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Bewdley's Centenary Carnival Delivers a Celebration to Remember

Thousands of people flocked to Bewdley on Saturday as the town celebrated the 100th anniversary of its much-loved Land and River Carnival.

Bewdley, featuring everything from classic vehicles and tractors to community groups and colourful floats.

attending the carnival for the first time. Owner Anzela Neal said she was delighted to be involved in such a special year and praised the positive atmosphere around the town.

The historic event, first held in 1926, marked a remarkable milestone with a day packed full of colour, entertainment and community spirit, drawing huge crowds to the streets of the riverside town.

The carnival atmosphere spread across the town centre, with stalls, live entertainment and family attractions creating a real festival feel throughout the day. Local businesses and traders also enjoyed a busy afternoon as thousands of people came together to celebrate the occasion.

Returning favourite Judi Priest of Judi's Gems was also among the stallholders, showcasing her handmade jewellery and enjoying another successful carnival. She said the event always attracts a fantastic crowd and provides a wonderful opportunity for local businesses to connect with visitors.

Residents and visitors lined the parade route as a spectacular procession made its way through

Among the traders taking part was Ariana's Treats and Cakes,

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The centenary celebrations highlighted exactly why Bewdley Carnival has remained one of the town's most cherished traditions for a century. Generations of families have grown up attending the event and many returned once again to mark the landmark occasion. With slightly cooler temperatures than the previous day, conditions were perfect for visitors to enjoy the packed programme of activities. Children headed for the funfair, families browsed the many stalls and entertainment continued throughout the afternoon.

Reaching 100 years is an extraordinary achievement for any community event and Saturday's celebrations were a fitting tribute to all those who have helped keep the carnival alive over the decades.

The success of this year's event has already sparked excitement for the future, with organisers now turning their attention to next year.

Planning for Bewdley Carnival 2027 has already begun and organisers are inviting the community to get involved. Whether you would like to volunteer, sponsor the event, enter a float or simply lend a helping hand, there are plenty of ways to play a part in one of Bewdley's most treasured traditions.

For more information and to register your interest, visit:
www.bewdleycarnival.co.uk
 and help shape the next chapter of Bewdley Carnival's remarkable story.





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Big Changes At Work

New Employment Rights Explained



You may not know that your workplace is becoming a fairer place for you! As a result of the Employment Rights Act 2025 passed by the Labour government as part of the Plan to Make Work Pay, new key employment rights came into effect in April 2026. This Plan extends employment protections, but changes are introduced in stages so that employers, businesses and workers have time to prepare.

Changes that came to your workplace in April 2026 Statutory Sick Pay, the minimum amount that employers must pay you when you are off work through illness, has changed and will benefit up to 9.6 million UK workers while helping lower income households. You are now entitled to Sick Pay from your first day at work and receive Sick Pay from your first day of sickness absence. Until now, you were not paid for the first three days off work. The Lower Earnings Limit has also been removed. Before April 2026, if you earned below

the £125-a-week threshold, you were not entitled to Sick Pay at all. Everyone is now eligible. This will really help women who are often in lower paid jobs, part-time workers, disabled employees as well as younger and older workers.

Paternity leave and unpaid Parental Leave are now a right from day one of employment.

The Minimum Service Level Legislation has been repealed. People in key public services such as Health Services, Education, Transport, Fire and Rescue services or Border Security can now go on strike without employers requiring specific employees to work. In cases of collective redundancies, where more than 20 employees are affected in one establishment, if the employer has failed to consult staff correctly, the maximum Redundancy Protection Award has been doubled from 90 days' pay to 180 days' pay per affected employee.

Whistleblowing protections have been strengthened in cases of sexual harassment, so don't be afraid to report your colleagues or boss. Employees can also no longer be fired for taking part in lawful strike action.

More changes are coming from January 2027 - Stronger protections will be introduced covering changes to pay, pensions, working hours, shift patterns and holiday entitlement. Unfair dismissal protection will apply after six months of service rather than two years. There will also be significant changes to zero-hours and low-hours contracts.

Workers will have the right to be offered guaranteed hours based on their regular working patterns, must be given greater notice of shifts, and must receive compensation for shifts cancelled or changed at short notice. Employees will also be protected from dismissal if they insist on these rights.

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Bewdley Festival Returns

with a Spectacular Celebration of the Arts

This October, the much-loved Bewdley Festival returns for its 38th year, bringing an inspiring programme of music, comedy, literature, history, art and conversation to venues across the town.

Since its launch in 1988, the festival has become one of the region's cultural highlights, at-

tracting acclaimed performers, respected speakers and emerging talent. The 2026 programme promises another memorable celebration, offering something to appeal to audiences of all ages and interests.

Music lovers are in for a treat, with performances from Glenn Tilbrook, the distinctive voice of

Squeeze, alongside Liza Pulman of Fascinating Aida fame. Classical music fans can enjoy appearances from the internationally acclaimed Carducci Quartet and the talented Young Pianists of Bewdley, while the Deborah Bonham Band will kick-start the festival in style.

Comedy is also firmly on the agenda. Popular Radio 4 favourite Alfie Moore returns with his hit show *It's A Fair Cop*, while impressionist, comedian and musician Alistair McGowan promises an evening packed with laughter and entertainment.

The literary programme features award-winning authors Liz Hyder and Kit De Waal, offering both talks and opportunities for aspiring writers. History enthusiasts can enjoy fascinating presentations from Lesley Smith, portraying Emma Hamilton, Max Keen exploring the story of Dudley Castle, and Dr Gareth Williams revealing the remarkable



tale behind the Herefordshire Viking Hoard.

Festival-goers can also look forward to thought-provoking conversations with broadcaster Stuart Maconie, punk music writer John Robb, Gardeners' World presenter Adam Frost, Reverend Kate Bottley and sustainability champion Baroness Natalie Bennett.

This year's visual arts programme includes a special exhibition celebrating the life and work of much-missed local artist Claire Spencer at Bewdley Museum. Her son, Ben Bowling, will also share insights into her artistic legacy. Visitors can additionally enjoy Turner and Constable, one of the year's most acclaimed art films.

The festival is also shining a spotlight on two of the area's

best-loved attractions, the Severn Valley Railway and West Midlands Safari Park, with special talks exploring the important work they undertake and the role they play in the local community.

Visitors can explore the full programme through the festival's online brochure, which contains detailed event information, performer profiles, venue details and booking information. With dozens of events taking place throughout October, the brochure is the perfect way to plan your festival experience. Whether you're interested in music, comedy, literature, history or visual arts, there is plenty to discover throughout this year's packed programme.

For full details, to view the online brochure and to book tickets, visit: www.bewdleyfestival.org.uk.

With such a diverse programme on offer, Bewdley Festival once again demonstrates why it remains one of Worcestershire's most cherished cultural events.

Be part of something special this October, there truly is something for everyone.



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THIS MONTHS

Local Lowdown Quirky Tales & Local Lore

*The Clock That Ran Five
Minutes Fast!*

For years, locals in Kidderminster joked that one of the town's old public clocks always seemed to be five minutes ahead. Shopkeepers claimed it was deliberately left fast to stop workers arriving late, while others believed it simply had a mind of its own. Generations of residents remember checking their watches against it and wondering which time was actually correct.



The Bewdley Bridge Ghost Light!

A long-standing tale in Bewdley tells of a mysterious lantern-like glow occasionally seen near the old bridge on misty evenings. Older residents claimed it was the spirit of a ferryman guiding travellers home, while others insisted it was simply moonlight reflecting on the River Severn. Whatever the explanation, the story still adds an extra touch of mystery to riverside walks after dark.

*The Stourport Ice Cream Queue
Record!*

In the summer of 1976, during one of Britain's hottest heatwaves, locals say an ice cream queue in Stourport stretched almost the entire length of the riverside. Families waited patiently in the blazing sunshine, determined not to miss out on a cone. Whether the queue was really quite that long may have been exaggerated over the years, but it remains one of the town's favourite summer stories.



*The Owl That Became a Village
Celebrity!*

Residents in Wolverley Village still talk about a tawny owl that regularly perched outside a local post office during the early mornings. The bird became so well known that people would adjust their walks to see if it had returned. Some even nicknamed it "Percy the Post Owl," and its appearances became a source of great local excitement.





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KIDDERMINSTER FOODBANK SETTLING INTO NEW HOME AS THE NEST TAKES SHAPE

Community lifeline begins an exciting new chapter with expanded support services for local residents Kidderminster Foodbank is now firmly established in its new home on Worcester Street, marking the start of an ambitious new chapter for one of Wyre Forest's most important community organisations.

The move to larger premises

has provided the foundation for the development of The NEST a permanent, community-led wellbeing hub designed to Nurture, Empower, Support and help local people Thrive.

For many local people facing financial hardship, Kidderminster Foodbank provides an essential safety net. Working with referral agencies including

Citizens Advice, schools, health-care professionals and support organisations, the Foodbank supplies emergency food parcels to individuals and families experiencing crisis. Alongside food provision, the team offers a compassionate and welcoming environment, helping people access practical advice and additional support services aimed at addressing the underlying causes of poverty and hardship.



The NEST will continue to be the base for Kidderminster Foodbank while also expanding the support available to local residents. Working alongside a range of partner organisations, the hub is beginning to offer wider services including counselling, support groups, creative activities, health checks, housing and financial advice, employment assistance and access to specialist services.

The project has been made possible through support from a number of local organisations, including Wyre Forest Crematorium, Worcestershire Public



Health and Wyre Forest District Council. The vision behind The NEST is simple but powerful: creating a welcoming place where people can access practical help, build connections and find support when they need it most, while helping tackle the wider issues that can lead people into food poverty.

Nina Price, Manager of Kidderminster Foodbank, said: "This move represents a really exciting moment for us. We're incredibly grateful to everyone who has supported us over the years and we're delighted to be welcoming people into our new space. The NEST is about so much more than what we've been able to offer before it's about build-

ing something lasting, together, with our community at the heart of everything."

For more than a decade, Kidderminster Foodbank, part of the Trussell network, has supported residents across Wyre Forest, one of the most deprived areas in Worcestershire. Backed by more than 60 volunteers and a strong network of local partners, the organisation has continued to provide vital services through challenging circumstances, remaining committed to helping those experiencing hardship.

One service user described the impact of the Foodbank, saying: "The food bank saved me when I had nowhere else to turn. But

it gave me more than food it gave me hope."

Foodbank services continue to operate from the new premises at 64-65 Worcester Street, with the referral system remaining in place and support available for anyone in need. Donations can be made via the Kidderminster Foodbank Just-Giving page, while the latest news and updates are available through the Foodbank's website and social media channels.



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Burlish Bike Park Teen Rides with World's Best in Austria



A talented young rider from Burlish Bike Park has returned from one of the biggest events in the mountain biking world after earning a coveted place at the prestigious Swatch Nines in Sölden, Austria.

Sixteen-year-old Felix Williams, who competes for Burlish Bike Park in the national MTB 4X series, was selected to take part in the event's highly regarded Senders Academy. Swatch Nines is famous for bringing together the world's top mountain bikers while giving promising young riders the chance to learn, develop and showcase their skills on some of the sport's most spectacular features.

Felix secured his place after responding to a social media call for applications. He submitted a video of his riding and was shortlisted alongside just 40 riders from across the globe. A public vote followed, with overwhelming support from friends, family, fellow riders and the local

community helping him secure his place in Austria.

The experience saw Felix riding alongside some of the biggest names in mountain biking, gaining valuable advice, building confidence and pushing himself on a course designed to inspire creativity and progression.

Speaking after the event, Felix said: "It was honestly unreal. To be riding at Swatch Nines with people I've looked up to for years was a dream. At first it felt massive and a bit overwhelming, but everyone was so supportive and it made me want to push myself even more."

Felix's love of mountain biking began when he was just two years old. From family bike rides he progressed to pump tracks, dirt jumps and eventually the British Fourcross Series. Away from racing, he has also played a major role in the success of Burlish Bike Park, helping build the site, leading its Young Leaders

volunteer team and inspiring younger riders to get involved. Now in its fourth year, Burlish Bike Park has become a thriving hub for young cyclists to develop skills, confidence and friendships.

Hannah Escott, founder of Open Trail and Burlish Bike Park, said: "Felix has been part of Burlish from the very beginning. He has helped shape the park, supported other young riders and worked incredibly hard on his own riding. To see him earn a place at Swatch Nines is fantastic and shows what can be achieved when young people are given the opportunity to thrive."

Felix's achievement is a proud moment not only for him and his family, but for the entire Burlish Bike Park community, proving that local talent can reach the very highest level with dedication, hard work and the support of those around them.

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Town Hall Restoration Wins Prestigious Regional Award

Kidderminster Town Hall has been recognised as one of the West Midlands' standout restoration projects after taking top honours at the prestigious RICS Awards 2026.

The landmark building was named winner in the Refurbishment and Revitalisation category at the regional ceremony held at the Hyatt Regency in Birmingham. The project also received a Highly Commended accolade in the overall Project of the Year category, underlining the significance of the ambitious restoration.

The extensive redevelopment of the historic town hall has transformed one of Kidderminster's most treasured buildings, carefully balancing the preservation of its heritage with the needs of a modern community venue. As a listed building, the project presented a number of chal-

lenges. Age-related deterioration, outdated services and the need to improve accessibility and energy efficiency all had to be addressed while protecting the building's historic character. The redevelopment has seen the introduction of a new café and bar, helping to bring more visitors into the town centre and providing a boost to local businesses. Meanwhile, the beautifully restored music hall has been upgraded to international standards, enabling the venue to attract a wider range of performances and events.

Judges praised the scheme for its sensitive approach to restoration and its positive impact on the town.

They said: "The blend between new and existing is subtle and in keeping with the environment. Consideration has been given to reusing rather than replacing

wherever possible, and the refurbishment has created facilities that will benefit the community for many years to come."

The RICS Awards celebrate the most inspiring projects across land, construction and infrastructure, recognising developments that make a real difference to communities.

More than 300 entries were submitted across the UK's 12 regions this year, making Kidderminster Town Hall's success even more impressive. The project will now go forward to represent the West Midlands at the RICS UK Grand Final in October, where it will compete against the best schemes from across the country.

For Kidderminster, the award is another significant milestone in the town hall's remarkable revival and a fitting recognition of a project that has breathed new life into one of the town's most important civic buildings. To find out more visit: www.rics.org





Bewdley's Hinton's Gin Celebrates International Success with Top Awards

A small artisan distillery in Bewdley is raising a glass after winning prestigious honours at one of the world's leading spirits competitions.

Hinton's Gin, founded by local distiller Nick Hinton, has secured an impressive collection of medals at the internationally renowned London Spirits Competition, further cementing its reputation for producing premium, handcrafted spirits. Nick established the business nine years ago, drawing on experience gained while working in the drinks industry during the 1990s. Since then, Hinton's Gin has become well known for its commitment to quality and its unique "Branch to Bottle" philosophy, with staff foraging locally to source many of the ingredients used in their award-winning products.

This year's competition saw three of the distillery's spirits entered for judging: Bewdley Gin, Worcestershire Cherry Gin and Damson Gin Liqueur. Competing against some of

the world's biggest and most respected producers, the results were nothing short of remarkable.

Both Bewdley Gin and Worcestershire Cherry Gin were awarded silver medals, while the Damson Gin Liqueur achieved a coveted gold medal, missing out on a double gold by just a single point.

The Damson Gin Liqueur also earned the distinction of becoming the highest-rated UK-produced liqueur in the competition, outperforming a host of international and national favourites.

The success is made even sweeter by the fact that the award-winning damsons used in the liqueur were sourced locally. The fruit was supplied by Bewdley Farm Shop and grown at Orchard Farm, creating what Nick describes as a true Worcestershire collaboration. Speaking about the achievement, Nick said: "It was a real branch-to-bottle chain from

three Worcestershire businesses. "It also shows that small family businesses can take on global names and win.

"From a small fruit farm, to a local farm shop and a small home-run distillery, this is proof that Worcestershire can take on the world when it comes to quality."

The awards are another proud moment for Bewdley and demonstrate that exceptional products can come from small, independent producers with a passion for craftsmanship and local ingredients.

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WHAT'S ON DOWN THE MILL IN AUGUST

- 3rd - Brew Monday 10am-2pm
- 3rd - Andy's Man's Club 7pm-9pm
- 3rd - Messy Monday kids crafts session 11am-1pm
- 5th - Wellbeing craft workshop 11am-2pm
- 7th - Tiamat Gaming 7pm-11pm
- 10th - Andy's Man's Club 7pm-9pm
- 10th - Messy Monday kids crafts session 11am-1pm
- 11th - Kids first aid session 5-11 years (10am-12noon)
- 12th - Wellbeing craft workshop 11am-2pm
- 17th - Messy Monday kids crafts session 11am-1pm
- 18th - Kids first aid session 12-16 years (10am-12noon)
- 19th - Wellbeing craft workshop 11am-2pm
- 21st - Tiamat Gaming 7pm-11pm
- 24th - Andy's Man's Club 7pm-9pm
- 24th - Messy Monday kids crafts session 11am-1pm
- 31st - Messy Monday kids crafts session 11am-1pm

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Wolverley Sebright Primary School Celebrates 100 Years of Learning and Community



This year, Wolverley Sebright Primary School proudly celebrates its centenary, marking 100 years of educating local children and serving the community at the heart of Wolverley.

The school's story dates back to 1926, when it opened to provide education for the growing number of children in the village and surrounding areas. Its name honours the Sebright family, who have long been associated with Wolverley through the historic Wolverley Court estate and their significant contributions to local life and education.

Over the past century, the school has witnessed extraordinary changes. It has guided pupils through times of national celebration and challenge, from the aftermath of the First World War and the Second World War,

through the technological revolution and into the modern digital age. Throughout every decade, the school has remained a place where children are encouraged to learn, grow and develop confidence in themselves and their abilities.

Generations of local families have passed through its doors, with many parents and even grandparents proudly seeing their own children attend the same school they once did. This strong sense of tradition and community remains one of Wolverley Sebright Primary's greatest strengths.

To mark this significant anniversary, the school is holding a series of special events throughout the year, bringing together current pupils, former students, staff and residents. The celebrations will include opportunities

to share memories, explore historical photographs and memorabilia, and reflect on the many stories that have shaped the school's remarkable journey.

Reaching 100 years is a tremendous achievement and a testament to the dedication of the teachers, governors, support staff and families who have played a part in the school's success over the decades.

As Wolverley Sebright Primary School celebrates this landmark occasion, it not only honours its rich and proud history but also looks confidently to the future, continuing its mission of inspiring young people and serving the community for generations to come.

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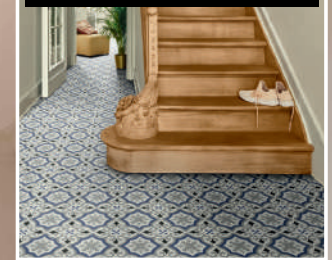
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Attwood Funerals Opens New Meeting Room in Bewdley

Attwood Funerals is delighted to announce the opening of our new meeting room in Bewdley, located at the front of our studio at 31 Load Street.

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by Skills Bootcamps Programme
Manager Abigail Jones

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Skills Bootcamps give people the opportunity to develop sector-specific skills, whether to progress in their current role or build the confidence and skills needed to move in a new career direction.

They are funded by DWP and managed by Worcestershire County Council through its Careers Worcestershire service.

Working with education and training providers, alongside local employers, a wide range of Skills Bootcamps are delivered at training provider locations and education settings throughout Worcestershire

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They can improve employment opportunities, open doors to future training, or give you the skills and confidence needed to change career direction.

Skills Bootcamps are free to take part in and, on completion, offer a fast-track interview with a local employer.

A wide range of Skills Bootcamps are available, including Construction (set at Kidderminster College), Cyber Security & Data, Welding, Venue Protective Security, Leadership and Management, Warehousing, Early Years, Health & Social Care, plus many many more.

Skills Bootcamps cover a variety of industries and bespoke Bootcamps can also be developed for employers across the county that are looking to upskill their workforce.



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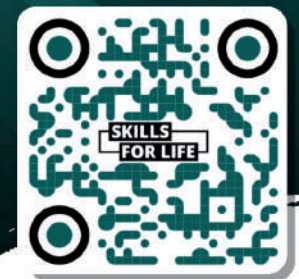
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Plant of the Month Japanese Anemone

As August arrives and many summer-flowering plants begin to slow down, the Japanese Anemone takes centre stage. This elegant perennial is one of the stars of the late-summer garden, producing masses of delicate blooms from August through to October and sometimes even later if conditions remain mild. Its ability to provide colour when many other plants are fading makes it a favourite among gardeners looking to extend the season.

Despite its name, the Japanese Anemone actually originates from China, although it became widely cultivated in Japan and has long been associated with traditional Japanese gardens. Today it is a popular choice in British gardens thanks to its hardiness, graceful appearance and reliable performance.

The flowers are available in shades ranging from pure white to soft pink and deeper rose tones. Held on tall, slender stems above attractive dark green foliage, they appear to dance in the slightest breeze, adding movement and a sense of lightness to borders. The simple, open flowers are also highly attractive to bees and other pollinating insects, making them a valuable addition to wildlife-friendly gardens.

Japanese Anemones thrive in moist but well-drained soil and are happiest in partial shade, although they will tolerate full sun if they receive sufficient water during dry periods. Once established, they are remarkably resilient and require very little maintenance beyond occasional watering during prolonged dry spells.

These versatile plants work beautifully in cottage gardens, mixed borders and woodland-style planting schemes. They combine particularly well with ornamental grasses, asters, sedums and late-flowering salvias, helping to create colourful displays that carry gardens through into autumn.

Another benefit is their longevity. Japanese Anemones are perennial plants that return year after year, gradually forming larger clumps and producing even more flowers as they mature. They also make excellent cut flowers, bringing their understated elegance indoors.

For gardeners seeking dependable late-season colour, the Japanese Anemone is difficult to beat. Beautiful, hardy and easy to grow, it provides a stunning display just when many gardens need it most, proving that the gardening season is far from over once summer draws to a close.



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Wolverley Village Players Open Their Doors to New Members

If you've ever fancied stepping into the spotlight, singing your heart out, or simply becoming part of a friendly local group, now could be the perfect opportunity.

Wolverley Village Players are inviting new members to join them as they launch preparations for their latest production on Monday 7th September at 7pm at Wolverley Memorial Hall, Shatterford Lane, Wolverley.

The local amateur dramatics group will unveil an original script, written entirely by members of the society, titled Hansel and Gretel and the Sugar Free Fairy. The production promises plenty of fun, laughter and the

traditional pantomime magic that audiences have come to love. The launch evening is open to everyone, whether you have years of stage experience or have never set foot on a stage before. The group is particularly keen to welcome new faces and says there are plenty of opportunities to get involved both on and off stage.

Andrea Millner, Director for the new season, said: "We always welcome new members to join us. No previous experience is needed. If you fancy having a go at acting, singing, dancing or just helping out backstage, we would love to hear from you." For more information, visit www.wolverleyvillageplayers.co.uk.



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Creating a Boutique Hotel Bedroom Upgrades bring luxury into your home

Boutique hotels are designed to feel comfortable, stylish and relaxing, and many of the same principles can be applied to a bedroom at home without undertaking a major renovation.

One of the most noticeable features of a hotel bedroom is high-quality bedding. Crisp cotton sheets, a supportive duvet and multiple layers of pillows instantly create a more luxurious feel. Adding a textured throw at the foot of the bed introduces warmth and visual interest.

Lighting is equally important. Rather than relying on a single ceiling light, boutique hotels use layered lighting to create atmosphere. Bedside lamps, wall lights and soft accent lighting allow the room to adapt to different

times of day and moods.

A statement headboard can dramatically change the appearance of a bedroom. Upholstered designs remain particularly popular, adding texture and creating a focal point behind the bed. Even a simple fabric-covered headboard can elevate the entire space.

Hotels are also experts at controlling clutter. Matching bedside tables, concealed storage and carefully chosen accessories help create a calm and organised environment. Limiting decorative items often results in a more sophisticated appearance.

Colour choices tend to be subtle and timeless. Warm neutrals, soft greys, taupe and muted greens are commonly used because they promote relaxa-

tion while providing a luxurious backdrop.

Mirrors can help reflect light and make a room feel larger. A well-positioned full-length mirror or decorative wall mirror adds both practicality and style.

Finally, attention to small details can make a significant difference. Matching bedside lamps, quality curtains and coordinated cushions help create a cohesive look that feels thoughtfully designed.

By focusing on comfort, lighting and simplicity, homeowners can achieve the elegant atmosphere associated with boutique hotels while creating a bedroom that feels both practical and indulgent.



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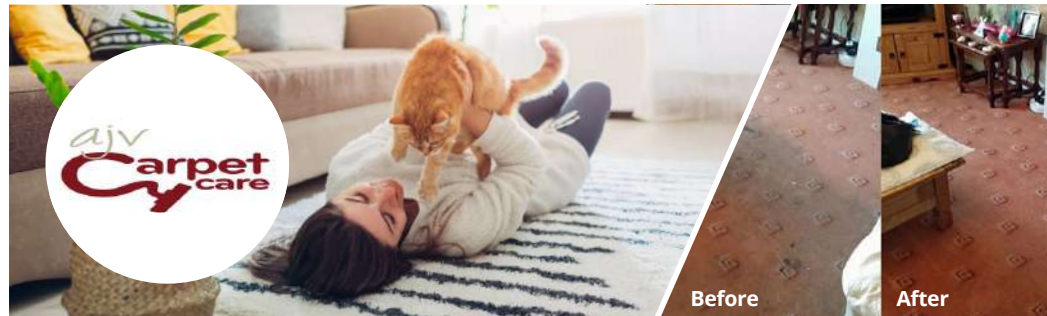
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The Rise of The Home Coffee Station

Homeowners are creating coffee corners



The home coffee station has become one of the most popular interior design trends, combining practicality with a touch of everyday luxury. Rather than storing coffee supplies in different cupboards, many homeowners are creating dedicated areas where everything is organised and easily accessible.

A coffee station doesn't require a large kitchen. A section of worktop, a sideboard or even a compact corner can provide enough space. The key is keeping essential items together, including coffee beans, pods, mugs, syrups and accessories. Open shelving is often used to display favourite mugs and glassware while adding visual interest. Wooden shelves paired

with black metal brackets remain a popular choice, particularly in modern and industrial-inspired homes.

Storage plays a crucial role in keeping the area organised. Glass jars for coffee beans, labelled containers for sugar and baskets for pods help create a tidy and coordinated look. Matching storage solutions can instantly make the space feel more professional and considered.

Coffee machines have become a design feature in their own right. Whether it's a bean-to-cup machine, espresso maker or traditional cafetière, positioning it as the centrepiece helps define the area.

Lighting can also elevate a coffee station. Under-shelf LED lighting or a small wall light creates ambience and makes the space feel intentionally designed rather than simply functional.

Adding personal touches helps complete the look. Framed coffee-themed artwork, a small plant or a decorative tray can give the station personality without creating clutter.

The appeal of a home coffee station lies in its simplicity. It creates a dedicated space for a daily ritual while helping keep kitchens organised. For many households, it's a relatively affordable upgrade that combines style, convenience and a little café-inspired charm.



August in The Vegetable Garden

Plant now for delicious autumn harvests

August is often seen as a month of harvesting, but it is also one of the most important times in the gardening calendar for sowing crops that will keep your kitchen supplied well into autumn and winter. As summer vegetables reach their peak, empty spaces begin to appear in vegetable beds, creating the perfect opportunity for a second round of planting.

Leafy crops are particularly well suited to August sowing. Lettuce varieties can still be planted and will produce fresh leaves for salads well into the autumn months. Rocket is another fast-growing favourite, often ready to harvest within a few weeks and ideal for adding a peppery kick to sandwiches and salads.

For gardeners looking for something a little different, mizuna and mustard leaf are excellent choices. These oriental greens

are easy to grow, cope well with cooler temperatures and provide colourful, flavourful leaves that can be eaten raw or lightly cooked. Lamb's lettuce, sometimes known as corn salad, is another reliable crop that thrives as temperatures begin to fall and can often be harvested throughout winter.

Radishes remain one of the quickest and most rewarding vegetables to grow. Sown in August, many varieties can be ready to pick in as little as four weeks. Spring onions are another excellent option, providing a steady supply of fresh, mild-flavoured onions for salads and cooking.

Looking further ahead, August is the ideal time to plant overwintering onion sets. These establish strong roots before winter and can produce an earlier crop the following summer compared

with spring-planted onions.

Chicory is another worthwhile addition to the vegetable plot. Its crisp leaves are perfect for autumn salads, while some varieties can be forced later in the year to produce tender, blanched shoots.

With warm soil and generally reliable growing conditions, August offers gardeners the chance to keep harvesting long after summer has ended. A little planting now can provide fresh produce for many months to come.



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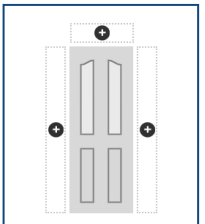


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The Return of Wallpaper

Bold patterns, texture and personality



Wallpaper has made a significant comeback in recent years, with homeowners increasingly using it to add character and individuality to their interiors. While painted walls remain popular, wallpaper offers an opportunity to introduce colour, texture and pattern in a way that paint simply cannot.

One of the biggest trends for 2026 is the use of oversized botanical prints. Large-scale leaves, flowers and nature-inspired designs can create a striking focal point in living rooms, dining areas and bedrooms. Murals are also proving popular, turning a single wall into a dramatic design feature. Textured wallpapers are another growing trend. Grasscloth-

style finishes, linen effects and subtle embossed designs add depth and interest without overwhelming a space. These are particularly effective in hallways and lounges where homeowners want a sophisticated look.

Feature walls remain the most practical way to use bold wallpaper. Applying a statement design behind a bed, sofa or dining table creates impact while keeping the rest of the room balanced. This approach works particularly well with darker colours and more intricate patterns.

For smaller rooms, lighter wallpapers with delicate patterns can help create a sense of space while still adding personality. Vertical stripes remain a

favourite choice for hallways and rooms with lower ceilings as they can make walls appear taller.

When choosing wallpaper, it is important to consider the room's natural light. Dark designs can look stunning in bright spaces but may feel heavy in rooms with limited daylight. Ordering samples and viewing them at different times of day can help avoid costly mistakes.

Rather than covering every wall, today's approach to wallpaper is often about creating carefully chosen focal points. Used thoughtfully, it can transform an ordinary room into a space that feels stylish, welcoming and uniquely personal.

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Kim's Designs Bringing Personality Into Your Home



In a world of flat-pack furniture and mass-produced home accessories, it's refreshing to find an independent interiors business that genuinely helps people create a home with character. Based in Kidderminster and Bewdley, Kim's Designs has built a reputation for combining stylish home décor, bespoke upholstery and expert interior advice with a warm, personal approach.

Whether you're looking to refresh a single room or completely transform your living space, Kim's Designs offers an impressive range of products and services. Their collections include furniture, lighting, wall art, mirrors, soft furnishings, home fragrance, tableware and decorative accessories, allowing customers to add those all-important finishing touches that

make a house feel like a home. What sets the business apart is its heritage in upholstery and soft furnishings. With more than 40 years of expertise, the family-run team creates made-to-measure curtains and blinds, handcrafted in their Kidderminster workshop. Customers can choose from hundreds of fabrics and receive guidance throughout the design process, ensuring every piece perfectly complements their home.

The stores are packed with inspiration, from statement lamps and eye-catching wall art to luxurious cushions, throws and unique gift ideas. Their carefully curated product range reflects current interior trends while maintaining a timeless appeal, making it easy to find pieces that will look just as good years from

now as they do today. For those seeking something truly individual, Kim's Designs also offers upholstery services, breathing new life into cherished furniture and helping customers create bespoke pieces tailored to their own style. This blend of craftsmanship, creativity and personal service has earned the business a loyal following across Wyre Forest and beyond.

Whether you're planning a full home makeover or simply searching for that perfect decorative piece, Kim's Designs proves that great interiors are about more than following trends they're about creating spaces that reflect your personality and make every day feel a little more special.

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Lisa 07906 989728

KIDDERMINSTER 5.30pm & 7pm
Kidderminster Baptist church
Franchise road
Kidderminster
Russ 07742 254410

TUESDAY

KIDDERMINSTER 9.30am & 11am
St Cecilia's Church
Hoo Road
Kidderminster
Jane 07800889768
KIDDERMINSTER
3.30pm 5pm & 7pm
St. George's Social Club Radford
Avenue
Kidderminster
Net 07989598589

WEDNESDAY

KIDDERMINSTER 5.30pm & 7pm
Kidderminster Baptist church
Franchise road
Kidderminster
Russ 07742 254410

KIDDERMINSTER
9am & 10.30am, 5pm & 7pm
St. George's Social Club Radford
Avenue Kidderminster
Net 07989598589

STOURPORT 9.30am
Stourport Bowling Club
Lickhill Road, Stourport
Jane 07800889768

BEWDLEY 5.30pm & 7pm St.
George's Hall
Load Street
Bewdley
Russell 07742254410

THURSDAY

KIDDERMINSTER
9.30am & 11am
Kidderminster Carolinas R.F.C
Marlpool Lane Kidderminster

KIDDERMINSTER 6.00pm
Foley Park Methodist Church
Off Brinton Close
Kidderminster
Rachel 07907033347

STOURPORT
5pm & 7pm
The Severns Club
Lickhill Road, Stourport Lisa
07906 989728

FRIDAY

STOURPORT 9.30am & 11am
The Severns Club
Lickhill Road, Stourport
Lisa 07906 989728

KIDDERMINSTER
gam & 10.30am
Kidderminster Carolinas R.F.C
Marlpool Lane

SATURDAY

KIDDERMINSTER
7.30am, 9am & 10.30am
St Mary's Church
Churchfields
Kidderminster
Kerry 07936495211

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August - National Wellness Month

Small Changes, Big Benefits



August is National Wellness Month, a month-long global initiative encouraging people to focus on their physical, mental and emotional wellbeing. In a world where busy schedules, constant notifications and everyday pressures can often leave us feeling overwhelmed, National Wellness Month serves as a timely reminder that looking after ourselves should never be considered a luxury – it is essential.

The concept is simple: dedicate time throughout August to building healthier habits, reducing stress and making positive lifestyle changes that can have lasting benefits long after the

month has ended. Importantly, wellness is not about drastic diets, punishing fitness regimes or striving for perfection. Instead, it focuses on sustainable changes that help people feel happier, healthier and more balanced.

One of the key themes of National Wellness Month is self-care. While the phrase is often associated with spa days and pampering, genuine self-care is much broader. It includes getting enough sleep, eating nutritious meals, staying hydrated, taking regular breaks and making time for activities that bring joy and relaxation. Even setting aside just 15 minutes a day to read, walk, meditate or enjoy a

hobby can make a noticeable difference to overall wellbeing.

Stress management is another major focus. Modern life can place significant demands on our time and energy, and prolonged stress can affect both physical and mental health. Simple techniques such as deep breathing exercises, mindfulness, spending time outdoors and connecting with friends or family can all help reduce stress levels.

Research consistently shows that regular physical activity is also one of the most effective ways to boost mood and improve mental resilience.



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SCAN TO JOIN

August - National Wellness Month

Small Changes, Big Benefits



National Wellness Month also encourages people to review their daily routines. Small adjustments can often produce significant results. Going to bed at the same time each night, taking a short walk during lunch breaks, reducing screen time before sleep or preparing healthier meals are all achievable goals that can improve wellbeing over time.

The month provides an excellent opportunity to explore local resources too. Across the region there are numerous opportunities to support a healthier lifestyle, from fitness classes and walking groups to yoga sessions, wellbeing workshops and community activities.

Participating in local events can not only improve physical health but also help strengthen social connections, which play a vital role in overall happiness and wellbeing.

Perhaps the most important message behind National Wellness Month is that wellness looks different for everyone. What works for one person may not work for another, and that's perfectly fine. The aim is not to compare ourselves with others but to identify the habits and routines that help us feel our best.

As August unfolds, why not use National Wellness Month as an opportunity to check in with yourself?

Whether it's committing to a daily walk, drinking more water, prioritising sleep or simply taking a little more time to relax, small positive changes made today could lead to a healthier, happier future. After all, investing in your wellbeing is one of the most valuable commitments you can make.

By focusing on achievable goals and celebrating small successes, you can create lasting habits that support your health all year round. Remember, wellness is not a destination but an ongoing journey, and every positive step, no matter how small, contributes towards a better quality of life, increased resilience and greater overall happiness.



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Make the Most of Blackberry Season Blackberries are at their best in August

There's something wonderfully nostalgic about blackberry season.

As summer begins to fade and autumn edges closer, hedgerows across Worcestershire burst into life with clusters of ripe, juicy blackberries just waiting to be picked. From country lanes and canal paths to local parks and countryside walks, this is the perfect time of year to enjoy one of nature's tastiest free treats.

Blackberries are typically at their best from late August through to September, making now the ideal opportunity to get outdoors and enjoy a spot of foraging. Not only is blackberry picking a great family activity, but it's also a fantastic way to connect with the local countryside while gathering ingredients for a variety of delicious homemade dishes. Packed with vitamin C, fibre and

antioxidants, blackberries are as nutritious as they are versatile. Their sweet yet slightly tart flavour works beautifully in both sweet and savoury recipes. Traditional favourites such as blackberry crumble remain popular for good reason, especially when served warm with custard or ice cream. They can also be transformed into jams, jellies and chutneys, or added to smoothies for a healthy breakfast boost.

For those looking to experiment, blackberries pair exceptionally well with apples, pears and plums. They can be baked into muffins, folded through cakes, used to top cheesecakes or stirred into porridge. A handful of fresh berries can even elevate a simple summer salad when combined with goat's cheese and walnuts.

If you do head out blackberry

picking, remember a few simple rules. Only pick from areas away from busy roads, avoid taking more than you need, and leave plenty behind for wildlife. Birds, insects and small mammals all rely on hedgerow fruits as an important food source as the seasons change.

One of our favourite ways to celebrate the season is with a homemade Blackberry & Apple Loaf. Combining the sweetness of fresh apples with the rich flavour of ripe blackberries, it's a simple bake that perfectly captures the taste of late summer and early autumn.

Turn the page for our delicious Blackberry & Apple Loaf recipe and bring a little taste of the Worcestershire countryside into your kitchen.

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Blackberry & apple loaf

Make the most of late-season fruit



Ingredients

- 250g self-raising flour
- 175g butter
- 175g light muscovado sugar
- ½ tsp cinnamon
- 2 rounded tbsp demerara sugar
- 1 small eating apple, quartered
- 2 large eggs beaten
- 1 orange finely grated zest
- 1 tsp baking powder
- 225g blackberry

Method

Step 1

Preheat the oven to 180C/gas 4/fan 160C. Butter and line the bottom of a 1.7 litre loaf tin (see tip below). In a large bowl, rub the flour, butter and muscovado sugar together with your fingers to make

fine crumbs. Measure out 5 level tbsp of this mixture into a small bowl for the topping, and mix in to it the cinnamon and demerara sugar. Set aside.

Step 2

Coarsely grate the apple down to the core and mix in with the eggs and the zest. Stir the baking powder into the rubbed-in mixture in the large bowl, then quickly and lightly stir in the egg mixture until it drops lightly from the spoon. Don't overmix.

Step 3

Gently fold in three quarters of the berries with a metal spoon, trying not to break them up. Spoon into the tin and level. Scatter the rest

of the berries on top. Sprinkle over the topping and bake for 1¼ -1 hour 20 minutes. Check after 50 minutes and cover loosely with foil if it is browning too much. When done the cake will feel firm, but test with a skewer.

Step 4

Leave in the tin for 30 minutes before turning out, then cool on a wire rack. Peel off the paper before cutting. Will keep wrapped in foil or in a tin for up to 2 days.



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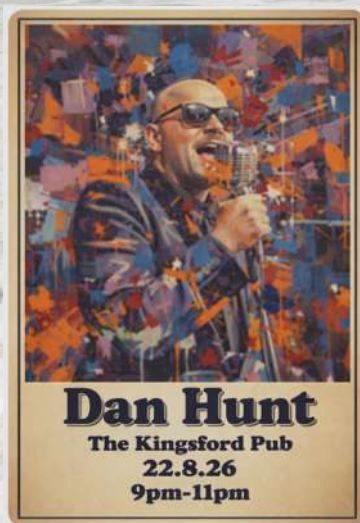


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Check out all our
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The Ultimate Mod Revue At Kidderminster Town Hall

Get ready for a night of pure Mod magic as The Goldhawks bring their acclaimed Ultimate Mod Revue to the stage. Packed with energy, nostalgia and wall-to-wall classics, this high-voltage production celebrates the very best Mod anthems from the 1960s through to the 1980s and beyond. Featuring outstanding musicians and vocalists, the show delivers hit after hit from legendary acts including The Who, The Jam, Small Faces, Ocean Colour Scene and The Kinks.

Produced by the team behind the hugely successful Quadrophenia - The Album, LIVE!, the performance is enhanced by a giant screen projection featuring specially created film sequences that capture the style, attitude

and spirit of the Mod movement. The result is an immersive journey through one of Britain's most influential youth cultures.

Whether you were there the first time around or simply love great live music, this is a show designed to get audiences singing, dancing and reliving some of the greatest songs ever recorded. With rave reviews from audiences and famous fans alike, including actors Jane Horrocks and Phil Daniels, The Ultimate Mod Revue has built a reputation as one of the UK's leading celebration shows.

The show comes to Kidderminster Town Hall on Friday 14 August, starting at 7.30pm.

Expect 90 minutes of unforgettable music, timeless classics and plenty of audience participation.



Book tickets:

www.boxoffice.kidderminstertownhall.org.uk

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Bewdley Museum ■■■

Mike Sanchez Brings Rhythm & Blues Magic to Kidderminster

Rhythm & blues legend Mike Sanchez heads to Kidderminster Town Hall on Friday 21 August from 6pm as part of the Get Your Kicks on the A456 Festival and Book Launch.

Widely regarded as one of the UK's finest rhythm & blues performers, Sanchez has built an international reputation for his electrifying live shows, blending rock 'n' roll, blues, boogie-woogie and soul with effortless style. Drawing inspiration from the sounds of New Orleans and classic American R&B, his performances are packed with energy, passion and world-class musicianship.

Over a career spanning decades, Sanchez has performed alongside music legends including Eric Clapton and Bill Wyman, earning respect as a true musician's musician and one of Europe's leading interpreters of roots music.

Joining him on stage will be his outstanding band featuring Mark Morgan on drums, Tom Bull on guitar, Nick Whitfield on bass, Drew Davies on tenor saxophone and Jean-Marc Labbe on baritone saxophone.

The evening will also feature special guests The Chloe Mogg Band, bringing their acclaimed blend of blues, rock and Americana, alongside rising act Crimson Flame, whose energetic sound combines

classic influences with a contemporary edge.

Set against the backdrop of the A456 Festival celebrations and book launch, the event promises an unforgettable evening of live music, storytelling and community spirit. Whether you're a lifelong blues fan or simply love great live music, this special concert at Kidderminster Town Hall is set to be one of the highlights of the summer.

Mike Sanchez and Friends
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Renault 5 E-Tech: The Electric Car Everyone's Talking About

Few new cars have generated as much excitement in 2026 as the Renault 5 E-Tech. Bringing back one of the most recognisable names in motoring history, Renault has successfully combined retro styling with modern electric technology to create a car that feels both nostalgic and futuristic.

The original Renault 5 was a common sight on British roads throughout the 1970s and 1980s, becoming known for its practicality, affordability and quirky French charm. Fast forward to today and Renault has revived the iconic badge for a new generation of drivers, this time with a fully electric powertrain.

At first glance, the resemblance to the classic model is obvious. The square headlights, distinctive silhouette and bold colours all pay tribute to the original, yet the new

version looks thoroughly modern. It stands out in a market where many electric vehicles have become increasingly similar in appearance.

The Renault 5 E-Tech is available with battery options offering up to 250 miles of range, making it practical for everyday use as well as longer journeys. Rapid charging can take the battery from 15 to 80 per cent in around 30 minutes, helping to reduce range anxiety for motorists considering the switch to electric.

Inside, the car features a digital dashboard, modern infotainment system and a surprisingly spacious cabin for a compact hatchback. Renault has focused on making the car enjoyable to drive too, with responsive handling and a low

centre of gravity thanks to the battery placement. Reviewers across the motoring industry have praised its combination of value, style and driving enjoyment.

Perhaps most importantly, the Renault 5 proves that electric cars do not have to be boring. While many manufacturers focus solely on efficiency and technology, Renault has created a vehicle with genuine character.

It appeals not only to environmentally conscious drivers but also to those who simply want a car that makes them smile every time they see it on the driveway. For many motorists, the Renault 5 E-Tech could be the car that finally makes the move to electric feel exciting.

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Harriers Ready for Life Back in the National League

There is a real buzz around Aggborough as Kidderminster Harriers prepare for their return to the National League following a memorable promotion-winning campaign.

The Harriers secured their place back in non-league football's top division after an outstanding season in National League North, culminating in a 2-0 victory over South Shields in the play-off final. The achievement marked a swift return to the fifth tier and sparked celebrations among supporters who believe the club belongs at a higher level.

Now attention turns to the 2026/27 season, and the challenge of competing against some of the biggest clubs outside the Football League. The National League remains one of the toughest divisions in the country, featuring former EFL sides, ambitious full-time clubs and several teams with promotion aspirations.

Leading the Harriers into the new campaign is manager Paul Wotton, who arrives at Aggborough following successful spells with Truro City and Torquay United. Wotton takes charge following the departure of promotion-winning boss Adam Murray, who left to join Barrow shortly after guiding the club back to the National League.

Supporters will be hoping Wotton can build on the momentum generated last season and establish Kidderminster as a competitive force at this level. Maintaining the strong defensive organisation and battling spirit that earned promotion will be crucial if the Harriers are to thrive.

The new season promises plenty of exciting fixtures, with local rivalries against Solihull Moors and Tamworth expected to attract large crowds.

Visits from some of the division's traditional heavyweights should also create a fantastic atmosphere at Aggborough throughout the campaign.

For many newly promoted clubs, survival is the primary objective, but there is a growing sense that Kidderminster can aim higher. The club boasts excellent facilities, a loyal fanbase and a squad that already knows how to win under pressure.

While the National League presents a significant step up in quality, Harriers fans have every reason to be optimistic. The foundations are in place, the club is moving forward and there is renewed belief around Aggborough.

After the highs of last season, the challenge now is to prove that Kidderminster Harriers are not just back in the National League – they are here to stay.



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