



**A DAY FOR
MUM**

The Story Behind
Mother's Day

**BENEATH OUR
FEET**

The Hidden Tunnels of
Kidderminster?

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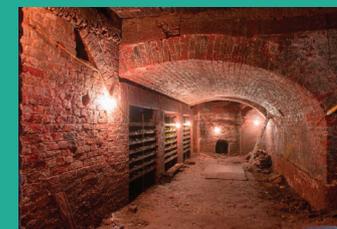
KIDDERMINSTER, STOURPORT, BEWDLEY & SURROUNDING AREAS

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Stourport's Future in Focus Council Backs Community Vision



There are moments when a town pauses, reflects, and decides what it wants to become. For Stourport-on-Severn, that moment feels very much like now.

A long term vision for the town, shaped by residents, businesses and community groups, has received the formal backing of Wyre Forest District Council, marking an important step from aspiration to action.

This is not a top down strategy drafted behind closed doors. The Stourport Vision has grown from widespread local consultation, gathering thousands of comments and ideas about what people value most and what they believe needs to change. That balance, between protecting what makes Stourport special and planning confidently for the future, sits at the heart of

the document.

Few towns in the Wyre Forest have such a distinctive identity. From its canal basins and riverside setting to its independent businesses and strong community spirit, Stourport's character is clear. Residents have been equally clear. They want to see that character safeguarded, but not at the expense of progress. Priorities emerging from the vision include improving the vitality of the town centre, encouraging sustainable growth, strengthening local infrastructure and ensuring that Stourport remains a welcoming place to live, work and visit. There is also a strong focus on partnership, recognising that meaningful change requires collaboration between councils, organisations and the community itself.

The district council's endorsement sends a powerful mes-

sage that Stourport's ambitions align with wider regeneration goals across the Wyre Forest. Crucially, it opens the door to coordinated investment and the practical delivery of projects rather than warm words alone.

A dedicated steering group is now set to guide the next phase, helping to turn ideas into measurable outcomes. That transition, from vision to implementation, will be the real test. But for now, there is reason for optimism. When a community speaks with clarity about its future and its local authority listens, the foundations for progress are strong.

Stourport has always been shaped by movement, of water, trade and people. With this renewed sense of direction, it may once again be charting a course toward something transformative.

The full Stourport Vision for the Future document is available online at

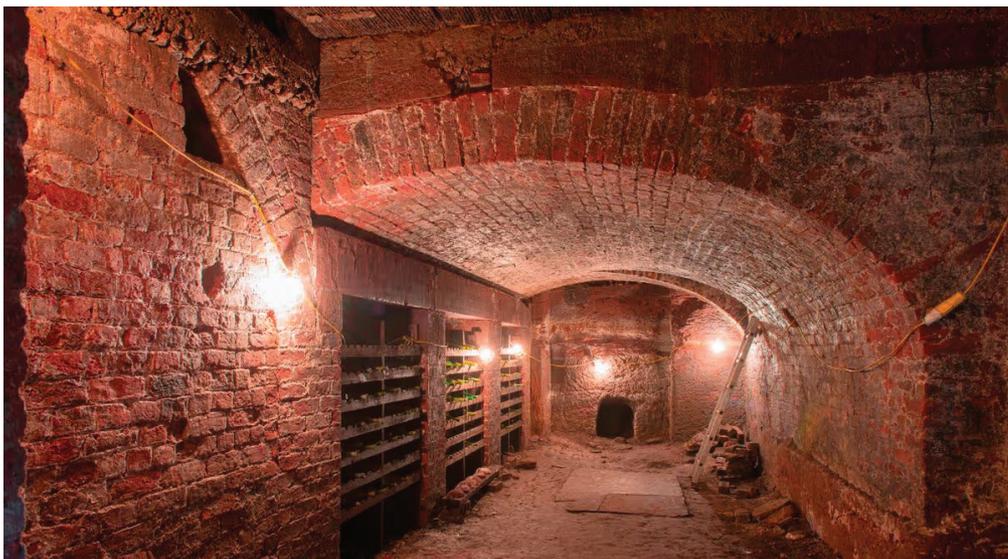
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Beneath Our Feet The Hidden Tunnels of Kidderminster



Walk through Kidderminster town centre on a busy Saturday and you'd never know what stories might lie beneath your feet. For generations, whispers have circulated about hidden tunnels running under parts of the town – secret passageways linking old carpet mills, warehouses and counting houses. Some say they were used to move goods discreetly between factories. Others claim they provided safe routes for mill owners during times of unrest. A few insist they were simply practical solutions in a booming industrial town where space above ground came at a premium.

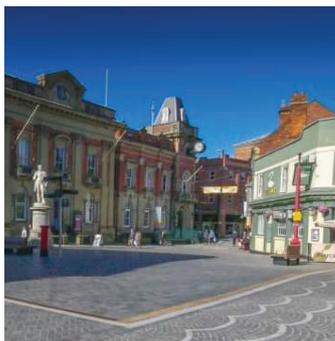
Kidderminster's identity has long been woven quite literally into the story of carpet making. At its peak, the town's mills supplied flooring to homes, hotels and even royal residences across the world. Among the most famous

names is Brintons, whose heritage remains a proud part of our local story. During the height of production in the 19th and early 20th centuries, the area around the River Stour was a dense network of workshops, dye houses and warehouses, all operating at pace.

In towns shaped by industry, subterranean spaces were not unusual. Coal chutes, storage cellars and service corridors often connected large buildings. Over time, as mills were demolished or repurposed, entrances were sealed, maps were lost and memories faded leaving behind fragments of stories and a sense of intrigue. Are there extensive tunnels stretching beneath the town? There's little documented evidence of a vast hidden network. But smaller service passages and underground storage areas certainly existed, and in some build-

ings still do.

Perhaps that's what keeps the rumours alive. In a town built on hard work and craftsmanship, it feels fitting that there may still be layers waiting to be uncovered. Kidderminster's story isn't just written in bricks and mill chimneys it may also be quietly resting below ground, woven into the very foundations of the place we call home.



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Rain, resilience and a very wet Start to the year

If it feels like you've barely seen a dry pavement since the Christmas lights came down, you're not imagining it. As of writing this on 15 February, it has rained every single day this year across Wyre Forest. Not dramatic, storm-battered weather, just a steady, persistent drizzle and grey skies that seem to linger from morning to night, soaking coats, muddying dog walks and turning fields and footpaths into a squelching obstacle course. It's the kind of rain that doesn't shout for attention, but quietly seeps into everything, from waterlogged verges to washing that simply refuses to dry.

The effect is visible everywhere. Riverside paths are slick underfoot, woodland trails are thick with mud, and even the most optimistic among us are checking the forecast daily in the hope of a bright patch. Yet, despite the damp start to the year, life across the district hasn't slowed. You still see parents pushing prams under rain covers, dog walkers wrapped up in waterproofs and wellies, and children happily splashing through puddles on the way home from school. Weekend football matches continue (some weekends), albeit with a few more slides and muddy kits than planned, while cafés and pubs feel warmer and

busier, offering a welcome escape from the chill outside.

In many ways, this kind of weather feels strangely fitting for our corner of the world. The countryside looks greener, the woods smell fresher, and the River Severn runs high and fast through Bewdley and beyond. Moss clings brighter to old brick walls, and when the clouds do briefly part, even for an hour, the sunlight feels like a small, hard-won reward. Rain changes how we use the area, but it rarely keeps us indoors for long; it simply encourages us to slow down, wrap up and carry on.

Of course, spring isn't far away. Before long, sodden verges will be dotted with daffodils, gardens will stir back into life and that first dry, mild evening will feel like a minor celebration. For now, though, we're meeting the drizzle with typical Wyre Forest resilience: waterproofs by the door, kettles on, and the quiet understanding that a bit of weather has never stopped this community. Here's hoping for a few brighter days soon we've certainly earned them.



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A Day for Mum The Story Behind Mother's Day

Every spring, as flowers begin to bloom and lighter evenings return, families across the Wyre Forest pause to celebrate Mother's Day. Whether it's breakfast in bed, a bunch of daffodils or simply time spent together, the day has become a cherished date in the calendar but its origins go back far further than many people realise.

Here in Britain, Mother's Day is traditionally known as Mothering Sunday, observed on the fourth Sunday of Lent. Its roots lie in medieval church life, when

people would travel back to their "mother church" the main church or cathedral in their home area for a special service. For young apprentices and servants working away from home, this often meant one of the rare opportunities each year to reunite with family.

Those journeys gradually turned into family occasions. Children would pick wildflowers along the way or bake small treats to bring home, and over time the day became associated with thanking mothers and the wom-

en who cared for them. By the early 1900s, the tradition had faded but was revived, blending with the growing influence of the American-style Mother's Day. The result is the celebration we recognise today: a mix of heartfelt gestures, cards, gifts and family gatherings.

Across the Wyre Forest, the day still has that same simple spirit. Cafés fill early in Kidderminster with families treating mum to brunch, riverside walks are popular in Bewdley, and a stroll along the canal or fairground brings smiles in Stourport-on-Severn. It's less about grand gestures and more about togetherness something our towns have always valued.

While shops may now be full of cards and chocolates, the heart of Mother's Day remains unchanged. It's still about going home, saying thank you, and spending time with the people who matter most.

In many ways, that's exactly how it started and exactly how it should be.



Off-grid pirate ship

Takes shape on the banks of the Severn in Bewdley



A striking hand-built "pirate ship" home moored beside the River Severn has become one of Bewdley's most unusual sights – and the centre of a planning debate. Sam Griffiss, 35, a former construction worker from Worcester, sold his house last summer and invested his savings into creating an off-grid lifestyle on land he already owned near the river. Starting with a £500 boat frame bought on eBay, he has spent the past year transforming the site into what he calls an "off-grid paradise".

The finished build named Daisy May includes a pirate-style boat structure, a raised cabin, a moveable wood-fired sauna and even space for chickens. Mr Griffiss says he has spent around £66,000 on the project so far, completing the main structure in January.

A long-time outdoor enthusiast, he said rising living costs pushed him to rethink how he wanted to live.

"I realised I was working just to pay bills," he explained. "After selling the house, I decided to put everything into creating something simpler and closer to nature."

The site runs without mains services. Rainwater is collected, while electricity comes from generators and solar panels, allowing him to live fully off-grid.

As well as providing a home, Mr Griffiss hopes the space can become a small wellbeing hub, which he plans to call the Connection Club, encouraging people to spend more time outdoors and reconnect with nature.

He says wildlife has already flourished around the plot, with deer and other animals regularly spotted on trail cameras. "It's amazing

what you see when you slow down," he said. "I'd love others to experience that too."

However, the future of the project remains uncertain. After informing the council about the build earlier this year, he may now need planning permission to keep it in place.

Wyre Forest District Council confirmed there is currently an active investigation and said it cannot comment further.

For now, Daisy May remains a talking point along the Severn – a bold, imaginative take on riverside living that's hard to miss.



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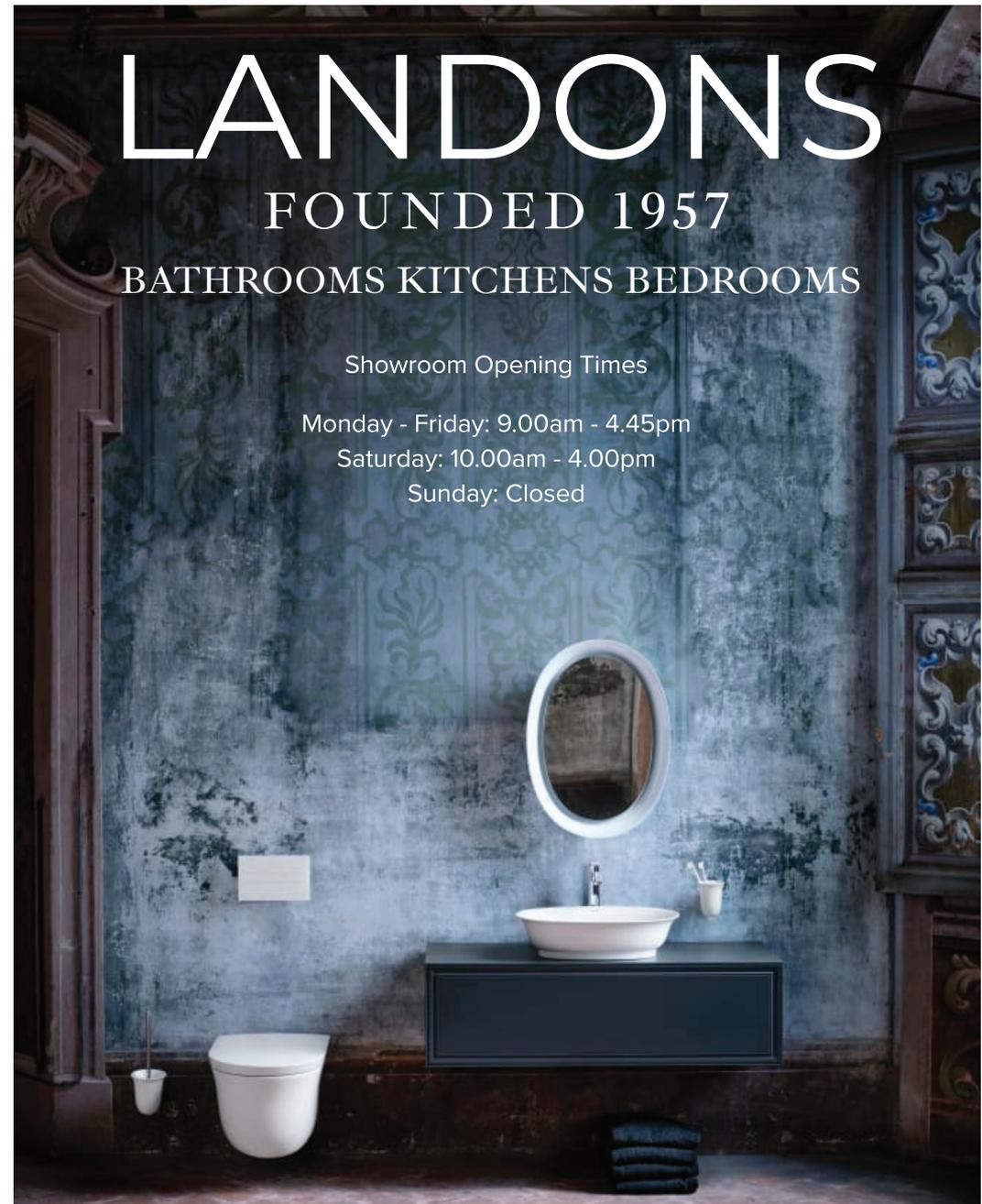
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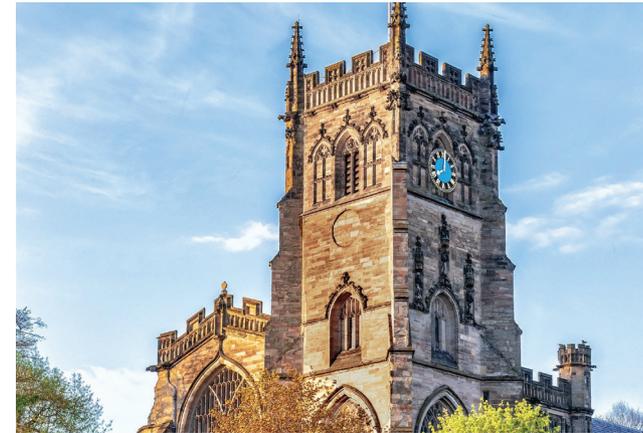


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THIS MONTHS

**Local Lowdown
Quirky Tales & Local Lore**

As March rolls into the Wyre Forest, winter loosens its grip and the first hints of spring creep in. But with the change in season come fresh whispers, odd happenings and curious local legends. Here are this month's strangest snippets of Wyre Forest folklore...

The Kidderminster Clock That Skips Time

Staff opening up shops along Worcester Street have long joked about "losing a minute" on certain March mornings. More than one trader swears the old church clock near St Mary's has been seen jumping forward, then correcting itself moments later. Local lore blames a former clockmaker who supposedly maintained the mechanism for decades and refused to let anyone else touch it. Even after his passing, residents say the clock still ticks slightly out of step during the month the clocks

change as if an unseen hand is adjusting the gears. Most put it down to faulty mechanics... though no fault has ever been found.



Bewdley's Blossom Path

Each early spring, dog walkers along the riverside path toward Ribbesford report a strange carpet of petals appearing overnight before any trees have properly bloomed. Pale white and pink flecks scatter the ground, then vanish by midday. Old tales tell of a Victorian bride who used to gather wild blossom there before her wedding, which was cancelled by a sudden Severn flood. Some say she still "walks the path" each March, leaving petals in her wake.

By afternoon, the trail looks completely ordinary again as if nothing was ever there.



The Stourport Whistle in the Wind

On blustery evenings around the canal basins, residents sometimes hear a soft, steady whistling drifting between the warehouses. It's not quite wind and not quite music more like someone calling a tune through their teeth. Boat owners say it echoes most clearly near the old warehouses that once stored grain and coal. The story goes that a night watchman used to whistle to signal all was well on his rounds. When the sound carries today, locals smile and say, "the watchman's still on duty." Curiously, the noise stops the moment you try to follow it.



The Habberley Lantern Glade

Walkers passing through Habberley Valley at dusk sometimes spot a warm orange glow flickering between the trees, like a distant lantern. Yet when they get closer, it disappears, leaving only empty woodland. Local lore says it's the lingering light of old charcoal burners' fires, still glowing in the March mist though sceptics insist it must be tricks of the eye.

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Spring Equinox

A Fresh Start for The Wyre Forest

On 20 March, the Spring Equinox marks the astronomical first day of spring



The long-awaited moment when day and night are almost perfectly equal, and lighter evenings finally begin to stretch ahead of us. After months of dark mornings, drizzle and winter coats, it feels like the Wyre Forest can collectively exhale.

Across Kidderminster, Stourport and Bewdley, the shift is already noticeable. Gardens show their first splashes of colour, daffodils line verges and roundabouts, and the River Severn seems to sparkle a little brighter under clearer skies. There's a sense of energy returning to our towns people lingering longer on the high street, cafés putting tables back outside, and families heading out for weekend walks. In Kidderminster, Brinton Park

starts to come alive again with dog walkers, runners and children racing to the play areas after school. It's the time of year when the town's green spaces feel especially inviting, offering a welcome reset after winter hibernation. Over in Stourport, the riverside and basin take centre stage, with visitors returning for waterside strolls, ice creams and the first boat trips of the season. And in Bewdley, arguably one of the prettiest spots in the county, the blossom trees and historic streets provide the perfect backdrop for a gentle wander or a coffee stop by the Severn.

The equinox isn't just a date on the calendar it's symbolic. Longer days bring renewed mo-

tivation. It's when we start planning home improvements, tidying gardens, supporting local markets and looking ahead to spring events and bank holiday weekends. Local businesses often feel the lift too, as footfall grows and the community spends more time out and about.

There's something reassuring about this natural turning point. No matter how grey winter has been, spring always returns.

So on 20 March, take a moment to step outside, breathe in the milder air and notice the change. Whether it's a walk through Brinton Park, fish and chips by the Stourport basin or a riverside coffee in Bewdley, the new season is here and it's ours to enjoy.

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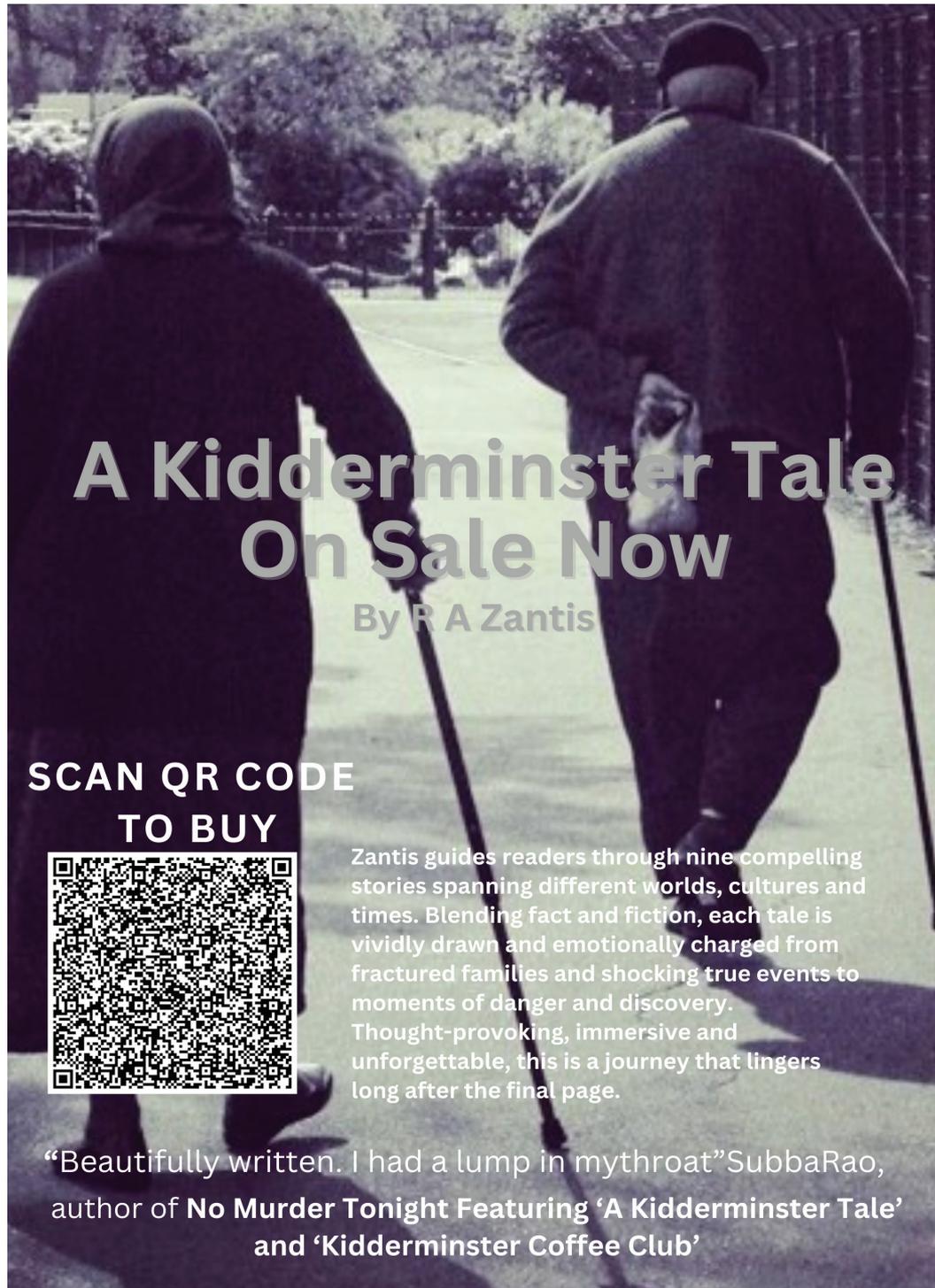
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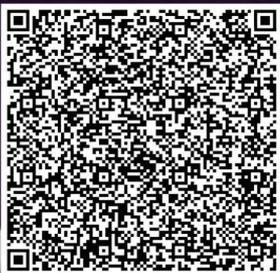
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StourJam Line-up Revealed For First-Ever Festival

Excitement is building in Stourport-on-Severn as StourJam announces the full artist line-up for its first ever festival, marking a major milestone for the ambitious new event. Taking place from 5-7 June 2026, StourJam will transform the town into a three-day celebration of live music, grassroots creativity and community spirit, bringing together performers, venues and audiences from across the Wyre Forest area and beyond.

The debut festival promises to be one of the largest community-led music events the town has seen, featuring an impressive 347 artists performing across 15 venues and 19 stages. As a free, not-for-profit festival, StourJam is designed to be accessible to everyone, championing independent artists while showcasing the power of collaboration and local creativity. The StourJam team say the response to the full line-up announcement has been overwhelmingly positive, describing it as a huge moment for the festival and a testament to the support shown by the local community.

Over the three days, venues throughout Stourport-on-Severn will be transformed into a vibrant network of live music spaces, including pubs, clubs and community hubs, all working together to create a town-wide festival atmosphere. Confirmed venues include BMK Stourport, The Port House, BOA Brewing Company, The Swan in Stourport with three stages, Severns Club with two stages, The Bridge Inn, The Black Star with two stages, Fedora's, The Hollybush, The Old Beams Stourport - Wylde Thymes, The Stagborough Arms, The Civic, The Wheatsheaf, The Rock Tavern at Wilden and The Three Lions.

In keeping with its community-first ethos, StourJam will also raise funds for three charities through the festival. These include Dementia UK, supporting families affected by dementia through Admiral Nurses; the Canal & River Trust, which cares for 2,000 miles of waterways including those around Stourport; and Worcestershire Acute Charity's Children's Cancer Fund, supporting local children and

families facing cancer treatment. The organisers are also inviting volunteers to be part of StourJam 2026, welcoming people of all ages and backgrounds who share the festival's values of creativity, kindness and inclusion. No previous festival experience is required, with roles available across stage crew, sound engineering, photography, hosting, crowd support, set-up and pack-down teams, runners and charity awareness. Training will be provided where needed, and volunteers will have the opportunity to learn new skills while helping deliver a safe, inclusive and memorable event for the town.

Anyone interested in volunteering at StourJam between 5-7 June 2026, or who would like to find out more about getting involved, can apply via the festival website at www.stourjam.com/volunteer.



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Mark Garnier Member of Parliament for Wyre Forest

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But we know that people find it a struggle to pay. That is why so many people will have voted for Reform at the last county council elections in May last year. They promised a cut in council tax. They would find efficiencies. They would stand up for the people.

And people bought it. Reform took over control of our county council. So how have they done? Reform is proposing that the tax we pay for our county council services will rise a record breaking, inflation busting, 9%. From April, when you paid £1 for a service, it will cost £1.09. Even Chancellor Rachel Reeves hasn't messed up that much. The rate of inflation rose under her series of disastrous budgets from 2% to closer to 4%, whilst she killed off growth in the economy. But Rachel's fingerprints are all over this.

In order to allow for a tax rise of more than 5%, they need a referendum. But the government has given Worcestershire permission to avoid the democratic process, and Reform have now

been given permission to tax us all more.

Meanwhile, at Wyre Forest District council, the proposed increase is 2.99% - a level below inflation. And this is good, considering that the government contributes to council costs. But this year, the government has decided to increase the contribution to Wyre Forest by a big fat zero. There will be no increase in the government's contribution. None whatsoever.

In fact, the government is requiring all councils to start recycling food waste. In the past, when the government adds a statutory duty, it sends more money to pay for it. The cost to Wyre Forest – us – will be at least £1 million extra council costs every year. That equates to, potentially, around an extra 15% on your bills.

There is a debate going on about this, and in any event, we will be forced into a unitary authority district and county councils will be merged into one. A unitary should bring savings in costs and greater efficiencies. We shall see!

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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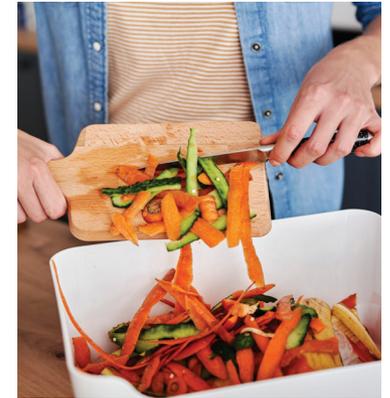
Home composting is one of the simplest and most effective actions residents can take to reduce waste and improve their gardens. By turning kitchen and garden scraps into nutrient rich compost, households can significantly cut the volume of rubbish they throw away while supporting healthier soil and greener outdoor spaces.

One of the biggest advantages of home composting is that it helps reduce the amount of biodegradable waste sent for disposal. Food and garden waste make up 46% of Worcester-

shire's black bin waste; when composted at home instead, these materials break down naturally and create a valuable soil conditioner. This compost helps gardens retain moisture, improve soil structure, and support plant growth – meaning less need for chemical fertilisers.

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Council Funding Proposal Could Secure Future for Museum of Carpet

There's renewed hope for one of Kidderminster's most treasured heritage attractions, as Wyre Forest District Council has proposed funding that could help secure the long-term future of the Museum of Carpet.

The museum, which celebrates the town's proud history as a global centre of carpet manufacturing, announced last year that it may be forced to close due to ongoing financial pressures. Rising costs, reduced visitor numbers and the challenges faced by many small independent attractions have placed the volunteer-run venue in a difficult position, prompting concern across the community. Now, as part of its latest budget plans, the district council has recommended a targeted transformation grant of

£25,000 per year for two years. Rather than covering day-to-day running costs, the funding is intended to help the museum's trustees and volunteers reshape the organisation and develop a more sustainable future.

The support would allow the team to work on a refreshed business plan, strengthen marketing, explore new partnerships and introduce fresh ideas to attract more visitors and income streams. The aim is to give the museum the breathing space it needs to adapt and thrive independently in the years ahead.

First opened in 2012 at Stour Vale Mill, the Museum of Carpet is the only museum of its kind in the UK. It houses historic looms, machinery, design archives and in-

teractive displays that tell the story of the industry that once employed thousands of local people and put Kidderminster firmly on the world map. For many families, it's not just a visitor attraction but a living reminder of parents, grandparents and generations who worked in the trade.

Museum trustees have welcomed the proposal, describing it as a positive step that brings genuine optimism at a critical time. Councillors have also stressed the importance of working with town councils and community partners to protect such an important piece of local heritage. For residents across the Wyre Forest, the hope is simple: that this funding will help keep the doors open and ensure future generations can continue to discover the story woven into Kidderminster's past.

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Jelleyman's Mill and the surrounding site on Puxton Lane are one of the last remaining vestiges of the industrial heritage of Kidderminster, and here at Jelleyman's Heritage Arts Charity we are devoted to conserving the character of that heritage whilst also bringing the site back to life as a modern, flexible, community asset. Our aim is to build a sustainable link between the past, present, and future of this beautiful region, engaging local people, groups and businesses to create a thriving hub of activity and opportunity. The site offers offices and function rooms for private hire, spaces for community group use, a community cafe, a wellbeing craft centre, and work has begun on a community garden.



The Bungalow Cafe

The Bungalow Community Cafe offers a warm, safe space in a beautiful, vintage, riverside setting at JHAC. Serving breakfast and lunch, coffee and cake, ice-creams and much more, we aim to become a hub for local groups and services to use as a meeting place and base.



Why not try us out for your next meeting, lunch date, or caffeine fix!



MARCH EVENTS

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Tiamat Gaming at The Mill

13th & 27th March
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Warm Space & Community Library

Monday - Friday 10am - 2pm throughout March

BECOME A VOLUNTEER

Support our vision

Become a volunteer and make a difference in your local community. Help us build something beautiful together.

Jelleyman's Heritage Arts Charity is powered by people like you. Volunteers are at the heart of everything we do from transforming the old mill into a creative hub to running workshops, events, and community cafés. Whether you've got a few hours a week or want to get stuck into a long-term project, there's a place for you here.

Ways to get involved We've always got plenty going on! Creative Workshop Support - ceramics, crafts, and more Event Crew - gigs, markets, festivals, open mics Café Helpers - brewing, baking, and friendly faces DIY & Restoration - if you're handy, we've got plenty to fix! Media & Marketing - photos, socials, design Front-of-House - welcoming guests, answering questions.

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JELLEYMANS HERITAGE ARTS CHARITY

This page is supported and funded by the generous support of local businesses based at Jelleyman's Mill. Details of these businesses can be found on this page.

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- Bromsgrove Hub:** Seetec, District Council Building, Parkside, Market St, Bromsgrove, B61 0AB
- Wychavon Hub:** WorkPays, 9 Victoria Square, Droitwich, WR9 8DE



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All Aboard for the Midlands Most Unusual Night Out!

If you're looking for something a little different to brighten up the colder months, how about swapping the usual pub or cinema trip for a party... on a steam train?

The Severn Valley Railway is transforming its historic line into a rolling dancefloor with the return of the Boogie Lights Express – a high-energy evening experience that combines classic heritage travel with music, lights and a full-on feel-good atmosphere.

Departing from Kidderminster,

the much-loved steam railway takes on a whole new personality after dark. Carriages are decked out with thousands of colourful LED lights, turning each coach into a glowing party space. As the train steams through the countryside, passengers are treated to a soundtrack packed with crowd-pleasing hits spanning the decades, from sing-along classics to modern chart favourites.

It's not just a train ride – it's an immersive show. Guests receive

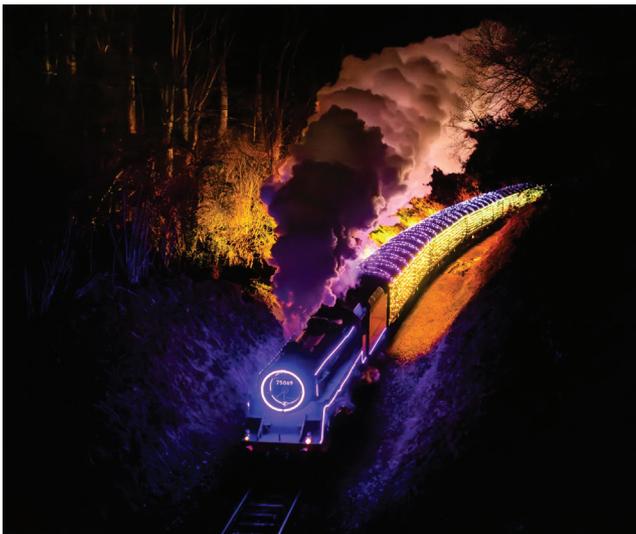
interactive light-up wristbands that sync with the music, creating a moving light display throughout the journey. Expect plenty of opportunities to sing, dance and let your hair down, with upbeat commentary and entertainment adding to the festival-style vibe.

The experience lasts just over an hour, travelling along the Severn Valley line before returning to Kidderminster, making it ideal for a fun evening out with friends, a family treat or even a quirky date night. Private compartments are also available for groups wanting their own space to celebrate.

It's yet another example of how our local attractions continue to think outside the box – taking something traditional and turning it into a memorable, modern experience. For Wyre Forest residents, it's right on the doorstep too, with no long journey required.

If you fancy swapping four walls for steam, lights and music, this could be your ticket to one of the region's most unique nights out.

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March in the Garden Spring Starts Here



March is the month when gardens across the Wyre Forest begin to properly wake up. The days are getting longer, the soil is slowly warming and there's a real sense that the growing season is just around the corner. It's one of the busiest and most rewarding months for gardeners, as a little effort now sets the tone for the months ahead.

Start by tidying beds and borders. Remove weeds, old leaves and any winter debris, then lightly fork the soil and add compost or well-rotted manure to give plants a nutrient boost. Cutting back dead growth from perennials and ornamental grasses will allow fresh shoots to come through.

This is also prime planting time. Hardy annuals such as sweet

peas, cornflowers and calendula can be sown directly outdoors, while tomatoes, peppers and chillies can be started indoors on a sunny windowsill or in a greenhouse. Early potatoes can go in the ground once the risk of hard frost has eased, and onion sets and shallots can be planted too. Lawns will likely need attention after winter. Rake out moss and thatch, repair bare patches with seed, and give the grass its first gentle mow on a dry day. Avoid cutting too short – a light trim is all that's needed.

March is perfect for pruning roses, buddleia and late-flowering shrubs, encouraging strong new growth and better blooms later in the year. It's also a good time to divide overcrowded perennials like hostas and daylilies to create free new plants for other

areas of the garden. Don't forget the wildlife. Clean out bird feeders and top them up regularly, and consider adding early flowering plants such as primroses, hellebores and crocus to support bees and pollinators.

The weather can still be unpredictable, so keep fleece or cloches handy for frosty nights. But with a bit of preparation now, your garden will soon burst into colour.

March truly is the month when everything begins again.



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Shop Local, Style Local

Interiors Inspiration on Your Doorstep

Giving your home a spring refresh or planning a bigger redesign doesn't mean scrolling through generic catalogues from far-away retailers in the Wyre Forest area, inspiration and quality products are right on your doorstep. From big-name homeware stores in Kidderminster to charming independent boutiques in Bewdley and Stourport, there's something here for every room and every budget. Kidderminster: Big Choices & Local Craftsmanship

For those redecorating or furnishing a new home, The Range on Crossley Retail Park is one of the first stops for many locals. It offers a huge range of décor, lighting, soft furnishings and storage solutions under one roof perfect for refreshing your living room or bedroom with practical, stylish pieces. Complementing that, Dunelm on Oxford Street

is great for home textiles and everyday homeware, while B&Q Kidderminster helps with DIY essentials if you're planning structural updates like shelving, paint or flooring.



Furniture is well covered locally too. The family-run Carters Furniture Centre and Bed City has long been a go-to for sofas, beds and stylish living pieces, and Oak Furniture Clearance offers quality wooden furniture at competi-

tive prices. Smaller, specialist options include comfy sofas and suites at SC Furniture Ltd, unique wood pieces from Woodrobes, or quirky pre-owned finds at C & M Second Hand Furniture.

For finishing touches and bespoke help, local services such as Designs by Kim Johnson Kidderminster add bespoke soft furnishings that feel truly personal. And if you're updating kitchens or bathrooms this spring, KAW Interiors - Kidderminster and New Wave Bathrooms offer a range of tailored design options.





Shop Local, Style Local

Interiors Inspiration on Your Doorstep

Stourport: Quirky Finds & Practical Pieces
 In Stourport, independent shops make it easy to add character to your home. The Wash House Stourport sells trusted appliances if you're tackling functionality alongside style, while mooch gifts & home offers a curated selection of homeware and gifts that can add personality to any corner of your space from cushions and vases to quirky accessories.

thoughtful gifts. Moch gifts & home stock beautifully made home goods and décor pieces that feel far more special than mass-produced alternatives,



Whether you're updating a cosy flat, family home or a riverside cottage, these locally owned businesses offer a friendly alternative to clicking "next day delivery" and help keep your money in the community. Bewdley: Boutique Style & Unique Treasures
 Across the Severn in Bewdley, Load Street is a treasure trove for interiors inspiration and thoughtful gifts. Moch gifts & home stock beautifully made home goods and décor pieces that feel far more special than mass-produced alternatives,

it certainly doesn't have to be impersonal. From practical furnishings to unique accessories and bespoke design support, the strength of local shops in Kidderminster, Stourport and Bewdley means you can create spaces that reflect your personality and community roots and discover new favourites along the way.





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HOME FURNISHING TRENDS 2026

What does the future hold for home furnishings, sustainability, multifunctional and smart technology all at the top of this year's trends.

The home furnishing trends of 2026 showcase a blend of innovation, sustainability, and personalization, reflecting the evolving needs and values of modern homeowners. As people continue to prioritize functionality, eco-consciousness, and aesthetic harmony, these trends are shaping living spaces to be more dynamic and adaptable.

1. Sustainable Materials and Practices

Sustainability remains at the forefront of home furnishing trends. Recycled and upcycled materials, such as reclaimed wood, recycled plastics, and natural fibers like jute and hemp, dominate the market. Furniture manufacturers are embracing circular design principles, creating modular pieces that can be easily repaired, repurposed, or recycled. Biodegradable furniture coatings and non-toxic finishes are also becoming standard, reducing environmental impact without compromising style.

2. Multifunctional Furniture

As urban living spaces shrink, multifunctional furniture is gaining prominence. Pieces like extendable dining tables, foldable chairs, and sofa beds with built-in storage cater to the need for versatility. Modular furniture systems that adapt to different room configurations offer flexibility for renters and homeowners alike, making them highly desirable in compact living environments.

3. Smart Home Integration

The integration of technology into furnishings is revolutionizing interiors. Smart furniture, such as beds with built-in sleep tracking, desks with wireless charging capabilities, and sofas equipped with integrated speakers, is becoming mainstream. These innovations seamlessly combine style and utility, appealing to tech-savvy consumers.

4. Biophilic Design

In 2026, the trend of bringing the outdoors in continues to

thrive. Homeowners are incorporating natural elements into furnishings, such as live-edge tables, planters built into furniture, and earthy color palettes. Biophilic designs aim to enhance well-being by creating a calming and harmonious connection with nature.

5. Personalization and Customization

Consumers are demanding furnishings that reflect their unique tastes and lifestyles. Customizable furniture options, from selecting fabrics and finishes to adjusting dimensions, allow homeowners to create pieces tailored to their needs. AI-powered design tools are making this process more accessible, enabling personalized interiors without professional assistance.

Ultimately, 2026's furnishing trends emphasize a balance between form, function, and environmental responsibility, redefining the way we create and experience our homes.

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HOME FURNISHING THE PERFECT SOFA

Finding Comfort & Style for
Your Home!

A sofa is more than just a piece of furniture—it's the heart of a living space. Whether you're curling up with a book, hosting guests, or enjoying a movie night with family, the right sofa can transform your home into a cozy and stylish haven. But with so many styles, fabrics, and sizes to choose from, how do you find the perfect one?

Style Meets Functionality:

Sofas come in an array of designs, from classic Chesterfields with deep button tufting to modern sectionals that offer ultimate comfort and versatility. If you're aiming for timeless elegance, a velvet or leather sofa in rich tones like navy or emerald green can add a luxurious touch. Prefer a more relaxed vibe? Scandi-inspired designs with clean lines and neutral fabrics create a minimalist yet inviting look.

Choosing the Right Fabric:

Fabric choice plays a huge role in both comfort and durability. If you have kids or pets, stain-resistant fabrics like microfiber or

performance blends are a practical option. For those seeking a plush, sophisticated feel, velvet or bouclé fabrics bring texture and warmth. Leather is another great choice—it's stylish, easy to clean, and ages beautifully over time.

Size Matters:

Before falling in love with a sofa, consider the size of your space. Large sectionals work well in open-plan living areas, providing ample seating for family and guests. For compact apartments, loveseats, two-seaters, or modular designs can maximize seating without overwhelming the room. Measure carefully to ensure your new sofa fits comfortably, leaving enough space for movement and other furniture.

Comfort is Key:

Looks aside, a sofa should be comfortable and supportive. Consider seat depth and cushion firmness—do you prefer a deep, sink-in feel or firmer support? High-density foam cushions hold their shape longer, while feather-filled options offer

a relaxed, lived-in look. Reclining sofas and chaise lounges are also fantastic choices for those who love to stretch out and unwind.

Sofas That Adapt to Your Life:

In today's world, versatility is essential. Many sofas now come with built-in storage, sofa beds, or modular designs that allow for easy reconfiguration. Whether you need extra sleeping space for guests or hidden storage for blankets, these smart designs make life easier.

Investing in the right sofa means finding the perfect balance of style, comfort, and practicality. With so many options available, there's a perfect sofa out there waiting to elevate your home's aesthetic and coziness.



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New research shows that young adults aged 18–34 who attend Slimming World groups aren't just losing weight – they're gaining confidence, improving their mental wellbeing and building healthier habits for life.

A study of more than 3,200 members in this age group found they lost an average of 12% of their body weight (around 2st 11lb). But the benefits go well beyond the scales.

- 92% feel part of a supportive community
- 89% report a healthier relationship with food
- 59% say their mental wellbeing has improved

The findings come as experts warn younger adults face the greatest risk of future weight gain, with global predictions suggesting one in three young people could be living with overweight or obesity by 2050.

Locally, Slimming World Con-

sultant Lisa, who runs groups in Stourport-on-Severn, says real-life connection is key.

"We're seeing incredible transformations that go beyond appearance," she says. "Members aren't just losing weight – they're gaining confidence, healthy habits and a real sense of belonging. In a world dominated by screens and remote working, our weekly face-to-face groups feel like a breath of fresh air."

"From young parents finding friendship to professionals building resilience, our groups offer support and accountability. Losing weight alongside others makes lasting change much easier."

Slimming World's approach combines a flexible, science-backed eating plan with weekly group support. Members learn practical strategies, understand their personal barriers and make small, sustainable changes to food, drink and activity.

Rachel from Slimming World adds: "Everyone is welcome, whatever their age or starting point. We're making it easier than ever to eat well, feel good and get active at your own pace."

For many, it's the shared experience that makes the difference. Consultant Jane says: "Real change doesn't happen alone. It happens when you're surrounded by people who understand. That sense of community is what helps members improve both their physical and emotional wellbeing." Slimming World has been helping people lose weight for more than 55 years, and younger members are now among its biggest success stories – gaining not just results, but tools for lifelong healthy living.

Groups run Monday to Saturday across Bewdley, Kidderminster and Stourport-on-Severn. To find your nearest session check out their advert opposite this page.

Slimming World

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real
good



MONDAY

STOURPORT 5.30pm & 7pm
The Severns Club
Lickhill Road, Stourport
Lisa 07906 989728

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

TUESDAY

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

WEDNESDAY

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

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

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

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

THURSDAY

KIDDERMINSTER
9.30am & 11am
Kidderminster Carolinas R.F.C
Marlpool Lane Kidderminster
Paula 07926192600

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

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

FRIDAY

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

KIDDERMINSTER
9am & 10.30am
Kidderminster Carolinas R.F.C
Marlpool Lane
Paula 07926192600

SATURDAY

KIDDERMINSTER
7.30am, 9am & 10.30am
St Mary's Church
Churchfields
Kidderminster
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Health Matters:

Why Lymphatic Drainage could be the best thing you've never tried!



You eat well (most of the time). You move your body. You drink the water, buy the collagen, avoid the beige buffet, so why the puffiness? Why the stubborn weight? Why that feeling of being one glass of wine away from swelling up like a marshmallow in stilettos? Let us introduce you to the wellness world's best-kept secret: lymphatic drainage.

This gentle, clever process can help shift fluid, reduce bloating, support immune function, and restore the kind of lightness you forgot was even possible. At Hypoxi at Rejuvenate in Kidderminster, it's a core part of what we do and it might just be the reset your body's been asking for.

Why Lymphatic Health Matters (Especially When You're Juggling a Lot) Your lymphatic system is essentially your body's clean-up crew. It clears waste, moves

fluids, supports immunity, and helps everything run more smoothly behind the scenes. But here's the problem: modern life isn't exactly lymph-friendly. Long periods of sitting, stress, hormones, high heels, and not enough proper rest can all make things stagnate. That's when the symptoms creep in:

- Bloating belly by 3pm
- Puffy ankles after standing
- Skin that feels dull no matter how many serums you slather
- That unshakable 'heavy' feeling in your limbs

These aren't just cosmetic gripes they're signs your circulation could do with a boost.

At Hypoxi, lymphatic drainage happens while you're horizontal relaxing on our Dermalogy bed, designed to work with your body's natural flow, gently stimulating lymphatic activity through vacuum and compression, and low-impact movement

to target the tummy, hips, and thighs encouraging oxygenated blood flow and lymphatic detox in areas that typically hold onto fluid and fat.

Lymphatic Drainage FAQs

We Hear in the Studio

"Will I need to drink more water?" Yes, and your body will love you for it. Think of it as helping flush everything out efficiently.

"Is it good for cellulite?"

Absolutely. Improved lymph flow can help smooth the appearance of skin by reducing fluid retention and supporting detoxification.

"Does it really make you feel different?" Ask anyone who's had a session, it's like waking up the bits of you that felt half asleep

"Can I just do one treatment?" you can book a 1 hour introduction to Hypoxi session for £50 at www.rejuvateathypoxi.co.uk or call on 01562740840.



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The Surprising Health Benefits Of Nettles

They are usually the plant we warn children about on countryside walks, but nettles are one of the most overlooked health boosters growing right here in the Wyre Forest.

Stinging nettles, commonly found along riverbanks in Bewdley, hedgerows in Kidderminster and footpaths around Stourport, have been used in traditional remedies for centuries. Once picked carefully, using gloves, the young leaves can be turned into soups, teas and even pesto. Nettles are rich in iron, vitamin C and calcium, making them particularly helpful for people feeling run down at this time of year. The iron content can sup-

port energy levels, while vitamin C helps the body absorb it more effectively. Many herbalists also recommend nettle tea as a gentle way to support joint health, as it contains natural anti-inflammatory properties.

They are also believed to help with seasonal allergies. Some people drink nettle tea in early spring to ease hay fever symptoms, as the plant may act as a natural antihistamine. Of course, foraging should always be done responsibly. Only pick from clean areas away from busy roads, and make sure you are confident in identifying the plant correctly.

Next time you spot nettles on a local walk, you might see them differently. What was once just a sting could in fact be one of nature's simplest and most powerful health boosts, growing freely on our own doorstep.



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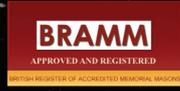
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Seasonal Spotlight - Asparagus
A Seasonal Favourite for March

As spring begins to make its presence felt, few ingredients signal the change of season quite like British asparagus. Often described as the jewel of the spring harvest, asparagus has a short but much-loved season, running from late April through to June, making it a true seasonal treat worth celebrating while it lasts.

Grown closer to home than many realise, asparagus thrives in the fertile soils of the Midlands and Worcestershire, meaning it often reaches local plates within hours of being

harvested. This freshness is key to its distinctive flavour, sweet, grassy and slightly nutty and is why seasonal eating makes such a noticeable difference.

Asparagus is not only delicious but also packed with goodness. It's naturally low in calories and rich in vitamins A, C and K, as well as folate and fibre, making it a great choice for those looking to eat well without compromising on flavour.

Lightly steamed, grilled, roasted or simply blanched, asparagus needs very little to shine.

In the kitchen, its versatility is part of its appeal. It pairs beautifully with eggs, cream and cheese in quiches and tarts, works wonderfully alongside salmon and chicken, and adds a fresh bite to pastas and risottos. Its delicate flavour complements richer ingredients perfectly, creating balanced, satisfying dishes.

A classic way to enjoy this seasonal star is in our asparagus and salmon quiche, featured on the next page. Combining flaky salmon, tender asparagus spears and a creamy filling

encased in crisp pastry, it's an ideal recipe for spring lunches, picnics or relaxed family dinners.

Whether picked up from a farm shop, greengrocer or supermarket, choosing British asparagus supports local growers and celebrates the very best of the season.

Enjoy it while you can asparagus season is short, but its impact on spring menus is unforgettable.

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Salmon and Asparagus quiche

The perfect recipe for March



Ingredients

700g shop-bought/homemade pastry
50g butter
1 large onion
1 tsp fennel seeds
Bunch asparagus
100ml milk
300g skinless salmon fillets
300ml double cream
3 large eggs
½ small bunch dill
Zest 1 lemon
100g cheddar grated
To serve
fennel and rocket salad

Method

Step 1

Heat oven to 200C/180C fan/gas 6. Put a baking sheet in the oven to heat up. Dust a clean work surface with flour, then roll out 600g of the pastry to line a 20 x 30cm tin. Trim the edges with scissors so that the pastry sits 2-3mm higher than the sides of the tin. Prick the surface all over with a fork, then line with baking parchment and add an even

layer of baking beans. Place on the hot baking sheet and blind-bake for 15 mins.

Step 2

Meanwhile, roll out the remaining pastry and any off-cuts, cut into strips and plait together. Take the tin out of the oven, remove the baking beans and brush all over with a thin layer of beaten egg. Stick the pastry plaits onto the edges, brush with beaten egg and return to the oven for another 15 mins until cooked through but not brown.

Step 3

Meanwhile, heat the butter in a frying pan over a low heat and add the onion. Cook gently for 15-20 mins or until soft, then stir in the fennel seeds and take off the heat. Leave to cool in the pan.

Step 4

Remove the tart case from the oven and set aside while you cook the rest of the filling. Add the asparagus to a large sauté pan, cover with 2-3cm water, bring to a simmer and cook for 5 mins. Drain, then rinse in

cold water to cool down quickly. Leave to dry on kitchen paper. Put the empty pan back on the hob, add the milk and salmon, and bring to a gentle simmer. Cook for 4 mins, turning once.

Step 5

Carefully take the salmon out of the milk and lay on a plate. Pour the milk into a large heat-proof jug and set aside. Spoon the onion and fennel seeds in an even layer across the base of the pastry case. Add the asparagus and, when the salmon is cool enough to handle, break chunks of it over the asparagus. Add the cream to the milk along with the rest of the eggs, the dill and lemon zest, then season. Pour the mixture into the pastry case, top with the cheese, then carefully put back in the oven for 45 mins-1 hr or until the filling is set and the cheese on top is turning golden. Serve warm or cold with a fennel and rocket salad.

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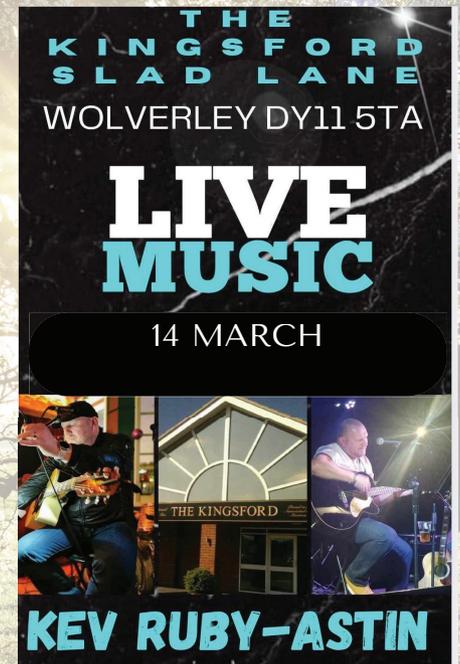
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Get ready for an unforgettable evening as Xperience Live proudly presents Whitney - The Candlelight Concert, a dazzling celebration of the timeless music and extraordinary voice of Whitney Houston at Kidderminster Town Hall Thursday 19 March 7.30pm.

This spectacular tribute brings together a world-class live band and one of the UK's leading Whitney Houston tribute artists, delivering her greatest hits with stunning authenticity, passion and power. Set within the elegant surroundings of Kidderminster Town Hall, the venue will be transformed by the warm glow of hundreds of candles, creating

a truly magical and intimate atmosphere.

Audiences can relive the magic of iconic classics including I Wanna Dance with Somebody, One Moment in Time, I'm Every Woman and I Will Always Love You. From soaring, emotional ballads to uplifting dance anthems, each performance captures the dynamic energy, vocal power and emotional depth that defined Whitney's legendary career.

The unique candlelit setting ensures every note feels personal and every moment resonates. Combined with rich live instrumentation and stunning vocals,

the result is a visually captivating and emotionally immersive journey through one of music's most celebrated songbooks. Whether you're a lifelong fan or discovering Whitney's legacy for the first time, this concert promises a heartfelt, nostalgic experience that lingers long after the final encore.

More than just a concert, Whitney - The Candlelight Concert is a breathtaking sensory experience that honours the heart, soul and artistry of an unforgettable global icon.

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OH WHAT A NIGHT!

At Stourport Civic

Step back in time as OH WHAT A NIGHT! returns to Stourport Friday 21 March 2026, taking audiences on a high-energy musical journey through the legendary career of Frankie Valli & The Four Seasons.

For more than two decades, Frankie Valli's unmistakable falsetto dominated the airwaves, delivering timeless hits including Sherry, Let's Hang On, Big Girls Don't Cry, Can't Take My Eyes Off You, My Eyes Adored You, December '63 (Oh What A Night), Bye Bye Baby and Who Loves You. With worldwide record sales exceeding 100 million and induction into the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame in 1990, their place in music history is firmly secured.

This hugely popular tribute show brings the songs to life with infectious personalities, stunning vocals, slick harmonies and sharp, perfectly timed dance routines. The attention to detail, costume changes and authentic sound make this a truly immersive experience for long-time fans and newcomers alike. Expect plenty of audience interaction, singalong moments and a feel-good atmosphere from start to finish. Packed with nostalgia and non-stop energy, OH WHAT A NIGHT! is a polished, uplifting night out that consistently has audiences on their feet, singing along and wanting more as the curtain falls.

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**Wyre Forest Symphony Orchestra
 Spring Symphony Concert**

Enjoy an uplifting and inspiring evening of live classical music, as the Wyre Forest Symphony Orchestra returns to the stage for its Spring Symphony Concert at Kidderminster Town Hall on Saturday 14th March.

This special performance promises a rich, atmospheric and memorable concert experience, opening with Mozart's dramatic Overture from Don Giovanni. This is followed by the graceful and expressive Symphonia Concertante, showcasing the outstanding musicianship of soloists Gill and Jonathan Pendrous. The evening concludes with Beethoven's monumental Sympho-

ny No. 3, Eroica a bold, powerful and emotionally charged masterpiece that remains a favourite with audiences worldwide.

Perfect for music lovers, families and newcomers to orchestral concerts alike, this event offers an accessible and welcoming way to enjoy high-quality live performance in a beautiful historic venue.

Doors open: 7.00pm
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 Tickets: £14 adults
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March Motoring Gearing Up for Spring

March is a month of transition for motorists. Lighter mornings, longer evenings and milder temperatures make it an ideal time to give your car a little post-winter attention and prepare for the months ahead.

After weeks of cold, damp conditions, your vehicle may be showing signs of wear. Road salt and grit can take their toll on paintwork and alloys, so a thorough wash including the underside is a good place to start. It's also worth checking wiper blades, as winter grime often leaves them streaky or ineffective just when spring showers arrive.

Tyres deserve particular attention at this time of year. Cold weather can cause tyre pressures to drop, affecting fuel efficiency and han-

dling. Check pressures regularly and inspect tread depth to ensure you're well above the legal minimum. March is also a sensible time to think about wheel alignment if potholes have been part of your daily commute.

With more daylight comes more temptation for longer drives and weekend trips. Before heading out, take a moment to check fluid levels including oil, coolant and screen wash. Spring sunshine can quickly turn roads dusty, so keeping your windscreen clean is essential for safe driving. March also brings the annual number plate change, with new registration plates appearing on forecourts across the country. While it may not

be the right time for everyone to change their car, it's a reminder to review running costs, insurance cover and servicing schedules. Booking a spring service now can help avoid unexpected issues later in the year.

Finally, remember that wildlife becomes more active as temperatures rise. Dawn and dusk are peak times for animals crossing rural roads, so stay alert and adjust your speed where necessary.

A little preparation in March can make all the difference, helping you enjoy safer, smoother and more economical motoring throughout the spring and into summer.

Bewdley Rotary



Bewdley Rotary is a member of Rotary International, a global service organisation with over 1.2 million members in over 200 countries, committed to 'Doing Good in the World'

www.bewdleyrotary.uk

Bewdley Rotary have sponsored the Bewdley Festival Young Musician of the Year Awards 2026. Whether you're a solo act or part of band, aged between 12 and 18 you can enter. Entry and tickets are available at bewdleyfestival.org.uk

The event will take place at St Georges Hall, Bewdley on 14th March. The Young Musician of the Year will automatically be entered into the 2027 Rotary District Competition.

Luke Pender, Bewdley Festival Young Musician of the Year 2025 winner, got through to the Final of the Great Britain and Ireland Rotary Young Musician of the Year. There were 6 instrumentalists and 6 vocalists from across England, Scotland and Wales.

Bewdley Rotary Club also offers corporate membership opportunities to businesses and organisations interested in community engagement and social responsibility. This allows companies to participate in local and international service projects, networking events and community initiatives.

The corporate members have several projects throughout the year including a networking event, an entertainment event as well as the Santa Sleigh rally around the Wyre Forest in December. All of these events will be discussed at our monthly meeting, on our social media and on our website.

CORPORATE MEMBER SPOTLIGHT:

Heidi from Gaunts of Kidderminster Funeral Directors has been a Rotary Corporate member just over 12 months with three generations of family in Rotary. "We became corporate members of Rotary to further our connection in and around the Wyre Forest. To continue our efforts to give back to the local communities we are proud to serve and to continue a family legacy after my Dad.



Bewdley Rotary

Corporate Group



Making an Impact

Are you an individual or small business who would like to give back to the community but are not sure how to go about it?

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Find out more by calling Phil on 07583 508577 or email phil@bewdleyrotary.uk



Bewdley
Rotary



Wyre Forest
Young Musician
of the Year
Competition 2026

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Is your band the next big thing?
If you're aged between 12 and 18, and
based in the Wyre Forest, then you
could be in with a chance of winning
the **Young Musician of the Year Award
2026.**



**SATURDAY
14TH MARCH**

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Enter the competition and Buy Tickets Now

www.bewdleyfestival.org.uk



Kidderminster Harriers March Diary

March is set to be a defining month for Kidderminster Harriers as the National League North season moves into a crucial phase. With league positions tightening and every point mattering, the Harriers face a demanding run of fixtures both home and away.

The month begins on the road with a challenging trip to Buxton on Saturday 7 March, where a strong performance will be key against a well organised home side. Attention then turns back to Aggborough on Tuesday 10 March, as Harriers welcome Peterborough Sports for an important midweek encounter under the floodlights.

Another big home fixture follows on Saturday 14 March with the visit of Chester, a game that could have a significant impact on ambitions for the closing weeks of the season. The Harriers then head north on Saturday 21 March to take on Radcliffe, a tough away test requiring focus and resilience.

March concludes with a final away trip on Saturday 28 March, when Kidderminster travel to face Oxford City. With momentum likely to play a vital role at this stage of the campaign, supporters can expect a month full of intensity, determination and pivotal moments as the Harriers look to finish the season strongly.

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