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EDITION NO. 22 NOV 2026

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Flying Scotsman Steams Through

Kidderminster

Kidderminster railway fans were up bright and early in September as one of the world's most famous steam locomotives made its way through the Wyre Forest.

The legendary Flying Scotsman, the LNER Class A3 locomotive built in 1923, passed through the area on Saturday 19 September as part of a special journey from Stourbridge Junction to Bristol Temple Meads.

Crowds had gathered earlier in the morning to catch a glimpse of the historic engine, with plenty of local residents making the most of the rare opportunity to see such an iconic locomotive travelling through Kidderminster.

The Flying Scotsman arrived at Stourbridge Junction at around 7.04am before departing just a few minutes later. It then continued its journey through the Wyre Forest, passing through Kidderminster at around 7.21am.

For those waiting along the railway line and around the station, the brief appearance was enough to create plenty of excitement. Residents captured photographs and videos as the locomotive steamed through, with footage quickly being shared online.

Some enthusiasts had been waiting since before 6am, braving the chilly September morning to make sure they didn't miss it. The effort certainly paid off, with the sight, sound and steam of the famous locomotive providing a memorable start to the day.

One spectator described the atmosphere as particularly special, with the excitement building as the train approached and the steam could be seen rising above the tracks.

The Flying Scotsman continued on through the area, also passing stations including Blakedown and Hartlebury, before continuing towards Bristol.

For Kidderminster and the wider Wyre Forest, it was a fantastic opportunity to see a genuine piece of railway history passing right through our local community.

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The Nest Wellbeing Hub Opens

in Kidderminster Town Centre



A new wellbeing hub offering support to people across Wyre Forest has officially opened in Kidderminster town centre.

The Nest marked its launch on Friday 9 October, welcoming local partners and stakeholders to its home at 64–65 Worcester Street for a cuppa and a conversation about the hub's future.

The project has grown from Kidderminster Foodbank, which will continue to provide essential support to people facing hardship. Wyre Forest Citizens Advice will also continue to offer support from the building.

The Nest is a permanent, community-led hub. Its name stands for its aim to nurture, empower and support people, and help the community thrive. The opening marks the first stage of a wider development. With funding from Trussell, the space is being given a bright, welcoming new look, and the team hopes to bring in new partners and services. The hub will build on existing links with organisations including Beyond the Hoard, Kidderminster Writes, Health Valued and Wyre Forest Baby Bank.

The Nest plans to offer a wider range of support, including creative activities, counselling, support groups, health checks, housing and financial advice, employment support and access to specialist services. It aims to be a welcoming place where people from all walks of life can find practical help and a sense of community.

The project has received support from local organisations including Wyre Forest Crematorium, Worcestershire Public Health and Wyre Forest District Council. Its long-term aim is to help build a community where people feel safe, valued, connected and hopeful, while working towards reducing the need for food banks.

Nina Price, manager of Kidderminster Foodbank, said: "We're really excited to be finally launching The Nest. We're incredibly grateful to everyone who has supported us over the years, and we offer a warm welcome to people who come through the doors.

"The Nest is about so much more than what we've been able to offer before, it's about building something lasting, together, with our community at the heart of everything."

Opening hours

The Nest and Kidderminster Foodbank are open:

Monday: 12.30pm–3pm,

Wednesday: 9.30am–11.30am and

Friday: 12.30pm–3pm.

To donate to Kidderminster Foodbank, visit its JustGiving page and search for "Kidderminster Foodbank".

For updates, follow Kidderminster Foodbank on social media at @kidderminsterfoodbank or visit kidderminster.foodbank.org.uk.

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KEMP Hospice recognised as one of the UK's Best

Workplaces in Healthcare™ and Charity & Not-For-Profit™

Having retained its Great Place To Work® status for 2026, Wyre Forest's KEMP Hospice has also been named in the UK's Best Workplaces in Charity & Not-For-Profit™ and the UK's Best Workplaces in Healthcare™ lists. Having been revealed this week by Great Place To Work® Kidderminster based KEMP Hospice was recognised among the list of organisations in the 'Small & Medium' size category.

Caroline Beech, Chief Executive at KEMP Hospice, said "We're absolutely delighted to have retained our Great Place to Work Certification. To have also been named in the UK's Best Workplaces in both the Healthcare™ and Charity & Not-For-Profit™ lists is an incredible achievement and something we are immensely proud of. Every day, our teams of staff and volunteers bring compassion, dedication and expertise to their roles, helping us provide care and support to local people in Wyre Forest and their families. We're incredibly proud of the team we have built and the culture we continue to develop together."



Cassie Bennett, Head of People & Operations, said "At KEMP, our culture is shaped by the people who work and volunteer here and the way everyone works together every day. This certification recognises the commitment our teams have made to really living our values and creating a wonderful place to work.

Great Place to Work® is built around trust, pride and camaraderie, and that really reflects what KEMP is all about – our teams trust and support one another, take pride in what they do and work together for a cause we all genuinely care about. Every team has an important part to play and, together, we can make a real difference in our community to those that need us.

I'm incredibly proud to be part of KEMP and particularly proud to see our team members recognised for the part they each play in making KEMP what it is. It's a fantastic recognition for everyone, and one I'm thrilled to be celebrating alongside them."

Great Place to Work® Certification™ is recognised worldwide and is based on employee feedback about their experience of working for an organisation. The 2026 Best Workplaces in Healthcare™ and Charity & Not-For-Profit™ lists are created using the anonymous feedback from employees working in the industry about their workplace experience.

Great Place To Work® UK administered their research-backed Trust Index© employee survey and analysed the responses of UK-based charity & not-for-profit and healthcare sector employees to determine the Best Workplaces™ list. The surveys asked employees to comment on how their company supports their work-life balance, sense of fulfilment, job satisfaction, psychological safety and financial security. Evaluations also included an assessment of how well the organisation was able to deliver consistency of their employee experience across all departments and seniority levels.

Benedict Gautrey, Managing Director of Great Place To Work® UK said "The organisations recognised as the UK's Best Workplaces understand that delivering on their mission starts with creating a positive experience for their people. Our research shows that by championing wellbeing, encouraging healthy work-life balance, and providing the flexibility employees need, these organisations create cultures where people feel supported, valued, and able to make their greatest contribution. Congratulations to KEMP Hospice on earning recognition as one of the UK's Best Workplaces in Healthcare™ and Charity & Not-for-Profit™ and for building a workplace where people and purpose go hand in hand."

If you would like to find out more about KEMP Hospice or how you could support the hospice, visit their website www.kemphospice.org.uk



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Coughs: What's Normal, What Helps

and When to Get It Checked

As November brings colder temperatures and more time spent indoors, coughs and colds can quickly become part of everyday life. A cough is one of the body's natural defence mechanisms, helping to clear mucus, irritants and germs from the airways. Most coughs are nothing to worry about and will improve on their own, but knowing what to look out for can help you decide when some extra advice is needed.

A cough often comes alongside a cold or another viral infection. You might also have a blocked or runny nose, sore throat, headache, tiredness or a mild temperature. Most viral coughs gradually improve without treatment, although they can sometimes hang around for several weeks after the original infection has gone.

There are a few simple things you can do to make yourself more comfortable. Getting plenty of rest and drinking enough fluids can help, while warm drinks can soothe a sore throat. Honey and lemon in warm water is a popular winter remedy and may help to ease coughing, although honey should never be given to babies under one year old.

If you have a cough, try to avoid smoking and smoky environments, as these can irritate the airways and make symptoms worse. Washing your hands regularly and using tissues when coughing or sneezing can also help reduce the spread of infections, particularly when you're spending more time indoors with other people.

Pharmacists can also offer advice about suitable treatments. Some cough medicines may help relieve symptoms, although they don't necessarily make the underlying infection disappear any faster. Antibiotics aren't normally prescribed for ordinary coughs caused by viruses because they don't work against viral infections.

Contact your GP if a cough lasts for more than three weeks, is getting significantly worse, or is affecting your daily life. You should also seek advice if you have unexplained weight loss, persistent breathlessness or other symptoms that concern you.

Urgent medical help is needed if you are struggling to breathe, coughing up significant amounts of blood, or experiencing severe chest pain. Keeping hydrated, getting enough rest, staying away from cigarette smoke and taking sensible steps to reduce the spread of infections can all help you get through the season.

And if a cough doesn't seem to be following the usual pattern or simply doesn't feel right, don't ignore it. A quick conversation with your GP or pharmacist can provide reassurance or make sure you get the appropriate advice.

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GET READY FOR THE WYRE FOREST CHRISTMAS

Lights Switch On

It might only be November, but Christmas is already on its way across Wyre Forest, with Kidderminster, Stourport and Bewdley all getting ready to switch on their festive lights and officially kick off the Christmas season.

If you're looking for a reason to get the family wrapped up, head into town and enjoy a bit of festive fun, there are plenty of dates for the diary.

KIDDERMINSTER
SATURDAY 14th NOVEMBER
Christmas gets underway first in Kidderminster, with the town's Christmas Lights Switch On taking place on Saturday 14th November.



The event is organised as part of Kidderminster Town Council's civic events programme, with the council having confirmed the date for this year's celebrations.

Full details of the entertainment and timings are expected to be available from Kidderminster Town Council, so if you're planning to head into town, it's worth checking for the latest information before the big day.

For the latest Kidderminster Christmas Lights Switch On information, visit kidderminstertowncouncil.gov.uk.

STOURPORT
FRIDAY 20th NOVEMBER
The following Friday, it's Stourport's turn, with the town's popular Three Kings Parade and Christmas Light Switch On taking place on Friday 20th November.
The parade will assemble in the car park behind the Civic Centre between 5.15pm and 5.30pm, before setting off at 6pm.
The parade route will run from the car park off Martins Way, along New Street, High Street, Lion Hill and York Street, before returning to the Civic Centre car park.

Visitors should be aware that road closures will be in place during the event.

The Three Kings Parade is always one of the highlights of Stourport's festive calendar and provides a great opportunity to head into the town, support local businesses and enjoy the start of the Christmas celebrations.

For full details and any updates, visit stourporttowncouncil.gov.uk.

BEWDLEY
SATURDAY 21st NOVEMBER
Just one day later, the Christmas celebrations continue in Bewdley, with the town's Christmas Lights Switch On taking place on Saturday 21 November.

And there is plenty planned to make this year's event a memorable one.

Bewdley Town Council has confirmed a number of attractions, including an outdoor grotto with a Narnia theme, an animatronic polar bear and stilt-walking reindeer. There will also be plenty of festive entertainment and activities for families to enjoy.

The council is continuing to finalise the programme, so visitors are advised to check the latest information before travelling.

For the latest Bewdley Christmas Lights Switch On information, visit bewdleytowncouncil.gov.uk.

So, whether you're heading to Kidderminster on the 14th, Stourport on the 20th or Bewdley on the 21st, there are plenty of opportunities to get into the festive spirit.

Christmas may still be a few weeks away, but across Wyre Forest the lights are getting ready to shine!





Project Aims to Stop Youth

Homelessness Before Crisis

Two Worcestershire charities have joined forces to launch a new school-based project designed to identify and support young people who may be at risk of homelessness before problems reach crisis point.

Wyre Forest & South Worcestershire Nightstop and Mediation Service and The Basement Project are delivering Upstream Worcestershire, an early-intervention project supporting young people aged 11 to 16.
Nightstop is piloting the project with Baxter College in Kidderminster and The Stourport High School and Sixth Form Centre, while The Basement Project is working with schools in Bromsgrove.

Upstream uses a digital survey completed by pupils in the classroom. It looks at areas including home life, wellbeing and experiences at school, helping identify potential issues such as family conflict, poor mental health and disengagement from education.

Young people who may benefit from additional support can then be invited to meet an Upstream practitioner. Support is tailored to the individual and their family and could include one-to-one support, conflict coaching, family mediation, help with school and relationships, or referrals to specialist services.

The whole-school approach is designed to reach young people who may be struggling but have not asked for help or are not already known to support services.

The project has been inspired by early-intervention programmes including The Geelong Project in Australia and forms part of the wider Upstream England programme.

Judith Ford, CEO of Wyre Forest & South Worcestershire Nightstop and Mediation Service, said the project could help identify difficulties much earlier.
"Family breakdown is the number one cause of youth homelessness, yet too often young people only come to the attention of homelessness services when relationships have already broken down," she said.

"Upstream gives us an opportunity to reach young people and their families much earlier. By identifying difficulties and offering the right support at the right time, we hope to strengthen family relationships and help young people remain safely housed and engaged in education."

The Worcestershire pilot will be monitored to understand its impact on young people's wellbeing, education and relationships at home.

The long-term ambition is to help more young people remain safe, supported and able to reach their full potential, while preventing problems from escalating into homelessness.



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Shine a Light with KEMP Hospice

This Festive Season

A favourite song, a familiar voice, a Christmas tradition, or simply a memory that makes you smile. The festive season has a way of bringing memories of people we miss a little closer. For anyone who has lost someone important to them, it can be a particularly poignant time of year.

Shine a Light from KEMP Hospice is an opportunity to pause and remember those special people. It is about celebrating their lives, sharing their memories, and keeping their light shining.

By supporting Shine a Light with a donation, you will also be making a difference for the people in your community who need the care and services KEMP Hospice provides. Whether a patient in day hospice accessing complementary therapy to ease the pain of their condition, or a young person who has experienced a bereavement needing counselling support; KEMP never charges for their services, so every pound given truly makes a difference.

Shine a Light is about helping KEMP Hospice bring comfort, care, and support to someone in your community, whilst remembering someone who brought light into yours.

This year, KEMP will also be holding a special evening of festive music on Tuesday 1st December at St George's Hall, Bewdley, when a local choir will fill the room with much-loved seasonal songs. It will be an opportunity to enjoy some beautiful music, reflect, and remember, while helping to raise vital funds for KEMP Hospice.

This festive season, take a moment to remember someone special and support your local hospice. Whether enjoying the concert or donating and dedicating online, you can help keep a light shining for your loved ones this festive season.

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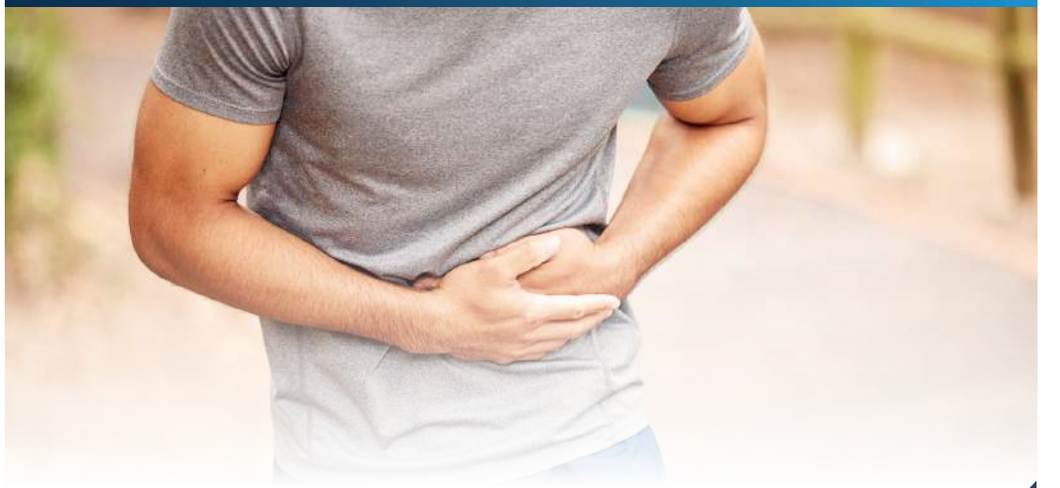
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Bewdley's Soup Trail Serves up

A Winning Day



Three hundred lucky ticket holders, eight pubs and cafés, and happy faces all round: Bewdley's annual Soup Trail brought the town together on a beautiful autumn day, with local venues serving up a tempting variety of bowls.

Organised as part of Bewdley Festival, the trail invited participants to explore the town and sample soups before voting for their favourite. With eight venues involved, there was plenty to taste and compare, and the standard of entries was high.
This year's winner was Phillings, whose roasted red pepper, tomato and mascarpone soup proved a hit with ticket holders. Diners could also choose to add chorizo, giving the winning bowl an extra savoury twist.

The other participating venues were Amphora Wine Bar, Cock and Magpie, The Courtyard Bewdley, The Garden Kitchen, Pon De River, Rise Café and The White Swan. Together, the venues helped make the trail a celebration of Bewdley's independent hospitality and the people who make the town such a welcoming place to visit.

The Soup Trail is a popular fixture in the Festival calendar, combining friendly competition with a chance to discover local cafés and pubs. This year, the fine weather added to the occasion as visitors wandered between stops, catching up with friends and enjoying the atmosphere around town.
There was more to enjoy at Bewdley Museum, where Got 2 Sing Choir Bewdley performed contemporary songs in the Saw Yard during the afternoon. The museum's Garden Kitchen was also among the venues taking part, after winning the previous year's wooden bowl.

With 300 tickets snapped up, eight distinctive soups on offer and a popular winner announced, this year's trail showed Bewdley doing what it does best: bringing people together, supporting local businesses and making a beautiful day out of a simple shared pleasure.

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Living in a Digital World

By Nigel Reid

As we become increasingly driven by technology, it is important to understand what living in a digital world means.

Computers, the internet and digital devices now play an important role in almost everything we do. They shape how we communicate, work, shop, travel, access information, receive services and entertain ourselves. Much of everyday life is connected through online systems, from keeping in touch by smartphone or video call to managing money, paying bills and ordering groceries. We can book GP appointments, access medical records, use digital prescriptions, plan journeys, buy electronic tickets and watch television through streaming services. Government services, such as paying council tax and completing tax returns, are increasingly available online. Artificial intelligence tools such as ChatGPT can answer questions and assist with everyday tasks.

There are clear advantages. Information is available almost instantly, communication is quicker, and many tasks can be completed from home. Technology can save time and money, while giving people access to education and services from almost anywhere. It also creates new opportunities for businesses and employment.

However, this progress brings challenges. People without internet access, computers or smartphones may find it difficult to use essential services. Older people and others who lack confidence with technology can be left behind. Personal information may be collected, shared or misused, and criminals use digital tools to deceive people. False information can spread quickly online.

Digital communication can also contribute to social isolation when it replaces contact in person. And when systems fail, people who depend on them may struggle to manage basic tasks.

These issues will matter even more as technology becomes further woven into daily life. Artificial intelligence, smart homes, driverless vehicles, digital identification, online healthcare and automated services are likely to influence how we live.

Living in a digital world is not simply about owning a smartphone or knowing how to use a computer. It means understanding how technology is changing society and being able to use it safely, confidently and effectively. It also means recognising that people should be able to choose how much technology they use. Essential services must remain accessible to those who are offline or prefer face-to-face help.

Technology should make our lives easier, not make it impossible to live without it. The challenge is to ensure that everyone can benefit from the digital revolution, rather than leaving some people behind.



Remembrance Sunday in Wyre Forest

The Story Behind the Silence and Local Services

Remembrance Sunday is observed across the United Kingdom on the second Sunday in November, close to 11 November. At 11 a.m., people pause for a two-minute silence to remember those who died in wars and conflicts, and honour those who served.

The date recalls the Armistice that ended fighting in the First World War on 11 November 1918. Its first anniversary was marked in 1919 with a two-minute silence and ceremony at London's Cenotaph. Poppies became a symbol of remembrance, and the Royal British Legion began its Poppy Appeal in 1921. During the Second World War, the national ceremony moved to a Sunday. In 1946, Sunday observance was formally adopted. Today, remembrance includes those who died in both world wars and later conflicts.

In 2026, Remembrance Sunday falls on 8 November. Across Wyre Forest, remembrance is rooted in local places and names. In Kidderminster, the parade gathers at Bateman's Yard car park at 10.15 a.m. and sets off at 10.30. The outdoor service is scheduled for 10.50 at the St Mary and All Saints Church war memorial, followed by the two-minute silence at 11 and wreath-laying. An indoor service follows.

In Bewdley, the parade gathers at Bridge House on Riverside North at 10.30 a.m., then proceeds to the war memorial at St Anne's Church for the 11 a.m. silence. A church service follows. In Stourport-on-Severn, the annual parade and service are listed for 8 November at the War Memorial on Vale Road; confirm the 2026 start time with the town council before publication.

These ceremonies are part of a history of commemoration. Kidderminster's First World War memorial was unveiled in 1922. Stourport's memorial, designed by the Bromsgrove Guild, was also erected in 1922, with a Second World War sundial added in 1954

From Kidderminster to Stourport and Bewdley, residents gather to remember neighbours, relatives and workers whose names are carved in stone. The silence offers a moment to reflect on loss, service and hope for peace, keeping local and national history alive for future generations.





JHAC

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.



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2nd - Andy's Man's Club 7pm-9pm
4th - Wellbeing craft workshop 11am-2pm
9th - Andy's Man's Club 7pm-9pm
9th - Emergency First Aid at Work 09.30-16.30 booking required
11th - Wellbeing craft workshop 11am-2pm
16th - Andy's Man's Club 7pm-9pm
18th - Wellbeing craft workshop 11am-2pm
23rd - Andy's Man's Club 7pm-9pm
25th - Wellbeing craft workshop 11am-2pm
28th - All Seasons Art Exhibition 2.30pm-4pm

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King and Castle celebrates

Good Beer Guide recognition



There's some great news for beer lovers in Kidderminster, with the King and Castle pub being included in CAMRA's Good Beer Guide 2027.

The popular pub, based at Kidderminster Station and part of the Severn Valley Railway, is one of several pubs across the Wyre Forest to feature in this year's guide, which celebrates some of the best pubs and beers across the UK.

The Good Beer Guide is published annually by the Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) and is widely regarded as one of the go-to guides for anyone looking for a great pint and a good local pub.

The King and Castle team say they are delighted to have been included, with Nicky Freeman, Commercial and Customer Experience Manager at the Severn Valley Railway, praising the hard work of the team.

"We're delighted that the King and Castle has been included in CAMRA's Good Beer Guide 2027," said Nicky.

"It's wonderful recognition of the hard work our team puts into creating a welcoming pub and serving a great range of beers."

The recognition is also a thank you to the pub's customers, with the team saying they are grateful for their continued support and looking forward to raising a glass together to celebrate.

The King and Castle isn't the only Kidderminster pub to make the guide this year. The Bear and Wolf, The Chester Tavern and The Weavers Real Ale House have also been included.

The latest Good Beer Guide features information on thousands of pubs across the country, including details about food, accessibility, beer gardens and family facilities.

It also includes a directory of around 1,700 breweries and 5,000 beers, including information on brewery taprooms.

CAMRA says venues are independently evaluated by its members before being included in the guide, giving pub and beer fans a useful starting point when looking for somewhere new to visit.

The 2027 edition also features a foreword from author Sir Ian Rankin, best known for his Inspector Rebus novels.

Fancy checking out the guide for yourself? The Good Beer Guide 2027 is available from the CAMRA shop, priced at £15.99, or £13.99 for CAMRA members, plus postage.



From Gunpowder Plot to Bonfire Night

The Story of 5th November

Bonfire Night, also known as Guy Fawkes Night, is celebrated in Britain every year on 5 November. The tradition began after the Gunpowder Plot, a failed attempt in 1605 to blow up the Houses of Parliament and kill King James I.

The plot developed during a time of religious tension. England was officially Protestant, while many Catholics faced restrictions on practising their religion. When James became king in 1603, some Catholics hoped he would treat them more fairly. Their hopes were disappointed, and a group of conspirators decided to use violence to change the government. Robert Catesby led the plan, and Guy Fawkes, who had military experience, was chosen to guard the explosives.

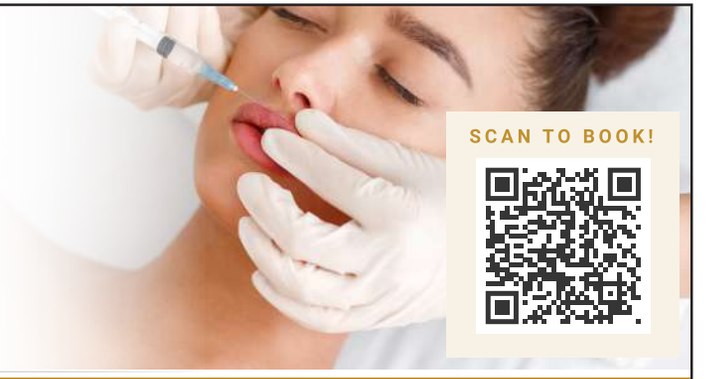
The conspirators rented a cellar beneath the House of Lords and secretly stored barrels of gunpowder there. They intended to set them off during the State Opening of Parliament on 5 November, when the king, members of Parliament and other important people would be present. The explosion was meant to kill the king and destroy the building, creating an opportunity for the plotters to replace the government.

The plan was uncovered after an anonymous letter warned Lord Monteagle to avoid Parliament. Officials searched the building during the night of 4 November and found Fawkes near the gunpowder. He was arrested and questioned. The other conspirators were pursued; some were killed resisting arrest, while others were captured. Fawkes and several surviving plotters were executed in January 1606.

Soon after the plot failed, people lit bonfires to celebrate the king's survival. Parliament made 5 November an annual day of thanksgiving. Over the centuries, the observance changed. Fireworks became part of the celebrations, and people began making effigies called "Guys" to burn on the bonfires.

Today, families and communities mark Bonfire Night with fireworks, bonfires, food and gatherings. The event recalls the foiled plot, but it also reflects the religious divisions of seventeenth-century England.

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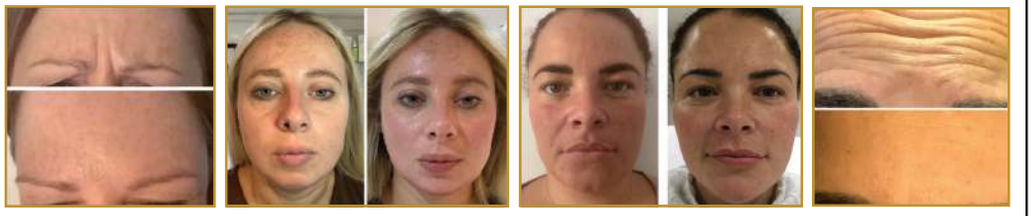


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Young Gloves Karate celebrates
Five Years at Leapgate

Young Gloves Karate has been celebrating a very special milestone, with its regular sessions at Leapgate Activity Centre in Stourport marking their fifth anniversary.

To celebrate, members came together for a special karate session last month, bringing together some of the people who have been taking part in the monthly sessions over the past five years. The sessions have become a regular fixture at Leapgate, giving members the opportunity to get active, learn new skills and develop their confidence, all within a friendly and inclusive environment.

Young Gloves Karate founder and senior instructor Justin Thomas BEM wanted to mark the occasion in style, presenting every member of the Leapgate group with a personalised Young Gloves Karate T-shirt.

Justin said the five-year milestone was a fantastic achievement, but that the sessions were about much more than simply learning karate.

For the members, the classes are about friendship, inclusion, confidence and achievement, while also giving everyone the opportunity to get involved and enjoy themselves.

Over the past five years, members have developed their skills and confidence, with the Leapgate group becoming an important part of the wider Young Gloves Karate family.

Justin also paid tribute to Matthew Jarrett, who has played a key role in making the monthly sessions such a success.

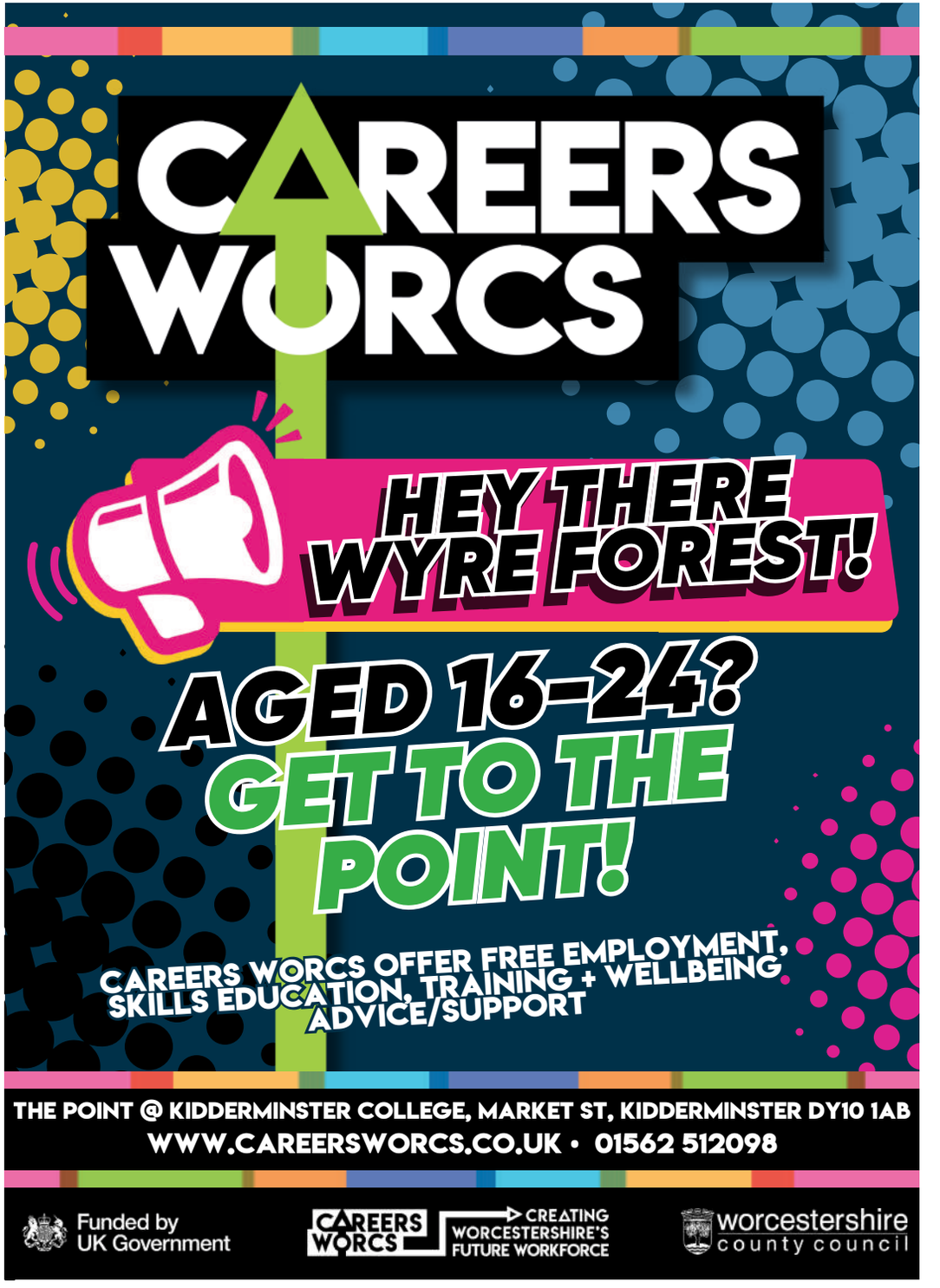
Matthew runs the class each month and helps ensure that everyone feels welcome and included, providing plenty of encouragement and support along the way.

Five years is certainly something worth celebrating, and the anniversary session was a great opportunity for everyone involved to look back at how far the group has come.

With the sessions continuing at Leapgate, there will hopefully be many more milestones to celebrate in the years ahead.

If you would like to find out more about Young Gloves Karate and its sessions, visit www.younggloveskarate.co.uk.

For more information about Leapgate Activity Centre and the facilities and activities available there, visit www.leapgate.co.uk.



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Plant of the Month:

Skimmia Japonica an Evergreen Favourite

As the leaves begin to fall and many gardens start to lose their summer colour, Skimmia japonica comes into its own. This attractive evergreen shrub is an excellent choice for November, providing year-round interest with glossy green foliage, clusters of flowers and colourful winter buds.

Originally from Japan and other parts of Asia, Skimmia is now a popular garden plant in the UK, particularly because it is relatively easy to grow and happy in partially shaded areas. That makes it especially useful for those awkward corners of the garden where sun-loving plants can struggle.

One of its biggest attractions is its foliage. The leaves remain green throughout the year, helping to give the garden structure during the darker winter months. In spring, small fragrant flowers appear, followed later by attractive red berries on female plants if a suitable male plant is nearby. November is a particularly good time to appreciate Skimmia's glossy foliage and developing flower buds. Some varieties produce deep red or pinkish buds that stand out beautifully against the green leaves, providing a welcome splash of colour as the garden becomes quieter.

Skimmia prefers a sheltered position with partial or dappled shade. It generally doesn't enjoy very bright, hot sunshine, particularly if the soil becomes dry. A rich, slightly acidic soil is ideal, and adding plenty of organic matter when planting can help establish a healthy shrub.

It also works brilliantly in containers, making it a good choice for patios, balconies and smaller gardens. Place a container near a doorway or seating area where the foliage and flowers can be enjoyed throughout the seasons.

Once established, Skimmia requires relatively little maintenance. Remove any damaged or untidy growth when necessary and keep container-grown plants watered during dry periods.

For a plant that provides attractive foliage, seasonal colour and plenty of winter interest without demanding too much attention, Skimmia japonica is a great November choice.

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Kitchen Storage

Making Better Use of Every Inch

The kitchen is one of those rooms where it never seems possible to have enough storage. No matter how many cupboards you have, there always seems to be another pan, appliance or packet that needs somewhere to go.

Before buying more storage, however, take a fresh look at the space you already have. You may be surprised by how much potential is hiding inside your cupboards and drawers.

Start with the awkward areas. Corner cupboards are notorious for becoming dumping grounds, but rotating shelves, pull-out baskets and clever corner storage can make these difficult spaces far more useful.

Drawers can often be improved too. Simple dividers can stop cutlery and utensils becoming mixed together, while deeper drawers can be used for pans, chopping boards and larger kitchen equipment.

Don't forget the inside of cupboard doors. Small racks can provide useful extra space for spices, cleaning products, chopping boards or food wraps without taking up valuable shelf space.
If your worktops are becoming crowded, think about which appliances genuinely need to stay out. A toaster and kettle may be used every day, but less frequently used gadgets could be stored away until they're needed.

Open shelving can also be useful, particularly in smaller kitchens, although it works best when kept relatively tidy. A few attractive everyday items can become part of the room rather than simply being storage.

November is also a good month for a kitchen clear-out. Check the back of cupboards for food that has passed its best-before date, donate items you no longer use and think about whether you really need duplicates of everything.
Good kitchen storage isn't simply about having more cupboards. It's about making the space you already have work harder.

With a little organisation, even a compact kitchen can feel less cluttered, easier to use and much more enjoyable to spend time in.



The Dining Room, Creating a Welcoming

Space for Family Meals and Entertaining

For many years, the dining room seemed to be disappearing from modern homes. Open-plan kitchens and breakfast bars became increasingly popular, with families choosing to eat wherever was convenient.

But there is something rather appealing about having a proper place to sit down and eat together, particularly as we head towards the colder months.
November is the perfect time to rethink your dining space. You don't necessarily need a separate dining room either. A small table tucked into a kitchen, an extension of the living room or even an unused corner can become a welcoming place to eat.

The table is the obvious starting point. Choose a size that suits the space rather than trying to squeeze in the biggest table possible. Round tables can work particularly well in smaller rooms because they allow people to move around them more easily.
Comfort matters too. Dining chairs don't have to be matching, and a combination of styles can give the room a more relaxed feel. Just make sure they are comfortable enough for long lunches and evening meals.

Lighting can transform the atmosphere. A pendant light positioned above the table creates a natural focal point, while dimmer switches allow you to change the mood from bright family breakfast to relaxed evening dinner.
November also gives us plenty of opportunities to make the table feel special. You don't need elaborate decorations. A simple vase of seasonal foliage, candles, linen napkins or a few autumnal touches can create a beautiful setting.

And perhaps the biggest benefit of bringing your dining space back into use is what happens around it. Sitting down together encourages conversation and gives everyone a reason to put their phones away for a while.
As the nights get longer and Christmas approaches, a welcoming dining space can become the heart of the home once again.







Preparing Your Home for the Colder Months

November is often the month when we really notice the change in our homes. The evenings are darker, temperatures begin to drop and suddenly we're reaching for the heating and extra blankets.

Before winter properly arrives, it's worth spending a little time getting your home ready. Small jobs now can make the colder months more comfortable and may help prevent bigger problems later.

Start with your windows and doors. Check for obvious draughts around frames and gaps, particularly in older properties. Draught excluders can be a simple and inexpensive way to stop cold air coming underneath doors, while thicker curtains can help keep warmth inside.

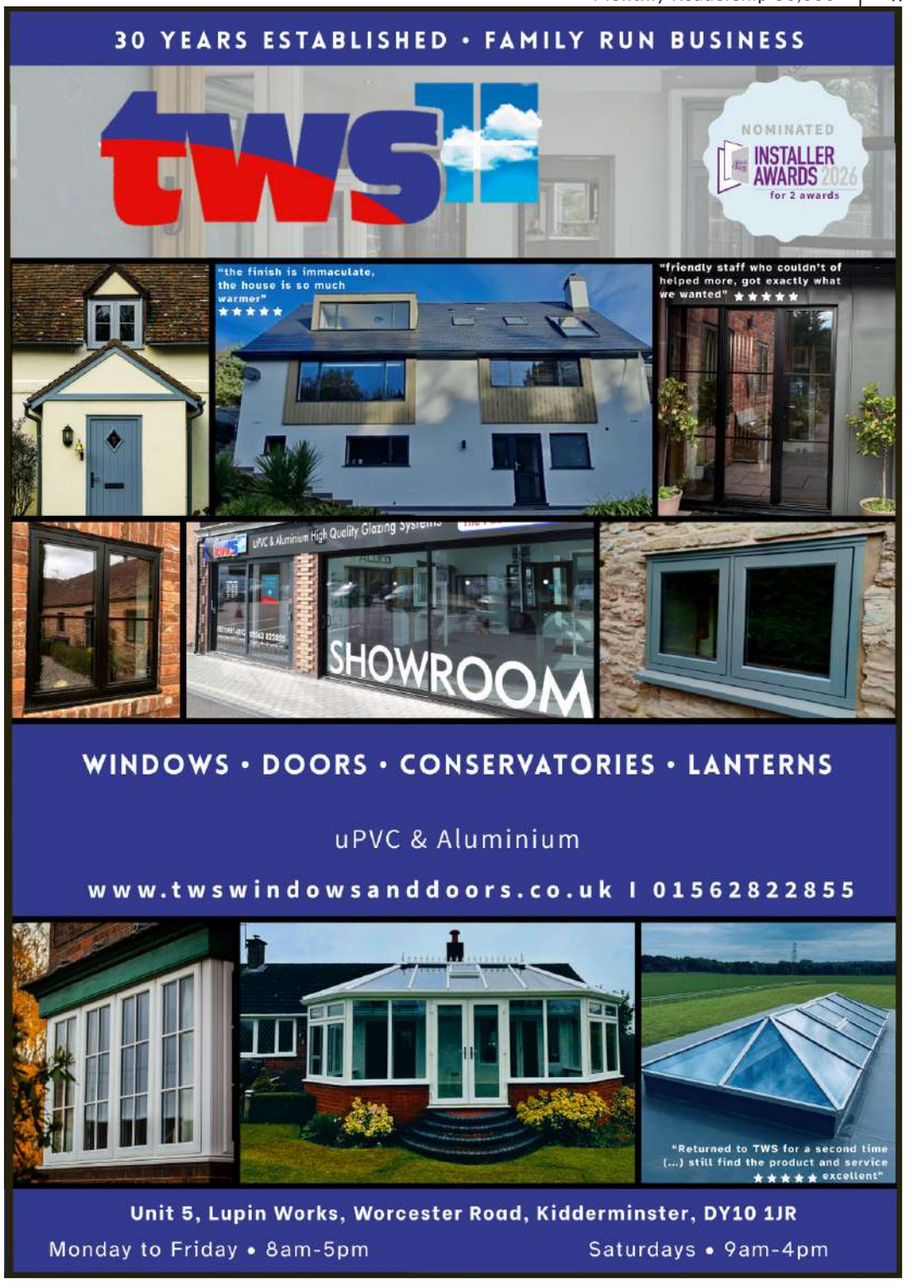
Your floors deserve some attention too. Rugs can instantly make a room feel warmer and more comfortable underfoot, particularly if you have wooden or tiled flooring. They also add colour and texture without requiring a major change to the room.

November is also a good time to look at your lighting. With darkness arriving much earlier, rooms can feel gloomy if you're relying on a single overhead light. Add a couple of lamps to living rooms and bedrooms to create a softer, warmer atmosphere.

Don't forget those jobs that aren't particularly exciting but are worth doing. Check your radiators, bleed them if necessary and make sure furniture isn't blocking them. If you have a fireplace or wood burner, make sure it is clean and ready for use.

Then there are the simple comforts. Bring out the thicker throws, change lighter summer cushions for warmer textures and make the bedroom feel inviting with heavier bedding.

Preparing your home for winter doesn't have to mean spending a fortune or completely redecorating. Often, it's simply about making the most of what you already have and creating a home that feels warm, comfortable and ready for the season ahead.



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Cosy Winter Bedrooms Simple Ways to

Make Your Bedroom Warmer and Calmer

There is something particularly appealing about getting into a warm, comfortable bed when it's cold and dark outside. As November arrives, the bedroom becomes more than somewhere to sleep. It becomes a place to retreat, relax and escape the winter weather.

Creating that cosy feeling doesn't require a complete bedroom makeover. Sometimes changing a few simple things is enough.

Start with the bed itself. As temperatures fall, swap lightweight summer bedding for something warmer and more substantial. Layering is useful because it allows you to add or remove blankets depending on the temperature. Texture is just as important as warmth. Chunky knitted throws, soft cushions, brushed cotton bedding and thicker curtains can instantly make a bedroom feel more inviting. Mixing different textures can add depth without needing lots of colour.

Speaking of colour, November is a good time to introduce warmer tones. Soft beige, earthy green, muted terracotta and warm grey can all create a relaxed atmosphere. You don't necessarily need to repaint the walls. Cushions, throws, bedding and accessories can introduce seasonal colour instead.

Lighting can make perhaps the biggest difference. Harsh overhead lighting isn't particularly relaxing at bedtime, so consider bedside lamps with warm-toned bulbs. A small lamp on a chest of drawers or dressing table can create another gentle pool of light.
Don't overlook the windows. Thicker curtains can help keep warmth in and create a more enclosed, comfortable feeling once the sun goes down. They can also add another layer of texture to the room.
Finally, try to keep the bedroom relatively uncluttered. A calm space is generally more relaxing than one covered with clothes, paperwork and everyday belongings.

Your bedroom doesn't need to look like a luxury hotel to feel special. A few warmer fabrics, softer lighting and thoughtful touches can make a huge difference.

When November brings those cold, dark evenings, there really is nothing better than having a bedroom that feels like your own cosy winter retreat.

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STOURPORT 9.30am Stourport
Bowling Club Lickhill Road,
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BEWDLEY 5.30pm & 7pm
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KIDDERMINSTER 6.00pm
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Rachel 07907033347

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The Severns Club
Lickhill Road, Stourport
Lisa 07906 989728

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Why Your Body Needs More of the
'Sunshine Vitamin' During the Darker Winter

As November arrives and the days become noticeably shorter, there is one nutrient that deserves a little more attention: vitamin D. Often called the "sunshine vitamin", vitamin D is produced by our bodies when our skin is exposed to sunlight. The problem is that in the UK, there simply isn't enough strong sunlight during the autumn and winter months for most people to make enough of it.

Vitamin D plays several important roles in the body. It helps maintain healthy bones and teeth, supports normal muscle function and contributes to the normal functioning of the immune system. While a balanced diet can provide some vitamin D, sunlight remains our main natural source.

During the summer months, most people can usually make enough vitamin D through regular time outdoors. However, between October and early March, the sunlight in the UK is generally not strong enough for our skin to make sufficient amounts. This is why UK health guidance recommends that everyone consider taking a daily vitamin D supplement during these months.

For most adults and children over four, the recommended supplement is 10 micrograms (400 IU) of vitamin D per day. Some people may need to take vitamin D all year round, particularly if they spend very little time outdoors, usually cover most of their skin when outside, or have darker skin. Babies and young children also have specific recommendations, so it is worth checking the guidance that applies to you.

You can get small amounts of vitamin D from foods including oily fish such as salmon, sardines and mackerel, egg yolks and some fortified foods such as certain breakfast cereals and spreads. However, it can be difficult to get enough vitamin D from food alone.

It is also worth remembering that taking more does not necessarily mean taking better care of yourself. Very high doses of vitamin D over a long period can cause too much calcium to build up in the body, which can damage the kidneys and heart. Stick to the recommended amount unless a healthcare professional has advised you otherwise.

November is also a good month to think about your overall winter routine. Try to get outside during daylight hours when you can, even if it is just for a short walk. Regular movement can help support your physical health and can also be good for your mood as the darker evenings arrive. If you are unsure whether you should take vitamin D, speak to your pharmacist or GP, particularly if you take regular medication or have an existing health condition.

So, while you might not be able to bring back the summer sunshine, a little attention to vitamin D can help you look after your health as we head into the colder, darker months.







Cranberry Topped Traditional

Raised Pork Pie



Ingrediants

For the filling
- 500g boneless pork shoulder
- 250g pork belly
- 650g chicken drumsticks
- 100g smoked streaky bacon
- ½ tsp ground mace
- 2 pinches of ground nutmeg
- 1 tsp ground white pepper
- 1 tsp ground black pepper
- 1 fresh bay leaf
- 4 thyme sprigs
- ½ bunch parsley
- 4 sage leaves

For the hot water pastry
- 140g lard
- 550g plain flour
- 1 egg

For the jellied stock
- 300ml chicken stock
- 2 gelatine leaves

For the topping (optional)
- 50g granulated sugar
- 100ml dry sherry
- 200g fresh or frozen cranberry

Method

Step 1
To make the stock, simmer the chicken and pork bones with 600ml water for 30 mins. Strain and reduce to 300ml. The bones should provide enough gelatine, but add 1 leaf as in step 10 if needed.

Step 2
Mix the filling ingredients with 1½ tsp salt. For the pastry, boil 150ml water with the lard and ½ tsp salt. Remove from the heat once melted.

Step 3
Sift the flour and 1 tsp salt into a bowl. Pour over the hot liquid and stir vigorously into a dough.

Step 4
Knead for 2 mins, then keep covered with cling film.

Step 5
Set aside one-third of the pastry for the lid. Roll out the rest to £1-coin thickness and use to line a 20cm-deep springform tin, pushing it into the corners and up the sides.

Step 6
Pack the filling tightly into the pastry case, creating a flat top.

Step 7
Roll out the reserved pastry and place on top. Press and trim the edges, then crimp if desired. Brush with beaten egg and cut a hole in the centre. Chill for up to 24 hrs or cook immediately. Heat oven to 180C/160C fan/gas 4.

Step 8
Bake for 30 mins, then reduce to 150C/130C fan/gas 2 and cook for 1 hr 45 mins. The centre should reach 75C, or feel hot when a spoon is held in it for 10 secs.

Step 9
Cool on a wire rack, then remove from the tin. Warm the stock. Soak the gelatine in cold water for 5 mins, squeeze dry and stir into the warm stock until dissolved. Season and pour into a jug.

Step 10
If necessary, use a skewer to create space between the pastry and meat. Pour in two-thirds of the stock, reserving about 4 tbsp. Chill for at least 2 hrs.

Step 11
Gently heat the sugar and sherry until dissolved, then boil and add the cranberries. Cook for 1-2 mins, stopping before they burst. Cool.

Step 12
Once the pie stock has set, top with the cranberries. Melt the reserved stock over low heat and brush generously over the fruit. Chill for 1 hr to set. Enjoy within 3 days.



Root Vegetables

The Taste Of November

November is the month when root vegetables really come into their own. As the weather turns colder, there is something wonderfully comforting about filling the kitchen with the smell of vegetables roasting in the oven, bubbling away in a casserole or being turned into a creamy, warming soup.

The good news is that many of our favourite root vegetables are at their best at this time of year. Carrots, parsnips, swede, turnips, beetroot and celeriac are all packed with flavour and are incredibly versatile.



For an easy midweek dinner, try a roasted root vegetable traybake. Chop carrots, parsnips, swede and red onion into similar-sized pieces, toss with olive oil, salt, pepper and a little rosemary, then roast until golden and tender. Add sausages for a one-tray dinner, or serve alongside roast chicken.

Parsnip and apple soup is another great November warmer. Fry a chopped onion, add sliced parsnips and a couple of apples, then cover with vegetable stock and simmer until soft. Blend until smooth and finish with a splash of cream. The sweetness of the apple works beautifully with the earthy parsnips.

For something a little more substantial, try a root vegetable cottage pie. Cook diced carrots, swede, mushrooms and onions with vegetable stock and herbs, then top with creamy mashed potato. For meat eaters, add minced beef or lamb to the filling.

And don't forget beetroot. Roasted beetroot makes a fantastic side dish, especially when combined with goats' cheese, walnuts and a little rocket. You can also grate cooked beetroot into a winter salad or add it to a rich chocolate cake for extra moisture.

For Sunday lunch, why not give the traditional roasties some competition? Roast chunks of parsnip, celeriac and carrots alongside your potatoes. They caramelise beautifully and add plenty of colour and flavour to the plate.
Root vegetables might not always get the attention they deserve, but November is their time to shine. They're inexpensive, filling and full of flavour, making them ideal for the kind of comforting home cooking we all start craving as winter approaches.



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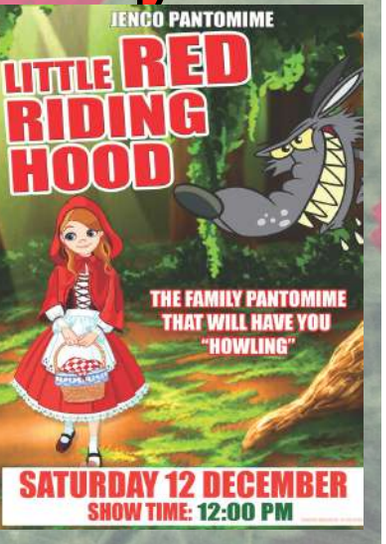
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Elvis - From Memphis to Vegas

At The Stourport Civic

Get ready to step back in time and experience the music, energy and unmistakable charisma of the King of Rock 'n' Roll when Elvis: From Memphis to Vegas comes to the stage on Saturday 28th November 2026.

Starring Mark Summers, one of the world's leading Elvis tribute artists, this spectacular show celebrates the incredible career of Elvis Presley, taking audiences on a musical journey from his early days in Memphis through to the legendary Las Vegas years.

Mark Summers is a three-time winner of the National Tribute Music Awards and has been described as being "the closest to Elvis". With more than 15 years of performing around the world, Mark has established himself as one of the top-selling international Elvis tribute artists, bringing the look, sound and spirit of Elvis to audiences across the globe.

His impressive career has also seen him appear alongside people who knew Elvis personally, including Elvis movie co-stars, original band members, close friends, members of the Memphis Mafia and members of the Presley family. Mark has even had the incredible opportunity to meet Priscilla Presley four times.

The show promises to take audiences through some of the most memorable moments of Elvis's extraordinary career, from the raw excitement of his early rock 'n' roll performances to the spectacular costumes, songs and stage presence of his later Las Vegas years. Expect plenty of classic Elvis favourites, powerful vocals and a night packed with nostalgia as Mark recreates the magic of one of the most famous entertainers the world has ever known.

Whether you are a lifelong Elvis fan or simply love great live music, Elvis: From Memphis to Vegas offers a chance to celebrate the songs and legacy of the King in a show designed to capture the excitement of seeing Elvis himself.

The show takes place at The Civic, Stourport-on-Severn, on 28th November 2026, with the performance starting at 7pm.

Tickets are £18 for adults, with concessions also priced at £18.

If Elvis is your kind of music, this promises to be a fantastic night of rock 'n' roll, nostalgia and unforgettable songs.

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Let the Music Play! Legend of Barry White at Kidderminster Town Hall

Get ready for an unforgettable night of soul as The Legend of Barry White – Let the Music Play! brings the music of one of the greatest voices of all time to the stage.

Direct from the USA, the critically acclaimed touring show stars Atlanta-born vocalist William Hicks, whose powerful bass-baritone voice and mesmerising stage presence recreate the unmistakable sound and style of Barry White.

With more than 100 million records sold, Barry White became one of the biggest names in soul and R&B, producing a string of timeless hits including You're the First, the Last, My Everything, Can't Get Enough of Your Love, Babe, You See the Trouble with Me, Never, Never Gonna Give You Up, Just the Way You Are, What Am I Gonna Do With You and, of course, Let the Music Play.

William is joined on stage by his live band, Soul Unlimited, alongside the stunning Motown Supreme Dreamgirls, creating a spectacular evening packed with classic soul, Motown and Barry White favourites.

The production has received high praise, with legendary Motown songwriter Eddie Holland describing William's vocal performance as "phenomenal" and the show as "simply stunning".

If you love classic soul, Motown and the unmistakable sound of Barry White, this is a show not to be missed. Let the Music Play!

TICKETS
Tickets are available now from boxoffice.kidderminstertownhall.org.uk



The JAECOO 7 The New Name

Taking Britain by Storm

There's a new name appearing more and more on British roads, and if you haven't spotted a JAECOO 7 yet, you probably will soon.

JAECOO only arrived in the UK in January 2025, but the JAECOO 7 has already made a serious impression. In March this year it actually became the UK's best-selling new car for the month, with more than 10,000 registered. By June, it was still sitting inside the UK's top ten, with 3,145 registrations in that month alone.

So what is all the fuss about?
The JAECOO 7 is a mid-sized SUV, with chunky styling, a surprisingly premium-looking interior and plenty of technology. It's clearly designed to appeal to drivers who like the idea of a bigger family SUV without necessarily wanting to spend premium-brand money.

There are several versions available, including petrol, self-charging hybrid and plug-in hybrid models. The plug-in SHS-P version combines a 1.5-litre turbocharged engine with an electric motor and can travel up to 56 miles using electric power alone. JAECOO quotes a combined range of up to 745 miles.

Inside, the emphasis is very much on technology. There's a large central touchscreen, digital displays and a comprehensive collection of drive assistance systems, including adaptive cruise control, blind-spot monitoring and autonomous emergency braking.

It also comes with a seven-year or 100,000-mile warranty, while the UK retailer network has expanded rapidly as the brand establishes itself.
And perhaps the most interesting thing about the JAECOO 7 is that it doesn't feel like a car from a brand trying to quietly find its feet. The styling is bold, the equipment list is generous and the company clearly has ambitions to become a familiar sight on British roads.

With prices currently starting from around £29,210 for the self-charging hybrid and £35,170 for the plug-in hybrid, the JAECOO 7 is certainly giving established manufacturers something to think about.

Whether JAECOO becomes a household name remains to be seen, but one thing is already clear the JAECOO 7 has arrived, and British motorists are definitely taking notice.

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Kidderminster Harriers

Ready for a Busy November

November promises to be another busy month for Kidderminster Harriers, with four National League fixtures on the schedule and plenty for supporters to look forward to at Aggborough and on the road.

The Harriers will begin their November campaign on Saturday 14th November when FC Halifax Town make the trip to Aggborough for a 3pm kick-off. It will be the first of two home games during the month, giving supporters the chance to get behind the team on home soil.

A week later, on Saturday 21st November, AFC Fylde will be the visitors to Aggborough, with another 3pm kick-off. With the season well underway by then, every point will be important as the Harriers look to build momentum through the autumn and into the busy winter period.

The team then face two away trips to round off the month.

On Wednesday 25th November, Harriers head north to face Harrogate Town, with the midweek fixture kicking off at 7.45pm. It will be a later start for supporters travelling to Yorkshire, but one that could provide another important test for the side.

The final game of November comes on Saturday 28th November, when Kidderminster travel to Boston United for a 3pm kick-off. So, four games, two at Aggborough and two away, and a mixture of Saturday afternoon and midweek football to keep the Harriers faithful busy.

There is always something special about watching the Harriers at Aggborough as the nights draw in and the season moves towards winter. The home support can play an important part, particularly when the games are close and those all-important points are up for grabs.

For supporters planning ahead, the November fixtures are:

Saturday 14th Nov
Harriers v FC Halifax Town, 3pm
Saturday 21st Nov
Harriers v AFC Fylde, 3pm
Wednesday 25th Nov
Harrogate v Harriers, 7.45pm
Saturday 28th Nov
Boston United v Harriers, 3pm

Kick-off times and fixtures can sometimes change, so supporters should check the club's official channels before travelling. Come on you Harriers!



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