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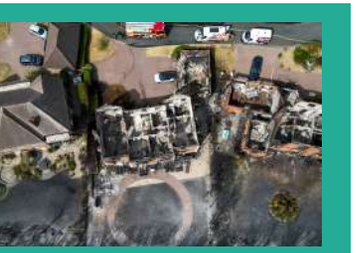
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Stourbridge Wildfires

A Month On From The Devastating Fires

A month on from the devastating wildfires that tore through parts of the West Midlands, the full impact of what happened on 13 August is still being felt in Stourbridge.

The fires, which came during the hottest day of the year, destroyed dozens of homes across the region, with 19 properties in Stourbridge among those badly affected.

For the families who lost their homes, the aftermath has been anything but straightforward. Some have been left with little more than the possessions they managed to save, while others have been staying in caravans or temporary accommodation as they wait to find somewhere permanent to live

It is difficult to imagine just how frightening that day must have been. What started as fires spreading through extremely dry countryside quickly became a major emergency, with flames moving incredibly quickly and threatening homes and communities.

A month later, attention is now turning to what can be done to make sure something on this scale is less likely to happen again.

West Midlands Fire Service chief fire officer Simon Tuhill has spoken about the pressure placed on firefighters during the fires, as crews faced an extraordinary situation across the region. Fire services from outside the area, including crews from London and Avon, were brought in to help.

The West Midlands Fire Service also deployed smaller 4x4 vehicles to tackle the fires, but many of these are now reaching the end of their working lives. There are calls for more specialist wildfire vehicles and better equipment to help firefighters deal with increasingly difficult conditions.

The issue is not simply about what happens when a fire starts. Experts have also warned that more needs to be done to prevent wildfires from taking hold in the first place.

Long periods of hot, dry weather leave grass, vegetation and open land incredibly dry, meaning a small fire can spread rapidly. With climate change expected to bring more frequent periods of extreme heat and drought, the concern is that the conditions seen this summer could become more familiar.

For Stourbridge, this is no longer something that feels like a problem happening somewhere else. We have seen first-hand how quickly a wildfire can move from open land towards people's homes and how devastating the consequences can be.

There have also been questions about whether fire services have enough firefighters, vehicles and equipment to cope with extreme events. Figures from the Fire Brigades Union show that the number of firefighters employed nationally has fallen significantly since 2010, with the West Midlands seeing a particularly large reduction.

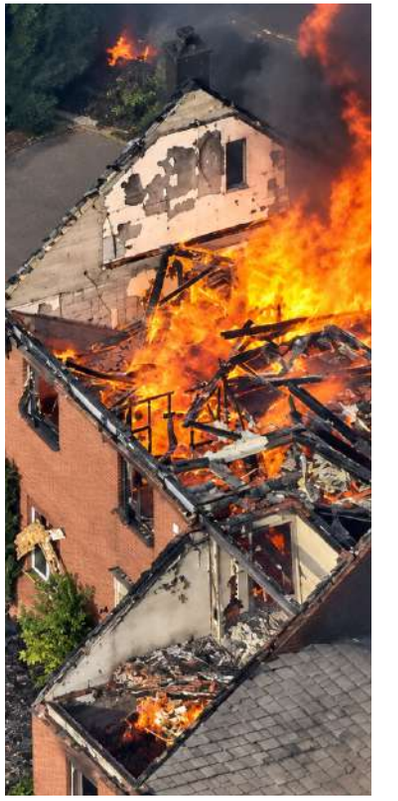
Dudley Council leader Patrick Harley has said the emergency procedures used during the fires worked well, with the council working closely with emergency services as the situation developed. However, he also acknowledged that the scale of what happened was something the borough had never experienced before.

The Prime Minister has visited the areas affected, while a new fire minister role has also been created following this summer's wildfires, with responsibility for fire policy, emergency response and the country's preparation for extreme weather.

There will inevitably be a debate about climate change, fire service funding and how councils and emergency services should prepare for the future. But for the families in Stourbridge who lost their homes, the most important thing right now is rebuilding their lives.

The hope is that lessons will be learned from what happened on 13 August, not only so our emergency services are better equipped to respond, but so our communities are better prepared if another extreme summer brings similar conditions.

For many people in Stourbridge, this summer's fires will not simply be remembered as a news story. They will be remembered as the day their lives changed forever.



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Over the past few months, we've been working on an exciting new chapter for our family business – and we can finally share the news.

YOU CAN NOW FIND PATCHWORK AT COUSINS FURNITURE

Alongside our established Stourbridge showroom, you will now find Patchwork at Cousins Furniture in Dudley, Tyseley and Shrewsbury. We're currently transitioning and settling into each of our new locations, and we'd love you to come and visit us. You can now visit Patchwork for all your carpet and flooring needs, while also shopping for furniture and furnishings for your home – all under one roof.
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Robin Hood Comes to Wollaston

This Christmas

It's that time of year when local groups start announcing their Christmas shows, and this year A Comedy Theatre Group is getting ready to take audiences on a very funny trip into the world of Robin Hood.

The group's traditional end-of-year pantomime will be Robin Hood and the Merry Friends, a comic take on the famous story of one of England's greatest legendary heroes.

We all know the tale. Robin Hood and his band of outlaws lived in Sherwood Forest, taking from the rich and giving to the poor, while trying to stay one step ahead of the villains. But this time, A Comedy Theatre Group promises to tell audiences what they think really happened all those years ago!

As r you would expect from one of the group's pantomimes, there will be plenty of laughs along the way, with corny jokes, heroes to cheer, villains to boo, songs to sing and plenty of adventure. There are also a few surprises promised along the way, making it a show aimed at getting the whole family into the Christmas spirit.

The action takes place at Wollaston Village Hall in Stourbridge, with four performances across the weekend.
The curtain goes up at 7pm on Friday, December 11, followed by two performances on Saturday, December 12, with a 2pm matinee and a 7pm evening show. The final performance takes place at 2pm on Sunday, December 13.

Tickets are just £5 each, making it an affordable way to enjoy some local live entertainment with the family this Christmas.
Tickets must be paid for in advance and cannot be held without payment. Payment can be made by bank transfer or arranged in person.

To book your tickets, call 07954 692593 or email acomedytheatregroup@gmail.com. You can also find A Comedy Theatre Group on Facebook and Instagram.

So, if you fancy finding out what really happened to Robin Hood and his merry friends, Wollaston Village Hall could be the place to be this December. Expect plenty of laughs, plenty of Christmas fun and, of course, a few surprises along the way!

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Bonded Warehouse Open Weekend

Returns to Stourbridge

One of Stourbridge's best known historic buildings will once again be opening its doors to the public this October, as the Bonded Warehouse welcomes visitors for its annual Open Weekend.

Following the hugely successful 40th Open Weekend last year, this year's event will take place on Saturday 17 and Sunday 18 October 2026, from 10am until 5pm on both days. Entry is completely free.

The Bonded Warehouse, on Canal Street alongside the Stourbridge Town Arm, is an important part of the town's industrial and waterways heritage. The three-storey building has a fascinating history and was originally used to store goods such as tea, tobacco and spirits while they were held 'in bond' before the relevant duties were paid.

Today, the building is cared for by the Stourbridge Navigation Trust, with a dedicated team of volunteers helping to maintain the warehouse, canal and surrounding area throughout the year.

The Open Weekend is a chance for local residents to step inside the historic building, discover more about its past and enjoy the unique canalside surroundings. The event also brings the waterway to life, with visiting boats and activities adding to the atmosphere across the weekend.

For many local people, the Open Weekend has become a regular fixture in the calendar, while for anyone who has never visited the Bonded Warehouse before, it offers an opportunity to discover one of Stourbridge's most distinctive historic landmarks.

The Stourbridge Navigation Trust relies heavily on volunteers to look after the warehouse and its facilities, and major events such as the Open Weekend are made possible thanks to their time and enthusiasm.

Further information about the programme, activities and arrangements for this year's event will be added over the coming weeks and months.

The Bonded Warehouse is located on Canal Street, Stourbridge, DY8 4LU.

For the latest information about the Open Weekend and other events at the warehouse, visit: thebondedwarehousestourbridge.co.uk





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THIS MONTHS

Local Lowdown

Quirky Tales & Local Lore

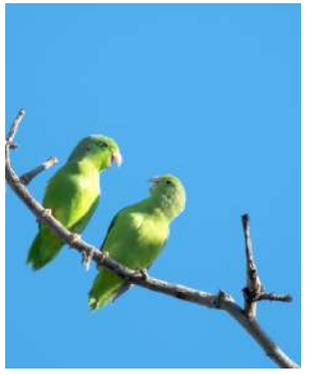
There's always something unusual happening across Stourbridge and the surrounding towns and villages and we love sharing the quirky tales that make our area unique.

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

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



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



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



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

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Small Space, Big Style
Making Every Corner Count

You do not need a large home to have a big sense of style. With a little imagination, even the most compact spaces can feel open, airy, and full of personality. The secret lies in smart design choices and clever use of light, storage, and colour.

Start by embracing multifunctional furniture. A sofa bed in the spare room, a coffee table with hidden storage, or nesting side tables can save precious floor space while keeping your home tidy and organised. Look for pieces that can do double duty, stylish and practical is the goal.
Light is your best friend in a small space. Mirrors can work wonders by reflecting natural light and creating a sense of depth. Position one opposite a window to instantly brighten a room. Choose sheer curtains instead of heavy drapes to let in as much daylight as possible.

When it comes to colour, lighter shades open up a room, while pops of bold colour in accessories such as cushions, artwork, or rugs add character without overwhelming the space. A soft neutral palette with accents of terracotta, teal, or mustard works beautifully for a modern yet homely look.

Clutter is the enemy of small spaces, so choose décor thoughtfully. A few meaningful items on display have far more impact than a crowded shelf. Keep surfaces clear and invest in decorative baskets or stylish boxes to store everyday items neatly out of sight.
Finally, do not be afraid to express your personality. Whether it is a statement lamp, a feature wall, or a gallery of family photos, small spaces come alive when they reflect the people who live in them.

With a few smart choices, any home, no matter its size, can feel spacious, stylish, and truly yours.









Cat Eccles Member of Parliament for Stourbridge

August brought some challenging moments for our community as fires affected parts of Stourbridge and the surrounding area. Thankfully, no lives were lost, and West Midlands Fire Service later confirmed the fires started accidentally in fields where agricultural machinery was being used at the time.

I want to thank the firefighters who worked tirelessly in difficult conditions, alongside volunteers, community groups and residents who stepped forward to support those affected. Their efforts demonstrated the strong community spirit that defines our area and showed how people come together when it matters most.

While these incidents were isolated, they also serve as an important reminder about the need to prepare for a changing climate. Across the country, we are seeing more extreme weather events, from prolonged periods of hot, dry weather to sudden flooding and storms. Building resilience is no longer simply an environmental issue. It is about protecting our communities, infrastructure, public services and green spaces.

That means ensuring local emergency services have the resources they need, supporting measures to reduce climate risks, and taking practical steps as individuals and communities to be prepared. Whether it is looking after vulnerable neighbours during periods of extreme heat, protecting local green spaces, or supporting sustainable environmental initiatives, we all have a role to play.

The response to the recent fires demonstrated that our community is strong, compassionate and resilient. By learning from these experiences and continuing to work together, we can ensure our area is prepared for whatever challenges the future may bring.

There is also some very welcome news for Netherton and Holly Hall. I am delighted that 33 community projects will receive a share of more than £420,000 through Pride in Place funding, helping local organisations that are already making a real difference to people's lives. As a member of the Pride in Place Board, I am particularly pleased to see this first wave of funding awarded.

The investment will support improvements to community facilities, green spaces, wellbeing programmes, youth services and a range of other local initiatives. It forms part of a wider £20 million programme that will invest in communities across the area over the next decade.

Our area is fortunate to have so many dedicated volunteers and community groups working tirelessly for others. Congratulations to all 33 successful projects. I look forward to seeing the positive impact this funding will deliver for residents in Netherton, Holly Hall and beyond in the months and years ahead.

You can contact Cat via email, telephone or online:

Email:
cat.eccles.mp@parliament.uk

Phone:
01384 881 095

Website: www.cateccles.co.uk





The Elephants Pyjamas

More Than Just a Baby Boutique...

Sometimes the best new chapters are the ones you never planned.

When Kelly and her husband moved to the beautiful village of Kinver in 2025, she had no idea that within a year she would become the owner of one of the village's much-loved independent boutiques.

A mum and step-mum to six children and grandmother to one gorgeous grandson, Kelly had spent around 30 years working as a PA and Event Planner. But when she discovered that the owner of The Elephants Pyjamas was retiring and the boutique could potentially disappear, something simply clicked.

"I loved the shop, I loved what it represented, and I'd already fallen in love with Kinver. I just couldn't imagine this lovely little boutique no longer being here."

And so began the next chapter of The Elephants Pyjamas.

While beautiful babywear and thoughtful new-baby gifts remain at the heart of the boutique, Kelly's vision has always been to grow it into something much more.



Today, tucked away at No.2 Chenevare Mews just off Kinver High Street, you'll discover gorgeous baby and toddler clothing, toys, nursery pieces and new-baby gifts alongside an ever-growing collection of women's fashion and accessories, Chelsea Peers pyjamas and gifts for the men too – including the brilliantly colourful OddBalls range.

The aim is simple: something for every generation – and something for every budget.

For Kelly, however, retail is only part of the story.

With decades of event-planning experience behind her, she is introducing experiences and services that take The Elephants Pyjamas beyond the traditional boutique. The shop can now come to you with its Pop-Up Baby Shower Boutique, bringing a carefully selected collection of gifts and baby products directly to a celebration.

There are also beautiful bespoke occasion cakes available in partnership with Bake-a-Cakeo, making the boutique a place to turn to for some of life's biggest celebrations – from baby showers and new arrivals to birthdays and special occasions. Community and charity are equally important.

Throughout her career Kelly has supported causes including Macmillan Cancer Support, Teenage Cancer Trust and Birmingham Children's Hospital Charity, and that passion for fundraising has become part of The Elephant's Pyjamas story too.

Through PJ's Kindness Club, selected purchases generate donations for Birmingham Children's Hospital Charity, while Kelly and her team have also taken their fundraising quite literally onto the water, taking part in the Birmingham Dragon Boat Race as "Williams Viking Warriors"and raising more than £5,500 for the hospital.

It is this combination of shopping, community, fundraising and a little bit of fun that Kelly hopes will shape the future of the business.

Women's fashion continues to grow, new brands and gifts are being introduced, the men's offering is expanding and there are plenty more ideas waiting in the wings.

Yet however much The Elephant's Pyjamas grows, Kelly is determined that it will retain the personal service and warmth of an independent village boutique.

"I want people to walk through our door and feel welcome. Whether you're buying a £5 gift, choosing a beautiful outfit, looking for something for a new baby or simply popping in for a chat, you matter to us."

The Elephant's Pyjamas are growing but its heart remains firmly in Kinver.

Visit the boutique at No.2 Chenevare Mews, High Street, Kinver, DY7 6HB or discover the collections and services online.





Help and Advice When You Need it

Age Concern Stourbridge & Halesowen

Age Concern Stourbridge & Halesowen is continuing to support older people across the local area with free, confidential advice, and has now launched a series of new advice webpages to make it even easier for people to find the information they need.
The new webpages have been designed to provide straightforward, easy-to-follow guidance on a range of issues affecting older people. They can be particularly useful for anyone looking for information, needing help with online forms or wanting to understand changes to legislation and available support.

The charity's volunteer advice team has already made a huge difference locally. Between October 2024 and September 2025, volunteers helped 166 local residents secure more than £300,000 in benefits they were entitled to.

For many older people and their families, navigating the benefits and support system can be confusing, particularly when forms are lengthy or information is difficult to find online. Age Concern's service aims to make that process a little easier.

The team can provide advice on benefits such as Attendance Allowance and Personal Independence Payments, as well as help with completing forms, Blue Badge applications, pensions and Pension Credit. Support is also available around debt through referrals, older person's bus passes, care and support, housing and employment.

The free advice service is available to anyone aged 55 and over. Those who need help can call 01384 390065 to make an appointment at The Elton Centre. The advice team is available from 10am to 1pm, Monday to Friday.

Age Concern Stourbridge & Halesowen also offers much more than advice. Its purpose-designed Elton Centre on St John's Road provides a welcoming space for older people, with a range of events and activities, an in-house café and rooms available for community use.

For more information about the charity and its services, visit www.ageconcernsh.org.uk or call 01384 390065.

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Stourbridge in Bloom Gets Ready

For a Splash of Autumn Colour

The team at Stourbridge in Bloom is already looking ahead to the next season of colour, with volunteers busy preparing the town's planters and floral displays for autumn.

The group has been working hard to clear away the summer flowers and get the planters ready for their next transformation. While the summer displays have brought plenty of colour to Stourbridge, it is now time to make way for a new selection of plants that will brighten up the town through the autumn months.

Stourbridge in Bloom vice-chairman Brenda Stevenson explained that some of this year's begonias had reached the end of their best, meaning the volunteers could begin the process of preparing the planters for their autumn planting. There is plenty to do before the new plants can go in. The old compost needs to be emptied, the watering systems checked and fresh compost added before everything is ready for planting.

The group already has polyanthus on order for the autumn displays, but volunteers say there is still plenty of preparation to be done behind the scenes.
This year's weather has also provided something of a challenge. While the geraniums performed particularly well, the begonias had a tougher time after being planted relatively early and then facing a mixture of hail, frost and cold winds before the hot and exceptionally dry weather arrived.

The experience has prompted the group to consider whether more resilient varieties could be used in future to help ensure the town continues to enjoy colourful displays whatever the British weather throws at them.

Of course, keeping Stourbridge looking its best takes more than just hard work from the volunteers and the group is currently appealing for help with the cost of compost.

Local people can support the project by buying a bag of compost from Websters in Wollaston and asking for it to be kept for Stourbridge in Bloom.

There is also the opportunity to sponsor a basket or planter, with sponsors receiving a sticker displaying their name for a year.

It is a lovely way for local residents and businesses to play a part in keeping Stourbridge looking bright and welcoming throughout the year.

To find out more or request a sponsorship sheet, contact Stourbridge in Bloom at:
stourbloom97@gmail.com or get in touch with the group via Facebook.

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Colour and Texture Swaps:
Instantly Refresh Your Home

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

Start with cushions. These small accents punch far above their weight when it comes to impact. Choose colours that complement your existing furniture, or go bold with contrasting shades for a fresh, modern twist. Mixing textures—think velvet, linen, or knitted fabrics—adds depth and interest, making your sofa or bed feel new again. Layering patterns, from subtle stripes to playful geometrics, can also give your space a designer feel without breaking the bank.

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

Throws are another versatile option. Draped over the arm of a chair or folded at the end of a bed, they add both warmth and style. Like cushions, they offer a low-commitment way to experiment with colour, pattern, and texture. A chunky knit throw can instantly make a room feel inviting, while a silky or lightweight fabric adds elegance.

Don't forget to consider your overall colour palette. While bold contrasts can energise a space, subtle harmonies can create calm and cohesion. Think of cushions, rugs, and throws as your home's accessories—they can be updated as often as your mood or the season changes.

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

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The Power of Furniture:
Turning a House into a Home

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

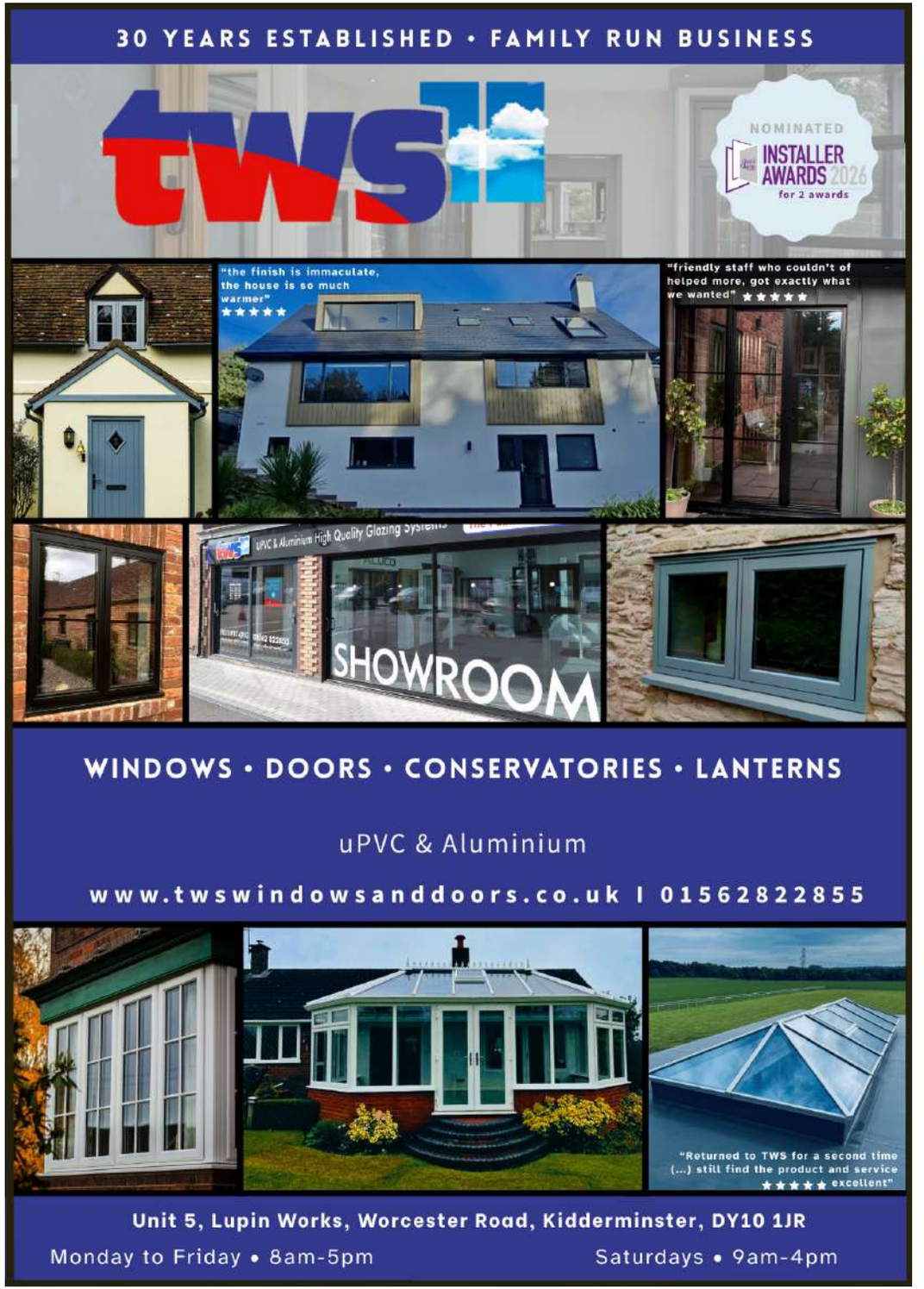
One of the most remarkable things about furniture is its ability to transform a space. A well-placed armchair can turn an unused corner into a cosy reading nook. A rustic dining table can make a kitchen feel instantly warmer and more inviting, while a sleek modern sofa can bring a fresh, contemporary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

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

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

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

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





HOME FURNISHING

THE PERFECT SOFA

Finding Comfort & Style for Your Home!

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

Style Meets Functionality:

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

Choosing the Right Fabric:

Fabric choice plays a huge role in both comfort and durability. If you have kids or pets, stain-resistant fabrics like microfiber or performance blends are a practical option. For those seeking a plush, sophisticated feel, velvet or bouclé fabrics bring texture and warmth. Leather is another great choice—it's stylish, easy to clean, and ages beautifully over time.

Size Matters:

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

Comfort is Key:

Looks aside, a sofa should be comfortable and supportive. Consider seat depth and cushion firmness—do you prefer a deep, sink-in feel or firmer support? High-density foam cushions hold their shape longer, while feather-filled options offer a relaxed, lived-in look. Reclining sofas and chaise lounges are also fantastic choices for those who love to stretch out and unwind.

Sofas That Adapt to Your Life:

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

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



IS ROOF CLEANING NECESSARY?

BY DAVE PEDEN - SQUEAKY CLEAN

The simple answer is No. I have never heard of a roof collapsing because it hasn't been cleaned but there is some definite advantages to getting your roof cleaned.



Why Clean Your Roof?

Moss and algae on the roof can look unsightly. Debris buildup can hide existing issues that, if left untreated, may lead to leaks. Moss falling from the roof can block gutters, requiring frequent clearing, and it also drops to the ground, making your property appear untidy and eventually slippery. Moss acts like a sponge, trapping water on the roof. In winter, this water can freeze, causing cracks and damage to mortar and tiles. Additionally, water held in the moss reduces your roof's thermal efficiency, which can increase your heating bills.

How Are Roofs Cleaned?

There are three main ways to clean roofs: scraping, pressure washing, and compressed air. Each has its advantages and disadvantages.

Scraping is gentler and less likely to damage tiles, making it suitable for fragile roofs. However, it takes longer to complete and may be less effective on older handmade tiles that aren't perfectly flat. It also delays the restoration of the roof's original colour.

Compressed air is probably the kindest method and causes minimal damage. It removes more moss than scraping alone, particularly from joints and edges, and delivers excellent results on most tiles. However, it takes longer for the full effect to show, and a compressor must run during the process.

Pressure washing delivers instant, dramatic results when done properly, making it a very effective method. But if used incorrectly, it can push water under tiles, damage the tile surface, or even make tiles porous. It often requires operatives to walk on the roof, increasing the risk of damage. It is not suitable for fragile or older roofs and can be messy, sometimes affecting neighbouring properties.

What Is a Biocide Treatment and Should You Have It?

Biocide is a chemical that breaks down the cell walls of moss, lichen, algae, and spores, effectively killing them. When first applied, the roof may appear worse due to the release of beta-carotene, a natural pigment. Once the biomass dies—usually within four hours—it begins to wash off over time as fine dust that won't block your gutters. Within six to twelve months, your roof will gradually return to its original colour.

Biocide does not change tile colour but reveals it by removing organic growth. Using biocide also prolongs cleanliness by preventing immediate regrowth.



How We Clean Roofs at Squeaky Clean Services?

At Squeaky Clean Services, we follow a proven three-stage method. First, we remove moss using compressed air, which is blown through long, extended poles and followed by wire brushing to clear remaining moss. We aim to remove 90–95% of the growth. Most work is carried out from mobile scaffold towers, limiting the need to walk on your roof to avoid damage and maintain safety.

Next, we apply a biodegradable, non-caustic biocide, which kills any remaining moss, algae, or lichen. This treatment helps prevent regrowth and gradually restores your roof to its original appearance.

Finally, we carry out a full cleanup, clearing the removed moss, emptying the gutters, and checking downpipes to ensure proper drainage.



Quotes Are Easy

Getting a quote is quick and simple. Just send us your address, and we'll use Google Earth to estimate your property size and provide a rough price. If you're happy with the estimate, we'll visit to assess access, growth, and roof condition before giving you a final quote.

To find out more ring Dave on 07956 222348



Looking After Your Skin in Autumn

By Lindsey Watson, Elle Jay Aesthetics

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

A Time for Repair and Renewal
Summer sunshine brings us joy, but it can also accelerate skin ageing. UV rays contribute to fine lines, pigmentation, and loss of elasticity, while heat and humidity may leave pores congested. As autumn arrives, the skin naturally needs more moisture and a little extra care to undo some of that seasonal stress. It's the ideal time to address sun damage, improve skin texture, and give your complexion a fresh start.

Chemical Peels: Shedding the Old, Revealing the New
Chemical peels remain one of the most effective ways to treat pigmentation and improve skin clarity. By gently exfoliating the surface layer, they lift away dead skin cells, stimulate renewal, and even skin tone. This treatment is especially helpful after summer, when pigmentation often appears more pronounced. At Elle Jay Aesthetics, we offer a range of peels tailored to individual skin needs—from mild brightening treatments to deeper resurfacing options.

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

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

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

Advanced Skin Renewal: Tixel 2 and CO_2 Fractional Laser
For more advanced concerns such as deeper pigmentation, fine lines, or loss of elasticity, we offer state-of-the-art treatments. Tixel 2 fractional heat technology is needle-free, safe for all skin tones, and works to tighten and rejuvenate with little to no downtime. CO_2 fractional laser, on the other hand, offers a more intensive resurfacing option, targeting stubborn pigmentation, scarring, and age-related changes with dramatic results.

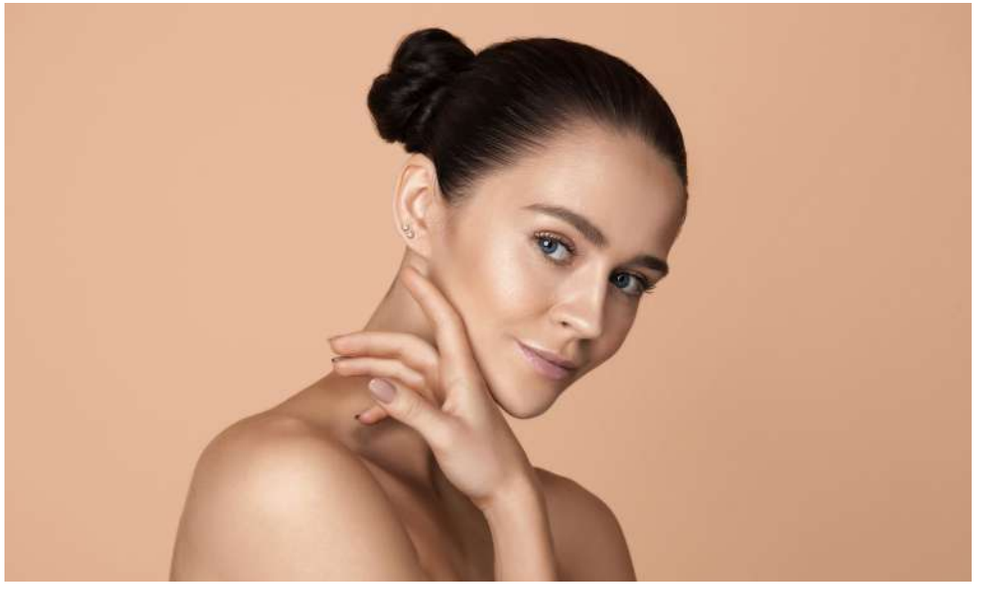
Your Autumn Skin Journey
Autumn is the season of change—and your skin deserves that same chance to reset. At Elle Jay Aesthetics, we're here to help you repair summer damage, restore lost moisture, and prepare your skin for winter with a personalised treatment plan. Whether you're looking for a gentle boost or a more transformative treatment, we'll ensure your skin looks and feels its best in the months ahead.

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

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

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

From small-scale surgical interventions to beauty enhancing aesthetics, we're here to offer expert care in a comfortable and professional setting.



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Spiced Pumpkin Muffins



Ingrediants

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

Method

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

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

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

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

5. Fill muffin cups: Spoon batter evenly into the 12 muffin cases.
6. Bake: 20–25 minutes, until a skewer inserted into the center comes out clean.

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





Spice Up Your October

Celebrate National Curry Week

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

Started back in 1998, National Curry Week has grown into a nationwide celebration of South Asian cuisine—and it's about more than just food. The event also raises funds for charities tackling poverty, making every curry you enjoy a way of giving back.

Locally, there are plenty of ways to get involved. Why not visit a nearby curry house for a meal or takeaway? Supporting our local restaurants not only treats your taste buds but also helps the community thrive. If you're feeling creative, you could even host your own curry night at home. With the official National Curry Week recipe book offering dishes from 50 UK restaurants, there's plenty of inspiration for your culinary adventures.



And don't forget to pair your curry with the perfect drink, whether it's a crisp lager, a fruity wine, or even a traditional lassi. For those who love sharing their experiences, the week is also a great chance to join the online community, show off your creations, and connect with curry fans across the country using #NationalCurryWeek.

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

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



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Stourbridge Amateur Operatic Society
Brings We Will Rock You to town

Get ready to rock this October as Stourbridge Amateur Operatic Society takes to the stage at Stourbridge Town Hall with the smash-hit musical We Will Rock You.

Running from Tuesday 20th to Saturday 24th October 2026, the production promises an unforgettable week of live theatre, spectacular music and some of Queen's greatest ever songs.

Featuring a book by comedian and writer Ben Elton, We Will Rock You is set in a dystopian future where live music and independent thought have been banned by the powerful Globalsoft corporation. In this strange new world, everyone is expected to think, dress and behave the same.

But rebellion is brewing. Young rebels Galileo and Scaramouche join forces with a group of freedom fighters known as the "Bohemians", who are determined to bring back individuality, creativity and, most importantly, rock 'n' roll.

The story provides the perfect backdrop for more than 20 of Queen's legendary hits, making this a show packed with songs that audiences will know and love.

Expect favourites including Radio Ga Ga, I Want to Break Free, Somebody to Love, Killer Queen, Don't Stop Me Now, We Will Rock You, We Are the Champions and many more.

With Stourbridge Amateur Operatic Society bringing its own energy and talent to the production, this is a great opportunity to enjoy a major musical right on the doorstep.

We Will Rock You
Tuesday 20th – Saturday 24th October 2026
Stourbridge Town Hall
Stalls & Balcony: £19.50
Tiered Seating: £22
Booking fees apply.

Whether you're a lifelong Queen fan, a musical theatre lover or simply fancy a great night out, We Will Rock You promises to deliver plenty of attitude, energy and, of course, plenty of rock!

Book tickets online at:
www.boroughhalls.co.uk





Jah Wobble Brings a Musical

Legend To Stourbridge

Stourbridge is set for a special night of live music this autumn when legendary bassist, singer and composer Jah Wobble brings his acclaimed band, The Invaders of the Heart, to Katie Fitzgerald's on Saturday 3 October.

Wobble, born John Wardle, has enjoyed a remarkable career spanning almost five decades. He first made his name as a founding member of Public Image Ltd (PiL), alongside John Lydon and Keith Levene, becoming renowned for his distinctive bass sound and his pioneering fusion of dub, funk and world music.

Since leaving PiL in 1980, Wobble has forged an equally impressive solo career, working with a remarkable range of artists including Brian Eno, Björk, Sinéad O'Connor, The Edge and members of Can and Killing Joke. His music has continually crossed boundaries, bringing together influences from across the world while retaining the unmistakable Wobble groove.

The Stourbridge show forms part of Wobble's UK and Belgium autumn tour, which follows a particularly busy year of releases. These include the re-release of his classic 23-track album The Usual Suspects, his Automated Paradise collaboration with Jon Klein and the Mystic Liverpool album with Tian Qiyi.

Several dates on the tour will feature Metal Box Rebuilt in Dub, but the Stourbridge performance promises a full evening with Jah Wobble and The Invaders of the Heart.

Known not only for his musicianship but also for his humour, storytelling and energetic stage presence, Wobble remains one of the most distinctive and entertaining figures to emerge from the British post-punk scene.

Jah Wobble & The Invaders of the Heart – Saturday 3 October, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge. Tickets are available through Songkick.

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UB40 Labour of Love at
The River Rooms This October

Fans of reggae and UB40 are in for a treat this October as UB40 Labour of Love, described as Europe's No.1 UB40 tribute band, heads to The River Rooms in Stourbridge.

Taking place on Saturday 10th October 2026, the show promises an evening packed with the classic songs that made UB40 one of Britain's most successful reggae bands.

Fronted by Anthony Jon, whose vocals are said to be remarkably close to those of Ali Campbell, the tribute act recreates the sound and atmosphere of a UB40 live performance.

The set is expected to feature a host of much-loved favourites, including One In Ten, Red Red Wine, Kingston Town, Higher Ground, King, Cherry Oh Baby, I Got You Babe, Come Back Darling, Don't Break My Heart, Rat In Mi Kitchen, Homely Girl, Bring Me Your Cup, Food For Thought and many more.

With plenty of familiar hits to sing along to, it promises to be a great night for long-time UB40 fans as well as anyone who simply enjoys a good night of live reggae.

Event details:
Saturday 10th October 2026
The River Rooms, Stourbridge
Tickets: £12
18+ only
Doors: 7.30pm
Show starts: 9.30pm

Free parking is available for River Rooms customers. Visitors should remember to enter their vehicle registration on the tablet at the main entrance to avoid receiving a parking fine. The venue advises that it cannot cancel fines once they have been issued.

Tickets are non-refundable and non-exchangeable, so make sure you are able to attend before booking.

For fans of UB40, reggae classics and a lively Saturday night out, this looks set to be one to put in the diary.

Buy tickets online at:
www.theriverrooms.com



Dacia Duster

A Lot of SUV For Your Money

If you're looking for a new car that offers the rugged appearance and practicality of an SUV without the premium price tag, the Dacia Duster remains one of the most interesting options on the market. The latest Duster has moved the model on considerably, with a more modern design while retaining the straightforward, practical character that has made it popular with families and drivers who simply want a car that does the job without unnecessary fuss.

Inside, there is plenty of space for passengers and luggage, making it a useful choice for everyday family life. The raised driving position gives you a good view of the road, while the relatively simple cabin layout means the important controls are easy to find.

There is also a choice of powertrains, including petrol, hybrid and four-wheel-drive versions, giving buyers more flexibility depending on how and where they drive. The hybrid version is particularly appealing to motorists looking for improved efficiency without having to make the jump to a fully electric vehicle.

One of the Duster's biggest attractions remains its practicality. The generous ground clearance and robust styling give it a genuinely useful feel, rather than simply looking like an off-roader. That could be particularly welcome as we head into autumn, when muddy lanes, wet roads and increasingly poor weather become part of everyday driving.

The Duster also makes a strong case for itself on value. Dacia has built its reputation around offering the essentials at a competitive price, and the latest generation continues that philosophy while adding more technology, safety equipment and refinement.

For drivers who spend time exploring the countryside around the Wyre Forest or Stourbridge area, that combination of comfort and ruggedness could make particular sense. It is the sort of car that feels equally at home on the school run, the daily commute or a weekend trip, without making ownership unnecessarily complicated or expensive.

It may not have the badge appeal of some of its more expensive rivals, but if your priorities are space, practicality, affordability and a touch of adventure, the Dacia Duster deserves a place on your shortlist.

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Stourbridge FC:
A Busy October Ahead

Stourbridge FC head into October with plenty of football to look forward to as the Glassboys continue their 2026/27 Southern League Premier Central campaign.

After making a positive start to the season, including an opening-day home victory over Stamford and an away win at Peterborough Sports, Stourbridge face a particularly busy spell as the autumn programme gets into full swing.
October begins with a home fixture against Racing Club Warwick on Saturday 3 October, followed by another home game against Leighton Town on Saturday 10 October. There is then a midweek trip to Worcester City on Tuesday 13 October, before Stourbridge travel to Bury Town on Saturday 17 October.

The Glassboys are back at the War Memorial Athletic Ground on Tuesday 20 October, when Anstey Nomads provide the opposition. A further away trip follows on Tuesday 27 October, with Stourbridge travelling to Real Bedford, before the month concludes with a home meeting against Kettering Town on Saturday 31 October.

Seven league fixtures in one month represents a significant test of the squad, with consistency likely to be crucial. The combination of Saturday football and midweek matches will demand plenty from the players, while home support could prove particularly valuable during a busy period.

There is also the added excitement of seeing how Stourbridge fare against some of the division's ambitious clubs. The Southern League Premier Central is always fiercely competitive, and there will be little margin for complacency.

For supporters, October offers plenty of opportunities to get behind the Glassboys, with four of the month's seven fixtures taking place at home.

If Stourbridge can collect a healthy haul of points during this busy spell, it could provide an important platform for the months ahead.

October Fixtures
- 3 Oct – Racing Warwick (H)
- 10 Oct – Leighton Town (H)
- 13 Oct – Worcester City (A)
- 17 Oct – Bury Town (A)
- 20 Oct – Anstey Nomads (H)
- 27 Oct – Real Bedford (A)
- 31 Oct – Kettering Town (H)

Fixtures are subject to change check with Stourbridge FC before travelling.



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