

# THE Coleshill & Castle Brom POST



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Dec 2025/Jan 2026 Issue 140



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& HAPPY NEW YEAR

and we thank you all for supporting the paper.



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**THE Coleshill &  
Castle Brom POST**

The Post Newspaper Group is an independent hyper-local tabloid newspaper publisher distributing over 14,000 copies to homes and businesses in Coleshill and Castle Bromwich each month, free of charge.

Our main aim is to provide hyper-local news and information to the community where it would otherwise not be accessible. We also offer the most effective platform for local businesses to promote themselves to their target audience. This benefits the entire community and improves social-cohesion.



Any views, articles and columns expressed in this publication are those of the contributors and not necessarily those of the Publisher, nor indeed their responsibility.

## Advertising in our publications

**In order to deliver The Post free to our readers we rely on advertising revenue from local companies.**

We work with you to create the most appropriate package for your business, after all it's in our interest to make each advert work and keep everybody happy.

We can design professional artwork if needed and offer sound advice based on years of knowledge.

By choosing to advertise with us you are also showing your support for the community and the customers you hope to serve.

## Getting in touch

**Sales:**  
[editor.postgroup@outlook.com](mailto:editor.postgroup@outlook.com)  
**07805 430191**

**General inquires:**  
[serena.postgroup@outlook.com](mailto:serena.postgroup@outlook.com)

## WHY CHOOSE HYPER-LOCAL?

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Show support for the community where your customers live.

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Help to increase footfall on the High Street and boost attendance at local events.

Give groups, clubs and organisations space to promote themselves and let local people know exactly what is available on their doorstep.



## THE Coleshill & Castle Brom POST

## CIRCULATION

**Door to door around:**

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Maxstoke

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Smiths Wood

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Kingshurst  
The Whitacres

Also available online on our website and facebook pages.





**Cllr Robert Aitkenhead, Coleshill North & Water Orton**

## Greetings Coleshill Post readers!

You may well be wondering what I have been doing since my previous offering in this valued publication. Apart from attending lots of meetings, many of them constructive, selected bullet points are as follows (self-sanitised to reign in my tendency to rant on certain subjects):

Recently I attended the Remembrance Parade and laid a memorial wreath in Water Orton, and have been checking and mostly approving applications for the 2nd round of the councillors community grant fund, for which I've met with several of the applicants for funding, and listened to their plans.

I've been remonstrating with HS2 about simultaneous road closures, atrocious road surfaces, the obnoxious odour created by their works which is still affecting local residents, I'm still liaising with Birmingham City Council regarding the protracted repairs to Vesey Bridge, and continuing to lobby county council officers for traffic light control of Cole End Bridge. (Regarding the so-called "Bridge Wars" stand-off setting there). If you have an opinion on this or anything else locally, I'd be interested to hear it.

I've stated the case for 20mph speed zones around the three schools within my ward, which is nothing that isn't already commonplace elsewhere in the region.

I've objected to several major local planning applications, all of which would have a detrimental effect on local journey times and traffic flow. Whether these proposed large scale sites are located in Curdworth or Wishaw, residents across the entire ward should be concerned, as their detrimental impact on the local road network and the M42 motorway would surely affect us all.

I've flagged up unscheduled/unauthorised roadworks in the locality.

I submitted a long list of requested highways repairs/improvements across the wider ward, with a request for budgetary consideration.

This will be followed up regularly.

I've been cutting back overgrown foliage from local road signage, where accessible, and reporting unmarked significant potholes.

Along with other ward councillors, I'm looking into the potential impact on this ward from the proposed Grand Union water transfer pipeline from Minworth to Buckinghamshire.

My experience of local councillors (irrespective of political allegiance) has been unequivocally positive, with good communication, co-operation and collaboration found across the board. So that aspect meets or exceeds my expectations, thus far. On a wider county level, I have observed political posturing, showmanship, experienced much red tape and frustration, and heard a lot of reasons why local requests can't be actioned, whether non-compliance to given criteria, or budgetary constraints, or both. I'm sure my experience is not unique in that regard, and that it is hardly breaking news for existing or past councillors reading this. I will continue trying to make the interests of ward constituents known at county level, nevertheless.

I'd like to wish all Coleshill Post readers a very Merry Christmas and a peaceful, healthy and prosperous New Year, and please continue to make me aware of any local issues I might realistically be able to assist with

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## Castle Bromwich litter pickers

**Outstanding litter picking from the Castle Bromwich litter picking volunteers.**

Since we started, around 6 years ago, we've now collected 14,000 bags of rubbish off the streets of Castle Bromwich, keeping our area tidy.

We regularly pick up around 40 bags of rubbish per week

We are a group of around 18

volunteers who litter pick from the Clock Garage to Kingshurst, Parkhall to Shard End.

We regularly report flytipping and have had two successful prosecutions of around £1000 each.

This group of volunteers pick virtually every week in all sorts of weather.

Here are some of the volunteers....



# JOY

*Celebrate Christmas at Coleshill and Maxstoke Parish Churches*

- 6th December @ 12- 4pm**  
*Christmas Tree Festival opens at Coleshill*
- 14th December @ 6pm**  
*Carol Service (Nine Lessons and Carols) at Coleshill*
- 20th December @ 4pm**  
*Christingle Service at Coleshill*
- 24th December @ 6pm**  
*Maxstoke Christingle*
- 24th December @ 11pm**  
*Midnight Communion at Coleshill*
- 25th December @ 9:15am**  
*Christmas Day Service at Maxstoke*
- 25th December @ 10:30am**  
*Christmas Day Service at Coleshill*

For further information contact your parish office at [colemaxsecretary@outlook.com](mailto:colemaxsecretary@outlook.com) or website [www.coleshillparishchurch.org.uk](http://www.coleshillparishchurch.org.uk)



# Health & Wellness



## Staying Fit Without the Gym – Home Fitness Tips for All Ages

No gym membership? No problem! Whether you're 17 or 70, there are simple ways to stay active using just your home and local surroundings.

### Local Fitness Ideas

- Walk or cycle to the shops
- Join a local walking group or run club
- Volunteer for a local cleanup – movement + community!

### Try This 10-Minute Home Routine:

1. March in place – 1 minute
2. Wall push-ups – 1 minute
3. Chair squats – 1 minute
4. Arm circles – 1 minute
5. Rest and repeat

Safe, effective, and can be done while watching TV!

### For Older Adults:

- Gentle stretching
  - Seated leg lifts
  - Gardening or light housework
- Movement keeps joints healthy and minds sharp.

### Stay Motivated

- Set small weekly goals
- Track your steps with a pedometer
- Find a fitness buddy

You don't need fancy equipment or apps – just a little time and a willingness to move.

**In Coleshill, health starts at home.**



## Keeping Up Appearances!



Methodist Church. The team, led by Aoinne Conway, painted the Community Hall that had suffered from rain ingress staining prior to the replacement of the roof. Drawn from different departments and areas, the team quickly got down to task and transformed the space.

The local community engagement team from Balfour Beatty VINCI – HS2's construction partner in the Midlands, recently spent a day volunteering at Water Orton

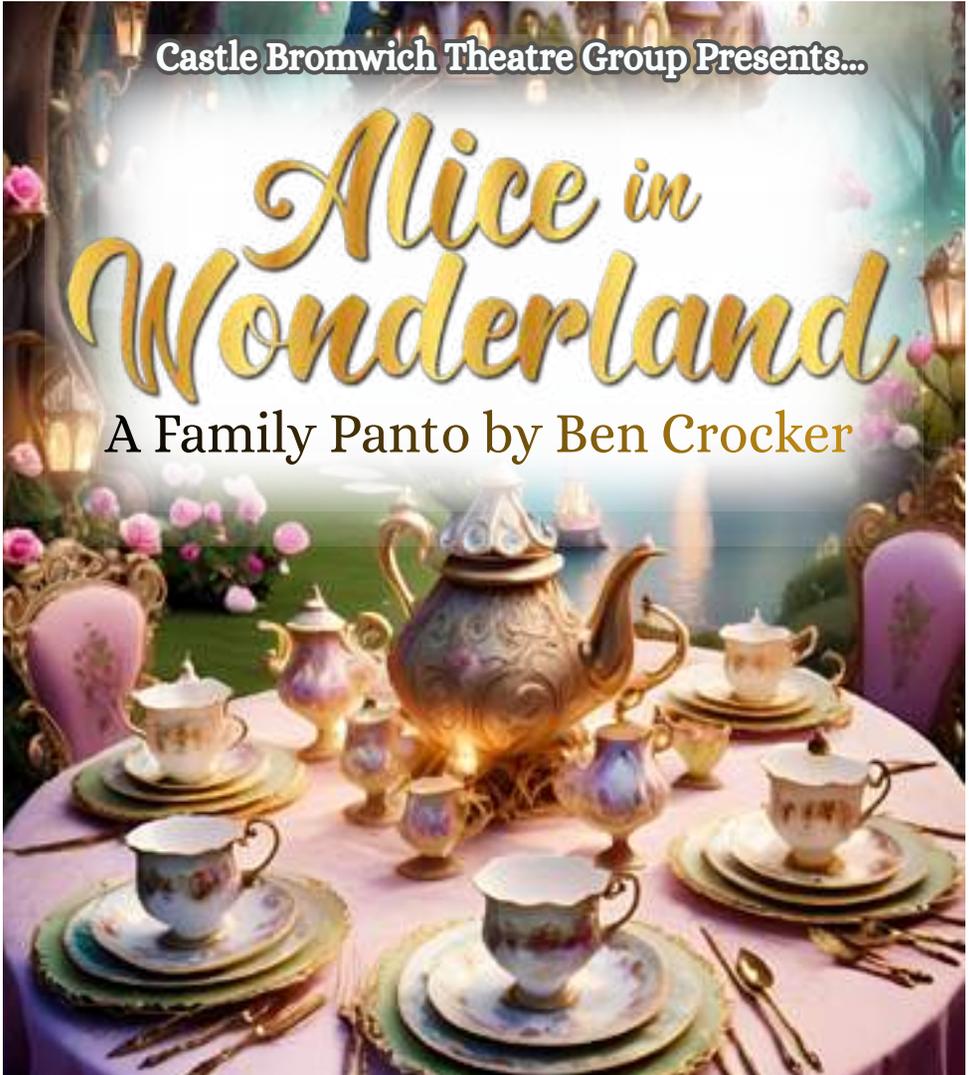
“Their enthusiasm and teamwork was impressive,” said Margaret Smith, Church Secretary. “This opportunity to volunteer and make a difference is a real Win! Win! for all. Thank you Balfour Beatty VINCI.”



Castle Bromwich Theatre Group Presents...

# Alice in Wonderland

A Family Panto by Ben Crocker



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Castle Bromwich Theatre Group is a registered charity number 503604



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**Next Town Council Meetings – 10th Dec & 21st Jan 7pm at Coleshill Town Hall**





**Merry Christmas and Happy New Year**  
**From all the Hub Volunteers**  
 For the festive period we will close Friday 19<sup>th</sup> Dec 1pm and reopen Monday 5<sup>th</sup> January 2026

**INFORMATION**  
 Help and support for any enquiries or issues such as:-  
 Blue Badges, Driving Licence, Passport Applications, Online Benefit Forms (Including Pension Credit Checks) and much more

Signposting to many groups, partner services and agencies – see some examples in boxes below:-




**GROUPS**  
 Parkinson's Cafe  
 Memory Cafes (Coleshill/ Water Orton)  
 Young at Heart  
 Stitch Sewing Club

**SIGNPOSTING**  
 Carers Trust  
 CAB (Citizens Advice Bureau)  
 MIND  
 Vision Support  
 Wellbeing

**GROUPS**  
 Parent & Toddlers  
 Walking Tours  
 Keep Fit & Natter  
 Walking Sports  
 Art & Crafts  
 U3A



**WARM HUB**



Community Centre (Tue only) and Town Hall Tue to Thu 10 to 1. Come in for a chat and activities if you wish. Free refreshments.

# From Empathy to Innovation: WMG Academy Student Transforms Lives with Life-Changing Invention

What started as a simple idea inspired by one little boy has grown into an extraordinary journey of innovation and compassion. Last year, one of our students, Grace Palmer at WMG Academy Solihull saw the challenges her cousin Dylan, who has cerebral palsy, faced when accessing essential equipment to help him transfer safely or sit independently. Determined to make a difference, she took her curiosity and creativity into engineering, designing a solution that could help not just her family, but others in need. Her determination and empathy have since led her to national recognition, demonstrating the incredible impact young people can have when they combine innovation with heart.

"It all started with one idea at the end of last year, inspired by one little boy: my cousin Dylan, who has cerebral palsy.



(Photograph Grace at Parliament)

I saw the challenges Dylan and my family were facing when trying to find equipment to help him transfer, be carried safely, or sit independently at a table. The equipment we needed would have cost around £750. Something our family, like many others, simply could not afford. So, I decided to make my own. That's what started my journey with the Thrive Transfer Aid. I wanted something not just for my family, but for other families who need it, because everyone should have access to essential equipment regardless of income. In the end, I created a multifunctional product that cost just £85, which I am hoping to mass-produce for other families in need.

I joined WMG Academy Solihull almost 4 years ago with very little confidence, but with one spark inspired by Dylan that pushed me toward engineering to help

people. I have changed a lot since year 10, and my confidence has grown significantly. I have gained many skills that are incredibly useful for my future career as an engineer.



(Photograph Grace's project and the finish product in use by her cousin)

On Monday I had the incredible honour of delivering a speech on behalf of Big Bang in Parliament. After winning the Senior Engineering Award back in June at the Big Bang competition, I was invited to talk about my project, The Thrive Transfer Aid, why I created it, and what I've learned along the way.



(Photograph on the left is with Toby Perkins (Labor MP), Hilary Leever (CEO of Engineering UK), Dame Chi Onwurah (Labour MP for Newcastle upon Tyne Central and West)

It was a very rewarding event where I got to see the most amazing and historic building of Parliament. I then set up my display with information about my project and began to talk to different ministers and MPs. I also spoke to many different companies and T-Level advocates. Completing my speech, I spoke about the main lesson I have learnt about engineering which is this.

Engineering often begins with empathy; when we understand people's challenges, we can create products that truly change lives." - Grace Palmer, Year 12 Student WMG Academy Solihull

We are immensely proud of Grace for representing WMG Academy Solihull on a national stage and for demonstrating the power of empathy driven engineering. Her achievements highlight the spirit of creativity, determination, and social responsibility that we strive to nurture in every student, and we look forward to seeing the many ways she will continue to make a positive impact in the world.



## THE COLESHILL SCHOOL WILL REMEMBER!

**On Tuesday 11th November 2025, The Coleshill School held its annual Remembrance Service to commemorate former students of The Coleshill School who lost their lives in active service.**

In front of a packed Hall of students and visitors, Sixth Form students proudly read out the names of 27 'old boys' from the first world war, 9 from the second world war and James Munday who was killed in Afghanistan in 2008. The last post was played followed by a two minute silence.

Caroline Munday, Mom of James Munday, was in attendance and read a beautiful poem from her recently published book 'Losing James'. The school made a wooden plaque with the poem engraved for Caroline.

Miss Brindley, Head of School, commented "I would like to thank all our students, staff and visitors including a special thank you to Caroline and Phil Munday, Cllr Sue Wallace, Cllr Ian Tomkinson, Mayor of Coleshill, and his wife Jan, and Andrew Watkins, former teacher, for attending our Remembrance ceremony.

This is an important event for the school and I am so proud of the number of students who voluntarily attended the Remembrance Service and were so respectful today to commemorate our lost boys".

For Coleshill Town's Remembrance Parade and Service on Sunday The Coleshill School were asked to submit some artwork which was displayed in the Town Hall.



Year 7 students were asked to produce poppies using their textile skills which were attached to a dress on display at the Town Hall. Mrs Pudge, Design Technology Technician commented "Our students have taken to this challenge with enthusiasm and respect for this important project, learning new skills and creating some beautiful artwork."



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## Coleshill School Celebrates 30th Birthday

On Friday June 24th, Coleshill CofE Primary school commemorated 30 years of education at its current site in the heart of the local community.

After a morning of lessons, the students were given the afternoon off to enjoy singing, games, plenty of cake, and the planting of a tree in the grounds.

The new oak replaced a similar tree cut down 30 years ago to make way for the current school buildings.

Headteacher, Alison Currin, said

the planting was a "symbol of our commitment to the future, and of the love and belonging that defines the school".

The school were joined by community leaders, parents, clergy, and members of the local council.

This including the mayor Ian Tomkinson, who helped the student 'Green Council' plant the tree.

Attendees, many of whom had been to the school themselves, enjoyed looking at old photos and newspaper clippings from its history.



## Coleshill Comes Alive With a Magical Book Hunt This December

Local families are in for a festive treat as The Little Book Fairy launches a town-wide live Advent calendar from 1st - 24th December.

Each morning, a few copies of the much-loved Christmas classic 'Twas the Night Before Christmas' will be hidden 'behind a door' around Coleshill.

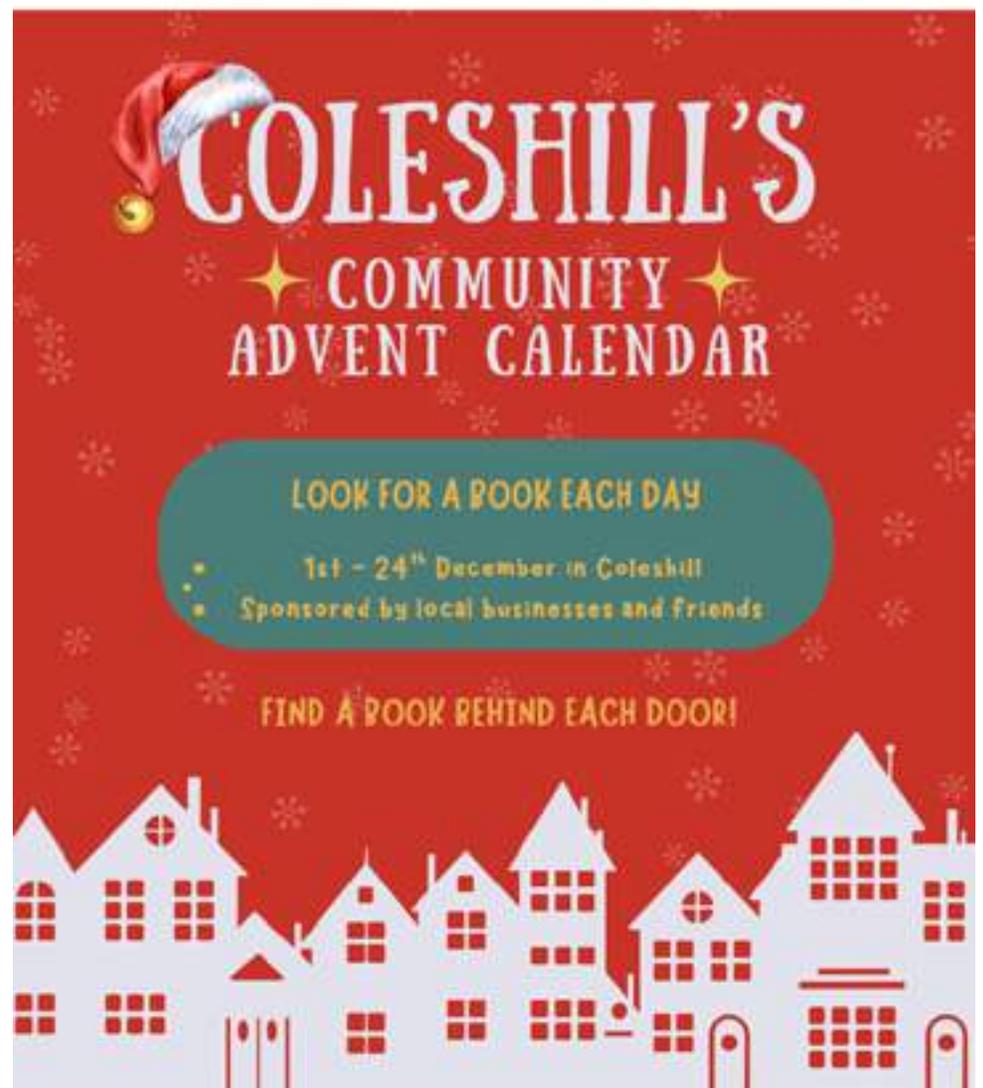
Daily clues will be shared on The Little

Book Fairy's social media pages (@the\_littlebookfairy), guiding families to the next hiding place. Those who find a book can take it home to enjoy.

This heart-warming project is made possible thanks to sponsorship from local businesses and friends, all coming together to bring joy to young readers.

Keep your eyes peeled - Christmas magic may be waiting just around the corner!

THE LITTLE BOOK FAIRY PRESENTS



## Coleshill Ladies Probus



We held our meeting on Tuesday 25th November at the Coleshill Hotel. Where we enjoyed our annual Christmas meal.

Our next meeting is on January 27th, 2026, and will be a fun quiz. So, if you would like to join us you would be very welcome.

Thereafter, we meet on the last Tuesday of the month

If you would like to know more about Coleshill ladies Probus, please contact Verenda on 01675 463806



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## Protect your Home

**Is your home your most valuable asset? Have you worked hard your whole life to pay for and maintain it?**

For most people, the answer to both of those questions will be a resounding yes. So with that said, why have so many people still not safeguarded their home the RIGHT way?

**Imagine this...**

You've made a Will, stating that, in the event of your death, you intend for your spouse to inherit everything, including your share of the family home. But what if your spouse needs care in later life? Your spouse may be expected to pay for their care themselves... but care fees are getting more and more expensive every year, costing anywhere between £26,000 and £52,000. How can they afford to pay for their care fees and leave some money as inheritance for your children?

This is an upsetting scenario... and unfortunately, it could happen to any of us without the right protection.

The sad truth is that around 200,000 family homes are sold every year to pay for care fees. Estates are drastically reduced- sometimes to nothing at all- to pay for care, leaving beneficiaries with little to no inheritance. The lower limit for care fee means testing is currently set at £14,250. However, your loved ones' inheritance could be even less than this simply because the home and other assets were not protected in the right way.

**Don't leave your home open to any risks.**

All of this can be avoided- with careful planning and professional advice, you can protect your home and savings so that your children can benefit as much as possible. Putting yourself in control means you'll prevent government authorities and other parties getting their hands on your assets.



### For Couples

If you jointly own your home, we can protect your property with one of our powerful Protection Wills. These wills provide your partner/spouse with a right to continue to occupy the property and buy a replacement property if necessary. The capital share you have in the property will also be protected. The property is also safeguarded from local authority means testing.

The ideal scenario is that half the property is protected from loss, and the other half is disregarded by local authorities. What this means for inheritance is that at least half of the property's shares will be passed down to your children.

This plan of action is applicable even if you have a mortgage!

Future stress and heartache for your family and beneficiaries can be avoided, but you must act sooner rather than later. If you fall ill and require permanent care, or if you unfortunately lose mental capacity for any reason, it will be too late to protect your home and assets.

### Act now!

Sadly, many people put off planning for the future until its too late, leaving children and loved ones devastated to realise that the situation could have been easily avoided. The sooner planning is put into effect, the more effectively we can help you ensure that your assets go to those you love ... not those you don't!

### Do you have Savings?

While the family home is usually the most valuable asset, we can also help you to protect your savings. Speak to us today to find out the best way to protect your assets.

Protect your Home and your Savings from unnecessary, avoidable losses. Accord can help ensure your loved ones benefit as much as possible from your estate.

Act today and protect those you love

If you want to be certain that your assets will pass down your loved ones or children you'll need more than a basic Will.

**Accord Legal Services Ltd will help you every step of the way.**

For more information please contact....

**Paul Palmer**

**0845 055 9415 or email;  
paul.palmer@accordwills.co.uk**

## NOT MADE YOUR WILL YET? DOES IT WORRY YOU THAT...

**Your children may NOT inherit all of your home or your hard earned savings... but the Government and others could!**

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# CHRISTMAS OPENING TIMES

*Wishing you all Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!*

Tue 23rd December .....	Open as usual
Wed Christmas Eve .....	11.30am - 9.30pm
Thur Christmas Day .....	CLOSED
Fri Boxing Day .....	CLOSED
Sat 27th December .....	Open as usual
Sun 28th December .....	CLOSED
Mon 29th December .....	Open as usual
Tue 30th December .....	Open as usual
Wed New Year's Eve .....	Open till 8pm
Thur New Year's Day .....	CLOSED

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## YORK & SCENIC YORKSHIRE

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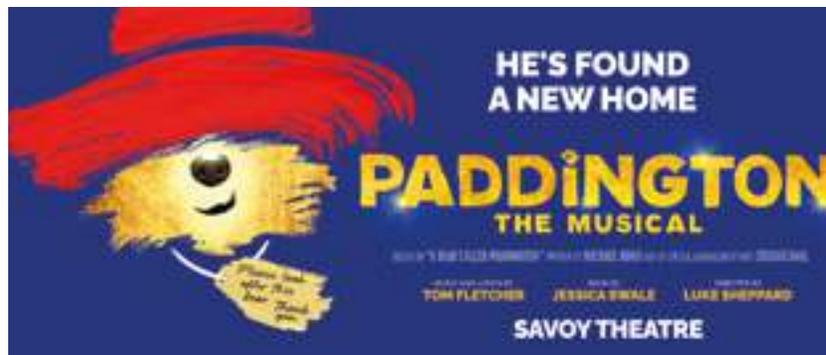
Join us on this idyllic break to beautiful Yorkshire, where we combine the rolling hills and panoramic landscapes with charming Haworth and Skipton Market. With a visit to historic York too, this lovely break is the perfect contrast of city and country!

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- ✓ Return coach travel **from Solihull, Sutton Coldfield**
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Sat 14 Nov '26, Sat 21 Nov '26**

Marmalade sandwiches at the ready! Come along to the Savoy Theatre for one of the West End's most anticipated shows, Paddington the Musical, where this loveable little bear arrives in London from deepest, darkest Peru and embarks on an unforgettable adventure!

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## Cllr Martin McCarthy, Castle Bromwich Ward (Solihull MBC) Welcome to the December and January update

As the festive season rapidly approaches and seems to all too soon pass us by, it is time to plan for the new year, for some like me this involves seed catalogues ( for a few moments !) and rather more seriously thinking about how we can preserve the life and character of Castle Bromwich. As ever I will be at the Library at 14:00 on the first Monday of each month to hear your ideas and help you with any local issues.

We have a big local election this coming spring which may affect the future of the area for years to come. We look forward to talking to you about this over the next few months.

50 New Verge planted trees have been promised for Castle Bromwich

Following a sustained campaign by your 3 local councillors we are now promised 50 new trees in our grass verges.

When you first asked us for these, availability was VERY limited but we have worked with SMBC officers who have found some Grant funding Through the Trees outside Woodland fund.

This community-led initiative will focus on planting in soft grass verges along residential roads with low tree canopy cover, particularly near Castle Bromwich Junior School and Castle Bromwich Infant & Nursery School. The project aims to create a green corridor linking Lanchester Park and Bosworth Wood, as well as key community assets such as the library, community centres, local shops, and health facilities. It will enhance biodiversity, improve landscape connectivity, and contribute to community wellbeing.

The Planting route covers Chester Road, Elmfield Road, Green Lane, Hazelhurst Road, Hawthorne Road, Lanchester way, Selworthy Road and Wyckham Road, these should go in during this winter.

These should be maintained by SMBC until they are established, however if you see a tree being damaged please put a photo on the SMBC 'report it' website or send it to us and we will Push for action to be taken.

Damage to our grass verges costs us all money, this is criminal damage after all and I would like to see the few offenders that carelessly cause this damage charged for the costs of remediation, what do YOU think ?

### The Castle Bromwich Society.

An open meeting of the Castle Bromwich Society was held during November at the Remembrance club and was very well attended with several working groups proposed to take things like the ward plan forward.

You may join the society on the its website or contact us or visit the Library if you do not have online access.

On the subject of online access, if you have trouble with this please contact me as we may consider including this in our regular surgery.

### Cuppa with a copper.

The next up Cuppa with a copper event is at nearby Kingshurst library, Cuppa with a Copper is sometimes subject to change due to operational requirements. This is currently scheduled for 10:30AM - 11:30AM, Thu 11 December 2025.

Kingshurst library Marston Drive Birmingham. We will keep you updated with the next CB event going forward.

### Regular Councillor Surgery at Castle Bromwich Library

The next monthly surgery is scheduled for Monday the 5th January and will take place at the Library at 14:00, no appointment is required, please email, or call me if anything urgent comes up in the meantime.

### Our councillor emails are martin.

[mccarthy@solihull.gov.uk](mailto:mccarthy@solihull.gov.uk)

[alan.feeney@solihull.gov.uk](mailto:alan.feeney@solihull.gov.uk)

and [leslie.kaye@solihull.gov.uk](mailto:leslie.kaye@solihull.gov.uk)

# Access to Justice for Injury Victims Why Does it Matter?

Over the past fifteen years, the idea of access to justice for injured victims has been chipped away, making it increasingly difficult to obtain fair compensation. For many, this is not just a legal issue, it is a matter of financial survival and dignity for those who have been injured through no fault of their own.

The impact of reforms on areas such as imposing rigid limited recoverable legal costs has created genuine difficulties for ordinary people. Victims who once had a clear path to justice now face barriers which feel impossible to overcome. When compensation monies fall short of the needs of the victim, in respect of both physical, psychological and emotional support, it is families, friends and loved ones who are left to pick up the shortfall, both financially and otherwise.

People are left to make tough choices alone and, in some instances, having to submit their own claims with little or no

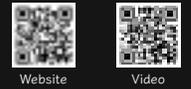
legal advice or support. This is not only unfair, but also unjust, leaving those most vulnerable without the support they need and deserve. Seeing the pattern unfold first hand in the local community are local specialist solicitors like Evans Derry.

“The fact that an injured person has to take on the burden of making a claim without legal advice, often against a large insurance company with huge financial resources, is truly disgraceful” comments Julie Bennett, Solicitor and Partner at Evans Derry Solicitors.

Julie is also a member of the Association of Personal Injury Lawyers and has worked in personal injury law since 2002. She provides her clients with a relentless and tenacious commitment to justice. Julie’s expertise means you are not just heard, you are protected, supported and empowered.

If you would like any further information, or if you have had an accident and would like an initial consultation free of charge, then please contact Julie Bennett at [JulieBennett@EvansDerry.com](mailto:JulieBennett@EvansDerry.com).

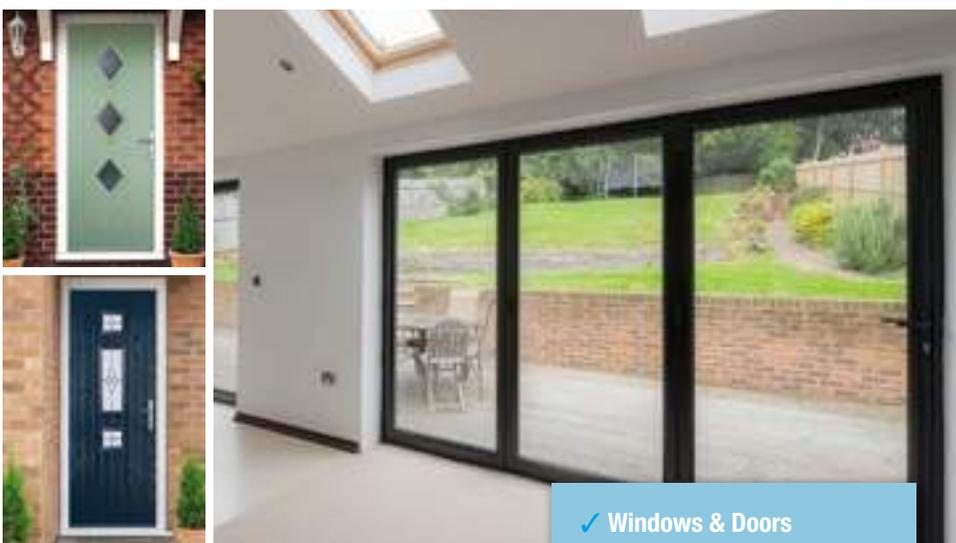
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Castle Bromwich  
Hall Gardens

## In the Bleak Midwinter... not at our Gardens!



### Christmas in our Shop

There are a great many things in our shop to entice over the Christmas period which is why we are promoting 'Shop Sundays' across Advent. It is such a brilliant way to support us, by popping along to our courtyard and browsing the shelves for those big day presents - or even just a Christmas card.

Our shop always stocks something to accompany the thunderous portions of Christmas. The organic apple juice, pressed in Worcestershire from the 50-odd heritage variety of apples, is a bostin' addition to the Christmas table. For the post-Christmas dinner cheese board, we are stocked with a panoply of deliciously creative jams and pickles to really treat the taste buds. This year has proven to be a Mast Year, a phenomenon where great quantities of fruits and nuts (collectively known as 'mast') are produced by trees and shrubs. This has led to vast numbers of hours of our jam and pickle makers going into chopping, boiling and setting these wonderful products of Mother Nature. It has even enabled some new additions such as quince, which takes an age to break down and set, is rare to find but it's on our shelves in its gorgeous rich colour!

For those presents under the tree, it is bursting with stocking-fillers and gifts for the big day. Our second-hand book section is certain to offer something of interest to those bookworms, especially if they like History! Dangling from branches within the shop are delightful Christmas tree ornaments, and many soaps and skincare products to fill out those hampers. Turned by a local woodsman, there are even beautiful wooden gifts, many made from fallen trees in our Gardens and Parkland. We try as hard as we can to stock local and handmade, not to mention them being as eco-friendly as we are able. There is sure to be something for you in our little shop!

### 'Old customs! Oh! I love the sound, however simple they may be.'

Like John Clare, we love old customs too. This Christmas you can expect to find firm favourites (and new additions!) populating our events calendar.

### Christmas Crafts Sunday 7th December

Want to make something for your Christmas tree? Come and join us for a festive and fun Crafting for Christmas Workshop! Get into the festive spirit by creating your own handmade decorations. This is an in-person event and can be booked in advance. Whether you're a seasoned crafter or a beginner, this workshop is perfect for anyone looking to add a personal touch to their Yuletide celebrations. Don't miss out on this chance to get crafty and spread some Christmas cheer!



### Singing Santa Saturdays 6th and 13th December

Spreading festive cheer with his iconic outfit, our resident guitarist, Vo Fletcher, dons his special Father Christmas garb to present two days of Christmassy joy. On his pre-Christmas tour, Santa will be visiting the Gardens on Saturday 6th and 13th December for both morning and afternoon sing-a-longs. There will be old classics, seasonal favourites and more with these festive sessions. Each child will also be given a Christmas gift to take home with them (gifted by Santa himself and his Christmas elves!) Do book early as these family-fun seasonal sessions are a quick sell-out!

### Christmas Quiz! Saturday 13th December

Ready to test your knowledge from local history to Christmas films? We will be hosting a fundraising quiz in our Christmas tent on the evening of Saturday 13th December. Your place should be booked in advance, with a small donation per person on the door being suggested. We are hoping that quizzes will then become a regular feature of 2026 and beyond so let's make it a success. Dressing up is of course encouraged! Please see our website for details... and rest assured, mulled wine and other festive treats will be on offer.

### Carols in the Courtyard 21st December, Midwinter's Day



'Oh come, all ye faithful!' With gentle circumstance, we sing a Merry Christmas, and a fond farewell to all that the Gardens has seen across 2025. On Midwinter's Day itself, we indulge in a firm favourite of ours; Carols in the Courtyard. All those best-known festive hymns will be sung in our Courtyard, guided by two musicians and singers. Bring your tuneful and hearty voices for a communal singalong as we approach the end of Advent and the big day!

This will also mark the end of our opening period for 2025, so it remains for us to wish you a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year and we look forward to welcoming you once again in 2026... is that the voice of a Wassailer I hear wafting through the Outer Orchard?



# Water Orton Ladies

Well, suddenly Christmas is nearly here – doesn't it always seem to creep up on us, no matter how prepared, we think we are!!!

We've had a wonderful 2025 – some great speakers – I can't name them all, but some deserve a special mention. We began the year with our customary New Year Lunch at Grimscote Manor Hotel, then welcomed Martin Cross again with another lovely slide show, had a visit, complete with a motor bike from Solihull & Warwickshire Blood Bikes, discovered the secrets of a Northamptonshire farmhouse, and learned about beekeeping and organ donation and were warned about scams and frauds, always out there, via email and mobile phones. We visited Port sunlight, the home of Lever

Brothers and the original sunlight soap and enjoyed a lovely afternoon tea at the Gardener's Rest Café at Orchard Nurseries. Yes another great year! And not ended yet – there's a craft session, to make a light up angel for our Christmas trees and our Xmas Party afternoon to come. If you haven't yet paid us a visit, do come along and see what you're missing! We meet from 2 to 4pm in The Pavilion in Openfield Croft in Water Orton (B46 1RE) on the third Thursday of the month, apart from January each year, when we're out to lunch. There's always good company, tea and cake and an interesting speaker. We extend a warm welcome to you and look forward to seeing you. Wishing you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy and Healthy 2026. Liz Tranter 07811 147728

# Op Plenty

Do you know of someone who is alone and would like a visit?



Atherstone Safer Neighbourhood Team are out visiting vulnerable and isolated people in need of support in our communities.

If you know someone who would appreciate us popping by for a chat, complete the form overleaf and post it to the address provided.

**Please ensure you have consent from the person before sending the form.**

You can also fill out this form online and email it to [sntreachout@warwickshire.police.uk](mailto:sntreachout@warwickshire.police.uk)

Visit [tinyurl.com/OpPlentyForm](http://tinyurl.com/OpPlentyForm) in your web browser to find out more.

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## Shustoke C of E Primary School



Is your child due to start school in September 2026?



We welcome you to join us for a festive session of activities at our Stay and Play session on

**Friday 12<sup>th</sup> December, 2:00 – 3:00.**

Please telephone the school office (01675) 481319 or email [admin3207@welearn365.com](mailto:admin3207@welearn365.com) to confirm your place. You are welcome to tour the school and meet the staff during your visit.



We look forward to meeting you, whether you are joining us for the first time or are returning for another visit.



**Cllr Steve Stuart, Water Orton North Warwickshire Borough Council**

## Dear Fellow Villagers

**“Just how local do you want your local government to be?”**

That was a question that I asked at North Warwickshire Borough Council when the matter of Local Government Reorganisation was discussed last week.

For those of you who aren't aware; there are changes afoot to our local councils. The Government is proposing that “two-tier” local authorities will be replaced with “unitaries” – that is to say a single council that delivers all of your services.

The outcome of the meeting is that North Warwickshire Borough Council will, along with the Stratford, Warwick and Nuneaton and Bedworth Councils will be proposing that there will be two councils in Warwickshire. One in the North and the other – you guessed it – in the South.

For me this was a simple and easy choice.

I have held over 100 surgeries in the past 12 months and never has any one said to me, “Do you know what we need?”

We need more of our services delivered out of Warwick.” Indeed, there are many concerns raised about County Services and those who supposedly represent us down at County Hall.

A new council would give the ability to design bespoke, vibrant services designed and delivered locally, effectively and efficiently. Saving public money by the right interventions, in the right place at the right time.

Apart from the key matter of service delivery, there is the creation of a new culture, in a new body, where we have the economic benefits of having key services not only delivered locally but based within

our communities. The possibility of a Rugby based Highways department, a Children's Services housed in Atherstone, Adult Social Care embedded close to George Eliot Hospital in Nuneaton, Bedworth housing Education and the jobs and regeneration that comes with such investments is fantastic. The potential that can be realised by a little bit of hope and vision is beyond measure.

Strangely the County Councillors for our communities have decided that our communities would be better served by a single council continuing delivering the services that have consistently failed our communities for decades. This is despite 73% of residents detailing their support for a more local based solution.

It is interesting that those that seemingly shout for “wanting our country back” or

“Taking back control” will miss the greatest opportunity to “take our country back” presented in the last 50 years.

The final decision will lie with the Government after a consultation which will take place at some point in 2026. Keep your eyes peeled and make sure your voice is heard.

You can hear my speech at <https://tinyurl.com/NWBC2025>

As ever I am keen to hear your comments, concerns and compliments. I hold regular surgeries – advertised on village noticeboards or do a search for my contact details online.

**Wishing you all a Merry Christmas and a Prosperous New Year.**

**Yours  
Steve**

## Do you enjoy singing? Come and join us Castle Bromwich Singers

We sing a wide variety of music so come along and have fun whilst raising money for charity.



Rehearsals  
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# Pet Page

## Dogs and Christmas

**I always think Christmas can be quite a confusing time for our dogs. As much as it can be exciting for us, routines change, visitors come and go, and the house fills with new smells, scents and decorations. If we understand things from a dog's point of view, it can make the whole season feel easier for everyone.**

We spend a lot of time encouraging dogs to toilet outside and near trees. Then in December we bring one into the house, cover it in shiny objects and expect them to leave it alone. Baubles are basically balls. Tinsel looks surprisingly like a squirrel's tail. From a dog's point of view, the whole thing makes complete sense to investigate.

Sometimes the Christmas tree also takes up space they usually use. Many people put the tree in a corner, and it's not uncommon for that to be where the dog bed normally lives.

A few small steps can really help:

- Move furniture gradually if the tree will take their usual space
- Shift the dog bed first so they get used to the new layout
- Bring the tree in for a day or two before decorating
- Start with simple decorations
- Avoid glass items, sentimental ornaments or anything that could harm a curious nose

Some families I work with use a small pen around the tree. Others pop it in a quieter room and decorate the main living space with other items instead. There's no right or wrong. It's about what works for your home and your dog.

### Food and Safety Around the House

Christmas comes with a lot of food, and some of it is highly toxic to dogs. Just a few examples include:

- Chocolate
- Raisins and sultanas found in mince pies, stollen and Christmas cake
- Macadamia nuts
- Rich or fatty foods

Alcoholic drinks left on low tables can be a danger too, especially when visitors forget that dogs will investigate anything at nose height. Wrapping, ribbons and leftover plates are also very tempting.

Rawhide is another common Christmas purchase, but it isn't always the best option. A quick online search about how it's made explains why many trainers and vets don't recommend it.

### Visitors, Excitement and Your Dog's Space

Some dogs love visitors. Others find the change a bit overwhelming.

A few things can help:

- Make sure your dog has a space in another room where they can take themselves if they need a break
- Set up a cosy, familiar spot they can retreat to at any time
- Use simple enrichment like a snuffle mat or scatter feeding to help them relax

If you live in a dog-aware household, you'll already be careful with food, packaging and drinks. Visitors may not be the same! A mince pie on a low coffee table is both tempting and dangerous, so having a plan for this can be helpful.

### Walks

It's not uncommon for many of us to see the same people and dogs most days on our walks. Christmas often shifts our daily patterns, so this goes out of sync. Different dogs, parks are often more full, and you may meet more dogs. For some dogs, this can be a lot. Choosing quieter routes can help dogs who get overwhelmed easily.

### Easy Games and Enrichment

Simple games and sniffing activities are brilliant at Christmas. They help dogs relax and give them something predictable and enjoyable to do.

Suggestions include:

- A cardboard box filled with plain paper for supervised shredding
- A toilet-roll inner with a few treats inside, then paper wrapped around and twisted at the end, can make a great Christmas cracker. Izzy and Freddie love this, as do many of my members' dogs.

Avoid shiny or foiled wrapping paper, and only offer cardboard if you know your dog won't ingest it.

### Enjoy Time Together

Among all the activity and busyness, taking time to sit together can be the perfect gift for your dog and a lovely pause for you. They don't need us to be perfect or to offer endless activities. Those quiet moments, just being a team, can be some of the most valuable training you ever do.

**Wishing you and your dog a lovely Christmas.**

**Clare Ware**

**Insight Hounds - Training for Sighthounds**



## Birmingham Dogs Home - Forever homes



### Tyson

**Breed:** American Bulldog

**Gender:** Male (N)

Meet Tyson! Our toy loving water baby. Tyson is a playful American Bulldog who's found himself back at the centre through no fault of his own. He's full of personality and looking a home that can match his energy and love for fun.

One of Tyson's favourite things to do is splashing around in the paddling pool. However he can get a little overexcited with all the fun and once he is in he is not keen on getting out. He adores his toys and is happy to exchange them during play and will sit before you throw it. He is a very clever boy and knows lots of commands and is eager to please especially if you have a treat or toy to offer in return.

Tyson can be a little strong on lead especially when first going out as he's

very excited but he does walk much better on a no pull harness and is learning to explore much more calmly. Whilst being in our care Tyson has shown some reactivity towards other dogs and has previously been muzzle trained. He has also done focus training which has helped him improved and he can now enjoy walks muzzle free as long as he is calm and focused.

Tyson would thrive in an active home that understands his needs and is able to live with children aged 8+. He is a big hearted boy and if you are able to offer him a loving home he has a lot of love to give.

**If you are interested in adopting, please contact the centre on 0121 643 5211 to enquire. [www.birminghamdogshome.org.uk](http://www.birminghamdogshome.org.uk)**

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- Our Christmas shop and Gift shop are bursting with gift ideas, cards, wrap, lights, baubles, steam punk, Betty boo, handbags, purses and wallets and so much more.

### BREAKFAST WITH SANTA

Our fabulous Santa is back on: • Sunday 21st December  
• Tuesday 23rd December • Wednesday 24th December - 9.30 or 11.30

To include an English Breakfast with tea or coffee or juice and croissants.

Then its off to the grotto where the children will make reindeer food with Mrs Claus before meeting Santa and receiving a gift. **£18.50 PER PERSON**

Babies just seeing Santa £6.00 (no seat/food/reindeer food) including a gift. Full payment required on booking, also allergy advice/veggie etc.

Or just visit the grotto and make reindeer food with Mrs Claus before visiting Santa and receiving a gift.

Dates as above, times between 10-1

Children £10, babies just seeing Santa £6  
Adults free.

Booking and payment required.



*We would like to wish all our customers a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year! And to thank you all for supporting our small business*




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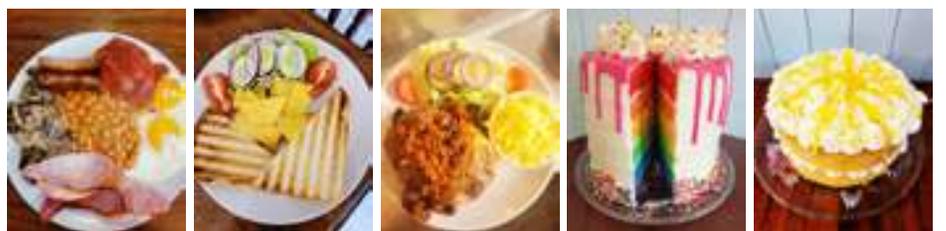
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North Warwickshire  
Borough Council

## Press Release

# Warwickshire councils submit proposal for two unitary Councils with strong public and MP backing in the area's biggest local government shake-up in fifty years

Councils in Warwickshire today formally submitted their proposal to Government for the creation of two new unitary councils for the county. The two-unitary proposal is supported by Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council, North Warwickshire Borough Council, Stratford-on-Avon District and Warwick District Councils. The proposal has strong public support and is backed cross-party by five of Warwickshire's six Members of Parliament.

The submission follows the Government's invitation to bring forward options for Local Government Reorganisation. Extensive analysis and engagement with residents, partners and local organisations has led the councils to conclude that a two unitary model best reflects the diverse identities, priorities and economies across Warwickshire. An independent survey carried out by ORS found that 73% of residents support the creation of two unitary councils rather than just one new council.

Under the proposal, the new councils would be:

#### North Warwickshire Unitary

North Warwickshire Borough Council, Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council and Rugby Borough Council

#### South Warwickshire Unitary

Stratford District Council and Warwick District Council

The two-unitary proposal provides a balanced, future facing model that is simple, strong and sustainable. It recognises that the north and the south are very distinct places with different priorities. The new councils would

have the scale to be financially resilient and the focus to deliver better services, stronger governance and improved outcomes.

The proposal sets out how the two unitary Councils would strengthen local identity and democratic accountability, remain close to communities and enable more responsive public services. It also highlights clear alignment with existing public service footprints, including NHS partnerships and policing, which already operate on a north and south split.

Both new authorities would continue to work closely with the West Midlands Combined Authority. Warwickshire councils already collaborate with the Combined Authority on transport, regeneration and economic development, and the Mayor has recognised the benefits of a model that reflects the county's two distinct areas.

Commenting on the decisions, Councillor David Wright, Leader of North Warwickshire Borough Council said:

"Our councils have worked constructively and collaboratively to identify the option that delivers the best outcomes for our communities. The two unitary model respects the real differences between north and south Warwickshire while ensuring both areas have the scale, resilience and strategic capacity to deliver excellent services. It is the right model for the future, and we are pleased to submit it to Government with strong public, political and parliamentary support."

"North Warwickshire Borough Council has very carefully considered which option is the best for the residents of the Borough. It did not have a preconceived conclusion in mind during this consideration but as the process continued it became increasingly clear that one mega

Council covering all of Warwickshire would be the worst option.

The differences between the North and South of the County are well known, have existing for a long time and have been largely unaffected by the existence of one Council that covers the whole of the County.

Not only should those two different areas have a Council each, for democratic reasons and to keep as far as possible the 'local' in Local Government, our analysis shows that this solution would provide better services, better outcomes for our residents and real and achievable public sector savings, rather than theoretical efficiencies which very large organisations very rarely achieve.

If we are to have this change, then we should give ourselves the best chance of real transformation of our services rather than having one very large Council for all of Warwickshire which would be seen as 'business as usual'."

Government will now consider the submission as part of the national programme for local government reform.

#### Background

- MPs publicly supporting the proposal are: Rachel Taylor, MP for North Warwickshire and Bedworth; Jodie Gosling, MP for Nuneaton; Matt Western, MP for Warwick and Leamington; Manuela Perteghella, MP for Stratford-on-Avon and Sir Jeremy Wright, MP for Kenilworth and Southam.
- The submission document and other material can be found at Our Submission Document - Shaping the future of our Councils (<https://shapingourcouncils.co.uk/our-submission-document/>)

## North Warwickshire Borough Council supports comedian Josh Pugh in 6-part series 'Stepping Up'

North Warwickshire Borough Council is delighted to welcome local comedian and actor Josh Pugh and the production team as they film scenes for the brand-new six-part Channel 4 series, *Stepping Up*, at the Council Offices. The Council has also supported the production crew in permitting them to park at the Atherstone Leisure Complex, the Council Offices and Sheepy Road car parks.

*Stepping Up* is a comedy series that follows the chaotic life of an over-enthusiastic stepdad, Josh, as he navigates the ups and downs of his new family. The show promises plenty of laughs as it captures the everyday challenges and unexpected moments of family life.

Josh Pugh, an English stand-up comedian, England Para-footballer, and actor, was born in Nuneaton in 1989 and grew up in Atherstone. In 2024, he launched the Atherstone Ball Game, personally throwing the ball to mark the start of the 824th game, highlighting his strong connection to the local community.

In addition to the Council Offices, Josh and the RoughCut team have been filming in other locations across Atherstone, including other local businesses, showcasing the town as an integral part of the series. The show will be aired on Channel 4 in Spring 2026.

Watch a snippet of the series here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xbLP-lJoljA>

Josh Pugh said:

"I want to say a huge thank you to North Warwickshire Borough Council for all of their help in facilitating some of the locations for *Stepping Up*. It's so rare that things are filmed outside of London, and this wouldn't be possible without their support and enthusiasm. I can't wait for people to see what we're doing."

Leader of the Council, Councillor David Wright, said:

"We are truly delighted that the Council Offices have been chosen to be featured in Josh Pugh's exciting new series. The fact that Josh grew up in Atherstone makes the town's inclusion even more meaningful and special to our community. It is wonderful to see local landmarks celebrated in this way, and we are eagerly looking forward to seeing the series when it airs."

# Warwickshire’s population soars – but Government funding for police shrink



**Warwickshire’s two most senior policing leaders – the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Chief Constable – are jointly calling on the Chancellor to prioritise policing in the forthcoming Autumn Budget. Their call follows stark findings from the National Audit Office (NAO), which reveal that Warwickshire has experienced the largest decrease in government police funding per capita in England and Wales, despite having the highest population growth.**

Between 2015 and 2024, Warwickshire’s population grew by approximately 12%, yet government funding per head fell by a matching 12%, according to the NAO’s latest report on police productivity. This double pressure – rising demand and falling central support – places Warwickshire Police under increasing financial pressure.

Police and Crime Commissioner Philip Seccombe said: “Warwickshire is growing faster than anywhere else in the country, yet our police funding is shrinking. This is a clear and urgent signal that the current funding formula is broken. It fails to reflect the real pressures on our force and the needs of our communities.”

The Commissioner is urging the Chancellor to use the November Budget to allocate additional resources to the Home Office, enabling a full and fair review of the police funding formula – something that has not been updated since 2013.

Currently, around 50% of Warwickshire Police’s budget comes from the local Police Precept, meaning the burden of funding increasingly falls on local taxpayers. While the Commissioner has worked to protect frontline services, he warns that relying on reserves and annual council tax increases is not a sustainable solution.

He adds: “Warwickshire deserves a fair share of national police funding – one that reflects our population growth, the complexity of modern crime, and the need to invest in technology and infrastructure. The Chief Constable and I are committed to delivering a high-quality police service and we have carefully structured our budgets year on year to deliver improvements, despite the inherent imbalance the current funding formula deals us.

“In the longer term this is unsustainable and we need a fair funding settlement, which properly recognises the increases in population, demand and capabilities that we face. Without this, I am forced each year to ask Warwickshire residents to pay an ever-higher amount from their Council Tax to fund essential services. This is fundamentally unfair, particularly when people in other parts of the country pay considerably less, despite already receiving a higher proportion of central government funding.

“I have written to ministers previously to call for a renewed funding formula, as have other Police and Crime Commissioners, but our pleas have fallen on deaf ears. The Home Office appears unable to get the necessary resources from the Treasury. However, with His Majesty’s Chief Inspector of Policing also highlighting the financial challenges that are in play and the need for funding reform, it is now high time for the Chancellor to respond and guarantee policing the resources that it has been denied for too long.”

Chief Constable Alex Franklin-Smith added: “This latest independent national data demonstrates that Warwickshire Police is getting an unfair funding deal from Central Government, at a time when the Warwickshire population has grown by more than any other policing area. Policing demand is going up and funding is going down. This is neither right for policing services in our county and nor is it right for Warwickshire taxpayers.

“Public funding is precious and we will continue to focus all of our available resources on the things that matter to local people. However, this latest data provides a stark reality of the unfairness in how Central Government funding has decreased more in Warwickshire than anywhere else. Furthermore, it demonstrates the lack of a level playing field when it comes to policing across England and Wales”.

The NAO report also highlights the broader challenges facing Police and Crime Commissioners and Chief Constables across England and Wales:

£276 million in reserves were drawn down by forces in 2024/25 to balance budgets – a short-term fix that threatens long-term resilience.

60% of police capital programmes were funded by borrowing in 2024/25, forecast to rise to 71% in 2025/26. No Government funding is provided for capital expenditure.

77% of police funding is committed to staff pay, leaving little flexibility for investment in technology or infrastructure.

The Home Office’s planned efficiency savings of £354 million are considered high-risk and unevenly achievable across forces.

Details of the police funding settlement for 2026/27 are currently awaited and are expected to be announced in December, following on from the Chancellor’s Autumn Budget. The Commissioner will consult on the budget for policing in Warwickshire once these figures are confirmed, ahead of setting the budget in February 2026.



## Remembrance Coffee Morning

**Shustoke Church of England Primary School welcomed in parents, carers and families, as well as members of our local community, to our annual Remembrance Coffee morning.**

Our Year 6 children all looked the part in their World War 2 inspired outfits, with children dressed as evacuees, armed forces and members of the land army. Parents, grandparents and members of the local community had the opportunity to look at

the children’s lovely work about World War 2 and then settle down with a cup of tea and a slice of cake to listen to songs and poetry from the period of the world wars before observing the 2 minutes silence at 11am. This is a long established event that has become part of Shustoke’s tradition in which we come together to remember those who have lost their lives in conflict and wars.

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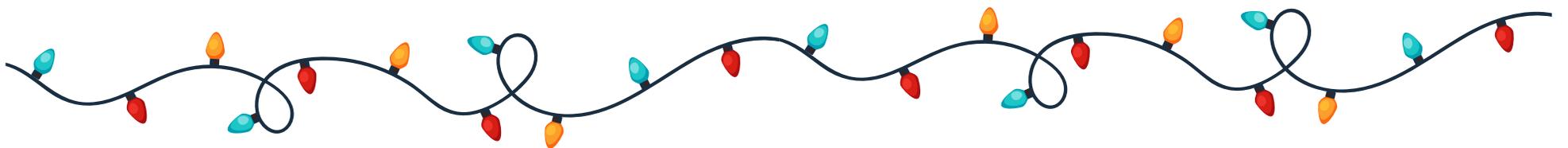
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# Police News



## Celebrating Excellence in Warwickshire Police

Our first excellence awards took place in October, and we are delighted to share that North Warwickshire SNT won team of the year.

Thank you to all of those who took their time to nominate the officers which was a fantastic event.



“The North Warwickshire Safer Neighbourhood Team has worked tirelessly over the past year to turn things around in Atherstone town centre. Through joint operations, school visits, and regular patrols, they’ve tackled drug use, street drinking, and violence head-on. Their actions have led to the number of crimes dropping by more than half. Thanks to their dedication, the town feels safer and stronger – earning them praise from the Mayor and MP, as well as in the local community.”

Followed by PCSO Scott who was nominated Police Community Support Officer of the year.



"In March 2024, Gavin stepped up to support a force-wide initiative tackling anti-social behaviour and serious violence across Warwickshire.

Working alone in a tough role, he went out in all weathers – building trust, making a real impact, and racking up over 700 hours on patrol in Atherstone.

A year later, the town is no longer seen as a hotspot. Gavin’s visible presence and care for the community helped turn things around, and he continues working hard to keep it that way."

## Get Connected with Warwickshire Police

Atherstone and Coleshill SNT have been promoting Warwickshire Connected.

Get connected with what is happening in your local area, keep up to date and get involved in shaping what goes on where you live or work. Warwickshire Connected is a free messaging service brought to you by Warwickshire Police where you decide when and how you hear about the issues that matter most to you, whether that be getting regular crime updates, the latest information on ongoing incidents and emergencies or learning more about what your local police are doing. This is also the place where you can get involved in helping to make your local area a safer place, tell us what police should be doing in your area, shape the initiatives that help to keep people and property safe and tell us what matters are causing your communities harm. Follow the link to sign up today: [www.warwickshireconnected.com](http://www.warwickshireconnected.com)



Also please follow our Facebook page where we put updates of what Atherstone and Coleshill Safer Neighbourhood Teams get up to.

There are updates on going incidents, appeals and much more. We will be posting about upcoming events also so please take a look, see when they are and come along. We like to be as accessible as possible so using our social media page is a great way for us to communicate with our communities.

## OP SCEPTRE – KNIFE CRIME

Officers from Atherstone and Coleshill Safer Neighbourhood Team attended The Coleshill School along with representatives from the council, Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service and The Mentoring Project.

The visit was part of our Operation Sceptre (Knife crime awareness) week. The students got a tabletop education about the impacts of knife crime, antisocial behaviour, violence, drugs, arson and how they affect our communities. The pupils then got a chance to pass through our knife arch where we are pleased to say, no knives were found.



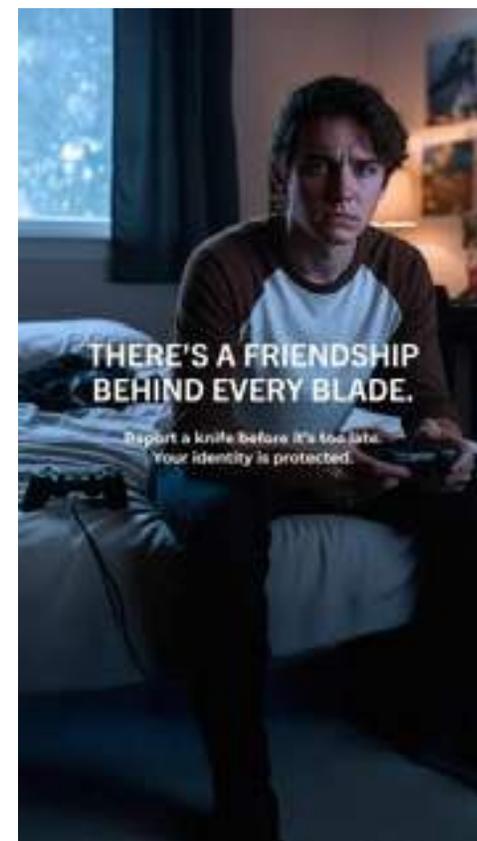
The pupils were fantastic, and we were really pleased with the engagement from them.



We look forward to attending the school again soon.



Operation Sceptre is a national knife crime awareness campaign.



Operation Sceptre 2025 is a national initiative aimed at reducing knife crime through coordinated police efforts, community engagement, and educational programs.

PCSO's Rygielski and Payne have been out and about speaking with members of the public about the topic and the impact it has on the community.

#OpSceptre





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## Castle Bromwich u3a

Castle Bromwich u3a was entertained and educated by Roger Butler who spoke about the canals and waterways of the West Midlands. We learned about the Stairway to Heaven and the many other interesting historical facts about the era of canals. Next month we will be listening to a talk

about the local area by the u3a history group. All welcome on the last Wednesday of the month at Arden Hall, 1.30pm. £2 for visitors. Our December meeting will be on Wednesday 10th December. We shall have tea and mince pies while listening to live musical entertainment. There will not be a meeting at the end of December.



Wishing all our customers a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year thank you for all your support throughout the year



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## The meaning of Advent

Christmas is upon us, and we are now in the season of Advent. I have always found it slightly curious that Advent begins on a different day each year, but that Christmas is always celebrated on the 25th December, which in turn is a most unlikely date for the birth of Jesus. This year Advent began on the 30th December. (the earliest date is the 27th November and the 3rd December the latest). This is because Advent always starts on a Sunday and there must be four Sundays in advent, before Christmas.



Advent means coming or arrival. During Advent Christians prepare to celebrate Jesus' birth (first coming) and look to examine their lives in preparation for his

second coming. Both events are heavily prophesied (foretold) in scripture. The purpose of Jesus first coming was to make a way where there was none. In the Gospel of Matthew we read, 'She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins'. Matthew 1 : 21. In the name Jesus we understand something of his mission. Jesus means God saves. Jesus entered the world to save people. Now all who repent and believe in him will be forgiven, something Jesus alludes to as he begins his ministry, '... repent and believe in the gospel (good news)'. Mark 1:15



When Jesus returns, he will gather those who have repented and believed in him. They will then spend eternity with him. Jesus makes this clear when he says, "Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life". Matthew 25:46

In his first coming Jesus makes a way for people to be declared righteous. In his second coming he comes to judge between those who have accepted this gift and those who have not.

Please do make time to come to church this Christmas as we celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ.

**The services at the parish church of Water Orton are: -**

**Tuesday 16th December 6:30pm**

Carol Singing in the Churchyard

**Wednesday 17th December 7:30pm**

Carol Service with North Warwickshire Community Choir

**Sunday 21st December 6:30pm**

Carol Service with the choir from Water Orton church

**Christmas Eve**

• Christingle services at 3pm and 5pm

• Midnight mass at 11:30pm

**Christmas Day**

• Family service with Holy Communion at 10am

**I wish you all a happy Christmas and a blessed new year.**

**God Bless**

**Rev Paul Tullett**

**paulofwaterorton@hotmail.co.uk 07581 544978**



Community Spud Club Volunteers meet to celebrate one year plus of joyful operation.

## Water Orton Community 'Spud Club' Volunteer Celebrations

Well into its second year, the Community Spud Club project, hosted by Water Orton Methodist Church every Monday from midday to 5.30p.m., thrives.

Key to its' success are the volunteers, many of whom joined up in July 2024. They do so for varied reasons which include - being part of a great team, real pleasure in providing a warm welcome, company, a nourishing meal and, most of all, the genuine satisfaction of doing something so enjoyable for so many and, for them, worthwhile. The Club is open to everyone as witnessed by family groups, workers, the retired, school staff enjoying a brief lunch break and pupils dropping in for some down time together after school. On Tuesday 19th November, most of the team were able to meet at the Plough for a celebratory lunch. Volunteering options are varied and include: - Setting up the Community Hall at 11.30a.m, and closing

down at 5.30pm. Food Preparation and service on Monday mornings - 2.00p.m. in church kitchen. Welcome and Service shifts in Community Hall from 12.00 - 2.00p.m., 2.00p.m. - 4.00p.m. and 4.00p.m. - 6.00p.m. Some flexibility in hours. Just like its' visitors, volunteers vary and include the young, the older and those looking for work experience or badge work.

If any of this appeals to you, come and see us any Monday, speak to the volunteers and leave your details.



Tina Chorley, Spud Club tea and coffee maker par excellence since July 2024 - one of the busiest members of the team!

## Statement on decision to abolish Police and Crime Commissioners

**Warwickshire Police and Crime Commissioner Philip Seccombe has responded to the Government's announcement that it is to abolish the role of Police and Crime Commissioners from May 2028.**

Reacting to the announcement, he said: "The announcement to abolish Police and Crime Commissioners is deeply disappointing and can only make policing less accountable and more remote from the communities it serves. The Government offers very little detail on what comes next or why this would represent a step forward. I think it is outrageous that a decision of this magnitude has been imposed with no consultation or public engagement- as PCCs we were given just 90 minutes' notice before it became public.

"The justification offered - that PCCs have a small electoral mandate - ignores the reality that turnout for PCC elections is now broadly comparable to local authority and mayoral elections. To base such a significant change on outdated arguments is extremely disappointing.

"Since the role was introduced, PCCs have transformed the way policing is governed with proper scrutiny to ensure that community priorities are addressed, as well as strengthening local partnerships and delivering improved support for victims of crime. These achievements risk being undone by a return to a more distant committee model or a remote Deputy Mayor that lacks accountability

and visibility. I fail to see how either model will replicate the level of focus and accountability offered by PCCs.

"In Warwickshire, my office has built considerable expertise and delivered outstanding results, including securing the funding to commissioning services for victims worth around £2.8 million each year. During my tenure, officer numbers have grown from around 800 in 2016 to 1,140 today, responding to one of the key concerns of local people. I have introduced a Police and Crime Plan shaped by local priorities and invested heavily in technology to support the force - all achieved despite the biggest reductions in central government funding per head of population in England and Wales.

"It feels like a kick in the teeth to see that swept away based on spurious justifications. It undervalues the work PCCs do and the difference we make to community safety. I am also concerned what this decision means for the future of the hard-working staff of my office and I will be working hard to get more answers from the Government.

"In the meantime, I want to reassure Warwickshire communities that I will continue to focus on local priorities, work with community safety partners and deliver on the ambitions of my Police and Crime Plan until the end of my term. My commitment remains to the people of Warwickshire and to ensuring their voices are heard in policing decisions."

# Coleshill Partnership - Switch on the Sparkle Shines Bright in Coleshill

Coleshill was glowing with festive cheer on Saturday 29th November as the annual Switch on the Sparkle event lit up the town and parish church in true Christmas style. Families filled the High Street and Town Hall to enjoy music, stalls and entertainment, creating a warm and joyful atmosphere that perfectly launched the festive season.

A heartfelt thank you goes out to our wonderful local community for turning out in such fantastic numbers, and to the traders whose stalls brought colour and charm

to the day. We also extend our gratitude to the dedicated volunteers, the Mayor of Coleshill, and the security and medical staff who helped ensure the event ran safely and smoothly.

And of course, no Christmas celebration would be complete without Santa, Mrs Claus and our very own town mascot, Cole, who brought excitement and smiles to children and grown-ups alike.

Coleshill once again proved the strength of its community spirit, sparkling brighter than ever.



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**Rachel Taylor MP, North Warwickshire and Bedworth**

## It's busy and challenging year

This year has been a busy and challenging one for many of us, so I am pleased to hear residents tell me they are beginning to see improvements in the NHS locally, and that increases in the minimum wage and cuts to interest rates are starting to make a difference. With the recent budget taking £150 off the average energy bill next year and increases in the minimum wage and the state pension pencilled in, I am optimistic that we are on the right track for fixing some of the longstanding problems facing the country.

The best part of my job is helping solve issues locally that matter to people – whether that's working with the police to tackle crime, getting the council to fix accessibility issues, or helping people access housing or support they are entitled to.

My year started back in January with nearly 100 residents packed into Coleshill Town Hall to discuss ongoing problems with the Coleshill Post Office. I am really pleased with the changes since that meeting. Not only do we now have a post box installed in the One Stop, but One Stop have committed to the Post Office counter being open from 9am to 5:30pm Monday to Friday, and from 9am to 1pm on Saturdays. I know how important the Post Office is to residents in Coleshill and the surrounding villages and am pleased that few problems are now being reported since I secured those changes.

HS2 has dominated the year, disrupting daily life for far too many residents with noise, dust, and traffic problems. Thank you to everyone who joined my events in Coleshill and Water Orton throughout the year – including our recent meeting at Water Orton's Spud Club with HS2 CEO Mark Wild, who I insisted attend so he could hear directly from you.

At that meeting, Mr Wild made several commitments: to return to Water Orton within a year to update residents; to seriously investigate concerns about dust and

dirt – including the option of a free car wash service; and to publish the long-overdue environmental impact assessment for the Bromford Tunnel.

These steps don't fix everything, but they build on a year of sustained campaigning. This year I have made HS2 abandon the use of "gagging clauses" for residents seeking compensation, resolved overdue repairs for HS2 tenants, and challenged unjustified rent increases. After reports of unpleasant smells in Water Orton and Coleshill, I pressed the Environment Agency for a full investigation. Following persistent pressure from me HS2 has changed how it records and publishes complaints, so the process is more transparent and accountable. For regular updates, I have a dedicated HS2 newsletter for constituents that you can sign up to at [rachel-taylor.co.uk/hs2/](http://rachel-taylor.co.uk/hs2/).

I am also fighting for better rail services for local residents commuting to Birmingham for work, often on a train that is late, overcrowded, and overpriced. Hundreds of residents completed my commuter survey, which I will be using to push for action from operators. One of the biggest issues people have raised is high fares, which is why I am delighted that the government has frozen rail fares next year, the first time this has been done in 30 years and a real terms price cut after inflation.

Finally, thank you to everyone who took part in my Christmas card competition, including students from Coleshill C of E Primary School. You can see Lilah Bentley from Coleshill CofE Primary's very colourful design on the back of the card, along with the other highly commended entries.

From investing in schools and the NHS to securing interest rate cuts and raising wages, this year has been a busy one, and I know next year will be no different. As always, please get in touch at [rachel.taylor.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:rachel.taylor.mp@parliament.uk) if there's something I can do to help, or you have a question you want to ask me.

In the meantime, I want to wish you and your families a very Merry Christmas and a happy New Year.



# Slimming World feel *real* good

### Monday

**Castle Brom** The Baptist Church, 5:30 & 7:00pm Claire 07917 867577

**Yardley** St Edburghas Church Hall, 7:30 & 9:00am, 3:30 & 5:30pm Jacqui 07814 675180

### Tuesday

**Shard End** Aylesford Hall, 7.30am & 9.00am Claire 07917867577

**Tile Cross** Mackadown Sports & Social Club, 4.00 & 5.30pm Nataley 07939 949136

**Coleshill** The Catholic Church 3.30pm & 5.30pm Jacqui 07814675180

### Wednesday

**Castle Brom** St Clements Church, 3.00, 4.30 & 6.00pm Nataley 07939 949136

**Marston Green** The Parish Hall, 4:00, 5:30 & 7:00pm Donna 07156 726534

**Water Orton** The Link, 5:30 & 7:00pm Shirley 07305 947214

### Thursday

**Smiths Wood** SJB Centre, 9.00am, 5.00 & 6.30pm Nataley 07939 949136

**Chelmsley Wood** The Fordbridge Centre (by Asda), 5.30pm Jacqui 07957133435

**Sheldon** St Thomas More Church, 4:00, 5:30 & 7:00pm Jayne 07453 348184

### Friday

**Sheldon** St Thomas More Church, 9.00am Claire 07917867577

**Chelmsley Wood** The Family Tree, 9.00am Jayne 07453 348184

### Saturday

**Chelmsley Wood** Three Trees Community Centre, 7.30 & 9.00am Michael 07957 510533

**Chelmsley Wood** The Family Tree, 8.30 & 10.00am Jayne 07453 348184

**Sheldon** St Thomas More Church, 7:30 & 9:00am Jacqui 07814 675180

**Castle Brom** The Baptist Church, 8.00 & 9.30am Donna 07516726534

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## Sertec Group Celebrates Prestigious Win at The Manufacturer MX Awards



Liverpool, UK – 14 November 2025 – Sertec Group is proud to announce its success at the Manufacturer MX Awards, where the company was named **winner of the People and Skills category, recognising its outstanding commitment to workforce development and engagement.**

The MX awards are one of the UK's largest and most respected manufacturing awards, celebrating excellence across the sector. Sertec's achievement highlights its dedication to creating a culture that prioritises learning, talent development, wellbeing, and communication—placing people at the heart of its business strategy.

“Our DNA is built around our people—their wellbeing, growth, and success,” said Rachel Starkey, Talent Business Partner. “This award is a testament to the incredible collaboration across our teams and our unwavering belief that people drive performance.”

Adding to this, Carl Milbourne, Head of Operations Sertec auto structures Birmingham, commented: “It's all about the people. The way we've connected with our teams and listened to their voices has enabled this result. Our culture is our strength, and this recognition proves that when we invest in people, we invest in success.” Carl Milbourne will join Sertec's Board of Directors in January 2026, following recent announcement.

From apprenticeships and Early Career Talent pathways to wellbeing initiatives, charity contributions, and two-way feedback channels, Sertec demonstrated how its people-first approach underpins every aspect of its operations. The judges praised Sertec for its depth and thoroughness, noting that the company doesn't just talk the talk—it walks the walk.

### A Second Consecutive Win

This achievement follows Sertec's success in the Smart Factory category in 2024, reinforcing its position as a leader in innovation and operational excellence.

### About Sertec Group

Sertec Group is a leading global supplier of automotive components, specialising in pressings, assemblies, lightweight structures and EV components for some of the world's most recognised automotive brands and beyond. With a proud heritage spanning over 60 years in the West Midlands, Sertec operates across multiple sites in the UK and internationally, delivering innovative solutions that meet the evolving needs of the automotive industry, including electric vehicle applications.

Our strategic direction focuses on sustainable growth, advanced manufacturing technologies, and continuous investment in people and skills. By combining cutting-edge automation with a strong culture of collaboration, Sertec ensures it remains at the forefront of manufacturing innovation while supporting the communities where it operates.

### Operational Excellence Recognition

In addition to its category win, Sertec was also named a finalist in Operational Excellence, standing alongside industry leaders such as BMW Group, Siemens, Evtac Automotive, and ROSS Pneumatrol Ltd. This recognition reflects Sertec's robust processes and continuous improvement ethos, reinforcing its commitment to delivering exceptional quality and customer satisfaction.

## 'High calibre and diverse' shortlist announced for Chambers' SLTC Awards



Judges today hailed a “high calibre and diverse range of entries” as the shortlist was revealed for the 2026 Royal Sutton Coldfield, Lichfield & Tamworth and Cannock Chase Chamber of Commerce (SLTC) Awards.

More than 40 businesses and individuals have been shortlisted across eight categories for the awards, which take place at Statfold Country Park near Tamworth on 12 February, 2026.

As well as crowning the eight category winners, one business will also be named overall SLTC Business of the Year.

The presidents of the three Chambers will also hand out President's Awards.

David Woakes (pictured), head of commercial development at Greater Birmingham Chambers of Commerce, chaired the judging panel.

He said: “The judges were very impressed by the high calibre and diverse range of entries for these awards.

“It is testament to the scope and quality of businesses across Sutton Coldfield, Lichfield, Tamworth and Cannock Chase. We wish all finalists the very best of luck.”

The judging panel comprised Nadia Johnstone-Smith (financial planner at Partners Wealth Management Solutions Ltd/Future Faces Chamber of Commerce committee member); Claire Reeves (multi-award winning coach, counsellor and trainer); Kevin Johns (director and shareholder, Prime Accountants Group/vice-president, Solihull Chamber of Commerce); Rebecca Fox (partnership and projects manager, Colebridge Trust), Caroline Fotheringham (chief executive, Sexual Abuse Rape Advice Centre); Amina Hussain (managing director, SME Outsourcing/vice-president, Greater

Birmingham Global Chamber of Commerce).

The shortlist is as follows:

**Cannock Chase Business of the Year:** Chasetown FC/Cosmik Carrot/Everyone Health/T150 Energy Ltd/Velorim Group Ltd

**Lichfield Business of the Year:** Bowbrook Financial Planners Ltd/Crown Highways Ltd/inLIFE/Lichfield Garrick Theatre/The Boat/The Boss Partnership

**Royal Sutton Coldfield Business of the Year:** EDGE Creative/Evolving Families/George Green Solicitors LLP/Moor Hall hotel & Spa/Nexus Care Services Visit Royal Sutton Coldfield BID (Business Improvement District)

**Tamworth Business of the Year:** Against The Odds Education & Awareness CIC/Pickerings Solicitors/PI-KEM Ltd/Reach Peak Performance HR and Coaching/Recruit123 Limited/tmWare Ltd

**SLTC Breakthrough Business Award:** Fiona Millington Photography/Go True North/Nicola Kathryn Coaching/Techcare Limited/The Holistic VA Limited

**SLTC Community Builder Award:** Adept Central Ltd/Chasetown Football Club/T150 Energy Ltd/The Cancer Support Centre/The George Hotel/The Hub at St Mary's

**SLTC Workplace Champion Award:** M6toll/Mercia Cleaning Services/Moor Hall hotel & Spa/tmWare Ltd

**SLTC Young Professional of the Year:** Ellie Summlar (Adcocks Solicitors Limited)/Conner Elwell (CJE Developments & Property Services Ltd)/Laura Bucknall (inLIFE)/Sophie Jee (mfg Solicitors LLP)/Lewis Lydiard (Techcare Limited)

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*"It's good old fashioned customer service driven by the customers needs and I highly recommend it!"*

Alistair Moore

## GREEN SPACES RESCUED FROM DAMAGING LAW-CHANGE



**The Open Spaces Society is delighted that a damaging amendment to the Planning and Infrastructure Bill, proposed by Lord Banner and others, was dropped. The amendment aimed to remove long-standing public rights on green spaces when the land is sold by a local authority. It was debated in the House of Lords on Monday night (3 November) but not then moved.**

The Open Spaces Society, which campaigns to protect open spaces, had urged peers to oppose it and is highly relieved that the amendment was not pushed to a vote.

The amendment would have made it much easier for local authorities to sell open spaces to developers, ignoring and negating public rights. It would have reversed the supreme court's judgment in the Day case which saved Greenfields Recreation Ground in Shrewsbury from development.

Opposing the amendment, Baroness Young of Old Scone said: "This amendment has caused substantial concern that it erodes the protection of green space and removes long-standing public rights of green spaces, where the land is sold by local authority, with or without consultation." She countered Lord Banner's assertion that judicial review was a solution for the aggrieved public, saying that this 'misrepresents the position of many local communities, which are absolutely incapable of bringing a judicial review, either by degree of organisation or financially.'

Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle added: "...the new enclosure", from the late 1970s to 2019, has seen 10% of what was public land in Britain transferred into private hands. That is two million hectares of land. This would be yet more loss of public good for private profit ...'

Peers from all the main parties spoke in opposition.

Baroness Taylor of Stevenage, the Lords Minister for Housing and Local Government, responded: 'Open and green spaces, including public parks, are an essential part of local social infrastructure. They are the lifeblood of local communities. When people are asked what they value about their local area, parks and green spaces are consistently cited as a priority, particularly for those living in urban areas.'

She said that the government was 'announcing a wider review of existing protections, so that communities, local authorities, and developers can have clarity about when and how land is protected. We will aim to bring coherence to the legal framework, making protections more transparent and accessible, so that communities can protect their most valued open spaces.'

She criticised Lord Banner's amendment 'which could have unintended consequences'. It would not provide robust safeguards to prevent local authorities being incentivised to sell land without following the statutory consultation process. She said that 'the duty to consult before disposing of land subject to a statutory trust remains an important safeguard as it gives local

communities an opportunity to speak up in favour of preserving their most important local spaces.'

In the light of this, Lord Banner did not move his amendment.

Says Kate Ashbrook, general secretary of the Open Spaces Society: "This is a significant result. We believe that, if the amendment had been passed, many open spaces with rights of recreation could have been lost without local people knowing that their rights were even at risk.

'We look forward to discussing how the law can be clarified while ensuring that the protection of green spaces is not weakened in any way. We are deeply grateful to all the peers who spoke against this deeply damaging amendment.'



Greenfields recreation ground, Shrewsbury

## News from St Clement of Alexandria Green Lane, Castle Bromwich (known locally as St Clements Church)



*"Of all the months of the year there is not a month one half so welcome to the young, or so full of happy associations, as the last month of the year."*

*Charles Dickens*

**December is the last month of the year when the Church celebrates the birth of Jesus and reminds us all of what is to come. So as we all put up our Christmas decorations it is important that we remember the birth of Jesus Christ through our celebrations on December 25th. There is no specific date for Jesus' birth and December 25th was established to coincide with or replace the existing winter solstice festivals held in Tudor times: the winter solstice was a significant and festive period, marking the shortest day of the year and the anticipated return of longer days. Feasting, gift-giving, and the use of evergreens such as holly and ivy for the celebrations, heavily influenced by the 12 Days of Christmas beginning on December 25th and continuing for the following twelve days.**

St Clements' Christmas Services

Sunday 30th November – Advent Sunday: 11.00 am – All Age Communion Sunday  
7th December – 2nd Sunday of Advent: 9.45 am – Praise Worship Sunday  
14th December – 3rd Sunday after Advent: 11.00 am – Nine Lessons and Carols; Children's Church with Christingle; Christmas Jumper Sunday – soup and roll served after the service in support of the neonatal twin crib appeal  
Sunday 21st December – 4th Sunday after Advent: 9.45

am – Praise Worship / or Communion  
Tuesday 24th December – Christmas Eve: 7.00 pm – Candlelit Communion with Carols  
Wednesday 25th December – Christmas Day: 10.30 am – Service at St Mary and St Margaret's Church

Events

Saturday 6th December: Beetle Drive in memory of Ian Wright with puddings (hard to make a choice); £6 per ticket with raffle; starting at 2.00 pm with carols to follow in church  
Sunday 21st December: Musical with Carols at St Mary and St Margaret's Church at 4.00 pm

St Clements will be welcoming Heights Academy (Year 7) on Wednesday 3rd December, and Merstone School on Thursday 4th December to sing and hear the Christmas Story. On the afternoon of Tuesday 9th December, we will also be joined by the Castle Bromwich Infants School Choir, and we are very much looking forward to seeing them all. During the year, we have also been pleased to welcome Castle Bromwich Junior School and Smith Wood Primary to our church.

St Clements celebrated Black History Month on 25th October with a very successful Caribbean afternoon. It was a wonderful opportunity for many of us to try Caribbean food, perhaps for the first time, and to take part in a lively quiz prepared by Clara. It truly was a lovely way to brighten a dark, dull afternoon. Our thanks go to Gus and Clara for organising the event, and to everyone who helped make it such an enjoyable occasion. We would also like to thank Tesco Express, opposite the church, for their kind support in providing raffle prizes.

On Remembrance Sunday a wreath was laid on behalf of the congregation of St

Clements Church at the War Memorial in the village of Castle Bromwich; as we continue to pray for peace and remember those that gave their lives for the freedoms we enjoy today.

Our Café, The Mary Bridgeman Tea and Coffee Lounge, is run entirely by volunteers. Although we strive to remain open during term time, there are occasions when illness or other unforeseen circumstances mean we have to close. We do our best to inform everyone through word of mouth, our Facebook page, and notice boards, but we recognise that sometimes visitors may not receive the message and have a wasted journey.

The café will be closed from Monday 22nd December for the Christmas and New Year period, reopening on Monday 12th January 2026. The Forget Me Not Memory Café will welcome "Music Man" on Thursday 11th December, which will be our final session before Christmas. It will reopen on Thursday 15th January 2026.

As we continue to welcome both new visitors and those who have been coming for many years, it is sometimes easy to forget how far we have come since the Oasis Café first opened in September 2012. The café is an important part of St Clements Church's outreach work within the community and operates under the PCC, with the Cross serving as a reminder that "all are welcome." For many years, the Cross was carried through the streets on Good Friday — and it certainly was heavy! We also have a picture of the "Tree of Life," along with a beautiful new framed picture on the wall opposite the serving hatch, placed in memory of Alan Vaughan.

The Crafternoon and Twenty21 Groups will also be taking a break over the

Christmas and New Year period. The final session before Christmas will be held on Tuesday 16th December, and meetings will resume on Tuesday 13th January 2026, from 2.00 to 4.00 pm.

Jesus stood for the core Christian beliefs of loving God and loving others, and St Clements continues to welcome all who come through our doors — whether to worship with us on Sunday or Wednesday, to join our groups, to visit our Café, or to enjoy our events.

As we stand on the threshold of a new year, we can reflect on the past and look forward to what is to come. Continuing to pray for peace, understanding, and tolerance of others is a powerful message — one that can be found in Matthew 5:9.

St Clements Church wishes everyone a very Happy Christmas and a Peaceful New Year. See you in 2026.

**Want to know more?**

**Get in touch...**

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**Facebook: [www.facebook.com/  
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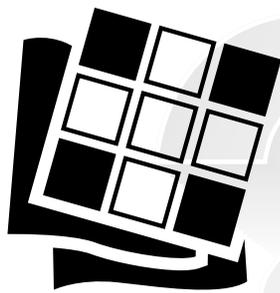
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# Puzzle Page

**ACROSS**

- 1 Liquid dressing or relish used to flavor food
- 6 Tel \_
- 10 Hook part
- 14 Fable writer
- 15 Traveled by car
- 16 Native ruler in Africa
- 17 Australian marsupial
- 18 Rampage
- 19 Not any
- 20 Information
- 21 Tons
- 23 North American nation
- 24 Northwest by west
- 26 Made a menacing noise
- 28 Egyptian paper (plr.)
- 31 Female child
- 32 Possessive pronoun
- 33 Navy cleric
- 36 Frozen form of precipitation formed into flakes
- 40 Quit moving
- 42 Earnings
- 43 Not far
- 44 Family residence
- 45 Type of star or watch
- 48 Her
- 49 Snow gliders
- 51 Nissan's former name
- 53 Cringe
- 56 Trail
- 57 Time period
- 58 Gleaming

- 61 Imitated
- 65 Opera solo
- 67 Poles
- 68 What people do in their sleep
- 69 Tall cereal plant with ears
- 70 Bulb flower
- 71 Bundle of yarn
- 72 Helen of \_
- 73 Dole out
- 74 Painter Richard

**DOWN**

- 1 Rice wine
- 2 Long time
- 3 U.S. Air Force
- 4 Distinet group of people living together
- 5 Environmental protection agency (abbr)
- 6 Indian weapon
- 7 Invalidate
- 8 Teen hero
- 9 Former member of the armed forces
- 10 TV lawyer Matlock
- 11 'love' (Italian)
- 12 Wash
- 13 Baked loaf made with flour
- 21 Off-Broadway award
- 22 Distress call

- 25 Sarcastic
- 27 Association (abbr.)
- 28 Ritzy
- 29 Motor vehicle
- 30 Cotillion
- 31 "You can't eat just one" brand
- 34 Musical composition
- 35 Bad (prefix)
- 37 Loch \_ monster
- 38 Next to Kauai
- 39 Small bird
- 41 Mexican money
- 45 Person who takes a long religious trip
- 46 First man
- 47 Rodent
- 50 Killed in action
- 52 Expression of gratitude
- 53 Act in response to something
- 54 Mistake
- 55 Egyptian capital
- 56 Old-fashioned
- 59 Traditional knowledge
- 60 Modify
- 62 Bard
- 63 Canal
- 64 Fox holes
- 66 Some
- 68 South southeast

1	2	3	4	5		6	7	8	9		10	11	12	13
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44					45				46	47		48		
			49	50					51		52			
53	54	55						56						
57				58		59	60				61	62	63	64
65			66			67					68			
69						70					71			
72						73					74			

Jimmy and Evelyn Johnson - www.qets.com

## Word Search

T	H	E	T	H	I	N	N	I	E	Z	S	T	Y	E	L
M	L	O	W	L	L	B	N	I	N	G	A	H	T	O	Y
U	M	F	N	O	A	D	E	I	V	S	E	P	M	R	E
M	A	B	E	R	I	K	N	M	F	I	S	O	E	K	
E	Y	M	O	A	R	P	R	I	E	E	A	C	W	T	R
H	F	A	N	R	M	M	R	O	N	V	R	M	I	O	U
T	L	S	N	U	G	G	A	A	M	A	O	N	I	V	T
N	O	N	P	D	L	E	R	X	N	E	H	L	I	L	L
A	W	O	A	I	R	E	A	B	T	I	M	N	E	G	Y
S	E	V	P	T	T	H	E	L	E	C	T	I	O	N	A
Y	R	E	N	E	A	R	N	Y	W	O	N	S	W	I	T
R	N	M	V	E	R	T	R	A	D	I	T	I	O	N	S
H	T	B	H	Y	S	T	U	F	F	I	N	G	E	Y	T
C	E	E	G	N	I	V	I	G	S	K	N	A	H	T	L
L	O	R	F	G	X	X	G	R	A	T	E	F	U	L	L
J	A	I	P	O	C	U	N	R	O	C	P	H	K	N	V

Find the words in the grid. When you are done, the unused letters in the grid will spell out a hidden message. Pick them out from left to right, top line to bottom line. Words can go horizontally, vertically and diagonally in all eight directions.

- |               |           |              |
|---------------|-----------|--------------|
| Benevolent    | Indians   | Stuffing     |
| Chrysanthemum | Mayflower | Thanksgiving |
| Cornucopia    | Memorial  | Topaz        |
| Cranberry     | November  | Traditions   |
| Election      | Pilgrims  | Turkey       |
| Family        | Pumpkin   | Veteran      |
| Grateful      | Snow      | Voter        |

# Bring a Beautiful Border to life at BBC Gardeners' World Live



**Got a great idea for a gorgeous garden? Why not bring your design to life at next year's BBC Gardeners' World Live at the NEC Birmingham (18-21 June). Applications for the 2026 Beautiful Borders competition are now open for the BBC Gardeners' World flagship event.**

Whether you're an experienced garden designer or amateur gardener, a student or school gardening club, or a charity or community group, BBC Gardeners' World events want to hear from you. The Beautiful Borders are an exciting opportunity to share your talents and skills, imagination and love of plants with tens of thousands of gardening fans. Measuring just 9m<sup>2</sup>, the Beautiful Borders are miniature wonders, brimming with fresh inspiration for small gardens.

The creative theme for the 2026 Beautiful Borders competition is 'Once Upon a Time', inviting entrants to show how even the smallest garden space can become a storybook. Visitors will be transported into a world where imagination blooms and every detail tells a tale. Whether inspired by a special memory, a journey towards health and wellbeing, a personal achievement, dream or meaningful moment, creating a Beautiful Border is a great opportunity to tell a story through plants, colour and design. It's personal stories and lived experiences that the BBC Gardeners' World events team are looking for rather than film or book interpretations. Limited bursaries of £250 are available for plants and props. BBC Gardeners' World events' friendly, experienced horticultural team supports entrants every step of the way, from application through build and to final reveal. Borders are assessed on site by expert assessment panels, with medals, awards and constructive feedback for every entrant. The top awards are Best Beautiful Border, Best Interpretation of the Theme, and Best BBC Gardeners' World Magazine Subscriber Border, with a People's Choice award for visitors' favourite design.

Lucy Tremlett, Event Director at Immediate Live, organisers of BBC Gardeners' World events, said: "The Beautiful Borders are a hugely popular feature at our events, with visitors spoilt for choice for brilliant ideas for their own gardens. The designers put so much effort, planning and creativity into their Borders, many of them drawing on personal stories and lived experiences for inspiration. Gardens are great places for storytelling, and we can't wait to see how this year's entrants bring the Once Upon a Time theme to life."

Winner of the 'best in show' Beautiful Border and Platinum award at this year's BBC Gardeners' World Live was North Yorkshire garden designer Anita Rose (pictured) for The One to Three Border, designed to foster connections between oneself, others and nature. Anita's Border featured different seating scenarios for reflection and quiet contemplation.

Alex Valk, a BBC Gardeners' World Live 2025 Gold award winner, said: "The Beautiful Borders gave me a chance to test myself and the freedom to explore my own creative ideas. The atmosphere on-site was brilliant; everyone shared ideas and helped each other. I met fantastic new plant-y friends and winning the Gold gave me a much-needed confidence boost."

**Entries are now open at [www.bbcgardenersworldlive.com](http://www.bbcgardenersworldlive.com) closing on 23 January 2026.**

Tickets for BBC Gardeners' World Live are on sale now. Event highlights include inspiring Beautiful Borders and show gardens, spectacular floral displays, plant and garden shopping, theatres and stages, and BBC Gardeners' World TV presenters, Magazine editors and plant experts. There are garden tours and talks, workshops and demonstrations, and great food, drink and live entertainment.

[www.bbcgardenersworldlive.com](http://www.bbcgardenersworldlive.com)

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# Interiors & Decorating



## Platinum December Update

**Each year, as autumn fades and the dark nights draw in, homes across the United Kingdom undergo one of the most significant seasonal transformations of the year. Christmas, with its rich traditions and deep cultural resonance, exerts a powerful influence on interior design. From colour palettes and textures to layout changes and lighting choices, the festive season encourages Britons to reimagine their living spaces in ways that blend heritage, comfort, and modern style. While the aesthetic choices vary from household to household, the underlying theme is remarkably consistent: Christmas décor in the UK is about creating warmth, evoking nostalgia, and cultivating a sense of communal joy.**

At the heart of Christmas interior design is the desire to generate a feeling of cosiness, what many now refer to as “hygge”, though the sentiment long predates the term. As temperatures drop and daylight becomes scarce, the British home becomes a refuge from the winter. Interior design at Christmas time therefore leans heavily into tactile comfort: plush throws, velvet cushions, thick knitted textiles, and woollen rugs. These elements not only soften the ambience of a room but also create a comforting, layered aesthetic that stands in contrast to the minimalism often preferred in warmer months. Even households that maintain a contemporary décor style often embrace more opulent fabrics during December, suggesting that Christmas provides a socially sanctioned opportunity to indulge in a little luxury.

One of the most striking influences of Christmas on interior design in the UK is the temporary overhaul of colour schemes. Neutral or monotone palettes make way for rich reds, forest greens, burnished golds, and deep jewel tones. These colours echo traditional festive imagery, from evergreen trees and holly wreaths to the warm glow of candlelight. In recent years, however, UK designers and homeowners have also embraced alternative festive palettes. Soft Scandinavian-inspired neutrals, icy silvers and blues, and even blush pinks have become popular, particularly in modern interiors. This shift reflects a broader trend within British design: an increasing appreciation for

personalisation and deviation from the conventional. Nevertheless, the classic red-and-gold combination continues to hold a special place in the national imagination, not least because it evokes the nostalgia of childhood Christmases.

Lighting, too, plays a crucial role in shaping the festive atmosphere. The British winter is defined by long, dark evenings, making lighting design essential during the festive season. Fairy lights, once confined to the Christmas tree, now adorn bannisters, mantelpieces, bookshelves, and even windows. Warm white lights remain the favourite for most UK households, as they create a gentle, inviting ambience, though multi-coloured lights still evoke a charming, retro appeal. Candles, both real and LED, are another prominent feature of Christmas interiors, offering soft illumination that enhances the sense of warmth. Many homeowners also introduce accent lighting, such as lanterns or illuminated figures, which briefly transform living rooms into twinkling winter wonderlands. This emphasis on ambient lighting at Christmas signifies a shift from purely functional illumination towards a more emotive, experiential approach.

Another notable influence of Christmas on UK interior design is the reconfiguration of space to accommodate gatherings. British homes, particularly older ones, are not always designed with open-plan living in mind. Christmas, however, encourages a certain fluidity in the way rooms are used. Furniture may be rearranged to make space for a tree, a dining table may be extended to welcome visiting relatives, or additional seating may be added for festive parties. The focus temporarily shifts from everyday practicality to social comfort and celebration. This functional adaptability reflects the deeply social nature of Christmas in the UK; even in smaller homes, great care is taken to ensure there is space for togetherness.

The Christmas tree itself is arguably the centrepiece of the seasonal interior transformation. Its style often reflects the homeowner's broader design preferences. Traditionalists may opt for a real tree adorned with handmade decorations, glass baubles, and nostalgic ornaments collected over the years. Others may choose a minimalist artificial tree decorated in a strict colour scheme. In recent years, themed trees have grown increasingly popular in UK homes, whether inspired by woodland motifs, metallic glamour, or pared-back Scandinavian design. The rise of sustainable living has also influenced tree choices, with many households

turning to potted trees or sustainably sourced alternatives. Whatever form it takes, the tree acts as both a decorative and emotional anchor for the home.

Beyond the tree, other Christmas decorations contribute significantly to the interior design landscape. Garlands, wreaths, and foliage arrangements, often featuring eucalyptus, pine, berries, and dried citrus, bring a natural, organic quality to the home. This botanical trend has gained traction in the UK as part of a wider movement towards biophilic design, which emphasises the emotional and wellbeing benefits of incorporating natural elements indoors. Handmade decorations have also experienced a revival, spurred both by environmental awareness and the appeal of crafting traditions. Paper chains, dried fruit ornaments, and knitted stockings all add a personal, nostalgic touch that resonates with many British families.

Scent, though invisible, is another crucial component of festive interior design. The aroma of pine, cinnamon, orange, clove, and seasonal baking contributes to the sensory richness of the season. Candles and diffusers designed specifically for Christmas have become a major feature of UK households. These scents form part of the emotional landscape of the festive season, often triggering memories and strengthening the connection between individuals and their homes.

The influence of Christmas also extends to the tablescape, which becomes a focal point during festive meals. British households often invest considerable effort into dressing the table with seasonal runners, centrepieces, candles, place cards,

and themed crockery. Whether traditional or modern, the Christmas tablescape allows for creativity and expression. It is a microcosm of the broader seasonal design ethos: layered, intentional, and celebratory.

One of the most interesting aspects of Christmas interior design in the UK is its blend of tradition and innovation. While many customs, such as hanging stockings or displaying a nativity scene, have deep historical roots, contemporary British homes increasingly experiment with modern interpretations. Minimalist decorations, neutral stylings, sustainable materials, and technology-integrated features (such as smart lighting) coexist alongside classic imagery. This fusion speaks to the diversity of British culture and the personal nature of how Christmas is celebrated.

Ultimately, Christmas exerts a profound influence on interior design in the UK because it invites people to temporarily re-envision their homes as spaces of warmth, connection, and celebration. It is a moment when practicality yields to sentiment, when everyday routines are replaced with ritual, and when design becomes a means of expressing joy. Whether understated or exuberant, traditional or contemporary, the festive reimagining of the British home is both a reflection of cultural heritage and a celebration of individual creativity. Each December, as decorations go up and living rooms start to glow, the transformation reminds us that design is not just about aesthetics, it is about the emotions and memories that shape how we experience our homes.



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**By Coach from Solihull, Sutton Coldfield**

**CIRQUE DU SOLEIL - OVO  
AT THE ROYAL ALBERT HALL**
**Departing Thu 26 Feb '26**

Cirque du Soleil is back at the Royal Albert Hall, one of the world's most famous venues, and invites you to suspend disbelief for the mesmerising spectacle of one of their most renowned shows, OVO.

**SO MUCH INCLUDED...**

- ✓ Return coach travel **from Solihull, Sutton Coldfield**
- ✓ Overnight stay at a selected hotel outside London (JG3 or JG4 rating) with full English breakfast
- ✓ Circle ticket to the Cirque du Soleil - OVO at the Royal Albert Hall (evening performance)
- ✓ Free time in London for shopping & sightseeing

**2 Days by Coach only £209**

Single Supplement £50


**NORFOLK  
COUNTRY MUSIC BREAK**
**Departing Mon 16 Mar '26**

Enjoy live music and toe-tapping performances from crowd favourites on this country music break at the Warner Corton Coastal Village! With excursions to pretty Aldeburgh and Norwich also included in the price, it's enough to make you holler yee-ha!

**SO MUCH INCLUDED...**

- ✓ Return coach travel **from Solihull, Sutton Coldfield**
- ✓ 4 nights at the Warner Corton Coastal Village, near Lowestoft (JG4 rating) with dinner & breakfast
- ✓ Live country music entertainment every evening
- ✓ Daytime activities in resort
- ✓ Excursions to Aldeburgh & Norwich

Optional excursion to the Norfolk Broads (Wroxham, Horning & Potter Heigham) (£14pp)

**5 Days by Coach only £379**

Single Supplement £175


**SCARBOROUGH  
WHITBY & HISTORIC YORK**
**Departing Mon 16 Mar '26**

Beloved for its pretty beaches, and classic charm, Scarborough is the perfect destination for a stunning five-day getaway! We enjoy a stunning excursion programme with visits to Whitby, York and the filming location for the TV series Heartbeat, Goathland.

**SO MUCH INCLUDED...**

- ✓ Return coach travel **from Solihull, Sutton Coldfield**
- ✓ 4 nights at a selected hotel in Scarborough (JG2 rating) with dinner & breakfast
- ✓ Light entertainment every evening
- ✓ **2 for 1 bar** (6pm-9pm) on selected drinks
- ✓ Excursions to Goathland (Heartbeat), Whitby & York

Optional excursion to Beverley (£12pp)

**5 Days by Coach only £269**

Single Supplement £75


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**By Coach from Solihull, Sutton Coldfield**

**WICKED THE MUSICAL  
EVENING SHOW & LONDON**
**Departing Thu 26 Feb '26**

Wicked is the sensational musical that hits stages like a twister with its electrifying score, stunning sets and a story that turns Oz on its head. Full of memorable songs such as No Good Deed and Defying Gravity, this is guaranteed to leave you spellbound!

**SO MUCH INCLUDED...**

- ✓ Return coach travel **from Solihull, Sutton Coldfield**
- ✓ Overnight stay at a selected hotel outside London (JG3 or JG4 rating) with full English breakfast
- ✓ Stalls or Dress Circle ticket (evening performance)

**2 Days by Coach only £179**

Single Supplement £45


**STEAMING THROUGH THE  
COTSWOLDS & CRUISING THE RIVER  
AVON**
**Departing Mon 6 Apr '26**

We explore the pastoral landscapes of the Cotswolds with their rolling hills scattered with honey-coloured stone towns and villages. We also include a scenic journey on the heritage Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway and a visit to Stratford-upon-Avon.

**SO MUCH INCLUDED...**

- ✓ Return coach travel **from Solihull, Sutton Coldfield**
- ✓ 4 nights at the Bromsgrove Hotel & Spa (JG3 rating) with dinner & breakfast
- ✓ Cruise on the River Avon
- ✓ Heritage train journey on the Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway
- ✓ Excursions to Stratford-upon-Avon, Worcester, Tewkesbury, Stow-on-the-Wold & Broadway

**5 Days by Coach only £379**

Single Supplement £100


**STRATFORD  
& THE COTSWOLDS WEEKEND**
**Departing Fri 20 Mar '26**

Brighten up the quieter months with some of England's prettiest gems on this weekend trip. The Cotswold towns of Stow-on-the-Wold and Broadway await, along with picturesque Stratford-upon-Avon. Featuring a fantastic bar offer too, go ahead and treat yourself!

**SO MUCH INCLUDED...**

- ✓ Return coach travel **from Solihull, Sutton Coldfield**
- ✓ 3 nights at a selected hotel in Coventry (JG2 rating) with dinner & breakfast
- ✓ **2 for 1 bar** (6pm-9pm) on selected drinks
- ✓ Excursions to Cotswolds Villages (Stow-on-the-Wold & Broadway) & Stratford-upon-Avon

**4 Days by Coach only £219**

Single Supplement £60


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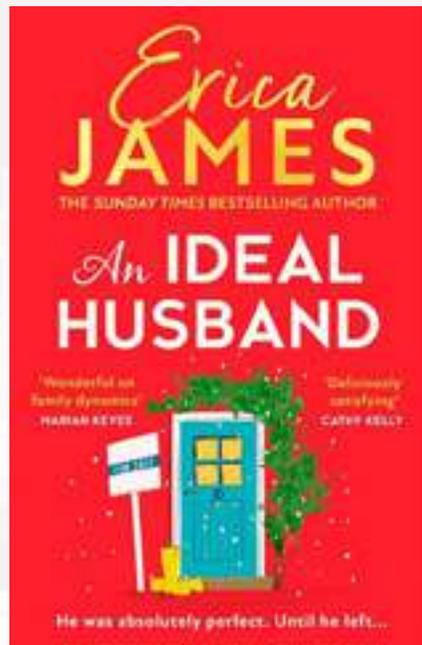
# Castle Bromwich Library Book Club

## **An Ideal Husband** by Erica James

The Langfords are a perfectly happy family. Louisa and Kip, happily married for nearly 40 years, have raised their children and are now just settling into a new phase of life where they'll have more time for themselves. Everything seems perfect. But then, one Boxing Day after a lovely family Christmas, Kip tells Louisa that their marriage is over. It's not something Louisa saw coming. And what he tells her next is even more unexpected: he's fallen in love with their son's ex-girlfriend, Zoe, the woman who broke Angus' heart. So just like that, Louisa's marriage is over - and her new life can begin.

*What a wonderful book! It is filled with emotion and empathy. It is heart breaking and heart-warming and has characters you will grow to love. A lovely absorbing and enjoyable read that will also make you think.*

Review by Castle Bromwich Library member

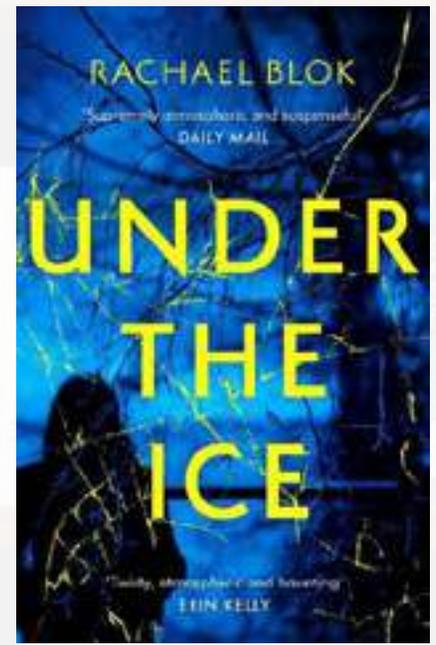


## **Under the Ice** by Rachael Blok

It is the week before Christmas, and the cathedral city of St Albans is blanketed by snow. But beneath the festive lights, darkness is stirring. The frozen body of a young girl is discovered by the ice-covered lake. The police scramble for clues. A local woman, Jenny, has had visions of what happened the night of the murder. But Jenny is an exhausted new mother, whose midnight wanderings pull her ever closer to the lake. Can Jenny be trusted? What does she really know? Then another girl goes missing, and the community unravels. Neighbour turns against neighbour, and Jenny has no idea who to believe. As Christmas Eve approaches, Jenny discovers a secret about her past - and why she could be key to everything.

*This book is full of tension and suspense. It's well written and has great characters - everything you want in a psychological thriller. It's a gripping unpredictable story that is very creepy in places and keeps you guessing right to the end.*

Review by Castle Bromwich Library member

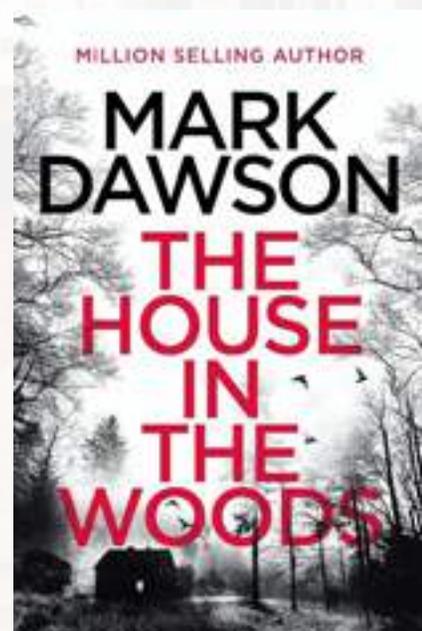


## **The House in the Woods** by Mark Dawson

It's Christmas Eve and DCI Mackenzie Jones is called to a murder at a remote farmhouse. Ralph Mallender believes his father lies dead inside. When three more bodies are discovered, it's clear a festive family gathering has turned into a gruesome crime. At first it seems like an open and shut case: a murder suicide committed by Ralph's volatile brother Cameron. Then new evidence makes Mack suspect the man who reported the crime is in fact the perpetrator. But Mack isn't the only one with a stake in the case. Private investigator Atticus Priest has been hired to get Ralph acquitted. That means unearthing any weaknesses in Mack's evidence. Irascible, impatient, and unpredictable, Atticus has weaknesses of his own. Mack knows all about them because they share a past - both professionally and personally. This time round, however, they aren't on the same side.

*This is a great book with a clever realistic plot and so many twists and turns it keeps you guess right to the end. A brilliant gripping read that will keep you on the edge of your seat.*

Review by Castle Bromwich Library member

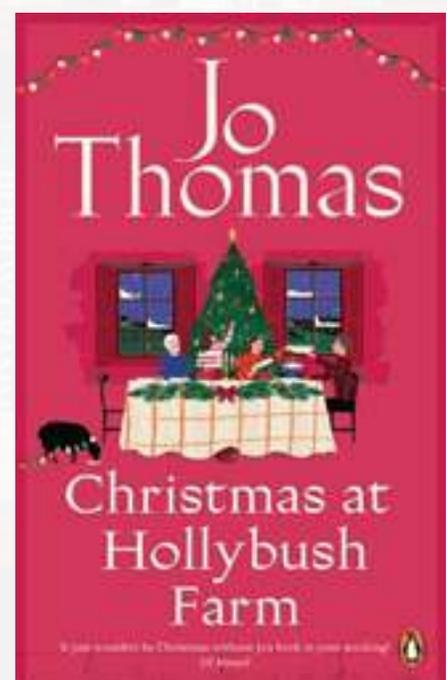


## **Christmas at Hollybush Farm** by Jo Thomas

Jemima Jones is driving home to her family's magical hill-top farm for Christmas. And on arrival, she soon learns that her dad has been keeping a secret - all is not as it seems, and Hollybush Farm is struggling to make ends meet! Worried about losing the childhood home she loves, Jemima decides it's time to pull on her winter wellies. Amid the chaos of chasing after the Houdini-escaping sheep and organising the Christmas tractor run, Jemima begins documenting her slice of farming life on social media. As she builds a supportive online following, she also forms an offline connection in the shape of charming, retired rugby player Llew, her very own Santa's helper.

*What a lovely story - wonderfully written with warm characters, beautiful friendships and an emotional happy ending. A delightful festive, feel-good read to snuggle up with on cold nights.*

Review by Castle Bromwich Library member





# St Mary and St Margaret Church

Castle Bromwich

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## Whats On

**The Coffee Pot Bereavement Group**  
**Monday 8th Dec & 12th Jan**

**1.30 - 3pm**

**Community Hall**

Everyone is welcome for refreshments and conversation, at this welcoming support group that provides help and companionship for anyone experiencing difficult times.

**Wednesday Drop In**

**10<sup>th</sup> Dec, 14<sup>th</sup> & 28<sup>th</sup> Jan**

**10.00 - 11.30am Community Hall**

Join us for a cuppa and a chat - everyone is welcome!

**Soup & a Roll Lunch**

**Wednesday 10th Dec & 14<sup>th</sup> Jan**

**12.00 - 1.30pm Community Hall**

Join us for our monthly Soup & a Roll Lunch for a £1 donation, on every 2nd Wednesday of the month following our Family Service and Wednesday Drop In

**Mothers Union Friendship Afternoon**

**Wednesday 17th Dec (Christmas Carol Concert) & 21<sup>st</sup> January**

**1.30- 3pm Community Hall**

Join us for an afternoon of fellowship & fun with a cuppa, a piece of cake & a chat!

All are welcome to join us - we would love to see you!

## Christmas Events

**Children's Christmas Craft-Time**

**Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> December**

**3 sessions:**

**10.00 - 11.30am**

**11.30am - 1pm**

**1.00pm - 2.30pm**

**Community Hall & Church**

**£7.50 per child**

Make a tree decoration & reindeer food bag, create a snowman treat & a hot chocolate cone! Visit with Father Christmas, receive a gift & finish with a story under the Christmas tree! Includes drink & biscuit. All children must be accompanied by an adult

Pre-booking required via QR code or click below

<https://tinyurl.com/mvhvb44m>



**The Story of the 3 Wise Men**

**Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> December**

**4pm St Clements Church**

All are welcome.

Seasonal refreshments

## Upcoming Services

**Friday 5<sup>th</sup> December**

5pm Family Christingle Service

**Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> December**

11am All Age Communion & Baptism

**Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> December**

9.30am Family Communion

**Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> December**

9.30am Parish Communion & Messy Worship for families

6pm Nine Lessons & Carols

**Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> December**

11am Sung Eucharist (Church)

NO CAFE WORSHIP UNTIL 18<sup>TH</sup> JAN

**Christmas Eve**

4pm Family Nativity

11pm Midnight Mass

**Christmas Day**

10.30am Parish Communion

**Sunday 28th December**

9.30am All Age Communion



**Official Church FB Page**

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**Church & Community Hall**

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**Community Hall Page**

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**Or visit our website**

[www.stmaryandstmargaret.co.uk](http://www.stmaryandstmargaret.co.uk)

# Castle Bromwich Parish Council News



## Tabletop Sale

On Saturday, 6th December, 10:00 am – 12:30 pm, our doors will open for the public for our monthly tabletop sale. There will be lots of local sellers with a variety of items to purchase; you will struggle to find better bargains! Also, the Chair of the Parish Council will be there selling her self-grown plants to raise money for the Chairman's Charity Fund. We are now sold out for this year; however, our dates have been released for 2026, and they are the first Saturday of every month, excluding January and August. If you are interested, then please contact Arden Hall front office on 0121 747 7150 or email us at ardenhall@castlebromwichpc.gov.uk. Tables are £10 or £15 for a larger pitch with space for a rail; we cannot reserve tables without payment. We will be back on February 7th, open to the public from 10 am. All packaging and unsold items are to be taken home.

## Coffee Morning with Bingo

Held each week on Thursdays in the Spencer Lounge at Arden Hall, an ever-growing group of friendly people meet to chat and play bingo. Tea and barista-quality coffees are £2, and bingo is £1 for a sheet. 10 am-12 pm Please come down and join us! Email Dylan Faultless-Hodgson, Community and Leisure Officer, for more information. leisure@castlebromwichpc.gov.uk

## Remembrance Day Service 2025

We want to thank everyone who supported and attended our Remembrance Day Service this year. Your support was immense, and for that we thank you. We are extremely thankful to all of those who volunteered their time and services to make the day special. We hope to see you all next year!

## Tribute Acts

Phil Collins 6th Dec

George Michael 13th Dec

NYE 31st Dec Bee Gees

Tina Turner 7th February

The Beatles 28th March

All tickets must be booked through Tribute Night Promotions, not Arden Hall.

Call 0121 270 5886./ Email: tickets@tributenightpromotions.co.uk / Visit website <https://tributenightpromotions.co.uk/>

## Pavilion Refurb

Work is ongoing for the refurbishment of the Parish Council's Pavilion to the rear of Arden Hall. The space is being upgraded with new electrics, heating, ceilings, floor, furniture and decoration. Look out for our social media for updates, and we hope the newly renovated community space will be available in the New Year. It will be perfect for kids' parties, community groups, and exercise classes.

## 2026 CBPC Dates

### Chairman's Charity Quiz

Friday 13th February 2026

### Party in the Park

Saturday 27th June 2026

### Heritage Open Day

Sunday 13th September 2026

### MacMillan Coffee Morning

Saturday 19th September 2026

### Remembrance

Sunday 8th November 2026

### Carol Concert

Tuesday 1st December 2026

## Youth Parish Council

Our Youth Parish Council has been working hard to bring new ideas to life, and we'd love more young people to come and join in! We will be meeting again on February 3rd in the Spencer Lounge at 5 pm, and membership is open to young people up to 21 years old. They recently attended our annual remembrance parade, where Youth Cllr. R. Faultless-Hodgson read the spoken lyrics of 'You'll never walk alone'. Our councillors also marched in the parade, and Youth Cllr. M. Wood laid a wreath on behalf of the YPC. If you'd like to be a part of this, then please contact Dylan leisure@castlebromwichpc.gov.uk.

## Small Grants Fund

As we continue to support our local community, we are pleased to share details of our Grant Funding. A £500 funding pot is available to be split amongst community organisations and charities working within Castle Bromwich. If your group or

organisation could benefit from additional support, then we would love to see you apply. Deadline for January applications: 31st December 2025. You can find more information and apply by contacting us directly. Email: Counciloffice@castlebromwichpc.gov.uk

## Parish Councillors

Castle Bromwich Parish Council is looking for new councillors to join our Council. We want people from all backgrounds and experiences who want to make a difference in our local area. The council makes a difference in everyday life from youth projects, managing open spaces, making representations on planning and traffic schemes, organising social events, and we strive to improve the lives of residents in Castle Bromwich. There are current vacancies, so please attend a meeting and see what we're about! You can find out more information on the Electoral Commission and Local Government Association website, or contact counciloffice@castlebromwich.pc.gov.uk or call 0121 747 6503

## Community Safety

We here at Castle Bromwich Parish Council feel honoured to be part of a thriving community, but appreciate there are issues like anti-social behaviour, off-road and electric bikes being ridden dangerously and other crime. As a community, we need to be reporting incidents to the police so they can serve us better. You can report issues to the police on 101 or webchat (always dial 999 in an emergency), but if you'd prefer to remain anonymous, you can contact Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111 [www.crimestoppers-uk.org](http://www.crimestoppers-uk.org).

Our staff and users of our facilities should be able to work and enjoy life without the fear of crime & abuse and the long-term effects it can have. We take this matter very seriously and will be reporting all incidents to the police. Please help us by doing the same.

## Park closures over Christmas

Please note that the Parish Council's parks at Arden Hall and Hob Farm will be closed on Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day. They will also be closed from midday on Christmas Eve. Please note that

Arden Hall will be closed from midday on Christmas Eve to New Year's Eve, then fully reopen on January 2nd 2026.

## Donations @ Arden Hall

We would like to make you all aware of a variety of charity collections we have here at Arden Hall. First of all is the Solihull Food Bank Network donation box. They are requesting dried food goods, toiletries, canned goods, and other non-perishables. The box is located in the Arden Hall foyer, you can drop your donations off whenever we are open. Secondly, we still have our partnership with WeCan. A local young resident collects thousands of empty drink cans to sell; he then donates this money to local charities. We have 2 bins at the rear of Arden Hall on the left-hand side of the car park for you to drop off your empty cans. Thirdly, we are asking all local residents who are skilled crafters if they would be willing to crochet any small animals or Christmas characters for Solihull College's Animal Department to sell at their Christmas fayre. All proceeds go towards local animal shelters and charities. If (like me!) you're not the best crafter, then they are also asking for donations of cat/ dog food, treats, toys or washing powder. All donations can be made in Arden Hall; ask for Dylan, due by 8th December.

## Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Castle Bromwich Parish Council would like to wish a very Merry Christmas to everyone at this special time of year. We send season's greetings to all who celebrate at this time of year. Whether you mark Christmas, another festive tradition, or simply enjoy the winter season, we hope it brings you moments of rest, warmth, and happiness. We would also like to wish everyone a happy, healthy, and hopeful New Year. We would like to thank everyone for their support in what has been an amazing year. We hope to see you all again for a bigger and better 2026!

# ADVERTISE YOUR BUSINESS WITH US

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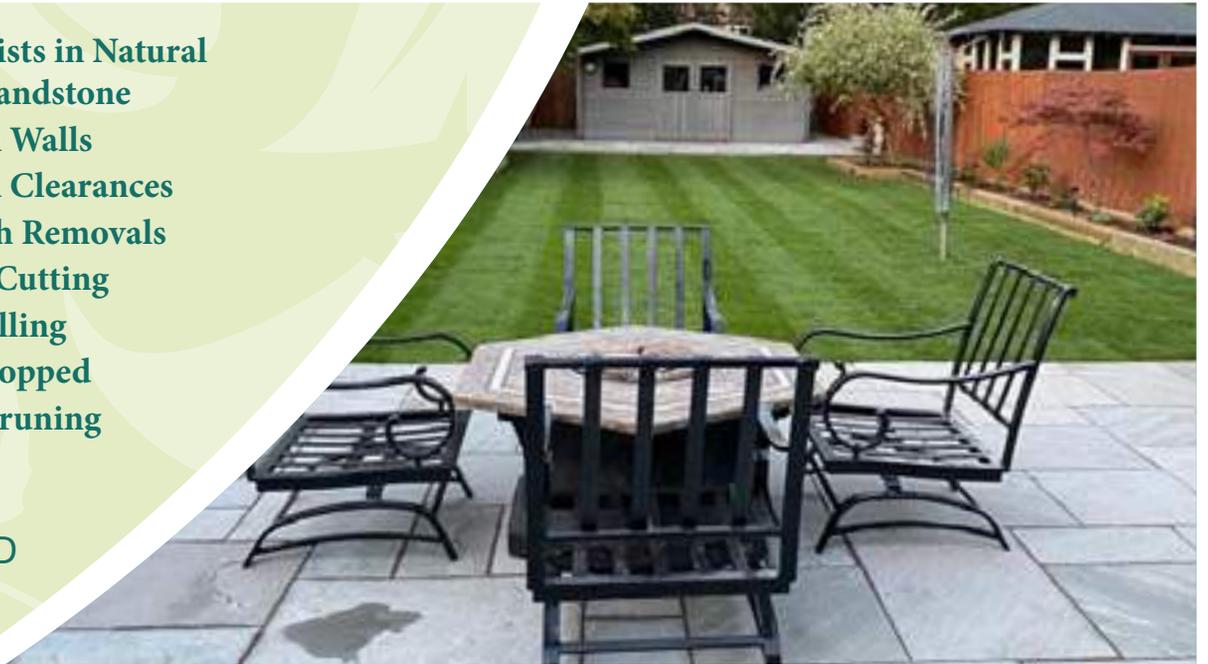
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## Puzzle Page Solutions



Solution:

1	S	A	U	C	E		6	A	V	I	V		10	B	A	R	B			
14	A	E	S	O	P		15	R	O	D	E		16	E	M	I	R			
17	K	O	A	L	A		18	R	I	O	T		19	N	O	N	E			
20	I	N	F	O		21	O	O	D	L	E	S		22	U	S	A			
						24	N	W	B	W			26	R	O	A	R	E	D	
28	P	A	P	Y	R	I					31	L	A	S	S					
32	O	U	R			33	Y	E		34	O	M	A	N		36	S	N	O	W
40	S	T	O	P						42	P	A	Y			43	N	E	A	R
44	H	O	M	E			45	P	U	L	S	A	R		47		48	S	H	E
						49	S	K	I	S				51	D	A	T	S	U	N
53	R	E	C	O	I	L					56	P	A	T	H					
57	E	R	A			58	A	G	L	E	A	M		61	A	P	E	D		
65	A	R	I	A			67	R	O	D	S			68	S	N	O	R	E	
69	C	O	R	N			70	I	R	I	S			71	S	K	E	I	N	
72	T	R	O	Y			73	M	E	T	E			74	E	S	T	E	S	



**Hidden message:**

THE THINNEST YELLOW LIGHT OF NOVEMBER IS MORE WARMING AND EXHILARATING THAN ANY WINE THEY TELL OF

*By Henry David Thoreau*



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# Local Sports



Picture credits David Hastings Rugby Warwickshire UK

## Doyle had to dig deep to reach 1000th historical milestone

Years of grit, blood, sweat, tears and pushing himself through 'many brick walls' finally reached the grand finale on 8th November 2025. Paddy Doyle once again raised the bar and went above and beyond achieving a World first global milestone of 1000 endurance fitness challenges and World Records involving thirteen different sporting disciplines, at The Knowle British Legion Club, West Midlands.

The charity chosen, Support Our Paras, raised from generous donations a total of £1,603.

The 1000th sporting challenge was The Farmer's Weight Carry Shuttle Walk along a measured 30ft line, carrying over 20kg in each hand in a backpack, for 20 minutes.

The previous best was 60 in a time of 20 minutes, and Paddy, in front of a roaring crowd, delighted spectators with achieving an amazing 92 lengths!

The historical milestone was witnessed by officials, Solihull and Coleshill Lord Mayors, spectators, family and dear friends and the crowd were fantastic in roaring Paddy on to the finish line, in

what was a demanding and physically exhaustative challenge for anyone to undertake.

The finale brought together a lifetime of physical fitness challenges and World Records, raising money for Paddy's chosen charities, and the dedication, mental and physical strength which has inspired many to step firmly out of their comfort zone, and 'give it a go'

Paddy "It was an unbelievable moment, finally reaching a tough 1000th milestone. All the years of hard work, mental and physical pain, the precious memories along the way and the spirit of teamwork, seeing how others have overcome their own battles with the positive impact of sporting challenges and setting goals. It was an emotional moment for me.

It is an honour to represent GB and be the first GB endurance athlete to have reached 1000 fitness endurance events covering, not one, but 13 different sporting categories. My support team has been truly magnificent along the way, and I thank them for their immense support throughout the years."

2026 is going to be another tough year as Paddy and his support team are preparing to surpass the 1000th milestone, aiming to put it out of reach from his arch rivals.



## Water Orton & District Tennis Club



As we approach the end of 2025 we would like to wish all our members, our supportive neighbours and regular sponsors, a very Merry Christmas & a Happy and Healthy New Year.

From January onwards we will be taking membership enquiries for 2026 and we have spaces available for Ladies, Men and Juniors. This will be for experienced players and beginners so if your interested please make contact on e-mail: paul.messenger82@hotmail.co.uk or send a text on 07528 601246 and we will get the details back to you.

Have a lovely Festive Season everyone and here's to a good New Year.

**Paul Messenger Club Chairman**

## Walking Football In Coleshill

By Steven Graham



**Walking Football is still continuing in Coleshill. It has been going over five years, and is at Coleshill Leisure Centre.**

For those who aren't aware of walking football, it is essentially the same game of football, but slower, with a few added bits! So obviously there is no running, on or off the ball. Over head height rules apply too, there is no offside also. There is meant to be no physical contact, but we

in Coleshill play it as if you win the ball then it is ok, but definitely not any slide tackling or tackling from behind! As we play indoors in Coleshill Leisure Centre there are no boundaries, so no throw ins or corners. Also we have a rule that you cant put your hands on the wall. This a a new rule thought up by us, it stops you holding the wall near the wall, and shielding it.

We don't have a card system either because we don't have the player numbers. That isn't to say that we haven't got a good player base, we have, we regularly get five/six a side, and in the past we have had as many as nine a side!

So if you used to love playing football but you feel that you couldn't play that now for any reason, come and join us a Coleshill Leisure Centre. It is on every Monday and Wednesday from 1:15pm.

Both males and females are welcome, we had our second female player play today as well!

We are a great group, very welcoming and like I said we have been going a long time!



## Water Orton Cricket Club

**We would like to thank all of you who have supported our Social Nights during 2025, your valued support makes all the difference and we really do appreciate you being there for us.**

We have almost completed our social calendar now up until the cricket starts back up again.

The following evenings are now booked and hopefully we will see some of you there supporting us at these Social Nights.

**January 2026** Quiz Night date to be confirmed a.s.a.p. Teams of 4/5/6 members £2.00 ea. member

**February 7th 2026** 80s Music Show with Tony James

Fabulous show covering all the big hits of the 80s

**February 28th 2026**

Soul & Motown Tribute with the fantastic Dayton Grey

**March 14th 2026**

Gary Barlow Tribute Show.

**March 21st 2026**

Robbie Williams Tribute Show.

Tickets for all of the shows will be available 6 weeks prior to the date. Tickets will all be £10-00 each and available from behind the bar at the cricket club or from Pete Coles at the cricket club or from Paul Messenger at the Tennis Club in Vicarage Lane.

**As we now head towards the end of 2025 can we wish all our club members and supporters a very Happy Christmas and a Happy and Healthy New Year.**



# Coleshill Town F.C.

## Coleshill Town's November Surge Sets Stage for Festive Showdowns

Coleshill Town's November campaign was one of grit, momentum, and tantalising promise. The Coleman recorded four wins from five across all competitions, climbing into 8th place with games in hand and keeping their playoff ambitions firmly alive.

### Sutton Coldfield: A Narrow but Deserved Win

The month began with a hard-fought 1-0 victory over Sutton Coldfield. Bermudan international goalkeeper Dale Eve made a one-off loan appearance, though he was rarely troubled thanks to Coleshill's dominance across the pitch. The decisive moment came in the 33rd minute when captain Taylor Carter-Byrne nodded home after a long throw from Ben Usher-Shipway caused chaos in the box.

### Walsall Senior Cup Defence Begins

Three days later, Coleshill began the defence of their Walsall Senior Cup crown with a convincing 4-1 win away at Wolverhampton Casuals. New signing Tristan Dunkley impressed with strength

and determination, netting twice. Young recruit Harry Rix added his first goal for the club, while Daniel Gyasi grabbed his fifth of the season to round off a commanding performance.

### Toppling Carlton at the Summit

Confidence was high after October's win over then-leaders Belper, and Coleshill repeated the feat against current table-toppers Carlton. In a bruising encounter, Usher-Shipway struck in the 65th minute to seal a 1-0 victory, propelling the Coleman into 5th place and underlining their credentials as playoff contenders.

### Basford Battle Ends in Defeat

Next came a clash with fellow playoff hopefuls Basford United. Both sides created chances, with goalkeepers excelling, but Basford's direct approach eventually paid off as a long ball broke through for the decisive goal in a 1-0 defeat.

### Disruptions and a Friendly Flourish

Momentum was checked by off-pitch setbacks: the eagerly anticipated home tie

against Championship side Birmingham City was postponed due to a mumps outbreak, while the league fixture against Corby Town succumbed to a waterlogged pitch. Seeking sharpness, Coleshill arranged a midweek friendly against Coton Green, running out 5-1 winners. The highlight came from Gio Dainty, who unleashed a stunning 20-yard half-volley into the top corner.

### November in Numbers

Games played: 5 (including friendly)

Wins: 4

Goals scored: 11

Goals Conceded: 2

League position: 8th (with games in hand, 4 points off playoffs)

Cup progress: Walsall Senior Cup quarter-final secured

### December and January: Festive Fixtures Await

With confidence high and momentum building, Coleshill now look ahead to a crucial winter schedule:

Dec 6: Home vs Anstey Nomads — promotion hopefuls in a key test.

Dec 26 (Boxing Day): Away vs Lichfield — a potential six-pointer with playoff implications.

Jan 1: Home vs Boldmere — a chance to start the new year brightly.

Jan 12: Rearranged home tie vs Birmingham City — a glamour fixture that promises to draw local Blues supporters in numbers.

### The Verdict

November showcased Coleshill Town's resilience and quality, with standout performances from new signings and established leaders alike. With the squad in form, games in hand, and a festive calendar packed with pivotal fixtures, December and January could prove defining months in the Coleman's push for playoff glory and cup success.

For more information, follow us on X, Facebook, and visit [coleshilltownfc.com](http://coleshilltownfc.com) for match and ticket details.

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