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Scooby Gang Takes on 1,300-Mile Charity Rally for Mental Health

Four friends from Kidderminster are preparing to swap the streets of Wyre Forest for the roads of Europe as they take on a 1,300-mile charity rally to Benidorm all dressed as the famous Scooby Doo gang.

Scott Boraston, Graham Wilde, Steven Buckley and Matt McGinley will take part in The Rat Run 2026, a five-day driving adventure that sees more than 200 teams travel from the UK to Spain in vehicles worth just a few hundred pounds.

The friends have transformed their £400 van into the iconic Mystery Machine, complete with colourful graphics, while Scott will be Fred, Graham becomes Velma, Steven takes on the role of Shaggy and Matt will be Scooby Doo. But behind the fun costumes and eye-catching van is a heartfelt reason for taking part.

The team is completing the challenge in memory of Graham's brother, John Wilde, who sadly died earlier this year. Through the rally they hope to raise funds for a new community mental health centre due to open locally in the coming months, helping others who may be struggling with their mental wellbeing.

As well as tackling the 1,300-mile journey, teams face a series of Top Gear-style challenges before receiving a police escort into Benidorm at the finish line.

Scott said the Scooby Doo theme came about after they spotted the van and imagined how it could look as the Mystery Machine. "We used AI to see what it would look like and thought it looked brilliant, so we just had to do it," he said.

Although Matt was originally meant to dress as Daphne, the

group joked that he "chickened out" and opted to become Scooby instead.

The distinctive van has already become a local talking point, attracting plenty of smiles wherever it goes.

"We've been driving it around for the last few weeks and it's drawn a lot of attention," Scott added. "Hopefully that helps us spread awareness and raise even more money for a fantastic local cause."

The team hopes their adventure will not only provide plenty of laughs but also encourage important conversations about mental health while supporting a project that will make a real difference in the local community.

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Has Talbot Park Changed Kidderminster Town Centre?



It's amazing how one new green space can change the feel of a town. When Talbot Park officially opened earlier this year, many people wondered whether it would make a real difference. After all, could replacing a row of empty buildings with a park really encourage more people to spend time in Kidderminster?

Just a few months on, it certainly feels like it has.

Whether you're popping into town for a coffee, meeting friends, taking the children to the play area or simply enjoying a few minutes in the sunshine, Talbot Park has quickly become a place where people naturally gather. Instead of hurrying through the town centre, more people now seem happy to stop, sit down and enjoy their surroundings.

Located between Worcester Street and Bromsgrove Street, the park has transformed what was once an overlooked part of the town into an attractive public

space. Complete with landscaped planting, generous seating, winding steps and a children's play area, it was designed to reconnect different parts of the town centre while giving people somewhere pleasant to spend time. The project forms part of the wider Kidderminster 2040 regeneration programme, funded through the Government's Future High Streets Fund.

Perhaps the biggest success isn't the landscaping or the design – it's seeing the park being used exactly as intended.

Office workers can now enjoy their lunch outdoors, families have another free place for children to play, shoppers have somewhere to rest, and visitors arriving in town are greeted by a welcoming green space rather than empty buildings.

Of course, every new public space comes with challenges. Shortly after opening, the play area suf-

fered a small amount of vandalism, something that disappointed many local residents. Thankfully, it hasn't stopped the park becoming a popular destination, and hopefully it serves as a reminder that these spaces belong to everyone and deserve to be looked after.

For years we've all spoken about wanting to see Kidderminster thrive again. While one park alone won't transform a town, creating attractive places where people actually want to spend time is certainly a step in the right direction. The hope is simple. If more people choose to visit the town centre, stay a little longer and support nearby cafés, shops and businesses, everyone benefits.

Sometimes regeneration isn't just about new buildings or major developments. Sometimes it's about creating somewhere that makes people smile, encourages them to pause for five minutes and reminds them that town centres can still be places to enjoy.



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A Wellness Studio Bringing the Community Together

By Camilla Lloyd, The Wellness Studios, Kidderminster

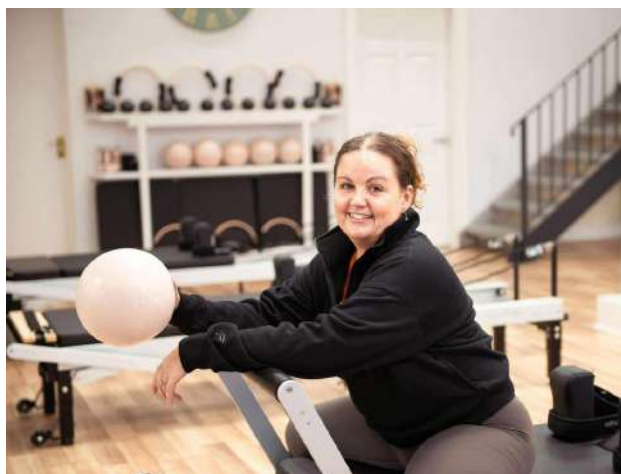
When I opened The Wellness Studios in Kidderminster, I wanted to create much more than a place where people came to exercise. My vision was to build a welcoming space where people could improve their physical health, support their mental wellbeing and, just as importantly, feel part of a community. In a world that often feels busy,

stressful and disconnected, having somewhere you genuinely look forward to visiting can make all the difference. Every day I see people walk through our doors who may be feeling nervous, lacking confidence or simply looking for something new. Watching them grow stronger, happier and become part of our studio family is one

of the most rewarding parts of what I do.

Our timetable has been carefully designed so there's something for everyone, regardless of age, fitness level or experience. Whether it's a calming yoga class, the strength and control of Reformer Pilates, the precision of barre, or one of our restorative sound baths, every session is about helping people feel better in both body and mind. Wellness isn't just about working out, it's about creating healthy habits that support every aspect of life.

My own journey into wellness wasn't straightforward. After undergoing two spinal operations, I had to rebuild my strength from the ground up. Through Reformer and mat Pilates, I was able to rehabilitate my body, regain my confidence and eventually return to a successful career in dance. That experience completely changed my perspective



on movement and its ability to transform lives.

Throughout my career, I've had the privilege of working with people from newborn babies right through to those aged 114. I've taught people living with disabilities, supported neurodiverse individuals and helped people from all walks of life discover movement in a way that works for them. Those experiences gave me the confidence and knowledge to open Kidderminster's first dedicated wellness studio, creating an inclusive environment where everybody feels welcome and supported.

This September is a particularly special month for us as we celebrate our first anniversary. To mark the occasion, we're hosting a charity ball at Stone

Manor Hotel to raise money for Kemp Hospice and Cancer Research UK. Supporting our local community is something that's incredibly important to me, and this event is our way of saying thank you while helping two charities that make a real difference to so many local families.

If you've been thinking about starting your own wellness journey but have been putting it off because you're worried you won't fit in or don't know where to begin, I'd encourage you to get in touch. I know how intimidating that first step can feel because I've been there myself. Whether your goal is to become stronger, improve your mobility, reduce stress or simply find a welcoming community, we'd love to help you discover what's possible.

For me, The Wellness Studios has never been just about fitness. It's about creating a place where people can feel supported, valued and inspired to become the healthiest and happiest version of themselves.

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Mark Garnier Member of Parliament for Wyre Forest

It can always be the case that two things can be wright at the same time. Sport, for example.

The Kidderminster Harriers, as everyone knows, have their stadium at Aggborough. But what is less well known is they have practice pitches between Stourport and Kidderminster. The new owners are keen to do great things for the Harriers and the local community. They are looking to develop a bigger area for practice, and build this into a football academy. This will be great for the district. Not only will it provide more sporting facilities locally, but it will attract more footballers from around the region and, possibly, nationally, to come and learn about football right here in the heart of Wyre Forest. And not just how to kick

a ball. How to referee, how to be a linesman, how to maintain pitches and all the rest of it that goes with football. That will be a really good thing and I for one am so grateful to the Harriers and their owners for this initiative.

Meanwhile, we all love nature and our wider environment. We are blessed, here. We have, of course, the Wyre Forest. And we have a lot of amazing patches of wilderness and special heathland across the district. Hartlebury Common, the Rifle Range and Burlish Top. We have a new area of special interest at the Maypole Field between Bewdley and the Safari Park, something local activists are keen to ensure has a lasting

legacy for the community something I am helping with. And near Kinver, we see abandoned pine plantations being brought back to natural heathland.

More recently, the former municipal golf course between Kidderminster and Stourport has been rewilded. More than just abandoned, conservationists have been remodelling small parts to make it more interesting to certain animals. The acid soil is ideal for reptiles and the area has become popular for walkers and nature watchers alike.

But... (there's always a "but"). The newly rewilded golf course is exactly where the Harriers want to put new astroturf football pitches. To be fair, they are after just one fifth of the area covered by the golf course. But astroturf is a lot different from an old fairway.

I spent a couple of days early in August looking at the site, hearing the point of views from conservationists and local wild area specialists. Both sides of the debate have strong convictions.

It is not for an MP to decide – that is the job of the local planners. But what I can try to do is make sure both sides are properly heard, and that proper process is followed. But both sides are convinced of their strong cases.

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

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The Stourport Fairground Organ Legend!

Long before modern theme parks, Stourport's fairs attracted thousands of visitors from across the Midlands. Local legend says that on quiet evenings, long after the fair had packed away, some residents could still hear the faint sound of a fairground organ drifting across the riverside. While there's no evidence the music really lingered, it's a story that has delighted generations of local families.



The Carpet Worker Who Never Missed a Shift!

Kidderminster's carpet industry was built on the dedication of thousands of skilled workers. One local tale tells of a weaver who reportedly worked for more than 40 years without ever missing a day's shift. Whether entirely true or slightly embellished over time, the story reflects the remarkable work ethic that helped make Kidderminster famous around the world for its carpets.



THIS MONTHS Local Lowdown Quirky Tales & Local Lore

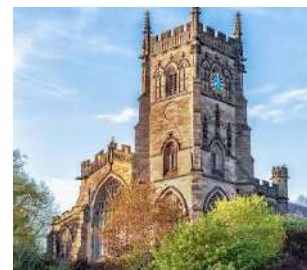
The Kidderminster Bell That Could Be Heard for Miles!

Before modern communications, the bells of St Mary's Church in Kidderminster were an important way of bringing the community together. Older residents often claimed that on a still day the sound of the church bells could be heard for miles across the surrounding countryside. Whether calling people to worship or marking special occasions, the ringing became part of the soundtrack of daily life and remains a treasured part of the town's heritage.



Bewdley's Secret River Steps!

Hidden beneath the bustle of Bewdley's historic streets are old stone steps leading down to the River Severn, once used by boatmen, fishermen and traders. Many visitors walk straight past without noticing them. Local stories suggest the steps were once busy with people loading goods onto barges, making them a fascinating reminder of the town's important trading past.



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Returning to School

Helping Your Child Make a Positive Start

The beginning of a new school year is an exciting time, but it can also bring worries and uncertainty for many children. Whether they are starting a new school, moving into a different year group, or simply returning after the summer holidays, a little preparation can make all the difference.

Talk and Listen:

Take time to talk with your child before term begins. Encourage them to share any concerns as well as the things they are looking forward to. Listening calmly and offering reassurance helps children feel understood and supported.

Get Back Into Routine:

A few days before school starts, begin returning to a regular routine. Earlier bedtimes, healthy meals and organising school equipment in advance can reduce last-minute stress and help the first morning run more smoothly.

Focus on More Than Grades:

Rather than focusing solely on academic success, remind your child that effort, kindness and a willingness to learn are just as important. Every child develops at their own pace, and confidence grows when they feel encouraged rather than compared with others.

Managing First-Day Nerves:

If your child is feeling anxious, acknowledge those feelings without dismissing them. Let them know that many children feel nervous at the start of a new term and that these feelings usually lessen once familiar routines return.

A Fresh Start:

Finally, celebrate the opportunities a new school year brings. New friendships, new experiences and new achievements all begin with that first step through the school gates.

With patience, encouragement and positive support from home, parents can help their children begin the new school year with confidence and optimism.

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Hartlebury Castle History, Heritage & Family Days Out



Easily reached from across the Wyre Forest district, Hartlebury Castle is one of Worcestershire's most fascinating heritage sites. With over 1,000 years of history behind its gates, the castle was once the powerful residence of the Bishops of Worcester who have shaped both the building and the landscape around it since the 9th century. The current fortified manor began in the 1200s, and through the centuries, the castle has hosted royalty, endured the English Civil War, and witnessed moments of quiet faith and political drama.

Today, Hartlebury Castle is a much-loved visitor attraction, offering a full day out for all ages. Visitors can explore the historic Bishop's Palace, complete with beautiful state rooms, grand staircases and the renowned Hurd Library—a hidden gem of 18th-century scholarship. Audio guides and displays bring the past to life, from stories of saintly bishops to humorous

tales about butlers and dignitaries. Children can enjoy dressing up, spotting curiosities, and engaging with interactive displays designed to make history fun and accessible.

The castle is also home to Worcestershire County Museum, housed in the North Wing. This museum collection is a nostalgic journey through local life, with everything from Victorian schoolrooms and traditional toys to fashion, farming tools and even a 1950s kitchen. There are regular temporary exhibitions and hands-on activities for younger visitors. Outdoors, the grounds are just as inviting, with scenic walks around the moat, a sunken garden, picnic spaces, and a natural play area with a zip-wire and climbing features—ideal for families looking to spend a relaxed few hours in nature.

Since being saved by the Hartlebury Castle Preservation Trust

in 2015, and with the help of a major National Lottery Heritage Fund grant, the site has been restored and revitalised. A range of community outreach programmes, education workshops and seasonal events now ensure the castle remains a living part of local culture. From open-air theatre to Tudor re-enactments, there's always something new to experience.

Hartlebury Castle is open from February to December, with access to all areas included in a single admission ticket. There's a friendly café on site, a well-stocked shop, and most areas are wheelchair accessible.

Whether you're a history enthusiast, a family on a day out, or simply someone who enjoys a peaceful walk in beautiful surroundings, Hartlebury Castle is a must-visit treasure in the heart of the Wyre Forest.

To find out more visit:
hartleburycastle.com

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There's Still Time to Enjoy Free Park Yoga at Brinton Park



If you've been meaning to give Park Yoga a try, there's still plenty of time. The popular free outdoor sessions at Brinton Park in Kidderminster continue every Sunday until 13 September, making it the perfect opportunity to get active and enjoy the fresh air before summer draws to a close.

The weekly sessions run from 9.30am to 10.30am and are open to everyone, regardless of age, ability or experience. There's no need to book – simply turn up, bring a yoga mat or towel and look out for the Park Yoga flag.

Whether you're completely new to yoga or have been practising for years, the welcoming sessions are designed to be accessible for all. They're a great way to improve flexibility, strength and balance, while also taking some

time out to relax and enjoy the peaceful surroundings of Brinton Park.

As well as the health benefits, Park Yoga is a fantastic way to meet new people and make the most of one of Wyre Forest's most attractive green spaces.

With just a few weeks remaining, now's the ideal time to join in if you haven't already.

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From Fitness Instructor to Midlife Women's Health Specialist: Meet Sandra Todd

When Sandra Todd first stepped into the health and wellness world back in 2006 as a Rosemary Conley diet and fitness instructor, she had no idea it would be the start of a 20-year journey that would lead her to become one of the Wyre Forest's go-to specialists in metabolic health for midlife women and beyond.

"I've always believed that food should be something to enjoy, not something to fear," says Sandra, founder of Sandra Todd Nutrition. "So much of the advice out there for women in midlife is about restriction and cutting things out. I wanted to offer something different practical, food-first support that actually fits into real life."

That philosophy has been shaped by nearly two decades of hands-on experience. Sandra holds two Master's degrees one in Exercise and Nutrition Science from the University of Chester, and one in Nutritional Therapy, awarded with distinction, from the University of Worcester- and is registered with both BANT and CNHC. In between, she spent three years delivering the NHS diabetes prevention programme across Warwickshire, Worcestershire and Herefordshire, and worked with a private company developing continuous glucose monitoring technology, creating educational content and supporting research along the way.



Sandra has continued to build on that foundation ever since. She's a qualified nutrigenomics practitioner, meaning she can look at how a client's genetics influence their nutritional needs, and offers functional testing including stool, saliva,



urine, allergy, genetic and blood testing to get a clearer, more personalised picture of what's really going on in the body. She also provides tailored supplement recommendations, carefully checked against any medications a client is taking to avoid contraindications, and has recently trained to support cancer patients through nutrition, adding another layer to the care she can offer clients.

Today, Sandra's practice focuses on supporting midlife women and beyond helping them navigate the metabolic changes that come with perimenopause, menopause, and the years that follow, a stage of life she believes is too often overlooked or dismissed. "Women come to me feeling like their body has changed overnight

and nobody can tell them why. My job is to help them understand what's actually happening metabolically, and give them a plan that works with their body, not against it whatever stage of midlife they're at."

As well as one-to-one consultations, Sandra runs a Wellness Club offering twice-weekly group sessions and talks, and a hands-on Cooking Club designed to make healthy eating feel achievable rather than overwhelming.

She's a familiar face on the local speaking circuit too, having delivered menopause talks for Worcestershire Fire Brigade, Worcestershire Police, Worcestershire County Council and care homes across Kidderminster and Dudley, as well as a

bone health talk for the Royal Osteoporosis Society.

This year marks a milestone for the business: Sandra has moved into her own dedicated studio at Suite 44, Anglo House on Worcester Road, Stourport-on-Severn a light, ground-floor space with free parking, where she now runs all her consultations, classes and courses under one roof.

"Twenty years in, and I still love this work as much as ever," she adds. "Watching a client go from feeling confused and unheard to feeling in control of their health again that never gets old."

Get in touch Sandra Todd Nutrition Suite 44, Anglo House, Worcester Road, Stourport-on-Severn www.sandratoddnutrition.co.uk email- support@sandratoddnutrition.co.uk



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- 9th - Wellbeing craft workshop 11am-2pm
- 14th - Andy's Man's Club 7pm-9pm
- 16th - Emergency first aid at work (9:30am-4:30pm) booking required
- 16th - Wellbeing craft workshop 11am-2pm
- 21st - Andy's Man's Club 7pm-9pm
- 22nd - Paediatric first aid (9:30am-4:30pm) booking required
- 23rd - Wellbeing craft workshop 11am-2pm
- 30th - Wellbeing craft workshop 11am-2pm
- 30th - FAW requalification (9:30am-4:30pm) booking required

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

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•Dust mites thrive in warm, humid conditions, and their microscopic waste particles can trigger allergic reactions, causing sneezing, coughing, and respiratory discomfort.

•Pet allergens—found in saliva, skin flakes, and fur—become airborne and can exacerbate breathing issues, skin conditions like eczema, and long-term respiratory illnesses.

•Outdoor pollutants such as pollen, car exhaust fumes, and

cigarette smoke get trapped in carpets, making indoor air quality worse over time, affecting sleep and overall health.

A Cleaner, Fresher Home Starts Here Regular vacuuming helps, but it only removes surface dirt. Professional deep cleaning is essential to extract embedded allergens and pollutants, improving not just the look of your carpets but also the air you breathe. At AJV Carpet Care, we're committed to creating healthier, fresher spaces with expert cleaning solutions tailored to your home or business. Our services don't just refresh your carpets—they contribute to a cleaner, safer, and more inviting indoor environment.

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Prepare Your Home for Autumn and Beyond with Cousins Furniture

As Autumn begins, it brings the perfect opportunity to refresh your home and prepare for the cosy season ahead. Cousins Furniture are excited to unveil their latest collections, now gracing their showrooms with fresh styles and designs to elevate your home for the season.

Autumn Arrivals and Seasonal Updates

Step into Autumn with confidence by exploring new collections. From comfy recliner sofas to stylish dining sets and beautiful bedroom furniture, Cousins' latest arrivals offer something for every taste and need. Their showrooms are brimming with inspiration, helping you create a space that reflects the warmth and beauty of the season.

Plan Ahead for Christmas

We know you might not even be thinking of Christmas just yet, but as the festive season approaches, planning ahead is key. If you're eyeing made-to-order items for Christmas, now is the perfect time to place your orders and guarantee pre-Christmas delivery, ensuring your home is beautifully

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Autumn and Winter are wonderful times for hosting and entertaining, and Cousins are here to help. Whether you need versatile sofa beds for guest sleepovers, ample dining chairs or extending tables for large family meals, Cousins have you covered.

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Cousins Furniture understands the importance of having everything you need in one place. Their extensive range includes living, dining and bedroom furniture, as well as home accessories to complete your look. Plus, the Cousins Flooring department can meet your flooring needs, whether it's for a living space, dining room, bedroom, hallway, kitchen or staircase. For those who need

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by Skills Bootcamps Programme
Manager Abigail Jones

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Skills Bootcamps give people the opportunity to develop sector-specific skills, whether to progress in their current role or build the confidence and skills needed to move in a new career direction.

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Houseplant of the Month: The Peace Lily

Few houseplants combine elegance and ease of care quite like the Peace Lily (*Spathiphyllum*). With its glossy green leaves and graceful white flowers, it's a timeless favourite that suits almost every style of home, from modern apartments to traditional family houses.

One of the biggest reasons for its popularity is its ability to thrive in lower light conditions. While it prefers bright, indirect sunlight, the Peace Lily will happily grow in rooms that receive only moderate natural light, making it ideal for hallways, bedrooms and offices.

Caring for a Peace Lily is refreshingly straightforward. Water it when the top layer of compost

feels dry, allowing excess water to drain away. The plant will often droop slightly when it's thirsty, making it surprisingly easy to know when it needs watering. Regular misting or placing it in naturally humid rooms such as bathrooms can also help keep the foliage looking its best.

Beyond its attractive appearance, the Peace Lily is often praised for helping improve indoor air quality by removing certain airborne pollutants. While no plant replaces proper ventilation, adding greenery can certainly contribute to a fresher, more inviting living environment.

To encourage flowering, feed the plant every few weeks during spring and summer with a

balanced houseplant fertiliser. Wiping the leaves occasionally with a damp cloth will remove dust and keep them glossy, allowing the plant to photosynthesise more effectively.

Like many popular houseplants, it's worth remembering that Peace Lilies can be toxic if chewed by pets or young children, so position them somewhere safely out of reach.

Whether you're an experienced gardener or completely new to houseplants, the Peace Lily offers the perfect combination of beauty, simplicity and year-round interest. It's a stylish addition to any room and a wonderful reminder that even the smallest touch of greenery can make a house feel more like home.

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Walk-in Shower Trends That Are Transforming Modern Bathrooms

Walk-in showers have become one of the most desirable features in modern bathrooms, combining sleek design with everyday practicality. Their clean lines and open appearance can make even smaller bathrooms feel larger, while offering easy access for people of all ages.

Frameless glass screens continue to dominate current trends, creating an uninterrupted look that allows decorative wall tiles to become a real focal point. Large-format porcelain tiles remain particularly popular, reducing grout lines and giving bathrooms a luxurious, spa-inspired finish.

Neutral colour palettes are also in demand. Soft greys, warm stone tones and natural textures create a calming atmosphere, while black fittings provide a striking contemporary contrast. Brushed brass and brushed nickel are

increasingly replacing polished chrome, adding warmth and sophistication.

Many homeowners are opting for rainfall shower heads alongside handheld shower attachments, offering both luxury and practicality. Recessed wall niches are another stylish addition, providing convenient storage for toiletries without cluttering the shower space.

Accessibility is becoming an increasingly important consideration. Low-profile or level-access shower trays not only create a streamlined appearance but also make bathrooms safer and easier to use for every member of the family.

Lighting can also transform the space. Waterproof LED lighting within niches or beneath floating

vanity units adds a subtle hotel-inspired ambience, particularly when paired with large mirrors that reflect natural light around the room.

Sustainability is influencing bathroom design too. Water-efficient shower heads and thermostatic controls help reduce water consumption while maintaining a comfortable showering experience.

Whether you're planning a complete renovation or simply updating your existing bathroom, a thoughtfully designed walk-in shower can add value, style and everyday convenience. By combining quality materials with timeless design, you'll create a space that's both beautiful and practical for years to come.



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Choosing the Perfect Flooring for Every Room in Your Home



Flooring plays a huge role in the overall look and feel of your home. It needs to be practical enough for everyday life while complementing your interior style, making it one of the most important decisions when updating any room.

Carpet remains a favourite for bedrooms and living rooms thanks to its warmth, comfort and excellent sound insulation. Available in countless colours and textures, modern carpets are more durable than ever and can add a cosy feel that's perfect for relaxing spaces.

Luxury Vinyl Tile (LVT) has become one of the fastest-growing flooring choices in recent years. Designed to replicate the appearance of wood or stone, it's

waterproof, highly durable and easy to maintain, making it ideal for kitchens, bathrooms and busy family homes.

Laminate flooring continues to offer great value for money. Modern designs are incredibly realistic and resistant to everyday wear, making laminate a popular choice for hallways, dining rooms and home offices. For those seeking timeless elegance, engineered wood flooring combines the beauty of real timber with greater stability than solid wood. It adds warmth and character to almost any room while increasing the appeal of your home.

Tiles remain the go-to choice for bathrooms, utility rooms and kitchens thanks to their durabil-

ity and water resistance. Available in a huge range of finishes, they can create everything from a sleek contemporary look to a rustic country feel.

Before making your decision, think about how each room is used. Homes with pets, young children or high footfall may benefit from more hard-wearing materials, while bedrooms often prioritise comfort underfoot.

The right flooring should strike a balance between style, durability and practicality. By choosing materials that suit your lifestyle as well as your décor, you'll create a home that's not only beautiful but built to stand the test of time.



September in the Vegetable Garden

What to Plant, Harvest and Prepare

September is one of the most rewarding months in the vegetable garden. While many summer crops are reaching the end of their season, there's still plenty to harvest, and now is the perfect time to prepare for the months ahead. A little effort now can keep your garden productive well into autumn and provide a head start for next spring.

Tomatoes, runner beans, courgettes and peppers are often still producing, while pumpkins and squash begin to ripen ready for harvesting later in the month. Sweetcorn should be ready to pick once the kernels release a milky liquid when pressed, and maincrop potatoes can be lifted once the foliage has died back. It's also an ideal time to sow hardy vegetables that will provide fresh produce during the cooler months. Spinach, spring

onions, winter lettuce and oriental leaves can all be sown now, while overwintering onion sets and garlic can be planted towards the end of the month in well-drained soil.

As beds begin to empty, remove old crops and weeds before digging in plenty of garden compost or well-rotted manure. This improves soil structure and replaces nutrients that have been used throughout the growing season. If a bed won't be used until spring, consider sowing a green manure such as grazing rye or field beans to protect the soil and naturally improve fertility.

Keep watering where necessary, particularly if September remains warm and dry, although cooler nights usually mean plants require less moisture than

during the height of summer. Continue harvesting little and often to encourage crops such as beans and courgettes to keep producing for as long as possible.

Protect ripening pumpkins and squash by placing them on a piece of wood or slate to keep them off damp soil, helping prevent rot. Net brassicas if pigeons become a problem, and keep an eye out for slugs, which often become more active as the weather cools.

September marks the transition between seasons, but it's far from the end of the gardening year. With regular harvesting, a little maintenance and some timely planting, your vegetable garden can continue to provide an abundance of fresh, home-grown produce long after summer has faded.

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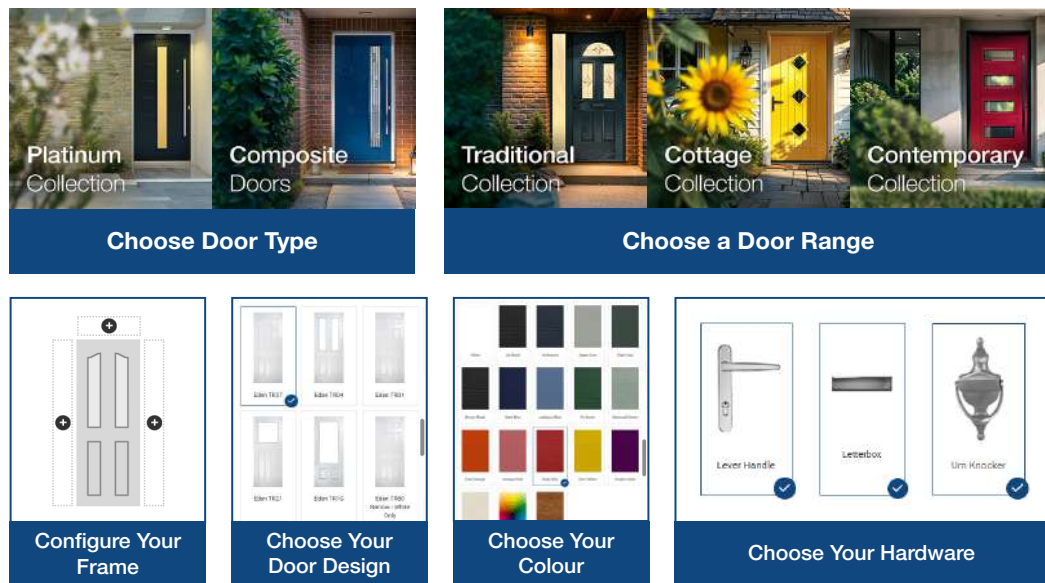
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Maximise Your Kitchen Space With Clever Storage



A well-organised kitchen can make everyday life easier, whether you're preparing family meals or entertaining friends. The good news is that creating more storage doesn't always require a costly renovation. A few clever changes can help maximise every inch of space while keeping worktops clutter-free. Start by making the most of your cupboards. Pull-out shelves and drawer organisers make it easier to reach items stored at the back, while stackable shelves allow you to use the full height of your cabinets. Clear storage containers are another popular choice, keeping dry foods fresh while making it easy to see exactly what you have.

Vertical storage is often overlooked. Wall-mounted rails, magnetic knife strips and hang-

ing utensil racks free up valuable drawer space while keeping everyday essentials within easy reach. Inside cupboard doors, slim racks can store spices, chopping boards or cleaning products without taking up additional room.

Deep drawers are becoming increasingly popular in modern kitchens, replacing traditional lower cupboards. They provide easier access to pots, pans and small appliances, reducing the need to crouch down and search through cluttered cupboards. A pantry, whether it's a dedicated room or simply a tall cabinet, is another excellent investment. Adjustable shelving allows you to customise the space, while labelled baskets help separate snacks, baking ingredients and canned goods.

Don't forget awkward corners. Carousel units and pull-out corner systems transform previously wasted space into practical storage that can hold everything from cookware to food supplies. Finally, be honest about what you really need. Regularly cluttering your kitchen and donating rarely used gadgets creates valuable space for the items you use every day.

The best kitchens aren't necessarily the biggest—they're simply organised well. By combining clever storage solutions with thoughtful organisation, you can create a kitchen that's easier to use, more enjoyable to cook in and far less stressful to keep tidy. Sometimes, it's the simplest changes that make the biggest difference.

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A Local Name You Can Trust Kidderminster Carpets



When it comes to choosing new flooring, experience matters and few companies can match the heritage and reputation of Kidderminster Carpets. Established in 1963, the family-run business has been helping homeowners across Worcestershire and the West Midlands transform their homes for more than six decades.

Despite expanding with stores in Shirley, Longbridge and Amblecote, its roots remain firmly in Kidderminster – a town synonymous with carpet making. For generations, Kidderminster has been recognised around the world for producing some of the finest carpets, making it the perfect home for a business dedicated to quality flooring.

Over the years, Kidderminster Carpets has built its reputation

on combining competitive prices with exceptional customer service. Whether you're refreshing a single bedroom, renovating an entire home or searching for the perfect flooring for a new extension, the company offers an extensive range of carpets, vinyl flooring, rugs and accessories to suit every style and budget. From classic wool carpets to modern, hard-wearing options, customers can browse products from many of the UK's leading manufacturers.

One of the reasons the business has stood the test of time is its commitment to making the buying process as straightforward as possible. Customers can take advantage of a free measuring and estimating service, ensuring they choose the right flooring for their home, while experienced fitters provide profession-

al installation with guaranteed workmanship.

In an age where online shopping dominates, there's still something reassuring about visiting a trusted local showroom, speaking to knowledgeable staff and seeing the products before making a decision. That personal approach has earned Kidderminster Carpets a loyal customer base and continues to attract new generations of homeowners.

As interior trends come and go, one thing remains unchanged: quality flooring provides the foundation for every beautiful home. With more than 60 years of experience behind them, Kidderminster Carpets continues to prove why local knowledge, expert advice and outstanding service never go out of style.

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homes

Join us for our next events

Brook Court care home, Kidderminster

Dementia café

Last Friday of the month, 2pm - 3.30pm

Meet other carers and their loved ones over a cuppa and cakes, share experiences, take part in a reminiscence activity and meet our dementia experts.

Chandler Court care home, Bromsgrove

Falls prevention

Wednesday 16th September, 2.30pm - 4pm

Hear advice on how to reduce the risk of falls in older age, from simple balance exercises to tips on how to fall-proof your home.

To attend please call 0330 029 1792 or visit
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Is The Theatre Crying Out To You? Do You Dream Of Treading The Boards?

If you would like to get out and meet people or to try a new hobby or develop a new skill, then look no further! The Rose Theatre is opening its doors (the newly painted ones!) for the annual OPEN DAY on Saturday 19th from 10-2. Take a tour of the theatre accompanied by one of our members finish off with a coffee and biscuit

Come along to the Rose Theatre and become part of the Non-entities company. We produce eight first class plays each year plus the ever popular Christmas entertainment and, in addition to actors, need a huge variety of backstage workers wardrobe, stage managers, props, set builders, light and sound technicians,

front of house staff the list goes on!

We are a company run entirely by volunteer members and would love to meet you. Come and see a show. If you can't make the open day, drop in at the theatre and ask for details about joining us. Check out our website www.rosetheatre.co.uk we are a friendly bunch and make new members very welcome.

ACT NO, it's better than watching the TV!

The Rose Theatre, Chester Rd North, Kidderminster DY10 2RX
01562 743745

Contact Kay our Membership manager on:
membership@rosetheatre.co.uk



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Lickhill Road, Stourport
Lisa 07906 989728

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

TUESDAY

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

WEDNESDAY

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

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

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

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

THURSDAY

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

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

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

FRIDAY

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

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

SATURDAY

KIDDERMINSTER
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Kerry 07936495211

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National Eye Health Week

Why Looking After Your Eyes Matters More Than Ever



Our eyesight is something many of us take for granted until we notice a problem. Whether it's struggling to read small print, experiencing headaches after hours in front of a screen, or finding it harder to drive at night, changes in vision can have a significant impact on everyday life. That's why National Eye Health Week, taking place from 21–27 September, is an important reminder to make eye care a priority. The annual campaign encourages people of all ages to adopt healthier habits, attend regular eye examinations and recognise the importance of protecting one of our most valuable senses.

An eye test is about much more

than checking whether you need glasses. During a routine examination, optometrists can detect early signs of several serious eye conditions, including glaucoma, cataracts and age-related macular degeneration. Many of these conditions develop gradually and may not cause noticeable symptoms in their early stages, making regular check ups essential.

Eye examinations can also reveal signs of wider health problems such as diabetes, high blood pressure and raised cholesterol. In some cases, changes in the blood vessels at the back of the eye may be among the first indicators that something isn't quite

right elsewhere in the body. Early detection often leads to more effective treatment and better long-term outcomes.

One of the biggest challenges to eye health today is the amount of time we spend looking at digital screens. Computers, smartphones, tablets and televisions are now part of everyday life for work, education and entertainment. While screens do not permanently damage eyesight, they can contribute to digital eye strain, causing symptoms such as tired eyes, blurred vision, headaches, dry eyes and neck or shoulder discomfort.



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Please contact us now for more information
Telephone: **01299 272 897**
Email: **wecare@tlc-careathome.co.uk**
Website: **www.tlccareathome.com**



National Eye Health Week

Why Looking After Your Eyes Matters More Than Ever



A simple way to reduce these symptoms is by following the 20-20-20 rule. Every 20 minutes, look at something around 20 feet away for at least 20 seconds. This gives your eye muscles a chance to relax and helps reduce strain. It's also important to blink regularly, as concentrating on screens often reduces our natural blink rate, leading to dry, irritated eyes.

Lifestyle choices also play an important role in maintaining healthy vision. Eating a balanced diet rich in leafy green vegetables, colourful fruits, oily fish, eggs and nuts provides nutrients such as vitamins A, C and E, zinc and omega-3 fatty acids, all of

which support eye health. Staying physically active, maintaining a healthy weight and avoiding smoking can also reduce the risk of developing sight-threatening conditions later in life.

Protecting your eyes from ultraviolet (UV) rays is equally important. Wearing sunglasses with proper UV protection during sunny days helps shield your eyes from harmful radiation, even when it's cloudy. If you work in environments where there is a risk of flying particles or chemicals, appropriate safety eyewear should always be worn. Parents should also remember that children's eyesight develops rapidly during the early years.

Regular eye tests can identify vision problems that may affect learning, confidence and development, often before a child realises anything is wrong.

This National Eye Health Week, take a few moments to think about your own vision. If it's been more than two years since your last eye examination or you've noticed any changes in your sight consider booking an appointment with your local optometrist. Looking after your eyes today can help protect your vision for years to come, allowing you to continue enjoying the people, places and activities that matter most.



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Plum Season Has Arrived Celebrate One of Summer's Sweetest Fruits

As late summer begins to unfold, plum season is in full swing, bringing an abundance of one of Britain's most delicious and versatile fruits. From deep purple Victoria plums to golden Mirabelles and juicy greengages, plums are packed with flavour and make a fantastic addition to both sweet and savoury dishes. British plums are typically harvested between August and September, meaning they are at their freshest, juiciest and most affordable right now.

Buying locally grown fruit not only supports British farmers but also ensures you're enjoying plums at their very best.

Plums are naturally rich in vitamins C and K, as well as fibre and antioxidants, making them a healthy snack that can be enjoyed straight from the fruit bowl. Their natural sweetness

satisfies sugar cravings while providing nutrients that support the immune system, digestion and bone health.

In the kitchen, plums are wonderfully versatile. They can be eaten fresh, stewed for breakfast, baked into crumbles and pies, or transformed into jams, chutneys and sauces. Their sweet-tart flavour pairs beautifully with pork, duck and cheese, making them just as suitable for savoury meals as they are for desserts.

When choosing plums, look for fruit that gives slightly when gently squeezed but isn't overly soft. A fragrant aroma is another sign they're perfectly ripe. If they're still firm, simply leave them at room temperature for a couple of days to develop their full sweetness before storing them in the fridge.

Plum season is relatively short, so it's well worth making the most of these colourful fruits while they're widely available. Whether you're baking for family, preparing a weekend pudding or simply enjoying a healthy afternoon snack, plums offer endless possibilities.

If you're looking for inspiration, you're in luck. Turn the page for our delicious Plum, Hazelnut and Chocolate Cake recipe a rich, indulgent bake that perfectly combines the natural sweetness of seasonal plums with crunchy hazelnuts and luxurious chocolate.

It's the perfect way to celebrate one of the highlights of the British fruit calendar and a guaranteed crowd-pleaser for family and friends alike.



Party nights, Santa events, festive dining, live music and New Year's Eve are now open for booking.

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Plum, Hazelnut & Chocolate Cake



Ingredients

- 175g butter
- 500g plums
- 175g light muscovado sugar
- 175g self-raising flour
- 175g ground hazelnuts
- 3 eggs
- 1 tsp baking powder
- 50g dark chocolate
- 2 tbsp hazelnuts
- 2 tbsp redcurrant or plum jelly

Method

Step 1:

Heat oven to 180C/fan 160C/gas 4. Butter and line the base of a round 20cm cake tin. Halve and stone 4 plums, set aside for later, then roughly chop the remaining plums.

Step 2:

Put the sugar, butter, flour, ground hazelnuts, eggs and baking powder into a large bowl and beat with a wooden spoon or electric hand mixer for 1-2 mins, until smooth and light. Stir in the chopped plums and chocolate, then tip into the prepared cake tin and smooth the top.

Step 3:

Arrange the halved plums over the top of the mixture, pressing them down lightly, then scatter over hazelnuts. Bake for 40-50 mins until the top is golden and the cake feels firm to the touch. Cool in the tin for 10 mins, then turn out, remove the paper and cool on a wire rack. Heat the jelly,

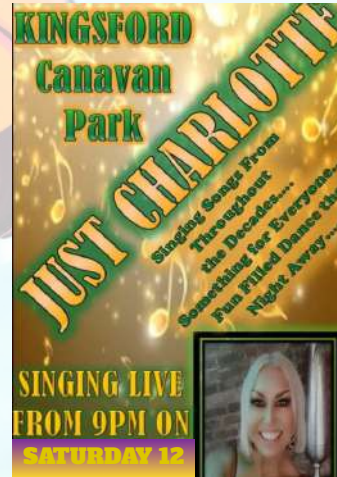
then brush over the top of the cake before serving.



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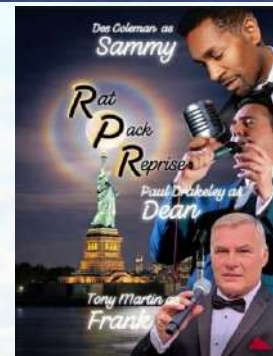
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11 SEPT

18 SEPT

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2 OCT



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2:22

A GHOST STORY

by Danny Robins



21-26TH September 2026

An amateur production by arrangement with Nick Horn Books

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Carpenters Gold Brings the Timeless Music of Karen and Richard to Stourport

The unforgettable music of one of the world's most successful pop duos will come to life this September as Carpenters Gold Live in Concert arrives at Stourport Civic Hall on Saturday 19 September 2026.

Celebrating the timeless songs of Karen and Richard Carpenter, this spectacular live production recreates the magic of the legendary siblings' iconic 1970s concerts. Produced by the London West End director behind hit tribute productions including 80's Mania, The Abba Reunion Tribute Show and Abba Mania, the show has become a firm favourite with audiences across the UK.

Featuring an outstanding live band, Carpenters Gold faithfully performs many of the duo's greatest hits, including We've Only Just Begun, Top of the

World, Yesterday Once More, Superstar, Goodbye to Love, Solitaire and many more. Every song is performed with incredible attention to detail, capturing the warmth, elegance and unmistakable sound that made The Carpenters global superstars.

The show stars internationally acclaimed West End vocalist Vikki Holland-Bowyer, whose beautifully rich and soothing voice bears an uncanny resemblance to Karen Carpenter's. As well as delivering the iconic vocals, she perfectly recreates Karen's stage presence, charm and gentle humour. A special highlight of the evening sees 'Karen' behind the drum kit, just as audiences remember from the original live performances.

Playing the role of Richard Carpenter is talented musical arranger and vocalist Greg Ste-

venson, whose superb piano performances and light-hearted interaction with both the audience and band bring even more authenticity to the production.

Whether you grew up with The Carpenters or have discovered their music more recently, Carpenters Gold - Live in Concert promises an evening filled with nostalgia, beautiful harmonies and unforgettable songs.

The performance takes place at Stourport Civic Hall on Saturday 19 September 2026, starting at 8.00pm. Tickets are £28.50 for both adults and concessions. Don't miss this wonderful celebration of one of music's most beloved duos - a perfect night out for Carpenters fans of all ages. Buy tickets online at: www.thecivictourport.co.uk



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*Prices correct as of April 2026 and may change in the future.





Experience the Magic of Adele by Candlelight at Kidderminster Town Hall

Fans of one of the world's biggest music stars are in for a spectacular evening this September as The Music of Adele, The Candlelight Concert comes to Kidderminster Town Hall on Thursday 24 September 2026.

This award-winning live production offers a stunning celebration of Adele's incredible catalogue of music, all performed in the enchanting atmosphere of a candlelit venue. Starring internationally acclaimed tribute artist Natalie Black, the show has earned a reputation as one of the finest Adele tributes in the world, touring globally since 2011 and winning multiple awards for its authenticity.

Backed by a world-class live band, Natalie captures not only

Adele's unmistakable vocal power but also her warmth, humour and stage presence. Audiences can expect an emotional journey through the superstar's biggest hits, from heartfelt ballads to uplifting anthems that will have everyone singing along.

The setlist features many of Adele's chart-topping classics, including Hello, Someone Like You, Rolling in the Deep, Easy On Me, Set Fire to the Rain and many more. Beautiful live arrangements, authentic costumes and outstanding musicianship combine to create a truly memorable concert experience.

The intimate candlelit setting adds a magical touch, making every song feel even more personal and atmospheric. There

are plenty of opportunities to raise your candles, sing your heart out, share a laugh and capture the evening with friends and family.

Whether you're a lifelong Adele fan or simply love exceptional live music, this promises to be an unforgettable night of entertainment. It's a celebration of one of Britain's greatest voices, brought to life with passion, energy and remarkable attention to detail.

Tickets are available online now, so book early to avoid disappointment and prepare for an evening filled with unforgettable songs, breathtaking performances and the unmistakable magic of Adele by candlelight.
www.boxoffice.kidderminster-townhall.org.uk

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Kia EV3 The Small SUV Making a Big Impression

The all-new Kia EV3 is one of the most exciting new cars to arrive in 2026, bringing premium electric vehicle technology to a more affordable and practical family SUV. Inspired by its larger sibling, the award-winning EV9, the EV3 combines futuristic styling with impressive range, clever technology and everyday usability.

From the outside, the EV3 stands out thanks to its sharp lines, distinctive LED lighting and bold, modern design. Despite being a compact SUV that's perfectly suited to town driving, it offers plenty of interior space, making it an ideal choice for families, commuters and anyone looking to make the switch to electric. Inside, the cabin feels remarkably upmarket. High-quality materials, comfortable seating and a minimalist dashboard create a clean, relaxing environment. A large

panoramic digital display combines the driver's instruments and infotainment system into one easy-to-use interface, while wireless Apple CarPlay and Android Auto come as standard on most models.

One of the EV3's biggest strengths is its driving range. Depending on the version you choose, Kia claims a range of up to around 375 miles on a single charge (WLTP), making it one of the longest-range electric cars in its class. Fast-charging capability also means you can top up from 10 to 80 per cent in around half an hour using a suitable rapid charger. On the road, the EV3 is quiet, refined and surprisingly enjoyable to drive. Instant electric power provides brisk acceleration, while the elevated driving position gives excellent

visibility. The suspension has been tuned for comfort, making it equally happy on motorways or navigating Britain's often less-than-perfect roads.

Safety is another area where the EV3 excels. It comes packed with advanced driver assistance features, including adaptive cruise control, lane-keeping assistance, autonomous emergency braking and intelligent parking aids designed to make everyday driving easier and safer.

With competitive pricing, generous equipment levels and Kia's excellent seven-year warranty, the EV3 is set to become one of the standout family cars of the year. For drivers considering their first electric vehicle, or those looking to upgrade to something practical, stylish and economical, the Kia EV3 deserves a place at the very top of the shortlist.


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September at the Station

Starting on 1st September, we are starting a brand new 8-week trial of a Bewdley to Kidderminster commuter rail link. Catch a train from Bewdley at 0640 and 0740 to connect with the mainline, with returns at 1757 and 1902. This service will be on a Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. Please see the SVR website for further information.

Thursday 17th to Sunday 20th is our 4-day Autumn Steam Gala.

Thursday 1st October to Sunday 4th October is our 4-day Autumn Diesel Bash.

The Fund shop will be open throughout the galas, and we hope to have the beer hut open also (depending on volunteer availability). Please see our Facebook page for updates.


Follow us on Facebook



Harriers Ready for an Exciting September in the National League

Excitement is building around Aggborough as Kidderminster Harriers continue their long-awaited return to the National League. Following last season's promotion-winning campaign, Phil Brown's side are back competing against some of the biggest names in non-league football, with supporters eager to see how the Reds fare at Step One once again.

The opening weeks of the season have already given fans plenty to cheer about, but September promises to be a crucial month as Harriers look to build momentum and climb the table. Every point will be hard-earned in what is widely regarded as one of the most competitive leagues in English football outside the EFL.

The month begins with an away trip to Boreham Wood on Saturday, September 5, before the Reds return to Aggborough for a mouth-watering home clash against Hartlepool United on Saturday, September 12. An-

other tough test follows on Saturday, September 19, with Harriers making the journey to Southend United, before rounding off the month back on home turf against local rivals Tamworth on Saturday, September 26.

With former Football League clubs including Carlisle United, Barrow, Forest Green Rovers, Harrogate Town, Southend United and Yeovil Town all competing in the division this season, there are no easy fixtures. Every match presents a fresh challenge, but Harriers have shown they possess the determination and togetherness needed to compete at this level.

Supporters will once again have a huge role to play. Aggborough has earned a reputation as one of non-league football's finest stadiums, with passionate home crowds often making the difference on matchdays. Strong backing

throughout September could provide the boost the Reds need as they continue to adapt to the demands of the National League.

Whether you're a lifelong season-ticket holder or thinking of making your first visit to Aggborough this season, now is the perfect time to get behind the Harriers. With exciting fixtures, fierce competition and another memorable chapter in the club's proud history unfolding, there is every reason for football fans across the Wyre Forest to be optimistic.

September Fixtures

- Saturday, September 5: Boreham Wood (A)
- Saturday, September 12: Hartlepool United (H)
- Saturday, September 19: Southend United (A)
- Saturday, September 26: Tamworth (H)

Come on you Harriers!



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