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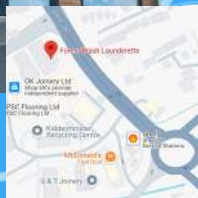
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Kidderminster theatre scene Shines with major award wins



Kidderminster's vibrant theatre community is celebrating a standout moment after three local groups swept the board at the West Midlands Annual NODA Awards.

Talking Props Theatre Arts, The Nonentities Society and Kidderminster Operatic and Dramatic Society all picked up top honours, showcasing the depth of talent right here in the Wyre Forest. Even more impressively, all three companies perform at the Rose Theatre, underlining its role as a true hub for local creativity.

Talking Props Theatre Arts secured Best Youth Production for its powerful staging of *Les Misérables*. Known for delivering performances of an exceptionally high standard while nurturing young talent, the group continues to go from strength to strength. Principal Michael Neri described the win as a proud moment, particularly as it marks their first year with NODA.

The Nonentities Society claimed Best Play for its production of *The Unfriend*, adding to its strong

reputation for quality drama. The group's season is far from over, with *Accidental Death of an Anarchist* arriving in May followed by *Tons of Money* in June, promising more great nights of theatre for local audiences.

Meanwhile, Kidderminster Operatic and Dramatic Society took home Best Musical for its energetic and polished production of *Legally Blonde*. With a history stretching back more than a century, KODS continues to impress with ambitious shows and a loyal following. Their youth section is

also preparing to take to the stage with *Grease* this June.

Together, these three organisations represent the full spectrum of theatre, from youth performance and training through to straight drama and large scale musicals. Their shared success is not just a win for the groups themselves, but for the town as a whole.

Kidderminster's theatre scene is clearly thriving, with passion, talent and community spirit at its heart. If you have not visited the Rose Theatre recently, now is the perfect time to see what all the buzz is about.



Intuitive Reading Partners within High Hopes Dog Rescue for Heartfelt Charity Event



Mark your calendars for 3rd May 2026 at Areley Kings Village Hall, from 10:00am to 3:30pm, for an inspiring charity event close to the heart of Melanie Webb, owner of Intuitive Reading. In collaboration with High Hopes Dog Rescue, the Mystic Market aims to raise vital funds for this dedicated animal rescue organisation.

Melanie's connection to High Hopes Dog Rescue goes beyond simple philanthropy – it's deeply personal. Her beloved dog, Juni, was adopted from the charity, making this a cause especially close to her heart. High Hopes Dog Rescue works tirelessly to rescue, rehabilitate and rehome abandoned and unwanted dogs, and this event is a true celebra-

tion of their invaluable work. The Mystic Market will feature a wide variety of stalls, offering unique goods and services including tarot and psychic readings, Reiki healing, and much more. Visitors can soak up the mystical atmosphere while supporting a cause that has a meaningful impact on the lives of countless dogs.

Since its founding in 2018, High Hopes Dog Rescue has successfully rehomed over 2,500 dogs, thanks to the dedication of its volunteers and the continued support of the local community. This event offers a fantastic opportunity for both supporters and newcomers to get involved and make a real difference.

For more information or to get involved, visit intuitivereading.co.uk or contact High Hopes Dog Rescue at highhopesrescue@gmail.com. You can also find further details at www.highhopesdogrescue.org or by following them on social media. Join us on 3rd May and support a cause that believes every dog deserves a loving home. Together, we can help change the lives of these wonderful animals.



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£69,500 Boost for Youth Homelessness Support in Wyre Forest

A vital Worcestershire charity supporting young people at risk of homelessness has received a significant £69,500 funding boost from Global's Make Some Noise.

Wyre Forest & South Worcestershire Nightstop and Mediation Service, based in Kidderminster, will use the grant to expand its work with vulnerable 16 to 25-year-olds across Wyre Forest, Wychavon, Worcester City and Malvern Hills.

The funding comes at a crucial time. Across the UK, more than 123,000 young people were homeless or at risk last year, with around 1 in 60 affected during 2024-2025. Locally, family breakdown remains the leading cause, alongside rising financial pressures and a shortage of affordable housing.

This latest investment will help deliver practical, life-changing

support, including emergency accommodation for young people in crisis, one-to-one guidance, and programmes that build independent living skills. The charity will also continue its preventative work in schools and colleges, helping young people develop communication skills and avoid situations that could lead to homelessness.

CEO Judith Ford welcomed the funding, describing it as both "timely and invaluable" at a point when demand for services continues to rise. She highlighted how the grant will ensure more young people have access to safe accommodation, alongside the tools and support needed to build stable futures.

The organisation is one of 39 small charities across the UK to benefit from this year's funding round. Since launching in 2014, Global's Make Some Noise has supported more than 500 com-

munity projects and helped over 240,000 people nationwide. This year alone, more than 21,000 individuals will directly benefit.

Beyond emergency accommodation, the Nightstop service offers mediation for young people and families, helping resolve conflict before it escalates into crisis. In 2025 alone, the charity delivered 324 nights of accommodation, 324 mediation sessions, and 160 crisis support sessions.

For many young people, the impact is profound—providing not just a safe place to stay, but a second chance to move forward with confidence, stability and hope.

To find out more visit:
www.wyreforestnightstop.org.uk

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Discover the Mystery of Nanny's Rock:

A Hidden Gem in Kinver

Tucked away in the enchanting woodland of Kinver Edge, Nanny's Rock is one of the Wyre Forests most intriguing hidden gems.

Nestled deep within the woodland trails of Kinver Edge, Nanny's Rock is one of the Midlands' most intriguing natural attractions. With an impressive 4.7-star Google rating and over 2,000 glowing reviews, this atmospheric sandstone cave has become a must-visit destination for families, walkers, and curious explorers.

Also referred to as the "Hermit's Cave," Nanny's Rock is believed to have been carved by hand into the rock face, with several chambers and archways that stir the imagination. Its history is laced with local legend—some say it was once inhabited by a reclusive woman known as "Nanny," while others whisper of hermits, smugglers, or even witches hiding within its walls. The site offers a fantastic mix of history, folklore, and nature. As you explore the surrounding Kinver Edge area, part of the National Trust, you'll discover dramatic sandstone outcrops, sweeping views, and the famous Kinver Rock Houses, once home to families living right inside the cliffs.

Perfect for all ages, Nanny's Rock is a free-to-visit, dog-friendly spot that adds a touch of adventure to any day out. Children love playing in the echoing chambers of the cave, while



adults can soak up the peaceful beauty of the forest or enjoy a scenic picnic nearby.

It's an ideal escape for photographers, walkers, and anyone seeking something a little different. The cave is accessible via woodland footpaths—sturdy shoes are recommended—and a small torch adds to the fun for peeking into the darker nooks inside.

Whether you're planning a peaceful weekend walk or looking for a unique place to entertain the kids, Nanny's Rock offers a memorable experience rich in charm, mystery, and natural beauty.

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THIS MONTHS

Local Lowdown Quirky Tales & Local Lore

The Stourport Clock That Ran Backwards... Almost

Only in Stourport-on-Severn could a simple clock become the talk of the town—but that's exactly what happened many years ago near the historic Stourport Basins.

Local legend has it that a clock overlooking the canal once appeared to run backwards or at least, that's what half the town insisted. Boaters passing through swore blind that time seemed to "go the wrong way" as they navigated the locks, while others blamed long days, a bit too much sunshine... or perhaps a pint or two at a nearby pub.

In reality, the truth was a little less mysterious but no less amusing. The clock had been fitted incorrectly after maintenance, causing the hands to move in a way that confused passersby. Add in reflections from the canal and suddenly, you had a full-blown local myth on your hands and for a short while, Stourport buzzed with chatter.

The clock was eventually fixed, but the story stuck. Even today, you'll still hear the tale retold with a knowing smile proof that in Wyre Forest, it doesn't take much to turn the everyday into something just a little bit magical.

Got a quirky local story? Send it in we know there are plenty more where that came from.



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Local Blues, Big Passion in Wyre Forest

The Wyre Forest Official Supporters Club

If you thought all the noise was coming from St Andrew's, think again there's a growing wave of Birmingham City Football Club support right here in Wyre Forest.

The Wyre Forest Official Supporters Club is going from strength to strength, bringing together Blues fans from Kidderminster, Stourport and Bewdley who share one thing in common a love for the club and a desire to be part of something local.

Whether you've followed Birmingham City for decades or you're just getting into the game, this friendly and inclusive group is all about community. It's not just matchdays either members can get involved in everything from social meet ups and quiz nights to group trips and exclusive experiences, including stadium tours and special guest events.

With plans to grow even further ahead of the 2026/27 season, now's the perfect time to get in-

involved and be part of a passionate local network of fans.

Membership is simple and affordable, with adults at £10, over 65s £8, and under 16s going free making it accessible for supporters of all ages.

So if you're Wyre Forest based and Blues through and through, this is your chance to connect, share the journey, and back the club together right on your doorstep. Find out more:

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No Surprise Our Beautiful Bewdley Is One of the UK's Best

It will come as no surprise to locals that Bewdley has been named one of the best places to live in the UK by Muddy Stiletto's. The much-loved riverside town has been included in the magazine's prestigious Top 260 Places to Live guide for 2026, recognising standout locations across the country. For those who know Bewdley, it's easy to see why.

Set along the banks of the River Severn, the town offers a perfect mix of history, charm and community spirit. Its Georgian architecture, independent shops and welcoming cafés give it a character that's hard to beat.

But it's not just about looks. With the stunning Wyre Forest on the doorstep, plus a packed calendar of events throughout the year, Bewdley delivers on lifestyle too whether you're after countryside walks, riverside views or a lively local scene.

For residents across Wyre Forest, this recognition simply confirms what we already know.

Bewdley isn't just a great place to visit it's one of the very best places to call home.





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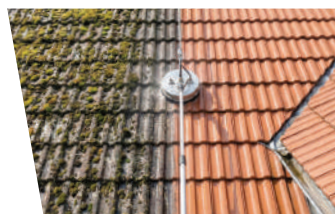
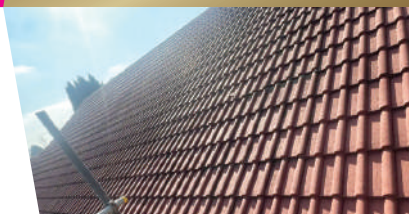


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Mark Garnier Member of Parliament for Wyre Forest

One of the great joys of being a local MP is getting to know the volunteer groups around our community. There are lots, doing a whole host of things from model making clubs, through sports clubs and the scouts, to activist groups. All are amazing, but it is the activists that impress me so much.

I engaged with one such group over the last couple of years. Horrified by the prospect of a quarry being dug between the villages of Cookley and Wolverley, the community got together and won their campaign, stopping the unwelcome activities from blighting their community. As the local MP, they asked for

my help, and I was delighted to give it. Of course, MPs have no power whatsoever, their only differentiating factor being able to vote on legislation in Parliament. But as the elected representative of a constituency, they carry influence.

We won, but it was the community that delivered the win.

Over the easter recess, I got a chance to meet another local activist group, working for the local community to secure for prosperity a parcel of land known as the Maypole.

This sits on a hill between Wribenhall and the Safari Park. From the top, you can look south

to Bewdley and the River Severn. To the east, you look into the Safari Park, watching lions and rhinos roam the Worcestershire savannah. To the north, Wassell Hill, which King Henry IV fortified during his battle with Owain Glyn Dwr in 1405 after the burning of Worcester. And to the west, you can see the Welsh Marches. It is a magical place.

There is no imminent threat to the 22 acres, but there is long term uncertainty. So, community activists, wanting to secure its future, have set up a charity, engaged with the owners, and hatched a master plan to make sure this piece of rural Worcestershire stays for the community forever. The owners, I am told, have been brilliant and are keen to engage with the Friends of the Maypole.

There are a few bits of process to get sorted before this all goes ahead, and I have promised I will do everything I can to make this work. But it is genuinely one of the greatest joys of my job to meet such outstanding people, who love their communities.

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

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Bewdley Duck Race Draws Crowds & Raises Thousands for Charity

Thousands of people lined the banks of the River Severn in Bewdley over the Easter bank holiday for the town's much-loved annual Duck Race.

Held on Easter Monday (April 6), the long-standing tradition once again proved a huge hit, with families, visitors and locals turning out in force to cheer on more than 900 ducks as they raced downstream. With warm sunshine and calm waters creating the perfect backdrop, the event delivered not only a great atmosphere but a welcome boost for local businesses, many of which reported strong trade throughout the day.

Organised by the Kidderminster and District Lions Club, the event also raised an impressive

£2,800 in support of the club's charitable work. Lion President Ron Cross offered his sincere thanks to everyone who attended and volunteered, helping ensure the day ran safely and smoothly.

The event continues to grow year on year, with organisers highlighting the scale of the operation now required to deliver it. Photographer Colin Hill described the Duck Race as a "very large logistical event," made possible thanks to the support of families, friends and a range of local organisations giving their time.

Safety and coordination on the day were supported by the Rotary Club of Bewdley, who provided bridge marshals, while



local canoe clubs from Wyre Forest and Stourbridge helped retrieve the ducks to prevent them drifting further downstream. The Severn Area Rescue Association was also on hand, providing essential water safety cover.

Mayor Nicole Harper had the honour of starting the race, firing the cannon and presenting prizes. The fastest duck title went to Jack Barry, with the Smith family taking second place rounding off another memorable day for Bewdley.

BATTLE CANCER PROGRAM



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CrossFit
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Stronger Together: Free Cancer Recovery Fitness Programme Launches in Kidderminster

A powerful new community initiative is coming to Kidderminster this May, offering hope, strength and support to those rebuilding their lives after cancer treatment. CrossFit Wyre Forest has announced the launch of the Battle Cancer Program, a fully funded fitness programme designed specifically for people recovering from cancer. Beginning this month, the scheme will provide a welcoming, supportive space where participants can focus on regaining strength, confidence and overall wellbeing.

Open to anyone who has completed active cancer treatment at least two months ago, the programme is intentionally inclusive. Whether you're returning to exercise after a long break or trying it for the very first time, sessions are tailored to suit all fitness levels and individual needs.

Experienced coaches will adapt every movement, taking into account injuries, physical limitations and ongoing health conditions, ensuring a safe and environment for everyone involved.

Classes will run twice weekly at the gym, giving participants consistent opportunities to rebuild both physically and mentally. Sessions take place on Tuesdays from 6:45pm to 7:45pm and Fridays from 5:30pm to 6:30pm, offering flexibility for those balancing recovery with everyday life.

The team at CrossFit Wyre Forest say the goal is simple but impactful: to create a community where no one feels alone in their recovery journey. Beyond the physical benefits, the programme aims to foster connection, encouragement and a renewed sense of confidence among participants.

Importantly, there is no upper limit on how long ago treatment may have finished, making this an opportunity accessible to many across the Wyre Forest district and beyond.

As this inspiring programme gets underway in May, organisers are encouraging the local community to spread the word. If you know someone who could benefit, sharing this opportunity could make a real difference.

Those interested can apply online via the Battle Cancer Program website or contact the CrossFit Wyre Forest coaching team directly for more details.

In a town built on community spirit, this initiative is a reminder that recovery is not a journey anyone has to face alone.

www.battlecancerprogram.com/apply

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JHAC

Jelleyman's Mill and the surrounding site on Puxton Lane are one of the last remaining heritage of vestiges of the industrial Kidderminster, and here at Jelleyman's Heritage Arts Charity we are devoted to conserving the character of that heritage whilst also bringing the site back to life as a modern, flexible, sustainable community asset. Our aim is to build a sustainable link between the past, present, and future of this beautiful region, engaging local people, groups and businesses to create a thriving hub of activity and opportunity. The site offers offices and function rooms for private hire, spaces for community group use, a community cafe, a wellbeing craft centre, and work has begun on a community garden.



WHAT'S ON DOWN THE MILL

- 6th MAY**
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- 8th MAY**
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- 13th MAY**
Craft Session (Crafty Jelley) 11am-2pm
- 20th MAY**
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- 21st MAY**
Senior CPR, Cuppa and Cake 11am-1pm
- 22nd MAY**
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Dad's Downing Street Walk for Mental Health

A father from Kidderminster has completed a powerful walk to 10 Downing Street, calling for better children's mental health support.

Rob Collins made the journey in memory of his son Mitch, who died in 2019. He set off on 28 March from Wolverley Secondary School, where Mitch is remembered.

The walk, first planned years ago, faced delays due to Covid and Rob's health. During the challenge, a knee injury forced him to pause, with his wife Lisa continuing before he rejoined for the final stretch alongside

family, including his son Drew. The campaign supports "Mitch's Law", calling for more mental health staff in schools. With over 13,600 signatures so far, the push continues towards the 100,000 needed for a parliamentary debate.

The Collins family say their mission is simple to improve support and ensure no other family faces the same loss. To find out more or donate visit Facebook - Mitch's Law



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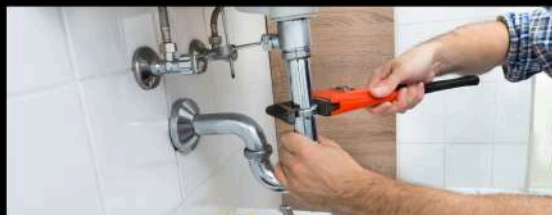
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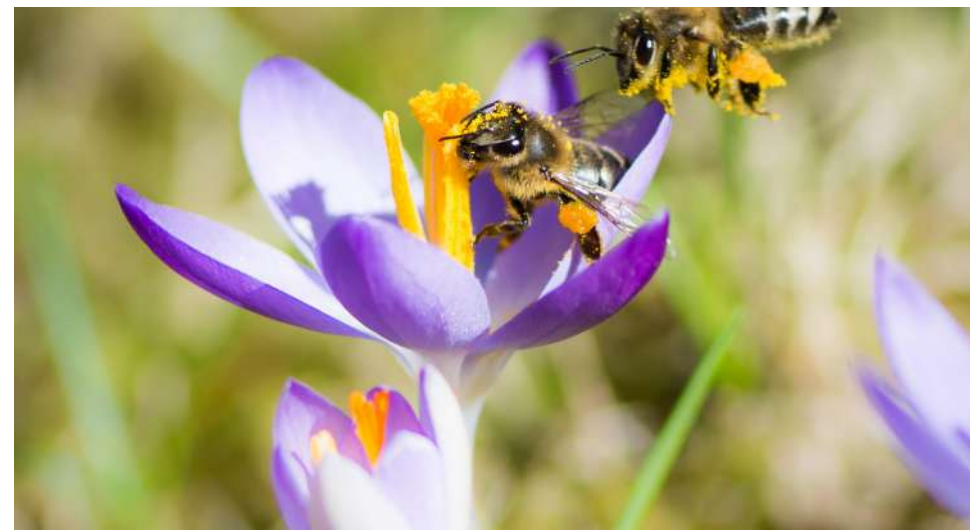


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Creating a Pollinator-Friendly Garden Small Changes, Big Impact



Transforming your garden into a haven for pollinators is one of the most rewarding and environmentally beneficial choices you can make. Bees, butterflies, and other pollinating insects play a vital role in maintaining healthy ecosystems, yet their populations have been declining in recent years. The good news is that even the smallest outdoor space can make a difference.

Start by choosing plants that are rich in nectar and pollen. Traditional favourites such as lavender, foxgloves, and buddleia are excellent choices, as they naturally attract bees and butterflies. Aim for a variety of plants that flower at different times of the year, ensuring there is a continuous food source from early spring through to late autumn.

This seasonal spread is key to supporting pollinators throughout their life cycles. Avoid overly cultivated or double-flowered plants, as these often lack accessible nectar. Instead, opt for simple, open blooms that allow insects to feed easily. Native plants are particularly valuable, as local pollinators are naturally adapted to them.

Water is another essential element. A shallow dish with stones or a small wildlife-friendly water feature can provide a safe drinking spot. Make sure insects have somewhere to land, as deep water can be hazardous.

Consider leaving a section of your garden a little "wild." Long grass, log piles, and undisturbed

corners offer shelter and nesting sites. Many species of bees, for example, nest in the ground or in hollow stems, so resist the urge to tidy everything away.

Finally, minimise or eliminate the use of pesticides. Even products labelled as "safe" can harm beneficial insects. Encouraging natural predators and maintaining a balanced garden ecosystem is a far more sustainable approach.

Creating a pollinator-friendly garden isn't about perfection—it's about intention. By making thoughtful choices, you can enjoy a vibrant, colourful space that not only looks beautiful but also supports the wildlife that depends on it.

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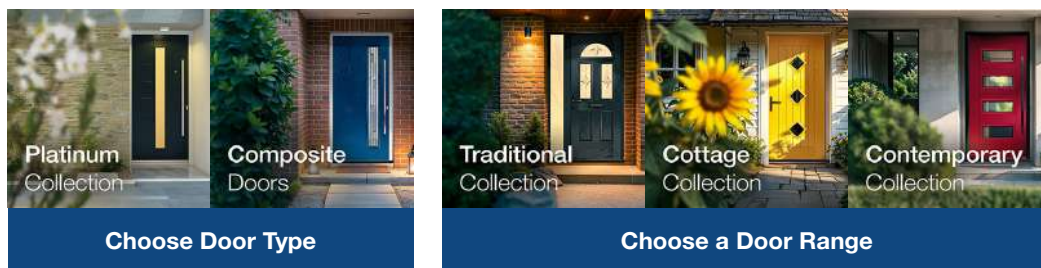
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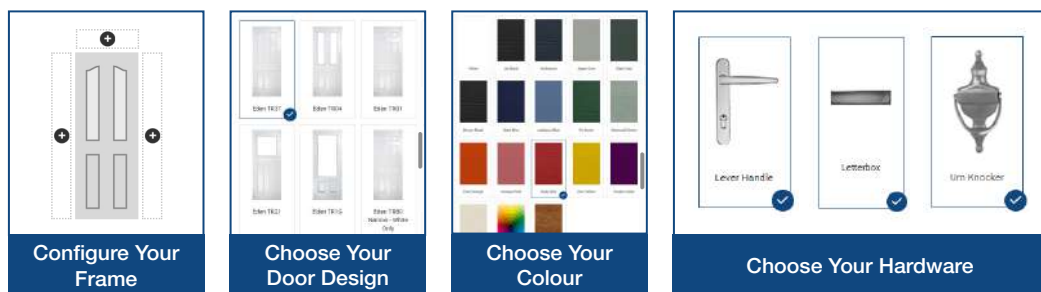
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Spring Refresh

Simple Ways to Transform Your Home

As the days grow longer and natural light begins to flood back into our homes, spring offers the perfect opportunity for a fresh start indoors. The good news? You don't need a full renovation or a big budget to make a noticeable difference.

Start with a proper deep clean. It might sound simple, but tackling those often-forgotten areas skirting boards, light fittings, inside cupboards, and windows can instantly brighten your space. Clean windows alone can dramatically improve how light moves through your home. Once that's done, focus on soft furnishings. Swapping out heavier winter textures for lighter fabrics can completely change the feel of a room. Think fresh cushions, breathable throws, and lighter bedding in soft, uplifting colours. Even changing curtains to something airier can make a big impact.

Adding greenery is another easy win. Houseplants bring life, colour, and a sense of calm into any space. Whether you go for low-maintenance options like snake plants or create a small herb garden on your windowsill, it's a simple way to reconnect your home with the season.

Don't underestimate the power of rearranging furniture. Sometimes, just changing the layout of a room can improve flow and make your home feel brand new. Pair this with a fresh coat of paint on a feature wall, and you've got a cost-effective transformation. Finally, think about scent. Seasonal candles or diffusers in fresh linen, citrus, or floral notes can subtly enhance the overall atmosphere. Spring is all about renewal. Small, thoughtful changes can make your home feel lighter, brighter, and ready to enjoy the months ahead.





Small Gardens Big impact

Not everyone is blessed with a large garden, but in the Wyre Forest area, many homes have compact outdoor spaces full of potential. With a bit of planning and creativity, even the smallest garden can be transformed into a relaxing and stylish retreat.

The key is to make your space work smarter, not harder. Vertical planting is a great place to start. By using wall planters, trellises, or hanging baskets, you can draw the eye upward and create the illusion of more space while maximising your planting area. Zoning is another clever design trick. Even in a smaller garden, you can create distinct areas a cosy seating spot, a small dining area, or a dedicated planting zone. Using different materials like decking, gravel, or paving can help visually separate these spaces without overwhelming the layout.

When it comes to planting, keeping things simple is often

more effective. Choose a consistent colour palette or theme to create a cohesive look. Evergreens provide year-round structure, while seasonal flowers add bursts of colour when needed.

Furniture should be practical and in proportion to the space. Foldable tables and chairs, or built-in seating, are ideal for saving room while still offering comfort. Multi-functional pieces are especially useful in smaller gardens.

Lighting is often overlooked but can make a huge difference. Solar-powered lights along pathways or draped across fences can create a warm, inviting atmosphere as evening sets in. A small garden doesn't have to feel limiting. With thoughtful design, it can become a beautiful extension of your home perfect for relaxing, entertaining, and making the most of the warmer months.





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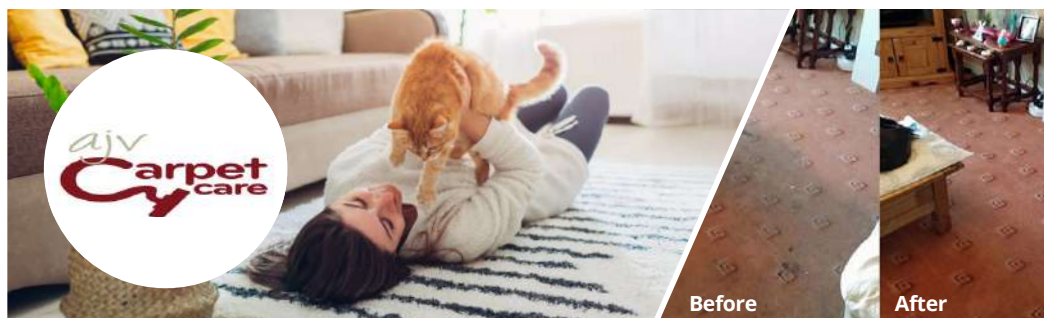
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In recent years, there's been a noticeable shift in how we style our homes. Instead of aiming for ultra-modern, minimalist spaces, more people are embracing interiors that prioritise comfort, warmth, and personality.

Cosy living is all about creating an environment that feels welcoming and lived-in. It starts with texture. Layering soft furnishings like chunky knit throws, plush cushions, and warm rugs instantly adds depth and comfort to a room. These elements not only look great but make spaces more enjoyable to spend time in.

Colour also plays a key role. Warm neutrals, soft earthy

tones, and muted shades are replacing colder greys and stark whites. These colours help create a calming atmosphere, perfect for unwinding after a busy day.

Lighting is another essential factor. Rather than relying on a single overhead light, layering different light sources such as table lamps, floor lamps, and wall lights creates a softer, more inviting glow. Warm bulbs can make all the difference in achieving that cosy feel.

Natural materials are becoming increasingly popular too. Wood, rattan, linen, and wool all add texture and a connection to nature, helping to soften the look

of modern interiors.

Perhaps most importantly, cosy interiors are about personalisation. Family photos, books, travel finds, and meaningful objects all help tell your story and make your space unique.

Even in smaller homes, creating a cosy environment doesn't mean clutter. It's about thoughtful styling and choosing pieces that balance comfort with functionality.

Ultimately, this trend reflects a wider desire for our homes to be a sanctuary a place where we can relax, recharge, and truly feel at ease.



Kitchen Trends 2026 Style Meets Function

The kitchen has long been considered the heart of the home, and in 2026, that role continues to evolve. Today's kitchens are not just places to cook they are spaces for socialising, working, and everyday living.

One of the biggest shifts we're seeing is in colour. Warmer tones are replacing the once-dominant whites and greys. Soft greens, deep blues, and earthy neutrals are becoming increasingly popular, helping to create a more welcoming and relaxed atmosphere.

Open shelving is another trend gaining momentum. It allows homeowners to display favourite crockery, cookbooks, and decorative pieces, adding personality and character to the space. However, balance is key too much open storage can feel cluttered, so it works best when combined with traditional cup-

boards. Sustainability is also high on the agenda. More people are choosing energy-efficient appliances, recycled materials, and long-lasting designs that reduce environmental impact. It's about making choices that are both stylish and responsible.


Flexibility is another important factor. With more people working from home, kitchens are increasingly doubling as workspaces. Breakfast bars, kitchen islands, or small integrated desks can provide practical solutions without compromising on style. Lighting is also stepping into the spotlight. Statement pendant lights over islands or dining areas can act as both functional features and eye-catching design elements.


The modern kitchen is all about balance combining aesthetics with practicality. Whether


you're planning a full renovation or simply updating a few elements, the focus is on creating a space that works for your lifestyle while still feeling warm and inviting.




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Stay Cool, Sleep Better The Rise of Temperature-Regulating Mattresses



If you've ever found yourself kicking off the covers in the middle of the night or constantly flipping your pillow to the "cool side," you're not alone. Overheating is one of the most common causes of poor sleep, and it's exactly why temperature-regulating mattresses are becoming one of the biggest bedroom trends in 2026.

Unlike traditional mattresses that can trap heat—particularly older memory foam styles—modern temperature-regulating designs are built to actively manage body heat throughout the night. The goal is simple: keep you at a comfortable, consistent temperature so your sleep isn't disrupted.

One of the most common features is cooling gel-infused memory foam. This material ab-

sorbs and disperses heat more effectively than standard foam, helping to prevent that "sinking into warmth" feeling. You'll also find breathable pocket spring systems, which allow air to circulate freely through the mattress, reducing heat build-up. Some higher-end options take things even further with phase-change materials (PCM). These clever fabrics absorb excess body heat when you're too warm and release it back when your temperature drops, helping to maintain balance throughout the night. It's a smart solution for those who struggle with fluctuating temperatures.

Covers and fabrics also play a big role. Many temperature-regulating mattresses now come with moisture-wicking, breathable covers designed to draw heat and humidity away from

the body. This is especially beneficial during warmer months or for those who naturally sleep hot.

These mattresses aren't just about comfort—they can have a real impact on sleep quality. A cooler sleeping environment has been linked to deeper, more restorative sleep, helping you wake up feeling refreshed rather than restless.

For couples, they're particularly useful, as they can help reduce the impact of different body temperatures during the night. As more people prioritise sleep and wellbeing, temperature-regulating mattresses are proving to be more than just a luxury—they're quickly becoming an essential part of a better night's rest.

Skin Cancer Prevention Month: Stay Safe in the Sun This May



May marks Skin Cancer Prevention Month, a timely reminder for all of us to take extra care as we begin spending more time outdoors. With longer days and warmer weather, it's easy to forget just how strong the sun can be even in the UK. Protecting your skin now can significantly reduce your risk of developing serious conditions later in life.

Skin cancer is one of the most common forms of cancer, but the good news is that it is also one of the most preventable. Simple steps can make a big difference. One of the most effective ways to protect yourself is by using a broad spectrum sunscreen with at least SPF 30. Ap-

ply it generously to all exposed skin and reapply every two hours, especially after sweating or swimming.

It's also important to seek shade during peak hours, typically between 11am and 3pm, when the sun's rays are strongest. Wearing protective clothing such as a wide brimmed hat, sunglasses, and lightweight long sleeves can provide an added layer of defence without sacrificing comfort.

Many people assume sunburn only happens on very hot days, but UV rays can penetrate cloud cover, meaning your skin is still at risk even when it feels cooler.

That's why daily protection should become part of your routine throughout spring and summer. Regular skin checks are another key part of prevention. Take time to notice any new moles or changes in existing ones, including differences in size, shape, colour, or texture. If you spot anything unusual, it's important to seek medical advice promptly.

By making small, consistent changes this May, you can enjoy the sunshine safely while protecting your long term health. A little awareness now goes a long way in keeping your skin healthy for years to come.



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Walking

Your way to better health this Spring

Simple routines for all ages!

As spring settles in and the days grow longer, there's no better time to embrace one of the simplest and most effective forms of exercise walking. It's free, accessible to almost everyone, and requires no special equipment, yet the health benefits are remarkable. Whether you're looking to improve fitness, boost your mood, or simply get out of the house more, walking is a fantastic place to start.

Regular walking supports heart health, helps maintain a healthy weight, and improves circulation. It's also incredibly beneficial for

mental wellbeing. A brisk walk in fresh air can reduce stress, ease anxiety, and increase energy levels something many of us need after the slower winter months. Even a short daily walk can help clear your mind and improve focus.

The beauty of walking is that it can be adapted to suit all ages and fitness levels. For beginners or those returning to exercise, start small. A 10 to 15 minute walk around your local area once or twice a day is a great foundation. Focus on consistency rather than speed, and gradually increase your time

as your confidence and stamina grow.

For those looking to step things up, aim for a brisk 30 minute walk five times a week. You should feel slightly out of breath but still able to hold a conversation. Adding variety can also make a big difference try different routes, explore local parks, or include gentle hills to increase intensity. Walking with a friend or joining a local group can also keep you motivated and make it more enjoyable.

Families can easily incorporate

walking into their daily routines too. A walk after dinner, a weekend nature trail, or even walking the school run can all contribute to better health. For older adults, walking is particularly valuable for maintaining mobility, balance, and independence. Gentle, regular movement helps keep joints flexible and muscles strong.

If you're short on time, break your walks into smaller chunks. Three 10 minute walks throughout the day offer similar benefits to one longer session and can be easier to fit into a

busy schedule. You can also make everyday activities more active parking further away, taking the stairs, or walking to local shops instead of driving.

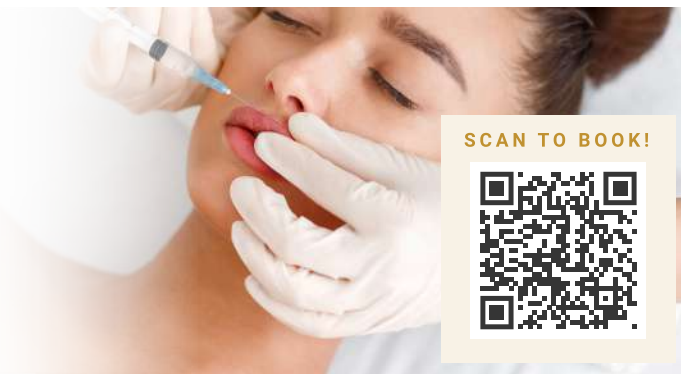
To get the most out of your walks, pay attention to posture. Stand tall, keep your shoulders relaxed, and swing your arms naturally. Comfortable footwear is key, as well as dressing appropriately for the unpredictable British spring weather.

Most importantly, make walking something you enjoy rather than a chore. Listen to music

or a podcast, take in your surroundings, or simply enjoy a moment of calm away from screens and distractions. Spring is a season of renewal, making it the perfect time to build healthier habits that last.

By incorporating regular walking into your routine this May, you'll not only improve your physical health but also enhance your overall sense of wellbeing, one step at a time.





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The Jersey Royal potatoes aren't just a seasonal delicacy they're packed with nutritional benefits that make them a smart addition to a balanced diet.

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One of their standout benefits is their high vitamin C content, which supports the immune system, helps maintain healthy skin, and aids in iron absorption. They're also a good source of

potassium, essential for maintaining healthy blood pressure and proper muscle function.

Thanks to their thin skins which are typically eaten Jersey Royals provide a useful amount of dietary fibre, supporting digestion and helping you feel fuller for longer. Their naturally waxy texture also means they have a lower glycaemic impact than many floury potatoes, helping to keep energy levels more stable.

In addition, they contain small amounts of B vitamins, which play a key role in energy production and overall wellbeing.

To maximise their health benefits,

keep preparation simple boiling or steaming is best. Pairing them with fresh herbs, leafy greens, and lean proteins creates a nutritious, well-rounded meal.

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The therapy can be done through light clothing, and is therefore non-invasive.

Treatment may alleviate the pain associated with Migraines, Back and Shoulder Pain, Arthritis, Vertigo, Neurological Illnesses (ME, MS, Chronic Fatigue, Parkinson's), Jaw/Face Pain, Pelvic/Hip Pain and Infant Colic to name a few Bowen can help with most pathologies!



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"BOWEN has helped keep my body together despite the bashing it takes. Its a vital support in putting right a whole range of aches and pains, making sure that old injuries don't cause me problems, and, helping fight stress and fatigue," BEAR GRYLLES

"The treatment I've had from Julie on the scar on my ankle has been marvellous. It means that I no longer have any pain in that area, my ankle is now supple & flexible." VALERIE

"Julie and Bowen Therapy have literally changed my life. When I started to see this lovely, friendly lady 2 years ago I was in tremendous pain and discomfort from my jaw. I couldn't eat or speak without my jaw cracking so loudly that I had to apologise to people for the noise. Now 2 years on my jaw is aligned and no longer cracks. Julie also helped with tissue damage after I tore tendons in my wrist after a fall last year. I would definitely recommend Julie and Bowen. It may take time but it works." BECKY

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Seasonal Spotlight Jersey Royal potatoes

As spring unfolds, one of the UK's most celebrated seasonal treats makes its eagerly awaited return the Jersey Royal potatoes. Grown exclusively on the island of Jersey, these distinctive new potatoes are prized for their unique flavour, delicate skin, and rich heritage.

What sets Jersey Royals apart is their terroir the combination of Jersey's mild climate, seaweed-enriched soil (known locally as vraic), and traditional farming methods. The potatoes are often grown on steep

coastal slopes, where they soak up plenty of sunshine and benefit from mineral-rich conditions that give them their famously nutty taste.

Harvested from April through to early July, Jersey Royals are at their best when fresh and simply prepared. Unlike larger, maincrop potatoes, there's no need to peel them just a gentle scrub will do. Their thin skins and waxy texture make them ideal for boiling, steaming, or tossing into salads. For a classic dish, boil

Jersey Royals in salted water until tender, then serve with a generous knob of butter, a sprinkle of sea salt, and fresh mint. They also pair beautifully with grilled fish, lamb, or spring greens like asparagus and peas, making them a versatile addition to seasonal menus.

When buying, look for firm potatoes with a light dusting of soil a sign they've been freshly harvested and haven't been overly handled. Store them in a cool, dark place and enjoy them as soon as

possible to make the most of their flavour. Simple, local, and bursting with character, Jersey Royal potatoes are a true taste of British spring a reminder that sometimes the best ingredients need very little fuss at all.

Don't miss our delicious recipe on the next page Jersey Royal, wild garlic & watercress tart with pink pickled onions a perfect seasonal dish showcasing these springtime favourites at their very best.

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Jersey Royal, wild garlic & watercress tart with pink pickled onions



Ingredients

350g Jersey Royal potatoes
1 mint sprig
4 eggs
handful wild garlic leaves
100g watercress
50ml double cream
250g ricotta
1 lemon zested
120g wensleydale or cheddar
pinch nutmeg
1 tbsp rose harissa

For the pastry

200g plain flour
120g cold butter
2 tsp vodka

For the pink pickled onions

1 red onion sliced
125ml rice wine vinegar
25g sugar
½ tsp sea salt
½ tsp yellow mustard seeds

Method

Step 1

First, make the pickled onions. Put the onion in a bowl, then bring the vinegar, sugar, salt, mustard seeds and 50ml water to the boil in a saucepan. Stir over a medium heat to dissolve the sugar. Once dissolved, remove from the heat and pour over the onions. Set aside for at least 30 mins.

Step 2

Meanwhile, make the pastry. Mix the flour with a pinch of sea salt in a bowl. Add the butter and use your fingers to bring it to a breadcrumb texture. Don't worry if there are some chunks, this helps make it light and flaky. Stir in the vodka, then add 2 tbsp ice-cold water and use a butter knife to bring the dough together. Use your hands to form a ball, adding a little more iced water if needed. Turn onto a floured surface and knead briefly until smooth. Flatten into a disc, wrap in baking parch-

ment and chill for 30 mins.

Step 3

Heat the oven to 200C/180C fan/gas 6. Put the potatoes and mint in a saucepan and cover with cold water. Add a pinch of salt and bring to the boil, then simmer for 10 mins until tender. Turn off the heat and leave to cool in the water.

Step 4

Roll the pastry to about 5mm thick, then transfer to a 20cm loose-bottomed tart tin. Trim the edges, then chill for 10 mins. Prick the base with a fork, line with baking parchment and fill with baking beans or rice. Bake for 20 mins.

Step 5

Remove the beans and parchment. Whisk one egg, then brush over the pastry. Bake for 10 mins more, then remove from the oven.

Step 6

Blitz the remaining eggs and egg wash, wild garlic, watercress and cream to a purée in a food processor. Transfer to a bowl and stir in the drained ricotta and lemon zest. Add most of the cheese, nutmeg and a pinch of salt. Slice the potatoes and arrange half in the tart case. Dot in the harissa, pour over the mixture and add the remaining potatoes. Scatter over the rest of the cheese.

Step 7

Bake for 35-40 mins. Rest for at least 20 mins before removing from the tin and slicing. Serve with a watercress salad and the pickled onions.

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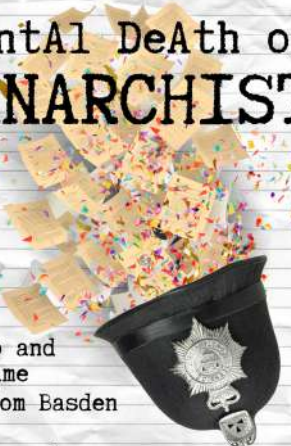
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A Triumphant Return Pete Williams Band Live in Bewdley

Live music lovers across the Wyre Forest are in for a treat this May, as the acclaimed Pete Williams Band returns to Bewdley for a long-awaited performance. Taking to the stage at St George's Hall on Friday 15 May at 7:30pm, this marks the band's first appearance at the venue in seven years and it promises to be well worth the wait.

A firm favourite with local audiences, Pete Williams has spent recent years touring extensively across the UK and beyond, building a formidable reputation for powerful, soul-stirring live shows. His journey has included high-profile invitations from The Proclaimers to open their 30-date tour, as well as a standout run as special guests for The Specials during their sold-out UK Protest Songs tour. Festival-

goers may also recognise the band from a headline slot on the Lunar Stage at the Moseley Folk Festival, alongside a sold-out show at Birmingham Symphony Hall earlier this year.

As a founding member of Dexys Midnight Runners now known as Dexys Williams has long been a respected figure in British music. His solo work continues to earn critical acclaim, with three albums already under his belt and a highly anticipated new release due later this year.

Praise for his songwriting and performance style is widespread. Iggy Pop has described his songs as "damn good," while Richard Hawley and Imelda May have both highlighted his storytelling, passion and authenticity. His work has been lauded for its

emotional depth, blending lived experience with rich melodies and a distinctive, soulful edge. Supporting on the night is rising talent Chloe Mogg, performing as a duo with guitarist Ethan an exciting addition to an already impressive line-up.


With tickets priced at just £16, this is a fantastic opportunity to experience one of the UK's most compelling live acts right on your doorstep. Expect an evening of raw energy, heartfelt songwriting, and unforgettable music in the intimate setting of St George's Hall.

Tickets can be purchased from:
www.boxoffice.stgeorghall.org.uk

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KEEP THE FAITH NORTHERN SOUL RETURNS TO KIDDERMINSTER

The unmistakable energy of Northern Soul is heading back to the dancefloor this June, as Northern Live – Do I Love You arrives at Kidderminster Town Hall for one unforgettable night of music and nostalgia.

Celebrating the underground movement that began in the North of England before sweeping across the UK, this high-octane live show captures the heart and soul of a genre that continues to inspire generations. Known for its rare grooves, fast-paced rhythms and devoted fanbase, Northern Soul is more than just music it's a cultural phenomenon built on passion, community and timeless sound.

Audiences can expect a spectacular performance from an

11-piece band, complete with four outstanding vocalists delivering over 30 classic tracks.

From the moment the first note hits, the atmosphere promises to be electric, with iconic songs like Out On The Floor by Dobie Gray and Do I Love You (Indeed I Do) by Frank Wilson guaranteed to have the crowd on their feet.

The setlist is packed with dance-floor favourites, including Tainted Love by Gloria Jones and The Snake by Al Wilson, alongside a host of beloved anthems that defined an era.

It's a chance to relive the golden age of all-nighters and spinning records, brought to life with a fresh, live performance twist.

Whether you're a lifelong fan who remembers the heyday of the Wigan Casino or simply love the infectious beat of classic soul, this is a show that promises to deliver feel-good vibes from start to finish.

Expect sharp suits, spinning dance moves, and an atmosphere that captures the spirit of Northern Soul at its very best.

Northern Live – Do I Love You takes place on Saturday 13 June at 7:30pm. For tickets, visit www.kidderminstertownhall.org.uk.

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Richard Jones - The Sound of Magic Live at Kidderminster Town Hall

Step into an evening of wonder with Richard Jones and his spectacular show The Sound of Magic, coming this Saturday 9 May. Known as the first and only magician to win Britain's Got Talent, Richard blends storytelling, music and illusion to create a truly unforgettable live experience.

Prepare to be amazed as he presents a collection of never-before-seen tricks that will challenge your perception and leave you questioning what's possible. This is more than just a magic show—it's an immersive journey exploring the powerful connection between music and imagination, designed to uplift and inspire audiences of all ages.

Whether you're a lifelong fan of magic or simply looking for a unique night out, this feel-good performance promises moments of awe, laughter and genuine astonishment.

For those wanting something extra special, a limited number of VIP tickets are available. These include an exclusive pre-show experience with Richard himself—featuring close-up magic, a meet and greet, signed poster, photo opportunity and a special gift. VIP guests should arrive at 6pm for a 6.15pm start. Don't miss your chance to witness the impossible, live on stage.

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May Motoring Fresh Season, Fresh Start For Your Car

May is a fantastic month for getting out on the road. With longer days, improved weather, and a couple of bank holidays on the horizon, it's the perfect time to give your car some well-earned attention and make the most of every journey.

After the challenges of winter driving, your vehicle may benefit from a seasonal check-up. Start with the essentials check tyre pressure and tread depth, top up your screen wash, and make sure oil and coolant levels are correct. Visibility is key too, so ensure your wiper blades are in good condition and your lights are clean and fully functional. Warmer temperatures can also expose issues with your battery or air conditioning, so it's worth testing these now before you rely on them during a longer trip.

As more people take advantage of the improved weather, roads can become noticeably busier, particularly around tourist hotspots, retail parks, and coastal areas. A little forward planning goes a long way set off earlier where possible, allow extra time for delays, and consider quieter alternative routes to avoid congestion. Staying patient and alert behind the wheel will help keep journeys safe and stress-free.

Fuel efficiency is another key focus for many drivers. Small changes in driving habits can make a real difference accelerate smoothly, maintain a steady speed, and avoid carrying unnecessary weight in your vehicle. Keeping tyres properly inflated and ensuring your

car is well maintained will also help maximise fuel economy and reduce wear and tear.

May is also a popular time for those considering a new vehicle. Dealerships often refresh their stock ahead of summer, meaning there can be a wider choice of quality used cars available. Whether you're looking for a practical family car, something more economical for commuting, or even a convertible to enjoy the sunshine, it's worth doing your research and taking a few test drives before making a decision.

Above all, enjoy the experience. Whether it's a countryside escape, a seaside trip, or simply driving home in the evening sun, May is a reminder that time spent on the road can be both practical and pleasurable.

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Kidderminster Harriers May Diary

Play-off place secured now it's all about momentum as Kidderminster Harriers enter the final stretch of the season with everything still to play for.

After months of hard work, the focus now shifts to consistency and finishing as strongly as possible. With a place in the National League North play-offs guaranteed, every point still matters as the Harriers aim to build form, sharpen performances, and carry real belief into the knockout stage ahead.

Home games at Aggborough will be crucial, with

the backing of the fans providing that extra edge, while strong performances on the road will be key to maintaining momentum under pressure. With their play-off spot confirmed, the challenge now is sharpening their edge staying organised, taking chances, and carrying belief into what is sure to be a high-stakes finale.

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