

14 years for man behind crash which killed baby



LEFT: Craig Nunn has been jailed for 14 years. An imitation firearm and an axe were found in Nunn's car. Pictures by West Mercia Police. s

RIGHT: Harley was described by his mum as a 'miracle baby' by his mum Imogen. s



Driver ignored red light before fatal collision

by **Tristan Harris**
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A STOURPORT man has been jailed for 14 years for causing the death of a baby in a crash last year.

Craig Nunn, 40, of Sandy Lane, was sentenced at Worcester Crown Court after previously pleading guilty to causing death by dangerous driving, causing serious injury by dangerous driving and drug-driving.

The charges relate to the death of three-week-old Harley Wilkinson.

In the early hours of October 26 last year, Nunn was driving on the A451 between Stourport and Kidderminster when he went through a red light and collided with a car carrying baby Harley and his parents.

Nunn was driving at over 90mph on a 70mph dual carriageway prior to the collision, although the speed on impact would have been less.

Nunn was found to be under the influence of amphetamines.

Harley, who was just three weeks and six days old, tragically died at the scene. His father, who had his

son on his lap at the time of the collision, suffered serious injuries including spinal fractures.

An investigation was launched immediately and Nunn was charged the following day.

Det Sgt Liam Bennett, of West Mercia Police's Serious Collision Investigation Unit, said: "It's difficult to find the words to express just how tragic this incident was.

"An innocent baby lost his life and two parents were left utterly devastated, while also having to deal with the terrible physical injuries one of them suffered as a result of the collision.

"I'm glad the case has concluded and that Nunn will now face the consequences of the reckless decisions he made that night which destroyed so many lives."

Harley's mum has paid tribute to the youngster.

In her victim personal statement, Imogen Bradley, said she thought she couldn't have children and described him as a 'miracle baby'.

"He will always be a part of me. His absence has left a void that will never be filled.

"Every time I close my eyes I see Harley's face and the collision.

"I refuse to accept what happened even now. My world has been devastated."

■ In addition to the driving offences, Nunn was also sentenced to two months in prison for possession of an imitation firearm and two counts of possession of a knife or bladed article in a public place.

He pleaded guilty to these offences last month after an imitation firearm, an axe and a knife were discovered in his car during the investigation into the crash.

This sentence will be served concurrently.

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New Mayors

New civic heads set out priorities

Kidderminster

THE NEW Mayor of Kidderminster has chosen three charities to support during his term of office.

Coun Doug Hine was the deputy mayor to Coun George Connolly for the last year and was elected into the top role last Thursday at Kidderminster's Annual Town Meeting and Mayor Making. He will be supported throughout his term by his wife Ros Hine, who will serve as Mayoress.

The causes he will fundraise for include Kidderminster and District Youth Trust, which works to empower and support young people to reach their full potential and Worcestershire Wildlife Trust, which protects and enhances local wildlife across the county. And he will support Kidderminster Foodbank which provides food for individuals and families in crisis.

Coun Hine expressed his gratitude to be elected as Town Mayor.

He thanked the audience present at St George's and paid tribute to the outgoing Mayor for his year of service to the town over the past year.

Also elected at the meeting was Coun Shazu Miah, who will serve as Deputy Mayor for the coming year.

Visit this story at: kidderminsterstandard.co.uk for more pictures of the Mayor Making.



Coun Doug Hine was elected as the new Kidderminster Mayor last Thursday. Picture by Miriam Cunliffe. s

Bewdley

THE NEW Mayor of Bewdley said she was 'looking forward to a busy but rewarding year, representing the town's people'.

Coun Nicole Harper spoke after being elected at the Annual Town Council Meeting last week, adding she was relishing representing and supporting the town at a wide range of functions across the region, including charity, community and formal events.

She will be supported by her husband William Barry as her consort.

Coun Harper has chosen three local charities to support during her term of office - The William Mills Foundation, The Emily Jordan Foundation and The Rob Poysor Fund for Cardiac Risk in the Young, who, she said, all undertook wonderful work within the community. Coun Sharon Harvey was elected as Deputy Mayor.

Coun Harper came to England from France as a student but fell in love with the country and decided to stay.

She holds a degree in English from the University of Aix-en-Provence and an MPhil from Aston University.

She lived first in Birmingham, then Stourport and Kidderminster before settling in Bewdley in 1978 when she married local artist Peter Harper.

Her career started in high schools and on teacher training programmes but for the last 20 years of employment she was a senior lecturer at Birmingham City University.

She has also travelled the world extensively as Director of International Affairs for the Business School, responsible for establishing joint degree programmes overseas as well as the recruitment and care of international students.

In 2008 she and her husband moved to France after her parents were both diagnosed with dementia.

She returned to Bewdley in 2020 and, after the death of her husband that year, she became more involved in community life.



She was elected as Labour councillor for Wribbenhall in 2023 and has been active on Bewdley Town Council and various committees before becoming Mayor this year.

She recently married Bill Barry, a retired judge, and they both live in Wribbenhall.

She coordinates the Community Speed Watch scheme for Bewdley and is a trustee of the Bewdley Dementia Support Group.

Her main aim is to serve the community to the best of her ability, with a particular emphasis on green issues, health and wellbeing.

Anyone wanting to contact the Mayor of Bewdley to attend events should email: office@bewdleytowncouncil.gov.uk for more information.

Coun Nicole Harper is looking forward to representing the people of Bewdley as the town's mayor. s

Stourport

THE MAYOR of Stourport, Coun John Thomas, was re-elected to serve another term last Thursday.

Coun Thomas was re-appointed at the Mayor Making and Coun Tim Berry was named as his deputy mayor.

Coun Thomas was born in Stourport and has lived there ever since. He ran a business in Stourport and then worked for one of the town's prominent local companies before it closed and he retired.

He was first elected a councillor in 2007 and is currently a Stourport Town Councillor for the North Ward. He has previously been a Wyre Forest District Councillor (WFDC) for the Areley Kings and Riverside Ward and a cabinet member on WFDC between 2019 and 2023 and a county councillor.

Away from his council roles, he serves as a governor at a local school and is a trustee of Areley Kings Village Hall.

Another trustee role he holds is on the Margaret Westwood Memorial Charity which makes grants to support the physical, educational or moral welfare and benefit of children and young people, up to the age of 25, who reside in Worcestershire.

Coun Thomas' daughters - Sarah Canty and Maria Thomas - will be sharing the role of Mayoress.

He will be deciding his chosen charities in due course.

Deputy Mayor Coun Berry was born in Warrington but has lived in various places



from Scotland to Portsmouth during his working life. He and his family settled in Stourport in 1995 and his children all went to school there.

During his retirement, he is enjoying being a town councillor, a trustee of Wilden Cricket Club and Wilden Village Hall, a volunteer lock keeper for the Canal and River Trust and currently chairs the Patient Participation Group for Stourport Medical Centre.

To invite the Mayor and/or Deputy Mayor to attend events, call 01562 732551.

Coun John Thomas has been re-elected as the Mayor of Stourport. Picture courtesy of Stourport Town Council. s



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Green goings on at this year's Wyre Forest sustainable festival

by **Tristan Harris**
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THE NEWLY-elected mayors of Bewdley, Kidderminster and Stourport came together for one of their first engagements this week - to launch the Wyre Forest's 2025 Sustainability Festival which takes place next month.

Mayor of Kidderminster, Coun Doug Hine, Mayor of Bewdley, Coun Nicole Harper, and Mayor of Stourport, Coun John Thomas, were welcomed by Mark Hambling, the chair of Sustfest.

As part of the unveiling of 'Sustfest', it was announced there would be a major event in each of the Wyre Forest's three towns.

In Kidderminster on June 7, there will be a Fun Family Eco-Day at the Old Magistrates Court and in Bewdley, a week later, on June 14, there will be a series of talks and workshops on 'Positive Futures for our Towns'.

Bringing the curtain down on Sustfest will be a Family Eco-Day in Memorial Park, Stourport, on June 29.

Important issues

Mr Hambling said: "We need to recognise nature itself has rights and that we humans benefit from

and depend on the environment.

"We must promote living today in a way which does not endanger the future."

This is the fourth year of Sustfest, during which organisations are encouraged and supported to put on special events for their local communities.

Peter Miller, from the Wyre Forest Green Alliance, said: "We aim to inspire, educate, and empower our community to take meaningful steps towards a sustainable future."

"Throughout June, dozens of other events will be popping up around the district."

"They range from talks to walks and from markets to marches."

"The one thing that all the events have in common is that they will encourage local residents to live more sustainably."

"They will all help people become greener or happier or healthier and preferably all three."

Coun Hine said: "It is heartening to see this festival growing from strength-to-strength over the last four years."

"The three town councils and the district council are fully behind efforts to promote healthier and happier living."

"We support environmental recovery, climate action and carbon reduction and this festival is a fun and educational way to promote that"



Other Sustfest events

As well as the headline days, other events will include family bike ride, open gardens, allotments and farms, craft workshops, markets selling eco-products, Repair Cafes and even a 'Chess Mind Gym'.

There will also be several walks including butterfly and general wildlife walks.

Local civic societies will lead local history walks.

In Bewdley on June 15, CARP (Communities Against River Pollution) is organising a procession to mourn the death of a healthy river.

This year several churches are organising special Eco-services, 'Rake and Cake' wildlife gardening sessions in churchyards and discussion groups on eco-themes. Schools have also been invited to participate, with eco-themed assemblies, recycling projects and wildlife fea-

tures in their school grounds.

People can visit: sustfestwyre-forest.org for the full calendar of Sustfest events and activities with new ones being added daily.

Chairman Mark Hambling welcomed the three mayors and others the launch of the Wyre Forest's Sustfest. Picture by Marcus Mingins 2225008MMR

Honoured to be elected as chairman

THE NEW chairman of Wyre Forest District Council has been sworn in at the Annual Council Meeting.

Coun Paul Harrison was elected Chairman at the meeting on Wednesday. He has served as a councillor for 25 years and currently represents the Wribbenhall and Arley ward. He succeeds outgoing Chairman Coun John Byng.

As chairman, Coun Harrison will represent the district at a wide range of functions, including community and charity events, as well as formal openings. He will also chair council meetings and work throughout the year to raise money for charity.

Coun Harrison said: "I am greatly honoured to be elected Chairman of Wyre Forest

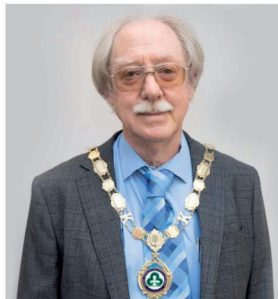
District Council. I am very much looking forward to representing our council and the communities we serve—both locally and beyond."

"I hope that my experience as an elected member will stand me in good stead to represent the district with dignity and pride."

He announced Citizens Advice Wyre Forest as his chosen charity.

Organisations seeking advice on how to invite the chairman to attend an event should email: eso@wyreforestdc.gov.uk to register their interest.

Coun George Connolly, who represents the Franche and Habberley North ward, will serve as Vice Chairman for the municipal year.



Coun Paul Harrison is the new chairman of Wyre Forest District Council. s

AN ARTISAN market is taking place from 9.30am to 4pm on June 13 at Bewdley Rowing Club.

The community-led market will embrace and showcase local talent and skills and boasts more than 25 stalls offering quality produce, crafts, drinks and ice cream.

And, with live music, the event is set to make for a perfect summer activity.

Admission is free, well behaved dogs are welcome and blue badge parking is available to make the market as accessible as possible for everyone.

People are urged to explore what Bewdley has to offer.

Further confirmed dates have been revealed for September 5 and December 5.

Visit: [facebook.com/BewdleyRowingClubSocialEvents](https://www.facebook.com/BewdleyRowingClubSocialEvents) for more.

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Open day at bowling club

THERE will be plenty of activities for all ages at an open day and family fun day at Bewdley Bowling Club.

The event, which takes place from 1pm tomorrow (Saturday), will feature music, a barbecue, a fully-licensed bar, family games, bowling, special offers and a HUGS stall.

HUGS is a charity which offers help, understanding guidance and support to bereaved parents and their families.

There will also be a special joining promotion at the club in Springfield Villas, Riverside.

Call 01299 403781 for more information.

Escalators left broken by teens

POLICE want to speak to four youths in connection with criminal damage to the escalators at The Swan Centre in Kidderminster town centre.

The incident happened around 5.25pm on May 7.

The four believed to be involved were aged between 13 and 15 and were wearing shorts and T-shirts. One was wearing sliders.

Their actions caused the escalators to break, which is now a large expense to repair.

Witnesses or anyone with information should email Kidderminster Police Town Centre Team at tctkidderminster@westmercia.police.uk or call Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

Ofsted inspectors praise school as 'outstanding'

by Tristan Harris
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STAFF and pupils at Wilden All Saints CE Primary School in Stourport are celebrating after being graded 'outstanding' in all areas by Ofsted.

The school received the top grade for the quality of education, behaviour and attitudes, personal development, leadership and management and early years provision.

Inspectors said they found the school leaders 'highly ambitious for pupils to succeed' and they added pupils behaved 'exceptionally well' and 'achieved highly', including those disadvantaged or with special educational needs.

Charlotte McDonald, head of school, said: "We are delighted the inspectors acknowledged the sustained and consistently high standards of education as well as the truly unique qualities of Wilden."

"The incredible feedback in this report reflects not the efforts of a single person or group, but rather the unwavering commitment of

our staff, children, parents and the wider community over many years."

The inspectors praised staff for having a 'carefully designed curriculum that is highly ambitious', and for putting reading at the heart of learning.

The report said: "The wide range of enriching activities and well-resourced classrooms bring reading

to life. The school quickly identifies when pupils are at the early stage of reading or at risk of falling behind. Staff provide highly effective bespoke support to ensure pupils become confident and fluent readers."

Last month's inspection found attendance levels very high, children having a wealth of opportunities to take on leadership roles

Executive head Shelley Reeves-Walters (left), head of school Charlotte McDonald (right) and longest serving teacher Sharon Mason, head of early years, who is retiring this summer after 24 years, with some of the pupils. s



and real-life experiences, such as a recent Roman Day which 'brought learning to life'.

Staff at the school, which is part of the Severn Academies Educational Trust, told the inspectors they felt 'very well supported' by leaders and the trust. The report also highlighted how governors held leaders to account through effective visits and reviews.

Shelley Reeves-Walters, executive headteacher for the trust's six primary schools, said: "I am thrilled for the community at Wilden, the staff are so hard working and always go the extra mile for the wonderful children at our school."

"There are so many people who have contributed significantly to the ongoing success and everyone should feel very proud of this well-deserved achievement."

"I know the team is very grateful to everyone for their love and support, and the light and legacy of our dearly missed late headteacher Francesca Fishwick, who passed away in 2020, still burns brightly in our school."



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King's award leaves group centre stage

by **Tristan Harris**
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A KIDDERMINSTER theatre group has received the prestigious King's Voluntary Service Award.

Wheely Different Theatre Company (WDTC) was delighted to be handed the accolade at a special ceremony in the Council Chamber at Wyre Forest House on Thursday.

The event was attended by members, registered volunteers and representatives of organisations which had supported WDTC over the 13 years since its launch.

Mayor of Stourport Coun John Thomas and Mayor of Bewdley Coun Ian Latimer JP, plus councillors Fran Oborski, Nicky Gale, Kevin Gale, Nathan Desmond and Anna Coleman also attended to witness The Lord Lieutenant of Worcester, Beatrice Grant, present the award on behalf of HM King Charles III.

The accolade recognises the work of the group which, despite members' disabilities, all work together to put on shows or events in the community plus.



The Wheely Different Theatre Company members Sarah Baker, Hannah Carroll, Elaine Kirby and Eleanor Mouzer with the Lord Lieutenant of Worcestershire, Beatrice Grant (centre). s

WDTC also has a strong social programme designed to empower members and improve health and wellbeing.

The group is one of two groups in Worcestershire and just 281 nationwide to receive what is equivalent of an MBE for organisations.

Hannah Carroll and Sarah Baker accepted the award on behalf of the membership and the group has dedicated the award to the memory of Janet Louise Shorthouse, who sadly passed away recently.

Speaking about the award, company administrator and producer Elaine Kirby said: "We are so proud of all we have achieved so far - we could not have done it

without the help of all our supporters and hope they will continue to help us further our work in the community."

The group is currently touring care homes and supporting events for Alzheimer's UK and Parkinson's UK.

Visit facebook.com/WheelyDifferentTheatreCompany for more on the group and its activities.

Appeal to find men wearing Nike tracksuits after attempted break-ins

POLICE are investigating a burglary, a car key burglary and two attempted burglaries which have all taken place in Kidderminster in the space of three days.

Between 6.45pm and 9.30pm on Sunday, the raiders gained entry to the property on Worcester Road and took jewellery.

And, between 3am and 4am on Tuesday morning, attempted burglaries were carried out at homes in Aster Avenue and Middleton Road in the Marlpool area of the town.

Police said at those locations there were two men wearing black Nike tracksuits and balaclavas.

They tried to gain access to the properties and it is believed they may have the car keys to the vehicles parked at the addresses.

Between 1.30am and 6.30am on Tuesday morning, a car key burglary was carried out in Ashdene Close.

On this occasion, the burglars

gained entry via the back door and stole car keys to a black Audi before driving off in the vehicle.

Following the incidents, Kidderminster Police said: "We want to reassure residents we are doing everything we can to trace those responsible."

Anyone who saw anything

suspicious in Worcester Road around the time of the burglary should email PC Joshua Weston at joshua.weston@westmercia.police.uk.

Witnesses or anyone with information on the car key burglary and attempted burglaries should call Redditch Safer Neighbourhood Team on 101.

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Chester Tavern licensee Andrew Hipkiss, Rob Budworth, from CAMRA, and assistant manager Matthew Lamb with their gold award. s

Rob Budworth, from CAMRA, owner and manager Larni Moore and staff Toby and Chloe from the Bear and Wolf which won the silver award. s



Chester Tavern named top pub

THE WYRE Forest branch of the Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) has named its 'Pub of the Year'.

The Chester Tavern in Kidderminster has been awarded the Gold Pub of the Year 2025 title after CAMRA branch members judged local pubs on a range of criteria, including drinks quality, staff knowledge, decor and atmosphere, welcome and service, community focus, and sympathy with CAMRA's aims.

Last week, Wyre Forest CAMRA chair, Rob Budworth, visited the Chester Tavern to present staff with the award.

In his presentation speech he said: "With more than 120 real ale venues in Wyre Forest, it is a special achievement for

by **Tristan Harris**
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the Chester Tavern to come out on top, especially as the pub only reopened quite recently, in August 2022."

Licensee Andrew Hipkiss said: "Thank you to everyone who voted for us, all our customers, and especially all our team."

Matthew Lamb, assistant manager, added: "I am amazed and absolutely lost for words, first getting into the Good Beer Guide earlier, and now winning Wyre Forest CAMRA Pub of the Year 2025. Thank you."

Silver and Bronze pub awards went to The Bear and Wolf in Kidderminster and the Hollybush of Stourport.

Also recognised were Cookley Village Hall and Sports Club for Club of the Year and the Black Boy at Wyre Hill, Bewdley, for Cider Pub of the Year 2025.

Cider pub of the Year recognises the best pub or club that promotes and encourages the sale of quality real cider and perry.

A public house was established on the site of the Chester Tavern in 1855.

After declining into a nondescript 'local boozer', the Chester Tavern closed in 2019 and was feared to have been lost to residential development.

It reopened in August 2022, completely free-of-tie.

Rob said: "The new owners of the Chester Tavern have shown what can be achieved when you

have a vision, a commitment to quality and the determination to see it through."

The Chester Tavern has a large ground floor with an attractive timber bar.

A central polished timber staircase leads up to a large room and a separate bar.

At the back is a large beer garden, with a Mediterranean style, including table benches, low walls, up-light feature trees, a covered area and a bar hatch.

There is open mic, rock, folk and other genres of music on a regular basis, plus monthly comedy. See the pub's Facebook page for details.

The Hollybush licensee Ursula Downes was presented with her certificate by Rob Budworth. s



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Splashpad shut for repairs for several weeks

by Tristan Harris
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THE SPLASHPAD at Brinton Park in Kidderminster is set to be closed for several weeks due to a major fault in the filtration system.

Wyre Forest District Council said the issue had been caused by a blockage in the system, which was stopping it from holding the right pressure.

As the splashpad uses an automatic safety system, it shuts down when a fault is detected and will not run until the issue is fixed.

The council apologised for the amount of time being taken on the issue and added: "We know how much families enjoy this free space, and we understand how disappointing this is."

"Our team is working hard to repair the problem as quickly and safely as possible, alongside external



The Brinton Park splashpad will be closed for some time to undergo repairs.

contractors. Once repairs are complete, we'll need to carry out full safety checks and send water samples for testing before it can reopen."

Because of the scale of the repairs and steps which must be followed, the splashpad will be closed for several weeks.

The council added the splashpad was fully serviced and recommissioned including water tests, before opening on May 4.

And the authority said:

"It had been running in test mode (with sprinklers off) for four weeks before that, to make sure everything was working correctly."

"When the splashpad closed at the end of last season, it was also fully decommissioned in line with safety procedures, rather than simply being switched off."

"We really appreciate your patience and understanding. We'll keep you updated and look forward to welcoming you back as soon as it's safe to do so."



Could your dad be joining Albert Cooper and his dad Liam for the Kidderminster for the competition?

Silly Dads wanted for competition

THE COMMUNITY cafe at Wolverley Memorial Hall is running a fun and quirky 'Silly Dads' competition to celebrate Father's Day.

Customers are being invited to send in humorous pictures of their dads and their antics which will be displayed in the cafe in the run up to this year's Father's Day on Sunday, June 15.

The funniest photo will be rewarded with a free ploughman's lunch and a pint of ale for the win-

ning dad and a guest of his choice.

The panel of judges will be made up of the team of volunteers who help to run the cafe.

Cafe manager Kate Mellor said: "We are enjoying our reputation locally as a friendly, fun place to visit."

"We hold regular 'Eat, Drink and Learn' sessions where people can try a new activity - circus skills was particularly popular."

"And we're always open

to new ideas."

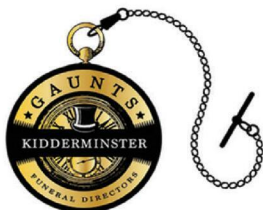
Fun photos of dad should be handed in to the cafe or emailed to: wolverleycommunitycafe@gmail.com no later than next Monday, June 2.

The winner will be announced that week at facebook.com/wolverleycommunitycafe - the Community Cafe Facebook page.

Wolverley Community Cafe is open from 10.30am to 3.30pm, Tuesday to Friday.



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Force getting better but more work is needed says key report

WEST Mercia Police has missed out on an Outstanding rating after His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) published its findings from a PEEL (Police Effectiveness, Efficiency and Legitimacy) Inspection.

The report follows an inspection of the force in 2024 and identifies areas of good work and progress on challenges, whilst also highlighting where further improvement is needed.

The report's gradings found West Mercia Police to be 'good' in recording date about crimes, 'adequate' in police powers and public treatments, preventing and investigating crime, and managing offenders.

The force was rated 'requiring improvement' in responding to the public, protecting vulnerable people, developing a positive workplace and leadership and force management.

Andy Cooke, HM Inspector of Constabulary, said although the force had made some improvements since its last inspection, he was disappointed the force did not always understand what support victims needed and were entitled to receive.

by **Ashleigh Osborne**
ashleigh.osborne@bullivantmedia.com

He said: "The force still isn't answering emergency calls as quickly as it should. But it is improving."

"The number of non-emergency calls members of the public abandon because they aren't answered is still high."

"This is something we found in our previous inspection in 2021/22."

"We also found that officers didn't attend calls for service within the required attendance time."

"The force must improve in these areas to maintain victims' confidence and maximise opportunities to solve crime."

The report outlined areas where the force must do better, such as how they identified vulnerable victims and challenges faced by its IT systems, which had required significant modernisation.

The report recognised neighbourhood policing teams were well resourced and were actively engaging with communities to resolve local issues, investigative standards have improved and that hot spot patrols had reduced serious crime by 18 per cent.



The report follows an inspection of the force in 2024 and identifies areas of good work and progress on challenges.

The force's dedicated online child sexual exploitation team (OCSET) was praised for its effective use of civil orders and strong partnership working to protect children, as was the processes in place for external scrutiny of the use of our stop and search powers.

Chief Constable Richard Cooper said: "We recognise the importance of independent assessments like PEEL and are using this report as one tool to guide our next steps and drive continued improvement for the communities we serve, and for our officers, staff and volunteers."

"We acknowledge the findings and are already acting on them."

"The inspection highlights both the progress we've made and the challenges we are addressing head-on."

"The results are not where we want to be, and I am clear that they must and will improve."

"As set out in the Police and Crime Commissioner's Safer Communities Plan, we remain focused on the issues that matter most

to our communities, which is providing a service that is responsive, fair and trusted."

Police and Crime Commissioner John Champion added: "I know the public have high expectations, so it's important we use the findings as a platform to drive further change."

"Together, with the new Chief Constable, action is already taking place to address concerns and it's my expectation this progress continues at pace."

"West Mercia Police is full of hardworking police officers and staff who are on the thin blue line keeping communities safe – it's on the Chief Constable and I to set them up to succeed."

"I will continue to work with and support the Chief Constable to deliver my Safer Communities Plan, by directing the resources needed to deliver the best possible service to the communities of West Mercia."

Visit hmicfrs.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/ to view the report.

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Get crafty to enjoy your half-term

by Aine McLean

Bewdley Museum will be hosting children's craft activities in the May half-term from 10.30am to 2.30pm between Tuesday and Thursday (May 27 to 29).

Tuesday's activity involves cress planters; on Wednesday children are making spring T-shirts; and Thursday will include parrot sequin art.

Sessions cost £7.

Walk-in activities cannot be booked online and only limited stock is available, so alternative crafts will be provided if a session sells out.

All children must be supervised by a parent or carer.

Organisers say the sessions encourage children's creativity and imagination, making it a perfect half-term activity for children and parents.

As well as the craft activities, Bewdley's local history will also showcased be in engaging exhibitions and displays which can be visited following crafts as a perfect finish to the day.

Visit bewdleymuseum.co.uk or facebook.com/BewdleyMuseum for more information on upcoming events at Bewdley Museum.

Crafters show off their wares at free charity fair

by Tristan Harris
tristan.harris@bullivantmedia.com

THERE will be more than 20 local independent stalls at a charity craft fayre being held from 11am to 4pm on bank holiday Monday, May 26.

The event at the Severns Club in Stourport will feature a variety of wares, including R&R Creations, Ray's Bakehouse, Bewdley Spirits, Dave's Designs, Wooden and Woolen and Felted Frillery.

Everything on offer is hand-made by talented crafters. Among the items will be upcycled wooden toys and trinkets, 3D printing, upcycled lamps, knitted toys, handmade clocks and pens, felted animals, needlecraft, Macrame, artwork and much more.

Admission to the event is free and there will be a tombola to raise funds for research into Amyloidosis, which is a group of rare conditions where a protein called amyloid builds up in the



Club owner Darren Richards welcomes crafters Trish Edwards, Heather Robson, Rachel Wilson, Lindsay Shaw and Rose Prattley to the Severns Club. Picture by Marcus Mingins 2225007MMR

body. It can affect organs such as your heart, kidneys, liver, nerves or digestive system. It cannot be cured, but there are treatments that may help with symptoms.

Ray's Bakehouse will also be donating a percentage of its profits to the cause and R&R Creations are donating handmade products for sale with the revenue going to the charity.

An appeal has been launched for items for the tombola – these can be dropped off in a collection box at the Severns Club.

This event marks the first year anniversary of the Severns Craft Fayres and all the creators are all really excited to be back again.

Rachel, from Ray's Bakehouse, said: "The event is free and it is always a really lovely atmosphere.

We have always had lots of comments on how much visitors have enjoyed themselves at previous events.

"The more support we get for this event, the more money we can raise and the more research can be done into Amyloidosis."

Visit facebook.com/severnsclub for more information on the club and to click through to this event.

Fair has everything, from welly wanging to vintage cars

ASTLEY Village Hall will be hosting another lively summer fete from 2pm to 5pm on Sunday, June 8.

Entry is free to the event with plenty of fun accessible to all

ages and a range of activities available to suit all tastes.

The afternoon includes tea, cake, ice cream and multiple fairground games such as 'Hoopla' and 'Splat the Rat', 'Tin

Can Knock Down' and 'Welly Wanging'. The fete will also feature a performance by the Stourport-on-Severn Brass Band and vintage cars.

The event is also being sup-

ported by the Stroke Club and Kemp Hospice – both of which provide valuable care and support to the most vulnerable and so any donations would be highly appreciated.

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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Malvern Goldsmiths, 28-30
Belle Vue Terrace, Malvern, WR14 4PZ

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

VE Day event helps to showcase centre

by Phoebe Mitchell

A SOCIAL day centre in Stourport held an open day in celebration of VE Day.

The event at the Elizabeth Mills Centre, based in Sion Gardens, featured coffee, cake and even Spam sandwiches for those who wanted to reminisce about the war-time era.

The event proved a very successful event that was enjoyed by all.

The day centre, which is planning more events, wants to raise awareness of the meals and more it offers to the over-50s.

The centre has provided hot



The Elizabeth Mills Centre. s

meals for years and currently supplies a two-course meal costing £6 for over-55s on three days-a-week – Monday, Tuesday and Thursday.

Meals are served between midday and 1pm and, with it being a popular service, booking is encouraged by

contacting the centre.

Since 1969 – when it was known as the Stourport on Severn Social Day Centre – the venue has been preventing social exclusion among older people and helping address health issues.

Its name was changed in 2010 to recognise a local councillor who served for many years and was a former mayor of Stourport.

The land and building is currently owned by Stourport

Town Council but the charity is run by a board of independent trustees who continue the tradition of enhancing well-being and promoting good health of the centre's attendees and residents in the surrounding area.

The trustees are extremely glad the day centre continues to be valued by all who visit and they want more people to be aware of it and the services it offers.

The staff are aiming to set up free events where possible so they can bring more people through the doors.

Call 01299 823240, email elizabethmillscentre@gmail.com or search for 'Elizabeth Mills Day Centre' at facebook.com for more.



The VE Day event at the Elizabeth Mills Centre was hailed a great success. s

Open garden highlights sustainability

A WILDLIFE-FRIENDLY garden in Bewdley will be open to the public from 10am to 5pm, next Sunday, June 1.

The event will take place at 21 Stourport Road as a part of SustFest Wyre Forest.

The festival has supported sustainability for the past three years,

aiming to promote the message of creating a 'greener, happier, healthier future'.

There will be community activities and workshops available at the open garden event.

Cash donations will be welcome to aid both the positive future of Wyre Forest's

residents and environment through South Worcestershire and Wyre Forest Nightstop – a charity which works to reduce youth homelessness.

The open garden will also include refreshments, homemade cakes and a plant sale for visitors.

Music festival will hit the right note

MUSIC fans will be in for a treat when a festival takes place in Stourport next month.

Midsummer Music in the Garden is being held from 2pm to 6pm on Sunday, June 22, at Mucklowe House, Areley Lane.

A variety of accomplished musicians from across the Midlands will

be performing, such as The Band of West Mercia Police, Bromsgrove School Musicians, The Coppice Shanty Crew, The Chameleon Quintet, David Coulson (baritone), Hereford Police Male Choir and members of The Wheely Different Theatre Company.

As well as the captivating

atmosphere the music creates, the festival will also raise funds for the Church House Trust and local Parkinson's UK group.

People are urged to bring their own picnics and garden chairs.

Tickets, costing £10, are available from Rose at: church.house.ak@gmail.com

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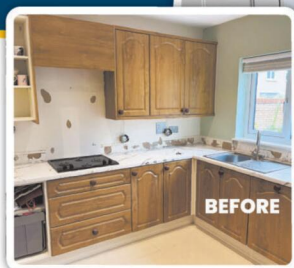
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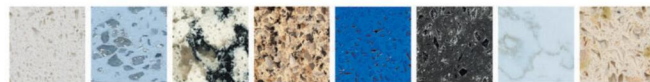
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A great day for a nature walk

PEOPLE wanting to explore nature can head out on two guided walks with the Wyre Forest Rangers this weekend.

The strolls - being held as part of National Walking Month - are both being held tomorrow (Saturday, May 24).

The first is at 10am at Blakemarth Nature Reserve in Kidderminster.

People should meet at White Wickets Park off Franche Road at 9.45am for a 10am start.

Then, at 12.30pm, the rangers will lead a walk at the Britannia Gardens Conservation Area in Stourport.

Walkers should meet at the gate near the children's play

area on Britannia Gardens at 12.15pm, ready for a 12.30pm start.

There is no parking at the meeting place so, if driving, people should park nearby.

At both events, participants will be able to hear all about the upcoming plans to enhance and protect the conservation areas for the benefit of people and wildlife.

And they will be able to ask questions and share their thoughts on the scheme.

Attendees should be aware that, although the walks are short, the ground is uneven, brambly and can be wet so sturdy footwear and weather-appropriate clothing are recommended.

Places are free but spaces are limited so people taking part need to sign up before-

hand.

There was good news for users of Blakemarth Nature Reserve this week - the board-walk across the marsh which had to be shut for safety reasons has now been fully repaired and reopened.

The damaged section has been made safe, and you can now enjoy the full walking route again.

The Wyre Forest Rangers said: "Thank you to everyone for your patience while the work was carried out.

"We hope you enjoy your next visit."

Visit this story at kidderminsterstandard.co.uk or go to: facebook.com/wyreforest-rangers to click the links for the walks for more information and to book spaces.



Tramp Wall UK will be performing their amazing Tumbling Tigers Trampoline show, five times a day. Picture by Matthew Lissimore. s

Safari Park set for Tiger Takeover

A SPECIAL event at West Midlands Safari Park for next week's May half-term will celebrate the arrival of the three endangered Sumatran tiger cubs, which were born at the start of the year.

The 'Tiger Takeover', from Monday to next Sunday, May 24 to June 1, will offer visitors an array of tiger-themed activities and the opportunity to see the adorable cubs.

The week will feature the exciting and acrobatic Tumbling Tigers Trampoline show, tiger-themed arts and crafts and the park's education and conservation teams

will also be championing the big cats' conservation.

On the Tiger Trail there is a themed quiz with the chance to enter a prize draw to win a Tiger Safari Lodge stay and people can put themselves in the frame to win a Ultimate VIP Tour for four people by taking their picture at the 'Love Tigers' photo point and posting it to the park's Facebook page.

Tiger-themed face painting is also available. Visit: wmssp.co.uk for more information and to book.

GARDENING TIME: A FUN-PACKED family day out will take place at Hartlebury Castle on bank holiday Monday, May 26.

There will be a variety of activities, including decorating a gardening apron, sowing seeds with expert help from volunteer gardeners and enjoy storytelling with Jen and her wildlife puppets.

Other activities include creating wild art, having a go at mini den building, learning about creepy crawlies and animal tracks, following a nature trail, exploring the venue's beautiful grounds and play-

ground and discovering the Bees and Bugs Family Trail.

Activities also continue with the 'Back to Nature' theme for the May half-term which also coincides with National Children's Gardening Week.

Admission tickets are available and the apron crafts - which include the trail - are £3.50 per child.

Visit: hartleburycastle.com/event/whats-in-your-garden for times, tickets and more information.

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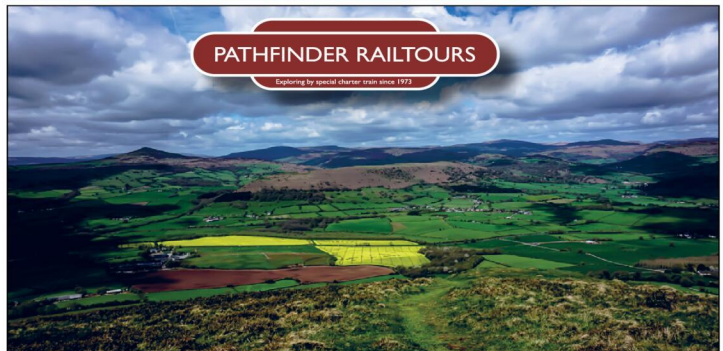
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*Subject to change once confirmed timings are received

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RIGHT - Home-based preserved class 50, 50049, also worked at the gala. s



LEFT - Freight company GBRf provided its new class 69 locomotive, 69014, to the event. s

Diesely does it



Freightliner locomotive 66509 was named 'Freightliner Retirement Association' at the Diesel Gala. Pictures by Neil Gordon Media. s

THE SEVERN Valley Railway's annual spring diesel gala has been hailed a success after 3,600 people attended the four-day event last weekend.

Several mainline train companies supported the gala by sending locomotives to operate services on the 12 miles of line between Kidderminster and Hampton Loade, along with home-based preserved engines.

Event sponsors Colas, GBRf, Freightliner, West Coast Railways, Rail Adventure and Locomotive Services provided engines including classes' 37, 56, 57, 66, 69, 70, plus a pair of Inter City power cars.

Meanwhile, home-based locomotives used to haul

by Neil Gordon
news@bullivantmedia.com

services between Thursday and last Sunday included classes' 20, 33, 37, 40, 42, 46, 50, 52 and 58.

The railway's diesel shed at Kidderminster and Engine House at Highley were also open, while visiting locomotive 66509 was named 'Freightliner Retirement Association' at Kidderminster to commemorate the association's 40th anniversary.

The Severn Valley Railway's managing director, Jonathan 'Gus' Dunster, said: "Our spring diesel event is always about gathering together examples of the best heritage and modern diesel traction.

"We're very lucky to have

such strong support from our mainline colleagues.

"This year we operated on the 12 miles of line between Kidderminster and Hampton Loade because Bridgnorth is still cut-off following the landslip in January."

And a poignant ceremony was held on Saturday when home-based locomotive number 50033 'Glorious' was rededicated to commemorate the 85th anniversary of the tragic sinking of HMS Glorious in the Second World War with the loss of over 1,200 crew.

The Severn Valley Railway celebrates its 60th anniversary this year with other events including Step Back to the 1940s, Railway 200, Swinging Sixties, plus autumn diesel and steam galas.

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Church is ideal stage for piece of telly heaven

THE GENIUS script-writing of the legendary Richard Curtis was brought to life when Fair Share Theatre performed the stage version of *The Vicar of Dibley*.

The show featured four episodes – *The Arrival*, *Engagement*, *Radio Dibley* and *Love and Marriage* – performed at St Mary and All Saints Church, Kidderminster.

Whilst having this proven funny script is obviously a Godsend (pun intended), converting a TV sitcom to the stage needs a versatile set for quick scene changes.

This one transitioned between David Horton's house, Vicar Geraldine Grainger's living room, a field with a gate and parish hall (we were already in a church so no problem there).

In fact, the church setting could not have been more perfect. A massive ornate stained glass window pro-

Review:

The Vicar of Dibley, St Mary and All Saints Church, Kidderminster

vided the ambience and as the evening got darker, it provided a real subconscious sense of time passing.

It also came in handy for the in-church scenes when the audience doubled as a congregation – even being roped into singing hymns during the vicar's inaugural service in the parish.

The wedding was also interesting as, looking around, it felt like you were genuinely part of Hugo and Alice's ceremony – and the audience could not have looked more thrilled for them. There was even cheers, whoops and applause when they kissed and made their way back down the aisle.

The organ and organist was also a beautiful touch – shout

out to Laurence Nicholas for his varied repertoire from hymns to pop songs and TV themes which played out while the sets were switched.

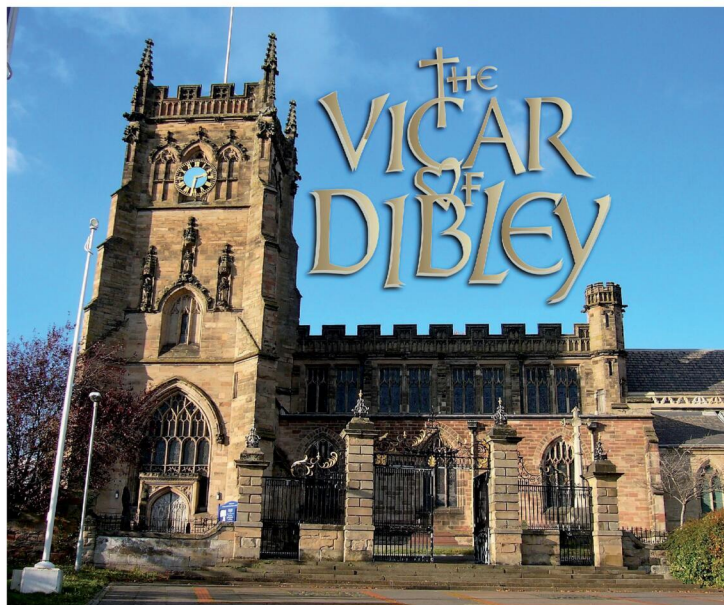
The talented cast certainly rose to the challenge of putting on this classic (with such big shoes and cassocks to fill).

Julie Merry had a fine five minutes of fame as 'the woman', while Nathan Beckett-Wilde and Jacquelyn Cook were solid as Simon and Mrs Cropley.

Tony Boardman was great as 'dull but endearing' Frank and got the biggest 'awww' moment when he 'came out' during his Radio Dibley show.

Likewise, Tam Weir was good as sex-obsessed Jim, particularly in the wedding episode with the best man's speech and some loud singing (and of course the 'no, no, no, no, no, yes' bits).

Neil Waghorn made for a fantastic Farmer Owen with all his outrageous antics and stories about his bizarre bowel movements getting a



Fair Share Theatre staged *The Vicar of Dibley* at Kidderminster's St Mary and All Saints Church. s

few laughs throughout.

Ben Beckett-Wilde played his role of naive but wholesome Hugo well and Michael Steiger was equally as good as snobby and arrogant parish council chair David.

But the performances of the night went to Dani Davis as popular and exuberant Vicar Geraldine and Megan Crosby as dippy but lovable verger Alice.

Both had the intonation, mannerisms, facial expressions and comedy timing mastered.

Crosby frequently had those watching in hysterics and Davis brought so much energy to her character and the whole show, which is what this production has its foundations on.

The only criticism was it was difficult for some towards

the back of the crowd being able to see the action on stage clearly but, logistically, it was not possible for the stage to be higher than it was.

God bless the cast, crew and directors Nathan Beckett-Wilde and Josie Marston for a thoroughly enjoyable and entertaining evening.

Tristan Harris



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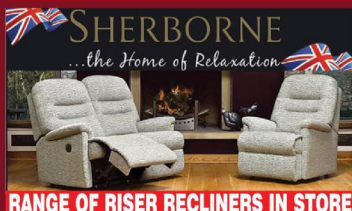
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Executive headteacher Shelley Reeves-Walters with Ellianna Smith, Liam Zorychta, Millie Underhill, head of school Alison Maybury and Charlie Schaff. s

Good ideas may lead to grants from funders

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

KIDDERMINSTER Education Foundation is now accepting applications for grants that support the development of education, particularly in the fields of art and science.

As a cornerstone of its mission, the foundation aims to enhance the knowledge, understanding, and practice of the arts, crafts, and sciences, with a special focus on promoting creativity and innovation within the community.

The foundation exists to promote education in the arts and sciences, helping to foster a deeper understanding and appreciation of these vital fields.

And it is tasked with providing and maintaining a museum and art gallery or either of these institutions, ensuring these important cultural resources continue to inspire and educate.

The foundation offer facilities and resources for recreation and leisure activities which align with educational and cultural pursuits.

The foundation's members believe in the power of education to transform lives and are committed to supporting projects and schemes which enhance artistic and scientific learning experi-

ences and contribute to the local cultural landscape by preserving and growing artistic and educational resources.

And the foundation provides meaningful opportunities for people and communities to engage in arts, crafts, and leisure activities that enrich their lives.

How to Apply

Representatives of local organisations and educational institutions or anyone with an innovative project idea can submit applications for grants via the Kidderminster Town Council website to explore how their visions could be brought to life.

Visit: kidderminstertowncouncil.gov.uk/kidderminster-educational-foundation/ for more on eligibility and the application process.

The foundation hopes to receive grant proposals before the end of May so it can meet in June to discuss them.

Anyone with questions about the scheme can email: Office@kidderminstertowncouncil.gov.uk for more information.

A foundation spokesperson said: "We look forward to seeing the creative and impactful initiatives that will help shape the future of education, art, and science in our community."

Good news for school

OFSTED has praised Stourport Primary Academy for its dedicated staff and high quality education, earning the school a 'good' ranking in all categories.

The school, which is part of the Severn Academies Educational Trust, has been recognised as being supportive and committed to its pupils' education by an Ofsted inspector.

It has been acknowledged by the inspector that pupils' behaviour was 'considerate and respectful' with a well-sequenced and well-planned curriculum seeming to consistently hold high expectations.

Headteacher Alison Maybury said: "I am delighted the inspector recognised the many strengths of our school, the dedication and knowledge of our staff, and that our children are at the heart of everything we do."

The primary academy reportedly took 'effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection' - a fact consolidating Ofsted's 'good' rating in terms of the Stourport school's quality of education, behaviour and attitudes, personal development, leadership and management.



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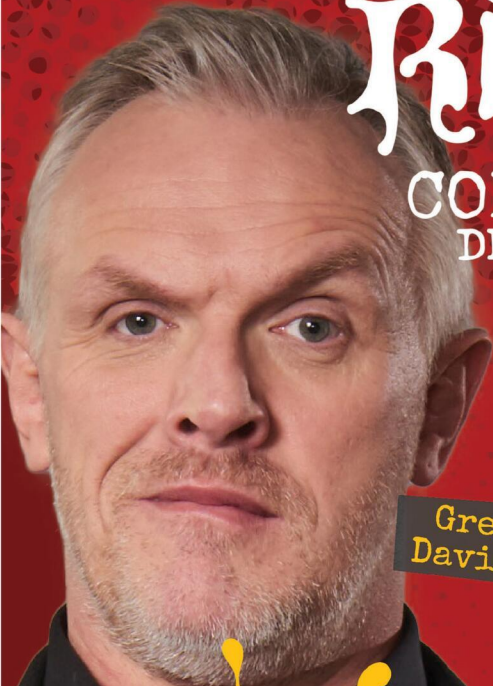
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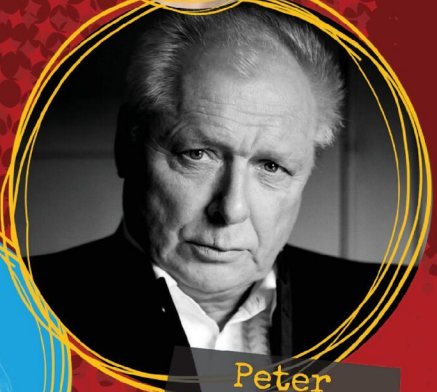


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Event aims to boost chances for businesses

PEOPLE IN Worcestershire will have the chance to grow their business with an event designed to empower local businesses through expert insights.

Organised by Worcestershire County Council, the Growth, Skills and Grant Support Conference takes place at 9.30am on June 11 at Sixways Stadium, Worcester.

The conference aims to bring together influential local business leaders, expert speakers and successful entrepreneurs for a morning of practical guidance and inspiration.

A key feature of the conference will be a live Q&A session exploring what makes a successful grant application and how businesses can tap into the latest support and funding opportunities available through Worcestershire County Council.

The event will also shine a spotlight on local businesses that have benefited from grant funding and tailored support programmes, highlighting real-world success stories and the positive impact on Worcestershire's thriving business community.

Gary Woodman, assistant director for economy at Worcestershire County Council, said: "This conference is an essential platform for Worcestershire's business community to learn, connect, and grow."

"We're proud to showcase real success stories and provide clear pathways for businesses to access support, improve skills, and secure funding. We encourage every local business large or small to come and explore how we can help fuel their ambitions."

Visit: businessesworcestershire.com/events-search/ and find the event on 'June 11' on the calendar for more information.

Golden times for those bringing in the visitors

VISIT Worcestershire is celebrating national recognition after being awarded gold certification.

The Green Tourism Awards celebrate destinations which go above and beyond in delivering high-quality, sustainable visitor experiences.

The judging panel said Visit Worcestershire and Worcestershire County Council's had forward-thinking schemes which led to the highest certification possible for tourism destinations.

As more travellers seek environmentally responsible experiences, this accolade makes the county the place to visit for regenerative tourism. It also supports Visit Worcestershire's ambition to grow the local visitor economy to over £1.1 billion annually in the next five years.

Lorna Robinson, visitor economy and destination manager, said everyone was delighted with the gold award.

"It's fabulous recognition of the incredible work going on across Worcestershire to put people, place, and the visitor experience at the heart of everything we do."

"This isn't just a badge – it's a signal Worcestershire is serious about being a leading destination for responsible, regenerative and highly enjoyable travel."



"From supporting local producers through Taste Worcestershire to improving access with green transport and biodiversity projects, we're proud to be flying the flag for a better way to travel."

She added she was so proud of the team, its partners and the 'brilliant' local businesses making Worcestershire a shining example of how tourism can do good.

The award recognises efforts to connect people with Worcestershire's countryside in

ways which benefit both visitors and the local economy.

Visit Worcestershire is actively working with the Malvern Hills Trust to inform visitors on how to visit responsibly through a series of short social media videos on topics including bird nesting season and responsible dog walking on the hills.

Part of the award submission focused on the Natural Networks Programme, delivered with the Worcestershire Wildlife Trust.

The scheme has benefited

several Worcestershire tourism businesses, including Bowbrook Lodges, which introduced a new wetlands habitat to increase biodiversity on the holiday park, as well as improving the visitor experience.

With grant support from Worcestershire County Council, visitor attraction Little Owl Farm Park, secured funding to install a solar PV system, projected to cut its energy bill by thousands of pounds annually.

Another key element helping gain the award was the Worcestershire On Demand bus service, delivered by the county council.

The flexible, app-based transport service is already enhancing visitor access to rural attractions across the county, connecting tourists and residents directly with destinations such as Attwell Farm Park, the Clent Hills and Croome Court.

The convenient and sustainable way to reach the areas is opening up more of Worcestershire to day trippers, without the need for a car.

Visit: green-tourism.com for more information.

Visit Worcestershire are actively working with the Malvern Hills Trust to inform visitors on how to visit responsibly. s



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Taking a look at our history

A WEBSITE uncovering Worcestershire's rich and layered history is being launched by Historic England as part of a national heritage event this month.

Historic England has launched its new Local Heritage Hub showcasing the past of nearly 400 locations across the UK as part of Local History Month.

Worcestershire's storied past is featured with its own dedicated web page full of interesting information, facts and archived material.

The page offers a wide range of content, from fascinating aerial photographs showing towns and villages through time, to curated selections of listed buildings, videos, blogs, and podcasts.

The Local Heritage Hub invites members of the public to discover their local area

through a new lens.

Duncan Wilson, chief executive of Historic England, said: "Understanding and connecting with local heritage is an important part of building strong communities.

"With this new service, we hope people across England will be able to explore hidden histories, reconnect with their surroundings, and feel a sense of pride in their local area."

The project comes in the wake of finding out that 71 per cent of people want to see more recognition of heritage in their area, while 58 per cent agree that local heritage enhances their daily lives.

Louise Brennan, the regional director for the Midlands at Historic England, added: "It is so exciting to see the breadth and depth of our local history and heritage in one place."

"The Midlands has such a rich and varied history - from the industrial brilliance of our cities, the character of our market towns, and the wonderful rural communities stretching from the Welsh border to the North Sea coast - there really is something for everyone."

"I look forward to seeing how people use it in different ways to find more about the local places that mean the most to them."

Visit: historicengland.org.uk/local/locations/worcestershire/ to explore Historic England's Worcestershire material and archives.

An aerial shot over Worcestershire from the Historic England Archive. s



Surface-dressing starts

THIS YEAR'S annual road surface dressing programme has been started by Worcestershire County Council after a successful winter gritting season.

As part of the gritting season, the council's highways team deployed more than 5,000 tonnes of salt to keep Worcestershire's road network safe and moving between October 2024 and April 2025. Operations were supported by six strategically located depots and seven remotely monitored weather stations.

The dedicated efforts of both county council staff and contractor Ringway ensured roads remained in safe condition for all users.

A highways team spokesperson said: "While it hasn't been the harshest of winters, our crews have worked tirelessly, sometimes around the clock, to make sure Worcestershire's roads remained safe."

"We are grateful to all involved, especially those who take on winter duties in addition to their regular responsibilities."

"The positive feedback we receive from road users across the county reflects how much their work is appreciated."

He added now attention turned to maintaining and improving the county's roads.

"Surface dressing is a preventative maintenance treatment that involves spraying roads with bitumen, followed by stone chippings that are rolled in to seal the surface."

"It's a quick and cost-effective method that can extend the life of a road by up to 10 years, while improving skid resistance and helping prevent potholes."

"Our teams are fully prepared and ready to deliver this year's surface dressing programme."

"It's a proven and efficient way to restore road surfaces and minimise long-term damage."

"Starting the work after the winter season allows us to carry it out under optimal conditions and with minimal disruption to residents and road users."

Signs will be displayed on roads in advance of any surface dressing activity. The programme may be subject to change depending on weather conditions.

Visit: worcestershire.gov.uk/surfacelddressing for more information.



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Driver training rule change is move to bring in younger staff



West Midlands Railway has welcomed the lowering of the age for people to start driver training from 20 to 18. Picture by Tristan Harris. Bullivant Media Group Ltd.

WEST Midlands Railway has welcomed the government's decision to reduce the starting age for people to undertake driver training from 20 to 18.

And last week, the government announced 18 to 20-year-olds could benefit from thousands of jobs and apprenticeships which will become available on the railways across the country as early as December.

As part of the 'Plan for Change', it is hoped getting young people into roles will bolster the workforce and improve rail services by preventing delays and cancellations and boosting the economy at the same time.

Young people will be able to take up new careers as train drivers three years earlier to boost the number of drivers needed for reliable services and put more school and college leavers on track to step straight into work.

The decision to lower the age will reduce the over reliance on rest day working by getting more people into the driving seat and ensuring a steady stream of drivers entering the industry.

is 48 years old and rising - 30 per cent are due to reach retirement age by 2029.

Bringing young talent into these skilled roles is aimed at bridging this gap, preventing any future shortages and ensuring consistent, reliable services for passengers.

Of the current driver list, less than nine per cent are women and less than 12 per cent are represented by ethnic minorities.

Another aim of this latest move is to open professional opportunities to a much wider group of people.

Richard Morrow, head of drivers for West Midlands Railway, said: "We're pleased with the decision to allow those between the ages of 18 and 20 to apply for driver roles.

"By unlocking these opportunities for school leavers, young people can step straight from education into a career or apprenticeship, offering them a skilled, life-long career.

"At West Midlands Railway, we are continuously recruiting for new drivers, with 26 new starters since the start of the year.

"We hope that this change will inspire a wide range of people to join the industry, and we look forward to welcoming them into the fold, helping us to deliver a more diverse, future-proofed railway."

Bold action

Transport Secretary Heidi Alexander said: "We're taking bold action to improve train services and unlock thousands of jobs.

"We're future-proofing our railways against delays and cancellations caused by a shortage of drivers, ensuring that we can provide reliable, passenger focused train journeys under Great British Railways for decades to come."

Mick Whelan, general secretary of ASLEF, the train drivers' union, said it had campaigned for many years to lower the age drivers could start training.

"This decision - to allow people to leave school, or college, and join the railway in the driving grade at 18 rather than wait until they're 20 - will increase diversity in the driver's cab by encouraging more BAME people, more LGBT+ people, and more women - as well as more young people - to drive trains on

Britain's railways.

"Because, at the moment, young people who want to become train drivers leave school or college at 18, get other jobs, and we miss out as an industry as they don't wait around until they turn 20 to find a career."

Several other countries have already successfully and safely adopted a lower age limit, including the Netherlands, France, Germany and Switzerland. Other nations, including Japan, are currently considering a change in law.

Transport for London also successfully opened up its train driver apprenticeships to 18-year-olds to drive trains on the underground network in 2007.

Everyone who takes on a train driver role must undergo rigorous training to ensure they are competent, qualified and fit to do so, ensuring the safe use of our railways for everyone.

Driver shortage

The current average age for a train driver

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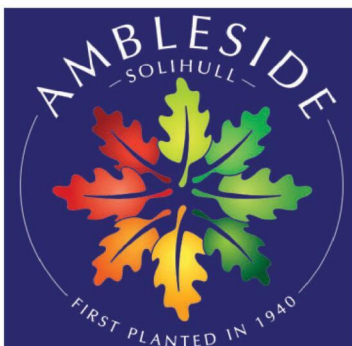


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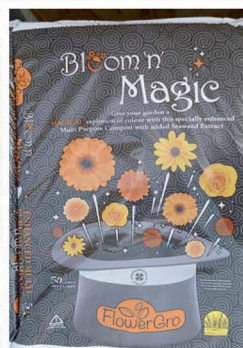
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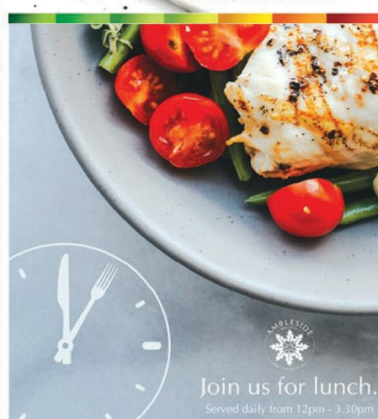
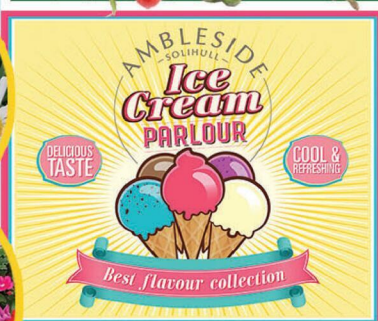
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AS THE hot May weather continues, Severn Trent has shared seven water-saving tips for households to help people save on their water usage and bills.

Last year, Water Saving Week received support from 4.7million people and this year Severn Trent is taking part by encouraging people to become real-life water-saving heroes by getting involved in daily challenges.

These range from making the most out of a laundry load to trimming a minute from shower times.

With the Met Office announcing the country has had the driest March in 60 years, the sunniest April on record, followed by more extremely warm and dry weather in May, there is of course less water in rivers and reservoirs - and so people are being encouraged to be water-wise.

Howard Perry, Severn Trent's network operations lead, said: "There are simple things you can do to be mindful of the water you use, like putting a jug of water in the fridge

so you're not waiting for the tap to run cold, switching the hose for a watering can and quickly fixing any leaks or broken taps.

"Not only are these wins for the environment, but they help save money too.

"As water is a precious resource, we're encouraging people to be mindful of water use, especially as the drier and warmer weather continues."

So, to make sure you manage your water carefully, and for a positive bounce in your finances this summer, follow some of the tips below.

Turn off taps when not in use -

Running taps uses over six litres of water every minute. Turning them off while teeth brushing can save over 12 litres of water. Similarly, when washing the dishes, fill the bowl with water, rather than having a running tap will help to save water.

Collect rainwater - Water butts

are a great way to store rain-water in the garden for use on plants and grass. The average roof collects enough rainwater to fill a water butt 450 times-a-year, allowing people to ditch the hose and save hundreds of litres of water.

Fix leaks promptly - People tend to put off getting leaks fixed, yet even small ones can waste significant amounts of water. So regularly check taps, shower-heads and toilets for leaks and repair them as soon as possible. For more information on leak-detecting, visit the Severn Trent website

Use water-efficient fixtures -

Everyone loves a power shower but they use a lot more water than a normal one, so consider installing water-saving devices such as low-flow showerheads or dual-flush toilets which do the same job while using less water.

Try a shower timer - Showers are one of the largest users of water in a household. And while people might love singing through their setlist while washing the suds out of their hair, a shower timer might just keep people on track to spend less time in there. Not only will that help lower water bills, it could also cut energy bills, too.

Run full loads - Dishwashers are

becoming much more energy and water efficient and, if used correctly, by only using them when it is full, can be more efficient than washing dishes by hand. Similarly, only using a washing machine on a full load will mean less cycles and less water used.

Get a water meter - Once installed, most customers make a conscious effort to use less water, once they switch to a water meter. The meters mean people will only ever pay for what they use, putting people in charge of your bills.

People can visit: stwater.co.uk to see if they are eligible to apply and for more water-saving tips.



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TORQUAY WEEKEND

Departing Fri 5 Sep '25

Take in a weekend of picturesque south-west scenery in Torquay, where the gorgeous sea views and beaches make it the perfect place to escape for a few days of rest and relaxation. We include excursions to the inspiring destinations of Dawlish and Teignmouth.

SO MUCH INCLUDED...

- ✓ Return coach travel **from Kidderminster, Stourport**
- ✓ 3 nights at the Burlington Hotel, Torquay (JG2 rating) with dinner & breakfast
- ✓ Entertainment every evening
- ✓ Excursion to Dawlish & Teignmouth

Optional excursion to Dartmouth (£11pp)



FOLKESTONE WEEKEND

Departing Fri 12 Sep '25

Enjoy a great-value break to discover Folkestone and the stunning scenery of South East England. With a day in Canterbury included and the chance to visit pretty Broadstairs and Whitstable, beloved for their sandy beaches, this weekend is not to be missed!

SO MUCH INCLUDED...

- ✓ Return coach travel **from Kidderminster, Stourport**
- ✓ 3 nights at the Grand Burstin Hotel, Folkestone (JG2 rating) with dinner & breakfast
- ✓ Light entertainment every evening
- ✓ Excursion to Canterbury

Optional excursion to Broadstairs & Whitstable (£15pp)



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Departing Sat 6 Sep '25

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SO MUCH INCLUDED...

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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

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

HARD

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

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.

Nicolas Cage films

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

Solutions opposite

CROSSWORD

1	2			3		4		5		6		7
										8		
9		10										
11								12				
13				14				15				
17								18		19		
		20									21	
22												
				23								

ACROSS

1. Fivefold (9)
8. Single (3)
9. Announcement (11)
11. Mats (7)
12. Of those (5)
13. Vindicate (6)
15. Injury (6)
17. Lucifer (5)
18. Want (7)
20. Order (11)
22. Decay (3)
23. To the letter (9)

DOWN

2. Employ (3)
3. Track (5)
4. Laud (6)
5. Letter (7)
6. Suitableness (11)
7. Submission (9)
10. Focus (11)
11. Convey (9)
14. Universal (7)
16. Lodestone (6)
19. Guide (5)
21. Nothing (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.

- Waistband
- Corrupt
- Outdoor shelter
- Hue
- Cans

FELT

TIPS

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.

- 47218 gives a French river;
- 68518 gives a second French river;
- 51936 gives a Pakistani river.

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.

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

WORDWHEEL

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



How you rate
10 words: average
14 words: good
19 words: very good
23 or more: excellent.

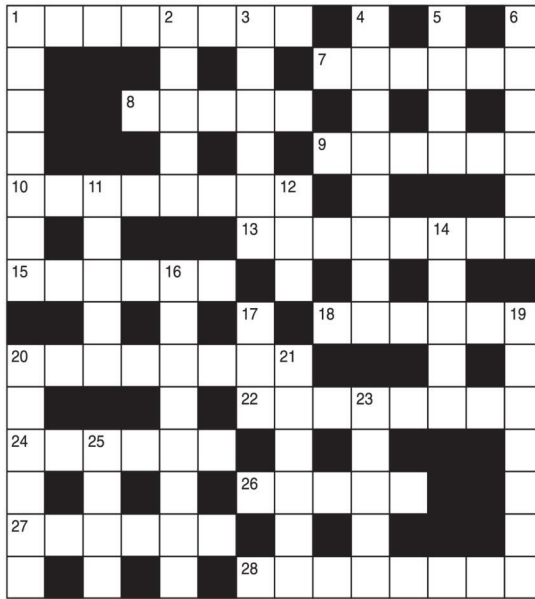
GENERAL KNOWLEDGE CROSSWORD

ACROSS

- 1 Branch of biology dealing with heredity and variation (8)
- 7 Group of lines forming a division of a poem (6)
- 8 & 6 Down Gorge through which flows the Colorado river in Arizona (5,6)
- 9 & 10 Across Composer of the symphonic suite Sheherazade (6-8)
- 10 See 9 Across
- 13 Monk who acquired great influence over the household of Nicholas II (8)
- 15 Delicate difference of feeling or opinion (6)
- 18 Plant with hairy leaves and 5-petalled, pinkish-mauve flowers (6)
- 20 Genus of ornamental climbing plants (8)
- 22 Kind of fungus with a round spore case (8)
- 24 Hebrew prophet in the time of David and Solomon (6)
- 26 Kind of anaesthetic (5)
- 27 River of the Republic of Ireland (6)
- 28 A looper caterpillar (8)

DOWN

- 1 Small cucumber used for pickling (7)
- 2 Henry Williamson's otter (5)
- 3 Large South American vulture (6)
- 4 Landlocked country in the Horn of Africa (8)
- 5 Hymenopterous insects (4)
- 6 See 8 Across
- 11 Large quantities of written work (5)
- 12 See 17 Down
- 14 City of Oklahoma, US (5)
- 16 Acted riddles (8)
- 17, 12 & 20 Down Hero of a story by Washington Irving (3,3,6)
- 19 & 25 Down Theodore Roosevelt's successor as US president (7,4)
- 20 See 17 Down
- 21 The capital of Texas (6)
- 23 Pulpy substance of fruit (5)
- 25 See 19 Down



SOLUTIONS

ACROSS: 1 Genetics; 7 Stanza; 8 Grand; 9 Rimsky; 10 Koroskov; 13 Rasputin; 15 Nuanet; 18 Mallow; 20 Wistaria; 22 Tarka; 3 Condor; 4 Ethiopia; 5 Ants; 6 Canyon; 28 Inchworm. DOWN: 1 Gherkin; 2 Tarka; 3 Condor; 4 Ethiopia; 5 Ants; 6 Canyon; 7 Rip; 19 William; 20 Winkle; 21 Austin; 23 Fleish; 25 Taft.

General Knowledge Crossword

ACROSS: 1 Quintuple; 8 One; 9 Declaration; 11 Tangles; 12 Their; 13 Avenue; 15 Lesson; 17 Satan; 18 Absence; 20 Arrangement; 22 Roy; 23 Literally; Down: 2 Use; 3 Trail; 4 Praise; 5 Epistle; 6 Convenience; 7 Deference; 10 Concentrate; 11 Transport; 14 General; 16 Magne; 19 Steer; 21 Nil.

Crossword

GENIILITY: It could happen to you, Ghost Rider, Vampire's Kiss, Can Air, Snowden, Raising Arizona, The Sorcerer's Apprentice, The Rock, Snake Eyes, The Family Man, Lord of War, Adaptation, City of Angels, Captain Corelli's Mandolin, The Wicker Man, Matchstick Men, Peggy Sue Got Married, Windtalkers.

Nourished

Niner

Wordwheel Pathfinder

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

Codeword


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

Hard

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


Easy

Sudoku






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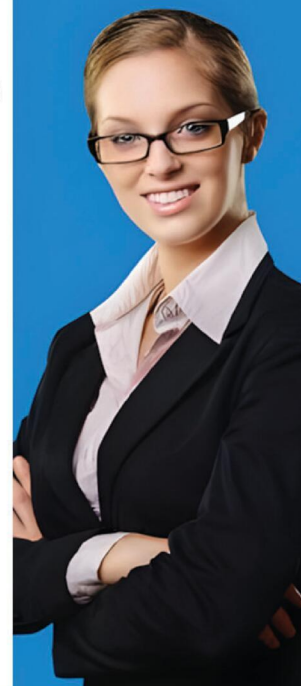
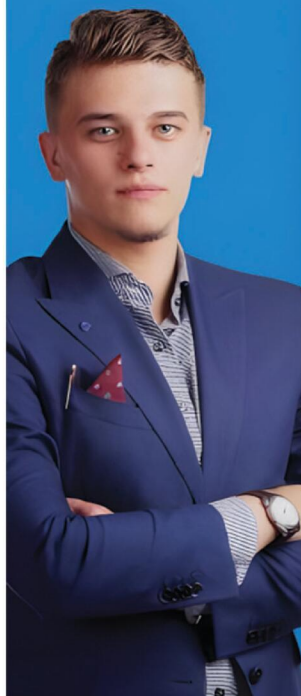
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Nissan Micra set to return as EV

THE all-new, sixth-generation Nissan Micra will return to the B-segment in 2025 as a fully-connected, pure EV.

Its arrival signals the next major step in Nissan's bold product offensive in Europe, where the company will introduce four new fully electric models by 2027 as part of its push towards electrification. These include the all-new Micra, followed by the Nissan Leaf, Nissan Juke, and a A-Segment model, as well as the upgraded third generation of Nissan's unique e-Power technology to be rolled out on the best-selling Nissan Qashqai.

Designed at Nissan's Design Europe (NDE) in London, the new Micra boasts a refreshed and distinctive

new exterior look – combining a premium exterior finish and a ton of attitude with an SUV-like design, simple and uncluttered surfaces, and subtle details throughout.

Giovanny Arroba, Vice President of Nissan Design Europe, said: "In designing the sixth generation of the Micra, we've celebrated all the values that have historically made it so popular – and opened a new chapter for Micra as an EV."

"The exterior has an audacious and playful appearance on first look but has a stance which gives it a solid presence on the road. We've also been able to integrate delightful details into the design, which owners will love. We're proud to have been able to bring the Micra into the EV age."


Inside the car, new Micra's interior recaptures a theme that has been at the heart of the model across all previous generations – simple, understated elegance. Building on that legacy, this latest generation also hints to its Japanese heritage through subtle hidden design features – including a moulded outline of Japan's most famous landmark, Mount Fuji, incorporated into the storage space between the front seats.

At under four metres in length and less than 1.8 metres wide, the new Micra punches well above its weight, and is perfectly suited for the tight turns and busy roads of urban life. A wheelbase of 2.54 metres pushes the wheels to the corners, which has the triple benefits

of guaranteeing improved interior space, while providing a dynamic stance on the road and an optimum blend of agility and stability.

Available for the first time as a fully electric model, new Micra offers worry-free EV driving that's perfect for daily life. Available in two battery options – 40kWh and 52kWh – the model offers significant power and range for an urban car.

Complementing the smooth and hassle-free feel of an electric drive, the new Micra has been meticulously engineered to provide a performance that goes above and beyond previous generations and will delight new and existing drivers alike.



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Harriers return for Murray as new boss targets success

by Aaron Sutcliffe
aaron.sutcliffe@bullivantmedia.com

FOOTBALL: ADAM Murray wants to take Kidderminster Harriers to the next level following his appointment as the club's new manager.

Murray has replaced Phil Brown in the Aggborough dugout following a successful spell in charge of National League South side Eastbourne Borough.

Eastbourne missed out on the title by a single point before losing the play-off semi-finals - not dissimilar to Harriers in the National League North.

Murray arrived at Borough in the 2023/24 campaign with the club six points from safety in the relegation zone.

And Murray, who won the National League North title with AFC Fylde in 2022/23, is targeting success with Harriers next season.

Murray said: "It's great to be here, I'm really happy to be at a wonderful football club, it's a place that has always held a place in my heart."

"To come back here as manager is a dream come true, it's been a whirlwind."

"I've got a lot of positive energy, it's a league I know well and a league I've been successful in and one that I aim to be successful in again."

"This has always been a big football club, that's never



changed, it's always been a club with ambition and unbelievable passion from the terraces.

"It's something I've always wanted to be part of and play a part in, I'm over the moon to be here."

"I aim to give it everything I've got and take the club to the next level and push again."

Murray made 22 appearances for Kidderminster as a player, scoring three goals, in a career which spanned more than 500 games in the Premier League, Football League and non-league.

And Birmingham-born Murray has been itching to return to Aggborough ever since his first spell with the club as a player in the early stages of his career in the sport.

Murray added: "It was a short period and if I'm being totally honest, as a young man and a

young footballer, I was probably a car crash as a person back then."

"I've most definitely evolved as a human being."

"From a football point of view I loved it here, I got a sense of what the football club was about."

"It's always been a role I've looked at and felt I want an opportunity there and fortunately the chairman has given me that opportunity."

"I'm hoping I can bring back the feeling I had here as a player which I really loved."

"To be back in front of these supporters again is going to be something really special for me."

New Harriers boss Adam Murray won the National League North with AFC Fylde. Picture courtesy of Official Harriers/YouTube.

Experienced pair to stay at Aggborough next season

KIDDERMINSTER Harriers pair Ashley Hemmings and Amari Morgan-Smith have signed new deals to remain with the club next season.

The duo scored 51 goals between them last term while 34-year-old Hemmings ended the campaign as the National League North's top scorer with 30 goals.

And 36-year-old Morgan-Smith netted 18 times last campaign.

Recently-appointed Harriers boss Adam Murray believes both players will prove 'priceless' as the club target promotion next season.

Murray said: "I've worked with Hemmo at two clubs before, so I know very well what quality he brings."

"You can see he has become a serial

winner and obviously knows what it takes to get success now, so I am over the moon he is playing with us."

"I actually played with Morgs for a bit at Luton, a really short crossover but, again, he's an unbelievable professional with an unbelievable mentality."

"He brings so much to the team on the pitch but off the pitch as well, he's a leader."

"These kinds of people are priceless, and to have people staying with us but not only know what the football club is about but understand what this league is about and what it takes to get out of it - you can't put a price on it."

"I am over the moon to have them both with us and hopefully they'll be a massive part of what we're doing."

Ashley Hemmings celebrates. Picture courtesy of Kidderminster Harriers FC.



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