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Local News

A Fresh Chapter Kidderminster:

New Park Takes Shape on Former Woolworths Site



Kidderminster town centre is embarking on an exciting transformation as work progresses on a brand-new public park, taking over the site where the iconic Woolworths once stood. For decades, this spot on Worcester Street was a bustling hub of retail activity, hosting high street favourites such as Megavalue, Poundland, and Sigma Aquatics. Now, the area is being cleared to make way for a vibrant, accessible green space that promises to bring a fresh sense of life and energy to the heart of the town.

The redevelopment, a joint initiative led by Wyre Forest

District Council in partnership with North Worcestershire Economic Development (NWEDR), is designed with the community in mind. The plans for the new park include a children's play area, winding walkways for leisurely strolls, and beautifully landscaped green spaces that aim to enhance the look and feel of Worcester Street. By creating a welcoming, accessible environment, the project also seeks to strengthen the connection between this key site and surrounding areas of the town centre, encouraging more visitors and fostering community engagement.

Phase one of the project, which involved carefully demolishing the old buildings that had become a tired reminder of the past, has already been successfully completed. The council is now in the process of reviewing tenders from contractors for the next stage of development, which will see the construction of the park's main features begin in the coming weeks. Residents can expect a visible transformation over the coming months as the space is brought to life.

This redevelopment forms part of the wider government-backed Fu-

ture High Streets Fund initiative, which aims to rejuvenate town centres across the UK. For Kidderminster, this means more than just a new park—it represents a broader commitment to creating a town centre that is not only functional but also vibrant, attractive, and socially inclusive. By replacing derelict buildings with a green, communal space, the project is set to provide a safe and enjoyable environment for families, young people, and older residents alike.

The benefits extend beyond aesthetics and recreation. By enhancing the local environment and providing an attractive space for residents and visitors, the new park is expected to boost footfall to surrounding businesses, sup-

porting the economic vitality of the town centre. It also represents a long-term investment in community well-being, offering a place for relaxation, leisure, and social interaction, right in the heart of Kidderminster. Once completed, the park will stand as a symbol of Kidderminster's ongoing commitment to urban renewal, community cohesion, and sustainable development. It will offer residents a modern, green space where people can gather, play, and enjoy the outdoors, while also serving as a landmark of the town's evolution.

Residents eager to follow the project's progress or learn more about the plans are encour-

aged to visit the Wyre Forest District Council's official website, where updates and detailed information on timelines and features will be regularly shared. With its combination of thoughtful design, community focus, and green innovation, the new Worcester Street park promises to be a valuable addition to Kidderminster, offering a legacy that future generations can enjoy.

To find out more about the new park and its development, visit:
www.wyreforestdc.gov.uk
for the latest updates and project information.



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Featured Business

15 Years of HYPOXI

Transformations in Kidderminster

HYPOXI is in 54 countries worldwide but Kidderminster is the only UK Studio outside London!



Dianne, owner of HYPOXI in Kidderminster, has dedicated the last 15 years to helping people transform their health, wellbeing and confidence. "I feel very privileged to have been able to bring HYPOXI to Kidderminster 15 years ago, and it really has saved lives!" she says.

HYPOXI is totally non-invasive, using compression and vacuum therapy, coupled with gentle exercise, and the results are miraculous.

HYPOXI has been exceeding client expectations for 25 years, and Dianne has supported over a thousand transformations from their Worcestershire Studio. "Clients have travelled the length and breadth of the country for HYPOXI improved skin tone, cellulite loss and targeted fat loss.

We've looked after clients of all

ages, and always enjoyed a relaxed, friendly yet professional atmosphere. Our discreet location means discerning clients, even those in the public eye, can be assured of confidentiality.

I first tried HYPOXI to recover damage from a corporate lifestyle and endometriosis, my stomach, knees, back everything was creaking and hard work! I then needed HYPOXI again to sort out post-baby damage, reversing a C-section overhang, and getting the lymphatic system back in order after pre-eclampsia.

More recently I have used HYPOXI preparing for holidays and weddings, but also to get me through menopause and grief. Stress causes high cortisol which takes its toll on the body. Symptoms include belly fat, weight gain, fatigue and poor sleep.

Over the years many, like I, have

found the answer in HYPOXI which stimulates nutrient-rich oxygenated blood throughout the body, making targeted fat burn and skin brightening and tightening a reality. Lose from stubborn fat areas as opposed to the face first.

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HYPOXI is co-located at Rejuvenate, home to many premium beauty brands delivered by some of the country's most qualified therapists. Leading technologies include radio frequency, CACI non-surgical, microneedling, peels, LVL lash lifts, manicures, pedicures and more.

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Stourport Carnival Brings the Town Alive with Colour and Community Spirit!



Stourport Carnival once again proved why it's one of the most treasured events in the Wyre Forest calendar, as hundreds of families flocked to the town on Saturday 6 September for a day filled with colour, music and community togetherness.

The streets of Stourport were bursting with life as the traditional carnival procession made its way through town. From noon, spectators lined the route to enjoy an array of vibrant floats, marching bands, dancers, classic cars and local community groups – each adding their own sparkle to this year's celebrations.

The fun didn't stop there. Down

by the Riverside, visitors enjoyed an afternoon packed with entertainment. Families made the most of the fairground rides, live music and children's activities, while the stalls offered everything from crafts and games to delicious food and drink. It was the perfect chance for friends, neighbours and visitors to come together and make lasting memories.

As the day gave way to evening, the carnival spirit carried on with music, dancing and laughter ringing out until late. The highlight for many was the spectacular fireworks display, lighting up the night sky above the riverside and bringing a dazzling

finale to an unforgettable day. The Carnival, a proud tradition loved by generations, once again showcased everything special about Stourport – community, creativity and celebration. A heartfelt thank you goes out to the organisers, volunteers, performers and everyone who took part in making this year's event such a success.





Mentor Link CHILDREN'S CHARITY IN NEED OF MENTORS

Children's charity Mentor Link provide 1-1 mentoring and therapeutic support to vulnerable children and young people in schools and the community. Children and young people who are facing social and emotional difficulties impacting on themselves and their motivation to learn.

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If you live or work in the Wyre

Forest, have excellent communication skills; are a good listener; reliable; have an interest in the next generation; can relate to children and young people and can commit to a minimum of 6 months volunteering, 1-2 hours a week, contact us.

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Support to Enhance Personal Skills

My STEPS is a day service opportunity for adults aged 16 and over who have a learning disability. We work with individuals on a one-to-one or small group basis to support progress in social skills, personal development, confidence, and independence. This warm and welcoming group is ideal for those taking their first step into the adult world, offering encouragement, friendship, and new experiences.

Our base is Leapgate Activity Centre, where we meet Monday to Thursday. This unique location means we can take part in a wide range of farming activities always a highlight! Over time, we've mucked out, fed, showered, and groomed donkeys, a pony, goats, and pigs. We've collected eggs from chickens and ducks, met newborn calves, even witnessed animal births. We garden in the orchard, help put up and take down fences,

use lawn mowers, and harvest apples and potatoes for use in our cooking sessions.

Cooking is a big part of our independent living skills programme. We've made everything from apple crumbles, rhubarb cakes, and cottage pie to soups, pasta dishes, roasts, quiches, omelettes, sandwiches, and salads. Baking cakes and treats to take home is always popular.

Craft and woodwork sessions have included creating personalised aprons, candles, hanging baskets, pom-pom wreaths, planters, hedgehog houses, rabbit hutches and runs. Everyone has the chance to try new skills, from shopping, money management, and recipe planning to cleaning, ironing, mopping, pumpkin carving, bird feeder making, and even Christmas cake decorating.

A typical morning may involve farm work and independent living skills, while afternoons could include sport and fitness, gardening, personal pampering, or enjoying a walk in the local area. Sessions are flexible and shaped by the choices of the people attending.

We provide transport from Redditch and Bromsgrove (one pick-up point in each), included in the cost of the day.

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THIS MONTHS

Local Lowdown Quirky Tales & Local Lore

There's always something unusual happening across the Wyre Forest – and we love sharing the quirky tales that make our area unique.

Did you know that Kidderminster once had a secret underground air raid shelter hidden beneath the town centre?

Locals walking along the High Street today might be surprised to learn that, during the Second World War, tunnels and chambers were built below ground to keep people safe during bombing raids. Some of these spaces still exist, quietly tucked away from view.



Meanwhile, over in Stourport, residents recently spotted a pair of bright green parakeets making themselves at home along the riverside. Thought to be escapees from an aviary, they've quickly become local celebrities – their tropical squawks drawing curious onlookers and photographers. It seems the Wyre Forest is a welcoming home for all creatures, not just our traditional wildlife.



And in Bewdley, there's been chatter about the mysterious carved faces that keep appearing on tree trunks near the riverside walks. Nobody is quite sure who is behind them, but each new discovery brings a smile to passers-by. Whether it's a hidden hobbyist wood carver or a cheeky prankster, it's another reminder of the creativity dotted around our community.



These stories may be light-hearted, but they're a wonderful snapshot of local life – a blend of history, nature and playful mystery that makes the Wyre Forest such a fascinating place to live. Keep your eyes peeled – you never know what quirky tale might be unfolding just around the corner!

Discover the joy of creativity at Cookley Art Club



For anyone who has ever wanted to pick up a paintbrush, sketchpad, or simply explore their creative side in a friendly environment, Cookley Art Club could be just the place.

The club was formed six years ago and has since grown into a warm and welcoming group of like-minded amateur artists. Members meet every Wednesday morning at Cookley Village Hall, from 10am to 12 noon, to enjoy a relaxed and informal session. There are no strict rules or rigid structures – members are encouraged to “do as they please,” whether that’s experimenting with paints, sketching, or simply sharing ideas over a cup of tea.

Creativity is at the heart of the club, but the social side is just as important. Conversations often flow from art techniques to

everyday life, making the weekly sessions as much a gathering of friends as an opportunity to explore artistic talents.

One of the most appealing aspects of Cookley Art Club is its accessibility. No previous experience is required – all that’s needed is a little enthusiasm and a willingness to have a go. Fellow members are always happy to offer guidance and encouragement to help newcomers find their own artistic path. The first visit is free, giving people the chance to see what the club is all about. After that, membership costs just £10 per month, which covers the hire of the village hall – excellent value for two hours of creativity and companionship each week.

Whether a complete beginner, someone returning to art after many years, or simply a local resi-

dent looking for a new hobby and new friends, Cookley Art Club offers the perfect opportunity.

New members are always welcome why not drop by one Wednesday morning and discover what this creative community has to offer?



Have Your Say: Improving Care at Kidderminster Hospital

Kidderminster Hospital & Treatment Centre is asking patients, carers and local residents to share what matters most in their experiences of hospital care – and your feedback could help shape future improvements.

This comes through Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust’s annual “Big Quality Conversation” survey, an anonymous questionnaire available in 95 languages. It asks about safety, the effectiveness of treatment, and the overall hospital stay. The answers gathered will directly influence the Trust’s safety and quality priorities for the year ahead.

Kidderminster has also seen

encouraging progress recently. Children’s services at the hospital were upgraded by the Care Quality Commission (CQC), moving from “requires improvement” to “good” after an unannounced inspection last autumn. Inspectors found stronger performance in safety, responsiveness, and leadership.

In addition, the hospital’s diagnostic services have expanded. The endoscopy unit has grown from three to five procedure rooms, increasing capacity and helping to reduce waiting times for vital tests and treatments.

Despite these improvements, there are ongoing calls from the

community for more investment in local services. Campaigners continue to push for the restoration of facilities and for Kidderminster to take more pressure off Worcester-shire Royal, particularly given the demands on its A&E department.

At present, Kidderminster Hospital already treats around 170,000 patients a year. Looking forward, health leaders say the site will play an even bigger role in day case and short-stay surgery, diagnostics and outpatient care – strengthening its position at the heart of healthcare in the Wyre Forest.

Have your say: You can share your views by completing the Big Quality Conversation survey at www.worcsacute.nhs.uk/bqc24.

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A Heartfelt Story of Hope: For Rescue Dogs

Local cartoonist Kerry Adams has turned her love of drawing and her passion for dogs into something truly special – a beautifully illustrated book about her own rescue dog, Rusty.

Rusty's life began in Romania, where he faced fear, hunger and loneliness until he was saved by High Hopes Dog Rescue, a Kidderminster-based charity. Thanks to their work, Rusty found his way to Kerry – and with time, patience and love, the two formed an unbreakable bond.

The book tells Rusty's real-life journey, showing both children and adults the importance of understanding and patience when welcoming a rescue dog into

their home. Kerry, who only discovered she was dyslexic at the age of ten, always found school difficult but never stopped drawing. Now she has fulfilled her dream of becoming an author and illustrator.

Half of all proceeds from the book go directly to High Hopes Dog Rescue (Charity No. 1207261), helping more dogs like Rusty find safety and love. As Kerry says, "Love can't pay their bills – please help."

The book is available for £15 at www.keztasticcartoons.com the perfect gift and of course Christmas gift for any dog lover, while also supporting a vital local cause.



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Don't Waste Your Pumpkin: A Spooky Guide to Using It All!

Carving a pumpkin is a Halloween classic, but what about all that delicious flesh and those tasty seeds? Don't let them go to waste! The inside of your pumpkin is packed with potential for some seriously spooktacular treats.

Pumpkin seeds are a ghoul-ishly good snack. Simply wash them, toss with a little olive oil and your favourite seasonings (like salt, paprika, or chilli flakes), and roast until crunchy. They're a great way to use a part of the pumpkin that often gets thrown away!

The stringy pulp and remnants of flesh can be a little tricky, but they're perfect for purée. Simmer with a splash of water, blend until smooth, and you've got a base for delicious pumpkin pie, soup, pasta sauce or even a warming latte.

This Halloween, be a pro at preventing food waste by using every bit of your pumpkin. For more and spooky recipes visit www.lets-waste-less.com/foodsavvy.



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Mark Garnier Member of Parliament for Wyre Forest

In September, for two weeks running, our Prime Minister stood at the dispatch box giving a wholehearted and enthusiastic endorsement for his colleagues caught in the spotlight. Yet within 48 hours, he had dumped his deputy prime minister for alleged tax dodging, and within 24 hours dumped his ambassador to the US because he was "best pals" with a convicted paedophile.

Angela Rayner's departure has been met by business with relief. Her worker's rights bill, passing through parliament right now, is something that employers have warned will add yet more pressure to employers still coping with Labour's job tax. 800,000 people have lost their livelihoods as a result of Rachel Reeves' and Angela Rayner's interventions so far. The loss of Rayner might

lead to the loss of the Bill, and so save more redundancies, or slashed recruitment targets. This was swiftly followed by the sacking of Peter Mandelson. Despite all the bleatings about being unaware of all the incriminating emails and documents, the reality was that appointing Peter Mandelson as the country's number one diplomat was always a bonkers move.

Mandelson has a track record of embarrassing failures, so it was always going to be risky. He is a talented individual, but he is not the only talented individual, and others could have been appointed who were not known chums of paedophile Geoffrey Epstein. What is ironic is that Starmer, Reeves and other Labour front benchers keep going on about the failures of the last govern-

ment. It is not unreasonable. It is because of those failures that Labour got their huge majority, despite dropping their vote by more than 500,000 from their 2019 defeat.

But here's the difference. Whilst Reeves and Starmer go on about the failures of Liz Truss, the economy has gone down further as a result of measures brought in by Reeves. Job vacancies are down by 800,000 since the jobs tax was introduced. Economic growth has stalled. Government borrowing costs are at their highest in recent history, and certainly higher than after Truss's budget. And whilst Reeves claims their actions have brought down interest rates five times, she fails to mention that the rate setting bank of England is independent and interest rate cuts have been brought in to try to stimulate growth, killed off by this government.

What Labour MPs are now confronting is the uncomfortable truth. Labour now has a far weaker leader, and a more incompetent chancellor. Yet they hold onto this situation.

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

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

Promoted by Mark Garnier,
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Bewdley Festival *of the Arts* October 2025

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BEWDLEY FESTIVAL 2025

18 events from Friday 10th October

Now in our 38th year, Bewdley Festival dates back as far as 1988, when our very first Festival featured the likes of Roger McGough, Jonathan Dimbleby and Stephen Fry. Since then, our annual Autumn Festival has featured over 650 musicians, bands, orchestras, comedians, poets, actors, dancers, historians, naturalists and horticulturalists, together with a host of personalities all with a fascinating story to tell.

And with a vision to entertain, engage & empower, our 2025 Festival of the Arts does just this! We've already sold out a few of our events, but don't worry - there's plenty more to see...

- Music comes in the form of sizzling hot folk ensemble **The Urban Folk Quartet** and internationally renowned classical pianist, **Mark Bebbington**.
- There's laugh-out-loud comedy fun from TV & Radio star **Ria Lina**, who will be joining us on the next leg of her Riabellion tour directly from the 2025 Edinburgh Fringe.
- We'll also be chatting to Coronation Street's **Mikey North**, celebrated author **Jonathan Coe**, legendary record producer **Joe Boyd**, plus local Radio & TV presenter **Adrian Goldberg** who's hot on the trail of where all the football money has gone.
- Then there's both stage and screen on offer, with George Orwell's play **Animal Farm** providing a dramatic reminder of life's timeless themes and ever-present challenges, and a study of the most exciting period of Van Gogh's life in the film **Poets & Lovers**. And even Clive of India will be joining us on stage, in the form of the ever-popular **Max Keen**.
- For the wildlife enthusiasts, local nature will be in focus with **Rosemary Winnall** and local bats with **Matthew Terry**. And you can even join in the artistic fun yourself and **Paint The Day** in our Festival art competition.

Don't miss your chance to *be part of something special this October*! There really is something for everyone, so head over to the Bewdley Festival Box Office at events.bewdleyfestival.org.uk and grab your tickets while you can!



History: Remembering the Long, Hot Summer of 1976 in the Wyre Forest

The summer of 1976 stands as one of the most remarkable and challenging periods in the history of the West Midlands. This prolonged heatwave, which began in late May and extended through August, brought scorching temperatures, severe drought, and widespread ecological and social impacts to our towns.

A Scorching Like No Other

The summer of 1976 was marked by a persistent high-pressure system that dominated the weather across the UK, resulting in one of the hottest and driest periods on record. Temperatures soared, with Cheltenham recording a peak of 35.9°C on July 3, 1976. The Wyre Forest experienced similar extremes, with our towns enduring prolonged heat and minimal rainfall. The drought conditions were so severe that many areas received less than half their average summer rainfall, leading to significant water shortages.

Bewdley and the River Severn

In Bewdley, the River Severn, a lifeline for the town, was reduced to a mere trickle. Photographs

from the time show the riverbed cracked and dry, with boats stranded and the once-bustling waterfront eerily quiet. The drought had a profound impact on the local ecosystem, with fish struggling to survive in the low water levels. The situation was a stark reminder of the delicate balance between nature and climate.

Kidderminster and Stourport: A Community in Crisis

In Kidderminster and Stourport, the heatwave led to widespread crop failures and water shortages. The town's famous carpet industry faced challenges as production slowed due to the lack of water for dyeing processes. Residents were forced to adhere to strict water rationing, with standpipes installed in streets and hosepipe bans enforced. The community came together to support each other, sharing resources and coping strategies during this unprecedented crisis. Stourport-on-Severn, with its picturesque canals and riverside attractions, also felt the effects of the heatwave. The canal levels dropped significantly, affecting

leisure activities and local businesses. The town's residents, accustomed to the gentle flow of water, were confronted with the harsh realities of a changing climate.

A Lasting Legacy

The summer of 1976 left an indelible mark on the Wyre Forest. The drought led to long-term water restrictions, something the region had not experienced before. It also sparked a national conversation about water conservation and climate resilience. In the decades since, the events of 1976 have been referenced as a benchmark for extreme weather events, with subsequent heatwaves often compared to that historic summer.

As we face the challenges of climate change, the summer of 1976 serves as a poignant reminder of the vulnerability of our environment and the importance of sustainable practices. The resilience of communities in Kidderminster, Stourport, and Bewdley during that time continues to inspire efforts to protect and preserve our natural resources for future generations.

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October in the Garden: Preparing for winter and enjoying the Autumn glow ahead

October is a month of transition in the garden, where the vibrant colours of late summer begin to fade into the rich hues of autumn. It's the perfect time to enjoy the seasonal beauty while getting your garden ready for the colder months ahead.

One of the key tasks this month is tidying up flower beds. Remove any annuals that have finished flowering and cut back perennials that have become untidy. Be cautious with late-blooming plants such as asters or chrysanthemums—these can be left until after they finish flowering. Clearing away dead leaves and debris will help prevent pests and diseases from taking hold over winter.

Autumn is also the time to plant bulbs for next spring. Crocuses, daffodils, tulips, and hyacinths can all be planted now to en-

sure a colourful display when the warmer months return. Plant them in well-drained soil, and remember to mark the areas so you don't accidentally disturb them later.

Fruit and vegetable gardeners have plenty to do too. Harvest any remaining crops, such as late apples, squash, or root vegetables, before frost sets in. Consider planting garlic or broad beans for an early spring harvest. And don't forget to compost your garden waste—it's a great way to enrich the soil for next year.

This is also the ideal time to give lawns some attention. Rake up leaves regularly and continue to mow until growth slows. Adding a layer of autumn lawn feed can help strengthen roots and prepare grass for winter.

Finally, consider adding autumn colour to your garden with seasonal shrubs, ornamental grasses, and late-flowering plants. Even as the days shorten, a few bright foliage colours and blooms can lift the spirits and keep your outdoor space inviting.

With a little effort in October, your garden will not only look beautiful through autumn but will also be ready to burst into life when spring arrives.



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Colour and Texture Swaps: Instantly Refresh Your Home

Sometimes, the easiest way to breathe new life into your home isn't a full renovation or a major shopping spree—it's a simple swap of colour and texture. By changing key soft furnishings like cushions, rugs, and throws, you can transform the look and feel of a room in just a few hours.

Start with cushions. These small accents punch far above their weight when it comes to impact. Choose colours that complement your existing furniture, or go bold with contrasting shades for a fresh, modern twist. Mixing textures—think velvet, linen, or knitted fabrics—adds depth and interest, making your sofa or bed feel new again. Layering patterns, from subtle stripes to playful geometrics, can also give your space a designer feel with-

out breaking the bank.

Next, look underfoot. Rugs are powerful tools for changing a room's personality. A neutral wool rug can soften a hardwood floor, while a vibrant patterned piece can become a focal point in a neutral living room. For smaller spaces, a few well-placed rugs can define zones, creating a sense of order and style. Seasonal swaps work too: lighter textures and brighter colours in summer, cozy and rich tones in winter.

Throws are another versatile option. Draped over the arm of a chair or folded at the end of a bed, they add both warmth and style. Like cushions, they offer a low-commitment way to experiment with colour, pattern, and

texture. A chunky knit throw can instantly make a room feel inviting, while a silky or lightweight fabric adds elegance. Don't forget to consider your overall colour palette. While bold contrasts can energise a space, subtle harmonies can create calm and cohesion. Think of cushions, rugs, and throws as your home's accessories—they can be updated as often as your mood or the season changes.

With just a few thoughtful swaps, your living space can feel completely renewed. It's an affordable, easy, and surprisingly effective way to keep your home looking fresh, stylish, and welcoming all year round.

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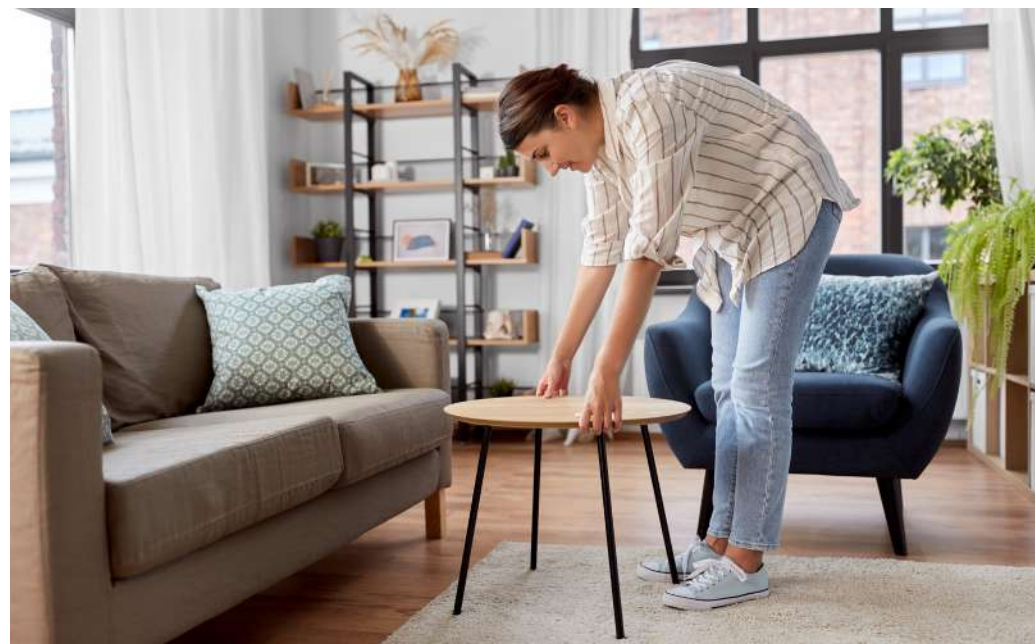


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The Power of Furniture: Turning a House into a Home

Furniture is far more than something we sit on, eat at, or store our belongings in. The pieces we choose for our living spaces shape the way we live, the atmosphere we create, and even the memories we make. From the sofa where families gather for movie nights to the dining table that hosts celebrations and conversations, furniture quietly becomes part of our daily story.

One of the most remarkable things about furniture is its ability to transform a space. A well-placed armchair can turn an unused corner into a cosy reading nook. A rustic dining table can make a kitchen feel instantly warmer and more inviting, while a sleek modern sofa can bring a

fresh, contemporary edge to a traditional home.

The style, colour, and texture of each piece influence the personality of a room just as much as paint or wallpaper.

Furniture also allows us to express who we are. Some people love the charm of antique finds, with their timeless character and craftsmanship. Others prefer minimalist designs that reflect a love of simplicity and order. For many, the joy lies in mixing old with new — pairing a vintage chest of drawers with a modern lamp or combining natural wood with bold fabrics to create a unique, lived-in look that tells a story.

Beyond style, comfort is at the heart of it all. After a long day, there's nothing better than sinking into your favourite chair, surrounded by pieces that feel familiar and welcoming. The right furniture not only supports our lifestyle but also provides the backdrop for life's most meaningful moments — birthdays, Sunday roasts, quiet evenings, and everything in between.

So, whether you're investing in a statement piece or simply rearranging what you already own, remember: furniture is more than function. It's the bridge between a house and a home, helping to create spaces that reflect who we are, how we want to live, and the memories we hope to build.

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

Style Meets Functionality:

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

Choosing the Right Fabric:

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

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

Size Matters:

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

Comfort is Key:

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

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

Sofas That Adapt to Your Life:

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

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





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Kidderminster Horticultural Society



A Blooming Community: Kidderminster Horticultural Society Welcomes New Members
Kidderminster Horticultural Society is a well-established and welcoming gardening club based in the heart of Worcestershire. With around 300 members, the society brings together gardening enthusiasts of all ages and experience levels—from seasoned growers to those just discovering the joys of gardening.

The society hosts a busy calendar of events, including monthly talks with expert speakers, flower arranging classes, and two major highlights: the Summer Show in July and the Annual Two-Day Show in September. These gatherings offer a chance to share knowledge, connect with others, and showcase horticultural talents.

Membership is open to anyone in Kidderminster and nearby areas and starts from just £4.50 per year, providing excellent value for a year of inspiration, activity, and community spirit.

The society also gives back. Over the years, its Garden Open Days have raised more than £100,000 for local charities, thanks to members who sell homemade cakes, plants, raffle tickets and more.

Nationally, the group has also shone—exhibiting at both Malvern and the Chelsea Flower Show, earning a Silver Gilt at Malvern in 1992, Silver in 1993, and a Bronze at Chelsea in 1999, following a Silver in 1997.

New members are always welcome—whether passionate about perennials or simply eager to learn something new.

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Ally 07719 415278

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

TUESDAY

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St Cecilia's Church
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Kidderminster
Jane 07800889768

KIDDERMINSTER 3.30pm
5pm & 7pm
St. George's Social Club
Radford Avenue
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Jane 07800889768

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

KIDDERMINSTER 5.30pm
Foley Park Methodist Church
Off Brinton Close
Kidderminster
Ally 07719 415278

KIDDERMINSTER 5pm & 7pm
St George's Social Club
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Kidderminster
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BEWDLEY 5.30pm & 7pm
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Paula 07926192600

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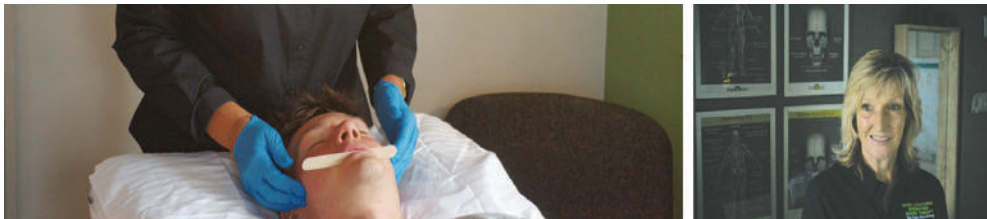
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Health: Looking After Your Skin in Autumn

By Lindsey Watson, Elle Jay Aesthetics

As the seasons change and we swap long, warm days for crisp autumn mornings, our skin begins to feel the shift too. After months of sun exposure, air-conditioned offices, and perhaps a few late nights making the most of summer, the skin can often appear dull, dehydrated, and uneven. Autumn is the perfect time to repair, restore, and renew your complexion so that it feels healthy, radiant, and ready for the colder months ahead.

A Time for Repair and Renewal
Summer sunshine brings us joy, but it can also accelerate skin ageing. UV rays contribute to fine lines, pigmentation, and loss of elasticity, while heat

and humidity may leave pores congested. As autumn arrives, the skin naturally needs more moisture and a little extra care to undo some of that seasonal stress. It's the ideal time to address sun damage, improve skin texture, and give your complexion a fresh start.

Chemical Peels: Shedding the Old, Revealing the New

Chemical peels remain one of the most effective ways to treat pigmentation and improve skin clarity. By gently exfoliating the surface layer, they lift away dead skin cells, stimulate renewal, and even skin tone. This treatment is especially helpful after summer, when pigmentation often ap-

pears more pronounced. At Elle Jay Aesthetics, we offer a range of peels tailored to individual skin needs—from mild brightening treatments to deeper resurfacing options.

Microneedling and RF Microneedling: Rebuild from Within

For those wanting to boost collagen and repair summer-induced fine lines or uneven texture, microneedling is a wonderful option. By creating tiny micro-injuries in the skin, the body's natural healing process is triggered, leading to smoother, firmer skin. Radio Frequency (RF) Microneedling takes this one step further by combining microneedling with radiofrequency heat, tightening and remodelling the skin at a deeper level. Both treatments are

excellent for long-term skin health and resilience.

Carbon Laser Facials: The 'Red Carpet' Glow

If your skin feels congested after sunscreen-heavy summer days, a carbon laser facial is a fast and effective way to clear pores and refine texture. Sometimes called the "Hollywood facial," it leaves the skin instantly smoother, cleaner, and more radiant—perfect if you want results with minimal downtime.

Hydro Facials: Quench and Nourish

Autumn air can be drying, leaving the skin thirsty for hydration. Hydro facials use advanced technology to cleanse, exfoliate, extract impurities, and infuse the skin with deeply hydrating serums. It's like giving your skin a drink of water, restoring plumpness and glow at

the time of year when moisture matters most.

Advanced Skin Renewal: Tixel 2 and CO₂ Fractional Laser

For more advanced concerns such as deeper pigmentation, fine lines, or loss of elasticity, we offer state-of-the-art treatments. Tixel 2 fractional heat technology is needle-free, safe for all skin tones, and works to tighten and rejuvenate with little to no downtime. CO₂ fractional laser, on the other hand, offers a more intensive resurfacing option, targeting stubborn pigmentation, scarring, and age-related changes with dramatic results.

Your Autumn Skin Journey

Autumn is the season of change—and your skin deserves that same chance to reset. At Elle Jay Aesthetics, we're here to help you repair summer damage, restore lost moisture, and prepare your skin for winter with a personalised treatment plan. Whether you're looking for a

gentle boost or a more transformative treatment, we'll ensure your skin looks and feels its best in the months ahead.

Who are Elle Jay Aesthetics: Based in Stourport they believe in enhancing not just how you look, but how you feel.

Their talented aesthetics team are committed to delivering the most advanced surgical and non-surgical treatments designed to rejuvenate AND refine your natural beauty. They are CQC registered and Safe Face accredited.

Whether you're seeking subtle enhancements, transformative changes, or minor surgical procedures, they have you covered.

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The Church Restaurant, Bar & Venue

Offers comfort, character and seasonal dining in the heart of Kidderminster.

Kidderminster has welcomed a remarkable new addition to its dining scene. The Church Restaurant & Bar, based on Church Street, has transformed one of the town's most historic sites into a vibrant social and culinary destination. Officially opening its doors in August, the venue is already drawing attention from food lovers and history enthusiasts alike.

The setting itself is spectacular. The Church occupies a Grade II-listed complex steeped in heritage. The main building, dating back to the 1880s, once served as a Unitarian church. Its soaring stained-glass windows,

vaulted ceilings, and imposing organ provide an unforgettable backdrop. Beside it sits the former church hall, which over the decades has served as a Sunday school and wartime communications centre. Today, this space has been reborn as the stylish restaurant and bar, where many original features have been preserved. Even the bar itself is a talking point, crafted from restored pew ends.

This blend of old and new continues onto the menu. The Church serves modern British cuisine, celebrating fresh, seasonal ingredients. Diners can look forward to starters such



Brunch - The Church Restaurant, Bar & Venue



Some of the finest chefs at The Church Restaurant, Bar & Venue

as sweet potato soup, chicken liver parfait, garlic and chilli tiger prawns, or a goats-cheese and beetroot tart. Mains include slow-cooked pork belly, a rich fish stew, lamb shoulder, and a range of steaks and burgers. Vegetarian and vegan diners are well catered for, while gluten-free options ensure the menu is accessible. A children's menu and indulgent desserts complete the offering, making this a place to enjoy everything from a casual lunch to a celebratory dinner. The restaurant operates from Wednesday to Saturday, serving lunch and dinner, and on Sundays for a traditional after-



The Church Restaurant, Bar & Venue - WOW!

Excellent evening dining at the church restaurant with friends, fabulous food, venue & the staff were amazing! Would highly recommend & will definitely be returning

noon service. The bar remains open into the evening, offering a welcoming space for drinks, cocktails, or locally brewed ales. Outside, a spacious beer garden and outdoor bar provide the perfect setting on warmer days, while inside the atmosphere is both grand and inviting.

October marks the restaurant's first full autumn in Kidderminster, and the timing could not be better. As the nights draw in, The Church offers hearty seasonal dishes that bring comfort and warmth. It is also an ideal venue for social gatherings, whether that's Sunday lunch with family, a night out with friends, or marking a special occasion. With the festive season already on the horizon, the team is preparing to welcome bookings for celebrations later in the year, giving locals a fresh and exciting option right on their doorstep.

Looking to the future, the adjoining church building is set to be transformed into a dedicated events and celebrations space. This promises to bring something truly unique to Kidderminster—a venue capable of hosting weddings, concerts, and community gatherings within one of the town's most iconic landmarks.

In just a few weeks, The Church Restaurant & Bar has made a striking impression. By combining heritage, hospitality, and high-quality dining, it has created a place where the past is honoured while the future feels full of promise. For those yet to experience it, October is the perfect time to step inside and see what all the excitement is about.

To book a table or find out more, visit: www.thechurchvenue.com

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The Church Restaurant & Bar



thechurch.dy10

Spiced Pumpkin Muffins



Ingredients

1 ¾ cups (220g) all-purpose flour
 1 tsp baking soda
 ½ tsp baking powder
 ½ tsp salt
 1 tsp ground cinnamon
 ½ tsp ground nutmeg
 ¼ tsp ground cloves
 ¼ tsp ground ginger
 ¾ cup (150g) granulated sugar
 ¾ cup (50g) brown sugar, packed
 ½ cup (120ml) vegetable oil or melted butter
 2 large eggs
 1 tsp vanilla extract
 1 cup (240g) pumpkin purée
 ¼ cup (60ml) milk (dairy or plant-based)
 Optional: ½ cup chopped walnuts, pecans, or chocolate chips

2. Mix dry ingredients: In a medium bowl, whisk together flour, baking soda, baking powder, salt, and spices.

3. Mix wet ingredients: In a large bowl, beat together sugars and oil. Add eggs one at a time, then stir in vanilla and pumpkin purée. Add milk and mix until smooth.

4. Combine: Fold dry ingredients into wet ingredients until just combined. Gently fold in any optional nuts or chocolate chips.

5. Fill muffin cups: Spoon batter evenly into the 12 muffin cases.

6. Bake: 20–25 minutes, until a skewer inserted into the center comes out clean.

7. Cool: Let muffins cool for 5 minutes in the tray, then transfer to a wire rack.

Method

1. Preheat oven: 190°C / 375°F and line a 12-cup muffin tin with paper cases.





Spice Up Your October: Celebrate National Curry Week

It's that delicious time of year again! From 6th to 12th October, the UK celebrates National Curry Week, a week dedicated to one of Britain's favourite cuisines. Whether you're a die-hard curry fan or just fancy trying something new, this is the perfect excuse to indulge in bold flavours and support local restaurants at the same time.

Started back in 1998, National

Curry Week has grown into a nationwide celebration of South Asian cuisine—and it's about more than just food. The event also raises funds for charities tackling poverty, making every curry you enjoy a way of giving back.

Locally, there are plenty of ways to get involved. Why not visit a nearby curry house for a meal

or takeaway? Supporting our local restaurants not only treats your taste buds but also helps the community thrive. If you're feeling creative, you could even host your own curry night at home. With the official National Curry Week recipe book offering dishes from 50 UK restaurants, there's plenty of inspiration for your culinary adventures. And don't forget to pair your curry with the perfect drink, whether it's a crisp lager, a fruity wine, or even a traditional lassi. For those who love sharing their experiences, the week is also a great chance to join the online community, show off your creations, and connect with curry fans across the country using #NationalCurryWeek.

From classic Chicken Tikka Masala to regional Indian specialties, National Curry Week is all about enjoying flavours, having fun, and supporting good causes. So, why not treat yourself this October and make it a week to remember?

For more information, check out nationalcurryweek.co.uk.



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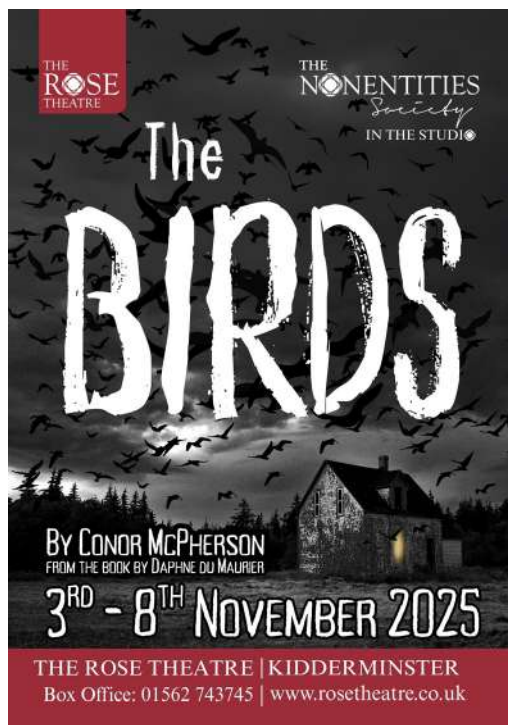
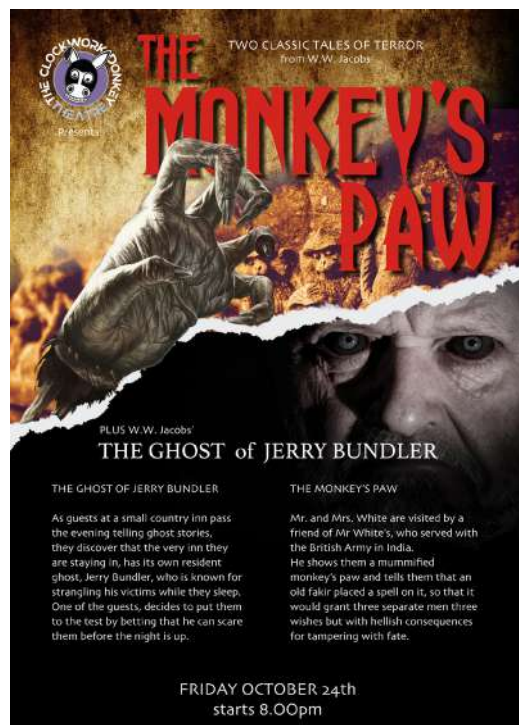
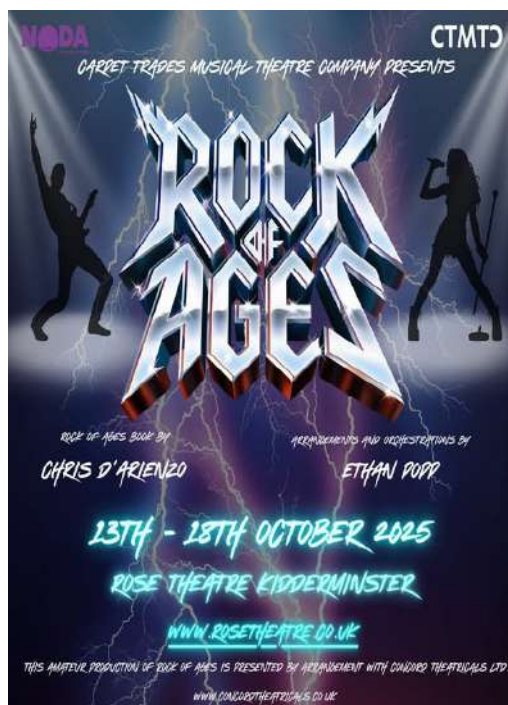
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October Fun at Stourport Civic Something for Everyone!



October at Stourport Civic promises a packed calendar of entertainment for all ages, from rock anthems to family musicals and festive fun.

Con Jovi – October 3rd, 7:30pm
Rock fans, get ready! The UK's No.1 Bon Jovi tribute act, Con Jovi, is back to bring the full energy of the New Jersey rockers to Stourport. Sing along to hits like Livin' On A Prayer, It's My Life, Bed of Roses, and Always. With authentic renditions of classic anthems, this high-octane performance is set to be an unmissable night of pure rock. Tickets are £22 for adults and £20 for concessions.

The Witch Who Couldn't Sleep – October 3rd, 2pm

For a magical family outing, join Natascha the Witch in this enchanting Story Time musical by Steven Lee, creators of the popular A Big Egg. With live action, music, and animation, little ones (and grown-ups!) will be captivated by this cosy, heartwarming sing-along. Perfect for all ages, tickets are £12 for adults and £8 for concessions. Don't forget your pyjamas!

The Bierkeller Schunklers – October 25th, 7:30pm
Fancy a night of fun, music, and laughter? The beloved Midlands-based German Bavarian Oompah band, The Bierkeller Schunklers, returns for a night of singing, dancing, and good cheer. Enjoy the traditional Bavarian atmosphere with plenty

of handclaps, laughs, and yes... drinks! Frankfurter Hot Dogs will be available on the night (pre-order when you book). Tickets are £15.

The Mayor's Halloween Spooktacular – October 31st
Get ready for some Halloween fun! Families can enjoy fancy dress, prizes, and a disco with DJ Nigel in this spooktacular evening. A perfect way to celebrate the spooky season, tickets are £22 for adults and £20 for concessions.

From rock fans to families, Stourport Civic has October covered with music, theatre, and festive fun. For tickets and more information, visit:
www.thecivicstourport.co.uk

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Kidderminster Oktober Festival 2025

Get ready, Kidderminster the biggest Bavarian party in town is back! The Kidderminster Oktober Festival 2025 takes place on Saturday 25th October at The Weaving Sheds, Worcester Road (DY10 1EW), bringing a huge slice of Munich right into the heart of the Wyre Forest.

Organised by FAB Food Fest, Kidderminster BID and Carly Louise, this is a celebration not to be missed. With a full 11 hours of entertainment split into two sessions, there's something for everyone:

- **Afternoon Session** (12pm–5pm) – Family Fun! Perfect for all ages, with food, music and plenty of atmosphere.
- **Evening Session** (6pm–11pm) Strictly 18+, with a lively Bavar-

ian beer hall vibe, live bands and late-night party fun. And here's the best news – entry is completely FREE!

What to Expect

Step inside the Bavarian beer hall and you'll be transported to Germany for the day. Rows of benches clad in classic tablecloths, thousands of steins ready to be raised, and a line-up of live Oompah and tribute bands that guarantee a buzzing atmosphere.

Foodies can indulge in bratwurst, currywurst, frankfurters and more with vegan options available too while drinkers can sample a huge range of German lagers, beers, spirits and cocktails. Lederhosen is optional, but highly encouraged!

This isn't just another night out

it's a full-scale Bavarian experience, right here in Kidderminster. Whether you're dancing on the benches, swilling stew with friends, or enjoying a family afternoon of food and music, the Oktober Festival promises mayhem, music and memories.

Book Your Free Tickets

Although entry is free, tickets are required and with such a popular event, booking early is highly recommended.

Reserve your spot now via

Eventbrite:

www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/kidderminster-oktober-festival-tickets-920963987807

Don't miss this massive Saturday of Bavarian fun – Kidderminster's Oktober Festival is set to be one of the highlights of the year!

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Mathew Horne: In Conversation Kidderminster

Join Mathew Horne, best known as Gavin from Gavin & Stacey, for a rare and intimate live appearance in Kidderminster on Sunday, 5 October 2025 at 8:00 PM BST. Taking place at the historic Kidderminster Town Hall, this special evening offers fans a chance to hear Mathew share his favourite moments from the beloved show, reveal hilarious behind-the-scenes stories, and reflect on the impact his iconic role has had on both his career and fans across the country.

The event will also feature a Q&A session, giving the audience an opportunity to ask

questions and hear firsthand anecdotes from Mathew himself. Whether you've loved Gavin & Stacey from the very beginning or are a more recent fan, this is a unique chance to experience the humour, charm, and warmth of one of Britain's favourite actors up close.

Tickets are expected to sell fast due to the exclusive nature of the event, so early booking is highly recommended. Secure your place and be part of this unforgettable evening by visiting www.eventbrite.com to secure your tickets.






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Please see our Facebook
page for operating times.



October Motoring Ready for the Dark Nights

As the darker nights draw in and autumn firmly takes hold, October is a great time to give your car some seasonal care and attention. The cooler temperatures and changing road conditions can present new challenges for motorists, so a little preparation now can save you trouble later. Autumn Safety Checklist

- **Check your lights:** With shorter days and foggy mornings, visibility is key. Make sure all headlights, brake lights and indicators are working correctly.

- **Tyre care:** Wet leaves and colder conditions can make roads slippery. Check tread depth (minimum 1.6mm is the legal limit, but 3mm is safer in poor weather) and ensure tyres are correctly inflated.

- **Wiper blades & screen wash:** October often brings plenty of rain, so fresh wiper blades and a topped-up screen wash reservoir with antifreeze protection are a must.

- **Battery health:** Cold weather can highlight a weak battery. If your car has been slow to start, it may be time for a replacement.

Watch Out for Autumn Hazards.

Fallen leaves can hide pot-holes and make road surfaces slick, especially when wet. Combine that with dazzling low sun in the mornings and evenings, and it's a reminder to keep your distance and drive with care.

New Car Spotlight

This autumn sees continued growth in hybrid and electric vehicle sales across the UK. Local dealers in Kidderminster and Bewdley are reporting strong interest in plug-in models as drivers look for more economical and eco-friendly ways to get around. If you're considering a change, now is a good time to explore options before the winter rush.

Tip of the Month

Keep a blanket, torch and pair of gloves in your boot. You may not need them often, but if you're ever caught out by a breakdown on a chilly evening, you'll be glad you did.

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Kidderminster Harriers: October Diary

As October unfolds, Kidderminster Harriers enter a pivotal chapter in their National League North campaign—each fixture carrying the promise of points, momentum, and local pride.

October Fixtures to Watch

Saturday, 4 October

(Away vs. Peterborough Sports)

A challenging first outing of the month, the Harriers travel to Peterborough with hopes of making a strong early impact.

Saturday, 11 October

(Home vs. Radcliffe Borough at Aggborough)

Returning to familiar stomping ground, this home fixture is a chance for the squad to rally the fans

and put their attacking flair on display.

Saturday, 18 October (Away vs. Chester)

Another away challenge against Chester demands resilience and discipline—essential attributes during this crucial stretch.

Tuesday, 21 October (Away vs. Merthyr Town)

A midweek trip to Wales adds a tactical twist to the month, testing squad depth and adaptability under lights.

Saturday, 25 October

(Home vs. Spennymoor Town at Aggborough)

Closing the month with a home fixture, this game offers a chance to end October on a high note.

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