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Hanbury Road homes bid ignites opposition

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

CONTROVERSIAL plans have been lodged seeking permission to build up to 475 homes in Droitwich.

An outline planning application for a site on land at Hanbury Road, submitted to Wychavon District Council by Ainscough Strategic Land, has faced a backlash from residents and councillors.

The agricultural fields, bordered by hedgerows and mature trees, and near the M5 motorway, span 22.05ha – the size of 30 football pitches.

The application earmarks 40 per cent of the development's homes as affordable and includes new open space, play areas and allotments.

The site is allocated for 'residential urban extension' in the South Worcestershire development plan and is expected to become part of the development plan review.

Worcestershire County councillor Seb James, who opposes the plan, helped organise a meeting at Droitwich Community Hall on Wednesday to hear residents' concerns.

He vowed to continue to fight the application, adding: "Droitwich and the surrounding villages are an



Coun Dan Birch, left, and SaltFest organiser Simon Berry are looking forward to welcoming the crowds to the Easter Kids Fun Fest. Picture by Marcus Mingins 1326005MMR2

EASTER LARKS: There will be plenty of egg-citing activities and free things to do in Droitwich's Vines Park over easter weekend.

The Easter Kids Fun Fest returns, from 10am to 5.30pm on Saturday and Sunday, April 4 and 5.

Activities will include pony rides, hook-a-duck, bouncy castles, canal boat trips, wrestling matches, children's rides, arts and crafts, a class and performance from ENTW9 Dance, a boxing display, a magic show and, of course, an easter egg hunt.

Stalls from local creatives and traders will sell

arts, crafts, pick-and-mix sweets, other food and drink and more.

This year's special guests will be The Saltwic Viking Re-enactment Soc-iety which will shed light on Viking village life through storytelling and battle scenes.

Other special visitors include former West Mercia Police dogs, from Ruff Recruits Dog Training and Recruitment, sponsored by councillor Dan Birch.

Visit: saltfestdroitwich.co.uk/easter-kids-fun-fest for more on the event.

incredibly special part of the world. This development challenges this.

"I am lobbying colleagues in highways, education – and Severn Trent – to put pen to paper and object to this. The central government housing targets are a stain on our rural communities, forcing development at the cost of our green spaces and infrastructure."

A transport assessment and travel plan, commissioned by Ainscough, concluded the proposed development

is considered acceptable in transport and planning terms.

Traffic impact assessments in the report claim the development would not have a material impact on the highways network or give rise to highways-related issues. The document stated the local highway network did not have a poor safety record and said there was no evidence to suggest the development would adversely affect road safety or accident levels.

Resident Alan Bourne, who contacted Coun James about the development, said: "Residents have already raised concerns for years about driver behaviour along the B4090 Hanbury Road. This proposal to develop will be dangerous and bring so much congestion to the B4090, and congestion at Hanbury Street in the town."

"Residents in Droitwich have already seen a town explode without added infrastructure."

The applicants state they antici-

pate a 'section 106' agreement with district and county councils, to mitigate infrastructure impact, unless conditions on the development can resolve that concern.

They acknowledge a likely impact on local infrastructure but claim, when considered alongside proposed mitigation and enhancement measures – it would 'not be significant or demonstrable and not outweigh the scheme's substantial public benefits'.

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Hear the latest

THE REDDITCH and Bromsgrove Talking Newspaper (RBTN) is appealing for people to join its ranks in two key roles.

The charity is made up of volunteers and provides weekly audio recordings for those who are blind, have visual impairments or struggle to hold or read a regular newspaper.

Each edition of the talking newspaper features local and county news, sport, local history, weather, a quiz, advice, exercise sections and more.

The RBTN is looking for cuttings editors and USB copying operators.

The Cuttings Editor role involves people working on their computer at home, choosing, extracting and occasionally editing interesting articles/stories ('cuttings') from local newspapers and sending them out for readers to record for the week's edition.

Each person would be on duty once-a-month and the role takes around eight hours, spread across several days. People need reasonable computer skills (eg Word and basic working on Excel spreadsheets).

Eventually, they would need to be good at working on their own and to deadlines, especially on a Wednesday.

The USB Copying role entails attending the RBTN office in Redditch on a Friday morning, loading the current week's edition from the Internet onto USB sticks, placing USBs in individual postal wallets and then taking the post bags to the Redditch sorting office. This role is also once a month, usually for around two hours and anyone undertaking it would need to have reasonable computing skills and be good at, eventually, working on their own, and to deadlines, on Friday mornings.

A spokesperson for the Redditch and Bromsgrove Talking Newspaper urged anyone wanting to find out more to email redbrontn@gmail.com or call 01527 517165.

Visit redditchbromsgrovetalkingnewspaper.co.uk to listen to the latest edition of the talking newspaper.

Charity match helps bring in the vital cash

A CHARITY football match held as part of Redditch man Bryan Mori's fundraising for VICTA has raised £400 for the cause.

The match took place at The Hayes 3G pitch in Kings Norton and was contested by a team from Mind The Gap (MTG) VICTA and Bromsgrove-based not-for-profit team Hope 4 Hearts.

VICTA is a small national charity helps children and young adults with sight loss by giving them an opportunity to engage in sport on their terms, whether for fun, social connection or competition.

Admission to the event was free and donations were welcomed.

More than 60 people turned up to watch the match and both teams had a total of 15 players each.

Mind The Gap (MTG) VICTA, who Bryan turned out for, won the game 4-0.

Bryan said: "But the result wasn't the main factor it was the reason we was there to



The teams lined up for the charity match organised by Bryan Mori in aid of VICTA. Picture by Marcus Mingins 0826002MMR

raise money and awareness." Bryan will be also taking on the London Marathon on April 26 and he has set himself a fundraising target of £2,250 which he is now just £270 off. But he wants to raise as much as possible for the charity. He said: "Not long now until

the big day of the London Marathon. "I am nervous but excited because I'm not doing this just for myself but I'm also doing this for a great cause and to raise money for VICTA which helps partially blind and blind children to give them a fair

opportunity in life as everyone deserves. "I also want to thank the Standard for publicising my event and marathon." Visit 2026tcs.londonmarathon.enthouse.com/pf/bryanmori for more and to donate to Bryan's fundraising page.



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5th June Northumbria Coast with Puffin Cruise & Seabirds Staying at the Copthorne Hotel, Newcastle, Dinner Bed & Breakfast. Includes Boat Cruise	4 Days from £355
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Remembering pandemic losses

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

A NEW memorial dedicated to those affected by the Covid 19 pandemic has been installed in Bromsgrove, following a national day of reflection.

Bromsgrove District Council has added the memorial at Bromsgrove Old Cemetery, near the entrance off Crabtree Lane.

It will provide a quiet place for residents to reflect, remember those who lost their lives and acknowledge the lasting impact of the pandemic on the local community.

The memorial marks six years since the pandemic began, in March 2020, and recognises the profound effect it had on individuals, families and communities.

Bromsgrove District joins a national programme of commemoration, encouraging communities to remember lives lost and the sacrifices made to protect one another.

Residents will be able to personalise the memorial by requesting a metal plaque bearing a message of remembrance. Civic messages of thanks have also been included, recognising the dedication of the NHS, funeral directors, volunteers and other key workers who supported residents and kept essential services running during an incredibly challenging time.

Bromsgrove District Council chairman, councillor Sam Evans, said: "Six years on from the start of the pandemic, this memorial offers a place for quiet reflection and remembrance.

"It is a way for our community to come together to remember those we lost, to recognise the sacrifices made and to acknowledge the kindness and resilience shown by so many during a very difficult period."

The memorial was installed on Monday and is now open to the public.

Call the council's bereavement services team on 01527 62174 or email bereavement@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk for more on personalised inscriptions.



Droitwich Spa High School student Matthew Kenny, 14, with co-headteachers Claire Moss and Gemma Lloyd Davies. Picture by Marcus Mingsins 1326003MMR

SADDLING UP: Students from Droitwich Spa High School have been taking part in the Walk Wheel Cycle Trust's Big Walk and Wheel 2026.

Pupils and staff were urged to walk, wheel, cycle or scoot to school as part of the UK's biggest inter-school active travel challenge, which began on March 16 and ends today (Friday).

Student Matthew Kenny, who is also communications officer for Droitwich Cycling, Walking and Wheeling Group, said there had been an amazing response.

"In the last fortnight, there have been 2,000 active travel journeys made to and from the school, putting Droitwich Spa High 20th in the country," said Matthew.

The Big Walk and Wheel

is aimed at inspiring families to make active journeys to boost health, improve air quality and discover how those changes make a difference.

This is the 17th year the annual event, sponsored by Schwalbe Tyres UK limited, has taken place.

There are prizes on offer for schools, which log their pupils' active journeys.



Bromsgrove District Council bereavement services manager Adam Smith; council leader Mick Marshall and couns Karen May and Sam Evans, with the new Covid Memorial. Picture by Marcus Mingsins 1326004MMR

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Will YOU be in the running?

THIS YEAR'S Wythall and Hollywood Fun Run is now just over two months away.

And, with the 'early bird price offer' ending at midnight this Monday, March 30, runners are urged to get in quick to take advantage of the discount.

On race day, Sunday, June 7, Participants will have the chance to take on the 5K or 10K course and there is also the Families on Track where different family members join forces to run a relay style race.

The fun run is a friendly, welcoming event which is suitable for all ages and abilities.

This year, there will be a new 10K route, taking runners through even more beautiful countryside.

All runners start together, creating a great atmosphere and plenty of encouragement. The routes then split, with the 5K staying fairly flat.

The event is supported by world champion and Olympic medallist Steve Cram CBE and the Events of the North team.

It is supported by Worcestershire County Council's Public Health Team and we are the official media partner.

Mr Cram said: "Wythall and Hollywood Fun Run stands out as an inclusive and uplifting event.

"Its friendly atmosphere and supportive spirit make it ideal for runners of all levels, whether you are just starting your journey or hoping to improve your best time.

"It is exactly the kind of grassroots celebration that shows how enjoyable running can be."

Coun Satinder Bell, Worcestershire County Council's cabinet member for health and well-being, added the Wythall and Hollywood Fun



Run was about much more than a race. "It brings people together, strengthens community spirit and inspires healthier ways of living.

"We are grateful to all our partners whose hard work and enthusiasm play such an important role in making this event a success."

This year, finishers will all be awarded a newly designed metal medal - a distinctive keepsake to celebrate their achievement.

Visit wythallhollywoodfunrun.org.uk for more, to sign up and to see the new route.

The Wythall and Hollywood Fun Run returns on June 7. s

Residents turn out to share views on plans

AROUND 80 Wythall residents turned out to a public meeting, held by County Councillor Adam Kent, to voice concerns about overdevelopment.

Bromsgrove MP Bradley Thomas is joining forces with Coun Kent to 'fight back against the increase in development in the village'.

This comes after Bromsgrove District Council consulted from June to October 2025 on a draft Development Strategy to control long-term growth in the area.

Wythall was earmarked to take 1,295 houses across three sites - land south of Houndsfield Lane, a parcel east of Lea Green Lane and land south of Station Road.

The influx of housing has caused outrage among villagers with many claiming local infrastructure cannot cope.

During the meeting, at Hollywood Golf Club, residents could raise their concerns with Coun Kent and Mr Thomas, who encouraged residents to make their opposition known by commenting on the planning applications submitted to Bromsgrove District Council.

Residents said Wythall was also being impacted by cross-border development too, with more houses being built in Solihull.

Afterwards, Mr Thomas said: "The mes-

sage from the public meeting was loud and clear - Wythall says no to overdevelopment.

"The village is facing a barrage of speculative housing applications because developers have been emboldened by the government's housing policy.

"My constituents and I aren't NIMBYs. We all except the need for new houses, but not on the scale the government is imposing on us.

"The government should build on brownfield land first and provide communities with the infrastructure that will be needed before any houses are built."

Coun Kent added: "It's quite clear from the meeting the residents of Wythall see the current avalanche of planning applications as deeply concerning both in terms of scale and inappropriate locations with a distinct lack of infrastructure.

"With over a dozen potential sites already in play, we could see planning applications increasing the size of Wythall by over 60 per cent."

He said that, coupled with large scale Solihull developments, there was 'a major problem looming'.

And he called on the district council to open immediate discussions with neighbouring South Warwickshire to find far more sustainable solution to the area's housing needs and at a more appropriate scale.

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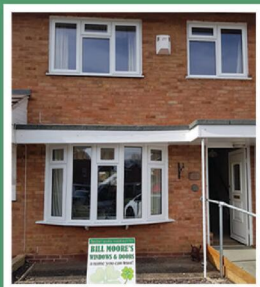


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Sex offender given 22-year sentence

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

THE PARENTS of a girl who spoke out about a serious sexual assault she was subjected to have praised her bravery after her attacker was jailed for 22 years.

Stephen Jeffries, from Northfield, abused three girls over almost two decades, with those he targeted aged as young as 11.

The 35-year-old, described by the judge as 'a most dangerous offender', was put on the sexual offender register for life and given a sexual harm prevention order until further notice.

He was arrested after a break-in at a Birmingham home in December 2024 during which a girl was sexually assaulted. Using forensic evidence, investigators identified a suspect within days and arrested Jeffries at home on December 12, 2024.

Specialist officers worked with the girl and her family to establish what she had been through.

After the sentence, the girl's parents shared victim statements given to the court. Her father had said: "Life is incredibly challenging for women who regularly face a world where their safety and dignity are threatened. I deeply admire my daughter for her courage in

standing up against this injustice – it truly reflects her remarkable strength and character. No parent should ever have to watch their child endure this kind of pain. While no sentence or decision can undo the harm that has been done, I hope the court will take into account the devastating impact this crime has had – not just on her but on all of us who love her.

"I want justice, not just for my family but also to send a message to others – actions like this cannot and will not be tolerated."

Brave

The girl's mother had told the court: "Stephen Jeffries may have found her at her most vulnerable that night but what he did not realise is what a brave girl she truly is.

"The same strong girl that spoke up, she has done what most adults cannot face doing, let alone a minor, her bravery is why we are all stood in this room today to ensure consequences are faced."

She added, no matter what sentence he received, it would not be as long as the one her daughter has been given – for the rest of her life.

Jeffries was further charged with sexually assaulting two other girls during offences dating back to between 2005 and 2024.

At Birmingham Crown Court the judge, His Honour Judge Dean Kershaw, commended the bravery

of the victims and their families in the case. In passing a sentence of 22 years in custody and eight years on an extended licence, the judge described Jeffries as being a very high risk to the public.

He added, he imposed the extended sentence to protect the public.

Det Sgt Nicky Simms, from West Midlands Police's public protection unit, said the victims and their families had remained strong and committed during the entire process.

"Their strength, fortitude and resilience attending every court hearing has meant we have been able to bring a dangerous and deviant perpetrator to justice," said Simms.

"It is down to the courage and bravery of these victims reporting and recounting the horrific details of the crimes committed against them – alongside the support and dedication of officers – that ensured that the defendant had no option but to enter guilty pleas.

"This sentence means he has now been imprisoned and is unable to harm others."

The detective urged other victims of abuse to report it to the police adding, even years after an attack or sexual abuse has ended, officers will listen and can give support to victims to help them work through cases and, hopefully, to bring perpetrators to justice.

Visit westmidlands.police.uk to report a rape or sexual abuse.



Stephen Jeffries was jailed for 22 years at Birmingham Crown Court and has had a further eight years' extended licence placed upon him. s

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Residents demand action on pavement parking issue

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

RESIDENTS in Rowney Green are calling for West Mercia Police to clamp down on pavement parking.

One man, who did not want to be named, reported two cars which left little room on the path on Rowney Green Lane, near the village hall, bus stop and junction with Newbourne Hill.

He said: "It's a busy section of road where a pavement is needed to keep pedestrians safe."

"More often than not, there is less than two inches of a gap and you certainly can't pass with pushchairs, wheelchairs or any other mobility devices - I have to walk in the road if I walk the dog."

He reported the problem to officers and checks he carried out on

the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency website showed the tax and MoT status of one of the cars was two weeks out of date.

The issue was also discussed at a meeting of the Rowney Green Association.

Councillor Adam Kent, who represents Wythall on Worcestershire County Council, has campaigned against pavement parking in the past.

He said: "I managed to get pavement parking restrictions put on a section of Shawhurst Lane in Wythall but then, when it was consulted on, residents and businesses said there was no other space to park."

"It was also found that people would park on pavements where there wasn't a ban, so it just moved the issue down the road."

He added, often action taken against pavement parking depended on the individual police safer-neighbourhood team, and said some officers would ticket cars.

"But that can only be done if the person is sufficiently far over on

the pavement to block wheelchairs and pushchairs, and you can get a police officer to come out, see it for themselves and issue the ticket."

"My solution would be to include pavement parking in [the police's] Operation Snap, so people could submit photographs or footage in the same way they do for dangerous driving and jumping red lights."

"Drivers could be prosecuted in that way, based on the evidence."

Ban

Currently, pavement parking is banned in London and new powers are set to be given to councils across England later this year to ban it in designated areas.

Coun Kent added: "The problem is, in London public transport is a lot more reliable and less people there own cars, so it works."

"That's not the same in Worcestershire, most of the roads in these areas were built in the 1950s and '60s, when people were lucky to have one car, but now some households have three or four."

Residents in Rowney Green are calling for a clampdown on the problem.



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ABOVE: Bromsgrove MP Bradley Thomas with Gareth and Lucy Lloyd, the owners of the winning venue - The Gate at Bournheath. s RIGHT: Mr Thomas with Bremi's general manager Alfie and co-owner Jason Pirie. s

Plug is pulled on beer festival

THIS YEAR'S Bromsgrove Beer Festival has been cancelled.

The organisers - Redditch and Bromsgrove CAMRA (Campaign for Real Ale) said it was not financially viable to continue the event in its current format but added there are plans to bring it back next year.

The event, traditionally held in the last weekend of June to coincide with the Bromsgrove Festival, has become a popular extravaganza for connoisseurs of real ale, craft beers, cider and perry and pulled in the crowds.

Options are being explored to change the format but, unfortunately, there was not time to put them in place for this summer.

The events team said they hoped members would support the other CAMRA festivals in the area, alongside local pubs, adding they would use the time between now and next summer to create a new-look Bromsgrove Beer Festival for 2027.

Raising a glass to the winners

BROMSGROVE MP Bradley Thomas has revealed his 2026 'Pub of the Year' following a vote by the public.

The popular competition returned after its inaugural one last year. Licensees flocked to put forward their venues and, likewise, 1,060 local residents voted.

This year's winner is the independent, family-owned pub and restaurant, The Gate in Bournheath.

Finishing in second place is Bremi's in Aston Fields and The Neighbourhood in Rubery came third.

Mr Thomas passed on his congratulations to The Gate.

"It's fantastic the top three are all independent businesses - something we can all celebrate.

"A big thank you to all the pubs that took part and to everyone who voted and supported their local.

"We must keep continuing to support our pubs and hospitality businesses."

He added it remained a challenging time for hospitality venues which were under more pressure than ever before.

The Gate is owned by Gareth and Lucy Lloyd and is managed by Jon, Rachael and Sarah.

As well as celebrating their win, the pub will also be raising a glass to mark its 50th anniversary this year.

Gareth said: "We're absolutely delighted to be named Bromsgrove and the Villages' Pub of the Year 2026, especially as we celebrate our milestone 50th anniversary.

"The Gate has been at the heart of the community since 1976, when Chris and Jan Lloyd first took it on, and we're incredibly proud to continue that legacy today.

"As the next generation, we're committed to keeping that same welcoming spirit alive - alongside great food, well-kept drinks, and a place people genuinely enjoy spending time in.

"The recent completion of our new restaurant has been an exciting step forward for us, allowing us to build on what we offer while staying true to who we are - all made possible by our fantastic team.

"We're so grateful to everyone who voted for us - this award really belongs to the whole community that has supported us over the last 50 years."



The MP also presented Callum Headland from The Neighbourhood in Rubery the prize for third place. s

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Every little helps donation drive

CUSTOMERS at Redditch's Tesco can help families facing financial difficulty during the easter school holidays by picking up an extra bag to put through the checkout.

Donation bags costing £2 to £5, are pre-packed with healthy, long-life food items.

They will be available in every large Tesco in and around Redditch during the easter break, from Monday to April 12, to make donating the most-needed items to the charities FareShare and The Felix Project and Trussell easier than ever.

Trussell says foodbank use remains 45 per cent higher than in 2019, before the Covid pandemic, with foodbanks in the Trussell community providing the equivalent of one parcel every 12 seconds last year.

Parents are among the people shouldering the heaviest burden, according to the charity, as families with children received almost two-thirds of all foodbank parcels in 2025.

FareShare and The Felix Project have recently merged to become the UK's leading food redistribution charity, providing good-to-eat surplus food to more than 8,000 charities and community groups – 83 per cent of which support families with children.

Customers can donate long-life items to FareShare and The Felix Project and Trussell but the most needed products are tinned meat and fish, long-life fruit juice, cooking and pasta sauces, tinned vegetables and tinned and dried soup.

Charlotte Hill, chief executive at FareShare and The Felix Project, said: "These pre-packed donation bags make it easy for shoppers to donate long-life items that help charities and make a real difference to families in need."

Other key items that can be donated include pasta, rice and noodles, cereal and porridge, tea and coffee, sponge and rice pudding plus UHT and powdered milk.



David and Georgina, from Chapman Opticians, with some of the donated books. s

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

AN INDEPENDENT optician in Bromsgrove has helped put more than 1,500 books into the hands of children who need them most after a highly successful community drive.

The Children's Book project, run across Chapman Opticians' six practices, invited patients, the public and schools to donate children's books.

The response exceeded expectations and the 1,500-plus volumes will be redistributed to children who may not otherwise have had books of their own.

The campaign not only highlighted community generosity but also raised awareness of the link between good vision and child literacy.

Clear vision plays a crucial role in a child's ability to read confidently and enjoy books. Undetected problems can make reading more difficult, in turn affecting learning, confidence and long-term education.

Donations were received from a wide range of contributors including local families, patients and several schools, reflecting a strong community spirit and shared commitment to supporting young people.

Chapman Opticians managing director Andy Chapman said: "We have been genuinely overwhelmed by the response to our book drive."

"To collect over 1,500 books is a fantastic achievement and a real testament to the generosity of our local community."

He said there was more than

just books at the heart of the campaign, adding: "It's about giving children the opportunity to develop a love of reading while also recognising how important good vision is in supporting their learning and confidence."

"We're incredibly proud to play a small part in making that possible."

The books will now be distributed by the Children's Book Project to children and families across the UK, helping to ensure more children have the opportunity to own and enjoy books at home.

WHAT'S ON AT ARTRIX

LIVE MUSIC:

- 28TH MARCH: THE ARMED MAN - BARNT 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
- 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
- 15TH MAY: THIS IS MERSEYBEAT
- 16TH MAY: CLASSIC ROCK REVIVAL
- 17TH MAY: CELEBRATING CELINE - A NEW DAY
- 22ND MAY: FRANKIE - THE CONCERT (FT THE FALSETTOS)
- 29TH MAY: RHINESTONE COWBOY: THE GLEN CABBELL STORY
- 30TH MAY: BURN DEEP PURPLE TRIBUTE
- 5TH JUNE: THE CARPENTERS EXPERIENCE
- 6TH JUNE: EVERLY BROTHERS BY CANDLELIGHT
- 19TH JUNE: BEEGEES YOU SHOULD BE DANCING
- 26TH JUNE: I'M EVERY WHITNEY
- 4TH JULY: SOUND & VISION (TRIBUTE TO BOWIE)
- 10TH JULY: BLONISH (THE MUSIC OF BLONDE)
- 11TH JULY: G2 DEFINITIVE GENESIS
- 23RD JULY: ULTIMATE ELVIS EXPERIENCE
- 24TH JULY: DESPERADOS EAGLES
- 6TH AUGUST: 50 YEARS OF FENDER
- 4TH SEPTEMBER: LUKE COMBS EXPERIENCE

EVENT CINEMA:

- 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
- 26TH MAY: NT LIVE: LIVE PLAYBOY OF THE WESTERN WORLD
- 25TH JUNE: NT LIVE: LES LIAISONS DANGEROUS

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Should have gone to... Kititi

A BROMSGROVE optician has helped provide life-changing free eyecare to hundreds of people in a remote rural village.

Robina Sharif, store director and optometrist at the Specsavers on Bromsgrove High Street, travelled to Kititi in Uganda last month, as part of an eight-strong group.

The team, made up of colleagues from Newmedica Worcester and Specsavers Stratford-upon-Avon, transformed a local primary school hall into a functioning clinic.

Once set up, the volunteers assessed more than 400 patients in two days, despite

regular interruptions to the electricity supply.

The mission also saw 1,000 pairs of glasses given out, along with vital donations of clothing, school uniforms and stationery equipment.

The trip was organised by Planting for Hope Uganda, an organisation founded by Newmedica patient Kate Oakley. The visit marked a major step in the charity's ongoing work to help the Kititi community achieve long-term self-sufficiency.

Building on the trip's success, the team has already raised more than £12,000 toward the charity's next goal, of installing

solar panels and a new and improved school kitchen unit.

Robina said: "The entire trip was incredible.

"The joy within the community was truly infectious.

"While providing eye care in such a challenging environment was difficult, seeing the gratitude of the people we helped made it all worthwhile.

"It was a life-changing experience and I would go back again in a heartbeat."

Visit planting4hopeuganda.co.uk/ for more on the project and head to [gofund.me/30bf32697](mailto:me/30bf32697) to donate to the cause.



Robina with a member of the community who is sporting new glasses thanks to the Specsavers scheme.

Council says it is delivering on its plan to improve the borough

by Ashleigh Osborne
ashleigh.osborne@bullivantmedia.com

REDDITCH Borough Council's executive committee has considered a report which showed 'all round commitment in delivering priorities' to make the town a better place.

The document, presented at last week's meeting, highlighted progress on delivering a four-year council plan which runs until 2028.

At the heart of the council plan are three core priorities, which were identified based on feedback from local stakeholders, the council said.

The priorities are building strong economic development; a clean, green and safe Redditch everyone can be proud of; and housing which meets community needs.

The council said the town centre had seen major development with the relaunch of the outdoor market and a commitment to an Innovation Centre aimed at bringing signifi-

cant opportunities to the borough. The report stated the council had also implemented a new approach to environmental crime and fly-tipping, working with Worcestershire regulatory services.

The council has committed to improving housing services, adding a recent tenant survey showed rising satisfaction and responses.

The authority said, by increasing the amount of temporary accommodation in its housing stock, it had significantly reduced use of bed and breakfast accommodation.

Redditch Borough Council portfolio holder for performance, engagement and governance, councillor Jane Spilsbury, said: "The plan puts our communities at the heart of everything we do.

"We are incredibly proud of the progress that has been made towards actions within the plan - from supporting the most vulnerable members of our communities to pushing forward ambitious economic projects. I'd like to thank our officers for the work they have put into delivering the priorities."

Council leader Coun Sharon Harvey said: "This report showed all round commitment from the council in delivering its priorities and our manifesto pledges.

"From when the council plan was published, in 2025 - a year after we came into administration - we have delivered in making Redditch a better place for people to live, work and play.

"We are proud of the progress made across these areas and at the same time maintaining a stable budget."



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Ribbon cut on town's new-look Heritage Centre



ABOVE: Deputy Lord Lieutenant, Charles Moyle TP DL, with Catherine Finn, Mayor of Droitwich, Coun Christine Bowden, Rebecca Butler and MP Nigel Huddleston. Picture by Paul Jones.

RIGHT: MP Nigel Huddleston with David Porter who worked at the BBC in Droitwich between 1972 and 1974 when there was a broadcasting centre there. Picture by Tristan Harris. © Bullivant Media Group Ltd. s



MORE THAN 100 people turned out for the official opening of Droitwich Spa's new-look Heritage Centre last Friday.

The ribbon was cut by Mayor of Droitwich, Coun Christine Bowden, who also gave a speech at the event, along with Deputy Lord Lieutenant, Charles Moyle TP DL, and MP Nigel Huddleston.

The opening coincided with English Tourism Week, which ran from March 13 to 22.

Mr Moyle, standing in for Lord Lieutenant Beatrice Grant and representative of The King, spoke about Droitwich's deep sense of civic pride, a strong sense of identity and a spirit of community which shone through in everything it did.

"There are so many good news stories about this ancient county town.

"Droitwich is not just a great place to live and work but to bring up families too."

He praised Droitwich's inclusion and, on the Heritage Centre, he said: "This is a place that connects past with present and offers learning, inspiration and opportunity for all.

"This community asset speaks volume about the strength of Droitwich's people and the deep-rooted sense of belonging that underpins the town's ongoing success."

Mr Huddleston said: "It's fantastic to see continued investment in the Droitwich Spa Heritage Centre.

"Droitwich has a rich and unique history, and projects like this ensure that story is preserved and shared with future generations."

"He added it was a pleasure to be at the opening and said: "This is about more than heritage - it's about bringing people into the town, supporting local businesses and strengthening the commu-

nity.

"It's a great example of what can be achieved when there is real ambition and belief in the future of our town."

And he praised the volunteers who worked tirelessly at the attractions to make visitors' experiences as great as they can be.

Catherine Finn, joint Heritage Manager with Rebecca Butler, said: "We are very pleased with how it has been transformed - we worked closely with the designers who were great at helping make our ideas and vision a reality.

"It is such an interactive space now and has lots of hands-on activities for children to do.

"We are hoping, as well as people from Droitwich, that visitors will come from Birmingham and Worcester to learn about our town's history and see what we have to offer."

The redevelopment began in 2023 and was carried out after a community consultation and a successful application to Wychavon Council's Community Legacy Grant programme.

The centre was extended into the undercroft and the internal layout was reconfigured with the help and support of councillors, volunteers and professional partners.

Droitwich Spa's fascinating '260million year history' is charted ice age, iron age, Romans and Anglo Saxons, right up to the modern day.

The salt heritage is extensively covered and there is a display dedicated to the Wychbold Masts and Droitwich's BBC broadcasting past - including being an outpost for the famous World Service.

There are plenty of activities for children, including touch screens and puzzles.



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Employment down

THE NUMBER of people in employment is down in Bromsgrove, Redditch and Worcestershire, compared to the same time last year.

Employment data from December 2025 showed the number of people on employment payrolls in the county was 270,186 - down 1,847 (0.7 per cent) on the same time the year before.

Data from February 2026 shows the number of people in employment in Bromsgrove is 44,843 - 69 less than this time last year (down 0.2 per cent). The figure, however, is up by 0.1 per cent month-on-month.

In Redditch, there were 40,971 people in employment, as of February this year - that is down 157 (0.4 per cent) on the same time last year and exactly the same as the month before.

These figures are based on analysis of latest Office for National Statistics payroll data and have been compiled by WageSight.

Compared to local authorities in West Midlands, Bromsgrove ranks 15th out of 30 for employment while Redditch ranks 20th out of 30. These trends reflect a mixed employment picture across West Midlands with some areas reporting improvements, while others seem to be struggling.

Paul Hebben, WageSight director, said although employment in Bromsgrove remained lower than a year ago, recent month-on-month figures suggested some stabilisation in recent months while the employment picture Redditch remained challenging.

Arts and crafts

AN ART and craft exhibition is taking place at at Aztec Adventure Centre, Upton Warren, on the weekend of April 11 and 12.

The display will be open from 10am to 4pm on both the Saturday and the Sunday.

The collection will include works from Redditch artist Roger Goddard and Pat and Sheila Proudfoot from Bromsgrove.

Roger creates landscapes and seascapes, Pat produces collages and mixed media artwork and Sheila designs and makes needlework pieces

Admission to the exhibition is free and refreshments are available at the Boat Shack cafe which is next door.

MP learns more of role of volunteers at CVS

REDDITCH MP Chris Bloore met staff and volunteers during a visit to Droitwich Spa CVS which has been supporting residents across north Worcestershire.

The visit took place at The Old Library Centre in Droitwich and was arranged after an introduction by Wychavon District Councillor Rick Deller.

Mr Bloore met chief executive officer Tonia Enderbury BEM and members of the community transport volunteer team to discuss the vital role voluntary organisations play in tackling isolation, improving access to essential services and supporting residents who struggle to travel to appointments or community activities.

Mr Bloore heard directly from volunteers about the practical impact of community transport schemes which connect residents in rural and semi-rural areas, such as Wychbold and Upton Warren, with healthcare, shopping and social opportunities.

And he learned about the wider support services delivered by the charity, including advice, signposting and partnership working with local authorities and community groups.

Mr Bloore said organisations, such as Droitwich Spa CVS, were



Redditch MP Chris Bloore with CEO, Tonia Enderbury BEM, and Droitwich Spa CVS staff and staff and volunteers. s

vital to the strength of our communities with volunteers helping their neighbours stay connected and remain independent.

"That kind of support can make a huge difference to people's day-to-day lives.

"It was a pleasure to meet Tonia, the staff and the volunteers and see first-hand the dedication behind their work.

"Community transport in particular plays an important role

for residents in the villages and surrounding areas who might otherwise find it difficult to access essential services.

"I wanted to visit in person to say thank you and to look at how we can work together to sustain and grow this vital work."

Discussion topics included the pressures facing local voluntary organisations, including rising demand and funding uncertain-

ty, and the importance of strong collaboration between charities, councils and national government to ensure local needs were met effectively.

Droitwich Spa CVS provides a range of community-focused services across the district and works closely with volunteers, local partners and residents to strengthen social networks and deliver practical support where it is most needed.



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Businesses were celebrated at the counties Tourism Awards.

Plenty worth celebrating

BUSINESSES in Redditch and Bromsgrove have taken home top prizes at this year's Worcestershire Tourism Awards.

More than 70 finalists were short-listed by an expert panel of industry judges, with 15 winners recognised for their outstanding excellence and contribution to the county's visitor economy.

All winners will now be put forward to the VisitEngland Awards of Excellence, where they will have the opportunity to compete at a national level.

Redditch's Attwell Farm Park won the Accessible and Inclusive Award and Large Visitor Attraction of the Year

In Bromsgrove Social Sticks - indoor golf, games and live sport - was highly commended in the New Tourism Business of the Year category and Canary and Kitchen won the Taste of Worcestershire Award.

The event also raised vital funds for local charity Acorns Children's Hospice through a prize draw raffie featuring Worcestershire-themed prizes generously donated by tourism businesses.

In total, more than £3,900 was raised - the highest amount ever achieved at the Tourism Awards, providing invaluable support for the charity's work.

Lorna Robinson, Visit Worcestershire's destination tourism manager, said, "It was a truly fabulous

evening celebrating Worcestershire's wonderful tourism sector.

"I'm incredibly grateful to all our brilliant suppliers who went above and beyond to make the night so special, as well as to our dedicated sponsors and judges.

"A huge congratulations to all of our winners and shortlisted finalists - the standard gets higher every single year and it's amazing to come together and celebrate such excellence in our visitor economy.

"It's no secret that the past few years have been challenging for the tourism sector, but the commitment, resilience and sheer love that this sector pours into what it does is undeniable.

"We are now proudly a \$1billion

visitor economy, and that success is down to the passion and hard work of the businesses and people we celebrated tonight.

"I can't wait to see who goes on to shine at the national VisitEngland Awards.

"Worcestershire will be cheering them on."

Entries for next year's awards will open next month, with Visit Worcestershire encouraging tourism and hospitality businesses to get involved.

The awards provide valuable recognition, increased visibility and the opportunity to showcase the very best of Worcestershire on a national stage.

ON DISPLAY: BUSINESSES in Aston Fields are being urged to take part in the first ever 'best dressed Easter window' competition.

The contest will run from Thursday, March 26, to the following Thursday, April 2.

A representative from the Standard will be judging local businesses' creativity to dress the window of their business.

The event is aimed at bringing the local community together, encouraging people to come to Aston Fields, increase footfall and give local traders some much-needed publicity.

The winner will be announced in the Standard.

Anyone wanting to find out more should email Coun Jane Elledge, who is organising the event, at: j.elledge@bromsgrove.gov.uk for further details.

EASTER SHOW: THE ANNUAL Easter-themed window competition in Rubery will also be taking place this year.

The event runs from March 30 to April 3 and all businesses on New Road are welcome to take part.

The Standard will also be judging the Rubery contest.

Any businesses taking part should contact organiser Coun Esther Gray via email at: e.gray@bromsgrove.gov.uk or by calling her on 07708 781335 to let her know and so they can be part of the judging process.



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Visit gives MP chance to get to heart of matter

USE IT PLEA: BROMSGROVE MP Bradley Thomas has urged residents to use the town's Post Office counter in TG Jones on the High Street after it was saved from closure.

The counter was due to close on June 6 but it is now staying and the MP's petition to keep the branch was signed by more than 1,000 people.

Bromsgrove High Street's branch will keep offering the same Post Office products and services, all over the same opening hours.

Mr Thomas is now encouraging residents to continue supporting the local branch to ensure it is not put at risk of closure again.

He added: "I said we needed a Post Office in the town centre and I kept my promise by doing everything I could to fight just for that."

"And now we've saved the branch in TG Jones from closure, it's vital we all continue to support and use this vital community service."

BAG A BARGAIN: THE LATEST Vinyl Record and CD Fair will take place at the Bromsgrove Hotel and Spa from 9am to 3pm this Sunday, March 29.

There will be more than 20 traders across 50 plus tables with thousands of vinyl records - both new and used - to suit all budgets on offer.

Among the genres are 90s Brit Pop, 80s pop classics, classic rock, punk, 2000s collectables, reggae, hip-hop, dance, soul, rock 'n' roll and new vinyl.

Free on-site car parking is available when registering inside the hotel and there is also a cafe and restaurant at the venue.

Anyone wanting more information can visit: midlandsrecordfairs.co.uk or call Ben or Call on 07832 247109 or 01527 873014.

REDDITCH MP Chris Bloore has visited Hale and Hearties at Oakenshaw Community Centre to meet members of the long-established cardiac rehabilitation group and see first-hand the vital support it provides to local residents.

Founded in 1997, Redditch Hale and Hearties delivers phase four cardiac rehabilitation exercise sessions for people recovering from heart attacks, cardiac surgery and other serious heart conditions.

Working closely with the Alexandra Hospital, the group provides weekly classes in Greenlands, Oakenshaw and Bromsgrove, offering ongoing, community-based support after patients complete hospital-based rehabilitation.

During his visit, Mr Bloore joined around 15 members for a one-hour session including a warm-up, supervised circuit exercises and a cool-down. He heard from participants about how the group had supported their long-term recovery and helped them stay active and independent.

The MP was invited by the Deputy Mayor of Redditch Borough Council, Coun David Munro, a long-standing committee member of the group who joined following two heart attacks in 2018 and 2019.

Mr Bloore said: "It was inspiring to see Hale and Hearties in action and to meet local people who have turned some of the hardest moments of their lives into a positive commit-



Chris Bloore MP and Coun David Munro with the and Hale and Hearties members. s

ment to long-term health. "Cardiac rehabilitation does not end when someone leaves hospital.

"Ongoing, safe and supervised exercise, delivered with care, expertise and good humour, is absolutely vital to helping people regain confidence and maintain their wellbeing. Groups like this are a lifeline for so many in our community."

The visit also provided an opportunity to discuss concerns previously raised about reductions to Phase

3 cardiac rehabilitation sessions at the Alexandra Hospital.

The MP confirmed he would continue engaging with NHS leaders to ensure patients in Redditch have access to a full recovery pathway from hospital treatment through to long-term community support.

He added: "As someone who regularly campaigns for strong NHS services at the Alex, I know how important it is that excellent hospital care is matched by high-quality

community provision."

And he said he would keep backing schemes, such as Hale and Hearties, and work with health leaders to ensure every cardiac patient locally had the opportunity to recover well and stay well.

Redditch Hale and Hearties runs weekly sessions on Wednesday evenings in Greenlands, Friday afternoons at Oakenshaw Community Centre in Redditch and Friday mornings in Bromsgrove.



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Welcome to church this Easter

Maundy Thursday 2nd April † Good Friday 3rd April

Holy Saturday 4th April † Easter Sunday 5th April

**St Leonards CofE, Church Hill, Frankley, B32 4BL
07748 693408**

Good Friday, 2pm - Prayers at the Cross
Easter Sunday, 11:15am - Easter Communion

**St Chad's CofE, New Road, Rubery, B45 9JA
0121 2383168**

Maundy Thursday, 7.30pm - Informal Communion service
Good Friday, 2pm - Quiet, reflective service
Holy Saturday, 9pm - 'Lighting the Fire'
Easter Sunday, 10am - Family-friendly Holy Communion

**Holy Trinity CofE, Rose Hill, Lickey, B45 8RR with
St Catherine's CofE, St Catherine's Rd, Blackwell
B60 1BN, 0121 445 1425**

Good Friday, 2pm - Service of reflection at St Catherine's
Easter Sunday, 10am - Easter Communion at St Catherine's
Easter Sunday, 4pm - Easter Praise at Holy Trinity Lickey

**Our Lady's RC, Leach Green Lane, Rubery, B45 9BQ
0121 453 3452**

Maundy Thursday, 9pm - Mass of the Lord's Supper
Good Friday, 7pm - Stations of the Cross
Holy Saturday, 11am - Blessing of Food for Polish Community
Holy Saturday, 9pm - Easter Vigil
Easter Sunday, 11.15am - Mass

**Beacon Church Centre URC, Whetty Lane, Rubery,
B45 9DL, 07526 250645**

Maundy Thursday, 5pm - Communion Service
Good Friday, 3pm - Reflective Service
Easter Sunday, 11am - Worship with Holy Communion

**Longbridge Methodist Church, Bristol Rd South,
B45 9TY, 0121 257 2584**

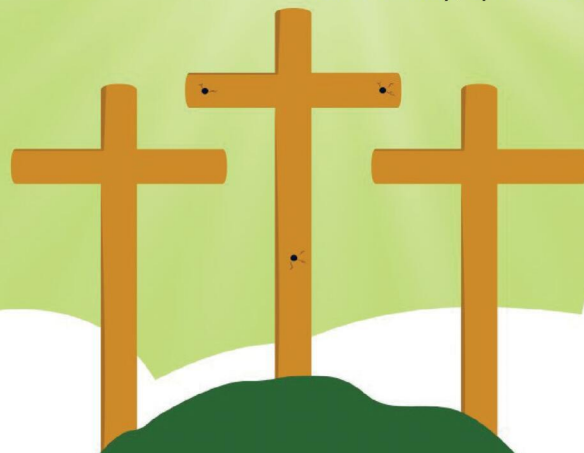
Good Friday, 6pm - Good Friday service
Easter Sunday, 11am - Easter morning fun for everyone -
worship, refreshments, activities and the Easter bunny!

**St Stephen's CofE, Edgewood Road, Rednal, B45 8SG
0121 243 4634**

Maundy Thursday, 7.30pm - Maundy Thursday Communion
Good Friday, 2pm - An hour at the cross
Holy Saturday, 7.30pm - Vigil Service
Easter Sunday, 10am - Holy Communion for Easter Day

**St Andrew's CofE, Sandhills Road, Barnt Green,
B45 8NR with St Michael's CofE, Cofton Church Lane,
Cofton Hackett, B45 8PT, 0121 447 7097**

Good Friday, 9.30am - Good Friday Reflection at St Andrew's
Easter Sunday, 9.30am - Easter Day Communion at St Andrew's
Easter Sunday, 6pm - Easter Day Communion at St Michael's



**Good Friday
Walk of Witness**
Gather at Our Lady's
on Leach Green Lane
(B45 9BQ) from 10am
for a 10.30am start.
The walk will end at
St Chad's with hot
cross buns!

**Easter Sunday
Sunrise Service**
Join us on Beacon Hill
(use the Monument
Lane Car Park)
at 6.15am to welcome
the new light of this
new day!

He is Risen!



The Fureys will visit Redditch's Palace Theatre on their farewell tour.

Irish legends dropping by to say fond farewell

IRISH band 'The Fureys' will play last concert ever in Redditch on April 28.

As part of their Farewell Tour, the group will perform at the Palace Theatre after eight previous appearances there.

The Fureys are one of Ireland's most influential middle of the road, folk and traditional bands, with classics such as 'When You Were Sweet 16', 'The Green Fields of France', 'The Red Rose Cafe', 'I Will Love You', and 'The Lonesome Boatman'.

Eddie Furey, member of the band, recalls how many musicians had told them they had influenced them after hearing a record from their parents' or grandparents' collection.

Changes have occurred over the years - Finbar Furey left the band in 1996, Paul Furey died in June 2002 of illness and Davey Furey had a stroke in 2014.

The remaining members George and Eddie Furey continued releasing CDs and going on tour but in May, the band will call it a day.

Eddie and George say: "Time catches up with us all and we will look forward to a new future from the middle of 2026, playing the odd music session and seeing the younger Furey generation playing their music."

Visit redditchpalacetheatre.co.uk/whats-on/all-shows/the-fureys or call 01527 65203 for tickets and more information.

New measures will protect on allergies

PLANS are set to be introduced across England to give stronger protections for children with allergies in schools, a campaign spearheaded by Redditch MP Chris Bloore.

The new statutory guidance, announced by the Government and now open for consultation, will for the first time require schools in England to introduce stronger safety measures for pupils with allergies.

These include a dedicated allergy safety policy, Individual Healthcare Plans for affected pupils, emergency adrenaline auto-injectors stocked as standard and mandatory allergy awareness training for all school staff.

The measures are expected to come into force from September this year.

Nearly 700,000 children in England are estimated to have a food allergy, with research showing that around one in five anaphylaxis deaths among school-aged children occur in school settings. On average, two children in every classroom are affected by food allergies.

Mr Bloore has been campaigning for improved allergy safety in schools and introduced the Schools (Allergy Safety) Bill in Parliament as a Ten Minute Rule Bill.

He said: "Nearly 700,000 children in England have a food allergy and parents should be able to send their child to school knowing their aller-



Pete and Helen Blythe with MP Chris Bloore.

gies will be properly managed.

"Too often that simply hasn't been the case.

"Food allergies affect around two children in every classroom, yet there has been a patchwork of standards across schools, with many lacking clear policies, training or access to emergency medication.

"These new measures are a huge step forward towards Benedict's Law.

"They will help ensure every school has the training, the policies and the equipment needed to respond quickly and save lives in an emergency."

Mr Bloore paid tribute to campaigners including Helen Blythe and the Blythe family, whose son Benedict tragically died after suffer-

ing an allergic reaction at school.

Since then, Helen has campaigned to improve allergy safety for children across the country.

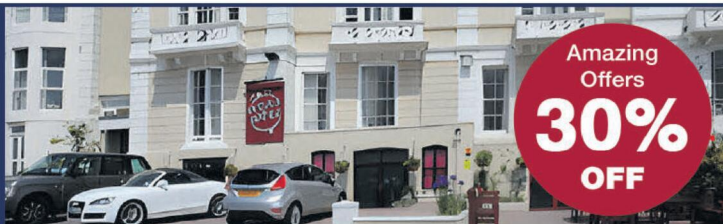
The MP added: "Families living with severe allergies deserve the confidence that schools are prepared and able to respond quickly if an emergency occurs.

"This announcement is a major step forward and shows what determined families, campaigners and MPs can achieve together.

"I am proud Redditch has played its part in helping to push this issue onto the national agenda."

The Government's draft guidance is currently open for consultation ahead of being finalised and implemented in September.

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DAY TO REMEMBER: A LIFELONG passion for Afghan Hounds led to a truly unforgettable day for Redditch care home resident Irene Smith, whose wish to return to Crufts resulting in a heartwarming and emotional reunion with a cherished friend from her dog showing days.

Irene, who lives in at Bowood Court Care Home, has a remarkable history in the world of pedigree dogs. Over the years, she bred and showed Afghan Hounds with great success, proudly taking part in Crufts five times.

During her distinguished showing career, Irene also achieved the prestigious title of Best of Breed at the Hound Association Championship and later shared her expertise by judging at dog championship shows herself.

As part of a special wish organised for her by the care home, Irene recently returned to Crufts - a place filled with memories from her decades in the dog showing community. What she did not expect was a deeply moving surprise waiting for her there.

During her visit, Irene was reunited with her longtime friend Jill, with whom she bred and showed Afghan Hounds from the 1970s through to the 1990s.

In an incredible twist of fate, Jill happened to be the Afghan Hound judge at Crufts this year, something Irene had no idea about before the visit.

Seeing Jill and her husband again after so many years was an incredibly emotional moment.

Irene said: "This is the best day. I can't believe Jill and her husband are here - I thought I'd never see them again."

The pair spent time reminiscing about their years showing dogs together, sharing stories and laughter while catching up on life since their last meeting.

Before parting ways, they exchanged phone numbers so they can stay in touch moving forward.

Irene with her Crufts memorabilia. s



Firms fined for failing pay threshold

REDDITCH and Bromsgrove businesses have been named and shamed as part of a government crackdown on those failing to pay the minimum wage.

New figures show a total of around £12.6million in penalties have been issued to 389 employers with these fines coming on top of the repaid wages.

Johnsons Cars Limited based in Redditch town centre has been handed a penalty for failing to pay £15,864 to 44 workers and Windmill Pre-School Midlands Limited did not pay £958 owed to 15 workers.

And Sidemoor Pre-School Playgroup was also among almost 400 companies across the UK which illegally unpaid its workers.

The playgroup owed £807.70 to seven of its workers.

The withheld cash has been directly repaid as part of the latest Government crackdown on those who fail to pay the minimum wage.

Figures show thousands of hard-working Brits have been denied over £7.3million by their employers.

Business Secretary Peter Kyle said: "The vast majority of businesses in this country do the right

thing by paying their staff properly and playing by the rules.

"It's not fair on them when others are able to get ahead by not paying the wages their workers are owed.

"A good employer doesn't build their business on the back of unpaid wages, and I look forward to working with the new Fair Work Agency to ensure its powers are used to crack down on those who think the rules don't apply to them.

"This is the first 'naming round' since the Chancellor's Budget commitment to publish more frequently, this puts more pressure on employers to keep their payroll up to date and boosts workers' confidence that when they're treated poorly by their boss, swift justice will follow.

Employment Rights Minister Kate Dearden added: "Nobody should finish a week's work and find they've been paid less than they've earned.

"I believe in a fair day's pay for a fair day's work.

"That's why we're cracking down on employers who underpay.

"We're making sure workers get the hard earned pay they deserve.

"I encourage every employer to check their payroll to ensure they don't get caught out."

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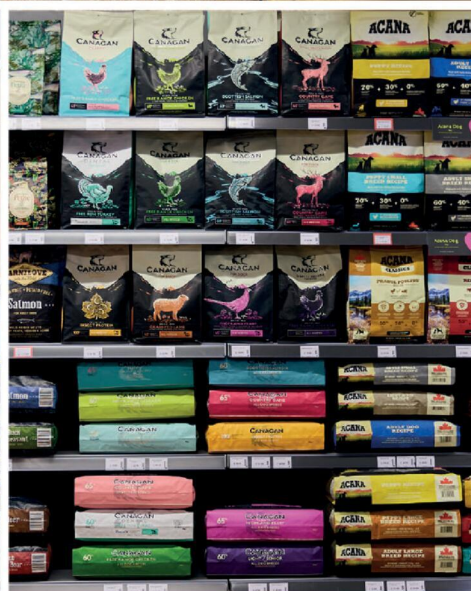
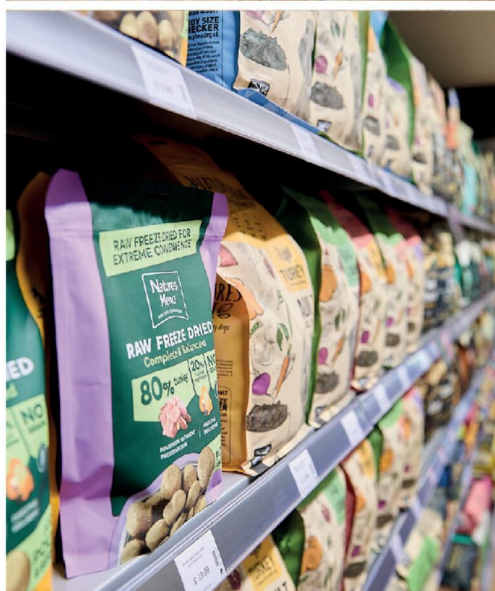
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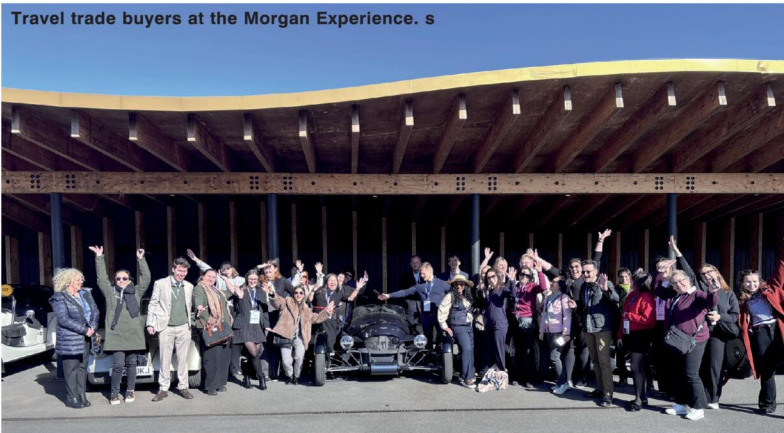
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Spreading the county message

WORCESTERSHIRE tourism businesses have been given a major opportunity to reach new international markets during English Tourism Week, as the county welcomed 29 global travel buyers for a three-day visit.

The familiarisation trip, delivered with support from Cotswolds Tourism, VisitEngland, UKinbound and Great Western Railway, showcased the best of Worcestershire and helped local businesses connect directly with international tour operators.

Welcoming such a large group of travel trade buyers has significant economic value for the county. According to UKinbound, the travel trade is responsible for 43 per cent of all inbound tourism to the UK, meaning strong relationships with international buyers play an important role in supporting local jobs and attracting year-round visitors.

In the lead-up to the event, both Visit Worcestershire and Cotswolds Tourism worked

closely with local businesses to support their journey towards becoming travel-trade ready, ensuring they could confidently engage with international markets.

A key highlight of the trip was a dedicated business workshop hosted at Stanbrook Abbey, where 30 Worcestershire and Cotswolds tourism businesses met directly with international buyers.

The workshop created a marketplace for suppliers to showcase their products, accommodation and experiences, while forming valuable new relationships with the global travel trade.

Lorna Robinson, visitor economy and destination manager at Visit Worcestershire, said: "We're delighted with the success of the trip and the feedback from buyers.

"Many were genuinely surprised by the quality and depth of what Worcestershire has to offer - not just our attractions and landscapes, but our people."

Cash boost to support those on the streets

A SERVICE which looks after rough sleepers during periods of extreme weather in Worcestershire has received a £100,000 funding boost.

The County Council has confirmed that the Public Health funding for 2026/27 will support the county's six district councils to keep rough sleepers safe when temperatures plummet. This is on top of funding provided by the district councils.

The Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) is a life-saving emergency response that provides warm, safe accommodation to people sleeping rough during dangerous weather conditions.

It is seen as vital in reducing preventable deaths and supporting some of the county's most vulnerable residents.

SWEP is activated when temperatures are forecast to fall to freezing or below, when a red weather warning is issued.

It can also be activated during heatwaves or at times when localised conditions, such as flooding, pose a risk to people without a place to go home to.

The service also opens for five nights over Christmas, regardless of the weather.

Cold weather significantly increases the risk of hypothermia, respiratory illness, stroke and other severe health conditions for people sleeping rough.

Public Health's continued investment will help councils offer emergency accom-

modation, on-site overnight support where facilities allow, as well as food and essential items.

Coun Satinder Bell, cabinet member for Health and Wellbeing said: "This investment will help prevent serious harm to health and reduce weather-related illness to those living rough. It will also help reduce avoidable hospital admissions.

"The emergency accommodation also presents an opportunity to offer people access to further care and help."

Director of Public Health, Lisa McNally, added: "SWEP saves lives. This funding will ensure that no one in Worcestershire has to face freezing temperatures without the offer of a safe, warm place to stay. We are delighted to be able to continue to offer this support at a time when pressures on housing are so great."

A spokesperson for Worcestershire's six district councils said: "We welcome this funding, which will help us continue to provide vital support to people sleeping rough during periods of severe weather.

"As district councils, we are exploring how we commission support for people who are sleeping rough, with a greater focus on prevention and early support so we can help people off the streets for good.

"SWEP will continue to play an important role within that approach, providing an essential emergency response when conditions put lives at risk."

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Time to join Race for Life

PEOPLE are being invited to go 'all in' against cancer this spring by signing up for Race for Life in Redditch.

Cancer Research UK's much-loved events, which raise funds for life-saving research, are returning to the town.

Money raised at Race for Life enables scientists to find new ways to prevent, diagnose and treat cancer - to bring about a world where everybody lives longer, better lives, free from the fear of cancer.

The Race for Life 5k and 10k events take place at Arrow Valley Park on Sunday June 14. People of all ages and abilities are welcome.

A month later - on July 11 - the Birmingham Pretty Muddy 5k will take place at Cofton Park in Rednal.

Cancer Research UK's Race for Life raises millions of pounds every year across the UK, funding crucial research.

Alanis Morata, a spokesperson for Cancer Research UK, urged everyone to 'go all in against cancer and to help fund life-saving research'.

"Sadly nearly one in two of us will get cancer in our lifetime but all of us can support the research that will beat it.

"Spring is an ideal time to commit to getting more active as the days get a little warmer.

"Race for Life powers progress and it relies on a whole community of people coming together, united by a common purpose to beat cancer.

"Whether you're a five-a-side crew, book club, dance troupe, yoga club, fancy doing something with your friends - or on your own - we want everyone to join us.

Since it began in 1994, more than 10 million people have taken part in Race for Life, contributing millions of pounds towards life-saving research.

The charity also helped prove the link between tobacco and cancer, preventing millions of deaths worldwide.

Visit raceforlife.org for more information.

Check your purse for fake notes is the advice

RESIDENTS and businesses in Bromsgrove are being warned to be on their guard after a number of counterfeit notes have been found in circulation in the district.

Officers have received several reports of fake bank notes being used and West Mercia Police is now issuing advice on how to spot them.

This latest find in Bromsgrove comes just a fortnight after fake notes were discovered in Redditch.

The force said: "We have been made aware of incidents whereby counterfeit notes, which are entirely worthless, were used to purchase high-value electronic goods on an online selling forum."

And it recommended residents and businesses use online banking to receive payments for goods, especially when using social media selling sites, and to ensure they check cash thoroughly when transacting in notes.

The notes (pictured) are completely worthless and police want residents, shopkeepers and other businesses to be more vigilant in spotting them.

The hologram image on the notes should change between 'Twenty' and 'Pounds' when tilted and the transparent window should have clearly defined images and edges.

Words on the notes, especially 'Bank of England' should be in raised print.

If a note feels unusual, appears blurry or lacks security features, it should not be accepted.

For more on checking notes, visit: orlo.uk/jA7ns and, if they are counterfeit, call



These fake bank notes have been circulating in Bromsgrove. s

police on 101. Businesses should also notify their banks.

People carrying out face-to-face transactions should not put themselves at

risk by confronting anyone directly, try to retain the note if it is safely possible to do so and then report it to police.

Enjoy Exclusive, Evergreen Editions of Seasons



Following on from the fantastic response to our debut 'Winter' edition of **Seasons**, we're delighted to announce that **Seasons** 'Spring' edition is about to be sprung.

As the days grow longer and our towns, villages and the countryside emerge from the long dark days of winter, we are all enjoying the arrival of the 'Spring' of 2026.

Pick up a copy locally for free, or simply browse on line www.seasons-magazine.com

The 'Spring' edition of **Seasons** will celebrate everything uplifting, inspiring and quintessentially local across the three counties of Warwickshire, Worcestershire and the West Midlands.

The beautifully glossy A5 magazine will once again be freely available in print, from a major supermarket near you - and, the 'Spring' edition of **Seasons** will also be available 247 on line and will be showcased across all of our local Observer and Standard Newspapers, websites and social media platforms for the next 12 months.

So you'll be able to enjoy the exclusive, evergreen, editions of **Seasons** by logging on to www.seasons-magazine.com where you can browse the 'Winter' edition of **Seasons** 247 and soon, you'll be able to enjoy the 'Spring' edition of **Seasons** too!

If you'd like your business to be featured in the next edition of **Seasons**, or if you'd like more details - just call **01527 588688** and speak to Kelly, Caroline, Roisin, Paul, Gareth or Sharon.

Seasons magazine is brought to you, by your local Observer and your local Standard Newspaper Team

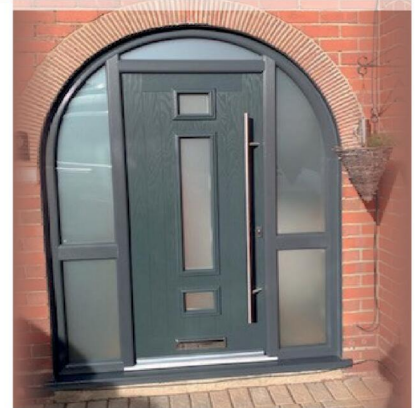


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Spreading the county message

WORCESTERSHIRE tourism businesses have been given a major opportunity to reach new international markets during English Tourism Week, as the county welcomed 29 global travel buyers for a three-day visit.

The familiarisation trip, delivered with support from Cotswolds Tourism, VisitEngland, UKinbound and Great Western Railway, showcased the best of Worcestershire and helped local businesses connect directly with international tour operators.

Welcoming such a large group of travel trade buyers has significant economic value for the county. According to UKinbound, the travel trade is responsible for 43 per cent of all inbound tourism to the UK, meaning strong relationships with international buyers play an important role in supporting local jobs and attracting year-round visitors.

In the lead-up to the event, both Visit Worcestershire and Cotswolds Tourism worked

closely with local businesses to support their journey towards becoming travel-trade ready, ensuring they could confidently engage with international markets.

A key highlight of the trip was a dedicated business workshop hosted at Stanbrook Abbey, where 30 Worcestershire and Cotswolds tourism businesses met directly with international buyers.

The workshop created a marketplace for suppliers to showcase their products, accommodation and experiences, while forming valuable new relationships with the global travel trade.

Lorna Robinson, visitor economy and destination manager at Visit Worcestershire, said: "We're delighted with the success of the trip and the feedback from buyers.

"Many were genuinely surprised by the quality and depth of what Worcestershire has to offer - not just our attractions and landscapes, but our people."

Cash boost to support those on the streets

A SERVICE which looks after rough sleepers during periods of extreme weather in Worcestershire has received a £100,000 funding boost.

The County Council has confirmed that the Public Health funding for 2026/27 will support the county's six district councils to keep rough sleepers safe when temperatures plummet. This is on top of funding provided by the district councils.

The Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) is a life-saving emergency response that provides warm, safe accommodation to people sleeping rough during dangerous weather conditions.

It is seen as vital in reducing preventable deaths and supporting some of the county's most vulnerable residents.

SWEP is activated when temperatures are forecast to fall to freezing or below, when a red weather warning is issued.

It can also be activated during heatwaves or at times when localised conditions, such as flooding, pose a risk to people without a place to go home to.

The service also opens for five nights over Christmas, regardless of the weather.

Cold weather significantly increases the risk of hypothermia, respiratory illness, stroke and other severe health conditions for people sleeping rough.

Public Health's continued investment will help councils offer emergency accom-

modation, on-site overnight support where facilities allow, as well as food and essential items.

Coun Satinder Bell, cabinet member for Health and Wellbeing said: "This investment will help prevent serious harm to health and reduce weather-related illness to those living rough. It will also help reduce avoidable hospital admissions.

"The emergency accommodation also presents an opportunity to offer people access to further care and help."

Director of Public Health, Lisa McNally, added: "SWEP saves lives. This funding will ensure that no one in Worcestershire has to face freezing temperatures without the offer of a safe, warm place to stay. We are delighted to be able to continue to offer this support at a time when pressures on housing are so great."

A spokesperson for Worcestershire's six district councils said: "We welcome this funding, which will help us continue to provide vital support to people sleeping rough during periods of severe weather.

"As district councils, we are exploring how we commission support for people who are sleeping rough, with a greater focus on prevention and early support so we can help people off the streets for good.

"SWEP will continue to play an important role within that approach, providing an essential emergency response when conditions put lives at risk."

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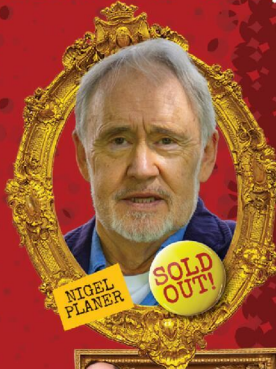
THE Rik Mayall

29 MAY
6 JUNE
2026

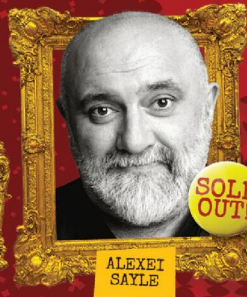
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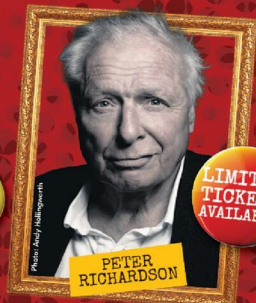
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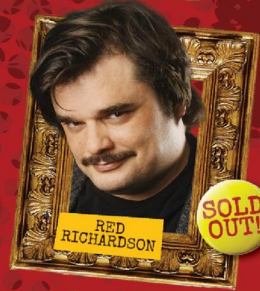
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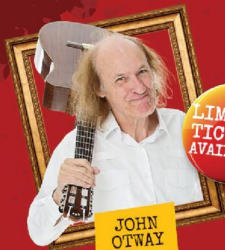
PHIL ELLIS



LAURA SMYTH



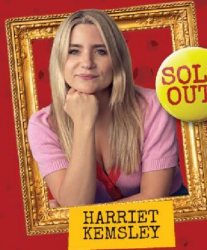
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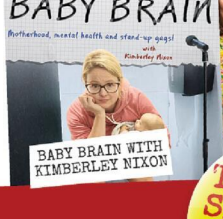
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SUDOKU

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

EASY

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

HARD

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

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.

Beyoncé singles

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

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										23	

ACROSS

- Compassion (4)
- Tranquil (8)
- Be a glutton (7)
- Cherish (5)
- Absurd (12)
- Advent (6)
- Beset (6)
- Miraculous (12)
- Throbbing (5)
- Sincere (7)
- Godliness (8)
- Given new colour (4)

DOWN

- Outlook (8)
- Subject for discussion (5)
- Property (6)
- Promoting the same end (12)
- Luck (7)
- Ogle (4)
- Public accusation (12)
- Solitary (8)
- Sickly-sentimental (7)
- Purpose (6)
- Emitting fumes (5)
- Work (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.

- Charge
- Register
- Panel
- Irritate
- Grain



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.

- 25865 gives an animal;
- 958643 gives a bird;
- 1536784 gives a fish.

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

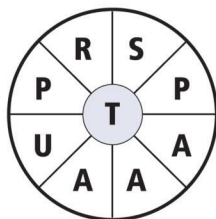
CODEWORD

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.

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

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.

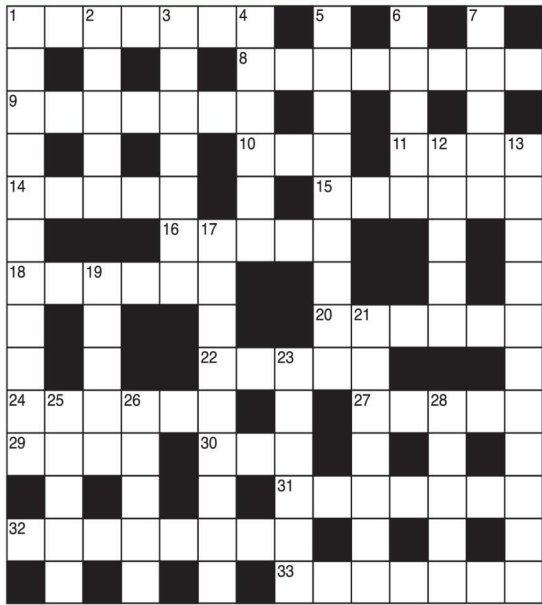


How you rate
 10 words: average 20 words: very good
 15 words: good 25 or more: excellent.

GENERAL KNOWLEDGE CROSSWORD

ACROSS

- Volumes or manuscripts of ancient text (7)
- One who takes overall administrative responsibility for a motion picture (8)
- Edible pasta cases with savoury filling (7)
- Greek island which gives its name to a long-leaved lettuce (3)
- A cardinal point of the compass (4)
- Sovereign independent republic of Asia (5)
- A castle or fortress in a north African town (6)
- Line with a running noose, for catching cattle, etc. (5)
- Highly endowed by nature (6)
- A brood of chickens (6)
- "I am --- and Omega, the beginning and the end,..." (Revelation, Chapter 21) (5)
- Surname of the author famous for his Diary, kept from 1640 to 1706 (6)
- Pole tossed or hurled by Highland athletes (5)
- Roman emperor from AD 54 to 68 (4)
- 30 & 1 Down. Play by Emyln Williams, published in 1938 (3,4,2,5)
- Outburst or display of bad temper (7)
- Photographic apparatus for increasing or reducing negatives or positives (8)
- State of south-eastern Mexico, largest city Mérida (7)



DOWN

- See 30 Across
- Craig ---, British singer who had a hit single entitled 7 Days (5)
- Type of traditional German, metrical hymn-tune, for congregational use (7)
- Various strong-flavoured or aromatic vegetable substances used for seasoning, etc. (6)
- Popular children's game (9)

- 6 and 25. Author whose works include Twenty Thousand Leagues Under The Sea (5,5)
- Vice ---, a fantasy novel by F. Anstey (5)
- The superior of a community of monks (5)
- Thriller by Graham Greene, set in Vienna (3,5,3)
- In lawn tennis, the next point won after deuce (9)

- Entrance hall of a hotel or theatre (5)
- In a Spartan manner, especially in speech or writing (7)
- According to Wordsworth, "the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings" (6)
- See 6 Down
- A rocking-stone (5)
- A Basque flat, round, woollen cap (5)

SOLUTIONS

General Knowledge Crossword

ACROSS: 1 Codices; 8 Producer; 9 Ravoli; 10 Cos; 11 East; 14 India; 15 Casbah; 16 Lasso; 18 Gifted; 20 Clutch; 22 Alpha; 24 Evelyn; 27 Caber; 29 Nero; 30 The; 31 Tantom; 32 Entlager; 33 Yucatan. DOWN: 1 Com; 15 Green; 2 David; 3 Chorale; 4 Spies; 5 Hopscotch; 6 Jules; 7 Vers; 12 Abbot; 13 The Third Man; 17 Advantage; 19 Foyer; 21 Laconic; 23 Poetry; 25 Verne; 26 Logan; 28 Bert.

Crossword

ACROSS: 1 Pity; 3 Peaceful; 9 Overeat; 10 Nurse; 11 Preposterous; 13 Coming; 15 Obsess; 17 Supernatural; 20 Pulse; 21 Earnest; 22 Sanctity; 23 Dyed. DOWN: 1 Prospect; 2 Theme; 4 Estate; 5 Contributory; 6 Fortune; 7 Leer; 8 Denouncement; 12 Isolated; 14 Mauldin; 16 Intent; 18 Reeky; 19 Opus.

Wordwheel Pathfinder

Sweet Dreams, I Am... Sasha Fierce, Beautiful Lie, Crazy in Love, APPARATUS Single Ladies (Put a Ring On It), Baby Boy, Drunk in Love, Me Myself and I, Irreplaceable, Run the World (Girls), Telephone, Broken-Hearted Girl, Déjà Vu, If I Were a Boy, Check On It, Dangerously in Love, Halo, Work It Out, Naughty Girl.

Ladder

Roll, Toll, Tilt, Tile, Rile, Rice, Dice

Codeword

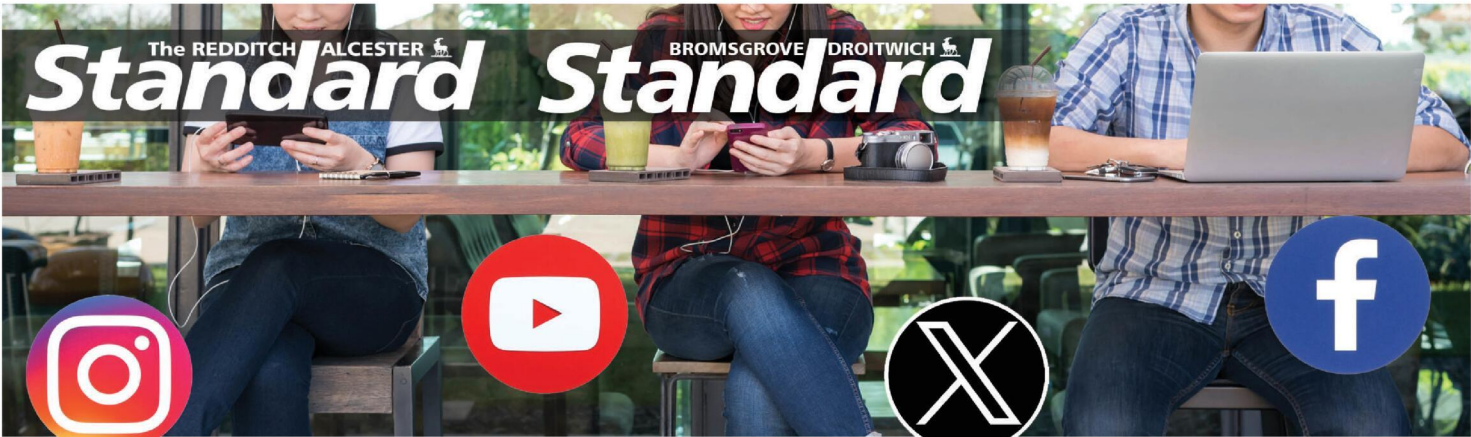
1=Y, 2=Q, 3=A, 4=O, 5=R, 6=W, 7=E, 8=P, 9=M, 10=N, 11=L, 12=X, 13=K, 14=D, 15=L, 16=C, 17=Y, 18=S, 19=B, 20=U, 21=T, 22=Z, 23=H, 24=J, 25=G, 26=F

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

Hard

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

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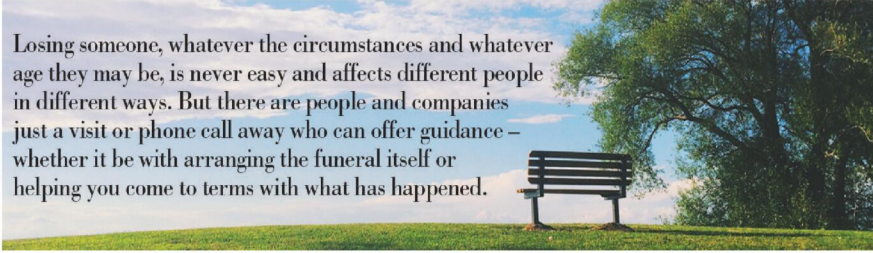
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Advertisement Key: ADVSTD = Wider Publicity, DEP = Departure, FPS = Footpath Setting, LBS = Listed Building Setting, MAJ = Major Development.

25/00369/FUL LBS
Site: Land Adjacent, Holmes Lane, Lower Bentley, Worcestershire.

Proposal: Demolition of Existing Field Shelter and Erection of Stables and Hay Barn.

26/00218/OUT MAJ ADVSTD FPS DEP
Site: Land At Brake Lane, Brake Lane, Hagley, Worcestershire.

Proposal: Outline planning application for the development of up to 111 dwellings (Use Class C3) including public open space and associated infrastructure; means of access (all matters reserved apart from access). The proposed development does not accord with the provisions of the development plan in force in the area to which the application relates.

25/00492/FUL DEP
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 hardstanding and construction of a 1.0m timber fence. (Retrospective). The proposed development does not accord with the provisions of the development plan in force in the area to which the application relates.

25/00844/FUL DEP ADVSTD FPS
Site: St Aidan's Church, Station Road, Wychall, Worcestershire B47 6AG.

Proposal: Demolition of church and erection of a dwelling house and garage. 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 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

STRATFORD-ON-AVON DISTRICT COUNCIL Council Tax Premiums for Second Homes

Stratford-on-Avon District Council's Council approved the introduction of council tax premiums for second homes across the District from 1 April 2027.

This follows national changes enabling councils in England to apply an additional charge of up to 100% on second homes, defined as properties that are substantially furnished but not used as anyone's sole or main residence.

Stratford on Avon District has over 850 second homes, representing more than 1% of the District's entire housing stock. Raising the cost of owning a second home is intended to encourage some properties back into the housing market.

Increasing the supply of homes for local residents remains a priority within the Council Plan, which commits to delivering "affordable, well built and maintained homes" and making decisions in the broader public interest.

A formal consultation on the proposed premium was carried out between 15 December 2025 and 2 February 2026.

- 589 online responses were received
- 8 paper questionnaires were submitted
- 14 additional responses were received via letter or email
- All 859 second home owners were contacted directly
- The consultation was shared widely through local press, social media, the Citizens' Panel, parish and town councils, and the residents' email newsletter

The consultation report is available for the public to view at <https://www.stratford.gov.uk/council-tax/council-tax-premiums-on-second-homes-consultation.cfm>

All second home owners affected by the change will receive written notification before 31 March 2026. Across the summer, the Council will also be holding some advice clinics for residents who want to understand in more detail what this means for them and if any exceptions apply to them.

The 100% premium will then be implemented from 1 April 2027, in line with statutory requirements to provide one year's notice before changes take effect.

Stratford-on-Avon District Council
Elizabeth House, Church Street, Stratford-upon-Avon, CV37 6HX

PUBLIC NOTICES

Goods Vehicle Operator's Licence

Walon Ltd of Sandall Bridge, Long Sandall, Doncaster, DN12 4SF is applying to change an existing licence as follows: To add an operating centre to keep 10 goods vehicles and 10 trailers at Bransons Cross Truck Park & Cafe, Bransons Cross Farm, Beoley Lane, Redditch, B98 9DP.

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, Quarry House, Quarry Hill, Leeds, LS2 7UE stating their reasons, within 21 days of this notice. A Guide to Making Representations is available at www.gov.uk/object-hgv-operator-licensing.

26/00218/OUT MAJ ADVSTD FPS DEP
Site: Land At Brake Lane, Brake Lane, Hagley, Worcestershire.

Proposal: Outline planning application for the development of up to 111 dwellings (Use Class C3) including public open space and associated infrastructure; means of access (all matters reserved apart from access). The proposed development does not accord with the provisions of the development plan in force in the area to which the application relates.

25/00492/FUL DEP
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 hardstanding and construction of a 1.0m timber fence. (Retrospective). The proposed development does not accord with the provisions of the development plan in force in the area to which the application relates.

25/00844/FUL DEP ADVSTD FPS
Site: St Aidan's Church, Station Road, Wychall, Worcestershire B47 6AG.

Proposal: Demolition of church and erection of a dwelling house and garage. 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 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

SHIRLEY EILEEN TAYLOR (Deceased)

Pursuant to the Trustee Act 1925 any persons having a claim against or an interest in the Estate of the above named, late of 12 Gossey Close, Astwood Bank, Redditch, Worcestershire, B98 6AS, who died on 17/11/2025, are required to send written particulars thereof to the undersigned on or before 29/05/2026, after which date the Estate will be distributed having regard only to the claims and interests of which they have had notice.

Solar Legal Limited, Strand House, 70 The Strand, Bromsgrove, Worcestershire, B61 8DQ

PUBLIC NOTICES

MAVIS ELIZABETH ESSON (Deceased)

Pursuant to the Trustee Act 1925 anyone with a claim against or an interest in the Estate of the deceased, late of 8 Nuffield Drive, Droitwich, WR9 0DJ, who died on 18/06/2025, must send written details to the address below by 28/05/2026, after which the Estate will be distributed with regard only to claims and interests notified.

Anthony Collins Solicitors LLP, 134 Edmund Street, Birmingham, B3 2ES. Ref: CS3.0721.44.0004

PUBLIC NOTICES

Goods Vehicle Operator's Licence

Gareth Boast trading as Lincs Haulage of Woodmere Pastures, Droitwich Road, Hanbury, B60 4DD is applying for a licence to use Woodmere Pastures, Droitwich Road, Hanbury, B60 4DD as an operating centre for 2 goods vehicles and 1 trailer.

Owners or occupiers of land (including buildings) near the operating centre 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-licensing.

PUBLIC NOTICES

Goods Vehicle Operator's Licence

121 Grab Hire Ltd of Mayfield Bungalow, 332a Stourbridge Rd, Catshill, Bromsgrove, B61 9LJ is applying to change an existing licence as follows:

To add an operating centre to keep 8 goods vehicles and 0 trailers at Home Farm, Mill Lane, Wychall, Bromsgrove, B61 0BX. Owners or occupiers of land (including buildings) near the operating centres who believe that their use or enjoyment of that land would be affected, should make written representations to the Traffic Commissioner at Quarry House, Quarry Hill, Leeds, LS2 7UE stating their reasons, within 21 days of this notice. Representatives must at the same time send a copy of their representations to the applicant at the address given at the top of this notice. A Guide to Making Representations is available at www.gov.uk/object-hgv-operator-licensing.

Applications for a licence to use Woodmere Pastures, Droitwich Road, Hanbury, B60 4DD as an operating centre for 2 goods vehicles and 1 trailer.



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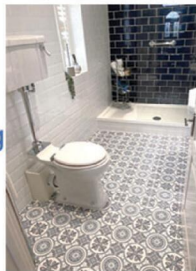
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New GT models

MERCEDES have launched two new performance models off the back of their concept AMG GT track sport.

It forms the basis for the new Mercedes-AMG GT3 and the future Mercedes-AMG GT Black Series – the current GT family is thus being expanded by two models.

With this project, the performance and sports car brand from Affalterbach once again underlines its ambition to set new standards in both Customer Racing and on the road.

The road-legal variant of the concept car serves as a homologation model for the GT3 successor.

The name "TRACK SPORT" was chosen deliberately - as a bridge between the uncom-

promising track performance of the Mercedes-AMG GT3 and the extreme yet road-legal performance that has always characterised the Black Series models.

Since October 2025, the prototype - camouflaged with yellow-green and red accents - has been undergoing extensive dynamic testing on test tracks and racetracks. In addition to the in-house development track in Immendingen, this has included Bilster Berg, Portimão and Montebelco.

With the start of the testing phase on the Nürburgring Nordschleife, the next stage of development is now underway.

Also the colours are now clearly defined - red will in future represent the Mercedes-

AMG GT3 as a central element of the Mercedes-AMG Motorsport colour scheme, whilst yellow-green will represent the Mercedes-AMG GT Black Series.

The Mercedes-AMG GT3 marks the logical evolution of Mercedes-AMG's successful Customer Racing Programme.

The foundations for the brand's Customer Racing commitment were laid in 2010.

The first full racing season followed in 2011 with the Mercedes-Benz SLS AMG GT3. This success story has been consistently continued with the Mercedes-AMG GT3 from 2016 and the Evo version from 2020.

The decision to develop a successor to the GT3 led to the establishment of Affalterbach Racing GmbH – a wholly-owned subsidiary of Mercedes-AMG – which, together with Mercedes-AMG Motorsport, is responsible for the development and construction of the new vehicle.

The new GT3 is currently in an intensive development phase. The aim is to continue the successful Customer Racing legacy whilst setting new standards in performance, safety and competitiveness.

Power, endurance and boundless performance - that describes the pinnacle of the Mercedes-AMG range. Since 2006, selected models have borne the coveted 'Black Series' designation.

As is well known, AMG's roots lie in motor racing. In 1967, it was the visionary idea of founders Hans Werner Aufrecht and Erhard Melcher to develop cars based on Mercedes vehicles that could meet the performance demands of professional motor racing. The focus was on transferring racing DNA to the road.

A key model in this development was the Mercedes-Benz SLK 55 AMG. With its powerful 360 hp 5.5-litre V8 engine, it demonstrated its impressive performance in Formula 1, amongst other places, as the official FIA F1 Safety Car.

Further details on both vehicles will be announced at a later date.



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Spa drop points in title race ahead of cup final showdown in Hereford

by Aaron Sutcliffe
aaron.sutcliffe@bullivantmedia.com

FOOTBALL: DROITWICH Spa's title hopes took a blow following a 2-2 draw against bottom side Lydney Town in midweek.

Spa twice fell behind against the division's basement club as James Baldwin and Alex Dugmore struck to rescue a point for the Saltmen at the King George Playing Fields.

The result means Droitwich slip to third in the Hellenic League Premier Division table, five points behind league leaders Slimbridge.

Spa survived an early scare as Ibrahim Olateju failed to find the net from close range.

However, the visitors stunned Andy Crowther's side on 14 minutes when Jordi Sheen scored a sublime overhead kick to leave Joe Stockton with no chance.

Spa searched for an equaliser as Cory Rudd shot narrowly wide before the same player forced Alex Causon into a smart save.

And Jay Sauntson then saw his effort cleared off the line while Dugmore and Charlie Tilley caused plenty of problems for the Lydney defence to no avail.

Tilley scuffed a volley moments before the break as Spa trailed by a single goal at the interval.

However, the Saltmen eventually drew level on 56 minutes when Baldwin's cross-



Alex Dugmore wins a flick-on against Highworth. Picture by Mathew Mason.

shot slipped through the hands of Causon in torrential conditions.

Spa looked to take the lead moments later as Dugmore saw his header saved while Rohan Levy headed over the crossbar.

However, Lydney won a contentious penalty 10 minutes from time when Olateju went to ground in the box under a challenge from Levy.

And Olateju sent the resulting penalty down the middle of the goal to put Lydney back in front.

Spa quickly found an equaliser when Dugmore headed in Baldwin's cross as the Saltmen drew level for a second time.

However, despite chances at both ends, the game ended all square in a blow to Spa's title hopes.

That came after Droitwich claimed a 1-0 win against Highworth Town last weekend. Rudd scored the game's only goal on the hour mark for Spa at the King George Playing Fields.

The Saltmen broke the deadlock against the run of play on 60 minutes as Rudd fired home from outside the penalty area.

Droitwich are next in action against Hereford Pegasus in the final of the Challenge Cup on Sunday, March 29 with kick-off at 4.30pm at Old School Lane.



Cyclists compete at Battle on the Beach

CYCLING: DROITWICH Cycling Club kicked off the 2026 season in style as the club's riders competed in both off-road and road racing events.

A team of eight Droitwich CC riders took on the Battle on the Beach race - the United Kingdom's largest off-road cycling event.

The event attracted almost 800 entrants and took place at Pembrey Country Park in South Wales.

The demanding course combines long stretches of sand with gravel sections and technical single-track.

Droitwich's Rikky Hughes secured a favourable start position and held his own among pro riders to finish 34th

in his category.

And Viv Elliott also produced a notable ride as she competed following a recent illness having only taken up racing in the veterans' category last year.

Droitwich riders also competed on the road as Joe Tyler followed up a solid ride at the Inkberrow Road Race by picking up points at the Rainbows charity criterium in Leicester and rode alongside teammate Marcus Bufton.

For more information regarding the club's events throughout the year, visit: www.droitwichcyclingclub.co.uk

Droitwich Cycling Club made a strong start to the new cycling season. Picture by Martin Stanley.

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