

Towns set to benefit from On Demand bus

by **Tristan Harris**
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STOURPORT, Bewdley and Hartlebury are among the next stops for the roll-out of Worcestershire County Council's On Demand bus service.

The move, offering a flexible and convenient alternative to traditional public transport, will give people in those areas more choice when it comes to getting around.

To ensure smooth and efficient operation, journeys are capped around nine miles (as the crow flies) and smaller vehicles will be used to navigate rural roads easier and deliver faster, more cost-effective trips.

The bus will be available to those in the Central Zone - Stourport, Hartlebury and surrounding rural areas - later this year and the North West Zone, which will extend to Bewdley and primarily serve Wyre Forest District, will launch in the first half of next year.

How it works

Passengers download the Worcestershire on Demand app - free from the Apple App Store and Google Play.

They then select their pick-up and drop-off points, guiding them to nearby 'virtual bus stops' designed for efficient, shared travel. The app also provides real-time updates on bus arrival times.

The service operates from 7am to 7pm,

Monday to Saturday. To celebrate the launch, all journeys will be free for the first month.

After this, fares will be £2.50 per person per journey, with £1.25 for additional passengers. Concessionary cards are accepted and veterans ride free of charge. Frequent travellers can also benefit from discounted ticket bundles.

Since its launch in Bromsgrove in July 2021, Worcestershire on Demand has completed over 104,000 trips, with the Malvern service, launched in June 2023, seeing nearly 18,000 trips already.



Coun Karl Perks, Worcestershire County Council's Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport, said the on demand service had proved extremely popular in Bromsgrove and Malvern so the authority was thrilled to be rolling it out further.

"The piloting of a journey cap and smaller vehicles reflects our tailored approach to meet the unique needs of each community and we'll be closely monitoring feedback as the service launches."

"We are committed to rolling out on demand transport across Worcestershire, and that's why we have a forward plan in place to provide as many people as possible with a sustainable, affordable, and user-friendly way to travel."

Visit: worcestershire.gov.uk/WOD for more information on the on demand bus services and to download the app.

Anyone struggling to download or use the app can get help from staff at Worcestershire libraries.



The fires, believed to have been started deliberately, have caused extensive damage to The Snipes. s

POLICE are stepping up surveillance and patrols on The Snipes, near to Astley Cross and The Walshes estate in Stourport, after nine fires in the past fortnight.

Wyre Forest Police and Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service are investigating the blazes which have all happened since June 27 and are believed to have been started deliberately.

In some cases, youths wearing masks and face coverings have been seen in the area.

Police officers are urging the public to help them catch the culprits and will also be engaging with owners when the land

affected is private.

Sgt Matt Ling, from Wyre Forest Police Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT), said starting fires deliberately in tinder dry grassy areas could cause a lot of damage and put surrounding buildings at risk, especially in the current heatwave.

He urged people to email him at: matt.ling@westmercia.police.uk or the SNT at: stourport.snt@westmercia.police.uk if they had witnessed incidents or had CCTV footage at the time of the fires.

Alternatively, people can call Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111 to report what they know.



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1940s' tea party to raise charity funds

THERE will be a 1940s-themed afternoon tea on offer at Jelleyman's Mill in Kidderminster from 12pm to 4pm on Saturday afternoon (July 12).

The event is being run by the Jelleyman's Heritage Arts Charity (JHAC) and all proceeds will go to help preserve the historic Victorian mill.

JHAC is dedicated to preserving and promoting local heritage arts through community programmes and engaging events.

Located at Jelleyman's Mill, Puxton Lane, 'The Bungalow' will provide the perfect nostalgic 1940s setting.

Musician and vocalist Emily Brookes will provide live music and singing, to add to the ambience and authentic atmosphere.

JHAC CEO, Samuel Davies, said "We can't wait to mark the VE Day 80th anniversary celebrations with our own 1940s themed tea event."

"Every penny raised by the event will be put back into the charity to improve the services and opportunities that we offer to the local community."

Tickets to the event - £10 for adults and £6 for children - will be available via Eventbrite.

Booking early is advised as tickets are limited and people are encouraged to dress in themed clothes if they want.

Visit this story at kidderminsterstandard.co.uk to click through the link or find it by searching for 'JHAC - Jelleyman's Heritage Arts Charity' on Facebook.

Boutique will benefit shoppers and hospice

by **Charlie Canning**
news@bullivantmedia.com

THE RIBBONS of the new KEMP Hospice Boutique Charity Shop in Hagley were cut last Thursday as it opened to the public.

Staff, volunteers and local supporters of the Wyre Forest based charity attended the event.

Gary Barnes, the hospice's head of retail, said "We're absolutely thrilled to open our new shop in Hagley."

"The local response has been fantastic, and were so grateful to the community for their warm welcome."

The shop offers a collection of women's clothing, formal wear and premium products and all items donated help raise funds for the hospice.

The charity provides services free-of-charge care for people over the age of 55, including day hospice clinic care, occupational therapy for patients and families, counselling and emotional support to those who need it.

Gary added: "We never charge for the care and support services provided at KEMP Hospice."

"But each year we need to raise around £1.6million to ensure we can continue to



be there for people."

As the new charity shop opens its doors, the team are keen to hear from people who would like to volunteer and help establish the store in the local community.

KEMP's volunteer co-ordinator, Kevin Powell, said "Volunteering is a fantastic way to not only support KEMP Hospice in raising funds, but a chance to meet new people and learn new skills."

Kevin added "Quite simply we couldn't keep our shop doors open without them."

Visit: kempshospice.org.uk for more on the charity, its shops, fundraising and volunteering.

KEMP Hospice nurses Laura and Emma officially opened the new store. Picture by Colin Hill from Colin Hill Photography. s

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St Richard's new superstore is already a hit after grand opening

HUNDREDS of customers flocked to the new St Richard's Hospice shop in Stourport after its official opening on Saturday.

The store - the hospice's biggest - will help the charity generate funds for those who need its services.

The shop on Tannery Retail Park, Lombard Street, is open from 9am to 6pm from Monday to Saturday

and between 10.30am and 4.30pm on Sundays, offering a variety of furniture, homeware and books.

Dan Corns, associate director of Retail Operations for St Richard's, said: "We've loved seeing shoppers enjoying the new retail space after months of hard work preparing to open.

"Our thanks go to everyone involved in getting the shop ready,

by Charlie Canning

including our volunteers.

"Since the store's preview night on Friday, we have served more than 480 customers and sold more than 1,400 items helping raise the funds we need for our free palliative and end-of-life care.

"We simply couldn't continue our services without the income raised by our shops and fundraising activities.

"Our new superstore will play an important part in helping secure our future, at a financially challenging time for hospices nationally."

The hospice costs £12million-a-year to run and supports around 3,100 patients, family members and bereaved people in Worcestershire each year.

David Bishop, who was admitted to hospice last December and was cared for on one of the in-patient Units (IPU), cut the ribbon to open the superstore.

Mr Bishop said: "St Richard's is a special place, with a team of special people, that survives mostly on donations - I owe my life to them."

June Sankey, who is the charity's longest serving volunteer and who has supported the hospice for more than 41 years also cut the ribbon.

Caitlyn Adkins, head of the St Richard's In-patient Unit, David Bishop, who was cared for by the hospice's IPU team and June Sankey, the hospice's longest-serving volunteer, cut the ribbon.



Members of the hospice team with ribbon-cutters Caitlyn, David and June at the superstore's opening. s

The superstore is now accepting donations in a good condition for resale with the funds raised helping

the charity continue its care.

Visit: strichards.org.uk for more information.

Charity has grounds for volunteers appeal

A CHARITY has launched an appeal for volunteers to help support its bank workers with grounds maintenance.

The Emily Jordan Foundation is looking for people to carry out tasks at either its Kidderminster or Quarry Bank premises.

Activities could include weekly litter picks at local public places, mowing lawns and weeding. They may also be tasked with refurbishing public garden furniture.

The Emily Jordan Foundation helps people with learning difficulties lead fulfilled lives through projects which teach them to learn new and practical work-based skills with an aim to enabling them to finding and remaining in employment.

It was set up by Emily's family and friends as her legacy after she died in April 2008 in New Zealand.

It came after she finished her law degree at Swansea University.

Emily understood the difficulties faced by people with disabilities, both socially and when trying to gain employment, as she grew up with a brother with moderate learning disabilities.

Emily helped her father, Chris, to set up LAFS, a group that still meets for social interaction, in Kidderminster. She then helped with the setting up and running of Spokes CIC, whilst at University.

Volunteers would undertake their roles for around half-a-day each to start with.

Anyone who can help should call the charity's volunteer manager Niki on 07572 715382 or email: niki.cooper@theemilyjordanfoundation.org.uk for more information.

POLICE APPEAL: CASH was stolen from two gambling machines when masked men broke into a pub in Stourport in the early hours of last Friday morning.

The incident happened at The Port House on Bridge Street around 3.30am.

Two men, wearing dark clothing and hoods up, smashed the front window of the pub and, after stealing the cash from two gambling machines, they left the area.

Det Ch Insp Warren Matthews said: "I am appealing to anybody who may have information that could help with our enquiries into a break-in at The Port House in Stourport.

"We appreciate the burglary took place in the early hours, but perhaps someone may have seen suspicious activity hours before or they captured something on their dash cam or doorbell which could help identify the people involved or a vehicle used."

Witnesses or anyone with information should email DCI Matthews at: warren.matthews@westmercia.police.uk with what they know.



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Wolverley resident Charles Woodward has paid tribute to his uncle, Peter Bridges, who died on HMS Glorious in 1940. Peter, right, was just 21 when he died. The Arctic Star medal, centre, was awarded to Peter. s

Nephew's pride at wartime sacrifice

A WOLVERLEY man has spoken of his uncle's sacrifice on HMS Glorious which sank 85 years ago claiming the lives of more than 1,200 naval personnel.

Charles Woodward's uncle Peter Bridges was just 21 when he died in the Norwegian Sea after aircraft carrier HMS Glorious was sunk, along with escorts Ardent and Acasta, by German battleships Scharnhorst and Gneisenau on June 8 1940.

A total of 1,531 personnel lost their lives, with 1,207 of the cas-

by Neil Gordon

ualties from Glorious, including Leading Aircraft Fitter Bridges.

Mr Woodward contacted the Standard after we published an appeal by the GLARAC Association (Glorious, ARdent and ACasta) asking for relatives of personnel from the three ships to come forward, as commemorations were being held to mark the 85th anniversary of the sinking.

Mr Woodward said: "I have always known about my uncle Peter's death on Glorious but

have only recently learnt more details about the sinking.

"Unfortunately, Peter died from exposure on a Carley float [a type of liferaft] eight hours before rescuers arrived after miraculously being uninjured when Glorious sank, according to testimony from a survivor."

HMS Glorious was returning home after collecting planes and personnel from Norway when it sank in the Royal Navy's worst loss of the Second World War. The sinking was shrouded in controversy and questions remain about why the ship was given

permission to travel alone, with Ardent and Acasta for protection, rather than sail with the main convoy.

The Admiralty stated HMS Glorious was low on fuel and had completed its mission.

Mr Woodward, who moved to Wolverley from the south of England to be near his son, said: "It's unsurprising that Peter joined up to serve his country as the family is steeped in service history being from the Gosport and Portsmouth areas of Hampshire."

"Peter became an RAF appren-

tice aged 15 in 1934, before transferring to the Fleet Air Arm about five years later and commencing his service on Glorious."

The Arctic Star medal awarded to Peter from the operation to Norway which Glorious, Ardent and Acasta were returning from is now in Charles' possession and he is also checking if any other medals awarded to his uncle remain unclaimed.

Mr Woodward said: "I have a sense of pride in Peter volunteering to serve his country and having his life taken at such a young age."

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Cubs called upon to help provide a swift response

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

AN EVENING was hosted at the 18th Wyre Forest Areley Kings Cub Pack last week to teach the youngsters all about swifts.

The event was held by Clair Amos on behalf of Swift Friends Wyre Forest and Vel McMillan from Food Share Wyre Forest and Community Cafe at the Walshes Community Cafe.

The session also coincided with Swift Awareness Week which ran from June 28 to July 6 and aims to encourage groups around the country to celebrate these feathered friends, highlight their declining numbers and encourage action to protect them.

The youngsters found out all about swifts and what they could do to help the birds.

They were all given a pack of information to take home and spread the word and were treated to an ice cream afterwards by volunteers Christine and Rebecca.

They planted some plants in the community garden and two swift boxes were also installed by volunteer Harley on the community centre adjacent to the community garden. This included a swift caller in a bid to attract some young breeding swifts to come and make their homes there.

Swift Awareness Week was first held in 2018 by groups around the country and is now an annual event.

Swifts are currently listed as red on the UK's birds of conservation concern list which indicates they are a high conservation priority. Swift numbers in the UK have dropped dramatically by 66 per cent between 1995 and 2022.



They rely on nesting sites in buildings and the loss of suitable places, especially in older buildings, has added to their decline, along with a drop in insect populations which are the swifts' primary food source.

People can search for 'Swift Friends Wyre Forest' on Facebook or visit: swift-conservation.org

or actionforswifts.blogspot.com for more information on swifts locally and nationally.

The 18th Wyre Forest Areley Kings Cubs with their information packs about swifts and what they could do to help them. s

News in brief

STOURPORT-on-Severn Town Council has given an update on the Riverside Paddling Pool, announcing that the work to repair it are set to start next month.

The council notified residents in April the pool would not be fixed in time for this summer season.

This was due to complex repairs on the pool which required the attention of specialist contractors.

The plan now is to have the paddling pool re-open in time for the 2026 summer season but the council added, it was reliant on clearly dry weather in order to re-lay the pool's surface.

The council added: "We recognise what an important asset the Riverside Paddling Pool is.

"We are working towards getting it open soon as we possibly can, whilst ensuring that the paddling pool is a safe and well-loved attraction that is available for future generations of children."

AN OPEN day will be held at Wyre Forest Fire Station, offering free fun for all the family, along with fire engines and community spirit.

The event takes place from 11am to 3pm tomorrow (Saturday, July 12).

Among the activities taking place will be fire service demonstrations, fire engine rides and a 'show and tell' about the equipment crews use.


Also in attendance will be West Mercia Police and the West Midlands Ambulance Service HART (Hazardous Area Response Team).

And there will be fairground rides, bouncy castles and food stalls.





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Survey shows opinions split over future for our councils

by **Ashleigh Osborne**
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MORE than 4,200 people and organisations have taken part in a survey seeking views on how local councils should be reorganised.

The Shape Worcestershire survey took place in June and invited feedback on government plans to abolish Worcestershire County Council and the six district, borough, and city councils by April 1 2028.

They will be replaced by either one single council for Worcestershire running all services, or two councils – one for the North and one for the South – with each authority running all services for its part of the county.

Survey responses were gathered from residents, community and voluntary organisations, businesses,

town and parish councils, and other key partners.

Initial survey results shows that 48 per cent backed creating two unitary councils, 29 per cent supported one unitary council for the county and 19 per cent didn't support any reorganisation of local councils in Worcestershire.

Respondents from Bromsgrove District, Malvern Hills District, Redditch Borough and Wychavon were strongly in favour of the two unitary council solution.

In Worcester City, 46 per cent favoured creating one unitary council, with 42 per cent supporting the North and South option.

In Wyre Forest, opinion was split with 40 per cent backing the one unitary option and 39% supporting creating two unitary councils.

People were asked to consider a range of factors when giving their responses, including how any pro-

posed change would save money, improve local services, simplify local government, support local identity and strengthen community engagement.

The two unitary option was considered better for improving local services, supporting local identity and stronger community engagement.

It was felt the one unitary option would be better for saving money/delivering value and making local government simpler.

The local council services people said they were most concerned about being affected by reorganisation were highways, adult social care, waste and recycling collection and disposal, parks and other green spaces and planning and related services.

COUNTY HALL



Infrastructure planning, maintaining and improving services and council-owned facilities and Council Tax levels, were the three things that mattered most to people when thinking about their local council.

More than 4,600 comments were also made as part of the survey responses. These are currently being analysed in-depth, along with the results of focus groups held across the county.

Survey feedback and other relevant information will be taken into account before councils formally submit their final reorganisation proposals to the Government by November 28 2025.

VicAllison, consultation and engagement lead for Shape Worcestershire,

said: "The Government's proposed changes to local councils are the most significant in more than 50 years. "So, I'm pleased so many people have taken the opportunity to have their say."

"Their feedback will be invaluable in helping each council decide on their final submission to the Government."

The Shape Worcestershire public engagement is led by Bromsgrove District, Malvern Hills District, Redditch Borough, Worcester City, Wychavon and Wyre Forest District Councils.

Visit www.shapeworcestershire.org to find out more about the proposed changes to local councils in Worcestershire.

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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Quarter Jewellery, 27 The Shambles,
Worcester, WR1 2RA

Dog lover Georgina goes walkies for FDR

A TENACIOUS trekker is walking more than 100 miles to raise funds for the Kidderminster-based Forest Dog Rescue (FDR) which gave her four-legged friend a second chance at life.

Georgina Cockerill got her dog Freddie from the rescue centre after he was found as a stray and neglected.

Being aware of the 'brilliant job' FDR does - rescuing more than 200 dogs a year - and after reading about the charity's need for funding in the Standard, she decided to get out her walking boots and take on the Shakespeare Avon Way from Naseby in west Northamptonshire to Tewkesbury.

It follows the course of the River Avon as closely as possible, using existing public footpaths, bridleways and a few minor roads.

She began her long walk on

by **Tristan Harris**
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Saturday (July 5) and set herself a target of £1,000 - she was currently up to \$600 as we went to press.

Georgina told the Standard: "Last year I adopted my little dog Freddie from FDR and he brings great joy and daily happiness to my life. He is a fantastic rescue dog."

"Sadly, the long distance walk would be a bit too much for his little legs, so he will have his usual walks with my husband while I do the long one to raise funds for FDR."

"I want to help Forest Dog Rescue secure its future to continue its work saving dogs. Financially times are tough right now for them."

"Please help me reach, and ideally smash, my target. Please sponsor me in my walk to help raise these

much-needed funds - no matter how much or little you can give.

"Truly, every pound counts towards helping FDR rescue and save more dogs."

"There are so many dog-lovers locally and nationally but without charities, such as the Forest Dog Rescue, these pets would not get the second lease of life they all deserve."

By the end of it, although the Shakespeare Avon Way is 92 miles, Georgina will have walked closer to 110 miles because of diversions due to overgrown foliage and other issues.

She is hoping to finish her walk by tomorrow (Saturday).

Visit justgiving.com/page/georgina-cockerill-1/ for more on the challenge and to donate to Georgina's fundraising page.

Go to forest-dog-rescue.org.uk or facebook.com/ForestDogRescue for more on FDR.



Georgina Cockerill is walking 92 miles to raise funds for the Forest Dog Rescue where she got her dog Freddie. s

Service will be held to mark 80th anniversary of VJ Day

AN OUTDOOR service will be held in Bewdley on August 15 to mark the 80th anniversary of VJ Day.

The event will take place outside the entrance to Bewdley Museum at 10.45am and there will be refreshments afterwards at St Anne's Church.

As a mark of respect the VJ

Day flag will be flown at St Anne's War Memorial which will be illuminated in the week leading up to the commemoration and for the weekend afterwards.

The event has been organised by Wyre Forest District Council.

VJ Day or Victory over Japan Day, is the day Japan officially surrendered to the Allied forces,

marking the end of the Second World War. It took place on August 15, 1945.

The war had ended in Europe (VE Day) in May 1945, but the conflict continued between the Allies and the Japanese.

BEWDLEY Museum will be opening its 'one-of-a-kind'

air raid shelter to give an insight into what it would have been like to spend time in one during the war years.

It gives visitors the chance to hear real life stories and investigate what it would have really felt like to be down the shelter during a bombing raid.

The attraction will be available

tomorrow (Saturday, July 13), Monday afternoon, July 15, next weekend - July 19 and 20, July 22 afternoon, July 26 and July 29 afternoon, 13 July.

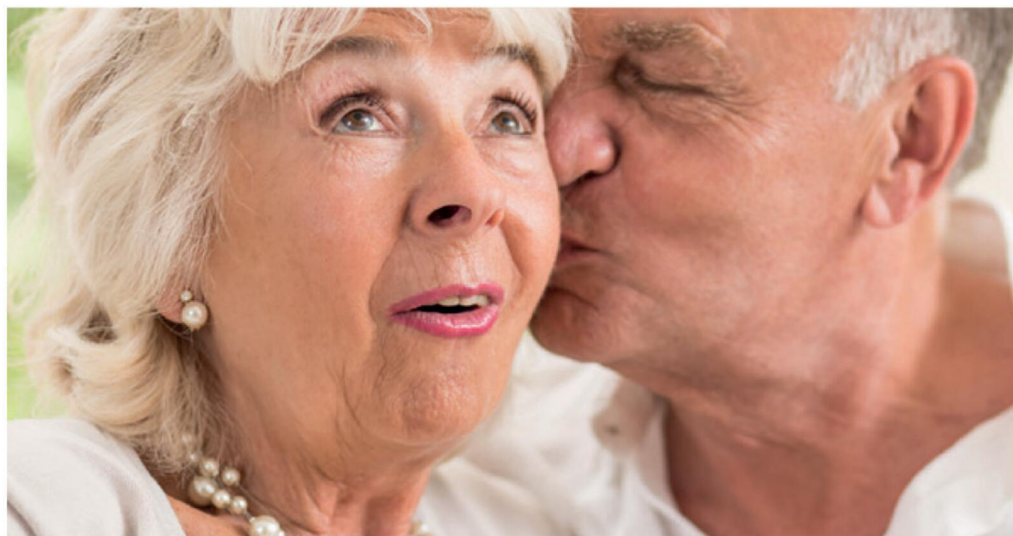
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Offering a chance to connect

PEOPLE can grab a cuppa, a snack and have a good chat at a weekly event being held in Kidderminster.

The get-together takes place every Wednesday between 10am and 1pm at The Tulip Tree Centre.

It has been organised by Kidderminster BID which has teamed up with the HELP team to give something back and create spaces where people can truly connect.

The Business Improvement District has funded 500 free brews so far and both long-term Kidderminster residents and those new to town will be made very welcome.

The Kidderminster BID's community engagement officer Lindsey Tasker said: "It's an environment to connect and chat, open to everyone."

There is no need to book - people just turn up.

THERE will be more Music in the Park from 2pm to 4pm this Sunday, July 13, at Riverside Meadows in Stourport.

Admission is free to listen to the music and people are urged to take along their picnic chairs and blankets for a fun and enjoyable afternoon.

Performing this Sunday is Ukes on the Edge, which is a lively ukulele band that plays a great mix of tunes for all ages.

Music in the Park is organised by Wyre Forest District Council.



LEFT: Volunteers from Grace Church, Kidderminster will be putting on the American Adventure Week. RIGHT: Members' of Grace's partner church in Mississippi will be journeying to Kidderminster for the event. s



An 'American' celebration

A KIDDERMINSTER church is celebrating six months since its launch with an American-themed week of community events and activities.

Grace Church will bring a 'Slice of Mississippi' to its venue during the first week of the school summer holidays - from July 21 to 27.

Among the highlights of the 'American Adventure Week' at the church on Greatfield Road, near Brinton Park, are an Old West themed children's holiday club for primary school-aged children, a 1960s afternoon for older adults, a

Thursday Night Hoedown with dancing and live music, a Youth Night featuring English Pick 'N' Mix and American Candy.

The week will culminate in a completely free Wild West barbecue party for all ages (featuring a bucking bronco) on the afternoon of Saturday, July 26.

To add an extra authentic American flavour to the week, the volunteers at Grace Church Kidderminster are being joined by 11 adults from their partner church in Mississippi who are jetting in to help for the week.

Lead Pastor Duncan Cobbett said: "Mississippi is known as the

'Hospitality State' so we are aiming to bring that warmth of welcome all the way from the Deep South to Wyre Forest.

"We truly hope that this week of events will be a real blessing to the local community."

Grace Church has been a hive of activity over the past six months with the church already setting up regular groups for tots, 'Kiddz', youth and older adults. There are also opportunities for anyone to come and explore faith for themselves.

Pastor Cobbett added: "One of the highlights of the past six months has been welcoming people through

our doors who have never been to church before (or for a very long time) and seeing people find true hope and meaning as they meet Jesus.

"We are looking forward to once again opening wide our doors and inviting people in from the local community during American Adventure week."

For more information about Grace Church Kidderminster's American Adventure week of events and their regular activities please visit: graceck.co.uk or search for 'Grace Church Kidderminster' on Facebook.

Re@d @ll @bout it!



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



LEFT: Officers made 34 visits to addresses believed to be forcibly used for drug dealing, and as a result safeguarded 14 vulnerable young people and adults. **MIDDLE:** Officers seized an estimated £618,000 in drugs, which included a large amount of cannabis, crack-cocaine, powdered cocaine and heroin. **RIGHT:** Over £77,000 in cash was seized. s

Arrests follow drug seizures

WEST Mercia Police have arrested 65 people and dismantled eight drug lines, as part of County Lines Intensification Week.

County Lines is the term used to describe drug dealing where a phone number 'line', usually a mobile, is used to supply drugs from large cities into rural towns and areas.

During the week, officers also seized an estimated £618,000 in drugs, which included a large amount of cannabis, crack cocaine, powdered cocaine and heroin.

In addition, over £77,000 in cash was seized, along with 20 weapons, which included machetes, swords, knives and a crossbow.

Officers made 34 visits to addresses believed to be forcibly used for drug dealing and, as a result, safeguarded 14 vulnerable young people and adults.

Officers from West Mercia worked alongside Merseyside Police, West Midlands Police, British Transport Police and partner agencies, including councils and housing associations to dismantle and disrupt criminal gangs.

Det Ch Insp Jo Woods said: "Organised crime gangs seek to profit from the exploitation of vulnerable people, spreading misery, intimidation and violence in the name of profit."

"Our aim is to create a hostile environment for these individuals who wish to cause harm to members of our communities and we are committed to protecting the public and tackling the harm that these criminal gangs cause."

"While I am proud of our work during this week of action it does not stop here."

"We remain relentless in our approach all year round, and we will continue to disrupt county lines drug activity throughout the year."

West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner John Campion said: "Drugs devastate communities, from addiction all the way to the exploitation of the most vulnerable in our society."

"I continue to listen to the public who tell me about the damage drug taking, and the vile trade that fuels it, has on their feelings of safety."

"So, I know they will join me in welcoming the results of this latest

week of action, which puts West Mercia Police as one of the top performing forces in the region."

"However, there's still much more to do."

"That's why I continue to back the force with its year-round efforts to break supply chains by putting criminals behind bars and safeguarding those being exploited."

Anyone who suspects drug-dealing is going on in their area is urged to call West Mercia Police on 101 or Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.



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Calling all the heroes..

STOURPORT carnival is running a new 'Nominate a Local Hero' competition to celebrate their centenary year.

Following 100 years of hosting the event, the organisers want to shine a light on the town's unsung heroes - those who go above and beyond to make Stourport a better place.

Whether it is through volunteering, supporting neighbours, organising local events, or spreading kindness, they want to hear about the people who make the community so special.

The carnival invites individuals to nominate someone they feel has made an outstanding contribution to the town - what they have done, why it matters and how it makes a difference.

The winner, who will be announced at this year's carnival on September 6, will be honoured with a trophy, presented live on the bandstand during the awards ceremony to mark the historic occasion.

The deadline for nominations is Sunday, July 20.

Visit this story at kidderminsterstandard.co.uk to click through to the link or visit the event's Facebook page at: facebook.com/stourportcarnival for more.



LEFT: Peter Greaves of Kidderminster Ismere team ministry. RIGHT: New Worcestershire priests with Bishop Martin, Acting Bishop of Worcester. s

New minister joins team

KIDDERMINSTER gained a new priest with the ordination of Peter Greaves at Worcester Cathedral serving at the Ismere team ministry which represents six churches to the north of the town.

He joined 10 other candidates who were ordained to serve in parishes across the diocese by the Bishop of Dudley, the Right Reverend Martin Gorick who is also currently the Acting Bishop of Worcester.

Seven candidates have completed their first year of in-parish training

and were ordained priests in the cathedral on June 28 and are now able to preside at the holy communion.

Reflecting on his ordination Peter said: "It's hard to believe that it has been 12 months since I was ordained deacon and I am now being ordained priest."

"This year has brought so much joy, with many new challenges and plenty of surprises, but the love and support I have received has been wonderful."

"It sometimes seems hard to believe that almost 18 years ago

I was so very ill that a future was difficult to envisage, and I had to retire early from the teaching and headteacher role that I loved."

"I believe that God's hand has been upon me and helped me recover, and I hope to be able to thank the Lord in my service and mission."

"I pray for God's blessing on the next step of this journey."

A further four candidates were ordained deacon on June 29 and are entering their first year of training as a curate.

The Rev Canon Dr Richard Cooke, former principal of the Coventry

Diocesan Training Partnership and now rector of the Ilmington Downs and Stour Valley Parishes in the Diocese of Coventry, preached at both services having led a pre-ordination retreat for all candidates.

Bishop Martin added: "It is always a great privilege to be able to ordain people who have discovered the love of God in their lives and have decided to devote themselves to bringing that love to others."

"All these candidates will be a blessing to the churches in which they serve as well as the wider community."



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New officers may boost SEND pupils



Front row - Jenny, Coun Satinder Bell, Lisa McNally, Director of Public Health, Anny, Jenny, Jenny, Sue. Back row - the Healthy Worcestershire team: Megan, Jai and Jack. s

HEALTHY APPROACH: THE HEALTHY Worcestershire Programme has celebrated its first anniversary, having made drastic improvements to the lives of those in the local community over the past year.

Run by Worcestershire County Council's Public Health Team, the scheme celebrated its first anniversary after making the lives of local people better since summer 2024, expanding to 30 venues and hosting around 700 people in weekly sessions.

These sessions offer supportive spaces where people can stay active and learn about health and wellbeing while also building local connections.

A total of 99 per cent of participants said they were leading a healthier lifestyle because of the Healthy Worcestershire Programme, with 65 per cent

stating sessions improved their strength, balance or flexibility.

Jenny Bruton, who attends these sessions regularly, said: "My doctor suggested it. I was struggling a bit.

"I've met new people, which is very nice, and I've enjoyed the exercises very much.

"You're not over pushed. You can do it at your own pace and it's super".

Participants have heavily shaped the programme by suggesting topics of focus, such as improving confidence, summer safety, probiotic foods, falling safety and tackling negative thoughts - all of which were addressed by Healthy Worcestershire trainers.

Visit: worcestershire.gov.uk/healthy-worcestershire for more on the programme.

YOUNG people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) could soon get a bigger say in the system, thanks to the introduction of two new co-production officers.

Over the past few months, Worcestershire County Council and NHS Herefordshire and Worcestershire Integrated Care Board (ICB) have appointed Chanika Benain and Amy Knight who are already making a positive impact. They have done this by prioritising the value and voice of young people with SEND.

Ongoing work, led by Worcestershire's Local Area Partnership, sees the system directly engage with young people across the county to discuss and ascertain their personal needs.

Visits to classrooms and family hubs are just some examples of how the pair are creating welcoming spaces to put the voice of those impacted at the centre of improvements to be made.

Gaining valuable insight of what 'good' looks like in each child's life to prioritise fulfillment, shapes Worcestershire's SEND strategy, ensuring the development of appropriate services is not only for young people, but with them.

The new SEND forum offers a



regular platform for children to come together and discuss interests.

A meeting being held online this month and a work launch event is being hosted by Chanika and Amy at The Hive on August 7. It will include a range of information stalls and fun activities for children to encourage active engagement.

Positive feedback has been shared continuously since the launch of workshops and has led to children

already comfortably expressing their thoughts.

One said: "I want people to understand me."

Another added: "I only want to be in meetings when they are saying good things so I can feel proud."

Coun Dr Stephen Foster, Cabinet Member for Education and SEND at Worcestershire County Council, said: "We know we need to do more to truly listen to and involve children and young people with SEND in the decisions that affect their lives."

He added Chanika and Amy's work was helping the service build stronger, more meaningful relationships with young people and ensuring their voices were not just heard but also acted upon.

Anyone who knows SEND children who would benefit can email Chanika and Amy at:

SENDco-productionteam@worcestershire.gov.uk or visit: worcestershire.gov.uk/SENDcoproduction for more information.

Children and young people with Special Needs and Disabilities (SEND) are being given a greater voice after the introduction of two new co-production officers. s

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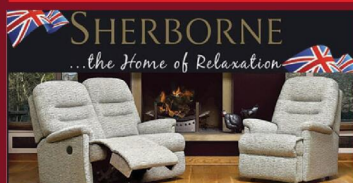
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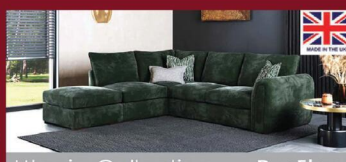
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Shining spotlight on frontline staff

WEST Midlands Ambulance Service is shining a spotlight on the dedicated, collaborative and compassionate natures of its frontline staff as part of International Paramedics Day on Tuesday.

The event, celebrated across the globe, provides an opportunity to thank the paramedics for their admirable service and to acknowledge the emotional resilience and mental endurance it takes to care for people in every imaginable situation.

West Midland Ambulance Service (WMAS) Chief Executive Officer, Anthony Marsh, said: "Today is a moment to reflect and say thank you for the life-saving efforts made by ambulance staff, every single day."

From life-threatening medical emergencies to responding to a serious road crash, delivering a baby at home or providing consolation and compassion in someone's final moments, paramedics stand beside people on the most difficult and challenging days of their life.

Working on the frontline of the health-care service, the day serves as a reminder of the physically and emotionally demanding situations which paramedics dedicate themselves to in order to help others.

To mark the occasion, the WMAS Trust has released a moving video featuring paramedic, Samuel Simpson, who described his own experiences of working in the field and the importance of his job.

He said: "We don't do this for the recognition. We do this because people matter."

Mr Marsh added: "On International Paramedics Day, we recognise the extraordinary individuals who represent the very best of



what our ambulance service stands for. "Our paramedics show courage, care and professionalism in some of the most challenging situations. Their impact is felt by thousands of patients and their families and loved ones every day. I am incredibly proud of each and every one of them."

Visit this story on our website to watch the video.

Samuel Simpson describes his own experiences of working in his role in a video released for International Paramedics Day. Picture by WMAS. s



Aldi shoppers helped raise £12million for the Teenage Cancer Trust. s

Checkout this fine total

SUPERMARKET Aldi is thanking its shoppers in the West Midlands for helping it to raise £12million for the Teenage Cancer Trust.

The company started its partnership with the charity in 2027, initially pledging to raise \$15million for the charity by 2017.

But it has now extended its commitments with a new target of £20million by 2031.

Funds raised through the partnership help the charity continue providing specialist care, vital support services and dedicated centres adapted to the needs of young people and teens undergoing cancer treatment across the country.

Kate Collins, chief executive of the Teenage Cancer Trust, said: "The funds raised have enabled our nurses and youth teams to improve the lives of thousands of young people with cancer and support families during their toughest times."

Aldi staff in the region have completed a

wide range of fundraising activities - from head shaves and cake sales to various endurance challenges, whilst donations have been further boosted by the generosity and kindness of Aldi shoppers across the area.

To mark the accomplished milestones, Aldi, the fourth largest supermarket in the UK, is also making an additional \$12,000 donation to continue to support the charity's work with teenage cancer patients and their families.

Liz Fox, national sustainability director at Aldi UK, said said the supermarket, was incredibly proud of its partnership with the charity, adding this latest milestone reflected the dedication of its staff and the generosity of its customers.

Throughout July, Aldi's Cuthbert cake will additionally feature a text code on its packaging for the Teenage Cancer Trust, giving those customers who want to donate to the charity the chance to do so.



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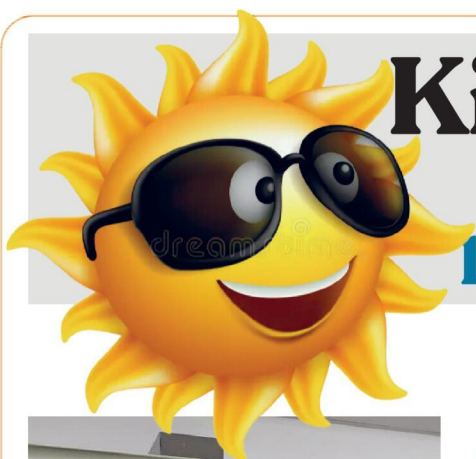
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Theatre, comedy, music and more in festival's final week

THERE will still be plenty to do in the final packed week of this year's Bromsgrove Festival.

Music

The final Festive Classics sees French Horn Fireworks come to Avoncroft Museum's New Guesten Hall at 12pm on Wednesday, July 16. A post-show lunch takes place at 1pm. The performance sees eight French horn players from The Birmingham Horn Sound perform mostly classical works with some lighter numbers and solo pieces. People can buy tickets for just the show or lunch as well. Visit: festive-classics.co.uk or call 01527 832492 for more information or tickets.

Top Meat Loaf tribute - the Meat Loud Duo will take centre stage at Fairfield Village Hall at 8pm next Saturday, July 19. The show features the talented Andy Plimmer and Sally Rivers covering many of Meat Loaf's songs, including the Bat Out of Hell album and some Jim Steinman classics. Visit: bromsgrovearts.org.uk for more information and tickets.

The Central of England Concert Band performs at the Jubilee Bandstand in Sanders Park at 2.30pm next Sunday, July 20. The group, which formed in the 1980s, is a warm and welcoming com-

munity ensemble which will be performing film music, hits from the musicals, marches and a more established wind band repertoire. The event is free and people are urged to take along picnics, chairs and blankets and enjoy the music in this Bands In The Park event.

The Orchestra of St John performs Haydn's Little Organ Mass at 10.45am on Sunday, July 20. At Bromsgrove's St John's Church, Dr Richard Jenkinson will be the conductor for the event which will see Hadyn's work played. It will be a precursor to the evening concert (see below).

At 7pm on Sunday, July 20, there will be the Musical Masterpieces - Festival Gala Concert at St John's Church in Bromsgrove. The show is being performed by The Orchestra of St John with Dr Richard Jenkinson as the conductor and features

Richard Strauss' Four Last Songs and Bruckner's 7th Symphony. Visit: osjbromsgrove.org or email: enquiries@osjbromsgrove.org for more information and head to priorbooking.com or Decanter Spirit in Bromsgrove High Street for tickets.

Theatre / cinema

Screenings of the National Theatre's A Streetcar Named Desire will take place at Fairfield Village Hall at 7pm on Sunday, July 13, and 7pm on Wednesday, July 16. Gillian Anderson, Vanessa Kirby and Ben Foster lead the cast of Tennessee Williams' timeless masterpiece which sees Blanche's fragile world crumble and, as she turns to her sister Stella, it leads to a downward spiral. Visit: bromsgrovearts.org.uk for tickets and more information.

Comedy

Independent Cafes and the High Street will be the setting for Bromsgrove's own comedy event next Saturday, July 19. Comedians Carl Paskin, Av Singh and Tristan Harris will be performing their stand-up sets at various venues have around 10 minutes to make an impact and set you giggling

Other events

From 9.30am to 3pm on Sunday, July 13, there will be the Avoncroft Open Air Art Competition. The historic venue has linked up with

LEFT - Distinguished diplomat Sir Laurie Bristow will be Bromsgrove WORDS' next guest speaker on July 22. s

Avoncroft Arts Centre for the event which will enable artists to pitch up where they want on the 19-acre site among more than 30 buildings from different eras. Participants can then finish their work at home and frame it ready for a public exhibition at the New Guesten Hall during the Heritage Open Days on September 20 and 21. Visit: avoncroft.org.uk/product/avoncroft-open-air-art-competition for tickets and prices.

WORDS welcomes its second speaker of The Bromsgrove Festival to Avoncroft Museum's New Guesten Hall at 11am on July 22. The distinguished diplomat Sir Laurie Bristow, who was the last United Kingdom Ambassador to the Republic of Afghanistan in August 2021, at the time when the Taliban overthrew the government and took power. His book 'Kabul: Final Call' is a first hand account of the final days of the Republic and the evacuation of Kabul. He publishes and broadcasts regularly on geopolitics. Tickets, at \$15 each, are available by visiting: ticketsource.co.uk and type 'Kabul: Final Call' into the search bar. Visit: bromsgrovewords.com for more information.



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All fired-up for the opportunity

AFTER being offered the chance to have a go at The National Standard Firefighters Test, our journalist **Tristan Harris** could not pass up the opportunity. Here is his first-hand account.

I headed to Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service's Malvern Fire Station to find out more about becoming a firefighter.

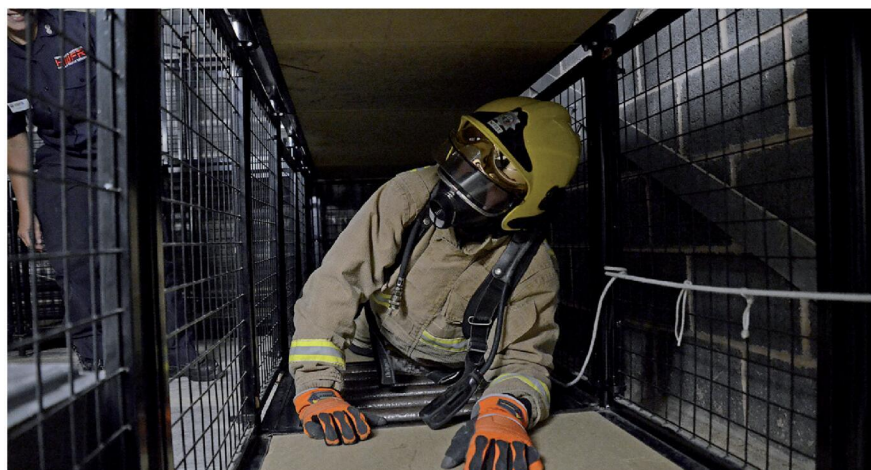
After being kitted out in full firefighter PPE - boots, trousers, tunic and helmet, I took on five of the seven tests anyone wanting to become a firefighter - wholetime or on call - would have to pass.

The first - 'Casualty Evacuation' - tasked me with dragging a 55kg fully-clothed mannequin around a 30metre course. I wrapped my arms around the casualty (under its arms) and, led by a firefighter behind me, completed the task within the allotted time.

For the 'Ladder Extension' you need to use a metal pulley to extend a triple extension ladder before returning it to its original position. The hardest thing here was finding the 'one hand over the other' rhythm. Once I got the hang of that, I was fine.

Third was the 'Ladder Lift' which tests upper body strength and control. This involves lifting a weighted pole - first to your chest before changing grip and pushing it above your head and repeating the process in reverse.

Next up was the BA (breathing apparatus) Crawl - This tests tolerance of enclosed spaces, using an L-shaped two-storey cage. As well



as the regular firefighter uniform, a 25kg oxygen cylinder and mask are added. This makes it trickier as you need to take into account the added height as you crawl through the course. At the one end of the L, I found it easier to turn around there and do the next bit backwards. I had some difficulty after dropping down to the ground level and had to think about how to get the extra equipment height through. I finished it within the time limit.

And the last task I did was the Equipment Carry, testing functional strength and endurance. This is performed on a 25m course and is

similar to a shuttle run/walk, travelling 550m in total, carrying various weights. It starts with the end of a hose being taken as quickly as possible to the end of the course. After laying that down, you run back and carry two heavy duty coiled hoses (similar to 'two bags of shopping' as the trainers reminded me) 50 metres. One of them is then lifted up to the chest and carried 25 metres.

After that, there is a long - light but awkward cylindrical pipe and another cylindrical object to be carried 50 metres before a 100m shuttle run - this time with no equipment

By this point I was out of breathing heavy and blowing hard. The most challenging was still to come so, coached by the training staff, I used the 100m to regulate my breathing and get some much-needed oxygen into my lungs.

The final 100m (four laps) was with a 30kg barbell weight, held at waist level. I really had to dig deep and was feeling the burn but was buzzing with adrenaline afterwards. The maximum time to complete the equipment carry was 5mins 47secs - I had somehow managed it in 4mins 18.

The two tests I did not under-

The BA Crawl tests people's ability to deal with enclosed spaces. Pictures by Marcus Mingsins 2825001MMR

take was a Ladder Climb, testing confidence and agility at height and Manual Dexterity to assess motor skills and assembling equipment.

Having passed the others with flying colours, I feel I could have struggled with the other two. I am not the best with heights, although if I had to, I could possibly rely on my adrenaline to overcome that fear and assembling equipment is also not my strongest point although I feel it is doable with deep concentration.

How I found it

Before undertaking this challenge, I feared I may not be fit enough to pass the tests but that was not the case and the trainers were brilliant at getting me to push for the finish of each task.

As Jules Short, the Watch Commander for the training section, stated - you do not have to be super-fit to become a firefighter. A good cardio vascular fitness level and the ability to deal with confined spaces and heights, along with other attributes will get people through The National Standard Firefighters Test and into 'a very rewarding job where everyday is different'.

Recruitment for HWFRS firefighters opens from Monday, July 17, to August 8 - go to: hwfire.org.uk for more.

Visit this story on our website for more pictures of the day.

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Gardening

Now is the time to get out and enjoy the garden in summer

JULY is the month for you to get out and enjoy your garden, whether it is an open area in the country or a more compact urban space.

The lazy, hazy days of summer are best spent enjoying the plants that you have lovingly nurtured and cared for over the past months that are now in full flower.

You do need to keep an eye on watering this month to make sure your garden does not suffer from dehydration, but make sure you are 'water-wise'.

You can conserve water and help plants in the summer by moving pots out of full sun into the shade where possible.

Some tips for good watering include using water-retaining gel in containers, water the area directly above the roots of plants, use grey water from washing up and a good watering less frequently is better than watering little and often.

Another way to conserve water and moisture is to ensure there is good ground cover planting in beds and borders – it acts like a mulch helping to suppress weeds and lock in soil moisture and nutrients.

Hardy geraniums, campanula and creeping herbs such as thyme are easy growing ground cover plants,

as are strawberries.

Using strawberries offers a variety of benefits to both plants and gardeners. In addition to providing delicious fruit, their shallow root system helps prevent soil compaction and also improves soil structure whilst their white and pink flowers attract beneficial pollinators.

Strawberries like well-draining and fertile soil and thrive in full sun but can also do well in partial shade. They require consistent moisture, especially during flowering and fruiting so need to be watered regularly.

There are several different types of strawberry plants – early, mid and late summer varieties, perpetual strawberries and alpine – with popular varieties including 'Cambridge Favourite' – best known and most reliable, producing medium-sized, orange-red berries with a good flavour, 'Finesse' – a perpetual with good resistance to disease that produces lots of tasty, heart-shaped fruits, and 'Alexandria' – a vigorous heavy cropping alpine.

Some ground cover plants can also be grown as an alternative to a lawn – such as Chamomile, which also makes an excellent herbal tea.

It belongs to the Asteraceae

Using strawberries offers a variety of benefits to both plants and gardeners.



(daisy or sunflower) plant family and has been used as a traditional medicine for thousands of years to calm anxiety and settle stomachs.

People in ancient Rome, Greece

and Egypt used dried chamomile flowers and their essential oils as a medicinal herb.

There is some evidence that Chamomile can ease anxiety and

maybe even help you sleep better.

Top tips

Other top tips from the RHS for July jobs in the garden include deadheading, feeding and watering for a long-lasting show of flowers, clearing algae, blanket weed and debris from ponds and keep them topped up in hot spells.

Do not worry if the lawn goes brown, it will bounce back once it rains but do water tubs and new plants if dry – although make sure to be water-wise.

Care for houseplants while on holiday, check for pests – especially aphids, pick courgettes before they become marrows, start picking tomatoes as they ripen and continue to feed and water, plant out leeks and brassicas for a winter harvest and give regular liquid feed to fruit or veg growing in containers.

And finally...

As Roald Dahl said: "If I had my way, I'd remove January from the calendar altogether and have an extra July instead."

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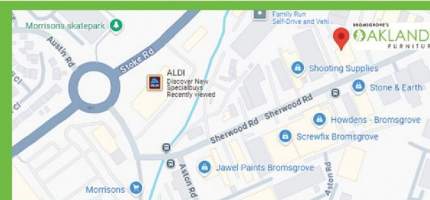
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CARING People CARING Places

Because caring isn't something we do, it's who we are.

Caring People, Caring Places: The heartbeat of our community

In every corner of our towns and villages, there's a quiet network of people and places who make care their calling.

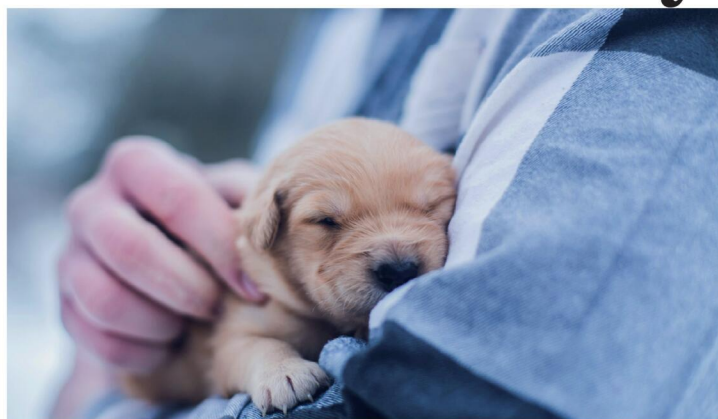
From the vet who checks on your family dog like it's their own, to the funeral director who offers gentle guidance during life's most difficult goodbyes, these unsung heroes are woven into the very fabric of our daily lives. This isn't just about care for the elderly – though they are, of course, a cherished part of this picture – but about the many ways compassion shapes our communities, across all ages and walks of life.

At its heart, Caring People, Caring Places is a celebration of humanity. It's about those who dedicate themselves to the wellbeing of others – people who don't just do a job, but perform a service rooted in empathy, patience, and

dignity.

Take, for instance, the local solicitor who offers free advice sessions on will writing, ensuring peace of mind for families at any stage of life. It's not just about legalese and paperwork – it's about offering reassurance, answering difficult questions, and helping people plan with clarity and care.

Veterinary clinics also tell a powerful story of compassion. Ask any pet owner and they'll say the vet is a lifeline during tough times – when the dog has eaten something it shouldn't, when the cat needs emergency surgery, or simply when a furry friend is nearing the end of their life. These clinics often extend their care beyond animals, understanding how closely our emotional health is tied to our pets. Many offer grief support and work closely with rehoming charities to give abandoned animals a second chance at love.



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CARING People CARING Places

Speaking of second chances, fostering and adoption services are a profound example of care in action. Across our region, there are families opening their doors – and their hearts – to children who need stability, support, and love. Social workers, carers, and support staff



dedicate their careers to making sure that vulnerable young people find not just shelter, but a sense of belonging.

And while we're on the subject of homes, care homes and supported living facilities continue to provide more than just a roof and regular meals. Many of these places are hubs of life and activity, staffed by people who understand that dignity, independence, and companionship are vital at any age. Increasingly, intergenerational projects and pet therapy schemes are breathing new life into care spaces, offering residents laughter, stimulation, and purpose.

But care doesn't stop at the front door. Funeral directors – some of the most quietly compassionate professionals in our communities – play a deeply important role in helping families navigate loss with grace and respect. Alongside them, stonemasons craft lasting tributes that honour lives lived, with each inscription carved in memory and love. These trades might not often make headlines, but their impact is profound and lasting. And let's not forget the smaller, sometimes overlooked services that make a world of difference. The kennels and catteries that provide safe havens for pets when families are away; the hearing aid specialists who reconnect people to the sounds – and conversations – they've been missing; or the volunteers who give their time to animal shelters and community centres, ensuring no one is forgotten.

These people and places aren't glamorous, and they rarely seek the spotlight. Yet they form a backbone of care and community that deserves



recognition. Their work is local, personal, and essential. They remind us that "care" isn't a service – it's a value. One that's practiced every day in countless acts of kindness, patience, and professionalism.

It might be easy to picture care as something reserved for our oldest citizens – and yes, their needs are crucial – but Caring People, Caring Places shines a light on the broader picture. From children finding safe new homes, to pets being lovingly rehomed, to families finding comfort and support through life's major

transitions, this is a celebration of care in all its forms.

So next time you pass the hearing clinic, walk past the vet's office, or drive by the local foster services banner, pause for a moment. Think of the people inside – doing quiet, tireless work to make someone else's life a little easier, a little warmer, a little more human. Let's support these people, these businesses and these organisations.

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Dispelling the recycling myths that many Brits think are true

BOX reuse experts at Sadlers - sadlers.co.uk - has revealed the five most common recycling myths which confuse British households.

Myth: The Green Dot recycling symbol means an item is recyclable
The Green Dot, which resembles two green arrows forming a circle, is one of the most widely used recycling symbols on packaging and is often mistaken to mean the item can be recycled.

In fact, the symbol comes from European manufacturers and indicates the producers have made a financial contribution to a packaging recovery and recycling scheme in Europe.

Even though the Green Dot scheme is not mandatory in the UK, many companies use the same packaging across markets, including countries such as Germany and France, where displaying the symbol is required.

It has no significance to whether the product or packaging is recyclable or whether local councils will accept it in recycling collections.

To determine if something is recyclable, check for logos from the On-Pack-Recycling Label scheme.

These usually appear as a green box with a looping arrow and the words 'Widely Recycled' - sometimes accompanied by instructions like 'Rinse' or 'Cap On.'

Myth: Items need to be spotless to be recycled

While items should be reasonably clean, they don't need to be immaculate. This misconception often leads households to recycle less, as they throw away packaging they feel they cannot get clean enough or do not have time to wash thoroughly.

It is true leftover food or liquids can contaminate recycling batches, even stopping the entire batch from being recycled, but a quick rinse is usually enough to remove the necessary residue.

The most important thing is to ensure there are no large chunks or sticky traces left on the packaging. Over-cleaning can waste water and discourage recycling efforts.

Instead, use the leftover water from cooking or washing dishes or quickly scrape the items clean.

Myth: All takeaway containers are recyclable

Many takeaway containers, such as pizza boxes and coffee cups, are not recyclable in a regular household collection.

Since pizza boxes are made of cardboard, many wrongly assume they are recyclable. However, oils and cheese grease soak into the cardboard fibres, which makes the material difficult to process at recycling plants.



Contaminated cardboard can cause entire batches to be rejected. If only part of the pizza box is greasy, this can be torn off. Otherwise, avoid recycling the whole box.

Similarly, most coffee cups are made from paper but have a plastic lining to make them waterproof. This means they require special facilities which can separate the materials - many councils do not offer this.

People can check if the coffee chain the drink was purchased from offers specialised recycling options instead.

Local councils have reportedly issued fixed penalty notices ranging from \$100 to \$400 to repeat offenders who continued to contaminate

batches after being warned.

Myth: Toys and craft materials are recyclable

Many parents presume plastic toys and leftover arts and crafts supplies are recyclable, especially if made of plastic or cardboard. However, these items are often not accepted in regular household recycling.

This is because they are typically made from hard plastics that fall into non-recyclable categories or they include mixed materials such as batteries, fabric or electronic parts.

Small parts on toys such as googly eyes are also too small to be processed by recycling facilities and can

jam the machinery.

Toy recycling schemes are offered by retailers and charities, with drop-off points available for used toys.

For arts and crafts, consider using recyclable materials, such as paper-based crafts or biodegradable glitter. Items covered in glue or paint will usually be unrecyclable.

It is important to teach children to check packaging labels or check before putting something in the recycling bin to prevent batches being contaminated.

Myth: Recycling bins and rules are the same everywhere in the UK

Recycling rules vary significantly depending on local councils or waste providers.

What is accepted in one area may not be in another. For example, one council might accept plastic tubs and trays, while a neighbouring one treats them as general waste.

Similarly, bin colours also are not standardised. In one area, a green bin might be for garden waste, while in another it is used for glass.

When visiting friends or relatives, it is a good idea to always check with the homeowner what their recycling system is.

People travelling on holiday can download recycling apps to scan barcodes or search items to see whether items are accepted.

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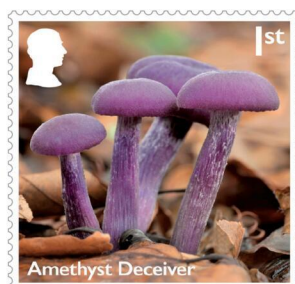
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Natural selection

A SELECTION of limited edition stamps have been released by the Royal Mail to celebrate the ecological importance of the UK's native mushrooms.

Ten stamps have been issued, showcasing the diversity of mushroom species throughout the UK.

The Royal Mail worked on the project with well-known mycologist, Geoffrey Kibby, one of Britain's foremost experts on mushroom identification. He has written and illustrated numerous books and field guides on fungi species found across Europe and North America.

Mr Kibby said: "Fungi are finally getting the attention they deserve in literature, education and on TV, and now their amazing diversity and importance to our ecology is being celebrated in this excellent set of Royal Mail stamps.

"The species illustrated show the wide variety of fungi to be found in the British countryside, emphasising their importance as a vital part of the fascinating biodiversity to be found in our islands."

An array of fungi

The mushrooms range from edible varieties, such as the Penny Bun, to the toxic Fly Agaric which has a distinctive white-spotted red cap.

They are also a variety of colours on offer within the fungi collection chosen, from the intense violet of the Amethyst Deceiver, a common species in autumn woodlands everywhere.

Many form simple cups, of which arguably the most beautiful is the Scarlet Elf Cup, while others are tough and bracket-shaped, such as the colourful Turkey Tails or the often large and striking Chicken of the Woods.

And there are common species found on oak logs - the Clustered Bonnet, known for its unusual but difficult-to-define smell which resembles paint, flour or cucumber.

The variety of fungi is extensive and their importance in the world's ecology cannot be underestimated.

The mushroom species pictured

on the stamps in full are: Chicken of the Wood, Clustered Bonnet, Scarlet Waxcap, Morel, Scarlet Elf Cup, Penny Bun, Amethyst Deceiver, Collared Earthstar, Fly Agaric and Turkey Tail. These are only a handful of the 4,000 varieties of mushroom in the UK today.

Essential role

David Gold, director of external affairs and policy for Royal Mail, said: "Few people will be familiar with the breadth, variety and beauty of the fungi that are of such biological importance to our natural environment.

"Mushrooms play an essential role in the delicate balance of life around us, yet largely go unnoticed.

"In these stamps their contribution to the natural environment is duly recognised."

Stamps went on general sale on July 3 and the collection costs £13.75 for each set of ten.

Visit: royalmail.com/mushrooms or dial 03457 641 641 for more.



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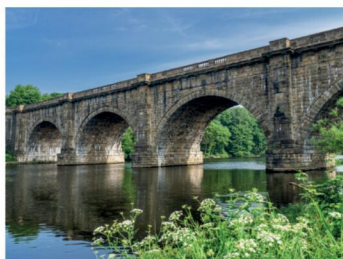
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8			9			5	4	
	7		1	6				2
2	3			4	5		9	
5		1		7			8	4
	1		3		7			5
3		2		1		8		9
			5			1		

HARD

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

PATHFINDER

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

Landlocked Countries

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

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

1. Saucy (4)
3. Jam (8)
9. Rubbers (7)
10. Hackneyed (5)
11. Teacher (12)
13. Lottery (6)
15. Hesitate (6)
17. Impolite (12)
20. Boredom (5)
21. Wordy (7)
22. Commonplace (8)
23. Pluck (4)

DOWN

1. Delight (8)
2. Extend (5)
4. Recommence (6)
5. Adequate (12)
6. Apparel (7)
7. Pitcher (4)
8. Memory (12)
12. Outlook (8)
14. Simulated (7)
16. Tremble (6)
18. Smell (5)
19. Nil (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.

- Wild animal
- Hit
- Unsurpassed
- Broken
- Household dirt

TEAR

DUCT

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.

- 7629183 gives a tube station;
- 457453 gives a second tube station;
- 89154 gives a commuter town.

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

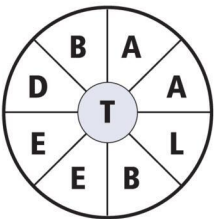
CODEWORD

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

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

WORDWHEEL

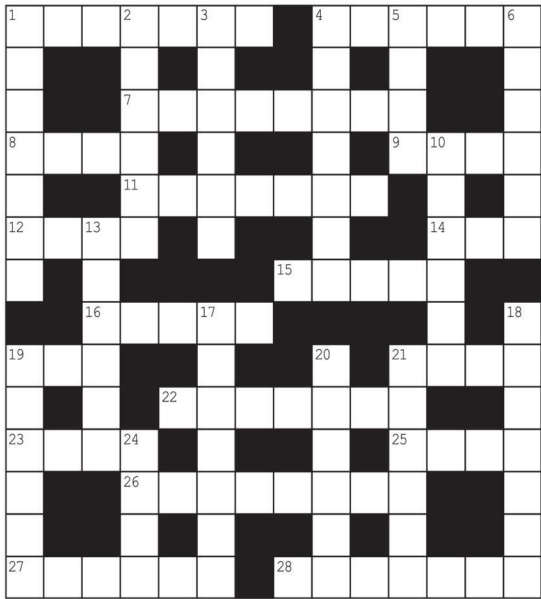
You have 10 mins to find as many words as possible using the letters in the wheel. Each must use the hub letter and at least 3 others. Letters may be used only once. You cannot use plurals, foreign words or proper nouns. There is at least one 9-letter word to be found.



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

GENERAL KNOWLEDGE CROSSWORD

- ACROSS**
- 1 Kind of domestic cat (7)
4 Mother of the prophet Samuel (6)
7 Short, squat gun used in trench warfare, etc. (8)
8 A counter-tenor (4)
9 A precious stone (4)
11 Kind of potherb (7)
12 See 20 Down
14 Famous French marshal (3)
15 Philosopher of a school founded by Zeno (5)
16 Freshwater fish of the carp family (5)
19 & 3 Down Hero of a novel by Mark Twain (3,6)
21 Asian desert (4)
22 In Greek legend, a creature half man, half horse (7)
23 Bone of the forearm (4)
25 An object of worship (4)
26 Belonging to the first ages (8)
27 See 6 Down
28 Intervening time (7)



- DOWN**
- 1 A cured herring (7)
2 Aristocratic ruffian of early 18th century London (6)
3 See 19 Across
4 See 18 Down
5 Roman emperor proverbial for his tyranny (4)
6 & 27 Across London thoroughfare associated with eminent surgeons (6,6)
10 Kind of South American cloak (6)
13 Opera by Bizet (6)
17 A pharmacist (7)
18 & 4 Down Maidstone-born writer famous for Table Talk, etc. (7,7)
19 Sign of the zodiac (6)
20 & 12 Across Flemish artist whose works include Man in a Red Turban (3,3,4)
21 A young salmon (6)
24 Polygonal church recess at the east end of the choir (4)

SOLUTIONS

General Knowledge Crossword

ACROSS: 1 Burmese; 4 Hannah; 7 Howitzer; 8 Alto; 9 Opal; 11 Cheviot; 12 Eyck; 14 Ney; 15 Stoic; 16 Roeder; 19 Tom; 21 Bloater; 22 Centaur; 23 Ulna; 25 Idol; 26 Primeval; 27 Street; 28 Inferno. DOWN: 1 Boater; 2 Mohock; 3 Sawyer; 4 Hazlitt; 5 Nero; 6 Harley; 10 Poncho; 13 Carmen; 17 Chemist; 18 William; 19 Taurus; 20 Jan van; 21 Grilse; 24 Apse.

Wordwheel Pathfinder

DEBATABLE: Vatican City, Zimbabwe, Switzerland, Moldova, Hungary, Ethiopia, Niger, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan.

Nine

Belarus, Andorra, Afghanistan, Armenia, Turkmenistan, Paraguay, Botswana, San Marino, Serbia, Tajikistan, Zambia, Kosovo, Mali.

Codeword

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

Ladder

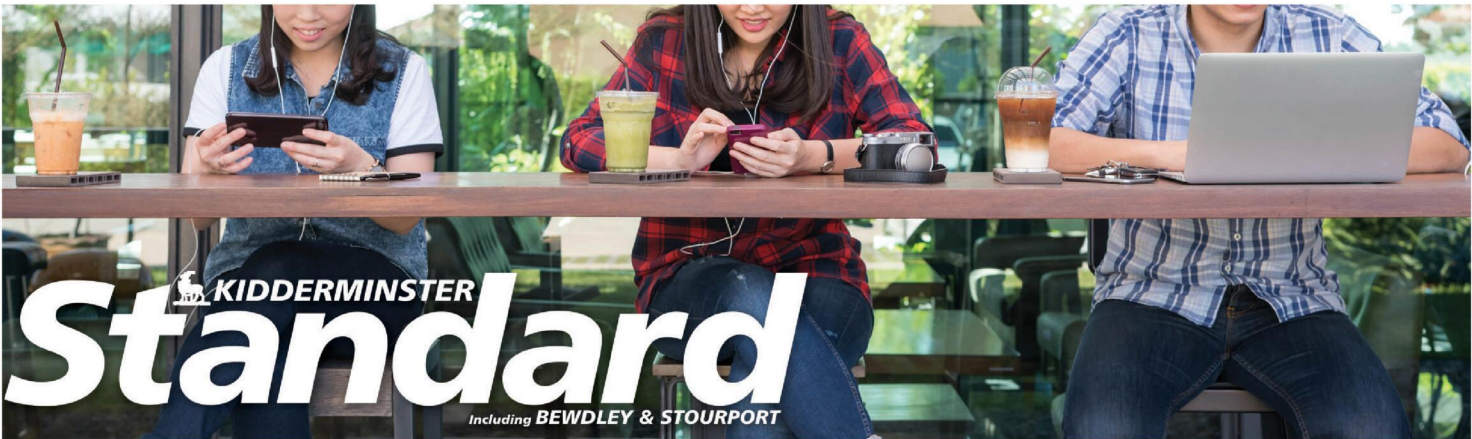
Tear, Bear, Best, Bust, Dust, Duct.

Easy Sudoku

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

Hard Sudoku

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



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GARDEN Rotovator - good working condition - sale due to retirement. £200. Tel: 01527 524745

ELECTRIC plane 650W, used once, new spare belt and blades 2mm cut, £20. Tel: 07780 900015

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Renault takes home the top spot

THE RENAULT 5 E-Tech electric has taken the number one spot in the EcoCar Electrified Top 50 Awards.

It was a double victory for the electric supermini after it also scooped the award for the 'Best Electric Small Car', while there were also plaudits for the Clio and Rafale E-Tech.

There were four Renault models in the top 50 list, including the Renault Scenic E-Tech electric – last year's overall winner – which took sixth place and made it two cars in the top 10 for Renault.

Ian Robertson, Editor and Publisher of Diesel&EcoCar which organises the annual awards, said: "Renault has pulled off a masterstroke with the 5 E-Tech, a retro-styled hatchback with cutting-edge EV credentials that confidently claims our top spot for 2025. Designed entirely afresh, yet paying tribute to the beloved original 5, it combines Gallic charm with modern engineering to deliver one of the most compelling electric cars of the year."

"For reinventing an icon and making it more relevant than ever, the Renault 5 E-Tech is our Electrified Car of the Year 2025, as well as grabbing the gong for Best Electric Small Car 2025. A round of applause please for our winner."

Referencing the style of the original model, the Renault 5 E-Tech electric is also the epitome of modernity, with agile handling and innovative

technology that delivers a driving range of up to 252 miles on a single charge. Available from £22,995 OTR in a choice of four trim levels, the Renault 5 E-Tech electric is fun to drive and fun to be around, with its heart-winning design and vibrant range of body colours.

The panel of expert judges were also hugely impressed with the Clio E-Tech, which went on to take the award for the 'Best Hybrid Small Car.' Available from £21,895 in full hybrid E-Tech 145 form and in a choice of three trim levels – evolution, techno, and esprit Alpine – the Clio E-Tech full hybrid matches its innovative and efficient hybrid powertrain with bold styling and a cutting-edge digital experience.

Recognising the qualities that made the Clio E-Tech a worthy winner, Robertson added: "The Clio has matured into a genuinely refined small car, with its 1.6-litre E-Tech full hybrid system offering up to 67.3mpg and smooth electric-petrol transitions. Compact yet comfortable, the Clio's recent facelift brings crisper styling and an improved infotainment system. It's our Best Hybrid Small Car for 2025, thanks to its efficient drivetrain, tidy handling and high-quality finish. It's a strong contender in the competitive supermini class and a real bargain."

Completing the quartet of awards and earning praise for its performance and style, the Renault Rafale E-Tech full hybrid was voted 'Best Hybrid Large SUV'.

Robertson explained: "Rafale is a new name in the Renault lineup and is a sleek flagship SUV coupé that offers strong performance from its E-Tech hybrid powertrain and standout style. A 1.2-litre petrol engine and twin electric motors deliver brisk acceleration and low emissions, earning it the title of Best Hybrid Large SUV. Inside, the Rafale feels premium and technology-rich, with sustainable materials and a clean, driver-centric layout. It's a bold and stylish addition to Renault's expanding electrified range. The plug-in hybrid variants offer a brisk 296bhp and four-wheel drive."

Renault Rafale is crafted around optimal driving pleasure, featuring a spacious and stylish cabin where exceptional material quality meets sustainability. Priced from £38,195, Rafale is offered in a choice of four trim levels – techno, techno esprit Alpine, iconic esprit Alpine and the range-topping atelier Alpine, available exclusively with the E-Tech plug-in hybrid 300hp powertrain that is as powerful as it is efficient.

Adam Wood, Managing Director, Renault UK, said: "We're exceptionally pleased to see so many models feature in EcoCar's expertly judged list. These awards highlight how our E-Tech technology brings benefits to every corner of the market, reaffirming the success and appeal of firm favourites like Clio and Scenic while recognising the class-leading credentials of our latest models, such as Renault 5 and Renault Rafale."

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Harriers to start season at home as fixtures revealed

Adam Murray will take charge of Harriers in a competitive match for the first time against Scarborough on Saturday, August 9. Picture courtesy of Official Harriers/YouTube.



by Aaron Sutcliffe
aaron.sutcliffe@bullivantmedia.com

FOOTBALL: ADAM Murray insists the homework on Kidderminster Harriers' opening day opponents has already begun after the club's fixtures for the 2025/26 season were revealed.

Harriers will host Scarborough Athletic on the opening weekend of the National League North season.

And while new Harriers boss Murray has not paid too much attention to his side's schedule, he is looking forward to starting his reign in charge of the club with a home game at Aggborough.

Murray said: "I'm not an overthinker when it comes to the fixtures, people overthink it and think too much into 'we're playing them there and then we've got that run at the end'.

"For us to be at home on the opening day is nice, we've got to turn up now and do the job.

"I haven't looked too much into the fixtures but it makes it real, as coaches, players and supporters we wait for fixtures day because everything becomes real then.

"Your pre-season brain switches into your proper work brain because you know what you're preparing for.

"The homework on Scarborough will start now and we'll get to their pre-season games and make sure we're right."

Harriers start the campaign with a home game against Scarborough at Aggborough on Saturday, August 9.

The opening day fixture will mark new Harriers boss Murray's first competitive match in charge of Kidderminster.

Harriers will then travel to Worksop Town (August 16) for their first away game of the season.

And Murray then faces a return to former club AFC Fylde (August 23) before hosting Leamington (August 25) just two days later.

Harriers will host Fylde in the return fixture in their final game before Christmas (December 20).

And Kidderminster again make the trip to Hereford on Boxing Day (December 26).

Harriers close out the year with a home fixture against newly-promoted AFC Telford United (December 30).

Murray's men begin 2026 with a home game against Curzon Ashton (January 3).

Kidderminster host Hereford in the return fixture on Good Friday (April 3) and then travel to Telford on Easter Monday (April 6).

Harriers travel to Leamington in their penultimate fixture of the season (April 18).

And Kidderminster finish the campaign with a home game against South Shields (April 25).

A full list of the club's fixtures is available online at:

kidderminsterstandard.co.uk/sport

Lategan hits century to keep club above drop

CRICKET: DANIEL Lategan's century helped Kidderminster CC to a winning draw against Worfield.

Lategan scored at a rate of more than a run-a-ball while Andrew Kimberlin and Mateen Khan both recorded half-centuries at Chester Road.

The hosts closed on 313-8 and restricted the visitors to 203-7 from 55 overs in reply.

Kidderminster took 17 points from the fixture to remain eight points clear of the relegation zone in the Birmingham and District Premier League Premier Division Two table.

Worfield won the toss and elected to field only for Kidderminster to score runs freely with the bat.

After Harry Sockett (18) fell to the bowling of Arfan Khan (2-68), Kimberlin (53) hit eight boundaries en route to a half-century.

Kimberlin shared a 90-run second-wicket stand with Lategan (124) as Rishin Patabedige (2-51) broke up the partnership.

Lategan's knock came from just 118 balls and included 12 fours and two sixes.

He formed partnerships with Lucas Ingram (40) and Khan (55) before he was eventually bowled by Khan.

Ben Gibbon (18 not out) helped Kidderminster past the 300-mark as the hosts posted a daunting total.

And a strong start with the ball set the home side on their way to a winning draw.

Liam Weston (2-13) had opener Shahrukh Khan (6) caught in the sixth over and also accounted for Aman Hussain (10).

And the wicket of Patabedige (5) saw Worfield slip to 34-3 before Lategan (1-33) claimed the scalp of Joe Wright (23).

Dylan Griffiths (2-35) then removed Greg Wright (18) and James Ralph (0) in consecutive balls to leave Worfield on 103-6.

However, Ross Aucott (99 not out) frustrated the Kidderminster attack in a 134-ball innings which denied the home side an outright victory.

Kidderminster are next in action against Dorridge on Saturday, July 12 with the game to begin at 12pm at Grange Road.

Swifts discover FA Cup foes

STOURPORT Swifts will play Newcastle Town in the FA Cup extra preliminary round.

Swifts travel to Staffordshire-based Newcastle on Saturday, August 2 with kick-off at 3pm at the Red Industries Stadium.

Stourport play one level below Newcastle.

Should Stourport progress to the next round, Swifts would travel to either Stone Old Alleynians or Sutton Coldfield Town in the preliminary round.

Stourport have also discovered their

potential FA Vase second round qualifying opponents.

Swifts will make the trip to either Wolverhampton Casuals or Dudley Town on Saturday, September 20.

And Bewdley Town will enter the FA Vase in first round qualifying.

Bewdley will travel to divisional rivals Ludlow Town on Saturday, August 23 with kick-off at 3pm at Bromfield Road.

If Bewdley progress to the next round, Town will host Atherstone Town in second round qualifying.

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