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Featured

4 Celebrating 20 Years

We're with You: 20 Years of Nightstop & Mediation Service

7 All Steamed Up

A Rally with a Difference at Severn Valley Railway

9 Remember, Remember 5th Nov

The History of Bonfire Night

15 This Months

Local Lowdown, Quirky Tales & Local Lore

Regular

25 MP Update

Mark Garnier Member of Parliament for Wyre Forest

28 History

Did You Know?
Kidderminster's Domesday Past

38 Interiors

Furnishings that make a house a home, sustainability and Autumn comfort

47 Rachel's Slimming World Journey

Rachel's Slimming World Journey. Comes Full Circle at Foley Park!

48 Health & Wellbeing

Boost Your Immune System This Autumn

52 Food & Drink

Seasonal Spotlight: Apples & Cranberries, Tappeto Lounge & Autumn Drinks

54 Whats On

Local events, theatre news and StourJam updates plus Panto at the Artrix

66 Motoring

November Motoring. Getting Winter Ready



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Local Feature

We're with You: 20 Years of Nightstop & Mediation Service

across Wyre Forest & South Worcestershire



We're with You. Three simple words that capture the heart of everything Nightstop does — standing alongside local young people in crisis, offering safety, support and hope when they need it most.

This year, the charity celebrates **20 years of supporting young people** in Wyre Forest and South Worcestershire, helping them find not just a roof over their heads, but also the stability

and confidence to rebuild their lives. Together with volunteer hosts, local businesses and supporters, Nightstop has helped thousands of young people find safety and a brighter future.

Who they are and what they do Nightstop's mission is to prevent youth homelessness before it starts. The service provides emergency accommodation in the homes of trained volunteer hosts, giving young people aged

16–25 a safe place to stay. Volunteer hosts provide more than a bed: a warm meal, a listening ear and reassurance. Volunteers also support administrative roles, fundraising and participate in charity events and talks, making Nightstop's work possible. Many young people experiencing homelessness are "hidden homeless", staying on friends' or relatives' sofas until luck runs out. For these young people, the risk of crisis is constant, making

Nightstop's preventative work upstream more important than ever particularly given the current lack of affordable move-on housing. Nightstop also provides Mediation, helping young people aged 11–25 and their families rebuild relationships. Many referrals come from young people at risk of homelessness due to family tensions. Additional services include Crisis Support for urgent situations and Educational Programmes in schools and colleges to raise awareness of youth homelessness and improve communication skills.

Real stories, real change

Homelessness can happen to any young person sometimes because of who they are.

Eighteen-year-old Archie was asked to leave home because of his sexuality. He was anxious about shared accommodation and struggled with low self-esteem. Nightstop placed Archie with a supportive host family, helped him access employment and guided him toward independent accommodation. With support, he and his partner secured a safe home where they could keep their pet. Eighteen-year-old Rita left a home marked by parental addiction, domestic violence, and neglect. Struggling with anxiety, selective mutism and depression, she was supported by Nightstop, who arranged safe accommodation, advocated on her behalf and helped her manage daily needs. Rita has since returned to college and now volunteers as a Nightstop young ambassador. Each young person supported gains safety, confidence and the opportunity to build a brighter future.

Accessing Support

Young people in crisis can con-

tact Nightstop directly to access emergency accommodation, mediation or guidance. Referrals can also be accepted from schools, colleges or other organisations.

"We're with You" Campaign

To celebrate its 20th anniversary, Nightstop is launching their "We're with You" campaign, highlighting that no young person should face homelessness alone. The campaign also celebrates the compassion of hosts, volunteers, fundraisers, partners, and local businesses — and shows how the community can get involved. An accompanying video, printed, and online graphics are available to share the message.

Get Involved, Fundraise or Donate

Individuals, businesses, clubs, groups, schools, and colleges can get involved in fundraising in so many ways from hosting bake sales, quizzes, taking on sponsored challenges, or choosing Nightstop as their charity of the year, the team are on hand with ideas, resources and support. All donations go directly to supporting local young people in crisis and will make a huge difference and can be made online.

Get Involved in Nightstop Events this Christmas

The charity has two fun ways to show support: their official Christmas Jumper Day is on Friday 5th December (or a date to suit you) and their Festive Afternoon Tea & Christmas Shopping is on Thursday 4th December from 2–4pm at St George's Church in Kidderminster. Full details are Nightstop's website.

For 20 years, Wyre Forest & South Worcestershire Nightstop & Mediation Service has been a vital support for young people in crisis. With continued community involvement, the charity will remain a safe haven for years to come.

We're With You.

For support, hosting or fundraising information, please visit www.wyreforestnightstop.org.uk or contact info@efnightstop.org 01562 743111.



How You Can Help

- Become a volunteer host and open your home to a young person in crisis. Training, support and expenses are provided.
- Fundraise: individuals, businesses, clubs, groups, schools and colleges can host events, take on challenges, or choose Nightstop as their charity of the year.
- Spread the word: follow and share Nightstop's posts on Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn.



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Local News

All Steamed Up!

A Rally with a Difference at Severn Valley Railway



Steam fans are in for a real treat this autumn, as Severn Valley Railway prepares to host a steam rally with a difference at its Bridgnorth Station over the weekend of 1st and 2nd November.

This special event will see more than ten miniature, road-going steam engines gathering at the top of the line, offering visitors the chance to get up close to these beautifully crafted machines. Unlike the mighty locomotives that haul the Severn Valley's heritage trains, these mini marvels have all the power and charm of their full-sized counterparts — just in pocket-sized form! Visitors can expect to see an impressive variety of working models, including a Foden steam lorry, a Burrell steam roller, and a Fowler ploughing engine, all lovingly maintained by their own-

ers. One of the highlights is the remarkable "Waterous" engine, a scale model of a Canadian machine once produced in large numbers in Ontario — a rare sight even for seasoned enthusiasts.

While the miniature engines puff away on display, the Severn Valley's full-sized locomotives will continue their regular passenger services along the 16-mile heritage line between Bridgnorth and Kidderminster. That means visitors can combine the best of both worlds — a nostalgic train ride through the autumn countryside and a wander among the miniature engines, each one a masterpiece of traditional engineering.

Organisers promise a relaxed, family-friendly atmosphere with plenty of photo opportunities and the chance to chat with the dedicated owners who keep

these tiny engines in working order. It's the perfect way to celebrate the magic of steam as the railway heads toward its festive season.

Once the rally wraps up, Severn Valley Railway will briefly pause regular services to make way for its much-loved Christmas programme, featuring the Elf Express from Bridgnorth and the Santa Steam Specials from Kidderminster events that bring joy to families year after year.

Whether you're a lifelong steam enthusiast or just looking for a unique day out, the Steam Rally at Bridgnorth Station promises a fascinating glimpse into Britain's enduring love affair with steam power — great fun for all ages and right on our doorstep.



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The History of Bonfire Night

Remember, remember the Fifth of November...

As the evenings grow darker and the crisp autumn air begins to bite, there's something magical about wrapping up warm, gathering around a crackling bonfire, and watching the sky light up with bursts of colour. Every November, communities across Britain come together to celebrate Bonfire Night — but behind the fireworks and toffee apples lies a story of treason, politics, and survival that goes back more than 400 years.

The story begins in 1605, during the reign of King James I. A group of English Catholics, angered by their persecution and hoping to restore their faith to power, plotted to blow up the Houses of Parliament. Their aim was to kill the King and his government during the State Opening of Parliament and replace them with a Catholic monarchy. At the heart of this plot was Guy Fawkes, an experienced soldier who had fought in Catholic armies in Europe. Fawkes was given the dangerous task of guarding 36 barrels of gunpowder hidden in a cellar beneath the House of Lords — enough to destroy the entire building. However, the plan began to unravel when one of the conspirators sent an anonymous letter

warning a friend not to attend Parliament that day. The authorities searched the cellars in the early hours of 5th November 1605, discovering Fawkes and his deadly cargo. He was arrested, tortured for information, and eventually executed, along with his fellow plotters.

The news of the King's narrow escape spread quickly, and Londoners lit bonfires in celebration. Parliament soon declared that the 5th of November should be observed as a day of thanksgiving, and so began what we now know as Bonfire Night or Guy Fawkes Night. In the years that followed, the tradition grew. Effigies of Fawkes — or "Guys" — were burned on the fires, children collected pennies "for the Guy," and fireworks became a spectacular part of the celebrations, symbolising the gunpowder that never exploded.

Over time, the event has changed from a politically charged occasion into one of the most loved community celebrations of the year. Today, it's a chance for friends and families to come together, enjoy food and drink, and watch the night sky come alive with fireworks.

Whether you're heading to a big organised display or lighting sparklers in the back garden, Bonfire Night remains a tradition that connects us to centuries of British history — a fiery reminder of a plot that failed, and a celebration that has stood the test of time.





Japanese Knotweed: A Growing Threat to Redditch Gardens

Across Worcestershire there has been a worrying rise in sightings of Japanese knotweed, with more than 700 reported infestations across the county. This invasive plant is now considered one of the most destructive in the UK, and experts warn that Redditch could be facing an increasing risk if local homeowners and landowners don't stay alert.

Japanese knotweed, a fast-growing plant native to East Asia, spreads through underground rhizomes that can extend deep and wide beneath the soil. Even the smallest fragment can regrow into a new plant, making it extremely difficult to eradicate once established. Its roots can push through concrete, damage walls, and compromise building foundations, making it a serious concern for property owners. The financial impact can also be significant. Properties affected

by knotweed often face a drop in value, and mortgage lenders may refuse loans until professional treatment has been carried out. Across Worcestershire, this has already caused headaches for homeowners trying to sell or renovate their homes.

In the Wyre Forest, residents are being encouraged to check gardens, verges, and nearby open spaces for signs of the plant. During spring and summer, knotweed appears as tall, bamboo-like shoots with reddish stems and broad green leaves arranged in a zig-zag pattern. In late summer, clusters of small white flowers may appear.

If you suspect Japanese knotweed on your property, avoid cutting or digging it out yourself, as this can cause it to spread further. Instead, contact a professional removal service or seek advice from the local council.

Early detection and proper treatment are key to preventing a small problem from becoming a large and costly one.

By staying vigilant, Wyre Forest residents can help protect their gardens and green spaces from this persistent invader.



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The Future of Heritage in Kidderminster

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

In these challenging times, that mission has never felt more important. And it's made possible by a community that cares from generous sponsors to dedicated volunteers and supportive neighbours. JHAC extends heartfelt thanks to all who make their work possible, including sponsors such as Bond Worth Limited, Clearview Environmental (Midlands) Ltd., and Oz's Golden Gardens. Their generosity goes beyond funding they give time, expertise, and belief in the charity's vision. With their help, every donation stretches further, facilities im-

prove, and opportunities grow.

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

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

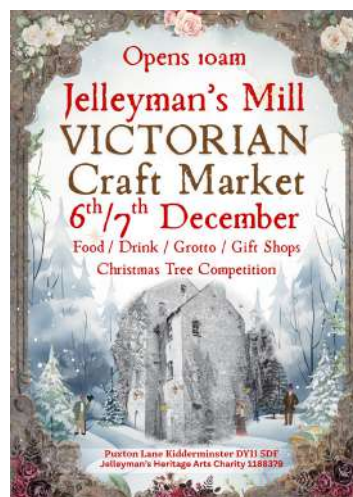
Beyond events, JHAC offers a range of venue hire options

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

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

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

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THIS MONTHS

Local Lowdown Quirky Tales & Local Lore

The Bewdley Bear

According to local lore, a travelling show once lost its performing bear near Bewdley in the late 18th century. Search parties combed the forests and riverbanks, but the creature was never found. Over the centuries, sightings have persisted: huge pawprints in the mud, livestock vanishing overnight, and eerie roars echoing through the Wyre Forest. Even today, some walkers claim to hear heavy footsteps and low growls among the trees at dusk, perhaps, that the legendary Bewdley Bear still prowls its woodland home.



The Stourport River Lights

Along the banks of the River Sever at Stourport, old fishermen once spoke in hushed tones of strange floating lights that drifted silently across the water. Some believed they were the restless souls of those who'd drowned in the treacherous current, while others swore they marked the hiding place of lost treasure buried deep beneath the riverbed. Generations later, a few locals still whisper that, on still November nights, the lights return pale, wavering, and eerily beautiful, gliding just above the misty surface before fading into darkness.



The Cry of the Kidderminster Weaver

Kidderminster's proud weaving past hides a haunting legend known as "the cry of the weaver." As the story goes, those passing the town's oldest mill buildings after dark sometimes hear the rhythmic whirr of looms and the soft sigh of a weary worker toiling through the night. Some say it's the echo of generations who spent their lives at the looms; others dismiss it as nothing more than imagination and wind through broken windows. Yet, for those who have heard it, the sound feels achingly real: a ghostly reminder of the town's hard-earned heritage.





Wyre Forest Talking Newspaper Celebrates 45 years

The Wyre Forest Talking Newspaper, (WFTN) held their Annual General Meeting on Saturday 4th October this year, and following the main meeting, guests enjoyed a celebration buffet, to mark the charity's 45th birthday.

The meeting was well attended by more than 50 guests including Mayors of Stourport and Bewdley, local councillors and WFTN volunteers old and new. Mike Dickens and Mary Blake, who both volunteered with WFTN from the beginning, also attended and helped to cut celebration cakes. WFTN was originally set up in 1980 by the Kidderminster and District Lions, who had raised funds to help support visually impaired people. The original

plan was to make a perfumed garden. However, Bob Roberts, who was himself blind, encouraged them to instead, set up a Talking Newspaper, and here we are, now into our 46th year.

WFTN provides a weekly reading of local newspapers for blind and partially sighted people in the Wyre Forest area of North Worcestershire. It's a free service run entirely by volunteers and is available to anyone who has difficulty reading or holding a newspaper. It's distributed to listeners on memory sticks that play on the equipment, provided free of charge by WFTN. We also produce a magazine recording, three times a year, with articles from various local and national magazines, and a seasonal Christmas

edition.

The studio is located at the St Barnabas Community Hall in Franche. We have three teams of volunteers, namely Early Birds, Night Owls and Puffins, who take it in turns to come into the studio each Friday evening. Duties are split between reading and preparing the memory sticks to go out to our listeners.

Reading takes place in the studio with the editor and technician on the other side of a glass window. Each reader has a board, prepared by our editor, to include articles from The Shuttle and other newspapers. There's a half-timebreak for coffee,

biscuits and a natter. Once the week's recording is transferred onto memory sticks and put in padded envelopes to be posted to our listeners, the job's done for that week.

We're always looking for new volunteers and listeners. There are various volunteer roles available, such as reading the news, admin, editing, technician and liaising with listeners. We welcome volunteers from all backgrounds, ages, cultures, experiences, skills and interests. Our volunteers are a friendly bunch of people, from all walks of life, and being part of WFTN not only helps our listeners, it's a great way of meeting new friends. If you

think this might be for you, or know of someone who would like to become a listener, more details about the charity and how to become involved, are on our website. www.wftn.org WFTN is a registered charity, and whilst the service is completely free to listeners, we are self-funded. Costs include premises rental, replacement and maintenance of equipment, and sundry expenses.

Donations large or small are welcome, whether from individuals or organisations, because without such support WFTN would cease to exist.



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Community Café Shows You: How to 'Cheat' with Your Christmas Cake!

The Community Café at Wolverley Memorial Hall is hosting a special festive event on the morning of Friday 14th November, showing how anyone can create a quick and easy Christmas cake at home.

Café manager Kate Mellor will demonstrate how she makes what she calls her "Cheat's Christmas Cake." "It's so quick and easy," says Kate. "I use mixed spices, mince-meat and oranges – all the taste without the fuss!"

The demonstration is part of the café's popular 'Eat, Drink and Learn' sessions, held regularly on Friday mornings.

Recent sessions have included T-shirt printing, stone painting and circus skills, along with talks on local history, community polic-

ing and the fascinating Drakelow Tunnels.

Coming up on Friday 28th November, local florists Winnie and Olive will be demonstrating how to make a beautiful Christmas wreath – perfect for the festive season.

"We're currently putting together our programme for 2026 and would love to hear from anyone who has a skill or topic of interest they'd like to share," says Kate. "Just email me at wolverleycommunitycafe@gmail.com or call the café on 01902 327713."

The Wolverley Community Café, based at the Memorial Hall on Shatterford Lane, is open Tuesday to Friday, 10.30am to 3.30pm.



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Mark Garnier Member of Parliament for Wyre Forest

The party conference season has drawn to a close. Despite the appearance of this being just about politicians talking to themselves, what is coming out from these conferences tells us about what is facing us all.

The Conservative conference has highlighted the priorities of my party –security and prosperity. Securing our borders and driving economic growth.

However, more importantly, these conferences shed greater light on the differences between our parties.

We know, for example, that Labour favours a bigger state, with greater taxes levied on the private sector to pay for the state sector and, importantly welfare. Fighting for the underdog has

been the key objective of Labour for over a century, and to be fair, they have achieved a great deal for workers. But now they are keen to continue to allow the welfare bill to expand, and the cost of that will come from increased taxation. We'll know exactly how much we'll be charged on the 26th November, when we have the next budget.

Meanwhile, Reform have confirmed that, whilst socially to the right wing, economically, they are to the left. They favour nationalisation of utilities, raiding private pensions to match fund nationalisation costs.

And that leaves just the Conservative Party on the right of centre economically. This is important, because Wyre For-

est has around 3,500 businesses here, many of which are small and micro businesses.

These businesses already know what a Labour budget looks like, with hikes to employers' national insurance. This has severely damaged business confidence and knocked economic growth. So, whilst Conservatives see businesses as the engines of economic growth, employment and prosperity, Labour sees them as a cash cow for their state-owned ambitions.

Of course, this is all pretty irrelevant as there will unlikely be an election before 2028 at the earliest. So, we have up to 4 years of slowing investment, international money fleeing our shores, and increased unemployment.

I may be wrong. The policies of big state may produce economic growth, and I will be forced to eat my words. But the legacy of the last 110 years is that every single Labour government there has ever been, has resulted in higher unemployment and economic decline. Every single one.

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

T: 01562 746771
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History: Did You Know? Kidderminster's Domesday Past

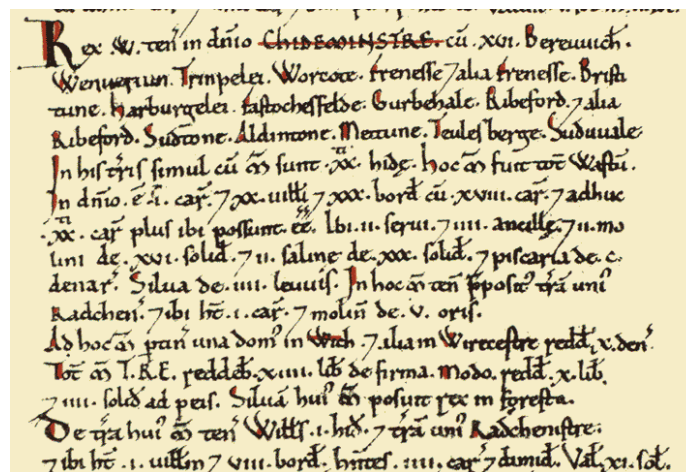
Did you know that Kidderminster was officially recorded in the Domesday Book of 1086? Back then, the town appeared under the names Chedeminstre or Chideminstre, and it was already a thriving and important settlement. At the time, it was held by Bishop Odo of Bayeux, half-brother to William the Conqueror and one of the most powerful Norman lords in England.

The Domesday entry paints a vivid picture of early medieval life in the area, describing villagers, smallholders, slaves, and even a working mill, which would have served the surrounding farmland. It suggests that Kidderminster was already a busy agricultural hub long before its later fame as a centre for carpet weaving and textile production.

The town's position beside the River Stour was key to its suc-

cess. The river provided water for farming and milling, and would later play a vital role in the town's industrial development. Over the centuries, Kidderminster grew from a rural manor into a bustling market town and then a proud manufacturing centre known

around the world for quality carpets. So next time you stroll through the town centre, it's fascinating to imagine that people were living, working, and trading on this same land nearly a thousand years ago.



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November Garden: Preparing for Winter and Planning Ahead

November might seem like a quiet time in the garden, but it is one of the most important months for preparation. The leaves have fallen, the air feels crisp, and while growth slows down, there is plenty to do to protect your garden and set it up for success next year.

Start by giving your garden a good tidy. Clear away fallen leaves from lawns and paths, and add them to a compost heap or leaf bin to create rich leaf mould for next year. It is also a great time to cut back any dead or dying perennials and remove old annuals. Leaving a few seed heads in place can provide food and shelter for birds and insects during the colder months, so do not feel the need to be too neat. If you have a lawn, give it one last light mow on a dry day and rake out any moss or debris. Avoid walking on frosty grass, as this can damage the blades and leave brown patches.



Autumn leaves are gold for the compost bin, so make use of them. Mixing them with grass clippings and kitchen waste helps create a perfect balance for decomposition. Turn the pile occasionally to keep it aerated. November is also the time to think about bulbs. Plant daffodils, crocuses, and tulips now for a burst of spring colour when winter finally fades. If you prefer pots, layer different bulbs in the same container — taller ones like tulips at the bottom, then daffodils, with crocuses or snowdrops near the top — for a long lasting display.

Tender plants will need protection as temperatures drop. Move pots to sheltered spots, cover delicate shrubs with horticultural fleece, and insulate containers with bubble wrap to prevent roots from freezing. Check greenhouse heaters and make sure everything is well ventilated to avoid damp and mould. Birds are your garden's winter companions, so keep feeders topped up and provide fresh water. A mix of seeds, suet, and mealworms will attract a variety of visitors and help wildlife through the lean months.

Finally, take a moment to look ahead. November is perfect for planning changes to your garden layout, browsing seed catalogues, and dreaming about next

spring's colours. A little planning now will make your spring work much easier and more rewarding.

Even though the pace of gardening slows, there is still plenty of satisfaction to be found outdoors. Wrap up warm, enjoy the peace of your late autumn garden, and know that every small task you do now will help your garden thrive once the growing season returns.



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Sustainable Interiors: Eco Friendly Ways to Refresh

More people than ever are looking for ways to live more sustainably, and home interiors are no exception. Choosing eco friendly furnishings does not mean compromising on style. In fact, it often brings a richer, more authentic feel to your space.

Start by thinking about materials. Natural options such as reclaimed wood, bamboo, linen, and organic cotton are both durable and planet friendly. Investing in well made pieces that last is far more sustainable than constantly replacing cheap, disposable décor. Look for local makers and second hand finds. Pre loved furniture can often be refreshed with a coat of paint

or new handles, giving it a fresh lease of life.

Sustainability also means making the most of what you already have. Before rushing to buy something new, try rearranging a room or upcycling what is there. A lick of paint, new cushion covers, or a reupholstered chair can completely transform a space for minimal cost and waste.

Energy efficient lighting is another easy win. Switch to LED bulbs, which use less electricity and last far longer than traditional ones. Adding a few plants can also improve air quality while bringing life and colour

into your home. Trailing ivy, peace lilies, and spider plants are all great low maintenance options.

Finally, when you shop for new homeware, choose companies with clear sustainability policies and recyclable packaging. Many independent retailers in Worcestershire and the West Midlands are now embracing greener practices, from locally sourced materials to environmentally conscious production.

By making thoughtful, sustainable choices, you are not just creating a stylish home, you are also helping to protect the planet for the future. And that is something to feel truly good about.

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Small Space, Big Style Making Every Corner Count

You do not need a large home to have a big sense of style. With a little imagination, even the most compact spaces can feel open, airy, and full of personality. The secret lies in smart design choices and clever use of light, storage, and colour.

Start by embracing multifunctional furniture. A sofa bed in the spare room, a coffee table with hidden storage, or nesting side tables can save precious floor space while keeping your home tidy and organised. Look for pieces that can do double duty, stylish and practical is the goal.

Light is your best friend in a small space. Mirrors can work wonders by reflecting natural light and creating a sense of depth. Position one opposite a window to instantly brighten a room. Choose sheer curtains instead of heavy drapes to let in as much daylight as possible.

When it comes to colour, lighter shades open up a room, while pops of bold colour in accessories such as cushions, artwork, or rugs add character without overwhelming the space. A soft neutral palette with accents of terracotta, teal, or mustard works beautifully for a modern

yet homely look.

Clutter is the enemy of small spaces, so choose décor thoughtfully. A few meaningful items on display have far more impact than a crowded shelf. Keep surfaces clear and invest in decorative baskets or stylish boxes to store everyday items neatly out of sight.

Finally, do not be afraid to express your personality. Whether it is a statement lamp, a feature wall, or a gallery of family photos, small spaces come alive when they reflect the people who live in them.

With a few smart choices, any home, no matter its size, can feel spacious, stylish, and truly yours.

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HOME FURNISHING Warm Up Your Home for Autumn:

Simple Touches for a
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As the nights draw in and the air takes on that unmistakable autumn chill, our thoughts naturally turn indoors. This is the perfect time to make your home a little warmer, softer, and more inviting. You do not need a big budget or a full redesign, just a few simple updates can transform your living space into a cosy autumn retreat.

Start by layering textures. Think chunky knitted throws, soft wool blankets, and plump cushions in deep, earthy tones like rust, forest green, and burnt orange. Mixing materials such as velvet, faux fur, and woven cotton in-

stantly adds comfort and depth to a room.

Lighting plays a huge role in setting the mood as daylight fades earlier each evening. Swap harsh overhead bulbs for warm, low level lighting. Table lamps, fairy lights, and candles create a softer glow that feels both welcoming and relaxing. A few scented candles, perhaps cinnamon, cedarwood, or vanilla, can bring that extra touch of autumn comfort.

Rugs are another instant game changer. Layering one over wooden or tiled floors adds both warmth and style. Choose natu-

ral fibres like wool or jute, or experiment with bold patterns to give tired flooring a lift.

Do not forget the small details. A bowl of pinecones or pumpkins, a vase of dried flowers, or even a cosy corner with a good book and a blanket can make your home feel like the perfect seasonal hideaway.

Whether you live in a modern apartment or a traditional family home, autumn is your chance to embrace comfort. This season, it is all about slowing down, creating warmth, and turning your home into a space you truly love spending time in.





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Rachel's Slimming World Journey Comes Full Circle at Foley Park!

Slimming World is thrilled to welcome Rachel, our inspiring new Consultant, as she relaunches the Foley Park group in Kidderminster on Wednesday 12th November 2025, with sessions at 5.30pm and 7pm.

Rachel first joined Slimming World back in 2018, feeling unhappy about her health and struggling with high blood pressure. She knew she needed help with what to eat and motivation to lose weight. Like many members, she found comfort, motivation, and real change through the power of the group, especially the togetherness and support that comes from staying to group each week. She learnt all about the simple Food Optimising plan where she didn't need to worry about weighing or measuring pasta, potatoes, rice, meats, fruit and vegetables. She found it quick and easy to fol-

low the plan and learnt how to make healthy swaps from the fellow members in group. After returning to Slimming World earlier this year, Rachel has already lost 1 stone 4 pounds, and she's feeling better than ever. Her favourite meals include a hearty aubergine bake, a classic Slimming World fry-up, and a warming curry, all delicious, satisfying, and totally on-plan!

Now, Rachel is excited to help others feel just as amazing. Her passion for health, happiness, and community shines through, and she can't wait to support members on their journey to a healthier lifestyle. Seeing how her Slimming World consultant Russell has supported and empowered people in his role for 29 years, has encouraged her to take the next step as a consult-

ant herself. Being a self-employed Slimming World consultant, Rachel will have the full support of a local team, 4 days of training at Slimming World Head Office in Alfreton and then be out spreading the word about her group!

Whether you're looking to lose weight, improve your health, or simply feel more confident, Rachel's group at Foley Park is the perfect place to start. Come along, meet Rachel, and discover how Slimming World can change your life, just like it changed hers.

The group meets on Wednesdays at Foley Park Methodist Church, Kidderminster at 5.30pm. A new 7pm session will be added from Wednesday 12th October when Rachel relaunches the group. Call Rachel on 07907 033347 for more details and current joining offers.



Health: Boost Your Immune System This Autumn

As the days grow shorter and the temperatures start to drop, many of us find ourselves reaching for an extra layer and the tissues. Autumn is a beautiful season, but it also marks the beginning of cold and flu season. The good news is that a few simple lifestyle changes can make a big difference in keeping your immune system strong and your energy levels up as the days grow darker.

A balanced diet is your first line of defence. Try to “eat the rainbow” by including plenty of colourful fruits and vegetables rich in vitamins and antioxidants.

Orange foods like pumpkins and carrots provide vitamin A, while leafy greens deliver iron and vitamin C to help fight infection. Local produce from Bewdley, Stourport, and Kidderminster markets offers a delicious variety of fresh, seasonal options that taste great and do your body good. Supporting local growers also helps strengthen the community a win for everyone.

Sleep is another vital part of immune health. Your body carries out essential repair work while you rest, including the production of immune cells that fight off infection. Aim for seven to

nine hours of quality sleep each night and try to keep a consistent routine. Avoid screens before bed, keep your bedroom cool and dark, and take time to wind down. A few minutes of reading or gentle stretching can work wonders for relaxation before bedtime.

Keeping active during the colder months also helps to build a resilient immune system. Even if you don't feel like a long workout, small bursts of movement add up. Try yoga, indoor fitness videos, or a walk when the sun breaks through. The Wyre Forest Nature Reserve, Severn Valley Country Park, and Riverside Meadows in Stourport are all ideal

ideal places to enjoy the crisp autumn air, boost your circulation, and top up your mood naturally. Staying hydrated is equally important. Even in cool weather, your body needs fluids to function well. Herbal teas, warm water with lemon, or homemade soups can keep you hydrated and comforted. Don't forget to include foods with high water content too such as citrus fruits, apples, and leafy greens.

Taking care of your emotional wellbeing also helps protect your physical health. High stress levels can weaken immunity, so make

time to rest and reset. Whether it's spending time outdoors, meeting a friend for coffee, or enjoying a quiet afternoon at home, small acts of self-care make a big difference. As daylight hours shorten, consider a vitamin D supplement your local pharmacist or GP can help you choose the right one. By nurturing your body with good food, quality rest, regular movement, and mindful downtime, you can strengthen your immune system and face the colder months with confidence. Autumn is a time for slowing down, nourishing yourself, and preparing for the season ahead so take care, stay warm, and keep well.



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Seasonal Spotlight: Apples & Cranberries

There's something very special about cooking with produce that's in season, and November is a perfect time to celebrate two fruits that bring colour, flavour, and a touch of nostalgia to the kitchen apples and cranberries. Both are staples of winter cooking and lend themselves beautifully to comforting puddings like our spiced crumble.

Apples

Autumn is apple season at its finest, and many orchards across the country are still brim-

ming with late varieties through November.

From sharp Bramleys that hold their shape in pies and crumbles, to sweet dessert apples like Cox or Russet, there's a type to suit every recipe. If you're lucky enough to have an apple tree in your garden, now's the time to gather up the last of the crop before frosts set in. Locally grown apples can often be found at farm shops and markets too, offering more flavour and variety than supermarket shelves.

Cranberries

While cranberries are most often associated with Christmas sauce, they're actually at their best in November and December. In the UK, they're usually sold fresh in supermarkets or farm shops from late autumn, but dried cranberries are also a handy store-cup-board staple that work wonderfully in baking and puddings. Their tart, jewel-red berries add a vibrant burst of colour and sharpness to sweet dishes, balancing rich or spiced flavours perfectly. Cooking with the season

Bringing seasonal produce into your cooking is about more than just taste – it connects us to the rhythm of the year and supports local growers and suppliers. Apples and cranberries are versatile, affordable, and a great way to add both freshness and tradition to your winter table.

So next time you're planning a pudding, look out for local apples and a punnet of cranberries, and you'll have the makings of a dessert that captures the very essence of November.

Savour the Flavour at Tappeto Lounge

From Brunch to Cocktails: Why Tappeto Lounge Hits the Spot

Tucked away on Riverside Walk in the Weavers Wharf Shopping Centre, Tappeto Lounge offers visitors a warm and welcoming spot to relax, eat and drink. With its riverside terrace and airy, light-filled interior, it strikes the balance between casual comfort and a stylish hangout. The atmosphere is designed to feel like a home-from-home, whether you're stopping by for a morning coffee, a hearty meal, or cocktails with friends.

The menu is broad and inclusive, making it an easy choice for groups with different tastes and dietary needs. Vegan and gluten-free options are clearly marked

and sit alongside classic favourites such as Louisiana Fried Chicken with fries and slaw, and their ever-popular smashed avocado brunch topped with feta, poached egg, and harissa. The kitchen's versatility is clear, serving everything from comforting soups and paninis to steak, noodles, and Mexican-inspired dishes. There's also a weekday lunchtime special, where a mug of soup paired with a half panini is served for just £6.95, making it a popular choice for shoppers and office workers nearby.

Drinks are another highlight. Tappeto works with Bristol-based Clifton Coffee, offering all



Amazing venue & Cocktails

the familiar favourites, complete with plant-based milk options. Later in the day, cocktails take centre stage with the Lounge Cocktail Club, where two of the same drinks can be enjoyed for £12.95 from 5pm until close. Regular themed nights also add to the appeal. Tapas Tuesday is a standout, giving guests the chance to enjoy three tapas with a glass of wine, a pint of Cruzcampo, or a soft drink for £13.50. On Mondays, the "Cheeky Mondays" deal means ordering any burger, main or salad comes with your choice of wine, beer, soft drink or even a pudding on the house.



Tappeto Lounge offerings



Tappeto Lounge - WOW!

Fantastic place to eat as a family, they are also dog friendly which is amazing. Brilliant service, great food and the staff are spot on! Indoor dining, Cosy atmosphere & Child-friendly

Practicality is at the heart of the Lounge's offering too. The venue is open daily from morning through to late evening, with slightly extended hours at the weekend. It is dog-friendly, with wheelchair-accessible facilities, and while walk-ins are always welcome for smaller groups, bookings are recommended for larger parties.

Whether you're looking for a hearty brunch, an after-work drink, or simply a spot to rest your feet while shopping, Tappeto Lounge provides an inviting and flexible space right in the heart of Kidderminster. With its relaxed riverside setting and menus packed with flavour and value, it's no wonder it has become a favourite for locals and visitors alike.

Riverside Walk, Weavers Wharf Shopping Centre, Kidderminster, DY10 1BY
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Spiced Apple & Cranberry Crumble



Ingredients

- 5 medium cooking apples, peeled, cored, and sliced
- 100g fresh or dried cranberries
- 75g soft brown sugar
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon
- ½ tsp ground nutmeg
- Zest of 1 orange

For the crumble topping:

- 150g plain flour
- 100g cold butter, diced
- 75g demerara sugar
- 50g rolled oats

Method

1. Preheat the oven to 190°C (170°C fan) or Gas Mark 5.
2. Place the sliced apples and cranberries in a large bowl, then mix with the brown sugar, cinnamon, nutmeg, and orange zest.

Tip the mixture into an ovenproof baking dish.

3. To make the topping, rub the butter into the flour using your fingertips until the mixture resembles breadcrumbs. Stir in the demerara sugar and oats.

4. Sprinkle the crumble topping evenly over the fruit, making sure it's well covered.

5. Bake for 30–35 minutes, until the fruit is bubbling and the topping is golden and crisp.

Serving suggestion:

This crumble is best served hot with custard, cream, or a scoop of vanilla ice cream. The cranberries add a lovely burst of colour and tangy flavour, making it a perfect dessert for November – and a great recipe to carry through into the festive season. There's something truly special

about the aroma of spiced apples drifting through the kitchen on a dark evening. This pudding is a real crowd-pleaser, easy to prepare in advance, and the perfect way to bring a little extra warmth to the table this winter.





WARMING AUTUMN DRINKS: COMFORT DRINKS

As the nights grow longer and the chill sets in, nothing lifts the spirits quite like a warming drink. November is the perfect time to swap iced lattes and cold refreshments for something soothing, spiced, and comforting. Whether you're coming in from a brisk walk, wrapping up after a local firework display, or simply settling down for a cosy evening at home, the right drink can make the moment feel extra

special.

Hot chocolate is, of course, the ultimate classic. Rich, creamy, and indulgent, it's a favourite for all ages. Add a handful of marshmallows, a swirl of whipped cream, or even a drizzle of caramel sauce to make it feel truly luxurious. For something a little more grown-up, try adding a splash of liqueur such as Baileys or orange brandy for a festive twist.



Mulled drinks are another November staple. Mulled cider brings a fruity warmth, infused with cloves, cinnamon, and star anise, while mulled wine makes an early appearance in the run-up to Christmas. Both fill the kitchen with an irresistible seasonal aroma and are perfect for sharing at social gatherings.

If you prefer something lighter, spiced teas can offer the same comfort without being overly rich. Chai lattes, with their blend of warming spices, are a great alternative to coffee and create that café-style treat at home. Herbal blends with ginger or cinnamon are also excellent for boosting energy and warding off the winter chill.

And don't forget simple homemade touches – a slice of fresh orange, a sprinkle of nutmeg, or a spoonful of honey can transform even the most ordinary cuppa into something warming and restorative.

So, whether you're curled up with a book, catching up with friends, or treating the family, November is the perfect excuse to savour a hot drink that warms you from the inside out.

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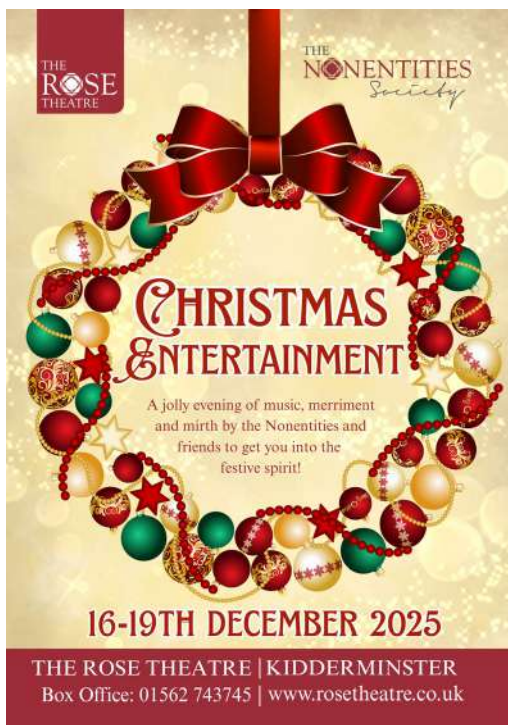
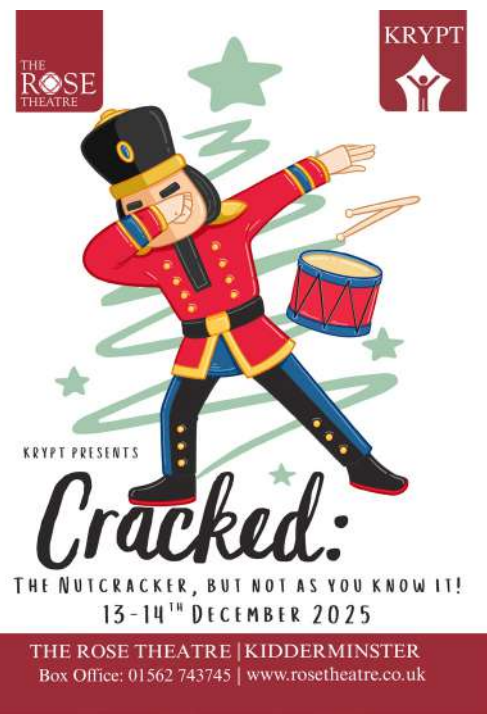
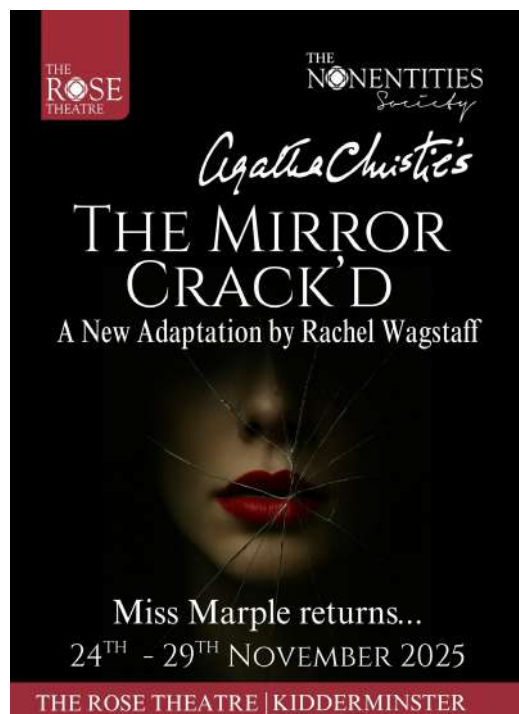
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CHRISTMAS IS
JUST AROUND THE
CORNER WATCH
OUT FOR OUR
CHRISTMAS SHOWS



It's all coming up StourJam and we're still 8 months away!

The countdown is officially on for the first-ever StourJam Festival, set to take place in Stourport-on-Severn from 5-7 June 2026. While the big weekend is still months away, the momentum is already building and fast.

On Sunday, 12th October, StourJam launched its artist applications, inviting musicians of all genres to apply for a chance to perform at the debut event. The response has been phenomenal, with applications pouring in from across the region and beyond. From indie bands and acoustic duos to DJs and solo performers, the diversity and quality of submissions have exceeded all expectations.

Musicians still have time to apply, but the window is closing in the coming months. Artists can apply at stourjam.com/apply. Organisers are encouraging artists to get their applications in

early to be considered for a lot at what promises to be a landmark event for the local music scene and the first of its kind for Stourport on Severn. StourJam is proud to raise funds for three incredible charities as part of its 2026 debut: Dementia UK Providing specialist support through Admiral Nurses to families affected by dementia across the UK. The Canal & River Trust Caring for 2,000 miles of waterways, including those in and around Stourport, helping protect nature, heritage, and wellbeing. Worcestershire Acute Charity: The Children of Worcestershire & Herefordshire Cancer Fund Supporting children and families facing cancer treatment locally, funding vital equipment, services, and care. Together, these charities reflect StourJam's commitment to community, compassion, and lasting impact both locally and nationally. 14 venues are on board and

will play an equal and vital role in delivering the festival's vision: a community powered celebration of live music, creativity, and charitable giving. The venues span pubs and clubs throughout the town, reflecting the collaborative spirit at the heart of StourJam.

Confirmed venues for StourJam 2026:

1. BMK Stourport
2. The Port House
3. BOA Brewing Company
4. The Swan, Stourport
5. Severns Club
6. The Bridge Inn Stourport
7. The Black Star
8. Fedora's
9. The Hollybush Stourport
10. The Old Beams Stourport
11. The Stagborough Arms
12. The Civic
13. The Wheatsheaf
14. The Rock Tavern at Wilden

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StourJam Want to get involved?

StourJam is a free, not-for-profit festival, raising funds for three chosen charities and a dedicated StourJam pot, which supports artist fees, equipment, and future creative programming. The festival is built by the community, for the community - and the involvement of these 14 venues marks a major milestone in its development.

StourJam's Battle of the Bands Series: Spotighting the Future Stars of tomorrow As part of the build-up to the festival, StourJam has launched its Battle of the Bands series - a six-heat competition designed to showcase emerging talent and give rising stars the chance to earn their place on the StourJam stage.

The first three heats have now been announced, with more to

follow in early 2026. Each heat will feature a lineup of fresh acts battling it out in front of live audiences and judges, with winners progressing toward a grand final and a guaranteed slot at the festival.

Festival co-founder Chloe Mogg said: "StourJam is more than just a weekend of music it's a movement. We're building something that celebrates creativity, community, and the future of live performance. The Battle of the Bands series is a chance for new artists to shine, and we can't wait to see what they bring."

Kidderminster College -
Wednesday 12th November
at Severns Club (Baldwin Suite)

Hereford Arts - Thursday 20th
November at The Civic

Worcestershire Rock Schools -
Sunday 30th November
at The Swan

Each heat will showcase a lineup of emerging talent, with winners earning a chance to perform at StourJam 2026. Expect big energy, fresh sounds, and the future stars of tomorrow.

Stay Connected
For press enquiries, interviews, artist applications, or sponsorship opportunities, please contact: info@stourjam.com
Alternatively:
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Painting & Prosecco at The Rustic, Hopleys

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

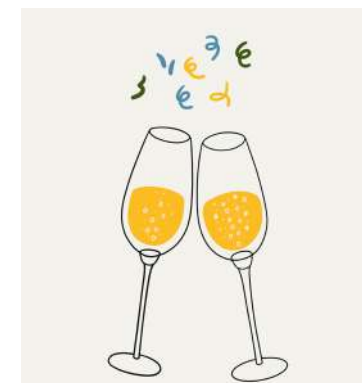
The idea is simple turn up, grab a brush and a glass of prosecco, and let your imagination take over. There's no formal lesson or pressure to produce a masterpiece; it's all about having fun, unwinding and expressing yourself in good company. Whether you're a seasoned painter or

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

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

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

darker evenings draw in. To find out more or to book your spot, visit:
<https://www.hopleyscamping.co.uk/whats-on>



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We will be open for the Bewdley Lights Switch on Evening on 29th November and then for all of the Santa train dates throughout December. Please see our Facebook page for times/dates etc. We plan to serve Warm Mulled wine, Mulled Cider and Mulled Apple Juice throughout the season as well as Hot Chocolate with cream and Marshmallows or a special one with a tot of Baileys*.

*subject to availability.



November Motoring Getting Winter-Ready

As the nights draw in and the temperatures drop, November is the perfect time to give your car some extra attention before the full force of winter arrives. A little preparation now can save a lot of stress later, whether you're commuting daily, running family errands, or planning festive trips further afield.

Check your tyres

Tyres are the only contact your vehicle has with the road, so it's vital they're in good condition. Check for adequate tread depth (at least 1.6mm, though 3mm is recommended in wet or icy conditions) and make sure they're properly inflated. Consider switching to winter or all-season tyres if you do a lot of driving in challenging weather, as they pro-

vide improved grip and reassurance.

Battery health

Cold weather is tough on car batteries. If yours is more than three years old, get it tested to avoid the dreaded flat battery on a frosty morning. Keeping jump leads or a compact booster pack in the boot is always a good idea too.

Lights and visibility

With darker evenings and poor weather, clear visibility is essential. Check all your lights are working and clean, and replace worn wiper blades. Top up your screenwash with a winter-grade formula to prevent freezing and keep your view crystal clear.

Emergency kit

It's worth keeping a small winter kit in your car – think blanket, torch, ice scraper, de-icer, phone charger, and even a flask of hot drink if you're heading on longer journeys. You'll thank yourself if you ever get caught in traffic or a breakdown on a cold night.

Plan ahead

Road conditions can change quickly in November, especially with early morning frost or heavy rain. Allow extra time for journeys, keep your fuel tank topped up, and drive steadily to match the conditions.

A few simple checks and a little preparation can make a big difference to your safety and comfort on the roads this winter.

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Kidderminster Harriers: November Diary

November promises to be a pivotal month for Kidderminster Harriers as they look to push up the National League North table. With a packed schedule, every point will count as the Reds aim to turn strong performances into results.

The month kicks off with a home clash against Southport on Saturday 2nd November, followed by a challenging away trip to Chorley on the 9th. Mid-month brings a big test at Aggborough as the Harriers welcome Chester on Saturday 16th November, always a fiercely contested fixture.

The team then travel to Scarborough Athletic on the 23rd, before rounding off the month back

at home against Blyth Spartans on Saturday 30th November.

Manager Adam Murray has called for focus and determination, with recent performances suggesting the side are starting to gel. Fans can expect attacking football and plenty of passion as the Harriers fight to climb the standings.

With home support playing such a vital role, Aggborough is set to come alive under the floodlights once again — so wrap up warm, grab your scarf, and get behind the Reds this November!

Full fixtures and tickets: www.harriers.co.uk

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