-15.30hrs.
Order Commences: 6 March 2026 for up to 18 months.

Anticipated Completion: 6 March 2026.

Access & Diversion: Bleachfield Street, Newport Drive, Evesham Street, Swan Street Roundabout, Swan Street and vice versa.
Contractor: Balfour Beatty, Tel: 03452 415 302.

CHURCH ROAD, ULLENHALL

Order Effect: Road closed to vehicular traffic.

Reason for Order: To replace a telegraph pole.
Order Commences: 5 March 2026 for up to 18 months.

Anticipated Completion: 5 March 2026.

Access & Diversion: Church Road, Church Hill, Henley Road, Barrells Park, Grimshaw Hill, Green Lanes, Oldberrow Lane, Oldberrow Road and vice versa.
Contractor: M J Quinn, Tel: 01543 547 118.

B4089 KINWARTON ROAD/CAPTAINS HILL/SCHOOL ROAD, KINWARTON/GREAT ALNE & D5355 COUGHTON FIELDS LANE, KINWARTON

Order Effect: Road closed to vehicular traffic as follows: Kinwarton Road/Captains Hill/School Road, Kinwarton/Great Alne closed between the junctions with Kinwarton Farm Road and Spenral Lane. Coughton Fields Lane, Kinwarton closed for a distance of 75 metres from its junction with Captains Hill/School Road.

Reason for Order: Carriageway resurfacing and associated works, 08.00hrs-17.00hrs weekend only.
Order Commences: 28 February 2026 for up to 18 months.

Anticipated Completion: 1 March 2026.

Access & Diversion: Main Diversion: B4089 (Henley Road, Alcester Road, Wootton Rise, Alcester Road), A3400, A4189, A435, B4089 (Arden Road, Tything Road, Kinwarton Farm Road and vice versa. Access/Egress to Coughton Fields Lane will be via A435 Birmingham Road whilst works are in progress.
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 13 Feb 2026

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PUBLIC NOTICES

PUBLIC NOTICES

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL & REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL

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25/01512/OUT ADVSTD FP FPS MAJ
Site: Land West of Whitford Road, Bromsgrove, Worcestershire.

Proposal: Outline planning permission for up to 125 dwellings (Use Class C3), together with site access and highway works, green infrastructure including sustainable drainage, ecological habitats, children's play areas and amenity green space, and ancillary works. All matters reserved for future determination except for the means of access from Whitford Road.

26/00015/OUT DEP ADVSTD MAJ
Site: Land At Alcester Road, Lickey End, Worcestershire.

Proposal: Erection of up to 85 dwellings with public open space, landscaping, sustainable drainage system (SuDS), access from the highway and other associated works. All matters reserved except for means of access from Alcester Road.

The proposed development does not accord with the provisions of the development plan in force in the area to which the application relates.

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

Comments can be submitted online, via email to neuplan@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.

PUBLIC NOTICES

Goods Vehicle Operator's Licence

GJS Landscaping Limited trading as GJS Landscaping Ltd of 93 Enfield Road, Hunt End, Redditch, Worcestershire, B97 5NE is applying for a licence to use Bransons Cross Farm, Beoley Lane, Beoley, B98 9DP as an operating centre for 1 goods vehicles and 1 trailers.

Owners or occupiers of land (including buildings) near the operating centre(s) who believe that their use or enjoyment of that land would be affected, should make written representations to the Traffic Commissioner at Quarry House, Quarry Hill, Leeds, LS2 7UE, stating their reasons, within 21 days of this notice. Representatives must at the same time send a copy of their representations to the applicant at the address given at the top of this notice. A Guide to Making Representations is available at www.gov.uk/object-hgv-operator-licence.

PUBLIC NOTICES

Goods Vehicle Operator's Licence

Lee Knight and Steven Knight trading as Top Ents UK of 1 Broadwas Close, Redditch, Worcs, B98 8QB is applying to change an existing licence to keep an extra 1 goods vehicle and extra 1 trailer at the operating centre at Unit 17, Brockhill Farm, Seafield Lane, Redditch, B98 9BX currently as an existing operating centre for 2 goods vehicles and 1 trailer.

Owners or occupiers of land (including buildings) near the operating centre(s) who believe that their use or enjoyment of that land would be affected, should make written representations to the Traffic Commissioner at Quarry House, Quarry Hill, Leeds, LS2 7UE, stating their reasons, within 21 days of this notice. Representatives must at the same time send a copy of their representations to the applicant at the address given at the top of this notice. A Guide to Making Representations is available at www.gov.uk/object-hgv-operator-licence.

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Spa firmly in title picture with 10 games remaining

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

FOOTBALL: ANDY Crowther admits he could not have asked for more from his squad with Droitwich Spa top of the table with 10 games left to play this season.

The Saltmen have enjoyed an impressive first season at Step Five and find themselves firmly in the Hellenic League Premier Division title race.

Spa sit two points clear of Roman Glass St George at the top of the table but the remaining three teams in the play-off places all have games in hand on the Saltmen.

As many as six clubs, including Droitwich, find themselves in the title race with 10 league games left to play.

And Crowther anticipates an exciting end to the campaign with lots of twists and turns expected.

Crowther said: "I couldn't have asked for any more. We're sitting top with 10 games left to play.

"There's a few teams that can catch us but it's going to be an exciting end to the season.

"The management team and the lads are looking forward to the run-in.

"Every team at the top has got to play each other so there's going to be

a lot more twists and turns. "The biggest thing we've got to do is just concentrate on each game.

"If we can carry on the form we're in at the moment, who knows what can happen."

Spa could not build on their most recent victory against Cribbs after their scheduled weekend fixture against Lydney Town fell foul of the weather.

The Saltmen return to action against divisional rivals Fairford Town in the Marsh Challenge Cup this weekend.

Droitwich completed a league double over Fairford, winning both games by a single goal.

And Crowther is expecting another tough encounter against the Gloucestershire side this weekend.

Crowther added: "It is a bit frustrating because you just want to continue the form, especially playing at home.

"Ideally you want to get the points on the board but there's a couple of players coming back [from injury] who get another week of training before the next game.

"Fairford have had two very good results recently, it shows how dangerous they're going to be.

"It's a cup game, we're not going into it lightly, we're going out to win it, especially at the quarter-final stage.

"It's going to be a very tough game."

Crowther managed his 200th game in charge of Droitwich against Fairford

in December last year. The Spa boss has guided the club to two promotions and two play-off finals in his five seasons at the helm.

And Crowther praised the continuously evolving infrastructure of the club and described Spa as a 'little family'.

Crowther said: "The club have been preparing for something like this [progressing through the divisions] with everything that's been going on off the field.

"To be involved with it and the majority of the lads who have been here for five or six years, it's been brilliant and long may it continue.

"In this day and age, you don't really get a lot of managers or players sticking around that long.

"There's a lot of players who have been here a long time now and it just shows that the club is doing everything right on the pitch and off the pitch.

"The respect between myself and the players is there and that's why we've been so successful over the last four or five years.

"I always say it's like a little family and it always has been.

"We've added the right players to that family and we're continuing to show the form we have over the last four years."

Droitwich host Fairford on Saturday, February 14 with kick-off at 3pm at the King George Playing Fields.



Gaudet Luce nominated at England Golf Awards

GAUDET Luce Golf Club has been shortlisted for the club of the year award at the 2026 England Golf Awards.

The award recognises clubs for community impact, inclusive growth and innovative player development.

The club's 'swing into golf' programme has introduced more than 250 new golfers to the sport in the space of just seven months.

Designed to remove barriers and make the sport accessible to complete beginners, the programme offers a friendly, jargon-free, three-level structure.

Participants begin with a free four-week Level One introduction before progression to Level Two (technique) and Level Three (on-course play).

The clear pathway of the programme bridges the gap between the driving range and independent play, helping newcomers build confidence and skills.

More than 55 participants have already advanced to Level Three.

The club also appointed a dedicated golf participation and events manager, ensuring every new player receives ongoing support and a seamless introduction to club life.

Gaudet Luce's open-door policy allows non-members to practice or play while short-game areas remain free to use.

The Par Three course at the club also hosts disc golf and footgolf.

A 'SafeGolf' accredited club, Gaudet Luce have added family-friendly activities to the club's calendar including a ladies fashion show and Halloween night.

The club hope to launch Level Four of the 'swing into golf' programme in March while continuing to invest in their facilities.

The England Golf awards take place at Manchester Deansgate on Tuesday, March 3.

Gaudet Luce Golf Club has been shortlisted for an award. Picture courtesy of England Golf.

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