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Friday, June 20th 2025 Week 25

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'We'll make town's markets great again'

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

THE NEW operator for Kidderminster Markets has vowed to return them to their former glory after being handed the contract to take it over from next month.

Bescot Promotions Ltd, run by brothers Scott and Spencer Evans, was awarded the contract by Kidderminster Town Council after a competitive tender process found it to be the preferred option.

Scott told the Standard: "We are a family-run company which has been operating for more than 30 years and me and Spencer have been part of it for more than 20.

"It is a kind of home-coming for us as we used to help run Kidderminster Market when we first started out.

"Right now, it's not as big as it used to be - it was a larger market with more stalls and we want to get it back to how it was.

"With our experience we know what makes a good market and we are confident we can get it thriving again."

He added Bescot Promotions had good links with a large number and wide variety of traders and good platforms, including a website and social media, to get the word out.

"We analyse what shops are in the area and work with those to ensure there are not any clashes, making sure we give the town exactly what it needs."



He added they were delighted to be working with Kidderminster Town Council, bringing a fresh approach to help both the market and town centre flourish over the coming months.

'Fresh energy'

Kidderminster Town Council said: "This collaboration marks a major step forward in enhancing the town centre's appeal, supporting local

businesses and attracting residents and visitors alike.

"The initiative aims to bring fresh energy, innovation and a variety of quality traders to Kidderminster's historic market town."

It added Bescot Promotions was a leading market operator with a strong track record of delivering successful and engaging markets across the region.

Adam Stockhall, Kidderminster Town Council's public realm and operations manager, said the move would bring economic benefits, attract visitors to the town centre and support local businesses with increasing footfall.

He added there would be community and social benefits as the markets would provide a different range of goods that perhaps the shops in the town did not already offer.

And the market would act as a social space, provide a sense of community, lead to urban regeneration and improve public space.

The revitalised Kidderminster Markets will officially launch under the new management on Thursday, July 10.

They will work in line with the usual Thursday and Saturday markets and there will be scope in the future to support local events.

* What do you think? What kind of stalls would you like to see line up on or return to Kidderminster Markets? What memories do you have of how it used to be? Email: editor@kiddermisterstandard.co.uk with your views.

A new operator has been chosen for Kidderminster Market. Picture courtesy of Kidderminster Town Council. s

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The Flying Scotsman on schedule to come steaming in



The 'Flying Scotsman' at the Severn Valley Railway in 2016. Picture by Ian Cawthorne. s

THE WORLD famous 'Flying Scotsman' will haul the first passenger train along the length of the 16-mile Severn Valley Railway when it fully re-opens.

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

Locomotive 60103 will undertake the journey when the northernmost section is reunited with the rest of the line on July 25.

The serious embankment collapse at the end of January saw the isolation of the SVR's northern terminus at Bridgnorth.

The 'Flying Scotsman' will head up the first service of the day from Kidderminster, crossing the repaired section of the embankment

at Mor Brook bridge and arriving to a triumphant and long-awaited welcome at Bridgnorth station.

The historic and much-loved locomotive will haul three return trips a day on the Friday, July 25, and again on the Saturday and Sunday July 26 and 27, as part of the SVR's 'Swingin' Sixties' event which celebrates the 60th anniversary of the line in preservation.

Jonathan 'Gus' Dunster, the SVR's managing director, said: "What a coup this is.

"Opportunities to travel behind this iconic loco on a heritage line are rare. It is incredibly exciting to have the best-known locomotive in the world at the head of our first full-line service this season."

He thanked the National Railway Museum for agreeing to the visit and Northern Steam Operations Limited and DB Cargo for their assistance.

"We'll be pairing 'Flying Scotsman' with the SVR's set of Gresley teak carriages to make sure we celebrate both the SVR's 60th anniversary and the reuniting of our full line in the most stunning way possible."

Craig Bentley, National Railway Museum director, said: "We are delighted to make this visit from the world's most famous steam locomotive possible and to help Severn Valley Railway mark an important moment in its recovery."

Tickets for a return trip behind 60103 'Flying Scotsman' are £45 and must be pre-booked.

Tickets booked for the Saturday and Sunday also allow unlimited travel on all other 'Swingin' Sixties' services for the rest of the day.

Tickets to attend the 'Swingin' Sixties' event without travel behind 'Flying Scotsman' are bookable

now, and all passengers will get plenty of opportunity to see the iconic visitor in action.

When the 60103 locomotive last visited the SVR in 2016 after restoration, it was a sell-out success and bosses are expecting a similar high demand for tickets.

The 'Swingin' Sixties' event will feature three other steam trains, a heritage diesel-hauled service, live music at Kidderminster and Highley and displays of classic cars at Kidderminster, Highley and Bridgnorth. Plus there will be a Ferris wheel at Highley. Visit: svr.co.uk for more.



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Embankment work on course to reconnect line

THE PROGRESS on repairs to the Severn Valley Railway's (SVR) embankment which suffered a landslide is gaining momentum and progressing well.

Specialist engineering contractor CML took over the site at the beginning of the month and has already excavated more than 2,500 tonnes of material from the track formation and embankment. It has also completed temporary culverting works on the watercourse below the bridge to facilitate full access to the embankment for plant and machinery.

This will allow further excavation to take place around the collapsed wing wall of the bridge and then the next stage will see a concrete footing installed.

CML will carefully lift in more than 100 huge Legato concrete blocks, each weighing around 2.5 tonnes, onto this to form a solid structure.

The blocks are already on site, ready for use.

Next, CML will backfill the embankment structure, using alternate layers of geogrid matting and imported aggregate, to tie the new wall into the embankment.

Large L-shaped concrete units will then be placed across the top of the bridge to form a strong base to carry the track bed, ready for the reinstatement of the rail itself.

The SVR's project manager Antony Bartlam said: "It really is a very clever solution indeed and CML's progress is impressive, helped by the recent good weather."

CML contracts manager, Stuart Hale, said: "This really is something different, not just a run-of-the-mill embankment failure."



The contractor's workers covering the culverted watercourse. Picture by Antony Bartlam. s

A robust and permanent solution which could be built at speed, be affordable for the heritage line and comply with the local authority's watercourse mitigation measures was needed.

"We're very glad to now be at the 'boots-on-the-ground' stage and looking forward to getting this finished, hopefully with no undue problems."

The SVR's managing director, Jonathan 'Gus' Dunster added it was satisfying to see real progress now being made after frustrating - but necessary - delays.

Gus added: "As soon as the embankment failure happened at the end of January, we saw a tremendous groundswell of support from the public."

"Thousands of people have donated, and together with money from our insurance company, this has meant we could go ahead with this essential repair work to re-unite the whole length of the line."

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Talented football coach Grace grabs her second FA accolade

by **Tristan Harris**
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A GIFTED student who hopes to become a professional football coach has netted a second top award from the Worcestershire FA in as many years.

Grace Gallagher-Kennett has won female pathway Coach of the Year in the association's grassroots football awards after scooping Volunteer of the Year last year.

The 18-year-old has just completed her studies at Kidderminster's Baxter College sixth form in PE, applied science and business and is hoping to start a coaching and performance degree course at Wolverhampton University in September.

When injury forced Grace to stop playing football, she turned her passion for the game to coaching and at just 16 took a team of under 10 girls from beginners to cup finalists in their first season with Kidderminster Lions FC.

'Passionate and caring'

Parents of the young players were quick to nominate her for the Volunteer of the Year award for her ability, passion and caring nature in supporting the girls and now, as successful u11s, their parents again nominated her for her coaching, leadership and being an influential role model.

Grace, who has also taught foot-



ball to year sevens at Baxter College and to local Brownies, where she is a young leader, hopes to be able to stay with her Lions team whilst at university, describing them as 'like a family'.

She said: "It was so nice to be nominated by the parents and to win the volunteer award and now this, which is a much bigger category, will really help me."

"The awards' ceremony was on my birthday, making it a very special celebration."

Grace, a talented winger, was diagnosed with a hip problem whilst playing for the Harriers and West Bromwich Academy but, undeterred, she jumped at the chance to start coaching.

'Amazing achievement'

Liz Spare, sixth form curriculum and standards lead, said: "To win two such prestigious awards in successive years is amazing and we are so proud of Grace and all she has achieved."

"She has been a joy to have as part of our Baxter family and showed huge resilience in overcoming the disappointment of being unable to continue playing and then discovering her talent for coaching."

"She is the embodiment of the 'Baxter Way'."

"Grace looks set for a great future as a star football coach."

"We will follow her progress with great interest and wish her the very best."

Grace Gallagher-Kennett with her award. s

A MAN was arrested on suspicion of electric vehicle cable theft following a police pursuit in Kidderminster.

Acting on intelligence, officers from West Mercia Police's Operational Policing Unit (OPU) followed a suspected stolen car around 11pm last Wednesday.

The black Renault Megane failed to stop for police and a pursuit was authorised.

Just before 1am last Thursday morning, OPU deployed a stinger successfully, however the car attempted to continue at speed.

Officers then used a TPAC (Tactical

Pursuit and Containment) manoeuvre to box the vehicle in and successfully bring it to a halt.

One man, believed to be the driver, fled the scene and an investigation has been launched to find him.

The other person in the car, an 18-year-old man, was arrested on suspicion of theft of EV cables and has been bailed while enquiries continue.

No-one was injured during the incident, and the black Renault was seized as part of the investigation.



Toasting 25 years

THE BEWDLEY Town Council Macebearer David Whale has been recognised for his voluntary long service at a meeting last week.

David has loyally served the town at many civic events over the past 25 years.

The Mayor of Bewdley, Coun Nicole Harper, thanked Dave for his years of service and presented him with a 25-year pendant to mark the occasion.

Dave was joined in celebration by civic dignitaries, past mayors, friends and family.



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LEFT - Pete Smith and his Highland. 2525001MMR7

RIGHT - Children meet alpacas. 2525001MMR5

Pictures by Marcus Mingins



Showjumping attracted quite the crowd. 2525001MMR11

Show's animal magic

THOUSANDS of visitors flocked to the annual Malvern Three Counties Show for a celebration of countryside and rural life last weekend (June 13 to 16).

The action packed festival entertained over 90,000 visitors with thousands of animals, food and drink, countryside shopping, celebrities and special guests and much more.

The stars of the show were the 8,000 animals which were

by **Sonny Rackham**
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showcased through livestock and horse equine parades. Other animal based entertainment included birds of prey, gun dogs, and sheep shearing competitions.

Family activities included sporting spectacles such as rock climbing, rugby, lacrosse and cricket. Other activities including cooking workshops, live music, machinery demonstrations and adven-

ture sports as well as engaging workshops on science, technology, English and maths.

Rounding out the weekend of entertainment included high octane motocross displays, tractor machinery showcases, British Army parachute display teams and horse carriage driving.

The festival, at the Three Counties Showground in Malvern, attracts nearly 100,000 visitors every year and is one of the largest livestock and equine shows in England.

Re@ d @l l @b out it!

Check out our e-edition at kidderminsterstandard.co.uk

£3million plan for Brinton Park to bring new pavilion and more

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

WORK has started on a £3million plan to improve Kidderminster's Brinton Park.

The project, which is funded by £2.4million from the National Lottery Heritage Fund and \$460,000 from Wyre Forest District Council's Evergreen Fund, will enhance facilities, protect local wildlife, and celebrate the park's rich heritage.

The Sons of Rest Pavilion is a key part of the project. Due to serious structural problems, the building

will need to be demolished and rebuilt.

The new building will reflect the historic character of the original pavilion while offering improved community facilities including a new cafe space, terrace, ornamental pond and landscaping.

Work has now started on the construction of an artificial badger set,

which will relocate badgers already living in the park, a factor that has caused delays to the project. This will allow work on the Sons of Rest Pavilion to begin in the Summer.

Coun Tracey Onslow, Wyre Forest District Council's Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure, Arts and Community Safety said: "It is great to see that work is already

underway at Brinton Park.

"This first stage is vital work which needs to be completed to both protect local wildlife and allow us to move ahead with the main improvements in the park."

Visit: brintonpark.com for more on Brinton Park, the proposals and the latest updates.

Premier League Primary Stars Holy Trinity turn out for Harriers in final



Holy Trinity School represented Kidderminster Harriers at Molineux. Picture courtesy of Kidderminster Harriers FC.

A SCHOOL from Kidderminster represented Kidderminster Harriers at the Premier League Primary

Stars under-11 national girls final at Wolverhampton Wanderers. Pupils from Holy Trinity School

represented Harriers in the national final after winning the qualifying tournament at West Bromwich Albion earlier this year.

Some 20 schools took part in the Premier League Primary Stars national final at Molineux.

Holy Trinity played against schools representing Liverpool, Brighton and Hove Albion, Brentford and Huddersfield Town.

The pupils experienced walking out of the tunnel onto the pitch and had their photo taken with the Premier League trophy in the home dressing room.

Kidderminster Harriers community trust coach, Becky Butler, said: "The girls have done so well to get through the national final."

"As a club we are proud of how the girls conducted themselves throughout the day."

"They should be proud of them-



Holy Trinity School pupils stand with the Premier League trophy. Picture courtesy of Kidderminster Harriers FC.

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Merleen made MBE for voluntary work helping the county's deaf

by Sonny Rackham
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A WORCESTERSHIRE based hospital volunteer has landed one of the highest Royal honours for her services to the deaf and hearing impaired community across the county.

Merleen Watson, who volunteers with Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust, will be bestowed an MBE in the King's Birthday Honours list.

The volunteer, who has been a member of the Public and Patient Forum at the Trust since November 2023, has been recognised for her outstanding work to improve deaf awareness at the county's hospitals, as well as her valuable work with several other organisations and charities, over the last 15 years.

Her continued work at the Trust helps to ensure the needs of hearing-impaired patients, staff and volunteers at the Alexandra, Kidderminster and Worcestershire Royal Hospitals are met, as well as helping the Trust to meet the requirements of the Accessible Information Standard.

Merleen also works as a peer support volunteer at Hearing Link and as a speaker for Hearing Dogs alongside her 'outstanding and brilliant' pooches – previously Grace

and now Zyla.

Since 2011 they have given and been involved in over 550 talks and activities, raised more than £90,000 and spread the word about Hearing Dogs and Hearing Link to more than 15,000 people.

Between them, Grace and Zyla have encouraged the sponsorship of over 110 puppies, each trained to enable their recipient to be the very best version of themselves that they can be.

Merleen also remains committed to maintaining her links with Wychavon District Council, Healthwatch Worcestershire, Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, and Sensory Matters to directly support their hearing impairment and British Sign Language service users and clients. She also supports Silverstone F1 Circuit and Museum to better support hearing impaired staff and visitors, and continue to challenge non-compliance of the Equality Act 2010 for reasonable adjustments for all those with hearing impairment and access issues for Assistance Dogs.

Merleen, who started volunteering following early retirement when her own deteriorating hearing impairment proved too challenging in her work as a senior education officer, said she was stunned when the letter informing her of her honour dropped through the letterbox.

She added: "I have only been

Merleen Watson MBE and her hearing dog Zyla. s



able to raise awareness, challenge, and hold people or organisations to account because of all the folk – including my husband Paul, my audiologist Tom Dixon, and the colleagues across the organisations I work with – who have encouraged, shared, challenged, supported, and helped me over the years. To all of you, a heartfelt thank you – this recognition is for all of you as well.

"There is still so much to do, particularly in the promotion of assistive technology to enhance communication in everyday situations; to encourage hearing-impaired people to get support for their hearing loss to avoid devastating health issues in later life; and encourage everyone who has a hearing aid to wear it, to enable them to reconnect with life."

Sarah Shingler, chief nursing officer at the hospital trust championed Merleen as an 'ambassador of positive change'.

She added: "I would like to thank her for her continued focus on improving accessibility in our hospitals. Volunteers can be unsung heroes and I was so pleased to find out Merleen has been awarded this recognition."

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King's honours for the county

TEN Worcestershire residents have been recognised in the King's Birthday Honours list for 2025.

Worcestershire's dedication to sporting excellence, rural heritage, and exceptional community service has been honoured in the prestigious list.

Ten outstanding individuals from the county have been acknowledged for their contributions across various sectors, celebrating their dedication and impact.

The Lord-Lieutenant of Worcestershire, Mrs Beatrice Grant, sent her congratulations to all being recognised.

She said, "It is wonderful to see ten members of our community honoured for their outstanding contributions to public life and their unwavering dedication to helping others."

"I extend my heartfelt congratulations and deepest gratitude to each of them for their invaluable service to society and to our county."

Recipient of an MBE for services to sustainable floristry, Shane Connolly, from the Malvern Hills district, is a sustainable floral designer and florist who arranged the British grown flowers at Their Majesties coronation.

She said: "I am deeply honoured to be awarded an MBE in The King's Birthday Honours. Sustainable Floristry is something I am passionate about and this award brings it into even greater focus."

Both The King and The Queen have been supporters of British Grown, seasonal flow-

ers for many years and that encourages us all enormously."

Recipient of a BEM for services to environmental education, Karen Blanchfield, from Stourport, has been recognised her work founding the Little Litter Warriors, a project providing schools with litter picking workshops and activities to help children learn about the environmental damage of litter across the county.

She said: "I'm truly honoured and humbled to be receiving this award, and to receive this recognition for something I care so much about is amazing."

"I'm really passionate about helping our Worcestershire communities in particular, the younger generation to learn about litter and about keeping the world we live in clean and tidy, both now and in the future."

Among the other recipients are Melanie Clarke OBE (services to road networks), Hannah Sidaway OBE (services to law and order), Steven Davies MBE (services to sport), Geoffrey Sansome MBE (services to farming and voluntary sector), Merleen Watson MBE (services to deaf and hard of hearing community), Richard Hayhow BEM (services to young people with learning disabilities and artists), Patricia Neal BEM (services to grass roots netball) and Jane Poynder BEM (services to sport).

Visit <https://www.gov.uk/honours> for more information.



Sonja Sinclair-Elechi, who has worked for HWFRS for 30 years, has been awarded the King's Fire Service Medal for Distinguished Service.



Sonja's long service recognised

A LONG-SERVING member of the support staff at Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service (HWFRS) has been recognised in the King's Birthday Honours.

Sonja Sinclair-Elechi, who has worked for HWFRS for 30 years, has been awarded the King's Fire Service Medal for Distinguished Service.

She joined HWFRS in June 1995 in an administrative capacity but in 2005 she spearheaded the formation of a Critical Incident Support Team (CIST) to provide a professional debriefing and trauma support after high-impact events.

Now, 20 years on, she manages, along with two co-ordinators, a team of 29 professionals, and in 2018, she established the Welfare Team, supporting colleagues

facing stress, anxiety and a host of well-being challenges.

Sonja said: "I am truly humbled and deeply honoured to receive the KFSM."

"Knowing that those who nominated me believed I was deserving of such recognition is both touching and inspiring."

"I feel incredibly blessed."

Chief Fire Officer Jon Pryce, who also holds the King's Fire Service Medal said: "I am immensely proud that Sonja has been recognised."

"Sonja has for many years developed and overseen HWFRS's welfare, staff support and counselling team, much of it in her own time, as well as working full-time in our payroll dept for 30 years."



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The national competition where even the winners were crying



The National Town Crier Champion for 2025, Jeremy Holland from Cinderford. s

by **Sonny Rackham**
sonny.rackham@bullivantmedia.com

A FIERCELY competitive battle of Town Criers from across the nation was hosted in Bromsgrove over the weekend as the town's crier celebrated a momentous personal milestone.

The National Town Crier Championship, hosted by Bromsgrove's ever present crier Kevin Ward, welcomed 25 criers from across the UK and even one from Australia on Saturday (June 14) to battle it out for a trophy.

Following a procession of all the competitors, joined by the Bailiff and members of the Bromsgrove Court Leet, the first cry "My Home Town" was heard in Bromsgrove High Street.

Each competitor then performed two rounds of cries, one of which had to focus on their own home town. The cries were heard by many onlookers and scored by seven judges.

There was a break for lunch where Criers mingled with shoppers and enjoyed lunch at a café or restaurant of their choice, thanks to sponsorship from the Bromsgrove Society.

After lunch it was all aboard a vintage Midland Red bus cour-



The 25 town criers who descended on Bromsgrove for the historic annual championship. s

tesy of the Transport Museum at Wythall for a journey to Avoncroft Museum.

On the steps at the back of Guesten Hall, overlooking the site, the second round of the Championship was held. The cry was titled "Why Visit Museums?"

At 5pm, the winners were announced and the trophies handed out, with local dignitaries present to hand out the awards.

The Carole Williams Trophy for the Best Ambassador was awarded by chairman of Bromsgrove Councillor Samuel Evans to Studley Town Crier, Adrian Smith.

Town Crier Paul Gough, from Nuneaton and Bedworth, presented the trophy to the Championship in memory of his late partner Carole Williams, who has also been a town crier.

MP for Bromsgrove, Bradley Thomas handed out trophies for the best four criers - judged based on accuracy, clarity, content, diction,

inflection and volume.

The National Champion was crowned as Jeremy Holland from Cinderford, with John Criffiths from Sleaford in second place and Mark Wylie from Calne in third.

The Bob Walker trophy for the best placed crier who hasn't won a Guild Competition before, was awarded to Judy Campbell from Echuca Moama, Australia.

Other awards were given for best dressed crier, best dressed couple, and best dressed consort.

Event host and Bromsgrove's Town Crier for the past 40 years, Kevin Ward presented thank you gifts to the judges and his organising team.

He said: "What a stunningly successful championship we had and it's all down to the help, support and hard work of the organising team and judges."

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It's good to talk on this bench

A 'HAPPY to Chat' bench has been installed at the Kidderminster Hospital and Treatment Centre.

Inspired by the national 'Happy to Chat' scheme, the bench offers a space for companionship.

Local resident Heather Prangley led the plans for the installation of the bench in conjunction with Worcestershire Acute Hospitals Charity and Kidderminster Specsavers Manufacturing and Distribution Team, which kindly sponsored it.

The bench, situated outside of the Minor Injuries Unit, provides a welcoming space for the community offering a moment for respite and of course a space to chat. The bench is positioned in a space for everyone to use, be it hospital staff, patients or visitors.

Heather, who holds the British Citizen Award for her community work, said it was very generous of Kidderminster Specsavers Manufacturing and Distribution Team to sponsor the bench.

"The aim of a designated bench is to let the community know that anyone sitting



Staff from Worcestershire Acute Hospitals Charity and Kidderminster Specsavers.

there is happy to start a conversation.

"May those who sit on this new bench make a connection which helps their mental wellbeing and may it also foster community interactions".

Rachel Baldwin, operations manager for Specsavers Kidderminster Distributions site added they were committed to supporting the local community and were proud to provide this 'Happy to Chat' bench to Kidderminster Hospital and Treatment Centre.

"Mental health matters, and sometimes, a simple conversation can make all the

difference.

"Don't sit in silence."

Sue Hayes, hospital engagement officer for Worcestershire Acute Hospitals Charity, said: "As a charity we understand the benefits of ensuring spaces are available for our patients, communities, staff and visitors to have room for rest, reflection and connection.

"We hope a 'Happy to Chat' bench within our hospital grounds will help the surrounding community to feel further connected to their local hospital and each other."



Coun Vicky Caulfield donated £300 to the Incredible Edible Kidderminster community project which sees food grown sustainably, s

New project provides food for thought

A KIDDERMINSTER councillor has provided £300 for the town's Incredible Edible Project which promotes sustainable community-led food growing in public spaces.

The funding was presented by Coun Vicky Caulfield, who represents the Green Party in Blakebrook and Habberley South, via her ward grant.

The cash will go towards the installation of three new planters, each showcasing vibrant vegetable displays, along with informational signs to engage and educate the public.

These planters will not only brighten up the local area but also offer residents the opportunity to connect with nature, learn about growing food, and enjoy fresh produce.

Coun Caulfield said: "Incredible Edible is a growing movement across the country and one Kate Spohrer from WFGA and I wanted to bring to Kidderminster.

"I've heard from many local groups who are already growing food and wanted to build on that to provide free, healthy food

across the town.

"Please help yourself to any produce you see in the planters.

"We are looking for more groups and businesses to be involved in this initiative, so do get in touch.

"I'm very pleased that Twigs and the town council have been able to give their support to the project and get Incredible Edible Kidderminster officially started as part of SustFest."

The Plants were provided by Twigs (The Emily Jordan Foundation) and will be watered by Kidderminster BID which is working in partnership with Kidderminster Town Council.

The planters will be located in visible, accessible spots within the town, encouraging passers-by to interact with the displays and learn more about the benefits of local food growing.

The grant reflects ongoing efforts to foster greener, more resilient neighbourhoods through small but meaningful investments in grassroots community projects.



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Moving ‘Remember Our River’ event gets celebrity’s backing



The coffin of Hope in Jubilee Gardens. s

MORE than 250 processed through Bewdley on Sunday as part of the Campaign Against River Pollution (CARP).

The group walked in silence and behind a coffin to ‘mourn the death of the river’ which they say had been killed by a toxic mixture of sewage and agricultural pollution. Among them were the Red Rebels - an international performance activist troupe dedicated to illuminating the global environmental crisis.

The Remember Our River event, part of Wyre Forest SustFest, also saw many more people join the procession as it reached Jubilee Gardens, sharing a positive mes-

sage of hope that ‘by working together, the situation could be made better’.

A service was conducted by local rector, Mel Beynon, accompanied by Wyre Forest Climate Choir.

Celebrity support

Local celebrity and supporter of CARP, Robert Plant, who lives close to the river, also turned out.

He said: ‘If you sit on the river bank, I challenge you to see a fish jumping, feeding.

“We can’t stand by and watch this happen. It can’t be ignored.

“It’s time that we all pull together.”

CARP said it was exactly the mes-

sage it wanted to convey.

Dee Edwards, Chair of CARP, added: “We have to build on today.

“We need more volunteers to become River Stewards - to look after a stretch of the river and report pollution to us, people to actively get involved in campaigning and writing to our MP, Severn Trent and the Environment Agency to demand change.

“This is the river that has existed well before Bewdley town grew to the town it is today.

“It brings in tourists, walkers, anglers, nature lovers.

“We want to protect and rejuvenate it.”



Robert Plant with CARP Steering Group members, Dee Edwards, Janice Bell and Trevor Ponman. s



The Red Rebels and a single drummer led the procession, followed by Rector Mel Beynon and the Coffin of Hope. s

Can you help?

CARP is a group of volunteers and to carry on this important work it also need donations to help with more chemical testing kits and campaign events like the ‘Remember Our River’ one.

Anyone interested in joining CARP should email: severncarp123@gmail.com or search for: ‘CARP Group - Communities Against River Pollution’ on Facebook.

The next big public CARP event will be on September 28 to cel-

brate World Rivers Day.

Dee added: “CARP organisers are also celebrating this week’s high court ruling preventing Shropshire Council’s planning permission for a 230,000-bird intensive poultry unit near two protected wetland sites and a mile from the banks of the Severn.

“This will help to protect our river from becoming another River Wye.”

Representatives from River Action - which brought the case - were among those supporting CARP on Sunday.

Quarter Jewellery and Malvern Goldsmiths



Quarter Jewellery (The most reasonable jewellers in Worcester) has now been open for 18 years, I have always endeavoured to run the shop as jewellers were run when I started in the jewellery trade 59 years ago. Five years ago we were lucky enough to acquire the lease of 28, Belle Vue Terrace, Great Malvern a beautifully fitted Victorian pharmacy, now reborn as Malvern Goldsmiths

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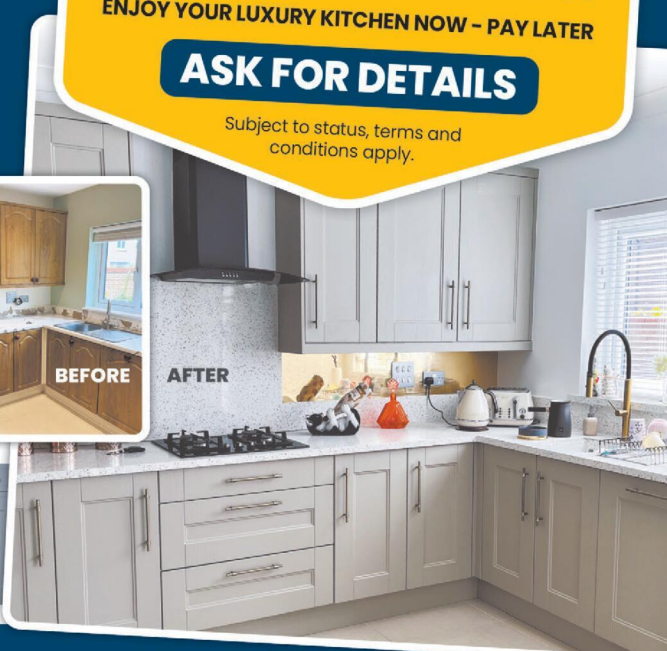
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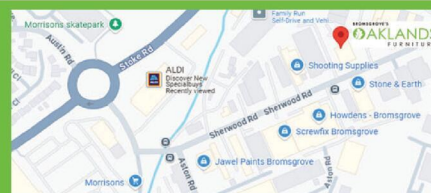
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Record scheme is huge success

by Ashleigh Osborne
ashleigh.osborne@bullivant-media.com

A NEW electronic patient record (EPR) system called Rio has successfully launched across Worcestershire Health and Care NHS Trust.

The project aims to transform care delivery across the trust's sites, as the EPR system connects multiple systems into one, where staff can access patients' health and care information quickly and securely.

Lisa Yates, the trust's director of digital and chief information officer, said: "Initial feedback from staff has been very positive and it is already helping us transform care delivery for both patients and staff."

"While we are still in the early stages, we are really excited to see what other opportunities this project brings in future."

The new system is part of a plan to streamline workflows across the organisation, reducing the administrative burden for staff and enhancing patient experiences.



The launch has also been welcomed by NHS England's Transformation Directorate, who champion how digital innovation can support better, safer care.

NHS England's Director of Digital Transformation Dermot Ryan said: "The major upgrade of the Electronic Patient Record (EPR) system at Herefordshire and Worcestershire Health and Care NHS Trust marks a significant achievement."

"By integrating multiple systems into one unified platform, this project provides the potential to boost

productivity by streamlining workflows, reducing administrative tasks, and improving data accessibility."

"It also sets the digital foundations for many innovative technologies which will further support clinical practice and enhance patient care."

"The encouraging feedback already received by the trust demonstrates the immediate impact and signals the beginning of much more benefits realisation to come."

Staff from the Older Adult Mental Health Services in Kidderminster. s



There is around 5,000km worth of grass to trim across the county. s

Staying trim during the summer

WITH THE summer months upon us, Worcestershire's grass cutting programme is now under way.

Worcestershire County Council's team has 5,000km of grass to trim.

There are 6million metres squared of rural verges and over 320,000metres squared of central reservations along its roads.

The cutting regime helps to keep roads visible for motorists but also provides a safe space for wildlife too.

Worcestershire County Council cuts less grass to make areas more friendly and protected for pollinators, however some cutting is still necessary.

At Junctions where visibility is required, grass is cut back to the full extent, whereas parallel to the road, grass will only be cut back one or two metres, leaving significant uncut areas available for wildlife.

Coun Karl Perks, Worcestershire County Council's Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Highways and Transport, said: "Although our main priority when cutting roadside verges is to ensure the safety of road users, it's important we can also support the county's pollinator populations."

"During the summer months, the roadsides grow very quickly, and we have a statutory duty to maintain them and to make sure the road network is safe."

"However, the changes implemented in recent years have seen significant improvement to biodiversity opportunities on our network."

Worcestershire County Council prides itself on being pollinator friendly and actively works to promote the protection of pollinating insects and their habitat.

Dual carriageway verges offer important linear networks for pollinators, known as 'Bee Lines'.

Reduced cutting of the central reservations has now created connections between previously isolated areas of ecological interest.

There are 46 Roadside Verge Nature Reserves designated for rare or special species and habitats across the county and all sites now receive a bespoke approach to ensure protected or rare species are fully considered when it comes to maintenance.

Anyone who wants to report a grass-cutting issue should visit: worcestershire.gov.uk/reportit to report it.





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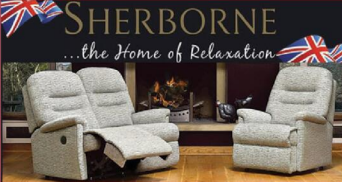
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More drug users sticking to their rehab programmes

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

A TREATMENT programme for drug users in Worcestershire has seen more than double the number of former offenders continue their treatment when they have left prison.

Many people who find themselves in that situation receive treatment while they are serving time but struggle to stick to their programme when they are released.

The Continuity of Care programme aims to stop this happening by supporting individuals to continue with this structured treatment so, when they are released, they still actively taking part in the programme back in the community.

The Safer Worcestershire Partnership, which runs the scheme, includes Public Health in Worcestershire and Police and Crime Commissioner John Campion.

It has been successful in using funding from both the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) and the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID) to support drug and alcohol treatment provider, Cranstoun.

Forming relationships



The support workers build up relationships with drug takers during their time in prison, creating bonds which lead to positive behaviours.

Once individuals leave prison, these relationships continue in the community meaning the treatment is more likely to continue.

This turnaround in former offenders continuing with their treat-

ment programme has been recognised by Public Health leaders in Worcestershire.

Worcestershire County Councillor Karen May, Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing said: "The number of people continuing with their treatment is normally quite poor but in Worcestershire, we've seen a rise to 51 per cent.

"This is a massive improvement,

from 25 per cent just a year ago to more than double in just a few short months."

Matt Burke, Cranstoun's county manager, who is commissioned to provide the on-the-ground support acknowledged this success.

He said: "This is great news. We know we're making a difference to people's lives when they come out of prison, how much this positively impacts on the local community.

"Seeing these figures proves it all the more."

West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner John Campion added, as the senior officer responsible for the Combatting Drugs Partnerships, he was pleased to be working with partners to tackle drug use.

"It's important drug users, who have often been involved in other crimes, continue to receive support to integrate back into society and prevent them from committing further offences and causing harm to communities.

"I hope that, through the Safer Worcestershire project, we are able to continue seeing an increase in the number of people using the programme."

The team are now looking for more ways to ensure the number of people engaging in community treatment continues to increase.

Matt Burke from Cranstoun, the alcohol and drug treatment for the county. s

WEST Mercia Police has announced plans to make staff cuts to save cash.

The force and its police and crime commissioner (PCC) said they 'had to make significant savings and improve efficiencies' in a statement released last week.

While police officer numbers are not set to be affected, other staff will be asked if they want to reduce their working hours or take voluntary resignation.

A statement from Chief Constable Richard Cooper and Police and Crime Commissioner John Campion said: "We believe these measures, along with a police-staff recruitment freeze, will help stabilise our financial position."

The statement added they had already made some redundancies in non-police officer roles, helping 'achieve crucial savings' with 'further reductions necessary'.

To support this, West Mercia Police is introducing two voluntary schemes to minimise the need for further compulsory redundancies this year.

The two schemes are a voluntary and temporary reduction in hours scheme, and a Mutually Agreed Resignation Scheme (MARS) allowing staff of either organisation to voluntarily resign with a lump sum payment.

Neither organisation shared details of how many positions would be affected or how much money they needed to save.

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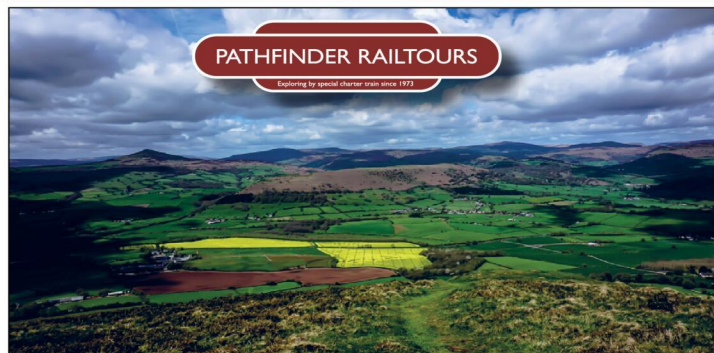
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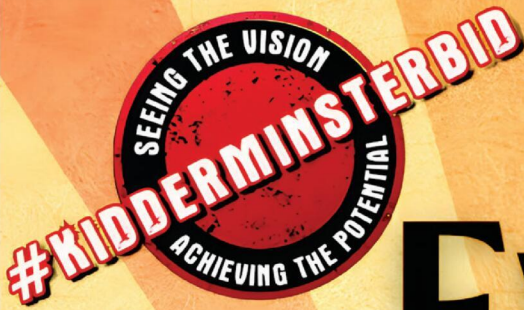
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**JULY
26TH**



MUSIC FEST 2025

Kidderminster Music Festival returns with a weekend of incredible live music across town! Don't miss Friday's main stage with Tinchy Stryder, Sweet Female Attitude, and Michelle Platnum, and 20+ acts in local venues, including top local talent like Tanya Tanya, The Dogs, Cantaloup, Chloe Mogg, Tin Drum, and Cheated England. It's set to be the town's biggest music weekend yet!

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Stay tuned for updates on the events, which will be unveiled on our event tabs!



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Rail Hub is still on track

THE MIDLANDS Rail Hub is a step closer to reality after receiving confirmation of financial backing in the Chancellor's recent spending review.

Chancellor Rachel Reeves, delivering her Comprehensive Spending Review, announced she was funding the rail upgrade which will benefit thousands across the region.

Speaking at the dispatch box, Ms Reeves said: "I am providing funding for the Midlands Rail Hub, the region's biggest and most ambitious rail improvement scheme for generations, strengthening connections from Birmingham across the West Midlands and into Wales too."

Midlands Rail Hub is a £1.75billion blueprint for faster, better and more frequent connections across the region.

Extra trains and seats

The scheme will add up to 300 additional trains and 20million extra seats on the rail network per day into or out of Birmingham and provide faster, more frequent or new rail links for over 50 locations including Bromsgrove, Worcester, Droitwich Spa, Malvern and Redditch.

Richard Parker, Mayor of the West Midlands, said: "The Midlands Rail Hub is about more than trains - it's about opportunity."

"This investment will unlock thou-

sands of jobs, support new homes and connect our region to faster, greener growth.

"It's a major step forward for national connectivity and local prosperity, and a clear signal that the Midlands is at the heart of Britain's future."

The Midlands Rail Hub project is co-sponsored by Midlands Connect, the Department for Transport and West Midlands Rail Executive.

Maria Machancoses, Chief Executive of Midlands Connect, said: "This marks a major milestone in this transformational, nationally significant project."

"The Midlands Rail Hub is our flagship scheme, and it is the result of years of collaboration and determination by cross-party leaders from all corners of the Midlands."

"It will deliver a step change for passengers, for communities and ultimately for Government's central mission of economic growth."

"In this region, we need improved transport connections, and Midlands Rail Hub will help make that happen."

"The project will create new jobs, improve access to opportunities and boost growth. It will also provide tailored apprenticeship schemes, as well as boosting much-needed house building."

"We will continue to work with our mayors, leaders and MPs across the region to progress the work on Midlands Rail Hub."



Bring in the bulldozers - Work has started this week at the site. s

Work begins on revamping gateway site

WORK started this week to transform Worcester's Shrub Hill Quarter, marking a major milestone for the county.

Demolition work is being undertaken to reshape the gateway into a modern, vibrant destination.

The outdated blue corrugated unit and brick tower on the Shrub Hill Industrial Estate is being removed.

This work, supported by the government's Brownfield Land Release Fund, paves the way for a dynamic new district, delivering much-needed homes, public spaces, and new jobs.

Coun Alan Amos, Worcestershire County Council's cabinet member for business and skills, said: "This is more than just clearing old buildings, it's about unlocking a once-in-a-generation opportunity to create something extraordinary for Worcester."

"Shrub Hill Quarter will become a place where people want to live, work, and spend time."

"This next step brings us closer to a bold new future for the city."

The demolition and site clearance will take up to

eight weeks.

For safety, temporary closures of the nearby footpath and parts of the road network will be in place.

This includes a closure of the path from the main entrance of Shrub Hill Industrial Estate to the pedestrian crossing, which is also being upgraded as part of wider public realm improvements.

Clear signage and diversion routes will be in place to keep disruption to a minimum and businesses in the area will remain open as usual.

The Shrub Hill Quarter regeneration is being led by Worcestershire County Council, Worcester City Council, and the Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership, with a shared vision to breathe new life into this key area of the city.

When complete, the Shrub Hill Quarter will offer over 500 new homes, up to 5,000 jobs, attractive public spaces, and improved transport connections.

Visit www.worcestershire.gov.uk/shrub-hill-quarter for more details.

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What is FitSteps? A Dance fitness class devised by Strictly dancers Iain Waite and Natalie Lowe and swimmer Mark Foster. Short sequences in a fitness format. Salsa, Waltz, Cha Cha, Samba, Quickstep, Charleston, Foxtrot, Jive, Tango etc

All classes 1hr £6.50 Pay as you go

Sunday 10am, Monday 11.45am, Tuesday 11.30am, Thursday 10.15am, Friday 11.45am

NEW CLASS

If enough interest Wednesday 8pm Start date TBC

MUSICALS

class Wednesday at 10.15am

Some dance experience needed.

'One Short Day', 'Don't Rain on My Parade', 'Anything Goes', 'Hot Honey Rag', 'I Could Have Danced all Night' etc

PILATES



PILATES CLASSES

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NEW CLASS Tuesday 5.45pm 45mins £5.50

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The Joys of Summer in the UK

A season served with strawberries, sunshine and surprises

Ah, the great British summer. That fleeting stretch of months when the weather becomes a national obsession (even more than usual), everything smells faintly of sun cream and sizzling sausages, and we all pretend we've always known how to put up a parasol properly.

While other nations may take their sunshine for granted, we Brits treat summer like a rare jewel: treasured, unpredictable, and occasionally rained on. So pull up a deckchair, pop the kettle on (or crack open something fizzy), and let's celebrate the glorious, ever-surprising joys of a UK summer

1. The Sunshine Lottery: Always a Gamble, Always Worth It


A British summer is like a game of weather roulette. One minute it's

blazing sunshine; the next you're sheltering under a tree with your chips in a soggy napkin. But that's half the fun. We earn our summer. When the sun does shine, we make the most of every second. Beer gardens fill faster than Glastonbury tickets, beaches overflow with sandcastles and optimism, and someone, somewhere, will always say, "We should do this more often."

2. The Nation's Uniform: Flip-Flops and Light Cardis

Fashion in a UK summer is a careful balancing act: part Riviera chic, part 'ready for drizzle'. Linen trousers, wide-brimmed hats, and floral everything emerge from wardrobes like moths from a cocoon. And yet, we still carry "just in case" jackets. Always. Socks with sandals? Sometimes. Sunglasses on the head and squinting anyway? Absolutely. Factor 50 on the nose but forgetting your ears? A rite of passage.








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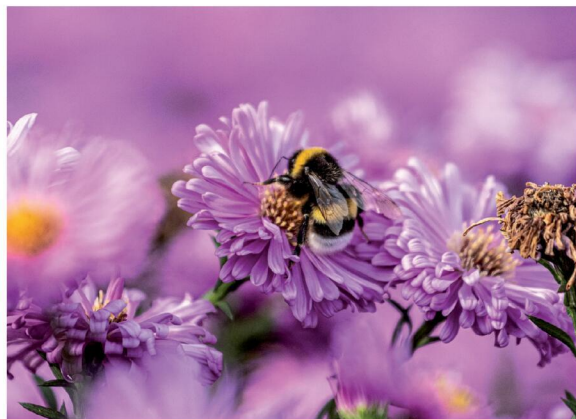
EXTERIOR DESIGNS



Summertime in the Home and Garden

3. A Garden in Full Voice

By July, British gardens are performing their greatest hits. Lavender, roses, sweet peas and delphiniums belt out colour like a botanical boyband. Lawns are mown to perfection – or at least mown. The scent of honeysuckle rides the breeze like a nostalgic melody from a summer years ago. Even the smallest balcony becomes a stage for potted tomatoes, fairy lights, and a single courageous sunflower leaning optimistically toward the sky.



4. The BBQ: A British Ritual of Smoke and Triumph

You know it's truly summer when the smell of charcoal drifts across every cul-de-sac. We gather around barbecues like ancient tribes around a fire – except we're debating halloumi and comparing marinades instead of hunting tactics. Is it perfectly seared or questionably charred? It doesn't matter. The point is: it's outdoors, it's shared, and someone always forgets the ketchup.

5. The Symphony of Summer Sounds

The soundtrack of a British summer is unmistakable: the drone of lawnmowers, the hum of bees, the distant thud of a tennis ball at Wimbledon. Ice cream vans jingle down sleepy roads while children screech joyfully in paddling pools that are 80% splash and 20% water. There's the gentle clink of glasses in pub gardens, the flap of bunting in the breeze, and, occasionally, the rumble of thunder reminding us who's boss.

6. The Great British Day Trip: Sunshine in a Flask

Whether it's a pilgrimage to the coast, a picnic in the Peak District, or a National Trust wander with a sausage roll and soggy map, summer is the season of spontaneous exploration. We pack coolers with ambition and sandwiches, brave motorway queues with stoicism, and always end up buying overpriced windbreakers we absolutely didn't need... until now.

7. A Feast of Summer Flavours

British summer is strawberry season. It's also Pimm's o'clock, elderflower everything, cucumber sandwiches at garden parties,



and the moment courgettes take over the vegetable patch with wild abandon.

From juicy tomatoes fresh off the vine to ice creams devoured before they melt (spoiler: they always melt), summer dining is laid-back, delicious, and usually enjoyed alfresco.

8. The Evenings That Stretch On Forever

There's something magical about a UK summer evening – the way the golden light lingers, the smell of cut grass hanging in the air, and the soft hush that descends over sun-weary streets. Twinkling fairy lights on fences, blankets over knees, a final glass

of rosé or cup of tea – these are the quiet joys that make summer feel endless, even though we know it never is.

The Takeaway? Squeeze Every Drop.

A British summer is never perfect. It's patchy and changeable, sunburned and unpredictable – but it's also glorious. It's Wimbledon in the rain, pub lunches in the sun, and gardens overflowing with colour and laughter. So dance at the village fête, eat strawberries by the punnet, mow the lawn with pride, and fall asleep with the windows open and the scent of roses in the air.








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Summertime in the Home and Garden

What to Do in Your Garden This Summer

Sow, Snip, Sip: Making the Most of the Sunny Season

Summer in the UK is the garden's moment to shine – literally. Borders are in full bloom, the lawn has never grown faster, and your tomato plants are suddenly demanding the same attention as toddlers. Whether your garden is a pocket-sized patio or a rambling

green escape, summer is when the real fun – and maintenance – kicks in. Here's your seasonal guide to what to do in your garden this summer to keep it thriving, blooming, and picnic-ready.

1. Keep Deadheading (Your Flowers Will Thank You)

Regular deadheading – removing spent flowers – encourages more

blooms and keeps plants looking fresh.

Top deadhead candidates:

- Roses
- Dahlias
- Geraniums
- Sweet peas
- Petunias

Tip: Snip just above a healthy leaf or bud to encourage the plant to flower again rather than set seed.

2. Water Wisely (Especially During Heatwaves)

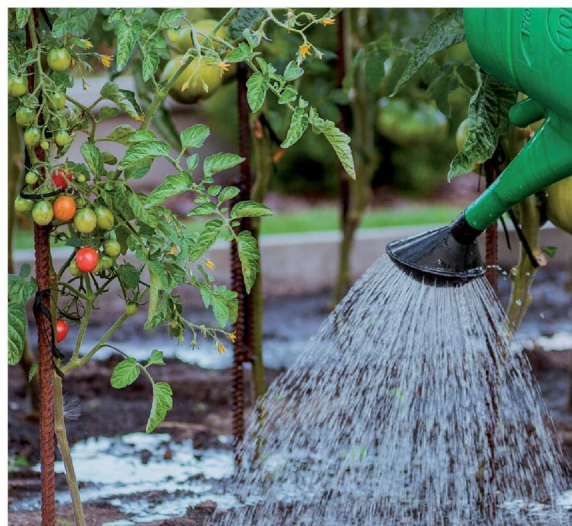
In the UK, summer weather can range from tropical to torrential. During hot, dry spells, smart watering is essential.

- Water early morning or late evening to reduce evaporation.
- Soak deeply, less often – better for root development than light, frequent watering.
- Mulch beds with bark or compost to retain moisture.
- Water the base, not the leaves – especially for tomatoes and cucumbers.

3. Feed Hungry Plants

Summer is peak growing season, and plants need fuel.

- Use a high-potash fertiliser (like tomato feed) for flowering plants and fruit.
- Feed containers and hanging baskets weekly – rain washes



nutrients away.

- Herbs and leafy greens benefit from nitrogen-rich feeds, but don't overdo it or you'll get leaves, not flavour.

4. Harvest Homegrown Goodness

Now's the time to reap the rewards of spring sowing.

Pick regularly to encourage more cropping:

- Courgettes (before they become marrows!)
 - French & runner beans
 - Tomatoes (as soon as they colour)
 - Strawberries, raspberries & gooseberries
 - Cut-and-come-again salad leaves
- Not only does regular picking boost production, but everything tastes better the moment it's picked.



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Summertime in the Home and Garden

5. Prune & Train for Shape and Health

Some plants need a summer haircut, not just a spring tidy.

- Trim wisteria: cut back side shoots to five or six leaves.

- Prune lavender after flowering to keep it bushy.
- Thin fruit trees to prevent overcrowded or poorly ripened fruit.
- Tie in climbers like clematis and sweet peas to keep them supported and looking neat.



6. Invite in the Wildlife

A garden buzzing with bees and fluttering with butterflies is both beautiful and beneficial.

- Plant nectar-rich flowers like buddleia, verbena, echinacea, and lavender.
- Top up bird baths and provide shallow water for insects.
- Leave a wild patch of grass or install a bug hotel.
- Avoid pesticides – let nature do the pest control.

7. Refresh Containers & Baskets

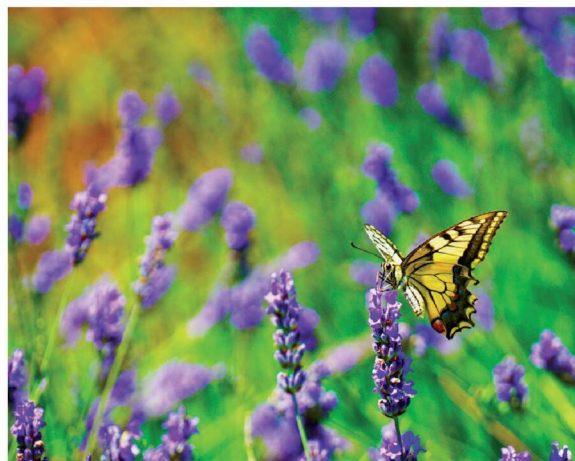
By mid-summer, containers can start to look a bit frazzled.

- Replace tired bedding plants with late-summer stunners like begonias, salvias, cosmos, and rudbeckia.
- Add slow-release fertiliser or mulch.
- Rearrange pots to highlight what's thriving and hide what's not!

8. Tidy, Edge, Repeat

It's the little things that make the garden shine.

- Edge your lawn for a crisp finish.
- Sweep patios and paths to remove moss and debris.
- Clean garden furniture – because spontaneous BBQs are a national summer sport.



- Weed regularly before things get out of hand.

9. Plan for Late Summer & Autumn Colour

Summer's not the end – just the middle. Now's the time to plant for the months ahead.

- Sow biennials (foxgloves, wallflowers) for next spring.
- Plant autumn-flowering bulbs like nerines and colchicums.
- Add late perennials like sedum, heleniums, and Japanese anemones for a seasonal encore.

10. Enjoy It!

Don't forget the most important summer gardening task of all: relax and enjoy your space. Whether you're pottering with a watering can or stretched out with a glass of Pimm's, your garden is there to bring joy.

Final Thought:

Summer gardens are living, breathing, ever-changing works of art. With a bit of regular care (and a lot of lounging), your outdoor space will reward you with colour, scent, and satisfaction all season long.



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Summertime in the Home and Garden

2025 Summer Interior Design Trends in the UK: Bright, Stylish & Sustainable

Summer 2025 is turning up the heat – and not just outdoors. Inside our homes, the season's trends are all about sunshine, soul, and sustainability. Think light-filled spaces, earth-conscious elegance, and just the right amount of “did this come from a French brocante or a Soho design studio?” mystery. Whether you're giving your entire home a glow-up or simply swapping a few cushions, here's your inside guide to the hottest (and coolest) looks in UK interiors this summer.

1. Sun-Drenched

Neutrals & Citrusy Pops

Wave goodbye to cold greys and hello to a warmer, creamier palette. This summer is all about buttery off-whites, oat milk beiges, and soft sand tones – paired with vibrant punches of colour that feel like a sorbet for the soul.

Trending tones:

- Lemon zest & tangerine accents
- Soft lilac & sky blue hues
- Terracotta, coral, and olive green for grounding warmth

Design tip: Use neutral backdrops to showcase bold accessories – think a citrus velvet chair in an ivory room, or sunny yellow blinds in a pale kitchen.

2. Nature-Inspired Everything (Still Going Strong)

The outdoors is still our biggest design muse – and we're not mad about it. In 2025, biophilic design matures into something truly beautiful: less jungle-in-your-lounge, more curated calm.

Natural elements trending now:

- Stone sinks and raw-edge wood furniture
- Clay, limewash, and textured plaster finishes
- Rattan, bamboo, and woven seagrass details

And yes, plants are still in. Go for statement greenery like fiddle leaf figs or trailing pothos, and mix real with high-quality faux to keep maintenance chill.

3. Comfortable, Curved & Cocooned

Sharp edges are out, soft curves are very much in. This summer is about creating interiors that feel like a warm hug – welcoming, flowing, and deeply relaxing.

Look out for:

- Arched doorways, round mirrors, and sculptural lamps
- Bouclé and chenille upholstery in marshmallow tones
- Cloud-like sofas and curved

headboards

Curves bring instant elegance and softness to a room.

4. Sustainable & Thoughtful Choices

In 2025, eco-conscious doesn't mean beige and boring. Today's sustainable design is full of flair, colour, and craftsmanship. It's about choosing better, not more.

Smart, stylish, sustainable ideas:

- Upcycled and vintage furniture with real history
- UK-made artisan ceramics and decor
- Reclaimed wood floors and repurposed materials

Even paint is getting greener – look for low-VOC, plant-based options in fresh, summery hues.

5. Light Living: Sheer Drapes & Airy Spaces

Let the sunshine in. Literally.

This summer, interiors are getting lighter – physically and visually. Heavy curtains, dark corners, and cluttered shelves are giving way to breezy minimalism.

Quick wins:

- Swap thick curtains for linen sheers or voile panels
- Use pale woods and reflective surfaces to bounce light
- Keep window ledges clear to

maximise natural brightness

Bonus trend: Window seats are making a comeback – perfect for curling up with a book and a view.

6. Personality-Filled Space

Minimalism is taking a bit of a back seat this summer in favour of bold, expressive interiors with soul. Homes are becoming less ‘showroom’ and more ‘show you’.

Key details:

- Gallery walls of personal art, not just prints
- Eclectic styling – mix modern with antique, sleek with scruffy
- Maximalist corners with books, plants, candles and collected treasures

Your home should tell your story, not just follow a trend.

7. Outdoor-Indoor Harmony

With garden rooms, balconies and patios getting more attention than ever, there's a real shift toward blurring the boundaries between inside and out.

Top tips for summer 2025:

- Use the same flooring materials (or colour tones) to connect kitchen and patio
- Decorate garden spaces with indoor-style touches – cushions,

rugs, art

• Bring natural light into transitional spaces with glazed doors and skylights

It's less about ‘escaping’ to the garden, and more about letting the whole home breathe together.

8. The Rise of “Slow Styling”

Forget fast decor. The buzzword of 2025 is intentional. That means fewer impulse buys, more meaningful pieces, and design that evolves over time – not overnight.

Slow styling looks like:

- Layering textures over time – linen, wool, ceramics, wood
- Investing in quality over quantity
- Choosing items that make you pause and smile

It's interior design with a conscience, and it's here to stay.

In a Nutshell?

Summer 2025 interiors in the UK are all about:

Warm neutrals. Thoughtful design. Natural textures. Playful personality. And space that breathes. So whether you're sipping Pimm's on your velvet sofa or padding barefoot across reclaimed floorboards, your home this summer should feel relaxed, radiant, and unapologetically you.

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AFTER this weekend's launch of this year's Bromsgrove Festival in the town centre, along with the Court Leet Fair Day, there will be another packed week of events for all tastes in the coming days.

Tomorrow (Saturday), the annual Silk Painting Display will go on show at Rubery Library until July 19. The works from the South Birmingham Guild of Silk Painters will be available to view from 8am to 8pm for Libraries Unlocked users or usual opening times. Entry is free.

Live music

On Wednesday (June 25), Craig Ogden will give 'A Celebrity Recital' at New Guessen Hall, Avoncroft Museum as part of the Festive Classics series. Craig's guitar repertoire will include music by Scarlatti, Villa-Lobos and Rodrigo. The concert starts at midday with lunch at 1pm. Tickets, available at festive-classics.co.uk or by calling 01527 832492 - can include just the performance or lunch as well.

Bromsgrove Folk Club and Festival will host Tania Opland and Mike Freeman at Catshill Social Club, Meadow Road, at 8pm on Thursday (June 26). The pair will use hammered dulcimer, guitar, violin, cittern, Native American flute, percussion and more as they perform songs in many languages. Visit: bromsgrovefolkclub.co.uk for tickets and more information.

At 3pm next Friday (June 27), there will be 'Folk and Fry-ups' at The Lemon Tree. The relaxed afternoon of folk music is free - people can just turn up.

The Every Brothers by Candlelight takes place at 7.30pm next Friday (June 27) at Artrix. The soul-stirring songs of the American duo will be brought to life by Gerry Slattery and Lars Pluto in this unique acoustic theatre show which also includes fascinating stories and anecdotes and a live string quartet. Visit: artrixbromsgrove.co.uk for tickets and more information.

The Players Platform at 11am next Saturday (June 28) sees young musicians showcase their skills. It is brought to Catshill Methodist Church, Golden Cross Lane, by The David Morgan Trust which sup-

Craig Ogden will perform at the first Festive Classics of the season on Wednesday. Picture courtesy of Craig Ogden. s



ports children and young people in Bromsgrove District to develop their understanding and appreciation of music. Admission is free. Visit: davidmorganmusictrust.org for more information.

At 12.30pm and 6pm next Saturday (June 28) at Artrix, Stardust Dance Academy will bring their '25 Terrific Years' show to the stage. Visit: artrixbromsgrove.co.uk or call 01527 361324 for tickets and more information.

Celebrations of Live by the Midland Sinfonia will take place at 7.30pm next Saturday (June 2) at St Laurence Church in Alvechurch. The concert will celebrate anniver-

saries through music. Visit: midlandsinfonia.co.uk for tickets and more information.

The City of Birmingham Brass Band will perform in the Jubilee Bandstand at Sanders Park from 2.30pm to 4.30pm next Sunday (June 29). The event is free and people are being urged to take along their chairs or blankets and a picnic for a relaxing afternoon.

Victoria's School of Dance showcase their 'Rising Stars' at 1.30pm next Sunday (June 29) at Artrix. Visit: artrixbromsgrove.co.uk or call 01527 361324 for tickets and more information.

Drama

All and Sundry will perform 'Dangerous Obsession' at Artrix

from Wednesday to Saturday (June 25 to 27). Performances start at 7.30pm. The show centres on a quiet and unassuming man who is obsessed with pinning the blame for his wife's accident on someone else. He turns up at Sally and Mike Driscoll's home, invites himself in and threatens to reveal secrets that could change their lives forever. Not recommended for under 16s. Visit: artrixbromsgrove.co.uk or call 01527 361324 for tickets and more information.

Art

Avoncroft Arts Society's annual art show takes place from 10am to 4pm next Saturday (June 28). There will be plenty of works on offer from members of the society, along with tea, coffee and home-made cake. Admission is £1 payable on the door. Under 16s go free. There will also be free workshops to take part in. Visit: avoncroftarts.org.uk or call 01527 833829 for more information.

Poetry

Award-winning Rubery poet Spoz - aka Giovanni Esposito - will perform 'Pedestrian Poetry' in Bromsgrove town centre from 11am to 3pm. The community event is free.

Visit our website for more on the first weekend of the Bromsgrove Festival and go to: bromsgrovefestival.co.uk for more on these and other upcoming events.

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

HARD

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

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.

Battles in the British Isles

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

Solutions opposite

CROSSWORD

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

ACROSS

6. Liberty (7)
7. Lid (5)
9. Insane (3)
10. Impromptu (9)
12. Essay (11)
15. Cheeky (11)
17. Deeply shocked (9)
19. In favour of (3)
21. Scatter (5)
22. Attack (7)

DOWN

1. Handle (5)
2. Determined (3)
3. Trick (4)
4. Fit (9)
5. Censure (7)
8. Diminish (9)
11. Alien (9)
13. Glib talk (6)
14. Copy (7)
16. Earth (5)
18. Otherwise (4)
20. Hiatus (3)

Scribble pad

LADDER

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

- Gap
- Rod
- Stance
- Mail
- Previous

HOLD

FAST

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.

- 73921 gives an animal;
- 4522785 gives a second animal;
- 92262 gives birds.

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

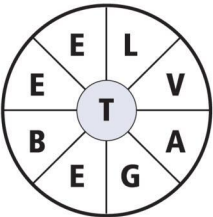
CODEWORD

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

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

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.

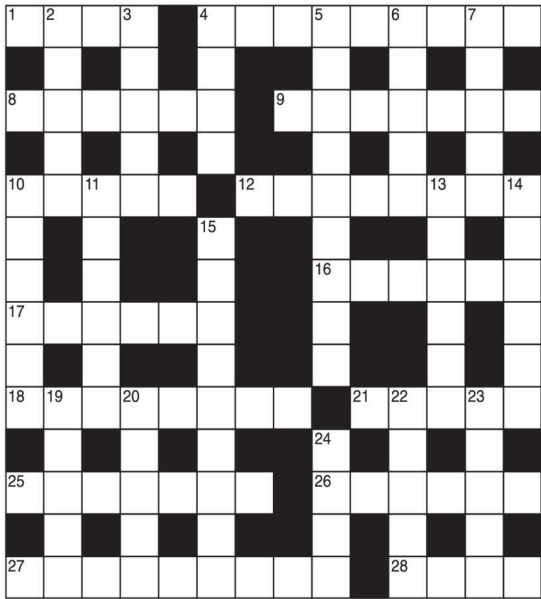


How you rate
8 words: average
12 words: good
16 words: very good
20 or more: excellent.

GENERAL KNOWLEDGE CROSSWORD

ACROSS

- 1 & 21 Across Film star nicknamed 'Duke' (4,5)
- 4 A student of the Earth's crust (9)
- 8 Surname of the dramatist who wrote The Caretaker (6)
- 9 Wife of Nabal and later of David (7)
- 10 & 25 Across Author of All Creatures Great and Small (5,7)
- 12 A strict disciplinarian (8)
- 16 Sir Thomas More's imaginary perfect island (6)
- 17 French royal House from 1328-1589 (6)
- 18 Ancient classical Indian language (8)
- 21 See 1 Across
- 25 See 10 Across
- 26 Animal skeleton used in cleansing (6)
- 27 & 23 Down The witches' sabbath held on the eve of May 1st (9,5)
- 28 The third son of Adam (4)



DOWN

- 2 Pen name of Marie Louise de la Ramee (5)
- 3 Saltpetre (5)
- 4 Hindu spiritual leader (4)
- 5 Trees with racemes of bright yellow flowers (9)
- 6 Benjamino ---, famous Italian tenor (5)
- 7 River on which Paris stands (5)
- 10 PG Wodehouse's perfect English valet (6)
- 11 Magician and bard who aided King Arthur, in legend (6)
- 13 Household, especially table, linen (6)
- 14 Sleep-like state (6)
- 15 Artificial lake for storing water (9)
- 19 The betel nut genus of palms (5)
- 20 Thick, sweet liquid (5)
- 22 Bitter ---, purgative drug (5)
- 23 See 27 Across
- 24 Part of the Thames, through Oxford (4)

SOLUTIONS

General Knowledge Crossword

ACROSS: 1 John; 4 Geologist; 8 Pinter; 9 Abigail; 10 James; 12 Martinet; 16 Utopia; 17 Valois; 18 Sanskrit; 21 Wayne; 25 Herriot; 26 Sponges; 27 Wajpurgis; 28 Seth.
DOWN: 2 Ouida; 3 Nitre; 4 Gurn; 5 Laburnums; 6 Giff; 7 Seine; 10 Jeeves; 11 Merlin; 13 Napery; 14 Trance; 15 Reservoir; 19 Arecia; 20 Syrup; 22 Aloes; 23 Night; 24 Isis.

Crossword

ACROSS: 6 Freedom; 7 Cover; 9 Mad; 10 Extremepore; 12 Composition; 15 Impertinent; 17 Staggeard; 19 For; 21 Strew; 22 Assault; Down: 1 Treat 2 Set; 3 Hoax; 4 Competent; 5 Reproof; 8 Lessen; 11 Foreigner; 13 Patter; 14 Imitate; 16 World; 18 Elise; 20 Gap.

Wordwheel Pathfinder

Stamford Bridge, Naseby, Mons Graupis, Lewes, Boyne, Marston Moor, Culloden, Towton, Hastings, Bosworth, Maldon, Flodden, Sedgemoor, Prestonpans, Tewkesbury, Watling Street, Barnockburn, Clontarf, Edgington, Edgehill, St Albans, Falkirk, Evesham, Orgreave, St Albans

Niner

REICHSSTAG

Ladder

Hold, Hole, Pole, Pose, Post, Fast, Fast.

Codeword

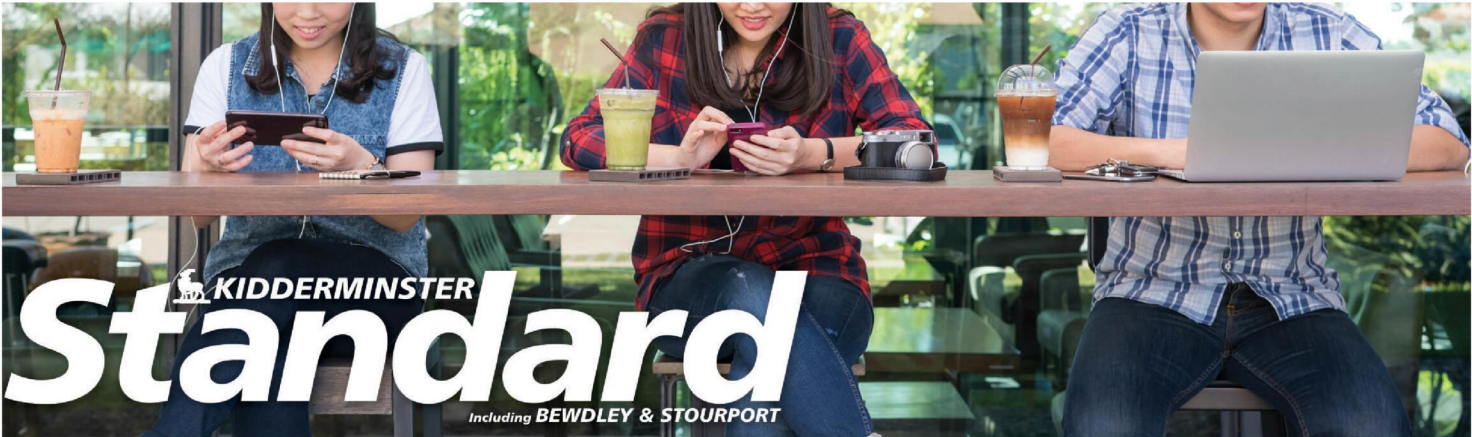
1=U, 2=A, 3=N, 4=Y, 5=S, 6=M, 7=E, 8=T, 9=L, 10=Z, 11=R, 12=B, 13=Q, 14=P, 15=C, 16=K, 17=O, 18=L, 19=H, 20=G, 21=X, 22=W, 23=D, 24=L, 25=Y, 26=F

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

Hard

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

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Sudoku



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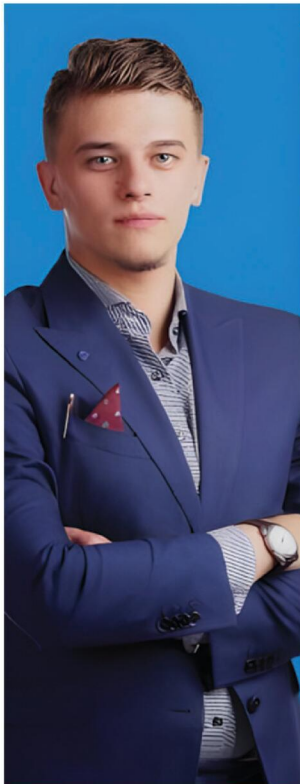
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Defender Tunncliffe returns for second spell with Harriers

by Aaron Sutcliffe
aaron.sutcliffe@bullivantmedia.com

FOOTBALL: KIDDERMINSTER Harriers have completed the signing of defender Jordan Tunncliffe.

Tunncliffe returns for a second spell at Aggborough after he made 77 appearances for the club during a three-season stint between 2015 and 2017.

The 31-year-old spent last season with Solihull Moors in the National League.

Tunncliffe said: "It feels really good to be back, coming back into the building has brought back a lot of good memories of the football club."

"I'm looking forward now to bringing on the season and hopefully a successful one."

"I'm very happy with what I've achieved since I left the football club but this was a springboard for me to be able to go and do that."

"Hopefully now I can bring my experience to the football club and help the club achieve promotion."

"Everyone's aim is to go and play in the Football League and I was fortunate enough to play at that level."

"Now I'm back, I'm excited to try and help the club achieve promotion."

"The club shouldn't be in the National League North, given the size



Jordan Tunncliffe has returned to Aggborough. Picture courtesy of Kidderminster Harriers FC.

of the club and the amount of fans we get.

"I think I can help with driving standards and everything like that."

"I was excited by the prospect of coming here anyway but when I spoke to the gaffer it just consolidated that feeling."

Tunncliffe played under current Derby County boss John Eustace during his first stint at Aggborough.

His performances in the National League North earned the defender the club's players' player of the year award at the end of the 2016/17 campaign.

He departed Harriers to join AFC Fylde in the National League before later playing for Crawley Town and Wrexham in the Football League.

Tunncliffe helped Wrexham achieve promotion from the National League to League One before joining Moors where he made 24 appearances last term.

And the defender is targeting another promotion with Harriers next season.

Tunncliffe added: "I want to be at a football club who want to achieve promotion and want to win football games."

"Experiencing promotion in the past, that's what every footballer wants to strive for, it's one of the best feelings you can have in football."

"Kidderminster had it a few seasons ago and everyone is pulling together to try and achieve that again."

Winning draw for Kiddy

CRICKET: ANOTHER stunning knock from Daniel Lategan helped Kidderminster CC to a winning draw against Shifnal.

Lategan starred with the bat as Kidderminster closed on 241-5 at the end of their 55 overs at Chester Road.

And the hosts restricted Shifnal to 142-8 in reply with the visitors chasing a revised target of 242 from 50 overs.

Kidderminster claimed 16 points from the fixture and sit 11th in the Birmingham and District Premier League Premier Division Two table.

Shifnal won the toss and elected to field only for Kidderminster openers H Sockett (57) and Lucas Ingram (36) to put on 72 runs for the first wicket.

Shaun Lorimer (1-61) eventually trapped Ingram LBW before Ben Lees stumped Sockett off the bowling of Charlie Home (2-87).

Shifnal bowler Jack Shields (2-26) then picked up a couple of quick wickets as he removed both Nathan Jukes (16) and Ben Griffin (1).

However, Lategan (91 not out) and Mateen Khan (32) combined for an

88-run fifth-wicket stand before the latter fell to Home.

Kidderminster closed on 241-5 as Lategan hit 10 boundaries including four maximums.

And the hosts made the perfect start with the ball as B Clements (4-38) removed Shifnal opener Michael Robinson (0) for a golden duck.

Clements ripped through Shifnal's top order as he also claimed the scalps of Sam Scringeur (20) and Home (12).

And Liam Weston (2-37) trapped Rahul Kaushal (24) LBW and also removed Jack Edwards (2) to leave Shifnal in trouble on 70-5.

The wickets continued to tumble as Lategan (2-38) took the quick wickets of Chris Murrell (10) and Matt Denver (1) with Shifnal in danger on 90-7.

However, Lees (48 not out) faced 115 deliveries while Shifnal's tail end dug in to deny Kidderminster an outright win.

Kidderminster travel to Handsworth on Saturday, June 21 with the game to start at 12pm at Handsworth Park.

League leaders beaten

BEWDLEY CC suffered their first defeat of the season against Burghill, Tillington and Weobley.

The league leaders slipped to a four-wicket defeat after Burghill restricted Bewdley to 201-8 from their 50 overs at the PAF Cricket Ground.

And a fine knock from Burghill's Barney Morgan inspired the home side

to victory with four wickets in-hand and 13 overs to spare.

Despite the defeat, Bewdley remain top of the Worcestershire County League Division One table.

Bewdley are next in action against Netherton on Saturday, June 21 with the game to start at 12.30pm at Highbridge Road.

Stourport stay in title contention

STOURPORT-on-Severn CC dominated opponents Barnt Green to claim a winning draw and move up to second in the Worcestershire County League Premier Division table.

Fine knocks from Peter Hawk (79) and Siddarth S Ahluja (78) saw Stourport close on 298-7 at Cherry Hill Road.

And Stourport then took nine wickets with the ball as Ryan Derrick (5-35) claimed a five-for as Barnt Green reached 129-9 at the end of their 50 overs.

Stourport host Bromsgrove on Saturday, June 21 with the game to start at 12pm at Walshes Meadow.

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