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KIDDERMINSTER, STOURPORT, BEWDLEY & SURROUNDING AREAS

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## The Love Child of the Titanic: A Kidderminster Family's Century-Long Search for the Truth

A remarkable story with deep roots in Kidderminster has recently come full circle, finally bringing closure to a mystery that began on the night the Titanic sank in April 1912. At the centre of the story is Ellen Mary Walker, known by her family as the "love child of the Titanic," who spent her entire life searching for the truth about her parentage.

Ellen was born on January 13th, 1913—nine months after the Titanic went down. Her mother, 19-year-old Kate Florence Philips, was among the survivors rescued from lifeboat No. 11. Her father, Henry Samuel Morley, a 38-year-old businessman from Worcester, tragically died in the disaster. The two had been secretly running away together to start a new life in

America, boarding the ill-fated ship under the assumed names "Mr and Mrs Marshall" to avoid scandal, as Henry was married with a child.

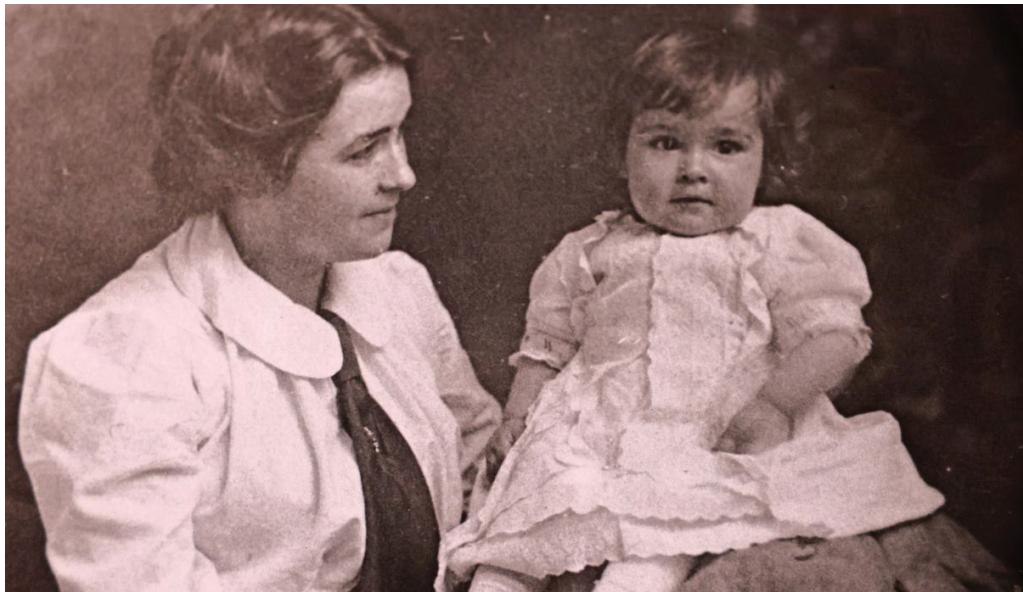
For Ellen, the story of the Titanic was not just history—it was her identity. She spent decades trying to prove that Henry Morley was indeed her father. Despite her determination, she died in 2005 without ever obtaining the confirmation she longed for.

The search did not end there. Her granddaughter, Kidderminster resident Beverley Lynn Roberts, continued the family quest. Beverley began researching their Titanic connection when she was just 21, piecing together letters, photographs, archived records, and family memories. Over more than 20 years, she built a detailed account of Kate and Henry's secret relationship—something Ellen herself never fully had access to.

Finally, in December 2020, the breakthrough came. DNA testing between Beverley and a



Beverley Lynn Roberts with her nan's teddy bear



Titanic survivor Kate Florence Philips with her daughter Ellen Mary Walker

relative of Henry's brother confirmed definitively that Henry Samuel Morley was Ellen's biological father. It was the proof Ellen had fought for all her life, delivered at last by her granddaughter.

Beverley described how much the revelation meant to her family. Her father, Robert William Farmer, had passed down treasured possessions from both Kate and Ellen, including a small teddy bear that Kate had given her daughter when she was born—kept always as a symbol of the father she would never know.

The story has continued to resonate strongly with Beverley, who travelled to Liverpool last year for the 113th anniversary of the Titanic's sinking. She visited the former White Star Line headquarters, where a major new exhibition on the ship's history is opening. There, she shared her

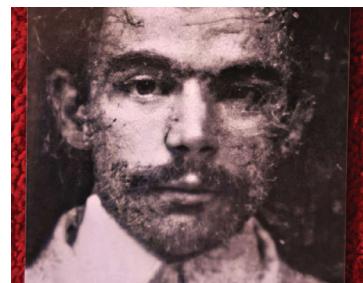
research and paid tribute to the man her grandmother spent her life trying to prove as her father. What makes this story so compelling is not just its historical drama, but the very human emotions at its core: love, loss, secrecy, and a daughter's lifelong longing for recognition. It is also a story deeply connected to our region. Henry Morley was a well-known local businessman who owned several confectionery shops in Worcester, including the one on Foregate Street where he first met Kate. A plaque now stands in Worcestershire in his memory—a quiet marker of a turbulent love story that changed the course of several lives.

For Beverley, ensuring accuracy has been a personal mission. She has corrected family records, uncovered forgotten details, and verified long-held assumptions. She hopes to pass her research down to her daughter so the

story will continue to be remembered for generations to come.

Her words perhaps capture it best: "Because she never had a father, that's all she wanted. She wanted to prove that he was her father. It's sad she never got to do that, but I finally proved it for her."

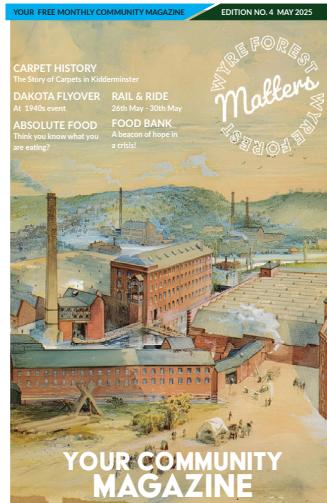
A century after the Titanic disappeared beneath the waves, this Kidderminster family has finally completed its own voyage for truth—a story of love, loss, and legacy spanning generations.



Ellen's dad Henry Samuel Morley, who died on the Titanic

# Celebrating One Year of Wyre Forest Matters

## A Message From Our Family to Yours



We can hardly believe it. Wyre Forest Matters is officially one year old. When we launched this magazine just 12 months ago, we hoped it would become something special for our community. What began as a simple idea from our Kidderminster family has grown into a magazine that now reaches thousands of homes and businesses across the district every single month.

From day one, our aim has been clear: to create a publication that truly reflects the people, places and positivity of the Wyre Forest. Over the past year, we have enjoyed shining a light on the wonderful things happening across Kidderminster, Stourport, Bewdley and the surrounding villages. From community projects and charity heroes to independent businesses, events and local success stories, it has been a pleasure to share it all with you.

We have now produced 12 issues, each one packed with local features, business showcases, what is on guides, seasonal inspiration and stories that matter to you. With over 8,000 printed copies distributed each month and thousands more reading online, it has been incredible to see how many of you have welcomed the magazine into your homes, workplaces and daily routines.

Wyre Forest Matters has always been and always will be a community magazine at heart. We are proud to remain independently run, managed by our family here in Kidderminster, and supported by the brilliant local businesses who advertise with us. Thanks to them and thanks to you, our loyal readers, we have been able to keep the magazine completely free and filled with genuine local content month after month. As we celebrate our first birthday, we want to say a heartfelt thank you.



Thank you for reading us, supporting us, sharing your stories and believing in what we are doing. Your messages, feedback and enthusiasm are what keep us going.

Here is to another year of championing local people, connecting our community and shining a spotlight on everything that makes the Wyre Forest a wonderful place to live.

Happy first birthday to us and thank you for making it possible.

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Website: [www.tlccareathome.com](http://www.tlccareathome.com)



## Charity urges parents to know the signs of childhood cancer

A childhood cancer charity is calling on parents to be more aware of the early warning signs of cancer in children after new research revealed that only three in ten parents feel confident they could identify potential symptoms.

The Grace Kelly Childhood Cancer Trust has launched a new awareness campaign, You Know Them Best, encouraging parents and carers to trust their instincts. The message is clear: if something doesn't seem right with your child's health, seek

medical advice promptly. Families are being urged to look out for a range of symptoms, including unusual paleness, extreme tiredness, persistent or recurring pain, unexpected lumps or swelling, unexplained bruising or bleeding, and changes in vision such as a new squint. The campaign is set to run across Worcestershire and surrounding areas, using cinema advertising, radio, outdoor displays and digital media to spread the message as widely as possible.

The Trust was founded in 2016

in memory of four-year-old Grace Elizabeth Kelly, who sadly passed away from cancer in 2014. Since its creation, the charity has supported more than 500 families across the region, offering guidance, raising awareness and championing earlier diagnosis.

Among those backing the campaign is local parent Sam Pollard, whose son was diagnosed with cancer at the age of seven. Sam said: "Trust your instinct - you know your child best. If you think something is wrong, go back to your doctor."

Healthcare professionals emphasise that early detection can make a life-changing difference. Spotting symptoms sooner means children can receive investigations and treatment at the earliest opportunity, improving outcomes and giving families vital reassurance.

To find out more visit:  
[www.gkct.org](http://www.gkct.org)





## KEMP Hospice Invites Supporters: To Take On Life-Changing Challenge Events in 2026

KEMP Hospice, the Wyre Forest's dedicated hospice charity, is calling on the community to get active, have fun and make a real difference by signing up for an inspiring series of challenge events throughout 2026. From iconic city runs to unforgettable endurance adventures, participants can challenge themselves, raise vital funds, and help KEMP Hospice continue its compas-

sionate, free of charge care and support for adults and families facing life-limiting illness.

Whether you're a keen runner, cyclist, thrill-seeker or simply want to support a meaningful cause, there's a challenge to suit everyone:

### London to Paris 4-Day Charity Cycle



Pedal your way from one capital city to another! This multi-day charity cycle is the perfect challenge for cycling enthusiasts looking for an unforgettable adventure while raising funds for hospice care.

### Great Birmingham Run

Take part in one of the UK's most energetic urban running events – a fantastic route through Birmingham that's suitable for all levels and offers a memorable running experience.

### Inflatable Course Challenge

Bring your friends and family and tackle the fun and energetic inflatable obstacle course. Perfect for teams or individuals looking for laughter, teamwork and a great fundraising story.

### Saucony London 10K Run

Run through the heart of London on a flat, friendly 10K course that passes iconic landmarks such as Big Ben, the London Eye and Westminster Bridge. The event includes a medal, race day entertainment and great crowd support – perfect for beginners



and seasoned runners alike.

All places are provided through Run for Charity, the UK's leading charity challenge events platform. Whether you're running, cycling, climbing or skydiving, every step and every mile you complete will help provide essential support for people in our community.

### Take It to New Heights: Skydive or Wing Walking for KEMP Hospice

For supporters looking for the ultimate adrenaline rush, KEMP Hospice is also offering a range of high-impact challenge experiences, including charity skydives and thrilling wing walking.

These unforgettable experiences give participants the chance to push their limits – whether that's jumping from a plane at thousands of feet or being strapped to the wing of a moving aircraft – all while raising vital funds for hospice care in our

community.

### Why Take Part?

Funds raised from these challenges directly support KEMP Hospice's services – including clinical care, therapy, emotional support and bereavement support – all provided free of charge to patients and families across the Wyre Forest. The hospice relies on the generosity of fundraisers and volunteers to raise more than £2.1 million each year so that vital care can continue.

"Taking on a challenge event is a fantastic way to test yourself and make a real impact," said Ian Carr, Head of Fundraising & Communications at KEMP Hospice. "Your participation and fundraising will help ensure we can be there for those who need us most, offering compassionate care and support without charging for our services. These challenges are ideal for individu-

als, groups, or workplaces looking to do something truly memorable in support of a cause that changes lives every day."

If you'd like to take on a challenge, or to find out more head to [www.kemphospice.org.uk/events](http://www.kemphospice.org.uk/events).



## Stourport's Civic Hall: Marks 60 Years at the Heart of the Community

The Civic Hall Celebrates 60 Years with a Year-Long Anniversary Programme

The Civic Hall will mark a major milestone in 2026, celebrating 60 years since it first opened its doors in May 1966.

To honour this landmark anniversary, The Civic is planning a year-long programme of celebratory events, featuring many of the much-loved acts, artists, and companies that have appeared on its stage over the past 15 years.

The celebrations will begin with a special launch night, showcasing three outstanding local performers:

The Rubix  
Katie Tranter  
Andy Browning

The launch event will also feature delicious food, freshly baked treats, fundraising activities, and plenty of nostalgia, setting the tone for a memorable anniversary year.



For the past 16 years, The Civic Hall has been run by dedicated Civic Group volunteers as a registered charity, ensuring the building remains a vibrant, welcoming space at the heart of the community. Their commitment has helped preserve the Hall not just as a venue, but as a place where creativity, connection, and shared experiences thrive.

Here at The Civic, we deeply value the ongoing support of the whole town and look forward to celebrating this remarkable building and the joy it brings to so many throughout our 60th anniversary year.

To find out more, follow us on Facebook or register for updates via our website: [www.thecivicstourport.co.uk](http://www.thecivicstourport.co.uk)

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### THIS MONTHS Local Lowdown Quirky Tales & Local Lore

As February arrives, the Wyre Forest district trades crisp frost for lingering mist, stirring up strange sightings, forgotten traditions and a few spine-tingling stories. Here are this month's quirkiest bits of local lore...

**The Kidderminster Candlelight Caller**  
On still February evenings, some residents claim to see a faint flicker of lantern light moving along the old towpath near Caldwall Mill. Legend says it's the ghost of a Victorian lamp-lighter who kept working long after gas lamps were removed. Dog walkers say it vanishes whenever they call out — leaving only the smell of burnt wick in the air.



**Bewdley's River Wisp**  
Fishermen along the Severn tell a tale of a pale "river wisp" that skims across the surface on certain foggy mornings in February. Not quite mist, not quite light, it drifts silently upstream against the current. Some insist it's the spirit of a lost angler guiding boats to safety, while others blame temperature inversions... but no one can quite explain why it glows.



**The Silent Hoofbeats of Stourport**  
Several early risers in Stourport have reported hearing the rhythmic clop of a horse trotting along the Riverside Meadows before sunrise — yet nothing is ever there. The story links back to an old tale of a mail courier who braved winter floods to deliver letters across the district. Locals say the sound appears only in February, when the river runs high.



**The Habberley Phantom Picnic**  
Up on the Habberley trails, walkers claim that, once a year, the scent of warm bread and apples fills the air despite the winter chill. According to local lore, a family used to picnic there every February, no matter the weather. Their tradition ended generations ago, but the mysterious aroma still drifts through the trees — often on the coldest days.



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## Get Moving This Year: Where to Find FREE Outdoor Gym Equipment in Kidderminster & Stourport

If you're looking for a simple, cost-free way to boost your fitness this year, Wyre Forest has a couple of parks offering free outdoor gym equipment for all ages and abilities. These open-air fitness zones are perfect for families, casual walkers, beginners and anyone wanting a change from indoor gyms. With flat paths, accessible layouts and plenty of space for children to play safely nearby, they make staying active easier than ever.

There's something refreshing about exercising outdoors crisp air, green surroundings and the freedom to work out at your own pace. Whether you're pushing a pram, bringing the kids along, or catching up with a friend while you train, these parks offer a relaxed

and welcoming environment. Many feature bodyweight-based machines, low-impact cardio stations and simple strength-training equipment suitable for teens and adults.

In Kidderminster, Baxter Gardens Park offers a compact outdoor fitness area with easy-to-use bodyweight machines designed to build general strength and In Stourport, Stourport Memorial Park features a publicly accessible gym zone offering a selection of bodyweight and strength-training pieces that cater to all ages and fitness levels.

As always, equipment availability can vary, and facilities may change over time. It's a good idea to check locally or visit the park directly to

confirm what's currently in place. But whether you're starting a new fitness routine or simply looking for fresh air and movement, Wyre Forests outdoor gyms offer a brilliant, budget-friendly way to stay active all year round.



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SPRUMIN

# Caring for our Wyre Forest Community:

## Why More Families Are Choosing Home Care

### By Riverside Home Care

Across the Wyre Forest, more families are looking for reliable, compassionate support that allows their loved ones to remain where they feel safest, at home. With familiar surroundings, long standing routines and neighbours they know by name, staying local matters. At Riverside our team is made up of local staff who understand the community, its people and its values. As the need for quality home care grows, so does the reassurance that there is a trusted, established service right here in the heart of the Wyre Forest. Many families are now choosing home care over residential options and for good reason. Care at home allows individuals to maintain independence,

dignity, and control over their daily lives. It offers a sense of continuity that simply cannot be replicated elsewhere. Waking up in your own bedroom, sitting in your favourite chair, keeping up with a weekly wander around the garden centre or enjoying that much loved coffee in the local cafe that you look forward to every week.

**What Care at Home Really Means:** Care in your own home is more than practical support. It is about enhancing wellbeing while respecting the life someone has built. From assistance with personal care and medication to help with meals, mobility, companionship and daily tasks, home care adapts to the indi-

vidual. It provides peace of mind for clients and families alike, knowing that support is delivered with warmth, respect, and genuine understanding.

#### A Personalised Approach That Puts People First:

No two individuals are the same and neither are their support needs. Riverside creates tailored care plans shaped around each person's preferences, abilities, and lifestyle. Whether someone needs short visits, longer support or a more flexible schedule, we adapt to what works best for them. We also take great care to match our carers to clients whenever possible, helping build strong, trusting relationships that make every visit more meaningful.

#### Local Carers with Local Knowledge:

One of the greatest strengths of Riverside is our team. Our carers and Managers all live and work in the Wyre Forest, bringing local insight and a real sense of community connection. This means quicker response times, continuity of care and a level of understanding that comes from supporting the area you call home. Choosing Riverside also supports local employment and we are incredibly proud to be a long established provider within the community.

#### Peace of Mind for Families:

We understand how important communication is. Families re-



ceive regular updates and reassurance, knowing their loved one is comfortable, safe, and respected. All our carers are fully trained, professional and passionate about delivering the highest standard of support. When we say we take the stress and worry away, we truly mean it.

#### Looking Ahead:

Home care allows people to stay independent for longer and offers a positive alternative to

residential care. It helps clients remain active in their community, maintain their sense of identity, and continue enjoying the routines and places that matter most to them.

#### Get in touch:

If you are beginning to explore care options, even if you are unsure what you need, we encourage you to start the conversation early. Riverside Home Care is here to offer friendly guidance,

honest advice and a no obligation assessment whenever you feel ready.

Caring for our community is at the heart of everything we do.

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[www.riversidehomecare.co.uk](http://www.riversidehomecare.co.uk)  
Old Anglo House,  
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## Mark Garnier Member of Parliament for Wyre Forest

Early January, the government performed its 11th and 12th U-turns. Number 11 was taxing family farms out of existence (they are only taxing the slightly bigger ones out of existence now). Number 12 was financially destroying pubs with a massive hike in business rates.

There'll be more U-turns to come, but what is extraordinary is just how blasé the government seems to be on all this. Ministers, apparently, seem to think it is perfectly OK to go back on manifesto pledges, to sack Labour MPs, only to make what they were sacked for a sackable offence if it is now not supported.

Rachel Reeves and Keir Starmer used to bang on about sorting out the mess after the Liz Truss

government. Interestingly, they seem to have stopped doing that now.

The reason, I am sure, is that both Reeves and Starmer are now more unpopular than Liz Truss ever was. In fact, according to opinion polls, Starmer is the most unpopular prime minister ever, and Rachel Reeves is the most unpopular chancellor since records began.

You can see why. Business confidence is at levels worse than the height of the pandemic. Unemployment is up. Economic growth stagnating. People are miserable. It is no wonder our leaders are so unpopular. But there are two big differences between Starmer and Reeves, and Truss.

The first is that we in the Conservative Party knew Truss was not who we thought she was, so we got rid of her, and we did so quickly. Labour is still holding onto their dismal leaders.

But more importantly, whilst Liz Truss was certainly incompetent, she at least had a vision, a north star that drove her political thinking. Her crime, whilst in office, was that failed to understand how things worked. But her vision of a high growth, lower tax economy was crystal clear. Contrast that with the Starmer and Reeves show, and there is no vision of what they want in our country. And this lack of a political direction is why it is so easy for them to talk about growth and then kill it with taxes, tax about more jobs then punish employers for taking on staff, sack Labour MPs for voting against the two child benefit cap before they remove the cap. Labour MPs look miserable, but it is the country I worry about. Just 3 ½ years to go of this utterly dismal leader.

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

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## Your important dates: This Valentine's Day

While you are planning your dates for Valentine's Day with your loved one, there's other dates that are as important in your life and that is the Use By and the Best Before dates. While they might look similar, they mean very different things for your health and your bin.

The Use By date is for safety. This label is used for foods like meat, fish, and soft cheeses. Even if the food looks and smells perfectly fine, harmful bacteria can grow invisibly on it, so you should not eat food after this date.

The Best Before date is all about quality. This is found on canned goods, dried pasta, and frozen foods. It's an estimate of when the food is at its peak flavour and texture. It is okay to eat food after this date, if it looks, smells, and tastes okay.

By checking your dates you can plan your meals around the items that are "expiring" soonest. You eat safely and the planet gets a break from unnecessary waste!

For more information on dates and being more #FoodSavvy visit [www.letswasteless.com/foodsavvy](http://www.letswasteless.com/foodsavvy).



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However you may want more of an occasion for your funeral. A meeting with one of our team at

Welsh woollen rope. Steph's coffins are approved to be used in crematoria – although it seems such a shame to burn a beautiful work of art.

<https://wegrnallswillowcoffins.co.uk> Alternatively you could opt for green burial.

Westhope Green Burial ground near Craven Arms is my personal favourite. It is set in an orchard, with a chapel to use if needed and sheep graze to keep the grass down.

If you would like to come to a free Funeral Wishes workshop please contact Kate on 07806301328 for the next available date. We can offer practical advice and help you to avoid spending money on things you don't need or want therefore keeping the cost down.

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## February Gardening: Preparing for the Season Ahead



February may still feel deep in winter, but it's one of the most important months for gardeners. While the weather can be cold, wet, and unpredictable, there's plenty you can do now to set yourself up for a thriving spring. Start by giving your garden a good tidy. Clear away any fallen leaves, dead plants, and broken branches that may have built up over winter. This not only keeps things looking neat but also helps prevent pests and diseases from overwintering. Check beds and borders for signs of frost damage and lift any plants that have suffered. If the ground isn't frozen, now is a great time to dig over vegetable beds and add well-rotted manure or com-

post to enrich the soil ready for planting.

Early sowing can begin indoors or in a heated greenhouse. Hardy seeds such as leeks, onions, chillies and sweet peas can be started in trays or modules. Give them plenty of light and don't over-water. If you grow summer-flowering bulbs, February is the perfect time to order dahlias, lilies and gladioli so you're ready to plant them as soon as conditions improve.

For those with fruit trees, get pruning. Apples and pears benefit from a winter prune to encourage healthy growth and better crops. Remove any dam-

aged, crossing or congested branches to open up the centre of the tree. If you have soft fruit bushes like currants and gooseberries, prune these too while they're dormant.

Don't forget your lawn. Avoid walking on frozen or water-logged grass, but if conditions are mild, you can give the lawn a light rake to remove debris and improve air flow.

Above all, February is a month of planning. Sketch out your planting ideas, choose seeds, and prepare the garden so that when spring arrives, you're ready to hit the ground running.

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## Cosy on a Budget: Affordable Ways to Warm Up Your Home

With energy prices still high and the chill of winter lingering, February is a great time to focus on affordable ways to make your home feel warm, inviting and comfortable. The good news is that you don't need a big budget to create a cosy environment - small, thoughtful updates can make a surprising difference.

Soft furnishings are the quickest and most cost-effective way to transform a room. A new throw, some textured cushions or even a cosy rug can instantly warm up a space without breaking the bank. Look for materials like fleece, wool blends or chunky knits to add comfort and depth. Layering different textures also helps smaller rooms feel more luxurious.

Upcycling is another brilliant option for those watching their spending. A tired lamp base can

be refreshed with a coat of spray paint, or a worn piece of furniture can be revived with chalk paint and new handles. Charity shops often have hidden gems - vintage mirrors, solid wood side tables or unique decorative pieces that can be styled beautifully with a little imagination.

Lighting is often overlooked, but small changes here have a big impact. Switching to warmer bulbs or adding a second lamp to a room instantly improves ambience. If you have darker corners, LED strips or battery-powered puck lights offer an easy and inexpensive boost.

Finally, consider adding scent. Candles, wax melts or essential oil diffusers help create a calming atmosphere and make a home feel more welcoming.

Comfort doesn't have to cost a fortune - it's all about choosing

small touches that bring warmth, personality and tranquillity into your space.



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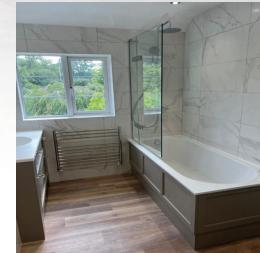


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## Grow Green Indoors: Plants That Thrive in the Darkest Months

February can be a tough month for houseplants. Short days, low winter light and central heating all create conditions that many plants struggle with. The good news? There are plenty of varieties that not only survive but thrive in low-light environments, making it the ideal time to update your indoor greenery.

The snake plant is one of the easiest options for beginners. Its upright leaves and architectural shape look striking in any room, and it tolerates low light extremely well. It also requires very little water—perfect for busy households. Another ex-

cellent choice is the ZZ plant, known for its glossy leaves and tough nature. It can cope with shady corners and only needs occasional watering.

Pothos is another winter-friendly favourite. With trailing vines that look beautiful on shelves or in hanging planters, pothos grows happily in indirect light and is forgiving if you forget to water it now and again.

Ferns can also do well during the winter months, especially varieties like the Boston fern, which enjoys shade and higher humidity. Bathrooms, utility rooms and kitchens make ideal spots.

To keep houseplants healthy through February, remember that less is more when it comes to watering. Most plants grow slowly at this time of year and won't appreciate soggy soil. Rotate pots occasionally to help them catch the available light evenly, and wipe leaves free of dust so they can absorb as much as possible.

With the right picks and a little care, your home can stay green and vibrant—even in the darkest month of the year.

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## Soft Romance: Subtle Ways to Warm

This February

February often brings a burst of red hearts and novelty décor, but there are plenty of ways to give your home a gentle Valentine's lift without going overboard. Instead of committing to bold crimson walls or themed accessories, consider subtle touches that warm the space and introduce a feeling of comfort.

Start with colour. Soft blush, rose and warm neutral tones work beautifully in living rooms and bedrooms, especially when added through cushions, throws or small decorative pieces. These shades blend easily with

most existing décor and bring a cosy undertone that feels perfect for this time of year. Layer in texture to enhance the ambience think velvet cushions, chunky knit throws, or a tactile rug underfoot.

Lighting plays a major role in creating a romantic mood. Swap harsh white bulbs for warm, soft lighting and use table lamps instead of overhead lights to instantly change a room's atmosphere. Candles are a simple but effective addition too. Whether scented or unscented, a few well-placed candles bring a soft

glow that transforms the feeling of a space.

For those planning a quiet Valentine's evening at home, a simple table arrangement can create a special moment without fuss. A neutral runner, a vase of fresh flowers, and a couple of textured placemats can turn an everyday dining table into something elegant.

February doesn't need to be bold or themed. With a few thoughtful adjustments, you can create a warm, relaxed home that feels inviting all month long.





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## Fall Back in Love With Your Kitchen This Valentine's Day – With Dream Doors

If your kitchen has lost its sparkle over the years, now is the perfect time to fall back in love with it. Instead of the disruption, cost or weeks of mess that come with a full renovation, a kitchen makeover offers a smart, affordable and stress-free way to rekindle the warmth and beauty of your space. More homeowners are discovering that you can completely refresh the look of

your kitchen in just a few days, without removing the existing layout or cabinetry. Up to 50% less than a full new kitchen simply by replacing your doors and worktops, a makeover gives you the chance to transform your home and enjoy your kitchen again without the hefty price tag.

It's a practical and eco-conscious

option too. By retaining your original units, you reduce unnecessary waste while still achieving a modern, stylish finish. And because most makeovers take just two to three days, you'll be enjoying your revitalised kitchen far sooner than you might expect ideal for anyone who wants a fresh new space without the disruption.

Choosing the right company is key to ensuring a smooth and enjoyable experience. A trusted kitchen makeover specialist should have a local showroom where you can see styles, colours and finishes in person before making decisions. They should also offer an in-home consultation, bringing samples directly to you so you can see how different options look in your own lighting. Asking where the products are made is important too, with UK-manufactured doors and worktops often offering the highest quality and durability.

Transparency matters just as much. Not all quotes include



fitting or essential final connections such as electrics, gas or plumbing, so always check exactly what is included. A fully managed service takes the stress away, ensuring you don't have to source your own tradespeople. Genuine, independent customer reviews are also invaluable for understanding the quality of service a company provides. And any reputable provider should also handle waste removal as part of the job, leaving your kitchen clean, fresh and ready to enjoy.

This level of service is exactly what you can expect from Dream Doors just a 15 minute drive from Kidderminster. Based in Wordsley, Dream Doors combine experience, craftsmanship and exceptional customer care.

Owner Chris Drew explains, "We're a one-stop shop for kitchens. Our makeovers can cost up to 50 percent less than a fully fitted kitchen and by simply replacing your existing doors and worktops, you can create a completely fresh, contemporary look."

At the showroom, Gwen, the Showroom Manager, helps customers browse hundreds of door styles and worktop combinations, offering inspiration and expert guidance. Once you've found the styles you love,

Installation is carried out by Dream Doors own fitting team a fully managed service by Nathan our project manager, delivering high-quality workmanship so every kitchen looks its absolute

best. Because Dream Doors uses an in-house team rather than subcontractors, customers enjoy a smooth process from initial design through to the final finish. "Buying your dream kitchen should be enjoyable," says Chris. "We manage everything so the experience is as easy and stress-free as possible."

Whether you want to breathe new life into your existing kitchen or you're planning a full installation, Dream Doors offers the expertise, quality and personal service needed to help you fall in love with your kitchen all over again.

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February may be best known for Valentine's Day, but it's also Healthy Hearts Month – a timely reminder that looking after your heart isn't just about romance. It's about the everyday choices we make that help us stay active, feel better and protect our long-term health.

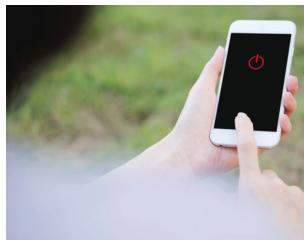
One of the simplest ways to support your heart is to keep moving. Walking is accessible, free and incredibly effective. Just twenty to thirty minutes a day can improve circulation, help lower blood pressure and lift your mood. Whether it's a brisk walk through the park, parking a little further away when running errands, or enjoying a short stroll after dinner, it all counts. The most important thing is con-

sistency – even small amounts of movement soon add up. Another positive change comes from reducing how much salt we eat. Too much salt can increase blood pressure, which puts extra strain on the heart. Much of our salt intake comes from everyday foods such as bread, sauces and ready meals, often without us realising. Simple steps like tasting food before adding extra salt, flavouring meals with herbs, spices, garlic or lemon, and choosing reduced-salt options can make a noticeable difference over time without sacrificing taste.

Stress is another factor that can quietly affect heart health. While it's impossible to remove stress completely, finding small

moments of calm can help protect both your heart and your overall wellbeing. Something as simple as stepping outside for fresh air, taking a few deep breaths before bed, or making time for an activity you genuinely enjoy can help your body reset and unwind.

Healthy Hearts Month isn't about doing everything perfectly. It's about making small, realistic changes that fit into everyday life. One extra walk, one less salty meal, or one moment of calm each day can all contribute to a healthier heart. This February, take a little time to look after yours – it works hard for you every single day.



## Digital Detox: Switching Off Without Missing Out

Most of us spend more time on our phones and screens than we realise. From checking messages first thing in the morning to scrolling late at night, constant screen time has quietly become part of everyday life. While technology keeps us connected, too much of it can affect both our sleep and our mood.

Using screens late into the evening can interfere with sleep, as the light from phones and tablets can disrupt the body's

natural wind-down process. Poor sleep, in turn, can leave us feeling tired, irritable and less able to cope with daily stresses. Constant notifications and endless scrolling can also increase feelings of anxiety and make it harder to fully switch off.

A digital detox doesn't mean giving up technology altogether. Small, realistic changes can make a big difference. Try putting your phone away an hour before bed, using that time to read, stretch

or simply relax. You could also experiment with a screen-free Sunday, or set certain times of day where phones are put to one side, such as during meals.

The key is balance, not guilt. Technology is part of modern life, and there's no need to feel bad about using it. By creating healthier boundaries with screens, you can enjoy the benefits of being connected while still protecting your wellbeing.

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## Seasonal Spotlight: Root Vegetables – February's Winter Favs!

As winter lingers, root vegetables come into their own hearty, versatile and packed with flavour. Grown beneath the soil, they thrive in colder months and are at their best right now, making them a perfect choice for seasonal cooking.

Carrots, parsnips, swede, celeriac, beetroot and turnips are winter kitchen staples, offering natural sweetness and depth once roasted, slow-cooked or baked. They're affordable, locally available

and ideal for comforting meals on chilly evenings. One of the simplest and most satisfying ways to enjoy root vegetables is roasting. A mix of carrots, parsnips and beetroot tossed with olive oil, thyme and a touch of honey brings out their natural caramelised flavours. Serve as a side to Sunday roasts or add crumbled feta for an easy midweek dish.

For something a little more indulgent, a root vegetable gratin is a true seasonal winner. Thinly slice potatoes,

celeriac and parsnips, layer with garlic, cream and a sprinkle of nutmeg, then bake until golden and bubbling. It's perfect alongside roasted meats or as a comforting vegetarian main.

Root vegetables also shine in soups and stews. A slow-cooked celeriac and apple soup offers a subtle sweetness, while swede and carrot add richness to casseroles and pies. Even mash can be elevated by blending potato with parsnip or carrot for extra flavour. As we look towards

spring, root vegetables remind us that seasonal eating doesn't have to be complicated. With simple techniques and a little creativity, these humble ingredients deliver warmth, nourishment and real winter comfort.



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## Red velvet pancakes

### The perfect Valentines day treat



#### Ingredients

- 200g self raising flour
- 2 tbsp cocoa powder
- 1 tsp baking powder
- 1 tbsp golden caster sugar
- ½ tsp vanilla extract
- 230ml milk
- 3 eggs
- 25g butter
- red gel food colouring
- For the toppings
- 100g cream cheese
- 4 tbsp maple syrup
- 100g chocolate chips
- icing sugar
- For dusting
- handful blueberries

#### Method

##### Step 1

Mix all of the pancake ingredients (except the food colouring) together in a large bowl, whisk thoroughly until smooth. Now add a small amount of red food colouring and mix again. Add more colouring until the batter is a rich reddish brown.

##### Step 2

Put a small knob of butter in a large non-stick frying pan over a medium-low heat and cook until melted and foaming. Pour 2 tbsp of the mixture into the pan and use the back of the spoon to shape it into a 8-9cm round disc. Depending on the size of your pan you may be able to get 2 or 3 pancakes to cook at the same time. Cook for 2-3 mins on the first side, then flip over and cook for another 1 min on the other.

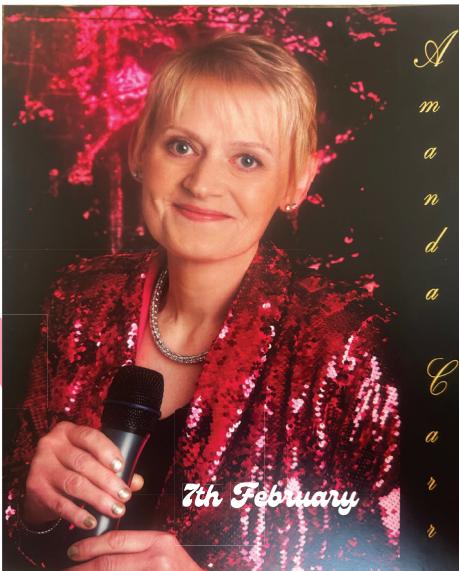
##### Step 3

Heat oven to its lowest setting and stack up the cooked pancakes on a baking tray to keep warm in the oven while you cook the rest. In a small bowl mix together the cream cheese and maple syrup then set aside until needed. To serve, stack the pancakes with the cream cheese mixture and chocolate chips in between them then finish with a final dollop of the cream cheese, a dusting of icing sugar and a few fresh blueberries if you like.



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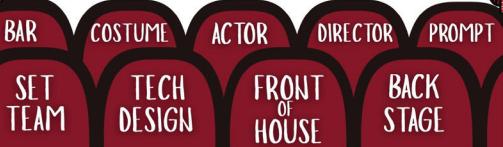
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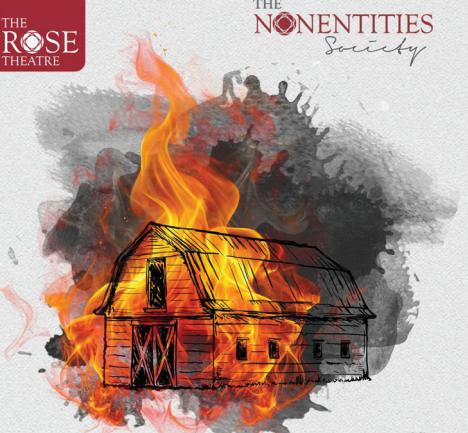
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## Jive Talkin Returning to The Civic, Stourport

One of the UK's most celebrated tribute acts returns to The Civic, Stourport, as Jive Talkin bring their acclaimed Bee Gees show back to the stage this February. Widely regarded as the original and definitive Bee Gees tribute, Jive Talkin hold a unique place in music history as the only Bee Gees tribute act to have performed with the original Bee Gees themselves. In 1997, brothers Gary and Darren Simmons appeared live on Heart FM alongside Barry and Maurice Gibb, receiving glowing praise from the legendary duo.

True to the spirit of the Bee Gees, Jive Talkin is a family affair. Gary and Darren take on the

roles of Barry and Maurice Gibb, with Darren's son Jack completing the trio as Robin Gibb. They are supported by a superb four-piece band featuring lead guitar, violin, cello and drums, ensuring the unmistakable Bee Gees sound is recreated with precision and authenticity.

The group's reputation speaks for itself, with critics and audiences alike praising their sound-alike quality and stage presence. Endorsements from both the music press and the Gibb brothers underline just how close this performance comes to the real thing.

Expect a two-hour celebration packed with classic hits including Night Fever, Massachusetts, Stayin' Alive, Tragedy and Jive Talkin'. For fans of the Bee Gees, this promises an evening of nostalgia, harmony and timeless music.

Thursday 27 February 2026

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Kidderminster Town Hall hosts a special musical evening on Thursday 6 February, bringing together three standout acts for a night of vocal harmony, style and showmanship.

Tenuto Singing Group open the evening with their powerful blend of voices, combining opera, musical theatre and classic pop favourites. With members whose experience spans the BBC, West End, television and international cruise companies, Tenuto deliver polished performances packed with charm, fun and impressive vocal harmony.

Next up is The Lady & The Sax, an award-winning vocal and saxophone duo known for their high-energy performances. Featuring the sensational vocals of Chloe Barry alongside multi-instrumentalist Sam Pagett, their mix of swing, blues and rock 'n' roll has earned them a loyal following across Worcestershire, Shropshire and the West Midlands.

Completing the line-up is David Lawrence, an accomplished cabaret performer whose career includes major theatre productions, cruise performances and appearances with the D-Day Darlings. A commanding stage presence and rich vocal style have seen him entertain audiences nationwide, from theatres to prestigious venues.

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## Forest Sound Bath in the Wyre Forest

If you're looking for a peaceful and restorative experience in nature, the Forest Sound Bath in the Wyre Forest offers the perfect opportunity to slow down and switch off. Hosted by Wildlove Yoga, this immersive session takes place in a cosy forest setting, surrounded by trees and the natural calm of the woodland.

A sound bath is a deeply relaxing, meditative experience rather than a performance. Participants are invited to lie back or sit comfortably while soothing sounds from crystal and Tibetan singing bowls, gongs, chimes and gentle percussion wash over the space. The session begins with a

guided body scan, helping release tension and quiet the mind before the sound journey begins.

Set within the forest environment, the experience combines the grounding presence of nature with carefully curated soundscapes designed to reduce stress, encourage deep rest and restore balance. No prior experience is needed – just bring along blankets, cushions or anything else that helps you feel warm and comfortable.

The session lasts just over an hour and is held in a calm, distraction-free atmosphere, allowing participants to fully relax and reconnect with themselves and the forest



surroundings.  
Places are limited and booking is essential.

If you're in need of some winter calm, this is a wonderful way to reset, recharge and experience the Wyre Forest from a new, tranquil perspective.

To book visit:  
[www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/forest-sound-bath-in-the-wyre-forest-](http://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/forest-sound-bath-in-the-wyre-forest-)

The Railway and Fund Shop reopen on Sat 14<sup>th</sup> February.

Tues, Wed and Thurs during half term week, Paddington will be at the Engine House in Highley at regular intervals. Please book online for his visit.

Sat 28<sup>th</sup> and Sun 1<sup>st</sup> March is our Branchline Weekend. Details are on the SVR website.

The Shop will be open on all operating days (subject to volunteer availability) Please see our Facebook page for opening times.





## February Motoring: A Fresh Start on the Roads

February may be the shortest month of the year, but it can be one of the toughest on your car. Cold mornings, damp roads and reduced daylight all take their toll, making this a good time for local drivers to stay on top of essential checks.

After a long winter, tyres should be a priority. Cold temperatures reduce tyre pressure, which can affect handling and fuel efficiency. A quick pressure check including the spare can improve safety and save money at the pump. While you're there, keep an eye on tread depth, especially with wet weather still very much part of daily driving.

Battery issues are another com-

mon winter problem. If your car has struggled to start recently, February is the month to get it tested before it fails completely. Short journeys around town, common at this time of year, don't always give batteries enough time to recharge fully.

Visibility is also key. Muddy roads and salty spray can quickly coat headlights and wind-screens. Top up washer fluid with a proper winter mix and replace worn wiper blades to keep your view clear on darker evenings and early mornings.

February is also a good time to plan ahead. With spring around the corner, book-

ing a service or MOT early can help avoid last-minute stress. Many local garages offer winter health checks, giving peace of mind before temperatures rise and travel increases.

Finally, remember that driving conditions can still change quickly. Frosty patches linger on shaded roads, particularly in rural parts of the Wyre Forest, so easing off the accelerator and allowing extra stopping distance remains essential.

A little care now can prevent costly repairs later and help ensure safer, smoother motoring as we head towards spring.

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## Kidderminster Harriers: February Diary

Kidderminster Harriers head into February in confident mood, currently sitting fourth in the National League North, firmly in the play-off places and well within touching distance of the league's leading pack. A consistent run of performances has kept the Harriers among the promotion contenders as the season moves into a crucial phase.

February begins with a testing away trip to Macclesfield on Tuesday 3rd (7.45pm), followed by another challenging journey to Spennymoor Town on Saturday 7th (3pm). A return to Aggborough comes on Tuesday 10th February, when Merthyr Town visit for an evening kick-off under the lights.

Mid-month sees Harriers travel to Darlington on Saturday 14th, a fixture that is always physical and fiercely contested. Supporters can then look forward to home action again on Saturday 21st February, as Southport come to town.

The month closes with a midweek away match at Marine on Tuesday 24th, before a tough final test at Chorley on Saturday 28th February.

With the table tightly packed at the top, February's run of fixtures could play a decisive role in shaping Kidderminster Harriers' promotion ambitions as they continue their push for a strong finish to the season.

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