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KIDDERMINSTER, STOURPORT, BEWDLEY & SURROUNDING AREAS

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## Celebrating Wyre Forest Everyday Heroes The No Barriers Awards

A celebration of the people who go the extra mile to support others across Wyre Forest has taken place, with more than 20 individuals, businesses and organisations recognised at this year's No Barriers the Mike Oborski Awards.

Organised by Wyre Forest District Council, the annual ceremony was held on Thursday 16 April. The awards shine a

light on those who have made a real difference to the lives of people with disabilities whether by improving accessibility, creating employment opportunities, or simply showing kindness and inclusion in their everyday work. This year's winners highlight the many ways our community continues to make Wyre Forest a more inclusive place. Among the 26 recipients were individuals offering vital behind-the-scenes

support, alongside local businesses proving that inclusion can sit at the heart of what they do. Community groups, schools and care settings were also strongly represented.

The awards were first launched in 2008 in memory of Councillor Mike Oborski and are now chaired by his wife, Fran Oborski.

Speaking after the event, Councillor Oborski said the awards are a powerful reminder of the compassion that exists across the district, adding that this year's winners show inclusion is not just a policy, but something people live every day.

The council hopes that by celebrating these achievements, more individuals, organisations and businesses will be inspired to make their services and spaces accessible to all.

To find out more about the awards and a full list of winners visit the Wyre Forest District Council website: [www.wyreforestdc.gov.uk](http://www.wyreforestdc.gov.uk)



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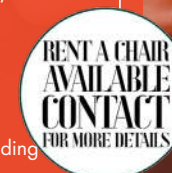


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## Free Outdoor Yoga Returns to Brinton Park

Residents across the Wyre Forest are being invited to roll out their mats and embrace the outdoors as free community yoga sessions return to Brinton Park for the summer. The Park Yoga sessions will take place every Sunday until 13th September.

Organised by Park Yoga, the popular sessions take place every Sunday morning from 9:30am, running from early May through to mid-September. The initiative is completely free to attend, with no booking required making it an accessible and welcoming activity for people of all ages and abilities.

Designed with inclusivity at its heart, Park Yoga aims to bring communities together in a relaxed, outdoor setting while promoting both physical and mental wellbeing. Whether you're a complete beginner or a seasoned yogi, the sessions

are structured to be gentle, supportive and easy to follow. In fact, organisers say a significant number of participants each year are trying yoga for the very first time.

Each session lasts around an hour and takes place in the fresh air, allowing attendees to connect with nature while enjoying the benefits of movement and mindfulness. Participants are encouraged to bring along a yoga mat, though a towel or blanket works just as well.

The return of Park Yoga has been welcomed by local partners and councils, who see the initiative as a valuable way to encourage healthier lifestyles and stronger community connections. The sessions also offer a social aspect, with many attendees choosing to stay on afterwards and enjoy the park or nearby town centre cafés.

Importantly, the sessions will go ahead in most weather conditions, with only severe rain leading to cancellations, which are communicated in advance online.

As the warmer months approach, Park Yoga offers a simple, free and uplifting way to start your Sunday helping residents feel healthier, happier and more connected to their local community.



## Community Café Wins Award

### Wolverley Cafe wins “No Barriers”award



The Community Café at Wolverley Memorial Hall has been presented with a “No Barriers” Award by Wyre Forest District Council.

The annual award recognises local organisations and individuals who provide meaningful access for people with disabilities while also supporting the wider needs of the community.

The Wolverley Community Café was nominated by local resident Mike Webster, a regular visitor. Mike said: “Since living with Parkinson’s disease and angina, it has been difficult for me to get out and about, but I can access the Community Café easily on my mobility scooter, or a member of

the café team will pick me up and take me home.

“The café is a very friendly place, with a team of smiley volunteers always ready to chat and cater for whatever you need – affordable drinks, tasty snacks and lovely homemade cakes.”

The café is part of the national Chatty Café scheme, which encourages people who may be feeling lonely to visit and connect with others.

The “Knit and Natter” group meets every Thursday afternoon, and there are regular free Eat, Drink and Learn sessions on selected Friday mornings, where visitors can learn a new skill or explore topics of local interest. Café Manager Kate Mellar said:

“We are delighted to receive this award from the local council and are so pleased that our friendly, welcoming space has been recognised in this way. Our aim is to be affordable and accessible to everyone in the local community.”

The Community Café at Wolverley Memorial Hall, Shatterford Lane, is open Tuesday to Friday from 10am to 3.30pm, and Saturdays from 10am to 2pm.



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## From Local Street to Global Stage Walter Nash - The Prime Minister Behind the Name

Have you ever wondered who Walter Nash was, whose name is commemorated in a road in Kidderminster?

Born in Kidderminster in 1882, Walter Nash went on to become Prime Minister of New Zealand in the 1950s. Prior to this, he held a key role as Finance Minister for 14 years (and for a time Acting Prime Minister) in New Zealand's first Labour Government from 1935 to 1949. This was during the tumultuous years of the Great Depression, the war against fascism, and the post-World War II efforts to build a rules-based system for resolving international disputes and enabling orderly trade between nations replacing the "beggar my neighbour" and "transactional" practices that had caused so much harm before the war.

Born into a poor family, he did well at primary school and won a scholarship to King Charles I School. However, he was unable to accept it because his family could not afford the additional costs of attendance. As a young man in a world of precarious em-

ployment at the beginning of the 20th century so vividly described in Robert Tressell's era-defining novel *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists* (a precariousness which, for many, seems to have returned in the 21st century) he struggled to gain secure and stable work. In order to better himself and his family, he emigrated to New Zealand.

There, driven by his beliefs in socialism, Christianity, and religious tolerance, he became, alongside the charismatic Michael Savage, one of the founders of the New Zealand Labour Party.

His organisational ability was key to the successful implementation of Labour's vision of a progressive and decent society that protected ordinary people. During World War II, he also played a crucial role in the efficient mobilisation of New Zealand's resources in support of Britain.

Relations between the New Zealand Labour Government in the 1930s and Britain's Conservative Government then pursuing a policy of appeasement towards

Hitler had been tense. However, this changed on 3 September 1939, when Britain declared war and New Zealand did the same. After a meeting of the New Zealand Cabinet, Prime Minister Michael Savage, dying of cancer, broadcast to the nation from his deathbed, saying: "We range ourselves without fear beside Britain. Where she goes, we go; where she stands, we stand."

After the war, it was calculated that 67% of all men aged 18 to 45 had joined the armed services. New Zealanders were recognised as elite soldiers of the Allied forces, often called upon to engage in the most difficult fighting. They paid a heavy price, with one of the highest casualty rates among British and Commonwealth nations.

The naming of a road in Kidderminster after Walter Nash recognises not only one of the town's most influential and remarkable sons, but also the enormous sacrifices made by New Zealanders in the war against fascism.

Submitted by  
Wyre Forest Labour Party



## A Trusted Name in Times of Need

### Gaunts Funeral Directors

For more than a century, Gaunts Funeral Directors has been a name synonymous with compassion, dignity and trust across Kidderminster, Stourport and the wider Midlands. What began as a simple act of kindness has grown into a sixth-generation family business, supporting thousands of families through some of life's most difficult moments.

The story of Gaunts Funeral Directors dates back to 1900, when Percival Gaunt, a local carpenter, was asked to make a coffin for a friend. With the help of his father, Decimus, he rose to the occasion unaware that this moment would mark the beginning of a long-standing family tradition. As the business developed, Percy's sons, Stanley and Ronald, joined him, forming F.P.

Gaunt and Son and laying the foundations for what would become one of the Midlands' most respected independent funeral directors.

Today, more than 125 years later, that same family ethos remains at the heart of everything they do. Now spanning six generations, Gaunts Funeral Directors continues to provide a service built on care, understanding and personal attention values that have been passed down and strengthened over time.

The company has grown steadily and serves communities across the region, with locations in Kidderminster, Stourport on Severn, Tenbury Wells, Rowley Regis, Stourbridge, Cradley Heath and Smethwick. Despite their expansion focus remains firmly on delivering a truly local service, with each branch maintaining close ties to the community it serves. Gaunts Funeral Directors offers a full range of funeral services, designed to meet the individual needs of every family. Whether arranging a traditional service or



something more contemporary, their experienced team provides guidance and support at every stage. From handling legal and administrative requirements to organising transport, liaising with crematoriums or burial grounds, and arranging bespoke elements such as celebrants or memorials, every detail is managed with professionalism and sensitivity.

Flexibility is also key. Families can choose between attended or unattended funerals, allowing them to create a farewell that feels right for them both emotionally and financially. Above all, Gaunts believes every funeral should reflect the life of the individual, ensur-

ing a meaningful and personal tribute.

Beyond their services, Gaunts Funeral Directors is also deeply committed to giving back. The company actively supports local charities and community initiatives, reinforcing its role not just as a business, but as a valued part of the areas it serves. This dedication to community is one of the many reasons why so many local families continue to place their trust in them, generation after generation.

In towns like Kidderminster and Stourport, where community connections run deep, reputation matters and Gaunts Funeral Directors has built theirs over decades of consistent care

and professionalism.

They are known locally not only for the quality of their service, but for their genuine empathy, offering quiet reassurance and support when it is needed most.

As they continue to grow across the Midlands, Gaunts Funeral Directors remains firmly grounded in its founding principles. More than 125 years on from that first coffin crafted by hand, their commitment to dignity, respect and family values remains unchanged ensuring they will continue to be a trusted name for generations to come.

To find out more visit:  
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THIS MONTHS  
**Local Lowdown**  
 Quirky Tales & Local Lore

**The Curious Case of the Tyre-less Car, Stourport**

A mystery motor has taken up residence on a quiet cul-de-sac in Stourport—minus tyres, windows, or an owner in sight. Locals have lovingly nicknamed it “The Modern Art Piece”. Council teams are on the case, but for now, it remains a baffling, bizarre, and bizarrely beloved landmark.



**Squirrel Goes Viral, Broadwaters Park**

One particularly bold squirrel

wowed park-goers last week with a series of gravity-defying leaps between trees, bins, and benches before nabbing a crisp and disappearing mid-munch. Onlookers are calling it “better than telly” and we have to agree.



**When Bewdley Competed for Longest Washing Line**

Rewind to the 1980s, when some Bewdley neighbours waged war with pegs and poles to see who could stretch their washing line the furthest. The

winner? 48 feet across three gardens. Local lore tells of the time Mrs Jenkins' king-size sheet flew into a neighbour's birthday BBQ. (The trifle never recovered.)



**Local History Bite:**  
 When Stourport Was the ‘Blackpool of the Midlands’  
 In the 1930s, Stourport was the place to be. With riverside picnics, paddleboats, fairground rides, and trainloads of Brummies in search of sun, it earned the nickname “Blackpool of the Midlands.” Though the lido may be long gone, the riverside charm certainly isn't.



**Bewdley's Big (Brief) Break for Freedom**

Did you know Bewdley was once declared a free borough by Charles I? That didn't last long—mainly because locals took it as permission to ignore taxes altogether. The Crown wasn't amused, but the town's proud independent spirit lives on!





## KEMP Hospice runners raise over £22,000 at London Marathon 2026

Dedicated fundraisers successfully completed the iconic TCS London Marathon on Sunday, raising an incredible £22,276 including Gift Aid, in support of KEMP Hospice. Six runners took part raising funds for KEMP Hospice.

In a particularly special year, for the first time KEMP Hospice were awarded four charity plac-

es. Will, Rachel, Sam and Rhys took on the 26.2-mile challenge, proudly representing KEMP Hospice and demonstrating months of commitment, training and fundraising. Two more runners chose to run in support of KEMP Hospice after successfully applying for ballot places.

In the lead-up to the marathon, four of the runners visited KEMP Day Hospice for a special send-

off event, where they spent time with patients creating banners to take with them to London. The visit highlighted the real impact of their fundraising and introduced them to just some of the people who are cared for by KEMP Hospice.

Ian Carr, Head of Fundraising & Communications at KEMP Hospice said "We are incredibly proud of all the runners for taking on this huge challenge. Each runner has their own personal reasons for wanting to support KEMP Hospice. Their dedication and the generosity of everyone who has supported them will make a real difference to people in our community who need our care and support services."

The London Marathon is one of the world's most recognised endurance events. Support for the team has come from across the community, with donations contributing directly to patient care, wellbeing services and bereavement support – all provided free of charge by KEMP Hospice.



The team at KEMP are now encouraging others to follow in the runners' footsteps. "We have four charity places for next year's event so if anyone is feeling inspired after the excitement of the weekend, you can register your interest for a charity place in the 2027 TCS London Marathon via our website."

To find out more about KEMP Hospice at the 2027 TCS London Marathon visit: [www.kempshospice.org.uk](http://www.kempshospice.org.uk)





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## The Freezer is it Foods Best Friend?

Ever wondered how to hit pause on that rapidly ripening punnet of raspberries or even those very soft bananas? Meet your freezer, the unsung hero of the kitchen!

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Your future self (and your wallet) will thank you for making your freezer your new best friend and yes, even bananas can be frozen remove them from their peel and freeze inside a bag or foil and use them to make smoothies or banana bread once defrosted.





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# The Next Chapter at The Elephants Pyjamas

Meet Kelly – the new owner continuing a much-loved Kinver boutique



Kelly – proud new owner of  
The Elephants Pyjamas

Hello, I'm Kelly – the new owner of The Elephants Pyjamas.

I'm a proud mum and step-mum to six wonderful children and a very happy grandmother to one gorgeous grandson.

For the past 30 years I've worked as a PA and Event Planner, bringing people together and creating memorable experiences. Alongside this, I've always been passionate about fundraising and supporting charities close to my heart, including Macmillan, Teenage Cancer Trust and Birmingham Children's Hospital.

In 2025 my husband and I moved to the beautiful village of Kinver and instantly fell in love with the warm community here.

The Elephants Pyjamas quickly became one of my favourite boutiques. When I heard that Nicki was retiring and the shop might close, I simply couldn't let such a special place disappear.

With the support of my family, I'm proud to continue the story of this much-loved shop – keeping it cosy, welcoming and full of thoughtful gifts for our wonderful community.

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## Mark Garnier Member of Parliament for Wyre Forest

The fallout from the recent local elections still rumbles on, not least with continued uncertainty about who will be prime minister! There are economic challenges facing us all, some driven by outside events, many from political choices. Tax employment and there is no surprise that unemployment goes up. Inflation, too. Push up the cost of employing a school leaver, and youth unemployment rises. Put green levies on all our energy bills, and it is no surprise that we have the highest energy costs in the developed world.

It is easy to be gloomy about what is going on. But here in Wyre Forest there are many reasons to be happy. When I first became the

local MP, back in 2010, there were large areas of deprivation. The Stourport road was blighted by derelict employment sites. Kidderminster's town centre was run down. Despite money spent on flood defences, Bewdley was still shut down every time the Severn broke its banks. Wind forward 15 years, and Kidderminster has a newly refurbished town hall, properly equipped for performing arts. The old magistrates court has been refurbished. The second ugliest building in the UK – Crown House – is gone. We are about to have a new town centre park. Bewdley has new, east bank flood defences. Eyesores in Stourport have been demol-

ished. And on the Stourport Road, we have the new Silverwoods development, a brand-new emergency services hub, and Specsavers' main UK manufacturing base. If you're "better off going to Specsavers", what better endorsement for Wyre Forest is there than Specsavers being better off going to Kidderminster!

And to be fair to the new government, they have continued with inward investment to the area. The £20 million Pride in Place funding award is just about to get started. This aims to tackle a strange local anomaly – that one of our most economically productive areas is also home to our area of greatest social challenge. One side of the Stourport Road has the most economic opportunity, but the other side, the greatest unemployment.

The new Pride in Place board will be aiming to resolve exactly that problem. There is no greater satisfaction in life than being in control of your own destiny, and the start of that is to have a job. A lot of recent decisions have made that more difficult, but at the very least, we can train people how to get onto life's ladder.

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

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## Forest Dog Rescue Every Share Makes a Difference

Forest Dog Rescue, a much-loved local charity near Kidderminster, is continuing its vital work caring for dogs in need and the community can play a simple but powerful role in supporting them.

Every year, Forest Dog Rescue provides a safe haven for dogs of all ages, many of whom arrive with complex needs or from difficult backgrounds. Their dedicated team works tirelessly to rehabilitate, care for and rehome each dog, giving them the second chance they deserve.

One of the most impactful ways you can help right now is by following Forest Dog Rescue on Facebook. By doing so, you'll stay up to date with the latest news, dogs available for adoption, and urgent fostering requests. Even

something as simple as sharing a post can help a dog reach the right home faster.

Fostering is another hugely valuable way to support the charity. By opening your home on a temporary basis, you can help ease pressure on kennel space while giving a dog a more comfortable, home environment. It also allows the charity to better understand each dog's personality, helping to match them with the perfect forever family.

Whether you're in a position to foster, adopt, or simply help spread awareness online, every action makes a difference.

To find out more, follow Forest Dog Rescue on Facebook and discover how you can get involved.

Together, the community can continue to support this fantastic local charity because every dog deserves a loving home.



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# Making Recycling Better In The Wyre Forest

Worcestershire County Council is due to spend £59million of our council tax on disposing of our rubbish this year. Wyre Forest Council will spend £4.6 million collecting household waste and transporting it to the privately run "energy from waste plant" at Hartlebury. The council intends to generate £1.7million of income mostly by charging for business and green waste collections. By reducing waste and recycling more we can spend our council tax on improving other services.

New legislation from the Labour Government will make recycling simpler by creating common standards of what can be recycled and how it should be collected across England. This means that we can now put aluminium foil and food trays in our green recycling bins and the recycling plant will separate it ready for reprocessing back to aluminium.

Our government is also requiring that all English councils collect food waste. Currently all our food waste goes to the Hartlebury plant and is burnt. As you can imagine, burning waste food is costly and doesn't create much energy. By collecting it separately and processing it in an anaerobic digester, methane gas can be created and used to generate electricity. This is good for the environment and also saves money.

Wyre Forest District Council is one of a number of councils that has not yet introduced a separate food waste collection service. Following the announcement of the new legislation, the Council has indicated that it will review its approach in line with government funding and guidance before committing to implementation. As a result, a dedicated food waste collection service is not expected to be introduced locally in the immediate future.

In 2027 a new Unitary council will be created, probably covering North Worcestershire, which amongst other things will bring waste collection, recycling and waste disposal together into one service. This will reduce cost and make planning and delivery easier. However, the key to protecting the environment and saving money is to reduce waste at source.

The Government's "Extended Producer Responsibility" holds businesses accountable for the entire lifecycle of packaging, promoting recycling and reducing waste. Business that produces waste will be charged and this money invested in waste reduction and recycling, bringing the cost to council taxpayers down. We can also play our part by not buying products with excess packaging, not wasting food and by buying vintage, recycled and longer lasting products.

Content Supplied by  
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## WHAT'S ON DOWN THE MILL

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Brew Monday 10am-2pm

**3rd June**  
Well-being Craft Workshop 11am-2pm

**5th June**  
Tiamat Gaming at the Mill 7pm-11pm

**10th June**  
Well-being Craft Workshop 11am-2pm

**13th June**  
Cancer Research Fund-raiser

**17th June**  
Well-being Craft Workshop 11am-2pm

**19th June**  
Tiamat Gaming at the Mill 7pm-11pm

**24th June**  
Well-being Craft Workshop 11am-2pm

## The Community Cafe

Our community café is temporarily closed for refurbishment while we carry out some improvements to the space. This will help us create an even more welcoming and comfortable place for everyone in our community. We look forward to reopening and welcoming you back very soon.



## Help Save Our Mill

Due to unforeseen financial pressures, we urgently need your support to ensure we can continue serving and keeping our community together.



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## Songs for Support 2026 Fundraising for KEMP



Wyre Forest Matters is proud to spotlight an incredible night of live music for an even greater cause. Songs for Support 2026 returns on Friday 20th November, bringing the community together to raise vital funds for KEMP Hospice.

The organisers would like to express a huge thank you to Wayne Barber, who has not only created a fantastic venue at The Church, but is also generously allowing this charity event to take place there. His support is hugely appreciated by everyone involved.

The evening promises a brilliant line-up of live music. Headlining the night are YOU2 a long established U2 tribute band celebrating their 22nd year. With

Paul McGahan taking on the role of Bono, they deliver an energetic and authentic journey through U2's greatest hits, returning for their third successful fundraising performance.

Joining them are The New Classix, featuring well-known local vocalist Jayne Peters alongside a group of experienced musicians. Audiences can look forward to popular tracks from artists such as Texas and The Pretenders.

Opening the night are The Rubix, an exciting up-and-coming local band who thrive across a mix of genres. Performing songs from Duran Duran, Spandau Ballet, Lady Gaga and The Cranberries, they are sure to get the crowd going.

So why KEMP? The answer is simple. Cancer touches so many lives, and KEMP Hospice provides vital care, guidance and support to those who need it most. To continue delivering these services, they rely on the generosity of the community.

All of the musicians are giving their time for free, meaning 100% of ticket sales will go directly to KEMP. Now it's over to the public to get behind this fantastic cause.

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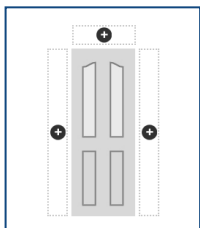
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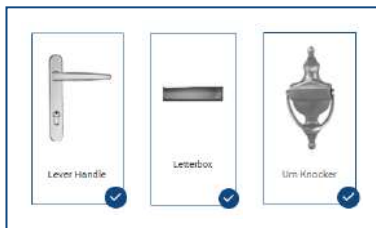
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## Plant of the Month Hydrangea

If you're looking for a showstopper this summer, the Hydrangea is hard to beat. Bursting into full bloom in June, these classic garden favourites are known for their large, colourful flower heads in shades of blue, pink, white and purple. They're a staple in UK gardens and right now, they're trending thanks to their versatility, low maintenance, and ability to transform any outdoor space into something truly eye-catching.

One of the biggest reasons Hydrangeas are so popular is their adaptability. They work beautifully in borders, containers, or even as feature plants in smaller gardens. Whether you're filling a shady corner or brightening up a patio, there's a variety to suit almost every space. Hydrangea thrives best in moist, well-drained soil rich in organic matter and prefers a position with morn-

ing sun and afternoon shade. Caring for Hydrangeas is refreshingly straightforward, making them ideal for both beginner and experienced gardeners. The key is consistent watering these plants don't like to dry out, which is reflected in their name, derived from the Greek word for water. Mulching around the base helps retain moisture and regulate soil temperature, especially during warmer June days. Regular watering and occasional feeding will keep blooms healthy and vibrant throughout the season.

One of the most fascinating features of Hydrangeas is their ability to change colour. In certain varieties, flower colour can shift depending on soil pH acidic soils tend to produce blue blooms, while alkaline soils encourage pink tones. This unique trait adds an extra layer of interest and allows gardeners to experi-

ment with their planting schemes.

Hydrangeas are trending not just for their beauty, but for their reliability. As long-lived perennials, they return year after year with bigger and better displays. Their lush foliage and dramatic flowers also make them perfect for cut arrangements, bringing that summer garden feel indoors. In short, if you want maximum impact with minimal fuss this June, Hydrangeas are the plant to choose bold, beautiful, and brilliantly easy to grow.





## Outdoor Entertaining Create The Perfect Garden Gathering

When the warmer months arrive, there's nothing quite like bringing people together in your garden. Whether it's a relaxed barbecue or an evening drinks party, a little planning goes a long way in creating a welcoming and memorable outdoor space.

Start with your layout. Think about how guests will move around the garden and create clear zones for seating, dining, and socialising. Arrange furniture in small clusters to encourage conversation, and ensure there's enough seating without overcrowding the space. If you're short on chairs, outdoor cushions, benches, or even picnic blankets can add a casual, comfortable feel.

Lighting is key to setting the mood, especially as the evening draws in. Layer different types of lighting to create warmth and

depth. String lights or festoon bulbs draped across fences or trees instantly add charm, while solar lanterns or candles placed on tables bring a softer glow. For a practical touch, make sure pathways and steps are well lit for safety.

When it comes to food, keep things simple and accessible. Opt for dishes that can be prepared in advance and served buffet-style, allowing guests to help themselves. This not only reduces stress for the host but also encourages a more relaxed atmosphere. Use sturdy outdoor-friendly tableware and consider covering food to keep it fresh and protected from insects. A drinks station with a selection of chilled beverages, glassware, and ice means guests can top up without needing to ask.

Creating atmosphere is all about the details. Background music

played at a low volume can enhance the mood without overpowering conversation. Add personal touches such as fresh flowers, herbs in pots, or themed decorations to tie everything together. If the weather is unpredictable, have a backup plan parasols for shade or light rain, and blankets or a fire pit for cooler evenings.

Ultimately, the best outdoor gatherings feel effortless. Focus on comfort, flow, and a relaxed vibe, and your guests will naturally settle in and enjoy the space you've created.





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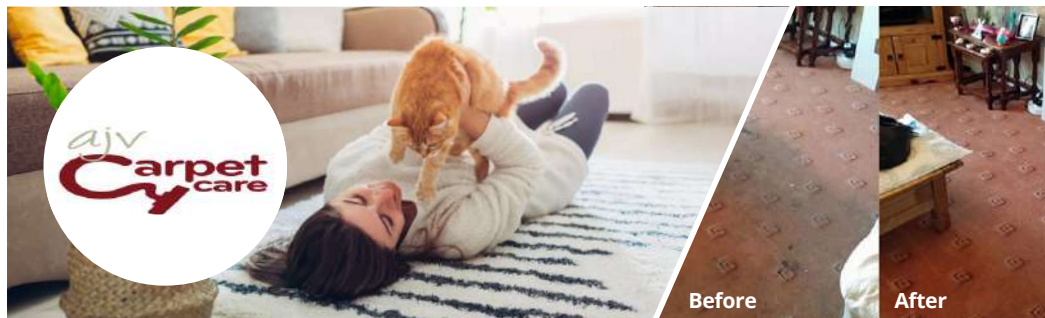
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## Growing Local Inside Cooks Garden Centre



Tucked just outside Stourport, Cook's Garden Centre has been a trusted name in local gardening for over 40 years and it is easy to see why it remains a firm favourite with both seasoned gardeners and beginners alike.

Family run since 1981, Cook's has built its reputation on friendly, honest advice and a genuine passion for plants. Founded by local horticulture expert Paul Cook, the centre has grown from a small operation into a thriving independent business while still retaining that personal, community feel.

What really sets Cook's apart is its focus on quality and value.

The centre offers a huge and ever changing range of plants from seasonal bedding and perennials to shrubs and specimen varieties sourced from across Europe. Many plants are grown on site at their nursery, ensuring strong, healthy stock and supporting local growing practices.

Beyond plants, Cook's is a one stop shop for all things garden related. Customers will find everything from compost and pots to feeds, fertilisers and lawn care products, with knowledgeable staff always on hand to offer tailored advice. Whether you are tackling pests, planning a full garden redesign or simply looking to brighten up a patio, there

is expert guidance available at every step.

The centre has also gained national recognition, earning multiple RHS Gold Medals including a prestigious win at the Chelsea Flower Show, highlighting the expertise and dedication behind the scenes.

But perhaps what makes Cook's truly special is its community spirit. With a loyal local customer base and a team that prides itself on long standing relationships, it is more than just a garden centre it is a place where advice is shared, ideas are sparked and gardens begin to grow.



## Grow Your Own Tomatoes With Confidence

If you are new to growing your own food, tomatoes are one of the best places to start. They are easy to care for, grow well in a variety of spaces, and reward you with a steady supply of fresh, flavourful fruit throughout the summer.

Cherry tomatoes are especially beginner friendly. They thrive in pots, hanging baskets, or small garden beds, making them ideal whether you have a large garden or just a sunny patio. Start by choosing a good quality tomato plant from a garden centre or grow from seed if you are feeling more adventurous. Tomatoes need plenty of sunlight, so pick a spot that gets at least six hours of direct sun each day.

Use a container with good drainage and fill it with nutrient rich compost. Once planted, water regularly to keep the soil moist but not waterlogged. Consist-

ency is key, as irregular watering can affect the quality of the fruit. As your plant grows, it will need support, so add a cane or small frame to keep it upright and healthy.

Feeding your tomato plant every couple of weeks with a liquid fertiliser will encourage strong growth and better fruit production. You will also need to remove small side shoots that grow between the main stem and branches. This helps the plant focus its energy on producing fruit rather than excess foliage.

Within a few weeks, you will start to see flowers appear, followed by small green tomatoes that gradually ripen into vibrant red or yellow fruits. The moment you pick your first homegrown tomato is incredibly rewarding, and the taste is often far superior to anything bought in a shop.

Growing tomatoes is not just about the end result. It is a relaxing and enjoyable process that connects you with nature and gives you a real sense of achievement. Once you have mastered tomatoes, you may find yourself inspired to grow even more.




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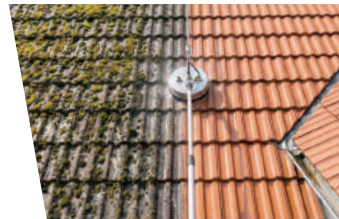
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## Sleep Easy This Hay Fever Season with Hypoallergenic Pillows and Quilts



As hay fever season arrives, many people notice their symptoms worsen not just outdoors, but indoors too. Pollen can easily find its way into the home on clothing, hair and even through open windows. Once inside, it settles into soft furnishings like bedding, making nights just as uncomfortable as days. This is where hypoallergenic pillows and quilts can play an important role in improving sleep quality.

Hypoallergenic bedding is designed to reduce exposure to common irritants, including pollen, dust mites and pet dander. These products are made using materials that resist the build up of allergens and help create a cleaner sleeping environment. Synthetic fibres such as micro-fibre or specially treated cotton are commonly used because

they are less likely to trap particles compared to traditional fillings.

During hay fever season, symptoms such as sneezing, congestion and itchy eyes can feel worse at night. Standard pillows often hold onto allergens over time, even with regular washing. Hypoallergenic pillows are created to stay fresher for longer, helping to reduce irritation and support clearer breathing while you sleep. This can make a noticeable difference, especially for those who struggle with blocked noses or disrupted rest. Quilts also play a part in maintaining comfort. Hypoallergenic options provide warmth without the allergen retention often linked to feather or down fillings. They are typically lightweight and breathable, helping to regu-

late body temperature and prevent overheating, which can also disturb sleep.

Keeping bedding clean is essential, particularly during peak pollen months. Most hypoallergenic pillows and quilts are easy to wash at higher temperatures, helping to remove allergens more effectively. Washing bedding regularly and changing pillowcases more frequently during hay fever season can further reduce exposure.

Making the switch to hypoallergenic pillows and quilts is a simple yet effective way to create a more comfortable bedroom. At a time of year when allergies can feel unavoidable, it offers a practical step towards better sleep and more refreshed mornings.

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This family-run independent business has built a solid reputation across Wyre Forest and Worcestershire for its exceptional customer service, expert fitting, and wide range of stylish, made-to-measure window coverings.

Located in the well-known Baldwin Centre, Gilberts specialises in supplying and installing bespoke blinds and shutters that not only look great but perform

brilliantly too. From traditional vertical blinds and classic Venetians to contemporary rollers, Roman blinds, and elegant plantation shutters there's a style to suit every space and budget.

Their welcoming showroom allows customers to browse the full range of designs, materials, and finishes in person, with expert guidance always on hand. Whether you're looking for something practical – like blackout blinds for a peaceful night's sleep – or something that adds a soft, decorative touch to your interior, the team will help you find the right solution.

With years of hands-on experience and a real passion for interiors, the Gilberts team is known for going the extra mile. Every blind or shutter is made to

measure, fitted with precision, and built to last – bringing you comfort, quality, and long-term value.

As a family business, Gilberts takes great pride in its personal approach, treating every home with the same care and attention they would their own. For homes, offices, or commercial premises, Gilberts Blinds and Shutters is your go-to for professional service and beautiful results.

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## Why Walking 10,000 Steps Isn't the Only Goal That Matters



For years, the idea of walking 10,000 steps a day has been promoted as the gold standard for good health. While it's a helpful target, the truth is far more flexible and far more encouraging for those struggling to hit that number.

The 10,000-step goal didn't originate from medical research. It dates to a 1960s Japanese marketing campaign for a pedometer, and while it stuck, modern science suggests that health benefits begin well below that figure. In fact, studies show that walking around 6,000 to 8,000 steps a day can significantly reduce the risk of conditions such as heart disease and Type 2 diabetes particularly for older adults.

What really matters is consistency. Regular movement, even in shorter bursts, can improve cardiovascular health, boost mood, and help maintain a healthy weight. A brisk 20-minute walk, a lunchtime stroll, or choosing the stairs over the lift all contribute to your daily activity levels. It's about building movement into your routine in a way that feels manageable.

It's also important to remember that not all steps are equal. Walking at a faster pace, tackling hills, or mixing in other forms of exercise like cycling, swimming, or strength training can deliver even greater health benefits. Quality of movement can be just as important as quantity.

For those with busy lifestyles, setting realistic goals is key. If 10,000 steps feels overwhelming, start with 5,000 and gradually build up. Using a step counter or smartphone app can help track progress and keep motivation high, but it shouldn't become a source of pressure.

Ultimately, the best approach is the one you can stick to. Whether it's 6,000 steps or 12,000, staying active on a regular basis is what truly makes the difference. In the long run, it's not about chasing a number it's about creating a healthier, more active lifestyle that works for you.

# Slimming World

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real  
good

## MONDAY

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

KIDDERMINSTER 5.30pm & 7pm  
Kidderminster Baptist church  
Franche 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  
Franche 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  
7.30am, 9am & 10.30am  
St Mary's Church  
Churchfields  
Kidderminster  
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STOURPORT 8am & 9.30am  
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## Caring for the Community with TLC Care at Home

### *Domiciliary/Community Care what does it mean?*

More and more people are choosing to stay at home in later life, and why not? Most of us spend the majority of our lives working to pay for our home and bills so why shouldn't we enjoy it during our retirement and golden days!

### *But what does it actually mean to have care and support at home?*

Here at TLC Care at Home we provide a local, family based, person centred approach to support and care for people in

their own homes. We provide support to a variety of clients in the Wyre Forest area and we are passionate about enabling people to stay at home safely for as long as possible.

When most people think about community care they tend to think of stereotypical tasks such as making a cup of tea and sitting with someone and having a good chat. Whilst this is correct as part of the role, there is also a lot more expected of care staff in the community.

Care and support with TLC Care at Home is tailored to an individual and the majority of day-to-day tasks that our carers

complete are as follows:

- **Personal care:** this includes assisting someone to get washed, showered/bathed, and dried then dressed in their chosen clothing.
- **Incontinence care:** this includes assisting someone to go to the toilet and aiding them to manage additional needs, which can include incontinence pads, stoma bag care, and catheter care.
- **Medications:** support with medication is a massive part of supporting someone in the community. All our staff are trained to aid with medication administration, collections, reordering and disposals.
- **Food and drinks:** this can include preparing a home cooked meal or helping someone to cook independently, as well as monitoring what the client is eating and drinking.
- **Mobility:** as we age our mobility changes and this can be linked to medical conditions or sadly just part of the aging process. Supporting someone to mobilise and walk safely in their own home requires input from professionals such as Occupational Therapists and Physiotherapists. Care staff are provided in depth manual handling training as well as continued training in the community and guidance for each individual who has support.



- **Safety and wellbeing:** the safety and wellbeing of our clients is at the heart of everything we do and we are obligated and regulated to protect vulnerable individuals. All care staff are trained to recognise, report and act on any concerns or suspicions of abuse.

This list is not exhaustive, and support services can range from a few hours a week to 24-hour support, where we also assist clients to manage their household with general chores and cleaning.

When completing assessments, we look at matching staff to clients and where possible matching personalities to ensure that both our clients and staff have a positive visit. A lot of planning and preparation goes into our visits. We look at preferred times, medication timings, location, skin integrity and many other factors. Care Coordinators within the Domiciliary/Community Care sector face challenges daily to keep everyone happy and safe whilst managing expectations.

Throughout the Wyre Forest area there is a high demand for care and support, and all care

providers work closely with Social Workers/Social Services, GP's and Consultants, District Nurses, Occupational Therapists, Physiotherapists, Mental Health/Learning disabilities professionals, Pharmacies, and any other professionals involved as required. As a care provider it can be a challenging balancing act to provide support, but we feel that to provide an "Outstanding" service you really do have to care. We are always going above and beyond to make the care experience as enjoyable as possible.

We, like all care providers are regulated by CQC and we have strict policies and procedures to ensure standards of care are maintained. CQC monitor and review all care providers including Domiciliary/Community Care and we are proud that during our last assessment we achieved the highest rating possible "Outstanding" To provide care and support is a privilege and recently we have undertaken the decision to branch out and look at the options of TLC Care at Home providing Extra Care (also known as supported living).

We are overjoyed to announce that we have been awarded a contract with Worcestershire County Council and The Community Housing Group, to take over the care provision at two of the largest Extra Care schemes in Kidderminster, Berrington Court and Arch Hill meaning that we can expand our expertise in providing tailored support and care from May 2026.

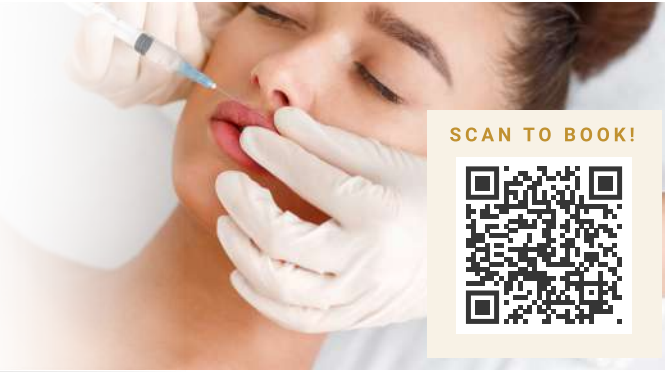
When it comes to seeking Domiciliary/Community Care it can be overwhelming at first but it's important to remember that support is available whether it's for you or a loved one, and services are available to stay at home with dignity for longer.

### *Help can be sought from:*

- **Your Doctors Surgery:** Your GP has the facilities to make a referral based on your current health and circumstances and may also be able to provide assistance from local services such as the district nurses.
- **Your local council:** Your local council can assess your needs and establish what they are able to offer you that is funded, meaning they will pay all or most of the costs. (There is a threshold for care being fully funded and this would be explained to you in detail when an assessment is carried out.)
- **Private care providers:** feel free to get in touch to discuss options available, there is no obligation and we are here to help make the care journey as smooth as possible!

**You can call  
TLC Care at Home on:  
01299 272 897 or email them at:  
wecare@tlc-careathome.co.uk**

If you require any advice on support available at home, including what additional benefits you may be entitled to, you can contact Age UK Advice Line on 0800 678 1602. Lines are open 8am-7pm, 365 days a year.



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Apple cider vinegar has been used for centuries as a natural remedy, and today it's enjoying a well-deserved resurgence. Made from fermented apple juice, this tangy liquid contains acetic acid, probiotics, and trace nutrients that can support overall wellbeing when used correctly.

One of its most talked-about benefits is its potential to aid digestion. Apple cider vinegar may help stimulate stomach acid production, making it easier for your body to break down food and absorb nutrients. Many people take a small, diluted amount before meals to reduce bloating and support gut health. It's also commonly linked to

blood sugar control. Some studies suggest that consuming apple cider vinegar before or with meals may help improve insulin sensitivity and reduce blood sugar spikes particularly after carbohydrate-heavy foods. This can be especially helpful for those looking to manage energy levels throughout the day.

Weight management is another area where apple cider vinegar may play a role. While it's no miracle solution, it may help promote feelings of fullness, which can reduce overall calorie intake when combined with a balanced diet. In addition, apple cider vinegar has natural antibacterial properties and is sometimes used to

support skin health or as a home remedy for minor ailments.

However, it's important to use it safely. Always dilute apple cider vinegar in water before drinking to protect your teeth and throat and consult a professional if you have underlying health conditions. Used wisely, this kitchen cupboard staple can be a small but beneficial addition to a healthy lifestyle.



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  SCAN ME



## Rolling into June

### Celebrating the Great British Sausage Roll

There are few things more comforting, more British, and frankly more irresistible than a freshly baked sausage roll. Golden, flaky pastry wrapped around perfectly seasoned sausage meat it's a simple pleasure that never goes out of style. This June, food lovers across the UK have the perfect excuse to indulge, as National Sausage Roll Day rolls around once again.

But while the sausage roll feels like a true British icon, its origins actually stretch much further back. The concept of wrapping meat in pastry dates to ancient times, with

early versions appearing in Ancient Greece and Rome, where cooks used pastry to preserve and cook meats. The modern sausage roll as we know it began to take shape in France during the 17th century, before becoming firmly established in Britain during the 19th century. By the time Victorian bakeries were thriving, sausage rolls had become a popular, affordable snack for the masses quick, filling, and easy to eat on the go.

Today, the sausage roll has evolved into a staple of British food culture. Whether you grab one from your favourite local bakery, enjoy a gourmet

twist at a café, or try your hand at making your own at home, this is a day dedicated to celebrating a true classic. The beauty of the sausage roll lies in its versatility. From traditional pork fillings to modern variations featuring caramelised onion, chilli, or even vegetarian alternatives, there's a version to suit every taste.

Of course, for those who enjoy getting creative in the kitchen, making your own sausage rolls can be incredibly rewarding. It's also a fantastic activity to do with family or friends, especially when you can

experiment with flavours and techniques. If you're feeling inspired, be sure to check out the sausage roll recipe on the following page, where you'll find a simple step-by-step guide to creating your own delicious batch at home.

National Sausage Roll Day is more than just an excuse to eat well it's a celebration of a beloved staple with a rich history that has stood the test of time. So this June, whether you bake, buy, or share, take a moment to appreciate the humble sausage roll in all its golden glory.

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## Easy Sausage Rolls with Apple Sauce or Chutney



### Ingredients

375g all-butter puff pastry  
flour for dusting  
2 tbsp apple sauce pickle or  
chutney  
400g sausage meat or sausages,  
skins removed  
1 egg beaten  
2 tsp sesame seeds

#### Step 1

Roll out the pastry to a 35 x 30cm rectangle on a surface lightly dusted with flour. Trim the edges neatly, then cut in half lengthways to form two long strips. Spread with a thin layer of the apple sauce, pickle or chutney, leaving a border along the edges.

#### Step 2

Tip the sausage meat into a large bowl, add 3 tbsp cold water and

### Method

squash together. Divide the mixture in two and mould each half into a cylindrical shape. Put each portion of meat into the middle of a pastry strip, leaving a border at either side.

Brush the pastry border and the top of the sausage mix with the beaten egg. Fold one edge of the pastry over the meat and roll to encase, then use a fork to press the pastry edges together.

Cut the sausage rolls into 5cm lengths and arrange on a lined baking tray. Chill for 20 mins. Can be made a day ahead or frozen for up to one month; to bake from frozen, add an extra 10 mins to the cooking time.



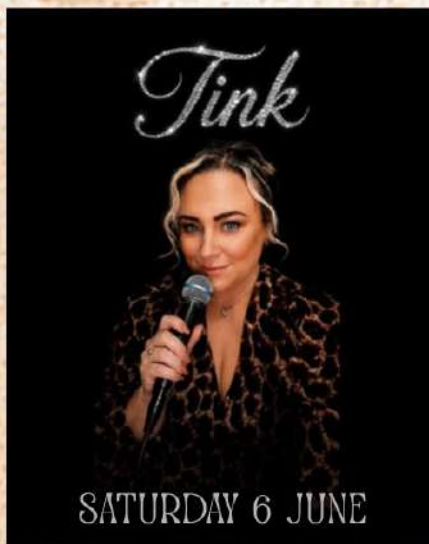
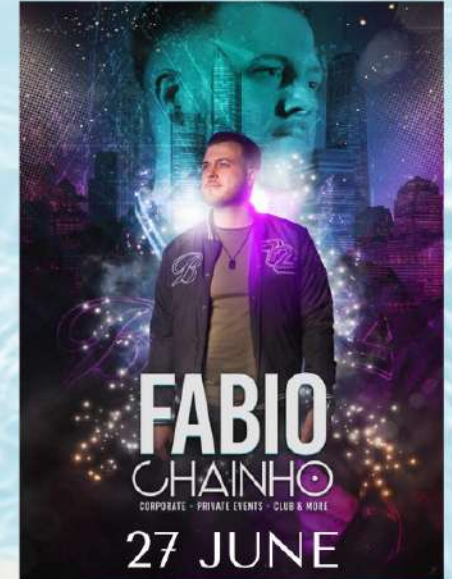
#### Step 3

Heat oven to 200C/180C fan/gas 6. Brush the sausage rolls with the rest of the beaten egg and sprinkle with the sesame seeds (if using). Bake for 30-35 mins until the pastry is deep golden. Transfer the sausage rolls to a wire rack and leave to cool for 10 mins.

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**ROY ORBISON STORY**

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**'True, Identikit Brilliance'**  
The Stage

## A Night of Legends: Barry Steele's Roy Orbison Story

Music fans are in for a real treat this June as Barry Steele's Roy Orbison Story arrives at Stourport Civic for an unforgettable night of live entertainment on 20th June 2026. Celebrating an incredible 21 years on stage, this acclaimed production brings the timeless music of Roy Orbison the legendary "Big O" back to life in spectacular fashion.

Direct from London's Adelphi Theatre, Barry Steele and his talented cast take audiences on a musical journey through Orbison's remarkable career. Backed by a superb five-piece band, the show spans from the early rockabilly days at Sun Records right through to the era of the Traveling Wilburys.

Expect to hear all the classic hits that made Roy Orbison one of

the most distinctive voices in music history, including Pretty Woman, Crying, I Drove All Night, You Got It, Only the Lonely, and In Dreams. Each performance captures the emotion, power, and unique sound that defined Orbison's global success and earned him a place in the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.

But the night doesn't stop there. This incredible show also features special guest tributes to fellow rock 'n' roll legends including Buddy Holly and Jerry Lee Lewis, as well as a celebration of the collective genius behind the Traveling Wilburys. It's a full evening of nostalgia, energy, and world-class musicianship.

Praised as "True Identikit Brilliance" by The Stage, Barry

Steele's performance is widely regarded as one of the most authentic tributes in the UK. His attention to detail and passion for the music shine through in every note.

With tickets priced at just £28 and the show starting at 7:30pm, this promises to be one of the standout live events of the summer.

If you love classic hits and legendary performers, this is a night not to be missed. Tickets available at: [www.thecivicstourport.co.uk](http://www.thecivicstourport.co.uk)

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# The Church Venue



Upcoming Events

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Hunting Relics - Hamilton White  
7 pm

MUSIC



**Sat, June 6<sup>th</sup>**  
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7 pm

MUSIC



**Fri, June 12<sup>th</sup>**  
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Check out all our upcoming events here



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## The Jersey Beats Live at Kidderminster Town Hall

Get ready for a night of timeless music and unforgettable entertainment as The Jersey Beats bring their spectacular show Oh What A Nite! to Kidderminster Town Hall on Friday 19th June 2026.

Celebrating the legendary sounds of Frankie Valli & The Four Seasons, this high-energy production takes audiences on a journey through the rise of one of music's most iconic groups. Led by Matt Andrew in the role of Frankie, the show blends storytelling with pitch-perfect vocals, capturing the magic that made the band a global sensation.

Audiences can expect to hear all the classic hits, including Oh What A Night, Can't Take My Eyes Off You, Sherry, Walk Like A Man and Big Girls Don't Cry. With stunning costumes, slick choreography, and a full production featuring showgirl dancers, the performance recreates the spirit of the 'Doo Wop' era in style.

Renowned as one of the UK's top tribute acts, The Jersey Beats deliver an authentic and entertaining experience that has wowed audiences nationwide. Set in the beautifully restored Town Hall, this promises to be a standout night of live music not to be missed. Tickets: [www.kidderminstertownhall.org.uk](http://www.kidderminstertownhall.org.uk)



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## Driving into June Motoring Matters This Month

As we head into June, it's the perfect time to get out on the road and make the most of the longer days, brighter evenings, and improving weather. Whether you're planning a weekend getaway, commuting locally, or simply enjoying a scenic drive through the countryside, this is one of the best months of the year to enjoy your car.

Before setting off, it's worth giving your vehicle a quick seasonal check. Warmer temperatures can put extra pressure on tyres, so ensuring they're correctly inflated and have sufficient tread is essential for both safety and fuel efficiency. It's also a good idea to check coolant levels, oil, and screen wash, especially if you're planning longer journeys. A clean windscreen and working air con-

ditioning can make all the difference when driving in bright sunshine.

June is also a popular time for road trips, with many people choosing to explore more of the UK. From coastal drives to countryside escapes, there are plenty of routes right on our doorstep that offer stunning views and a chance to unwind. Planning ahead can help avoid traffic hotspots, particularly during weekends and school holidays, so it's worth checking your route before you travel.

For those thinking about upgrading their vehicle, summer often brings a range of offers from dealerships, making it a great time to explore new or

used options. Electric and hybrid vehicles continue to grow in popularity, offering lower running costs and a more environmentally friendly way to travel, particularly for shorter local journeys.

Finally, remember that with more cyclists, pedestrians, and motorcyclists on the roads during the summer months, extra awareness is key. Taking a little more care and allowing extra space helps keep everyone safe and ensures that June's journeys are enjoyable for all.

So, whether it's a short trip across town or a longer adventure further afield, make the most of the season and enjoy the road ahead this June.

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IMAGE CREDIT ADE HOSKINS

## Kidderminster Harriers PROMOTED!

There were fantastic scenes of celebration away from home as Kidderminster Harriers secured promotion back to the National League with an impressive 2-0 victory over South Shields.

In front of a travelling army of passionate supporters, Harriers produced a disciplined and determined performance to seal a memorable return to the top tier of non-league football. Goals in each half ensured the visitors completed the job in style, sparking jubilant scenes at the final whistle as players, staff and fans celebrated together.

The result caps off a superb campaign for Kidderminster, who have shown consistency, resilience and quality throughout the season. The

squad's hard work and togetherness have been clear from start to finish, with supporters backing the team every step of the way home and away.

Players and management praised the incredible support from the travelling Harriers faithful, whose vocal backing at South Shields helped create a memorable atmosphere on a historic day for the club.

Promotion marks an exciting new chapter as preparations now begin for life back in the National League, with fans already eagerly anticipating next season and the challenges ahead.

For the town of Kidderminster, it was a proud day as supporters made the long journey home celebrating a deserved promotion-winning success.

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