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#### Featured

### 4 Remembrance Sunday in the Wyre Forest:

A United Community Pays Tribute

#### 7 All Aboard

Christmas Magic with the Severn Valley Railway Up for Grabs!

### 9 Kidderminster's Historic Piano Building

Hits all the right notes

#### 15 This Months

Local Lowdown, Quirky Tales & Local Lore

#### Regular

### 25 MP Update

Mark Garnier Member of Parliament for Wyre Forest

### 26 History

Life in Georgian Wyre Forest A Glimpse into Everyday Elegance

#### 38 Interiors

Christmas furnishings, soft tones and comfort for the festive season

### 45 Your Eyesight and the Road Ahead

By Ella McCormack BA (Hons) FBDO, Bainbridge Bespoke Opticians

### 48 Health & Wellbeing

Aesthetics, Slimming and private hospitals

#### 52 Food & Drink

Seasonal Spotlight: plus Christmas Special: Beef Wellington & Winter Drinks

#### 54 Whats On

Local Christmas events, theatre news from the Rose plus a local Panto in Wolverley

#### 66 Motoring

December Motoring, Getting Winter Ready









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### Remembrance Sunday in the Wyre Forest:

A United Community Pays Tribute

Across the Wyre Forest, hundreds gathered this Remembrance Sunday to honour those who made the ultimate sacrifice in service of their country. From Kidderminster to Stourport and Bewdley, communities came together in quiet reflection and heartfelt gratitude.

In Kidderminster, veterans, cadets, councillors and families lined the streets for the annual parade from the Town Hall to the War Memorial. As the clock struck eleven, the town fell silent, the only sound the haunting notes of the bugler's Last Post. Wreaths were laid by representatives of the armed forces, emergency services, local schools and community organisations a touching reminder that remembrance is shared





In Stourport, crowds gathered at the Memorial Park, where the River Severn provided a peaceful backdrop to a moving service led by local clergy. The turnout was one of the largest in recent years, with young people from the Scouts, Guides and Army Cadets taking a proud part in proceedings. The town's band played traditional hymns, echoing through the crisp November

Meanwhile, Bewdley's ceremony brought together residents along the picturesque riverside. The service outside St Anne's





Church was marked by dignity and reflection, with many pausing to remember loved ones lost in both world wars and more recent conflicts.

Across all three towns, the sight of poppies, uniforms, and bowed heads painted a powerful picture of community unity and respect. These moments of remembrance serve as a poignant reminder that while time moves on, the debt of gratitude owed to the fallen remains eternal.











**Local News** 

# All Aboard!

Christmas Magic with the Severn Valley Railway



There's something truly magical about Christmas at the Severn Valley Railway, where festive sparkle meets vintage charm. This year, the ever-popular Santa's Steam Specials return, offering local families the chance to step back in time and experience the wonder of Christmas in a beautifully restored steam carriage.

Departing from Kidderminster Station, your adventure begins the moment you step aboard. The gentle chuff of the steam engine and the scent of coal smoke set the scene as you journey through the stunning Severn Valley to Arley Station, where the real excitement awaits. Families are treated to a live theatrical performance, The Great Christmas Train Rescue, featuring Santa himself, his mischievous elves

and a brave polar bear named Polly. With professional puppetry directed by Matthew Forbes best known for his work on the National Theatre's War Horse this heart-warming show brings festive storytelling to life in spectacular fashion.

Of course, no Christmas trip would be complete without gifts and treats! Every child receives a special present from Santa, while adults can enjoy a seasonal sweet treat during the ride. Adding to the joy, each child also receives a complimentary "Freedom of the Line" ticket, valid for a return visit in the 2026 season a wonderful reason to return.

Running from 29 November to 24 December, the event includes a specially adapted "Relaxed" performance on selected dates, designed for guests who prefer a calmer, more sensory-friendly experience. With reduced sound levels, softer lighting and fewer passengers, it ensures everyone can enjoy the magic of Christmas at their own pace.

Whether it's your first visit or part of an annual family tradition, Santa's Steam Specials offer a unique way to celebrate the season. The combination of nostalgic train travel, live entertainment and festive cheer makes this one of the Wyre Forest area's most enchanting Christmas experiences.

Tickets often sell quickly, so early booking is advised. For dates, times and prices,

visit www.svr.co.uk.



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# Kidderminster's Historic Piano Building

### Hits All the Right Notes

Kidderminster's famous Piano Building, a much-loved local landmark overlooking the canal at Weavers Wharf, has been given a spectacular new lease of life following a major refurbishment. Originally built in 1867 as a wool warehouse for Brinton's Carpets, this Grade II listed gem has undergone a sensitive transformation that blends its industrial heritage with a modern vision for the town's future.

The newly restored Piano Building now offers around 29,000 square feet of high-quality commercial space, designed to welcome a vibrant mix of offices, leisure outlets, cafés and restaurants. Its revival marks a major milestone in the ongoing regeneration of Kidderminster, bringing fresh energy and opportunity to the heart of the town centre.

The project, delivered by Wyre Forest District Council with support from the Government's Levelling Up Fund, has been carefully designed and constructed by local contractors Speller Metcalfe. The result is an inspiring example of how heritage buildings can be adapted for modern use without losing their

character. The building's curved façade – which earned it the nickname 'The Piano' – remains beautifully intact, while its interiors now feature open-plan layouts, exposed brickwork, and state-of-the-art facilities fit for contemporary business and leisure.

As part of the wider town centre regeneration strategy, the Piano Building is expected to become a hub for enterprise, creativity and social life, encouraging more people to work, visit and spend time in Kidderminster. With its prime canal-side location and eye-catching architecture, it's already attracting interest from prospective tenants looking for a unique space that combines history, style and function.

This ambitious project represents more than just the restoration of a building – it's a symbol of civic pride and confidence in Kidderminster's future. The Piano Building stands once again as a striking focal point of the town, harmonising heritage with progress and proving that, when the community and council work together, the results can be truly transformative.

For more information about the project and upcoming developments, visit www.wyreforestdc.gov.uk.





### Park for Free After 3 This Christmas

There's some festive good news for shoppers, diners and Christmas revellers across the Wyre Forest - parking in all Wyre Forest District Council car parks will be free after 3pm from Monday to Friday. 1st to 24th December. The "Park for Free After 3" initiative has become a much-loved part of the council's Christmas calendar, designed to encourage residents to shop local and enjoy everything our towns have to offer during the festive season. Whether you're picking up gifts, enjoying a festive drink with friends or simply soaking up the lights and atmosphere, you can now do so without worrving about the parking meter.

10

The scheme applies to all council-owned car parks across Kidderminster, Bewdley and Stourport-on-Severn, though drivers should note that private car parks, such as Weavers Wharf in Kidderminster, are not included. To take advantage, simply park between 3pm and

6pm, display a valid ticket, and enjoy free parking within that window. It's a simple but effective way to make visiting our town centres easier and more affordable during what can be a busy and costly time of year.

Councillor Nathan Desmond, Cabinet Member for Operation-

Councillor Nathan Desmond, Cabinet Member for Operational Services, said the initiative is all about community spirit and supporting the local economy:

"It's a great opportunity to support our local businesses. This offer makes it easier than ever to shop local, enjoy what's on our doorstep, and help our high streets thrive."

With independent retailers, cafés, and restaurants offering plenty of festive treats, there's never been a better time to explore what's right here in the Wyre Forest. From twinkling lights along the canal to bustling Christmas markets and family-friendly entertainment, our towns have so much to enjoy this December.

So, if you're planning an afternoon or early evening trip into town, why not head in after 3pm, park for free, and spend a few hours making the most of our wonderful local shops and eateries? It's a small gesture that makes a big difference – helping our high streets shine bright this Christmas. For full details, visit: www.wyreforestdc.gov.uk.





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### **Jelleymans Theatrical** Victorian Craft Market

Set against the picturesque backdrop of the River Stour, Jelleyman's Heritage Arts Charity (JHAC) continues to prove that small acts of kindness can spark lasting change. What began as a mission to preserve a remarkable piece of Kidderminster's industrial heritage has grown into something far greater a hub that supports vulnerable people, nurtures creativity, and provides a welcoming home for local businesses and artists alike.

In these challenging times, that mission has never felt more important. And it's made possible by a community that cares from generous sponsors to

dedicated volunteers and supportive neighbours. JHAC extends heartfelt thanks to all who make their work possible, including sponsors such as Bond Worth Limited, Clearview Environmental (Midlands) Ltd., and Oz's Golden Gardens. Their generosity goes beyond funding they give time, expertise, and belief in the charity's vision. With their help, every donation stretches further, facilities improve, and opportunities grow.

This December, JHAC invites everyone to step back in time for Jellevfest 5: A Victorian Affair a spectacular Christmas event taking place on 6th and 7th December. The huge hall will be transformed into a traditional Victorian street market. brought to life by the creativity of the Crafty Jelley team. Expect festive craft stalls, delicious food and drink, live music, and of course, a visit from Father Christmas himself. Children who arrive in Victorian costume will even receive a special gift!

Visitors can also take part in a Christmas Tree Competition, voting for their favourite among dozens of beautifully decorated trees each sponsored by local businesses such as Eden Midcalf and Gemini Packaging. and adorned by local volunteer groups. Admission is free, making it a perfect festive day out for all ages.

Beyond events, JHAC offers a range of venue hire options from bright meeting rooms to a grand hall ideal for celebrations. workshops, or community gatherings. By hiring space at JHAC, visitors directly support the charity's work, helping to fund projects that make a real difference in people's lives.

Looking ahead, the charity's ambitions continue to grow. With the ongoing support of sponsors, volunteers, and the wider Kidderminster community. JHAC is determined to expand its reach. enhance its heritage site, and provide even more opportunities for creativity, connection, and care.

So, whether you'd like to volunteer, book a space, attend an event, or simply drop in to see what's new, JHAC welcomes you with open arms. Every action, no matter how small, helps strengthen the heart of the community turning compassion into action, and action into lasting change.

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THIS MONTHS

# Local Lowdown Quirky Tales & Local Lore

### The Ghost on the Bridge Bewdley

As the mist rolls across the River Severn, locals still speak of the "Grey Lady" who haunts Bewdley's famous bridge. Said to be the spirit of a ferryman's wife who drowned before the bridge was built in the 1790s, she is doomed, so the legend goes, to finish her final crossing. Many a late-night walker has claimed to glimpse her drifting halfway across before disappearing into the fog. Whether ghost or imagination, Bewdley Bridge remains one of the town's most atmospheric landmarks after dark.



### The Lion of Stourport

It sounds unbelievable, but in the early 1800s, Stourport briefly played host to a lion! When a travelling menagerie visited town, one of its cages reportedly broke open, sending a "great tawny beast" padding through the canal district. Panic followed, and the animal was soon captured some say by being lured with meat into a stable yard. The lion spent its final days locally, and the tale became one of Stourport's strangest bits of history.



# The Beer Boats of Bewdley Before railways and lorries, Bewdley's breweries shipped their beer down the River Severn to Bristol and beyond. Each spring, "beer boats" set sail loaded with local casks, returning with exotic goods, gossip and stories from distant ports. The riverside inns were packed with sailors and traders, their laughter and songs echoing across the water – a lively reminder that the Severn was

15



once the beating heart of our local

### The Whispering Woods

And finally, venture deep into the Wyre Forest at dusk and you may hear more than the rustle of leaves. Walkers tell of soft whispers, faint laughter, even the sound of music between the trees Some say they are the spirits of long-gone charcoal burners who once lived and worked by firelight in these woods. True or not, it's easy to feel the ancient energy of this place – where history, myth and nature blend into one.



Have a quirky Wyre Forest story of your own? We'd love to hear it! Drop us a line at: info@wyreforestmatters.co.uk.





# MFG Solicitors Celebrates National National Recognition for Legal Excellence

Wyre Forest-based law firm MFG Solicitors is once again celebrating national recognition after being ranked among the best in the UK in the latest Legal 500 guide for 2025.

The long-established firm, which has offices across the region including Kidderminster, earned high praise for the quality of its legal expertise, client care, and specialist departments. Nine areas of law were highlighted in the prestigious guide, which is widely regarded as the benchmark for excellence within the legal profession.

Among the standout achievements, partner Robert Weston was inducted into the Hall of Fame for the fourth consecutive year, recognising his outstanding reputation in contentious probate. Partners Sam Pedley and Alexandra Phillips also joined the ranks of the UK's leading lawyers for their work in litigation and agriculture and rural affairs respectively.

The firm's Family Department achieved coveted Tier One status, while the Agriculture & Rural Affairs team retained its Tier One ranking for another year.

Several other mfg partners were recognised as Next Generation Partners, including Andrew Chandler, David Raymont, and Sian Kenkre, showcasing the strength and depth of talent across the firm.

17

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## Making sure you have the right amount of food this Christmas Day

Christmas Day is the culinary highlight of the year, but sometimes that festive abundance leads to a sleigh-load of unnecessary food waste. Don't let your glorious feast turn into mountains of forgotten lefto-

This year, the best thing you can do is plan! Use a portion planner to work out how much vou actually need to cook on Christmas Dav: there is one available through the #FoodSavvv webpage (www. letswasteless.com/foodsavvv/ portion-pro) which will give vou the correct amounts de-

pending on the number of people you are cooking for. A little planning saves you money, saves you effort and ensures the beautiful food you've prepared doesn't end up in the bin.

Let's make sure everyone has a full-filling plate this Christmas, with just enough left for a delicious Boxing Day sandwich or curry, but nothing more!

For more information visit www.letswasteless.com/foodsavvv and look out for your Christmas recipes and inspiration.







22



### Mark Garnier Member of Parliament for Wyre Forest

As Christmas approaches and our three towns are decorated for the festive season, there is a strong sense of anticipation as we look forward to a New Year. Here in Wyre Forest, 2025 has been a year of significant progress, with major capital investments reaching completion across our towns.

The new flood defences on the Wribbenhall side of Bewdley are now finished and have already been deployed, protecting homes and the defences will allow the town to remain open, as the bridge will no longer need to close during periods of peak river flow.

The once derelict Old Magistrates' building, abandoned for

more than two decades, has been transformed into a vibrant business and creative hub serving the whole of Wyre Forest.

Meanwhile, the historic Piano Building will soon open its doors, offering hospitality spaces that celebrate the splendour of this listed landmark - a new go to destination with family and friends.

Kidderminster Town Hall has also reopened following a full refurbishment, re-establishing itself as a major venue for the West Midlands.

In addition to these landmark investments, we have benefited from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, which has supported improvements to valued community facilities such as Stourport Community Centre and the Spennells changing rooms. 23

Of course, for many, 2025 has also been a challenging year, a time of uncertainty, with speculative planning proposals placing additional pressures on our communities. And as we go to print, we await the long-anticipated Budget. Whatever 2026 may bring, I am confident that, together, we will continue to face challenges and opportunities as a stronger, more united community.

Your letters and emails remain invaluable, keeping me informed of your concerns and priorities. My office is always available should you need direct assistance.

And, in this final edition of Wyre Forest Matters for 2025, I would like to wish you and your family a very Happy Christmas and a peaceful New Year.

Mark holds regular weekly surgeries: to book an appointment please contact his office via:

T: 01562 746771 E:mark.garnier.mp@parliament.uk

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### History: Life in Georgian Wyre Forest A Glimpse into Everyday Elegance

Step back to the late 1700s, when the Wyre Forest area was buzzing with new life. Stourporton-Severn had just emerged as one of Britain's youngest towns, thanks to the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal, while nearby Bewdley was already an established port with centuries of trade behind it. Together, they painted a vivid picture of Georgian life industrious, sociable, and surprisingly refined.

In Bewdlev, the timber and river trades brought wealth and bustle to its elegant Georgian streets. Merchants' houses stood proudly along the riverside, while

craftsmen and traders filled the narrow lanes behind Load Street.

Local markets sold everything

from cloth and candles to cider and cured meats.

Coffee houses and coaching inns buzzed with conversation, where merchants might discuss shipments while travellers shared tales of the road.

Just a few miles away, Stourport represented modern progress. Built from scratch around its busy canal basins, the town attracted engineers, labourers, and skilled boatbuilders. It was a place of opportunity, where families found new work and a new way of life. Elegant Georgian buildings rose auickly from the Tontine Hotel for visiting traders to neat terraces for canal workers. On Sundays, families would stroll by the water, just as visitors do today.

Fashion reflected the age's optimism: lace and linen for the wealthy, simple wool and cotton for the working class. Food was local and seasonal - bread baked in communal ovens, meats smoked or salted. and ale brewed in every town. While life was harder by modern standards, the Georgian Wyre Forest had a strong sense of community and purpose, much like today's towns.

Walk down Bewdley's Load Street or Stourport's High Street now, and echoes of that era remain. The Georgian facades, cobbles, and courtyards remind us that beneath the modern shops and cafés lies a living link to the past - proof that style, spirit, and enterprise have always been part of Wyre Forest's character.







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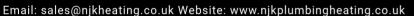
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### As winter settles in and frostv mornings become the norm, the garden may seem quiet, but there's still plenty to do to prepare for the year ahead. December is a time to take stock, tidy up, and give nature

a helping hand while it rests.

Start by clearing fallen leaves from lawns and pathways to prevent slippery surfaces and mould growth. Compost healthy leaves to enrich next year's soil, but discard any that are diseased. Borders benefit from a good mulch of compost or well-rotted manure now, helping to insulate roots against the cold and improve soil structure.

It's also the perfect moment to prune dormant trees and shrubs. Apple and pear trees, in particular, can be shaped and thinned while they're leafless. encouraging healthy growth and better crops come spring. Roses can be lightly trimmed to prevent wind rock, while any dead or damaged wood should be removed entirely.

For those who like to stay busy. December offers the chance to plan next year's planting scheme. Take a moment by the fire with a notebook or seed catalogue and think about what worked - and what didn't - over the past year. Ordering seeds early ensures the best selection and avoids the spring rush.

Birds will be grateful for extra support now. Keep feeders topped up with seeds, suet, and peanuts, and make sure fresh water is available even when temperatures drop below freezing. A simple act like this not only helps wildlife survive the winter but also brings colour and life to the garden when little else is stirring.

If you grow vegetables, hardy winter greens such as kale. Brussels sprouts, and leeks can still be harvested, offering a rewarding taste of home-grown produce at Christmas time.

Finally, take a moment to eniov the stillness of the season. Frosted seed heads, evergreen structure, and low golden light bring a quiet beauty to the garden in December - a reminder that rest is an essential part of nature's cycle, and spring will return before you know it.

# **December Gardening: Preparing** for Winter and planning ahead



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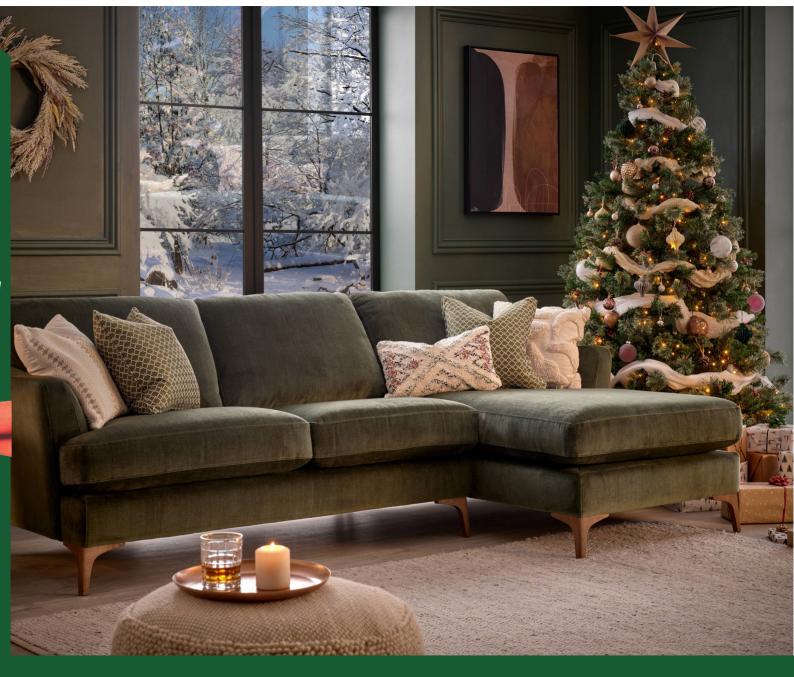


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# Natural Beauty Indoors: Winter's Organic Charm

As nature sleeps under frost and snow, winter brings its own unique beauty, and more homeowners are finding ways to reflect that indoors. The trend for natural materials continues into December, blending sustainability with seasonal warmth.

Wood, stone and wool form the foundation of this look. A rustic oak coffee table, woven jute rug or slate candle plate can instantly ground a space and bring that sought after organic texture. Pair these with earthy tones such as mushroom, sand, sage and soft cream to create calm and balance.

Add in greenery to keep your home feeling alive. Sprigs of pine, mistletoe and holly make charming decorations that celebrate the season's simplicity. Bundle them into vases, hang a wreath on an interior door, or lay a garland across your dining table for a natural centrepiece.

Warmth is key, so layer in knitted throws, sheepskin rugs and thick curtains to insulate and soften. Lighting should feel gentle, choose warm lamps, fairy lights, or even clusters of tealights to mimic the glow of a winter fire. A few well chosen accessories such as ceramic vases, wooden

bowls or woven baskets will enhance the look without overpowering it, keeping the focus on texture and tone. Even a simple display of dried flowers or twigs can add understated charm and a sense of connection to the season.

This look isn't about perfection, it's about embracing the beauty of nature in its raw, honest form. By bringing the outdoors in, you can create a winter home that feels authentic, calming and wonderfully connected to the world beyond your windows.



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# Seasonal Sparkle Elegant Touches for a Festive Home

When it comes to festive interiors, a little sparkle goes a long way. December is the time to embrace warmth, light and a touch of glamour, not just for Christmas Day, but for the whole winter season.

Start by introducing metallic accents into your decor. Brass candleholders, gold edged glassware, or a silver framed mirror can elevate your space with subtle shine. Pair metallics with deep seasonal hues such

as emerald, plum or navy for an elegant contrast that feels luxurious yet timeless.

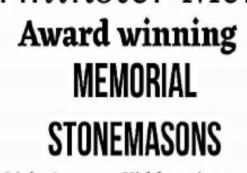
Layer in texture for richness: velvet cushions, satin ribbons, or soft wool throws create depth and comfort. Fairy lights aren't just for the tree, drape them along mantels, shelves or stairways to bring gentle, ambient light that transforms the atmosphere on dark evenings.

If you prefer a natural look, opt for a woodland luxe theme. Mix

greenery such as eucalyptus, pine and ivy with candles, pinecones and rustic ceramics. The result feels festive yet calm, perfect for relaxing nights by the fire. 39

Finally, scent completes the mood. Fragrance your home with notes of orange, clove, cedarwood and vanilla to evoke that classic Christmas feeling. This winter, balance elegance with comfort, a home that glows softly, sparkles subtly, and feels joyful all season long.

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# Warm Up Your Home

Winter Comforts and Cosy Styling

As winter settles in, our homes become the heart of our seasonal celebrations, a place to gather, unwind, and keep the cold at bay. Creating a warm and inviting atmosphere doesn't mean a full redesign; it's all about adding layers of comfort, texture and light.

Start with your living areas. Introduce plush throws and soft cushions in rich tones like mulberry, forest green and burnt orange. These colours not only

reflect the season but bring a sense of warmth that instantly transforms a room. Soft, tactile fabrics such as velvet, wool and faux fur make everything feel more luxurious.

Lighting is crucial during darker days. Replace cool white bulbs with warm amber tones and add a few candles to create a soft flickering glow. If you have a fireplace, make it the focal point; a neatly stacked pile of logs or a glowing wood burner instantly signals winter comfort.

In the dining room, layer your table with natural textures such as linen runners, wooden serveware and sprigs of evergreen. Simple touches like cinnamon sticks tied with ribbon or pinecones as place settings make for beautiful, effortless decoration. This December, embrace a slower pace and make your home a true winter sanctuary, somewhere to retreat from the cold, recharge, and savour the season's simple pleasures





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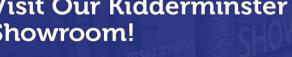
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KIDDERMINSTER 5.30pm & 7pm Kidderminster Baptist church Franche road Kidderminster Russ 07742 254410

#### **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

KIDDERMINSTER 5.30pm & 7pm Kidderminster Baptist church

Franche road Kidderminster Russ 07742 254410

### **WEDNESDAY**

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

KIDDERMINSTER 5.30pm & 7pm Foley Park Methodist Church Off Brinton Close Kidderminster Rachel 07907033347

KIDDERMINSTER 5pm & 7pm St George's Social Club Radford Avenue Kidderminster Net 07989598589

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KIDDERMINSTER 5pm & 6,30pm Foley Park Methodist Church Off Brinton Close Kidderminster Ally 07719 415278

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



### **FRIDAY**

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A NEW ERA OF

# Health, Beauty and Wellbeing in Stourport

The Haven and Elle Jay Aesthetics



Stourport-on-Severn is fast becoming a hub for high-quality health, beauty, and wellness services thanks to an exciting new development The Haven, the latest project from Elle Jay Aesthetics.

Led by registered nurse Lindsey Watson, Elle Jay Aesthetics has built a strong reputation for professional, safe, and effective medical aesthetic treatments. From anti-wrinkle injections and dermal fillers to advanced technologies such as CO<sub>2</sub> fractional laser, radio frequency microneedling, Tixel 2 skin resurfacing, hydrofacials, and body sculpting, Elle Jay's nurse-led team has become a trusted name across Worcestershire.

Now, that same ethos of clinical

excellence and community spirit is expanding into something even bigger The Haven Health and Wellbeing Centre, located at 1 Lombard Street, Stourport. The vision is to bring together a network of health, beauty, and wellness professionals under one roof, offering a truly holistic experience for clients and patients.

Already open on the ground floor is Elysian Hair and Beauty, a stunning salon blending natural tones, plants, and spa-like calm. The Elysian team offers a full range of hair and beauty treatments in a luxurious yet down-to-earth environment perfect for anyone who wants to look and feel their best.

Coming soon is The Haven Com-

space for everyone to enjoy. It will serve as a relaxed meeting point for clients, visitors, and local residents somewhere to pause, connect, and be part of the community heartbeat that's growing within the building. On the first floor, work is underway to launch The Pilates Bay Reformer Studio, introducing cutting-edge reformer Pilates equipment and accessible classes for all levels. This area will also house The Haven Health and Wellbeing Centre, featuring treatment rooms and multipurpose spaces for therapy, rehabilitation, and holistic health. Facilities include a lift for full accessibility and a hydrotherapy pool that can also function as a swim spa ideal for physiotherapy, post-surgery recovery, or gentle exercise.

munity Coffee Shop, a welcoming

The Haven is already attracting interest from practitioners across the region and a few spaces remain for professionals seeking to expand their practice in a supportive, multidisciplinary environment. Whether you're in medical aesthetics, nursing, physiotherapy, counselling, audiology, podiatry, dental hygiene and whitening, or other allied health professions, The Haven offers a modern, professional base to work, grow, and collaborate.

Wyre Forest Matters

If you're looking for a high-quality setting with shared values around safety, care, and community, this is your invitation to join the team. Rooms are filling up fast apply directly via email: info@thehavenhealthandwellbeing.co.uk.

For updates on treatments and openings, follow @ellejayaesthetics and @thehavenhealthandwellbeing on Facebook and Instagram.





Our mission is simple, to treat everyone that uses Riverside as family. To offer the care and attention that we would want for our own mothers, fathers, grandparents and friends. Having support at home can be a hugely positive and life enriching experience.

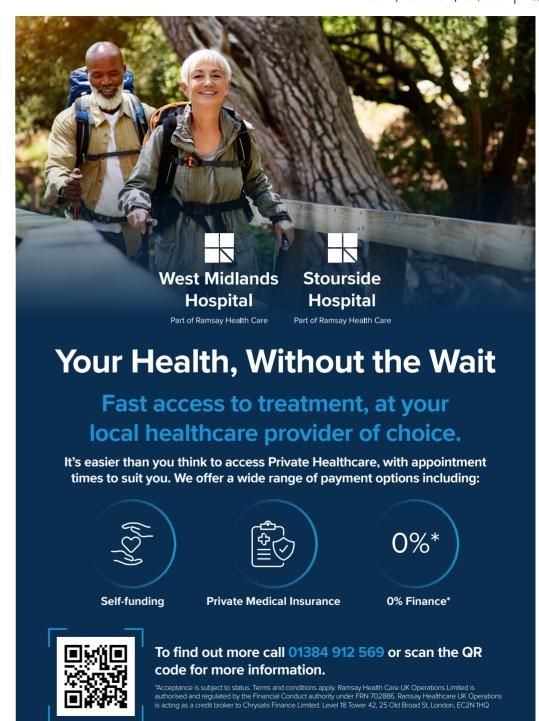
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# **Seasonal Spotlight:**

### Chestnuts & Cranberries

December brings a wonderful array of seasonal produce perfect for hearty winter dishes and festive feasts. As the days grow shorter and colder, our kitchens fill with the comforting aromas of slow cooked stews, roasted vegetables, and freshly baked treats.

Root vegetables truly shine this month. Carrots, parsnips, and swedes are at their sweetest, developing rich flavours after the first frosts. They're ideal for roasting with herbs or blending into warming soups. Brussels sprouts, the traditional

Christmas staple, are also at their peak, delicious when roasted with heat until the shells chestnuts or tossed with crispy bacon. Don't overlook red cabbage. which adds both colour and a touch of sweetness to festive plates when braised with apple and spices.

Few things capture the spirit of December like the smell of roasted chestnuts on an open fire. Whether you're enioving them while out Christmas shopping or roasting them at home, they bring a nostalgic warmth to the season. Simply score each nut before roasting to pre-

vent them from bursting. then cook over gentle crack and the insides turn golden and tender. Served warm with a sprinkle of salt, roasted chestnuts are the perfect winter treat - sweet, smoky, and wonderfully comforting.

December also offers vibrant fruits to brighten dark days. Clementines, satsumas, and oranges are juicy and fragrant, perfect for snacking, garnishing puddings, or infusing a mulled wine. Apples and pears are still plentiful too, wonderful baked into crumbles or paired with cinnamon for a cosy dessert.

For something truly seasonal, try adding chestnuts or cranberries to your festive cooking. Fresh chestnuts bring a nutty depth to stuffings or winter salads, while cranberries add a sharp burst of flavour in sauces and bakes.

Buying local, in season produce this month not only supports nearby growers but also ensures maximum freshness and flavour. So, whether vou're preparing a comforting midweek meal or planning your Christmas dinner. December's produce offers plenty of inspiration for warming, wholesome dishes.



### **Christmas Special - Beef wellington**



### **Ingrediants**

- •Beef fillet of around 1kg
- 3 tbsp olive oil
- •250g/90z chestnut mushroom
- •50g/2oz butter
- •1 large sprig fresh thyme
- •100ml dry white wine
- •12 slices prosciutto
- •500g 20z pack puff pastry
- •a little flour
- •2 egg yolks

### Method

- Heat oven to 220C/fan
- •Sit the 1kg beef fillet on a roasting tray, brush with 1 tbsp olive oil and season with pepper, then roast for 15 mins for medium-rare or 20 mins for medium. When the beef is cooked to your liking. remove from the oven to cool, then chill in the fridge for about
- •While the beef is cooling, chop 250g chestnut (and wild, if you like) mushrooms as finely as possible so they have the texture of

- coarse breadcrumbs. You can use a food processor to do this, but make sure you pulse-chop the mushrooms so they don't become a slurry.
- •Heat 2 tbsp of the olive oil and 50g butter in a large pan and fry the mushrooms on a medium heat, with 1 large sprig fresh thyme, for about 10 mins stirring often, until vou have a softened mixture.
- Season the mushroom mixture. pour over 100ml dry white wine and cook for about 10 mins until all the wine has been absorbed. The mixture should hold its shape when stirred.
- •Remove the mushroom duxelle from the pan to cool and discard the thyme.
- Overlap two pieces of cling film over a large chopping board. Lay 12 slices prosciutto on the cling film, slightly overlapping, in a double row.
- Spread half the duxelles over

the prosciutto, then sit the fillet on it and spread the remaining duxelles

51

- •Use the cling film's edges to draw the prosciutto around the fillet, then roll it into a sausage shape, twisting the ends of cling film to tighten it as
- •Chill the fillet while you roll out the
- •Dust your work surface with a little flour. Roll out a third of the 500g pack of puff pastry to a 18 x 30cm strip and place on a non-stick baking sheet.
- •Roll out the remainder of the 500g pack of puff pastry to about 28 x 36cm.
- •Unravel the fillet from the cling film and sit it in the centre of the smaller strip of pastry.
- •Beat the 2 egg yolks with 1 tsp water and brush the pastry's edges, and the top and sides of the wrapped fil-
- •Using a rolling pin, carefully lift and drape the larger piece of pastry over the fillet, pressing well into the
- •Trim the joins to about a 4cm rim. Seal the rim with the edge of a fork or spoon handle.
- •Glaze all over with more egg yolk and, using the back of a knife, mark the beef Wellington with long diagonal lines taking care not to cut into the pastry.
- •Chill for at least 30 mins and up to 24 hrs. Heat oven to 200C/fan 180C/gas 6.
- •Brush the Wellington with a little more egg yolk and cook until golden and crisp - 20-25 mins for mediumrare beef, 30 mins for medium. Allow to stand for 10 mins before serving in thick slices.





### **WARMING FESTIVE DRINKS:**

### **COMFORT DRINKS**

As the festive season rolls in and the chill bites a little harder, nothing lifts the spirits quite like a warming Christmas drink. Whether you're gathered with family, hosting friends, or simply enjoying a quiet evening by the fire, these festive favourites bring comfort, cheer, and a touch of indulgence to December days.

A classic choice is mulled wine. the ultimate winter warmer.

Simmer red wine gently with slices of orange, cinnamon sticks, cloves, and a hint of star anise. Add a splash of brandy or port for extra depth, and let the fragrant spices fill your kitchen with Christmas aromas. For a nonalcoholic alternative. mulled apple juice or spiced cranberry punch offers the same cosy feel without the kick.

For those who prefer some-



thing creamy, Baileys hot chocolate is hard to beat. Rich, velvety, and utterly indulgent, it's perfect topped with whipped cream and chocolate flakes. If you fancy a twist, try stirring in a shot of peppermint liqueur or hazelnut syrup. A sprinkle of crushed candy cane or grated nutmeg on top adds an extra festive flourish.

Another favourite is hot spiced cider, a wonderful balance of sweetness and spice. Heat cloudy apple cider with cinnamon, nutmeg, and a few apple slices for a drink that tastes like Christmas in a cup. And for coffee lovers, a gingerbread latte brings café style comfort to vour own kitchen. Just mix espresso with steamed milk, gingerbread syrup, and a sprinkle of nutmeg on top for a comforting winter pick me up.

Finally, for something truly traditional, serve eggnog, a creamy blend of milk, eggs, sugar, and a dash of rum or bourbon. It's smooth, sweet, and feels like a festive hug in a mug.

Whether it's mulled wine at a Christmas market or hot chocolate after a frostv walk, these warming drinks make the season sparkle and fill even the coldest day with a little Christmas magic.



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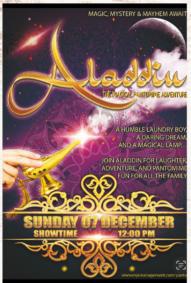
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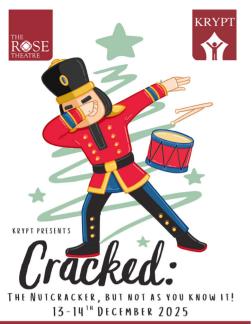
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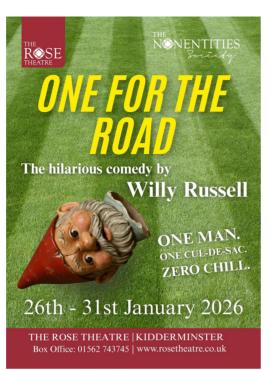
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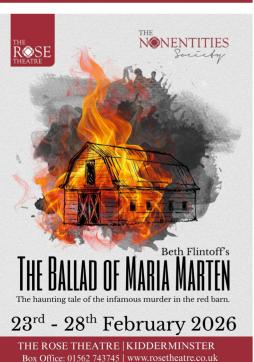




56

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### **Christmas Entertainment at**

### The Rose Theatre, Kidderminster

The festive season is set to sparkle at the Rose Theatre in Kidderminster, as the talented Nonentities company present their annual celebration, Christmas Entertainment 2025. Running from Tuesday 16th to Friday 19th December, this much-loved event brings a wonderful mix of music, laughter and local spirit to the stage – the perfect way to embrace the magic of Christmas close to home.

Each evening begins at 7.30pm, inviting audiences to sit back and enjoy a heart-warming selection of sketches, songs and seasonal surprises. True to tradition, the show promises a joyful blend of wit and warmth, all performed by a talented cast of local actors and entertainers who

know exactly how to get everyone into the Christmas mood. Guests are greeted with a complimentary glass of mulled wine and a mince pie, setting the tone for a relaxed and convivial night out. Whether you're a regular supporter of the Rose Theatre or visiting for the first time, you'll find the atmosphere friendly and full of festive cheer.

For residents of the Wyre Forest and beyond, Christmas Entertainment 2025 isn't just a night at the theatre – it's a community tradition. It's a reminder of how special local arts can be, bringing people together through laughter, song and shared celebration. The Rose Theatre's long-standing reputation for warmth and hospitality makes it the ideal

setting for an evening of live performance that captures the very essence of Christmas. 57

Tickets are already proving popular, and with limited dates available, early booking is strongly recommended to avoid disappointment. So gather your friends and family, don your festive jumpers and treat yourself to a magical evening of local theatre this December.

The Rose Theatre, Chester Road North, Kidderminster, DY10 2RX.

For full details and to book tickets, visit www.rosetheatre.co.uk.





# The Civic Hall Stourport Welcomes Comedy

### **Favourite Johnny Cole as Its New Patron**

Stourport-on-Severn, The Civic Hall Stourport is absolutely thrilled to announce that the much-loved and hilariously funny Johnny Cole has agreed to become the new Patron of The Civic.

Johnny is no stranger to Stourport audiences, having performed to packed houses at The Civic twice already this year. His quick wit and down-to-earth humour have made him a firm favourite with local audiences and who could forget the night when he found comedy gold in an unexpected emergency evacuation after the ice cream machine failed!

Johnny will be returning to The Civic next year for two more shows as part of his extended tour, and the team couldn't be happier to have him officially join the Civic family.

Speaking about his new role, Johnny said:

"I've had such a laugh every time I've performed at The Civic. The audiences here are brilliant friendly, warm, and always up for a good night out. I'm proud to be a part of something that means so much to the community."

The Civic Hall team added: "Johnny has brought so much laughter and energy to our stage, and we're delighted that he's agreed to become our Patron. He embodies everything The Civic is about community spirit, great entertainment, and a good sense of humour!"

The Civic Hall Stourport continues to grow as a vibrant hub for live entertainment, hosting everything from comedy and music to theatre and local events. The venue is also available to hire for private corporate events, family celebrations, and special occasions, providing a welcoming space for the community to come together.

59

With Johnny Cole now supporting as Patron, the future of The Civic looks brighter (and funnier!) than ever.

For news on upcoming shows including Johnny's return dates or to find out more about hiring the venue, follow @CivicHall-Stourport on Facebook or visit their website

www.thecivicstourport.co.uk

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# A Wild Christmas?

Adventure at the Santa Safari



This festive season, West Midland Safari Park transforms into a magical winter wonderland with the return of its ever-popular Santa Safari. Running from 22 November to 24 December, this immersive Christmas experience combines festive fun, family adventure and a touch of wildlife magic making it the perfect day out for Wyre Forest families.

Your journey begins with a leisurely four-mile drive through the park's Safari, where you can spot some of the world's most incredible animals from the comfort of your own car. Lions, giraffes, elephants and rhinos may all make an appearance, setting the scene for an unforgettable day out.

Once your animal adventure is

complete, it's time to step into the Discovery Trail transformed into a snowy North Pole scene brimming with festive cheer. Helpful elves guide families through twinkling lights and beautifully decorated displays before leading the way to Santa's cosy log cabin grotto. There, children can meet Santa himself, have their photo taken, and receive a special present straight from his workshop.

New for this year, little ones can enjoy Storytime with Mrs Claus, a heart-warming addition that brings the magic of Christmas storytelling to life. Families can also explore the elves' workshop, pick up a festive treat or two, and capture the perfect Christmas photo along the way.

For those who prefer a quieter experience, Relaxed Santa Safari Sessions are available on selected mornings. With softer lighting, reduced sounds and fewer visual effects, these sessions ensure that everyone can enjoy the magic of the season in comfort.

With so much to see and do, Santa Safari offers a unique blend of festive tradition and wildlife wonder. Each ticket includes the safari drive-through, a visit to Santa, a gift for every child and even a free return ticket for another visit in 2026.

For tickets, dates and more information, visit www.wmsp.co.uk.

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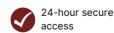
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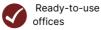
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# Painting & Prosecco this December

# At The Rustic, Hopleys

If you're looking for a relaxed, feel-good evening with friends this autumn, Painting & Prosecco at The Rustic could be just the ticket. Hosted at Hopleys Family Camping in Bewdley, these popular sessions blend creativity, conversation and a little sparkle in a setting that feels warm and welcoming.

The idea is simple turn up, grab a brush and a glass of prosecco, and let your imagination take over. There's no formal lesson or pressure to produce a masterpiece; it's all about having fun, unwinding and expressing yourself in good company. Whether you're a seasoned painter or

someone who hasn't picked up a brush since school, you'll find it's the perfect way to switch off and try something new.

All materials are provided, including paints, stencils, brushes and aprons, so all you need to bring is a sense of fun. Sessions run from 6.30pm to 8.00pm, with the full Rustic Café menu available throughout, making it easy to pair your creative streak with a bite to eat.

These adults-only events (18+) take place on selected evenings throughout December, offering a sociable, light-hearted night out as the darker evenings draw in.

To find out more or to book your spot, visit:

https://www.hopleyscamping.co.uk/whats-on







# **December Motoring Getting Winter-Ready**

As winter settles in, December can be one of the most challenging months for motorists. With shorter days, plummeting temperatures, and unpredictable weather, a bit of preparation can make the difference between a safe journey and a stressful one.

Start with a thorough winter check. Tyres are your first line of defence, so make sure they have at least 3mm of tread and are inflated correctly, as cold weather can cause the pressure to drop. Consider switching to all season or winter tyres if you regularly drive in icy or rural conditions. Check your lights too, clean lenses and replace any faulty bulbs to ensure you can both see and be seen on dark mornings and misty evenings. Your windscreen is another key area. Top up your washer fluid with a winter grade mix that will not freeze, and make sure your wipers are free from cracks or smears. A quick spray of silicone lubricant on your door seals and locks can also prevent them from freezing shut overnight.

Cold weather can take a real toll on batteries, especially if vours is over three years old. Many garages offer a free battery test, and it is worth taking advantage before the mercury drops further. Keep your fuel tank at least half full to avoid condensation building up inside, and check that your antifreeze is at the correct strength. For longer journeys, particularly over the festive season, pack a small winter survival kit. A blanket, torch, spare phone charger, water, and some snacks can be a real comfort if you get caught in traffic or stuck in bad weather. A shovel, de icer, and high visibility vest are handy additions too.

Above all, adapt your driving style to the conditions. Accelerate gently, avoid harsh braking, and leave plenty of space between you and the car in front. Remember, stopping distances can be ten times longer on icy roads.

Whether you are heading to see family for Christmas or just facing the daily commute, a calm, prepared approach will help you stay safe and stress free. With a little extra care, you can keep your car running smoothly and enjoy the season with confidence.

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### **Kidderminster Harriers: DECEMBER Diary**

December is shaping up to be an exciting month for Kidderminster Harriers, as new manager Adam Murray looks to guide his side through a busy festive fixture list. With plenty of home and away action, the Harriers will be eager to pick up points and give supporters plenty to cheer about over Christmas.

The month kicks off at Aggborough on Saturday 6th December against Radcliffe, followed by a tricky away trip to Alfreton Town on the 20th. Fans can then enjoy some Boxing Day football as Harriers welcome Buxton to Aggborough on Friday 26th December, before rounding off the year with an

away fixture at Chester on Tuesday 30th December. Off the pitch, there's plenty happening too. The club's Christmas Party Nights return throughout the month, offering festive fun at Aggborough, while the club shop is stocked with gifts and merchandise for Harriers fans young and old. The Kidderminster Harriers Community Trust also continues its great work across the district, bringing football and festive spirit to local schools and groups.

So, wrap up warm, grab your scarf, and head to Aggborough this December — let's make it a month to remember for Kidderminster Harriers!





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