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Parents praise staff who 'saved our son's life'

by **Tristan Harris**
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PARENTS from Ombersley have praised staff at Worcestershire Royal Hospital for 'saving their little boy's life'.

Zoe and Matthew Higgins rushed their three-week-old son Thomas to hospital when he quickly became seriously unwell, following an infection before Christmas.

Thomas was admitted to the Riverbank children's ward, where he required ongoing care, including support from a CPAP (Continuous Positive Airway Pressure) machine to deliver oxygen to help him breathe.

Despite having to spend Christmas Day in hospital while Thomas remained under close observation, the Riverbank ward team ensured the Higgins family were able to share precious moments together during an incredibly frightening time.

Zoe said: "Our other little one came to visit, and we all had the most special day we could."

Matthew added: "We even had visits from Father Christmas and presents at the end of Thomas' cot."

However, just days later, Thomas' condition worsened significantly and the hospital's critical care team were called.

Zoe said: "They told us he might have to be put in an induced coma and transferred to the Birmingham Intensive Care Unit."

Instead, ward staff tried further increas-

ing the pressure and oxygen percentage delivered through the CPAP machine to keep his airways open and support his life-threatening breathing problems.

Thomas gradually began to improve and was then able to come off the CPAP treatment.

After several more days of monitoring, he was finally discharged home with his relieved and grateful parents.

Zoe said: "At our lowest point, the doctors and nurses did absolutely everything they could - not just to care for Thomas, but to support us emotionally as well."

"The staff were amazing and I can't thank them enough."

"They saved my little boy's life and we will be forever grateful."

Reflecting on their time in hospital over Christmas, Matthew added: "The support we received from the ward team kept us going through such a difficult time."

"They saved Thomas' life, kept us all sane, and made sure our other son felt supported and involved."

"They have been amazing and are a real credit to the NHS."

The ward manager for the Riverbank children's ward at Worcestershire Royal Hospital said: "Supporting both children and their families to feel cared for during incredibly difficult moments is at the heart of what we do."

"We are delighted that Thomas made such a good recovery and wish him and his family all the very best for their future."



Proud big brother Jack with Thomas. Picture by Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust. s

Vehicles damaged

POLICE are investigating after a number of cars were damaged in Droitwich over the weekend.

All the incidents happened over the weekend, between Saturday night and Sunday morning on Homestead, in the Chawson area.

Officers are urging witnesses or anyone with information to come forward and get in touch.

Insp Lisa Hornberger, for Droitwich Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT), said: "We understand the local community are concerned after a spate of criminal damage over the weekend."

"SNT officers have been out in the area today carrying out their enquiries and have already spoken to a number of people, including the victims, but are keen to hear from anyone else who might be able to help."

She urged witnesses or anyone with CCTV, Ring doorbell footage or information on the incidents to call police on 101 or Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

Information can also be sent to: droitwichwest.snt@west-mercia.police.uk via email.

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A plan for 110 homes in Wythall has been submitted to Bromsgrove District Council.

New 110-home plan sparks opposition

A PLANNING application has been submitted for 110 homes in Wythall.

Homebuilder Taylor Wimpey has outlined plans for a variety of new homes with 'extensive' green public open space on land west of Alcester Road.

Of the 110 proposed homes, 50 per cent would be affordable, including homes for social rent and shared ownership properties.

The proposals also include new public open spaces with two existing ponds in the northern part of the site.

Stephen Swinscoe, Taylor Wimpey's strategic land regional director, said: "We are grateful to everyone who took part in our consultation in autumn 2025 and we considered all of the feedback we received during this process. Proposals include a range of high-quality energy-efficient homes, providing opportunities for home ownership for first time buyers, second time buyers and downsizers in a desirable and well-connected location."

This comes as Bromsgrove District Council consulted on a draft Development Strategy to control long-term growth in the area from June to October 2025. Wythall was earmarked to take 1,295 houses across three sites

- and south of Houndsfield Lane land east of Lea Green Lane and land south of Station Road.

The influx of housing has caused outrage among villagers, with many saying local infrastructure will not cope. It also comes amidst calls from Bromsgrove MP Bradley Thomas for the government to reduce the housing target it set for Bromsgrove district.

Mr Thomas met with Matthew Pennycook, the Minister for Housing and Planning alongside Bromsgrove District Council leader, Coun Karen May.

During the meeting, the MP claimed it was unfair Bromsgrove's housing target had increased when Birmingham's decreased by 31 per cent.

He also said the formula used to decide the housing target was flawed.

"The Government's affordability ratio shows the relationship between local house prices and jobs available in that locality.

"However, this does not accurately reflect the reality of districts such as Bromsgrove, where many people commute into major cities where there are higher paying jobs.

"This puts upward pressure on Bromsgrove house prices and makes the local income figure artificially low

- both of which incorrectly drive up our housing allocation."

Mr Thomas said the meeting was his last attempt to get the increase in house numbers for Bromsgrove reversed. I'm leaving no stone unturned in the fight to save our precious green belt. Once it's gone, it's gone.

"I told him my constituents and I aren't NIMBYs.

"We all accept the need for new houses, but not on the scale the government is imposing on Bromsgrove.

Coun Adam Kent, who represents Wythall on Worcestershire County Council, has organised a public meeting so people can discuss the development sites earmarked for Wythall, develop a strategy to deal with them and assess the implications of a lack of infrastructure..

He said the event - at 7pm on March 19 - was also aimed at developing a strategy for the public to deal with them and understanding the implications of a lack of infrastructure.

Mr Thomas will also be attending the event and a venue will be confirmed at a later date.

Visit the Bromsgrove planning portal at: bromsgrove.gov.uk and use the reference number '25/01503/OUT' to view the full plans.

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See page **30**



There are concerns the Raven Hotel poses a risk to public safety. Picture by Stuart Webb. s

Council aiming to rectify hotel

by Ryan Smith
ryan.smith@bullivanmedia.com

ACTION is being planned against the owner of Droitwich's former Raven Hotel, to try and get the most dangerous sections of the building demolished as concerns grow about its deteriorating condition.

Wychavon District Council is preparing evidence to put before a court to request an order requiring the owner to demolish the non-historic parts of the building which structural engineers have identified as unstable.

The building was badly damaged by fire in August and structural surveys at the time confirmed, while some of the oldest parts of the building could potentially be saved, others – those most at risk of collapse – needed to be removed as soon as possible.

Public safety measures were put in place, including closing the road at the front of the property and installing metal fencing around the site to create a buffer zone.

However Wychavon council claimed the owner of the Raven had so far failed to carry out demolition work.

The latest assessment by Wychavon's building control team warned demolition of the most dangerous sections was now essential on safety grounds and the council

is preparing the evidence needed to support a request to court, which will be made in the next few weeks.

Discussions are continuing with partners including Historic England, the Worcestershire Building Preservation Trust, Droitwich Place Board, Droitwich Town Council, Droitwich Preservation Trust, Droitwich Civic Society and The Raven Heartbeat Group, to try and find a long-term solution.

It is the second time Wychavon has been forced to take legal action over the former Raven Hotel to protect the public.

In November 2024, the council was granted permission from a court to carry out urgent safety work after sections of the roof fell into the road. Efforts to recover the cost of that work from the owner are ongoing.

Wychavon District Council leader, councillor Richard Morris, said: "It's disappointing we have once again got to step in to force the owner to meet their most basic legal responsibilities.

"We have given them every chance to make the building safe but, typically, have seen no action. We now have no option but to go through the courts.

"Our priority is, and always will be, public safety. If the owner won't act, we will.

"I share residents' frustrations we are in this situation but we're determined to push forward and work with our partners to find a long-term solution which will deliver the best outcome for the people of Droitwich Spa."

Ensembles assemble for gig

BROMSGROVE School is holding a concert for a trio of Midlands ensembles next weekend.

Music lovers from across the district are invited to enjoy an evening of music by Alcester Victoria Silver Band, The Kidderminster Valentines and the Warwickshire and Coventry Youth Brass Band.

The concert will be held at Bromsgrove School's Routh Hall at 2pm tomorrow (Saturday) and the programme will feature pieces selected from musicals, the charts, classical and original brass music.

Jane Richardson, chairman of the Warwickshire and Coventry Youth Brass Band, said: "This concert is a wonderful example of different ensembles coming together to celebrate music making across different generations.

"Performing alongside Alcester Victoria Silver Band and the Kidderminster Valentines, this is an exciting opportunity for our young players and a great experience for the audience."

Admission to the concert costs £13 for adults and £7.50 for under-16s.

Visit the Bromsgrove School box office at: bromsgrove-school.co.uk/boxoffice/ or call 01527 579679 (extension 616) for tickets and information.

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Bloom contest organisers tell of rain problems

THE ORGANISERS of Astwood Bank in Bloom have spoken about the issues caused by the constant rain.

Astwood Bank was last week named as just one of three areas in the UK where it has rained for more than 43 consecutive days.

The statistic, along with the other two areas - North Wyke in Devon and Cardinham in Cornwall, were revealed on social media by the Met Office.

The forecaster said: "Feel like the rain hasn't stopped?"

"For some places, it really hasn't." It then listed the trio which were three days ahead of the next high-

est consecutive-day rainfall areas.

Sam Mulhall from Astwood Bank in Bloom said: "The rain is not letting up."

"We hit the national news last year when we were the hottest place in the UK during a heatwave - it's almost like we have our own microclimate here in Astwood Bank."

She added Astwood Bank Carnival took place last year, during the heatwave and a lot of people struggled with the heat - especially youngsters as the adults battled to find them sufficient shade.

Sam added the extreme weather affected the plants, as well as the residents.

"It puts a lot of stress on the plants - the leaves on some of them are rotting and there is a high risk to them."

"Astwood Bank in Bloom started 10 years ago with 12 volunteers and we now have more than 50 members, although still a core number of 12."

"Our work does depend heavily on the weather - we have so many outdoor activities, including planting out

the planters."

Sam and, fellow in bloom volunteer Alyson, have been out and about recently, planning for the Astwood Bank Open Gardens event which is returning to the village for the first time in three years.

The event is triennial and also alternates between Feckenham and Cookhill.

"The Open Gardens takes place on June 13 and 14 and, ahead of that, myself and Alyson have been visiting gardens, checking out what they will be offering and, equally importantly, that they are safe and secure places."

"It has been tough with all this rain - we have just had to put on our coats, grab our umbrellas and get on with it."

According to folklore, it is said if it rains on St Swithin's Day, it is supposed to rain for 40 days and nights - but that is later on in the year on July 15.

Anyone wanting to find out more about Astwood Bank and the events can visit astwood-bankcg.co.uk or: facebook.com/AstwoodBankCarnival



Millie, ten, Rosie, 15 months, and Imogen, five, are looking forward to having an eggs-cellent time at the Tardebigge Big Breakfast in aid of Cancer Research UK and the Primrose Hospice. Picture by Marcus Mingins 0726003MMR

An excellent start

THERE will be brilliant bacon, excellent eggs and super sausages when this year's Tardebigge Big Breakfast returns from 8.30am to 11.30am on March 7.

The popular annual event, organised in conjunction with the Bromsgrove Farmers' Club, will be held at Tardebigge Village Hall.

The eggs-travaganza, along with a tombola, will raise funds for Cancer Research UK and the Primrose Hospice. To date, £70,283.86 has been generated for the two causes.

Every year, hundreds of people flock

to the event, including cyclists, runners, hikers and others dropping in on their way from A to B.

Helen Hiron, one of the event organisers, said she was looking forward to seeing as many people as possible.

"Please spread the word to family and friends - we'd love to see you all there."

"Also, if you are not able to come but would like to make a donation, please send me a message."

For more on the event, to donate tombola prizes or contribute to the cause, call Helen on 07976 573306.

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Bromsgrove's Nailers Yard project will be getting a cash boost. Picture by ONE Creative Environments. s

Town centre cash is now nailed-on

by Ryan Smith
ryan.smith@bullivantmedia.com

THE NAILERS Yard development in Bromsgrove has been given a more-than-£2million cash boost.

Some £2,425,000 of funding has been secured from the Enterprise Zone Regeneration Investment Fund (EZRF).

The Nailers Yard project is intended to transform the former Market Hall site into a new commercial building offering office and a ground-floor restaurant space plus a rooftop food and drink outlet.

At a Bromsgrove District Council meeting in December, councillor Charlie Hotham said the development appeared to be turning into Bromsgrove's very own HS2, describing it as 'a vanity project with a huge overspend'.

Bromsgrove council leader Coun Karen May, at the time said the £2.425million was expected to be made available via Birmingham City Council as Bromsgrove's allocation of funding from the now-defunct Greater Birmingham and Solihull local enterprise partnership (LEP).

Speaking after release of the funds, Coun May said: "The Nailers Yard project and the opportunities it will bring for the residents, businesses and visitors to the town are many, offering high-quality spaces, not only to work but also socialise in the heart of the town. Over £2 million in funding from the EZRF means that we are one step closer to opening the doors.

"I am increasingly looking forward to being able to welcome people from far and wide into this new space we've created for the benefit of the town, the night economy and local business."

The cost for Nailers Yard was

estimated to be £10,399,000 in 2021 but, as of December, it was estimated to be £15,004,552.

At December's council meeting, Coun May said the cost increase to the Bromsgrove council taxpayer, from the authority's bank account, was £165,000 as matters stand, not £5,343,000, as Coun Hotham suggested.

The EZRF was designed to ensure that all local authorities in the former LEP's region could share in the success of the enterprise zone, and to stimulate development, attract investment and create jobs.

The project is a central part of Bromsgrove's wider regeneration programme for the town centre.

The project is scheduled for completion in May.

See more on this story at bromsgrovestandard.co.uk and click the link there for more information on the project.

Police federation treasurer spent funds on own lifestyle

A FORMER West Mercia Police Federation (WMPF) treasurer and secretary from Droitwich has been found guilty of 15 counts of fraud after abusing his position.

Jamie Harrison, 55, was convicted over the misappropriation of federation members' funds and abuse of hospitality.

A five-week trial at Hereford Crown Court heard how Harrison abused his role to misuse around £13,500 of funds between 2012 and 2018.

Concerns were first raised to the national Police Federation in June 2018.

Based on the allegations, the federation commissioned auditors to review the financial accounts of the West Mercia branch and Harrison was suspended from his position as federation secretary and treasurer.

His role in the organisation meant he was responsible for protecting the financial interests of the branch's members.

The investigation identified Harrison repeatedly abused his position by using petty cash to fund his personal spending on food, alcohol and entertainment, and used fellow officers' membership funds to pay for four-star hotel stays, meals and family trips.

He abused his position again by falsifying timesheets to receive and accept pay for full working shifts even though text messages proved he was abroad watching rugby and on holiday.

Fraudulent

More than 100 fraudulent financial claims were identified during the course of the investigation.

Following the verdict, Det Supt Tony Garner, who led the investigation, said Harrison chose to act for himself.

"He took advantage of the position as treasurer and secretary within the Police federation to use member's funds for his own gain,"

said Det Supt Garner. "This was a betrayal of the trust placed in him by the public and his colleagues.

"His actions amounted to criminal behaviour and an investigation was carried out, without fear or favour, as the public would rightly expect."

Victoria Norman, from the Crown Prosecution Service, said: "As a police officer and federation treasurer, Jamie Harrison was in a position of considerable trust and was expected to act with honesty and integrity.

"Instead, he exploited his control over WMPF's finances for personal gain and behaved in a thoroughly dishonest way during the entire eight years of his tenure."

She added, Harrison had a 'cavalier attitude' to being caught and called his actions 'a total betrayal of his colleagues, whose subscriptions funded the Police federation'. Sentencing will take place at Worcester Crown Court on March 25.

Jail time after drugs found

A DROITWICH man has been jailed after trying to run from a car containing a deodorant tub full of drugs in Tamworth.

Arben Lusha, aged 33, was jailed for two years and nine months at Stafford Crown Court on Monday.

Lusha, pictured, admitted possession with intent to supply class A drugs: cocaine, driving without a licence and driving without insurance.

Police stopped a silver Citroen C4 on Christchurch Road in Amington on November 20.

Lusha struggled with officers and managed to get out of the car before attempting to run off but he



was arrested and the car was searched.

In total, 16 deals of cocaine were discovered concealed in a tub, along with cash and multiple mobile phones.

Lusha later admitted the offences in court and, following his conviction, was ordered to forfeit the drugs and cash as part of his sentence.

Supt Victoria Downing, from Staffordshire Police's major and organised crime unit, welcomed Lusha's admission in court and the custodial sentence.

She said: "Lusha knew what he would find in the vehicle and his attempt to evade officers demonstrated his criminal activity."

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Care demand rise sparks call for help in wills

THE PRIMROSE Hospice is urging people to help protect the future of its care and services by considering leaving a gift in their will.

Statistics show, last year alone, hospices across the UK supported more than 310,000 people with life-limiting illnesses.

Demand for palliative care is expected to rise by 25 per cent by 2048.

But, despite this, Hospice UK - which represents hospices across the UK - said 59 per cent of people did not realise hospice services were free each year and only 14.6 per cent of the care was funded by the Government.

The Primrose Hospice must raise \$1.95million each year so it can offer its services to patients and their families free.

Across the country, hospices want to reach everyone who needs them, but financial pressures are holding many back.

One person benefiting from the Primrose's care was Jack, who received support from the hospice before and after his wife Amara died in 2024.

He said he understood just how essential the services were.

"The best thing I ever did was take up grief counselling.

"After the initial support fades, you're still in the grip of grief - you need someone who can help you process it."

Through stories like Jack's, the 'This is Hospice Care' campaign shows how hospices provide comfort, create moments and support whole families.

The drive also illustrates how leaving a gift in a will can help ensure this care is there for future generations.

From pain management to birthday celebrations and bereavement counselling, legacy gifts keep these services going.

Catherine Bosworth, director of Income Generation and Grants at Hospice UK, said: "Gifts in Wills are the lifeline keeping hospices open.

"Someone receives hospice care every hour that simply wouldn't exist without people choosing to leave a legacy.

"With funding pressures rising and demand increasing, securing hospice care for the future is vital.

"Leaving a gift in your Will doesn't mean parting with money today - anyone can leave a legacy and gifts of any size make a real difference."

Gabrielle Grubb, fundraising manager at Primrose Hospice, added: "At Primrose, we're here for - and powered by - our community.

"Legacy gifts ensure vital support is there not only for those receiving care, but for the people around them too."

Visit: primrosehospice.org/leaving-a-gift-in-your-will/ for more on leaving a will to the Primrose Hospice.

The scheme has reduced waste across the town. s



CELEBRATING SUCCESS: A REUSE scheme at the Redditch Household Recycling Centre is celebrating success over the past six months, diverting valuable items from landfill while generating essential funds for local charities.

The project, delivered through a collaboration between Worcestershire County Council, Severn Waste Services, Primrose Hospice and Family Support Centre, and Age UK North Worcestershire, has already made a significant positive impact.

As part of the scheme, a dedicated reuse container has been installed at the Recycling Centre, giving residents a convenient way to donate good-quality items they no longer need.

Instead of being thrown away, these donations are collected, sorted, and sold in charity shops operated by Primrose Hospice and Age UK North Worcestershire.

Coun Ian Cresswell, Worcestershire County Council's cabinet member for the

environment, said: "We are delighted this partnership is working so well and the volume of materials being reused is testament to the scheme's success.

"As a result, we now have reuse containers at nine of our Household Recycling Centres, all supporting local charities and helping to divert materials out of the waste stream and into charity shops."

Amanda Allan, CEO of Age UK North Worcestershire, added: "We are thrilled with the success of this project.

"Not only are we reducing waste and promoting sustainability but we're also raising money to provide our important local services and make a real difference for our community."

Ian McRoy, Primrose Hospice retail manager said: "We really appreciate the support from the council and Severn Waste Services to make this collaboration possible."

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LEFT: Heritage Managers Becky Butler and Catherine Finn with Droitwich Mayor Coun Chris Bowden (centre) at the re-opening of Droitwich Heritage Centre. Picture by Marcus Mingins 0626008MMR2

RIGHT: Becky Butler with one of the new displays at the revamped Droitwich Heritage Centre. 0626008MMR3



Opening the doors on a heritage centre ready for a new era

THE NEW-LOOK Droitwich Spa Heritage Centre opened last week following a three-year revamp to improve the visitor experience and expand the museum's offering.

Redevelopment plans began in 2023, shaped by community consultation, followed a successful application to Wychavon Council's Community Legacy Grant programme.

Funding from Wychavon made it possible to extend the centre into

the existing undercroft and reconfigure the internal layout.

The project was delivered with the support of local councillors, volunteers, and professional partners.

Thanks to the dedication of volunteers, the centre was able to remain open throughout most of the works, closing fully for just three weeks.

Heritage manager Rebecca Butler said the revamp truly had been a labour of love.

"From the very beginning, com-

munity feedback played a vital role in shaping the new Heritage Centre, and we are incredibly grateful to Wychavon Council for the funding that made this project possible."

She added she wanted to thank the centre's volunteers, councillors and project partners for their dedication and hard work, which allowed it to remain open for most of the redevelopment.

And she said everyone was excited to welcome visitors into the new space and looked forward to

continuing to refine it with their feedback.

Mayor of Droitwich, Coun Chris Bowden, who reopened the centre with a ribbon-cutting ceremony, said it was a pleasure and fantastic to see the results of such a carefully planned redevelopment. "This project highlights the value of community-led heritage and the dedication of the volunteers and partners involved."

"Thanks to the support of Wychavon Council and the commitment of everyone who contrib-

uted, the centre is now well placed to continue educating and inspiring residents and visitors for years to come."

An official reopening event will take place at the end of March, following a short period of visitor testing and feedback.

■ Anyone wanting to be among the first people to visit the Heritage Centre can head there between 10am and 4pm, Monday to Friday, and between 10am and 1.30pm on Saturdays.



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Projects offer the chance to get creative

REDISCOVERNorthEastWorcestershire has announced submissions are open for three projects in Redditch and Bromsgrove.

Wagons roll, Awe and Wander, and Gateway to Nature make up the 'Sharing Stories' element of Sharing Stories, Shaping Futures.

Each project is specifically designed to be suited to a branch of the arts.

The successful applicants will work with ReNEW from May 2026 until September 2027, with the aim of creating tangible outcomes, delivering skills workshops for young people and contributing to the development of apprentices.

ReNEW's core aims are to develop young creatives into confident industry professionals, build the resilience of the local cultural sector and bolster connection in local communities through the power of the arts.

Redditch Borough Council's portfolio holder for leisure and recreation, Coun Juliet Barker Smith, said: "These projects are brilliant opportunities to celebrate Redditch's proud heritage as part of the ReNEW programme.

"Giving local young people the chance to work with established arts professionals to shape something new and exciting."

Bromsgrove District Council's cabinet member for health and wellbeing, Coun Shirley Webb, said: "Bromsgrove's heritage is wonderfully diverse, and the 'Sharing Stories' projects will allow us to do exactly that - share those stories.

"I can't wait to see how the successful provid-

ers bring these projects to life with their expertise and passion for the arts."

Chair of the Cultural Compact for North East Worcestershire, Petro Nicolaides, said: "It's not just about performance though - it's about increasing pride, bringing together communities, and nurturing young new talent in the creative sector.

"The project team and I can't wait to see the creative magic that emerges."

Wagons Roll celebrates local people through performing arts, inspired by the rich heritage, stories, and legacy of the Showmen of Redditch, whose vibrant fairground traditions have shaped local culture since the late 19th century.

This strand will pay tribute to the spirit, artistry and resilience of the Showman community and celebrate the importance of this legacy.

Gateway to Nature invites local people to share their stories and experiences of connection with the local environment, enabling the successful Visual Arts Provider/s to support creative activity that will inform the future identity of the National Trust's proposed '8 Hills' Regional Park.

Awe and Wander is designed to connect local communities with green spaces, focusing on underrepresented neighbourhoods.

The project will use digital creativity, storytelling, and participatory activity to position local people to experience local nature in ways that are accessible, meaningful and engaging.

Visit redditchbc.gov.uk/SharingStories/Tenders for more information.



Groups of French students will be visiting in March and April. s

Providing a welcome

HOST families are being sought in Bromsgrove, Redditch, Droitwich, Northfield and Longbridge for visiting groups of French students.

The first contingent will be visiting from March 16 and staying until March 20 and the second group will be here from April 13 to 16.

People will be financially rewarded for their hospitality.

The students will be out all day, sightseeing and taking in the local cultures and will

return to their hosts in the evening.

There is no need for people to be able to speak French and the trips offer all parties the chance to share language, food and culture.

Host families need to be within a comfortable driving distance of Bromsgrove or Longbridge.

Anyone interested in finding out more can email Lisa Mistry at: Lmistry@aol.co.uk or call, text or WhatsApp 07702 504495.

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Whether you're stepping into spring with fresh goals or simply looking for something exciting to look forward to, we've got you covered. Keep an eye on the highlighted events, these are our volunteers' top picks, and tickets are selling fast!

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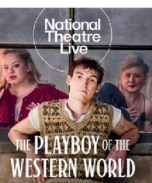
- 27TH FEB: **ABBA GOLD**
- 28TH FEB: **THAT BRITPOP BAND**
- 6TH MARCH: **BEATLEMANIA**
- 7TH MARCH: **NEARLY DAN - THE SOUND OF STEELY DAN**
- 15TH MARCH: **THE SPICE PARTY - 30 YEARS OF THE SPICEGIRLS**
- 19TH MARCH: **TINA TURNER EXPERIENCE**
- 20TH MARCH: **FLEETWOOD UNCHAINED**
- 21ST MARCH: **FEARLESSLY TAYLOR (TAYLOR SWIFT TRIBUTE)**
- 28TH MARCH: **THE ARMED MAN - BARNY 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 SOUS**
- 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**
- 5TH MAY: **ROYAL OPERA LIVE: EUGENE ONEGIN**
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Citizen award 'is an honour'

A REFUGEE who settled in Bromsgrove after fleeing war-torn Syria said he was 'honoured' to have been awarded British Citizenship.

Mazen Salmou was presented with his new-found status by Worcestershire Deputy Lieutenant Nicholas Wentworth-Stanley during a special ceremony.

Maz was a well-known TV presenter in Damascus but had to flee for his own safety, using a United Nations resettlement programme to escape the regime.

From the moment he arrived, Maz completely immersed himself in the Bromsgrove community, getting involved in local projects and buying into the British way of life.

During the Covid pandemic, he collected and delivered shopping and medication to older people and the vulnerable who were forced to isolate.

In recognition of his volunteering, Great Western Railway named a train after him.

Maz said being awarded citizenship wasn't just an administrative process.

"It felt like an affirmation of my belonging to a system of values I have come to know closely throughout the years I have spent in this country, values present in daily interactions, in respect for individuals, and in the high level of professionalism that characterises public institutions."

"Citizenship here is not a fleeting emotional moment, but a mutual recognition - the state recognises you as a citizen and you recognise it as a framework that upholds justice, rights and responsibilities.

"It is an experience that confirms that a nation's true strength is measured not only by its power or resources, but by the values it commits to and by its ability to turn those val-



ues into a tangible reality in people's lives.

"And so, I say this calmly and with confidence: 'I am truly proud to be a British citizen'."

When Maz arrived, he spoke no English and had no money and was supported by Bromsgrove and Redditch Welcomes Refugees (BRWR).

He has maintained a strong friendship with the charity and is currently studying a PhD in media and journalism at the film and TV department at Reading University.

BRWR chair Yvonne Rendell said everyone was delighted for Maz, adding: "Maz is a lovely man whose determination to make a really positive contribution to the UK and to integrate into our culture and communities, makes him a marvellous example of how those seeking sanctuary can be a huge asset to our country."

Maz Salmou has become a British citizen. Picture by BRWR. s



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Owners urged to check their pet licences

OWNERS of pet monkeys, lemurs, chimpanzees and other primates in Bromsgrove, Redditch and Droitwich are being urged to get their animals licensed before new rules come into force.

From April 6 this year, anyone in England who owns a primate without a licence will be committing a criminal offence, which can include up to six-month in prison, an unlimited fine, or both.

A Dangerous Wild Animal Licence may also be needed if primate owners don't already have one in place.

The new licensing requirements are being introduced as part of the Animal Welfare (Primate Licences) (England) Regulations 2024 which aims to significantly boost welfare standards for primates kept as pets.

In order to get a licence, owners will have to prove they are meeting zoo-level welfare standards, such as building the right size enclosure for them, providing the right diet and proving the primate is free from pain, injury and suffering. Licences will last three years with inspections carried out by a licensing officer along with a specialist vet or zookeeper.

The Government estimates up to 5,000 primates may currently be kept as pets in homes across England.

Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) will be carrying out the inspections on behalf of Bromsgrove District Council, Redditch

Borough Council and Wychavon District Council.

The shared public service is funded by the six district councils in Worcestershire and provides licensing functions across the county.

Bromsgrove District Councillor Kit Taylor, whose portfolio covers WRS, said: "We wanted to give people wanting to own a primate as a pet plenty of time to meet the high standards set by these new licensing rules before they come into effect."

Redditch Borough Councillor Jane Spilsbury, who covers WRS, said: "Primates have high-level needs so it is important these rules are put in place to guard their welfare."

"Please make sure you obtain a licence before the new rules come into force."

Coun Rick Deller, Wychavon's Executive Board Member for Housing, regulatory and customer services, urged primate owners to apply for the licences and said: "These animals have complex needs and it's right to ensure we're doing everything we can to safeguard their welfare."

Visit: worsregservices.gov.uk for more information on the new licensing process and the application form which is available by heading to the website and searching for 'Primate Keeper Licences'.

Anyone who knows of someone who owns a primate in the Worcestershire area can contact WRS on 01905 822799 or email: enquiries@worsregservices.gov.uk to raise awareness.



The Alvechurch FC minibus was recovered from this unit in Willenhall, along with five other vehicles. s

Club's minibus found

THE ALVECHURCH FC minibus which was stolen last week as the team played a league match at Tamworth FC has been found.

Police in Wolverhampton discovered the vehicle while they swooped on - and arrested - gang members in Willenhall.

Unfortunately the club are unable to get it back until forensic officers have completed their investigations.

Alvechurch FC said on social media: "We don't know exactly what state it's in yet but it's back."

The club thanked everyone who shared the appeal. The unit on Watery Lane, where the minibus was found, was searched by West Midlands Police officers who recovered six vehicles - the Alvechurch FC minibus, along with others stolen from Wolverhampton, Dudley, Walsall and Birmingham.

Various car parts were also located at the premises with these and the vehicles being seized for further examinations and testing.

Five men at a property were arrested on suspicion of a number of matters, including handling stolen goods, burglary and criminal damage.

Det Insp Lee Medlam from Wolverhampton's Priority Crime Team said: "Each vehicle was in a different state or awaiting dismantling."

"But we have been able to notify their owners that they have been located."

"Vehicle crime is a priority for us and we will act to deter and disrupt those how seek to take others property for their own profit."

The men aged 67, 46, 40, 34 and 33 have been released on police bail as investigations continue.



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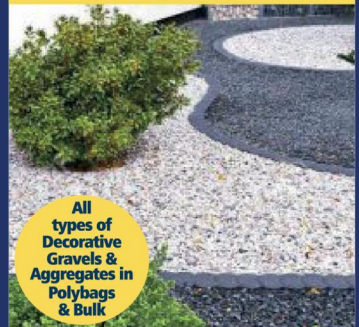
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Busy period has brought some important votes

RECENT weeks in Parliament have seen a number of significant debates and votes, particularly on national security, government accountability and the cost pressures facing households.



Westminster Diary

Nigel Huddleston MP writes for The Standard

I voted against the Government handing over the Chagos Islands, which raises serious concerns about the UK's national security and international standing. It will also cost the British taxpayer billions of pounds.

This is a sensitive and strategically important issue, and decisions of this scale must be handled with care and proper scrutiny.

Further information has come to light in recent days, questioning the basis upon which this decision was made, and the opposition will continue to hold the Government to account.

I also voted against the Government's decision to allow Reform-led Worcestershire County Council to increase Council Tax by nine per cent - without needing to hold a referendum.

At a time when many families are already facing rising costs such large increases place further strain on household finances. I know local residents will want assurances about what improvements will come from this extra money.

This month, the Conservative opposition tabled a Humble Address motion in the House of Commons, which placed a requirement on the Government to release documents relating to the appointment of Lord Mandelson as our

Ambassador in Washington.

These motions exist to ensure Parliament can properly scrutinise decisions taken at the highest levels of government and it is important that the Government now complies fully with the request.

In my capacity as Shadow Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, I also spoke in a debate on the future of the BBC Charter, following the publication of the Government's Green Paper in December.

The BBC is one of our most respected national institutions and a trusted global brand, but its long-term future depends on meeting its Charter obligations, particularly around impartiality. Maintaining public trust is essential if the BBC is to continue delivering the services audiences value most.

I have also spent time in my shadow ministerial role engaging with key stakeholders in the sports, arts, culture, creative industries and tourism sectors.

Many businesses have still not fully recovered from the pandemic and are struggling with recent government tax policies, but they are major employers across the country - including in Worcestershire.

Nigel Huddleston MP
MP for Droitwich and Evesham

First AGM for arts organisation

THE FIRST annual general meeting of Droitwich Arts Network as a Community Interest Company has been held at the Old Cock Inn - the group's new venue.

In his chairman's report, Rhys Jones thanked the committee for its support and enthusiasm during 2025.

In particular, he mentioned Wendy Simmons and Derek Webster who will continue with many of their activities but wish to step off the committee.

Rhys presented them with gifts in recognition of their significant contribution to Droitwich Arts Network over a number of years.

The three officers - chairman Rhys Jones, secretary Rosie Philpott and honorary treasurer Nicola Giles - were elected as directors of the company.

After more than two years in St Andrews Square, the Hub closed.

Droitwich Arts Network has secured an area in Droitwich Library until the end of 2026.

The group said, with an average of 400 visitors every day, many people would see the banner.

A rolling presentation lasting about 20 minutes is usually running on a large screen showing many of the members' activities.

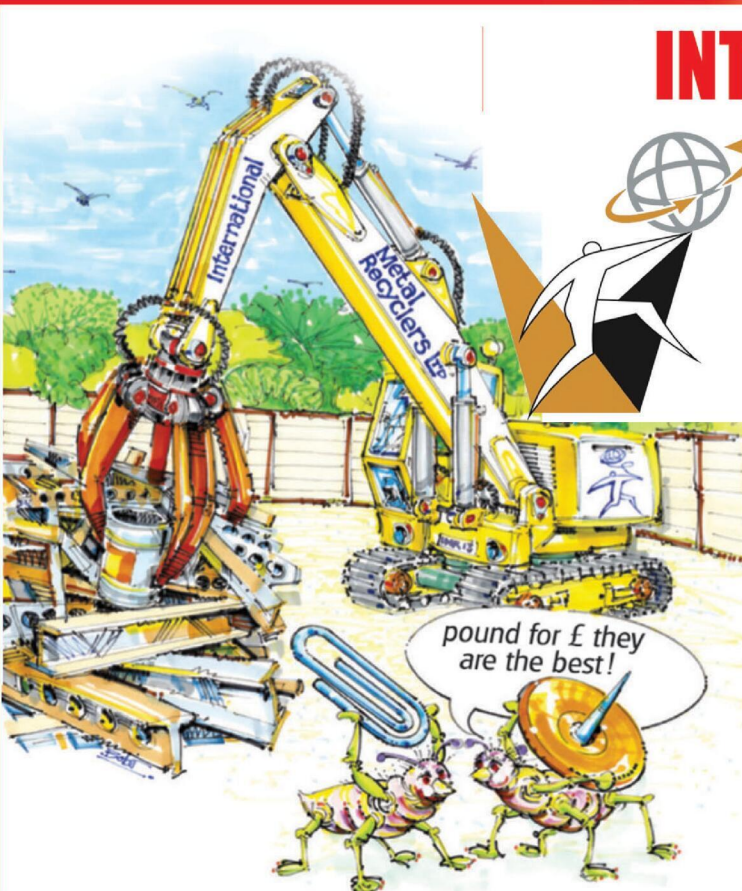
Once the formal AGM had finished, members enjoyed a hot buffet and entertainment provided by local singer Hannah King. Additional Information Droitwich Arts Network (DAN) is a "not for profit" Community Interest Company that advocates and champions all forms of art in the Droitwich area.

This includes visual arts, performing arts, pho-



tography, media, written, music and crafts. The network provides opportunities for artists to display or perform their work, and for the public to participate in various projects and events. Members are drawn from a wide area including Redditch, Birmingham, Bromsgrove, and Worcester.

Derek Webster with chairman Rhys Jones and Wendy Simmons at the Droitwich Arts Network AGM. s



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Order bans man from specified Redditch locations

Kamil Novak is banned from entering, or being in specific locations in the town. s

by Ashleigh Osborne
ashleigh.osborne@bullivantmedia.com

A MAN who failed to comply with a Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) in Redditch town centre has been given a three-year criminal behaviour order (CBO).

Kamil Novak, 29, of Salters Lane, Redditch is banned from parts of the town until February 9, 2029, after receiving the order at Worcester Magistrates Court last week.

Novak's ban includes entering Trafford Retail Park or being within the boundaries and car parks of the retail

park; being on Unicorn Hill; entering Tesco, including the filling station on Coldfield Drive; entering B&Q; and having an open vessel of alcohol in public unless in an area where alcohol consumption is permitted.

Novak was ordered to pay a £240 fine, costs of £85 and a victim surcharge of £48 after he was found guilty of two counts of failing to comply with a PSPO in Redditch on March 20 and July 9.

Sgt Katie Ward, of Redditch town centre team, said: "Working with our partners at Redditch Borough Council, we introduced a public space protection order (PSPO) in the town centre in 2024, for three years."

She she the order helps prevent the actions of people

who cause anti-social behaviour (ASB).

"We said we would enforce the PSPO," said Sgt Ward. "As a result of action taken, we are pleased to get this CBO for Novak, which will help us to protect the public from his ASB, that has no doubt upset those who live and work in Redditch."

Redditch Borough Council member for community services and safeguarding responsibilities, councillor Monica Stringfellow, said: "This is why the borough council authorised the town centre PSPO: to give our partners the tools they need to keep Redditch safe."

Anyone who sees Novak breaching his CBO terms should contact police at 101. uk/9rseg or by calling 101.

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HELPING TO SAY Goodbye



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

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

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

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

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

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



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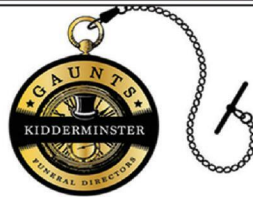

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Writing a Will *Where there's a will*

HELPING TO SAY Goodbye



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Finding a solicitor:

Please contact one of the solicitors in this paper.

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

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

policies and their relevant estimated values.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Signing the will:

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

Where to keep the will:

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

Keeping your will up to date:

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

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



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One Last Goodbye *Delivering a Eulogy*

HELPING TO SAY Goodbye



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

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

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

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

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



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HELPING TO SAY Goodbye

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

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

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

purpose of flowers at a funeral is to celebrate life. Whether the floral arrangement is formal or informal, it should preferably include a hand written note to provide comfort, and help lift the spirit of the family of the deceased. You will also want to take the faith and culture of the deceased into consideration before sending flowers. What may be appropriate for one culture may be inappropriate for another. If you aren't sure, ask the closest family member you know.



A quick guide is as follows:

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



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All four of Redditch's squads came home with medals. s

Redditch teams mop up medals

by Aaron Sutcliffe
aaron.sutcliffe@bullivantmedia.com

REDDITCH Lifesavers entered four teams into the Royal Life Saving Society South Worcester Rookie Gala.

And all four squads came home with medals from the event, at Pershore Leisure Centre, contested by teams from Redditch, South Worcester, Lower Wick, Evesham and North Worcester.

The gala included relays in bodyboard,

brick, mannequin tow, torpedo buoy and the rope throw.

Redditch's 12-and-under and 14-and-under teams both took gold, and won the overall trophy. Another Redditch 12-and-under team finished third and the club's 10-and-unders also took bronze.

Redditch Lifesavers trainer Val Wilson said: "We are very proud of how well every-one swam in the gala and they were all very supportive of each other."

"We would also like to say a big thank you to the parents and trainers who attended and to the organisers of the gala."

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Anniversary is perfect reason to celebrate a charity success



Dr Jen Kelly set up the charity in memory of Grace to continue her legacy of wanting to help people. s

A WORCESTERSHIRE cancer charity created in tribute to a brave four-year-old who lost her battle with the disease is celebrating ten years of fundraising. The Grace Kelly Childhood Cancer Trust was started in 2016 in memory of Grace Elizabeth Kelly and was aimed at making a positive difference to children and families facing childhood cancer.

As well as fulfilling Grace's wish of helping others, it has also funded vital research into childhood cancers which receive little government investment.

In June, to mark their celebration of reaching this milestone, the Grace Kelly Childhood Cancer Trust is holding its 10th Anniversary Charity Ball.

The event promises to be a truly special night of elegance, entertainment and celebration of a decade of supporting children and families facing childhood cancer.

Founder and CEO of the Grace Kelly Childhood Cancer Trust, Dr

Jen Kelly, said: "Recent research tells us only two per cent of public funding spent on cancer research in the UK is devoted to childhood cancers, which is why the work of charities such as ourselves, is so important to really boost this underfunded age group."

"What began as a promise to Grace has grown into an inspiring legacy of support, compassion and impact."

"Thanks to the combined and tireless efforts of our wonderful volunteers, supporters, fundraisers and partners, together we have turned hope into action, and we're only just getting started."

Grace's legacy has achieved much more than just an amount of funds raised - the full impact of positive achievement reaches across the whole spectrum of those affected by childhood cancer.

So far it has offered £194,000 worth of support grants for families which may need to make adjustments to their home, travel, food and accommodation when at hos-

pital.

The charity has also produced signs and symptoms awareness cards - more than 3million of these informative cards have been distributed to parents, helping to spread the vital knowledge of what warning signs to look out for in children.

The trust has handed out 46,000 clinician cards to medical professionals - either via paper cards or as part of GP training provider materials.

A total of £679,000 worth of research grant funding has been awarded to vital projects which will

help save the lives of children with aggressive childhood cancers.

These projects have been allocated through the Grace Kelly Childhood Cancer Trust specialist Research Advisory Panel.

There have been 146 new diagnosis support packs distributed to local hospitals, ready for when a child has just been diagnosed with cancer.

Also known as 'ladybird bags' incorporating the charity's logo, they contain essential and comforting items and a 'hug in a bag' for both parents and children.

And 60,800 publications have been handed out to parents, children, medical journals and learning materials for professionals

In 2026 the Grace Kelly Childhood Cancer Trust said its message remained clear - continue Grace's legacy to fund world-class research, to continue raising awareness of the signs and symptoms of childhood cancer, and to ensure that no family faces childhood cancer alone.

Visit gkect.org/ for more information on the charity and details of how to get involved.

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- ✓ Return coach travel from Bromsgrove
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- ✓ Excursions to the Holy Island of Lindisfarne, Alnwick Castle, Hadrian's Wall & Chesters Fort

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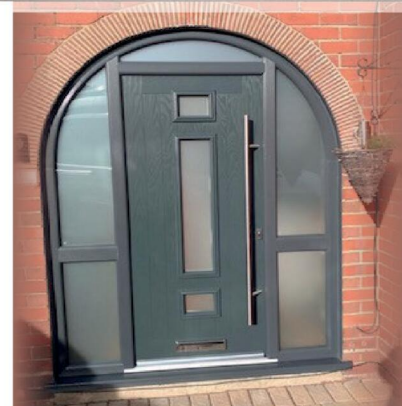
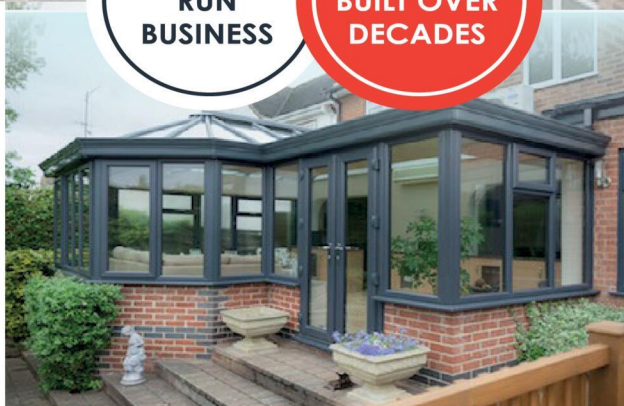


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Interviews: Tuesday 10th March 2026

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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:

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LANE Trevor John

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Jennifer, Charlotte & Family xxx



DEATHS

COOKE Graham Stanley

Sadly, passed away on Thursday 22nd January 2026 aged 94 years.

A service to celebrate Graham's life will take place at The Vale Crematorium on Thursday 5th March 2026 at 12 p.m.

Donations if desired to The Royal British Legion may be sent to Thomas Brothers Birchfield House, 494 Evesham Road, Redditch, B97 5JF
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Love Jennifer and Family xxx

DEATHS

LEES Patricia

Aged 91 years

Passed away peacefully on Sunday 1st February 2026.

A much-loved Mum to David, Elizabeth, Clare, John and Matthew. Patricia will be greatly missed by all of her family and friends.

A service to celebrate Patricia's life will take place at Redditch Crematorium on Friday 6th March 2026 at 1.15pm.

Family flowers only please.

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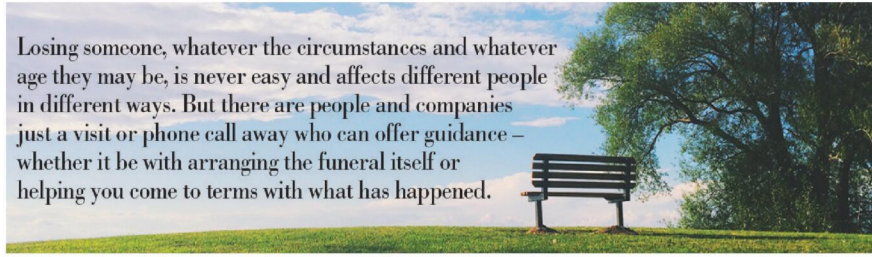

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BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL & REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL

Advertisement Key: ADVSTD = Wider Publicity, HOUAPP = Householder Application, DEP = Departure, FP = Affects Footpath, LB = Listed Building, MAJ = Major Development.

25/00492/FUL **FP**
Site: Land At Wassell Grove, Lane Hagley, Worcestershire DY9 9JH.

Proposal: Material change of use of land to use as a residential caravan site for 5 Traveller pitches, including the laying of handstanding and construction of a 1.8m timber fence. (Retrospective).

26/00086/OUT **HOUAPP**
Site: Land At Dusthouse Lane, Bromsgrove B60 3AA.

Proposal: Outline planning permission, with all matters reserved except for access, for the erection of 1 no. new detached dwellings with associated detached garage. This is a Householder application, in the event of an appeal against refusal of planning permission, which is to be dealt with on the basis of representations in writing, any representations made about this application will be sent to the Secretary of State and there will be no further opportunity to comment at appeal stage.

26/00110/LBC **LB**
Site: Ruins of the Old Hewell Grange, HM Prison Hewell, Hewell Lane, Tardbigge, Worcestershire.

Proposal: Stabilisation repairs to Hewell Grange Ruin, including minor amendments to the repair strategy.

25/01503/OUT **ADVSTD DEP MAJ**
Site: Land West of Alcester Road, Wythall, Worcestershire.

Proposal: The erection of up to 110 no. Class C3 dwellings with associated public open space and infrastructure (all matters reserved other than access). The proposed development does not accord with the provisions of the development plan in force in the area to which the application relates.

24/01166/FUL **MAJ**
Site: Crossbrook House, Dusthouse Lane, Finstall, Worcestershire B60 3AE.

Proposal: Construction of a purpose built timber shelter for horses, change to equestrian use.

25/00492/FUL **MAJ**
Site: Land At Wassell Grove Lane, Hagley, Worcestershire DY9 9JH.

Proposal: Material change of use of land to use as a residential caravan site for 5 Traveller pitches, including the laying of handstanding and construction of a 1.8m timber fence. (Retrospective).

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.

PUBLIC NOTICES

Warwickshire County Council

ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984

Warwickshire County Council has made the following Temporary Traffic Orders:

STATION ROAD, SALFORD PRIORS

Order Effect: Road closed to vehicular traffic.
Reason for Order: To safely enable works to install LED lights.

Order Commences: 24 February 2026 for up to 18 months.

Anticipated Completion: 5 March 2026.

Access & Diversion: A46, Chadbury Bypass, Evesham Road, Harvington Lane, Abbots Salford Road, Crest Hill, Station Road and vice versa.

Contractor: Chevron TM, Tel: 01785 338 990.

C99 MORTON BAGOT ROAD, MAPLEBOROUGH GREEN

Order Effect: Road closed to vehicular traffic between A4189 Henley Road and Hardwick Lane.

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

Order Commences: 23 February 2026 for up to 18 months.

Anticipated Completion: 23 February 2026.

Access & Diversion: A4189 Henley Road, Hardwick 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.

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 20 Feb 2026

PUBLIC NOTICES

ROBIN FRANK RICHARDS Deceased

Pursuant to the Trustee Act 1925 anyone having a claim against or an interest in the Estate of the deceased, late of Fox Hollow, Earls Common Road, Stock Green, Redditch, B96 6ST, who died on 20/03/2022, must send written details to the address below by 21/04/2026, after which date the Estate will be distributed having regard only to claims and interests notified.

SNE Solicitors, 8 Sansome Walk, Worcester, WR1 1LV Ref: 100286/1

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Warriors romp to 10-try victory as Wallis dots down hat-trick

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

RUGBY UNION: WORCESTER Warriors ran in 10 tries as the club chalked up their biggest win of the season with a 66-7 bonus point victory at London Scottish.

A hat-trick from Austin Wallis and further tries from Will Lane, Roma Zheng, Rory Taylor, Josh Bassett, Will Reed, Matt Kvesic and Corey Lewis sealed a comprehensive win for Warriors at the Richmond Athletic Ground.

The result means Worcester sit second in the Champ Rugby table, behind only unbeaten league leaders Ealing Trailfinders.

Matt Everard's side made the perfect start when former Scottish player Wallis powered through a gap from the back of a ruck to dot down after just two minutes as Reed kicked the first of seven conversions.

Worcester crossed again on 12 minutes when Lane sniped over after Will Trewin went close out wide moments earlier.

The visitors scored their third try on 21 minutes as the ball passed seamlessly through the hands and Zheng strolled over in the corner.

And Warriors took the game out of London's reach with three tries in the space of minutes.

Worcester scored their bonus point try on 26 minutes from a driving maul as Wallis crossed for his second of the game.

And the away side dotted down again three minutes later when Taylor intercepted a pass inside his own 22 and sprinted all the way to the London try line.

Warriors scored their sixth try on the half-hour mark as Bassett combined well with Matt Kvesic after London kicked the restart straight out of play.

The blitz of tries sent Worcester into the break with a commanding 40-point lead with Scottish yet to trouble the scoreboard.

And Warriors picked up where they left off six minutes after the interval as Reed danced through the London defence to score.

Kvesic then powered over from close range to score Worcester's eighth try of the game.

The home side crossed for their only try of the match on 55 minutes when Noah Ferdinand touched down Harry Sheppard's grubber kick as the latter converted.

Normal service resumed on 61 minutes when Wallis scored his hat-trick try from the back of another driving maul.

And a driving maul also led to the final try of the game on 78 minutes as Lewis marked his Warriors debut with a try.

Worcester are next in action against Caldy on Saturday, February 21 with kick-off at 12pm at Sixways Stadium.

Sikandar Raza is currently captaining Zimbabwe at the T20 World Cup in India and Sri Lanka.



Rapids sign Zimbabwe star Raza for entirety of T20 Blast campaign

CRICKET: WORCESTERSHIRE Rapids have confirmed the signing of Zimbabwe international all-rounder Sikandar Raza for the entirety of this season's T20 Blast competition.

The Zimbabwe T20 captain has represented his country more than 100 times in the shortest format of the game.

And the 39-year-old joins the Rapids as a second overseas player for the tournament.

Raza said: "I am delighted to be joining Worcestershire Rapids this summer and to be playing in a T20 competition that I really enjoy."

"I have loved my time in England whenever I have played there previously, so I can't wait to get started this summer and link up with the squad."

Raza has experience of playing in the IPL, CPL, PSL and

SA20 in a 19-year professional career.

The off-spinning all-rounder also featured for Manchester Originals in the Hundred during the summer of 2024.

He has a T20 high score of 133 not out for Zimbabwe and has also taken more than 230 wickets in the shortest format of the game.

Raza scored more than 200 runs for Northamptonshire Steelbacks during the 2024 T20 Blast.

Rapids head coach, Alan Richardson added: "Sikandar's stats in T20 cricket speak for themselves and as a side who want to kick on in the Vitality Blast and challenge for the trophy, we know the importance of having real quality in key areas."

"With Ben [Dwarshuis] unable to join us, we wanted to make sure that we had someone

with international pedigree and who can impact the game in all three facets, so we were very keen to get Sikandar on board as soon as we knew he was available."

Worcestershire CEO, Ashley Giles said: "We are delighted to welcome Sikandar on board for the Vitality Blast this season, his vast experience with both the bat and the ball in T20 cricket will be a huge asset to the side."

"He is one of the most exciting all-rounders in limited overs cricket and we can't wait to welcome him into the group."

Raza is currently captaining his country at the T20 World Cup in India and Sri Lanka.

He helped Zimbabwe stun Australia with 25 not out from 13 deliveries as his country secured a memorable 23-run group stage victory.

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