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April 2026 Issue 142



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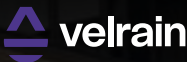
From Poland to Poros... The Journey of a Solo English Channel Training Swimmer

When local Solicitor, Family Mediator and Partner at Evan’s Derry Solicitors, Karen Beevers received an email on International Women’s Day 2024 offering a chance to attempt a solo English Channel swim, it was too good an opportunity to turn down.

Now in the final 5 months of preparation for the big swim, the journey has taken Karen to places over the world in training for the 21mile swim.

To prepare and acclimatise to swimming without a wetsuit, Karen has embraced cold water swimming to the extreme, becoming an ice swimmer in water temperatures of sub 5 degrees over the previous two winter seasons.

Full story on page 10



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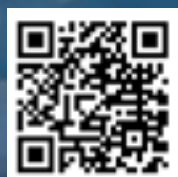




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Our main aim is to provide hyper-local news and information to the community where it would otherwise not be accessible. We also offer the most effective platform for local businesses to promote themselves to their target audience. This benefits the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



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Curdworth WI

Well here we are almost into April, and having enjoyed the lovely snowdrops and daffodils, we thought Spring was really here! But as always, when we get too far ahead of ourselves, fate deals us a timely reminder and then came a return to wet, windy, cold weather and hailstorms just to underline the message. March winds and April Showers?! But we in England are now so accustomed to our unpredictable and changing weather, that nothing really comes as a surprise and hail one day could mean a heatwave the next?! Yes, I know that was a bit hopeful, but you know what I mean.

Anyway, I'll stop wittering on and say hi to you all from Curdworth WI, well into our programme for 2026. And with a few changes! We now meet for our monthly meetings at 7.45 on the evening of the first Thursday of the month at Curdworth Church Hall in Glebefields. We shall still hold some events in The village Hall, such as our Summer Show (Thursday 3rd September) and our afternoon cream tea in August (Friday 7th August), but our monthly meetings will be at The Church Hall.

There are lots of interesting speakers coming up – one I'm so looking forward to is 'Barn, Spun Yarn & Farm' in June. If like me, you care about the environment and supporting sustainable and quality products, you'll not want to miss this! Angela Dewes, our speaker, lives on a working farm in Leicestershire, which farms sheep, using traditional methods from shearing, carding, hand dying and hand weaving to produce lovely yarns, which turn into beautiful knitted and felted garments and bags etc. Angela will be with us on 4th June, with her spinning wheel and examples of the lovely items she produces to tell us all.

On 2nd July we shall take a peek into the very interesting and changing life of Elton John, from his days as ordinary Reginald Kenneth Dwight from Middlesex to superstar Elton Hercules John to-day! And this talk will be illustrated with slides and film, and I just can't wait!

Do come and join us one Thursday – just the chance to step away from the chores and cares of our busy everyday lives and spend a couple of hours in a different setting, meeting other ladies and relaxing over a chat and a cuppa after the speaker is wonderful therapy. I've been a WI member for well over thirty years, made so many friends and found so many new interests from being part of 'the club' and I've never regretted taking that first step. I'm always at the end of a phone if you have any queries – I'd love to hear from you. **Liz 07811 147728**

Mother and Toddler Group

We are delighted to announce that every fourth Tuesday of the month commencing on the 28th April 2026, there will be a Health Visitor from Warwickshire Health Drop-in clinics, in attendance from 9.30 until 11 am at the Mother and Toddler group at the Coleshill Town Hall.

All welcome to come along and have baby weighed and discuss any issues you may have.

Our thanks go to Coleshill Town Council, Cllr Peter Fowler, and 0 to 5 services for their support in setting this up.

Key Information & Support Services
 Drop-in Clinics: Held at Family Hubs and community locations across North Warwickshire, Nuneaton, Rugby, Warwick, and Stratford.

Accessing Support: Services can be accessed via the Warwickshire Child and Family Health Visiting website or by calling the Single Point of Contact 0300 247 0072.

Services Provided: Health visitors offer guidance on breastfeeding, sleep, introducing solids, and child development, alongside conducting mandatory health reviews.

Text Support: A dedicated text service is available for advice at 07520 615293.

Happy Foot Health Awareness Month!



April marks Foot Health Awareness month. When you get pain in your feet it can be tempting to try and solve the problem yourself. However, the products that you can buy over the counter can be harmful and damaging and make your issue worse. This editorial will teach you the do's and don'ts of looking after your feet.

You should avoid callus removal blades. It is extremely easy to take too much hard skin off which can make your feet sore. It is also easy to cause cuts and as these removal blades are not sterile can easily lead to infections. Instead, you should see one of our Podiatrists who are all highly skilled at removing hard skin safely and comfortably with sterile blades.

Hard skin removing peel off masks can be tempting for dry, hard skin. However, these work by chemical exfoliation so contain acids. These can be harmful for your skin and can cause damage that can make your feet sore and painful. Instead, you should see one of our Podiatrists who can remove the hard skin safely and give you expert advice on how to hydrate the dry skin.

Corn plasters contain strong acids which are designed to breakdown the corn allowing it to "drop out". However, these rarely work and instead can often breakdown the healthy skin surrounding the corn making this very painful and sore and potentially leading to an infection whilst the corn remains. Instead, you should see one of our Podiatrists who can remove the corn safely and give you expert advice on how to prevent it from coming back.

Over the counter verruca treatments contain strong acids which are designed

to break down the viral tissue in order to create a response from your immune system. These can be harmful if not used in a controlled way as the acids can breakdown both the viral and healthy skin. Also, verrucae are commonly misdiagnosed so by applying these over-the-counter treatments you may cause damage and pain. Instead, you should visit a Podiatrist who can correctly diagnose the verrucae and discuss treatment options. This year we celebrated our 2 year anniversary of having our Swift machine which is fantastic at treating verrucae and most importantly there is no aftercare involved!

The products mentioned can be particularly harmful if you have diabetes. Diabetes can affect circulation and sensation which in turn can slow down wound healing. Therefore, any breakdowns caused by these products may take longer to heal and may cause infections.

Our starter packs are a great way of maintaining your feet at home in between your appointments. Included is a foot file which should be used gently twice weekly before a bath or a shower and our Help4feet foot cream which should be applied to tops and bottoms of feet (but not in between the toes) daily. We also have kits that include our Help4feet intense cream which is ideal if you are prone to heavy cracked skin especially around your heels. You can purchase these directly from our clinic.

If you would like to book an appointment to see one of our HCPC registered Podiatrists, you can at www.walshpodiatry.co.uk or by calling us on 0121 749 6313.

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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 it's 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.

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Rachel Taylor MP, North Warwickshire and Bedworth

Iran and cost-of-living

In recent weeks, many constituents have written to me about Donald Trump's ill-advised war in Iran, and the impact it could have on the cost of living at a time when many households are already struggling.

Like many people across North Warwickshire and Bedworth, I have not forgotten the long shadow cast by the Iraq War, and the painful lessons about what happens when military action is taken without a clear plan.

It was reckless for both Reform UK and the Conservatives to demand that Britain fall in unquestioningly behind Donald Trump, as the consequences become clear on our TV screens and in our wallets. The first responsibility of any government must always be to act in Britain's national interest, particularly when it comes to taking us into war and putting our brave armed forces in harm's way. That is why the Prime Minister is absolutely right not to allow the UK to be dragged into this foolish war.

The disruption to vital trade routes has sent oil and gas prices sharply upwards, which is already having major consequences for prices here in the UK – at the pumps, in our bills, and in the shops. For the second time since Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine, our national and economic security has been shown to be seriously exposed to erratic fossil fuel prices controlled by despotic regimes and at the mercy of global events beyond our control.

That is why we must push ahead with making the switch to secure, homegrown, and cheap renewable energy. The announcement that cheap and easy-to-install plug-in solar panels will soon be available in high street shops could be a gamechanger in helping people bring down their bills.

With the green shoots we had been seeing in the economy now in doubt due to this crisis, tackling the cost of living remains my overriding priority. I was pleased the Chancellor is examining options to protect households if energy prices rise further, and that on 1 April a whole raft of measures came into effect that will help struggling families.

Most importantly, a 7% cut to energy bills has begun and will continue until at least July, with further support beyond that date being looked at by the Chancellor. Already, £53 million in support for households reliant on oil to heat their homes has been announced, something I pushed hard for given the number of people in a rural area like ours who are not connected to the grid. I also welcome the crackdown on petrol retailers to prevent profiteering at the pumps.

The minimum wage has now increased, benefiting 2.7 million workers and worth around £900 a year for a full-time employee and even more to those under 21. Prescription charges have been frozen, saving patients £12 million this year, along with a freeze in rail fares, which will save passengers an estimated £600 million. And for pensioners, the state pension has risen by 4.8%, worth around £575 a year — helping ensure older people are supported in retirement.

These measures will be even more important at a moment of global instability, as we wait to see whether the situation in Iran can be resolved and energy prices brought back down again.

I know many people are worried about what comes next, both abroad and here at home. That is why I will continue pressing in Parliament for the UK to play our important role in pushing for de-escalation and diplomacy, and for action to support households through whatever difficulties may lie ahead.

And a couple more things... I have an HS2 constituent newsletter where I share updates of what I'm doing to tackle the unacceptable disruption experienced by residents. You can sign up to receive it by visiting www.rachel-taylor.co.uk/HS2/

I will also be holding a constituent advice surgery in Coleshill again on 8 May from 5pm – 7pm. If there's something you want to discuss, contact my office for an appointment. The location will be shared with those who are booked in.

And finally, whether it's a policy question or a casework issue, I'm keen to hear from you. Contact me at rachel.taylor.mp@parliament.uk or by calling 024 7630 9901.

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Still No Laughing Matter in 2026

By Steve Graham

I want to bring up the subject of Nitrous Oxide capsules and bottles.

When I am doing my litter picks mostly down Packington Lane in Coleshill, I nearly always, amongst other rubbish, find nitrous oxide bottles and a few balloons along with them. Now this gas, its proper name is N2O, and it is also known as Hippie Crack has been used by youngsters and older people to get a quick high. I would say that the majority of people who inhale this gas have no idea about its side effects and what it does to your body! Long term use can lead to Vitamin B12 deficiency and degeneration of the spinal cord, also it sometimes causes irreversible nerve damage, all for a couple of seconds of "pleasure".

On my litter pick today down Packington Lane in Coleshill, I found eight nitrous oxide gas bottles just dumped in the undergrowth!

I know that the local police are aware of the use and dangers of N2O. But the problem is that these bottles and capsules can be bought perfectly legally online! The local schools are aware of it and hopefully discuss the problem too! If young people were to know the risks involved in inhaling N2O then maybe they would think twice about doing it?

Young people are still taking nitrous oxide it seems, but now in bigger amounts! People are getting seriously injured and in some cases dying. So maybe, and schools may do this already, videos and pictures should be shown to them highlighting the dangers of this gas, and just how stupid and ill informed users are to want to inhale it in the first place!

As I mentioned earlier in the article, as of 11th February 2026, I am still finding nitrous oxide bottles on my litter picks! This is still a massive problem throughout the area and country wide, and it doesn't seem to be going away any time soon!





Castle Bromwich
Hall Gardens

April in the Gardens, Re-enactors, Falconers and Booters!



Ah April, the month where our events season truly begins. The trudge of Winter is over, and whilst there is still the likelihood of early morning frosts, the warmer weather combined with a well-populated events calendar means that we see our Gardens become brighter and busier. It's here that the Courtyard Café garners a wonderful sense of being a destination for people, somewhere to enjoy when the sun shines on the red-brick walls and the sound of bustling chatter fills the air.

Easter Holidays

Well we are certainly packed with events and happenings to keep you all entertained across the Easter Holidays. Our famous Easter Trail is back - will you find all the letter-guarding bunnies to find the word and claim your prize? (I've heard tell that it might be chocolatey!) This runs from 28th March right through to 12th April.

The Roundheads are back! Fresh from their recent engagement at Curdworth Bridge, Colonel Pickering's Regiment of Foote pitches camp across our Gardens. Join us across Easter Weekend for musters, musketry and medicine as this English Civil War encampment takes you back in time to the tumult of the Seventeenth Century. Our Archery Lawn will be populated by canvas tents, with all the smells, sounds and visuals of the bloodiest conflict

ever to take place on British soil. In both the late morning and early afternoon, the regiment will be forming up in their arena for a mustering, where they will demonstrate the firepower of their cannons and muskets, as well as the determined discipline of the pikemen. A new addition this year will be talks taking place in the Batty Langley Kitchen Garden where you will have the opportunity to learn about how the Stuarts would have utilised Mother Nature in their food and medicine.

Crafting and Family Activities

Across Easter, there are lots of fun-filled sessions to get involved with.

We will be exploring the Outer Orchard and ponds in our Minibeam Adventure activities. Try your hand at pond-dipping and bug-hunting, and see what lives in the variety of habitats we look after. This session is entirely outdoors and is suitable for children aged 3 -12 years old. Tickets are free – but space is limited – please book online via our website.

Easter Crafts

Two sessions to have the chance to create three egg-shaped items to take home with you. These simple, but charming crafts are a perfect way to allow children to get creative in a safe and guided environment.

Tree Tots Stay and Play

Wonderful Tree Tots returns! After an extended break, Nurturing Through Nature brings its unique approach to letting little ones be themselves and explore the world around them. These Tree Tots Stay and Play sessions are a fun-filled hour of outdoor discovery promoting curiosity, child well-being and child development. It's a play class for parents/caregivers and toddlers where exploration is encouraged within a safe and welcoming environment.

NGS Day

Continuing our relationship with the National Garden Scheme, the 11th April 2026 will see us have our annual NGS Open Day. This is where we are able to donate a portion of our admissions income for that day to the NGS. They do brilliant work across the country, and with their Centenary Anniversary coming up, have been at the heart of the independent gardens world for nearly 100 years. Tours both in the morning and afternoon will be running, exploring the Gardens and giving a general introduction to the history that they share.

Children's Falconry

Returning to the Gardens on 12th April is our children's falconry experience. Join us and our friends from Tora's Falconry for a hands-on session with these majestic birds of prey.

Car Boot

Third time's a charm! We are determined that this year's car boot will go ahead.

After a mere six-year hiatus, the Castle Bromwich Historic Gardens car boot is back! We will be hosting a day of car booters and visitors in our Paddock on Sunday 19th April from 09:30 until 12:30ish. It is a chance to indulge in one of those great British traditions.

The Gardens will be open and normal entry fees apply - but our Courtyard Café is free to enter and will be serving hot bacon batches and drinks from opening.

We are really looking forward to welcoming back this well-loved and (we hope) well-remembered fixture of our calendar. What will you discover amongst the trinkets and trifles?

Merry Month of May

Looking ahead to May and its wonderful blossom, it's a month heralded by the bells and rattle of the Morris dancer and the Green Man...

It leaves us to wish you all a joyful and blessed Easter, wherever you are celebrating.



SHARE A STORY

contact:

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The Therapeutic Effects of Sound Healing

By Julie Mclean

In a world which frequently feels chaotic and demanding, finding moments of calm can seem elusive. However, there exists a practice that provides a refuge of peace amid the turmoil, the time-honoured practice known as a sound bath.

A sound bath is a form of sound healing, an ancient method used by different cultures from around the world for thousands of years. A therapeutic experience, it involves participants lying on a mat, under blankets immersed in the sounds of instruments, such as singing bowls, gongs, chimes, and drums. The frequencies produced by the instruments resonate throughout the body, inducing a state of deep relaxation, allowing

tensions to disperse and the mind to drift into a meditative state.

Scientific research has found the effects of sound baths to be profound. One of the most notable benefits is stress reduction. The vibrations absorbed by the body calm the nervous system and alleviate anxiety. As the mind relaxes, the body follows suit, allowing tension stored in muscles and tissues to release.

The state of deep relaxation experienced during sound baths has also been shown to enhance the quality of sleep, with individuals benefitting from increased energy levels and overall well-being.

Evidence suggests that sound baths are also able to enhance mental clarity and focus. The meditative state experienced, encouraging the mind to quiet and allowing

for greater clarity of thought and heightened awareness.

On a physical level, the vibrations produced by sound instruments have been found to stimulate circulation, promote the regeneration of cells, and enhance the body's natural ability to heal, alleviating muscle tension, headaches, and chronic pain.

For some individuals sound baths also hold spiritual significance and have enabled deep introspection, inner healing, and spiritual awakening.

I am a fully qualified sound therapist having completed my training with The College of Sound Healing two years ago. If you are interested in finding out how to access the sound baths I offer in the local area please visit my website www.purefrequencies.co.uk





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FREE PARKING



From Poland to Poros... The Journey of a Solo English Channel Training Swimmer



When local Solicitor, Family Mediator and Partner at Evan's Derry Solicitors, Karen Beevers received an email on International Women's Day 2024 offering a chance to attempt a solo English Channel swim, it was too good an opportunity to turn down.

Now in the final 5 months of preparation for the big swim, the journey has taken Karen to places over the world in training for the 21mile swim.

To prepare and acclimatise to swimming without a wetsuit, Karen has embraced cold water swimming to the extreme, becoming an ice swimmer in water temperatures of sub 5 degrees over the previous two winter seasons.

In January, Karen travelled to Poland with fellow ice swimmers to take part in the Polish World Championships 2026. She became one of the first English women to successfully complete the Baltic Beast 1 Kilometre swim at a water temperature of minus-0.34 degrees, as well as winning her age group in the freestyle events.

Building on endurance Karen has just returned from a Channel training camp in Poros, Greece, undergoing a week of intensive training in cooler water temperatures, night swimming & in wide ranging conditions, seeking to replicate challenges she will likely face in the Channel.

Karen shared "the journey so far has been amazing- meeting and swimming alongside some really inspiring people, as well as swimming in places I'd never have previously anticipated. The physical and wellbeing benefits have been significant. When you see footage of chainsaws & diggers being used to carve the swimming pool out of the ice, you know you're doing something out of the ordinary!"

Fellow partner Julie Bennett shared "It's been fantastic for us all at Evans Derry to be part Karen's journey over the last two years, and to support her to facilitate her training schedule. The monies raised for two such worthwhile charities to date is phenomenal".

Karen is raising funds for both Parkinson's UK & The Brain Tumour Charity, having seen the impact of both diseases on close friends & family. Karen added, "Unfortunately, my Father has been living with Parkinson's for several years and over recent months his movement has been significantly impaired. I often think when training how much he'd love the ability to move without restriction.

Karen's Channel Swim window opens between 2nd - 9th September 2026.



SOLO CHANNEL SWIM 2026

I am fundraising for Parkinson's UK & The Brain Tumour Charity by way of a solo English Channel Swim in September 2026. Any donations, however small on the following links would be greatly appreciated.

<https://tinyurl.com/53d6739t>



SOLO CHANNEL SWIM 2026

Please Support Karen Beevers,
Solicitor and Partner at Evans Derry Solicitors
swim 21 Miles - England to France
in September 2026



**Fundraising for
Parkinson's UK and The Brain Tumour Charity**



Parkinson's UK

Please visit
Karen's Just Giving pages
to learn more



The Brain
Tumour Charity

**Parkinson's
UK**

EDS
Evans Derry Solicitors

**THE BRAIN
TUMOUR
CHARITY**



Purple House Clinic: Providing Specialist Help

At the Purple House Clinic, we help individuals of all ages navigate life's challenges and improve emotional wellbeing. We provide specialist assessments and evidence-based therapies for children, adolescents, and adults from our peaceful clinic or online.

Talking Therapy: Talking therapies provide a safe space to make sense of difficulties and explore life events, relationships difficulties, physical health problems, and to understand emotions such as depression, anxiety, anger, low self-esteem.

Occupational Therapy: Mental health impacts every aspect of a person's life including their ability to participate in educational, recreational and occupational activities. Occupational therapists help people to overcome these challenges and engage in the activities that matter to them, supporting them to reach their full potential.

Speech and Language Therapy: Our team supports children with communication challenges, including speech, listening, comprehension, and social interaction. We also work with parents and carers to build strategies that promote confident communication in daily life.

Sensory Assessment: A sensory assessment can support those who struggle to process the sensory environment and experience sensitivities to sound, touch, taste or smell. Sensory processing difficulties can cause an individual to feel overwhelmed by daily activities and occupations, and our sensory assessments help identify these sensitivities and strategies to support daily activities.

Autism and ADHD Assessment: Our assessments are available to both children and adults. We offer comprehensive assessments that provide an insight into an individual's strength, difficulties and practical life skills. We recognise that an assessment is often the first step, and our team offer post-diagnostic therapeutic support.

Family and Couples Therapy: Family therapy creates a structured, neutral space to improve communication, resolve conflict, and support each other's mental health. Whether a family is facing stress, grief, behavioural challenges, or just wants to deepen their connection, family therapy offers tools to rebuild trust and create lasting change. Strengthening emotional bonds can lead to lasting change and a healthier home environment.

If you would like to learn more about how we can support you or your loved ones, please get in touch. We're here to help.




Mental Health & Neurodiversity Services

At the Purple House Clinic we understand that psychological health is as important as physical health. We believe that everybody deserves to be happy and fulfilled in life, and we are committed to helping people overcome, or adapt to, life's challenges.

Our Services

Delivered by a team of highly qualified and registered healthcare professionals, our services include:

- Psychological Assessment
- Psychological Therapy
- Autism and ADHD Assessment
- Occupational Therapy
- Sensory Assessment
- Couple and Family Therapy

0121 820 7851

birmingham@purplehouseclinic.co.uk

Coleshill - with easy access from the M42



The Shabby Attic

* FREE VALUATIONS *

Unlike some other businesses we **DON'T** charge a fee when we value your jewellery/coins etc

Anything that you consider may have monetary worth, or if you're unsure we will try and value it completely **FREE** of charge with absolutely **NO** obligation to sell.

The Shabby Attic liaise with experts who have knowledge in different areas of valuables, the list below is just some of the items we will take a look at and we will always strive to offer the best **CASH** offer if there is value.

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- * Vintage Advertising * Antiques
- * Georgian/Victorian * Masonic Regalia
- * Watches * Pocket Watches * Militaria
- * Lego * Glassware * Vintage * Coins
- * Vintage Toys/Antique Toys

Nothing above ??

Bring it in, we'll take a look...
there's nothing to lose!!

82 High Street, Coleshill B46 3AH
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Reader travel


Scarborough, York, Whitby & the North Yorkshire Moors

Departing Mon 22 Jun '26

Discover Yorkshire's stunning coast and moorland on this five-day escape based in Scarborough. Highlights include historic Whitby with its dramatic cliffs and abbey, the scenic village of Goathland and the sweeping landscapes of the North York Moors.

SO MUCH INCLUDED...

- ✓ Return coach travel **from Solihull, Sutton Coldfield**
- ✓ 4 nights at the Royal Hotel, Scarborough (JG2 rating) with dinner & breakfast
- ✓ Entertainment some evenings
- ✓ Excursions to Whitby, North Yorkshire Moors (Goathland & Pickering) & York

Optional excursion to Beverley & Filey (£12pp)

5 Days by Coach only £459

Single Supplement £100



Isle of Wight Weekend

Departing Fri 29 May '26

A long weekend by the sea beckons on this lovely escape to the Isle of Wight. Beloved since Queen Victoria's reign, follow in the footsteps of royalty and relax at our base in a popular seaside resort and discover other highlights during an optional trip!

SO MUCH INCLUDED...

- ✓ Return coach travel & ferry crossings **from Solihull, Sutton Coldfield**
- ✓ 3 nights at the Medehamstede Hotel, Shanklin (JG2+ rating) with dinner & breakfast
- ✓ Entertainment some evenings
- ✓ Excursion to Newport

Optional Island Highlights tour (£15pp)

4 Days by Coach only £279

Single Supplement £60

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For more information, or to book, please call

03332 341 856 Quote **PGM**

or visit us online at **justgoholidays.com/PGM**

033 numbers are free within inclusive minutes packages otherwise standard rates apply.



★ Trustpilot



Heart of England Singers Spring Concert

**Saturday 25th April St. Leonard's Church,
Marston Green B37 7BT**

The popular Heart England Singers under the musical direction of Ruth Lowe will perform a beautiful programme of Spring songs at the iconic St. Leonard's Church, Elmdon Lane, Marston Green accompanied by Judith Fisher on piano and organ.

The programme will have something for everyone.

They will perform John Rutter's "All Things Bright and Beautiful" to reflect the lovely light evening together with the popular theme from the Vicar of Dibley which is Howard Goodall's version of the "Lord is My Shepherd" along with the quirky "African Alleluia" by Jay Althouse there will be more traditional versions of the "Sky Boat Song" and pieces by J S Bach and Rudyard Kipling. The

choir will also perform the hauntingly beautiful "We've only Just Begun" which was a worldwide smash hit for the Carpenters.

Tickets are £15 per adult or £6 for under 16 years old cash or card on the door.



Ruth Lowe



Judith Fisher

Heart of England Singers

Present

A SPRING Concert

MUSICAL DIRECTOR - RUTH LOW
ACCOMPANIST - JUDITH FISHER

Programme to include music by Johann Sebastian Bach, Edward Elgar, Karl Jenkins, George Frideric Handel and John Rutter plus many more.

APRIL 25, 2026

7.30 PM

**ST. LEONARD'S CHURCH, ELMDON ROAD
MARSTON GREEN, B37 7BT**

TICKETS
£15 Adult
£7.50 Under 18s

Buy tickets:

- online via TicketSource (booking fee applies) scan this QR code
- in person from any choir member
- on the door from 6.45pm (cash or card)





CELEBRATING WORLD BOOK DAY AT THE COLESHILL SCHOOL



On Thursday 5th March 2026, staff at The Coleshill School dressed up to celebrate World Book Day. Students enjoyed being taught by a whole host of characters including characters from Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, Wizard of Oz, Jurassic Park, 101 Dalmations and many more!

Sarah Cardwell, Deputy Headteacher commented "World Book Day is a fantastic opportunity to celebrate the power of reading in transforming young minds. At The Coleshill School, we encourage a love of books because reading not only supports academic success but also inspires creativity, empathy, and a lifelong thirst for knowledge."



Maths Department as Wizard of Oz



Leadership Team as Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs



Art Department as favourite fairy tales

Coleshill Ladies Probus



Ian Tomkinson with Probus President, Treasurer and Secretary.

We held our meeting on Tuesday 31st March at the Coleshill Hotel

After our meal, the guest speaker was Ian Tomkinson Mayor of Coleshill.

Ian who, was sworn in, on 21st May 2025. gave an interesting and entertaining talk on becoming the Major of Coleshill and his involvement with raising funds for local charities.

Ian has attended many events to help

raise funds for Coleshill cubs and Warwickshire search and rescue.

The latest being the Oompah evening at the Town Hall. Which was enjoyed by all. Our next meeting is on Tuesday 28th April 2026 at the Coleshill Hotel at 12.30. If you would like to join us, you would be very welcome.

Thereafter, we meet on the last Tuesday of the month.

The guest speakers for the months of April- June are:

April Ian Mullins of local search and rescue

May Afternoon tea and quiz

June Talk about the Royal Yacht Britannia
If you would like to know more about Coleshill ladies Probus, please contact Verenda on 01675 463806

205 Tyburn Road,
Erdington, B24 8NB
(Covering all areas in
the West Midlands)
0121 4484290



Website



Video

julieenglishinteriors.com



- Julie offers a one to one personal service from start to finish, ensuring your project is executed to perfection.
- 3D Visuals to help you visualise your space.
- Supply only or Supply and Installation Service available using trusted tradesmen of 15 years.
- Covering every room in your house, using branded and recommended products which will stand the test of time.
- Visit the studio for inspiration.
- Specialist in Bathroom and Wetroom Design for Domestic and Commercial projects. Access to Exclusive Products and Ranges.
- Offering a wide range of Fitted and Sliding Door wardrobes tailored to your storage needs. Beautiful designs and matching combinations to complement and work with your home interior design.
- Made in the UK, Julie English Interiors offer a stunning collection of modern and classic styles to create your own individual kitchen scheme.

Step 1 > Explore Your Options

Step 2 > Site Visit

Step 3 > Design & Quotation

HM Government

NHS



Small steps to lift your mood

Make the first move for your mental health. Search
Every Mind Matters

Better Health

Let's do this

Castle Bromwich Parish Council News



Tabletop Sale

On Saturday 2nd May, 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. Sales 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. All packaging and unsold items are to be taken home. Please note we have sold out for April.

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. Come and join us for a cup of tea, barista-quality coffees and bingo. 10 am-12 pm. Email Dylan Faultless-Hodgson, Community and Leisure Officer, for more information. leisure@castlebromwichpc.gov.uk

Tribute Acts

Soul & Motown	18th April
Back to the 80s Disco	16th May
Jersey Boys	13th June
Freddie Mercury	26th September

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

Call 0121 270 5886.

Email: tickets@tributenightpromotions.co.uk

Visit website tributenightpromotions.co.uk

2026 CBPC Dates

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

Park Opening Hours

The parks will open at staggered times throughout the year. Please see the dates and times below.

From SUNDAY 29th March 2026 6:00 pm

From MONDAY 13th April 2026 7:00 pm

From MONDAY 18th May 2026, 8:00 pm for the summer

From MONDAY 31st August 2026 7:00 pm

From MONDAY 14th September 2026 6:00 pm

From MONDAY 5th October 2026 5:00 pm

From SUNDAY 25th October 2026: 4:00 pm for the winter

****The top gate to Stonemoor Drive will be locked at 3.45pm during winter and 4pm the rest of the year.**

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. You can find more information and apply on our website www.castlebromwichpc.gov.uk or ring to discuss 0121 747 6503.

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@castlebromwichpc.gov.uk or call 0121 747 6503

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 Tuesday May 5th in the Spencer Lounge at 5pm and membership is open to young people up to 21 years old. Our current youth councillors are busy planning for this year's Party in the Park, you are more than welcome to come and get involved! If you are interested in joining then please contact Dylan leisure@castlebromwichpc.gov.uk

Donations @ Arden Hall

We would like to make you all aware of a variety of charity collections we have here at Arden Hall. Firstly, 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.

New Planning Policy Threatens Access to Nature, Warns Open Spaces Society

'The government's proposed planning policy will strike a fatal blow to the creation of new village greens and does nothing to safeguard and improve people's vital access to nature.' So declares Helen Monger, case officer for the Open Spaces Society.

The society, which is Britain's oldest national conservation body, has responded to the Ministry for Housing Communities and Local Government's consultation on the National Planning Policy Framework. It has called for amendments to the draft framework.

Helen explains: 'The government proposes a new category of "safeguarded land" to be identified in Local Plans as part of its proposals to erode the green belt—but that land is to be safeguarded for (not from) development. Such designation on land used for public recreation would prevent local people from registering it as a town or village green to secure its protection and their rights there. We have called for the removal of this pernicious provision.

'We also want to see it made a condition that the developer voluntarily registers green space within the development as a town or village green, so that it remains protected as public open space in perpetuity.

'Additional amendments sought by the society include a request for greater clarity on definitions provided in the glossary which are critical to the protection of open space.

Helen continues: 'The National Planning Policy Framework will influence building development for many years to come. Yet it pays insufficient attention to the government's Environmental Improvement Plan, published only last December, which has as a central aim "to make sure that everyone has access to green or blue spaces within a 15-minute walk from home". Figures from Natural England show that the most deprived neighbourhoods have the least access to open space—that must be remedied. Unless green spaces are protected and improved as part of planning policy, the government's "15-minute" aim can never be met.

'The new framework is designed to be "pro-growth". We urge the government to see access to nature and outdoor recreation as integral to the mix needed for sustainable development and not a "blocker" or a "nimby" interest. Liveability and pride in place are part of delivering healthy communities in the future, and it is crucial that government recognises this,' Helen concludes.



Building site near Goring-on-Thames, Oxfordshire, in 2024. A new village green here would have protected the open space for ever.



Sumner Road, Coleshill
 Hours: Mon to Fri 10:00 to 13:00
 Tel. 01675 462517
www.coleshillhub.org.uk
coleshillcommunityhub@gmail.com



**Next Town Council
 Meeting –
 22nd Apr 7pm at
 Coleshill Town Hall**



HAVE A HAPPY EASTER
From all the Hub Volunteers
 We will be closed on Bank
 Holidays Friday 3rd & Monday 6th
 April

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.

All welcome, come and visit us for a chat and see how the Hub could help
 you.



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

GROUPS

Walking Tours
 Keep Fit & Natter
 Walking Sports
 Art & Crafts
 U3A
 Parents & Toddlers

SIGNPOSTING

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

TWO WARM HUB'S

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



Pet Page

Sukis Canine Rescue

Following a call from our local vets, Bambi came into our care on 17th January and was placed into foster with Ellie, one of our experienced foster carers.

Bambi was believed to be just a young dog, around a year old. When she arrived, she was emaciated, weighing just 14kg when she should have been closer to 28–30kg. Her body told a heartbreaking story. She was covered in sores, cuts, grazes, and scars consistent with cigarette burns, something we have sadly seen before. One side of her jaw appeared to have been broken and left to heal on its own. She also had worms and a damaged ear.

Bambi displayed deeply distressing behaviour, spinning relentlessly in circles and causing herself harm. Ellie worked tirelessly with her, using constant distraction and gentle care to reduce this behaviour, but Bambi was easily triggered and would quickly return to spinning.

As weeks passed, and with regular veterinary care, Bambi's physical health began to improve. She gained 12kg in just four weeks, an incredible transformation. But while her body was healing, it became increasingly clear that mentally, Bambi was still suffering.

She began experiencing episodes where one side of her head would swell. During these, she would lose focus, bleed from her nose, and occasionally collapse. After multiple veterinary consultations, it was believed Bambi had likely suffered significant head trauma, alongside the

severe physical and emotional abuse she had endured.

Despite her physical progress, Bambi's condition continued to deteriorate. After several difficult conversations with our vets, we were faced with the most heartbreaking decision. We were told that even with extensive tests and scans, the outcome would not change, it would not save her.

We would have done anything to give Bambi a future. Anything. But we could not fix the extent of her suffering to allow her to live a safe, happy, and normal life. And so, with heavy hearts, we made the decision to let her go.

Bambi only knew love for a few short weeks but in that time, she was safe, cherished, and no longer alone.

What happened to Bambi was not an accident. Humans did this to her. She was knowingly and intentionally starved. She was confined to a crate far too small for her. She was subjected to prolonged, avoidable suffering in her short life.

Now, we are determined to get justice for Bambi.

We want those responsible to be held accountable. We want prosecution. And we want to ensure that cases like Bambi's are taken seriously within the UK justice system.

We are asking for your support. Please follow our Facebook page and stand with us in our campaign Justice for Bambi. <https://tinyurl.com/dhkckpde>

Together, we can be her voice.

Justice for Bambi

Bambi was rescued from a house in Tile Hill, Coventry. She was emaciated, had a suspected broken jaw, sores all over her body and scarring from previous injuries. But the worst of all was the lasting effects from the mental abuse and head trauma she quite clearly suffered over a long period of time. Bambi lost her life as a result of months of mental and physical abuse.

PLEASE HELP US GET JUSTICE FOR HER

Show your support by following her Facebook page 'Justice for Bambi'



We are trying to make a change for dogs and other animals just like Bambi, living in fear, starving, frightened and never knowing love and care. Sign this petition and help us as we try to make a difference.

Sukis Canine Rescue Crew

Birmingham Dogs Home - Forever homes



Torvi

Breed: Shar Pei **Gender:** Female

Torvi is a striking and intelligent girl who is looking for a very specific and understanding home where she can truly feel safe and secure. She has a lot of love to give and once she forms a bond she is incredibly affectionate and loyal. Torvi adores cuddles and loves spending time with her people and she especially enjoys soft squeaky toys which bring out her playful side.

Torvi can find the world around her quite overwhelming and she is reactive to dogs and wary of new people. With the right handling and patience she settles well

and shows her true gentle nature once she feels comfortable. In real life settings away from busy environments she can be brilliant and much more relaxed.

She will need an adult only home with children aged 16 and over. Torvi must be the only pet in the home with no dogs cats birds or livestock and she also cannot live in a home with neighbouring dogs.

Torvi may experience separation anxiety and will need a home where she is not left alone for long periods while she builds confidence. She will require ongoing support and a consistent routine to help her feel secure.

On walks Torvi wears a muzzle along with a double clip harness and her new family will need to continue her focus training around dogs and work on careful socialisation with new people. She is a clever girl who will benefit from calm guidance and positive reinforcement.

Torvi is a deeply loving girl who just needs the right environment to thrive. With patience structure and understanding she will form a strong bond and become a devoted companion.

If you are interested in adopting, please contact the centre on 0121 643 5211 to enquire.

www.birminghamdogshome.org.uk

Awareness Days Helping Us Understand Our Dogs

There's been a real shift in the dog world over the last few years. We're moving away from "one size fits all" advice and towards understanding the individual dog in front of us. Awareness days are playing a big part in that shift. They give us the chance to pause, reflect, and sometimes rethink what we thought we knew. Here are three important ones, recently passed and coming up, that are well worth knowing about.

Dogs in Yellow Day – A Simple Way to Support Dogs Who Need Space

Dogs in Yellow Day, created by Sarah Jones, takes place each year on 20th March.

It began with Sarah's own dog, Bella, who became anxious after a difficult experience. Like many dogs, Bella wasn't "being difficult". She simply needed space and support.

The idea behind the day is simple but powerful.

Dogs wearing something yellow, such as a lead, harness, coat, or ribbon, are signalling that they need space. This might be because they are:

- Nervous or worried
- In training
- Recovering from injury
- Or simply not comfortable with close interactions

Yellow was chosen because it's widely recognised as a caution colour. It gives a clear, visible message without the need for explanation.

What makes this so effective is how it supports both the dog and the person walking them. It reduces pressure, prevents misunderstandings, and helps dogs feel safer in everyday situations.

Sometimes, the kindest and most helpful thing we can do is simply give a dog a bit more space.

Don't Walk Your Dog Day – Rethinking the Daily Walk

Don't Walk Your Dog Day, created by Niki French, takes place on 2nd April.

At first, this idea can feel a little surprising. Many of us have grown up believing that dogs must be walked every single day. But this awareness day encourages us to look at things a little differently.

Instead of asking, "Have I walked my dog today?", it invites us to ask, "What does my dog actually need today?"

For some dogs, particularly those who are overwhelmed, recovering, or finding the outside world challenging, a walk can add more stress rather than reduce it. That doesn't mean walks aren't important. They absolutely are for many dogs. But they are just one part of the picture.

There are lots of other ways to meet a dog's needs, including:

- Scent games and "find it" activities
- Enrichment such as licking, shredding, and problem-solving
- Gentle play and connection-based games
- Rest and recovery time

In some cases, stepping back from walks, even temporarily, can make a significant difference to a dog's wellbeing.

It's about giving people permission to make thoughtful choices, rather than feeling they have to follow a fixed rule.

Sighthound Spotlight Day – 30th April

Coming up on 30th April is Sighthound Spotlight Day, created by Insight Hounds.

This is a day dedicated to celebrating sighthounds, including greyhounds, whippets, lurchers and salukis, and helping people better understand who they really are.

Sighthounds are often surrounded by long-standing

myths. That they need endless exercise, that they can't be trained, or that they only suit certain homes. In reality, they are thoughtful, sensitive dogs who thrive when we understand how they learn and what matters to them.

The day focuses on building understanding through education, training, and breed insight, alongside sharing real stories from the people who know and love these dogs best.

It also raises awareness of homing and adoption. Each year, many sighthounds are in need of homes via breed specific rescue and rehoming centres, and you will often find one waiting for a home in any all breed rescue centres.

With the right support, they can settle beautifully and make wonderful companions.

Sighthound Spotlight Day is about celebrating them for who they are, sharing their stories, and getting sighthounds into the spotlight where they belong.

Why These Awareness Days Matter

What links all of these awareness days is a shift in thinking.

Instead of asking, "What should a dog do?", we start asking, "What does this dog need?"

- Some dogs need space
- Some dogs need a break from walks
- Some dogs need us to understand their breed traits

When we begin from that place, everything else becomes clearer. Communication improves, confidence grows, and both ends of the lead feel more supported.

Sometimes it's not about doing more.

It's about doing what's right for the dog in front of you.



www.insighthounds.co.uk



Sighthound Spotlight

WHEN PEOPLE SEE THE REAL SIGHTHOUND, ADOPTION MAKES SENSE

30th April

SighthoundSpotlightDay 30th April insighthounds.co.uk

Sighthound Spotlight

S **Sighthound Spotlight Day**
The annual day to shine a light on sighthounds.

I **Insight**
Growing understanding and busting myths through education, training, and breed insight.

G **Great Stories**
Celebrating great sighthound stories, shared by the people who know and love them best.

H **Homing & Adoption**
Raising awareness of the need for homes and celebrating those who make it possible.

T **Together**
Together we can make a difference for sighthounds.

SighthoundSpotlightDay 30th April insighthounds.co.uk

Fashion, Fizz and a Fantastic Final Fundraiser



The Cameo Suite at the Coleshill Hotel was filled with laughter, style and community spirit on Sunday 22nd March, as guests gathered for the Fashion & Fizz event in support of Lady Captain of Maxstoke Golf Club, Jenny Curley.

Hosted as Jenny's final fundraiser before stepping down from her role, the afternoon brought together friends, members and local supporters for a truly enjoyable occasion. Guests were welcomed with a glass of fizz, followed by a delicious cream tea, creating a relaxed and sociable atmosphere from the start.

A highlight of the afternoon was the fashion show by Liliann Styled by Ryan on Coleshill High Street. The collection was beautifully presented and warmly received, with plenty of inspiration for the season ahead and a real sense of fun throughout.

Thanks to the generosity of everyone who attended, an impressive £1,100 was raised for Mind Charity, supporting mental health services that make such a difference to so many.

It was a wonderful way to round off Jenny's time as Lady Captain, an afternoon that reflected the strong sense of community around Maxstoke Golf Club, while raising valuable funds for an important cause.


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First V Levels subjects revealed for students in the West Midlands as part of landmark post-16 reforms

- **First students to do V Levels from 2027 as part of ambitious reforms post-16 system that will prepare them for future jobs**
- **Reforms come as poll finds majority of parents in the West Midlands want their children to enjoy combination of academic and vocational training**
- **Progress to help reach the Prime Minister's target to get two-thirds of young people taking a gold standard apprenticeship, higher training or heading to university by age 25**

Young people will be able to take the very first V Levels in education, finance, and digital in 2027, under landmark reforms to help young people secure well-paid jobs.

Too many young people have been held back by a system that didn't value every route to success. That's why the government has introduced V Levels, which offer transformational new qualifications – equivalent to an A level – with learning designed around real jobs and the skills employers actually need.

They are central to the Prime Minister's ambition to ensure two-thirds of young people are in a gold-standard apprenticeship, higher training or university by the age of 25, helping to close skills gaps, cut the number of young people not in education, employment or training, and drive economic growth as part of our national renewal.

It comes as a new poll of parents of 14 to 18-year-olds in the West Midlands show that one fifth (21%) don't feel confident that their child understands the options available beyond GCSEs and 40% overwhelmingly prefer a mix of academic and work-based or technical training for their children after GCSEs to better prepare them for the future.

Students who want to specialise in technical, sector-focused studies will also have more options, as T Levels – which combine study and real-world work experience – will be expanded to include subjects such as Sports, Fitness and Exercise Science, along with Care Services.

New qualifications will be introduced next year for 16-year-olds, providing a year of study before progressing to V Levels, T Levels or A levels, with initial subjects in Education and Early Years, and Digital. A separate two-year, employment-focused route will also be available for those aiming to move straight into work or an apprenticeship, starting in Catering and Hospitality, and Education and Early Years.

The government's landmark reforms to post-16 education will do exactly this – provide clearer options for young people, allowing them to mix and match academic and vocational subjects, and setting them up for the jobs of tomorrow.

Education Secretary Bridget Phillipson said:

"Our bold reforms will end the snobbery in post-16 education, supporting young people with real choice and real opportunity to build secure, future-proof careers.

"Not only that, but it will give parents much-needed confidence in a system that values every route to success – academic, technical or vocational – as we continuing driving forward our mission to ensure two-thirds of young people are in education, training or apprenticeships by 25."

Principal and Chief Executive of Heart of Worcestershire (HoW) College Michelle Dowse said:

"These reforms move us towards a clearer, more coherent post 16 system that young people and parents can navigate with confidence.

"Expanding T Levels and introducing V Levels gives academic, technical and vocational routes equal standing, aligned with the skills employers need, and opens up Further Education to even more young people.

"While it will take time for new pathways to embed and be widely understood, this could prove to be a positive direction of travel for learners and employers."

The government's response to a consultation on the new qualifications announced in the transformative Post 16 Education and Skills White Paper has been published today.

It gives young people and providers information on which subjects areas the first set of new qualifications will be available in for the following new qualifications:

- V Levels which will sit alongside A Levels and T Levels, and will be equivalent to one A Level, allowing students to mix and match academic and vocational subjects if they are unsure where to specialise.
- The Further Study pathway, which provides a year of study to support students who want to go on to do V Levels, T Levels or A levels but aren't ready to progress beyond GCSE-equivalent study due to lower attainment. It will be supported by a new Foundation Certificate qualification.
- The Occupational pathway which is a two-year programme to provide extra support to lower attainers while developing the skills to go into employment or an apprenticeship. It will be supported by a new Occupational Certificate qualification.

Further changes to T Levels will refine content and assessment, and allow providers more scope to tailor industry placements, to ensure that more young people can access them.

A consultation has also been launched on new qualifications that will be targeted at students with lower attainment in English or Maths as a stepping stone to better prepare them to resit their GCSEs the following year. This will support around a third of 16-year-olds who do not achieve a GCSE grade 4 or above in English and/or maths by the time they leave Year 11.

These reforms are backed by nearly £800 million extra for 16-19 education in 2026-27, with average per student funding increasing to £6,874 in the next academic year, from £6,762 in 2025/26.

Chief Executive of the Sixth Form Colleges Association, Bill Watkin, said:

"Our members will warmly welcome the government's decision to retain existing qualifications while the new suite of V level qualifications is phased in.

"Colleges and schools can now make the most of this period of stability and certainty to ensure that tens of thousands of young people have an uninterrupted educational experience, while also engaging constructively and with focus in the design and rollout of V levels.

"We are pleased that a third qualification pathway will sit alongside A levels and T levels in the future. The changes announced to T levels today are also very welcome and should make it easier for more young people to study a T level and for schools and colleges to offer them."

Chief Regulator at Ofqual, Sir Ian Bauckham, said:

"All young people should have a post 16 pathway that is ambitious and prepares them for their future.

"Ofqual will ensure that the new post 16 qualifications announced by the government are well designed and will be valued by students, schools and colleges, universities and employers.

"They will provide high-quality pathways for young people making decisions about their futures."

Chief Exec of UUK Vivienne Stern MBE said:

"There is no single route into university and students should feel confident that when they get there, their previous qualifications will equip them with the academic and practical skills needed to go on to enter and thrive in the workforce.

"We look forward to working with the government to ensure V Levels open doors for young people.

"Through our Future Jobs programme, universities across the UK are listening to business leaders to ensure their offering continues to deliver real opportunity and prepares young people for the jobs of tomorrow."

The consultation response also includes details for providers on how to move to a reformed system. There will be a phased, sustainable approach for providers to transition to the reformed system. Legacy Level 3 qualifications that are equivalent to the size of around two A Levels, including BTECs, or smaller will have funding approval removed where T Levels exist. V Levels will be introduced in those areas.



North Warwickshire
Borough Council

Press Release

North Warwickshire Borough Council Launches £2 Million Prosperity Fund to Support Local Projects

North Warwickshire Borough Council has launched the North Warwickshire Prosperity Fund (NWPF), a new £2 million grant programme designed to support community, business, and local development projects across the borough.

The scheme was formally approved by councillors at the recent Executive Board meeting on Monday 23rd March 2026 and will open for applications from Wednesday 1st April 2026.

Building on the success of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) and Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF), which allocated £2,460,639 to more than 100 projects between 2022 and 2025, the NWPF aims to continue fostering prosperity in North Warwickshire communities.

The fund is open to a wide range of applicants, including town and parish councils, voluntary

sector organisations, and private sector entities.

Projects can apply for funding for up to two years, with all grants to be spent by 31 March 2028. There is no minimum or maximum funding amount.

The North Warwickshire Prosperity Fund represents a £2 million investment in the borough's future, supporting initiatives that improve quality of life, foster economic growth, and enhance local communities.

Councillor David Wright, Leader of the Council, said:

"The North Warwickshire Prosperity Fund will provide vital support for local organisations and groups, helping them deliver projects that benefit residents and strengthen our communities. We encourage all eligible organisations to apply and make a lasting impact in the borough."

For more information, including how to apply, visit: North Warwickshire Prosperity Fund

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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

Pype Hayes St Marys Church Hall, 5:30 & 7:00pm Maddy 07482 343018

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

NEW GROUP Kitts Green Kitts Green Church, 5:30pm Julie 07882 304964

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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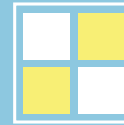
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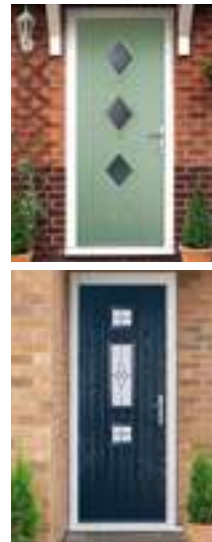
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North Warwickshire
Borough Council

Press Release

Local Businesses Celebrated at First North Warwickshire Small Business Awards



On Wednesday 25th March 2026, North Warwickshire Borough Council hosted their first ever Small Business Awards at The Belfry in Sutton Coldfield.

The event was proudly sponsored by London Northwestern Railway and brought together small businesses from across North Warwickshire for an evening of celebration and networking, recognising the vital contribution they make to the local community.

The North Warwickshire Small Business Awards celebrates amazing independent businesses. From bold ideas to tireless dedication, the awards recognise the passion, innovation, and hard work that turn dreams into reality.

Winners were selected by an independent panel, with awards presented by Councillor Debbie Bates, Mayor of North Warwickshire Borough Council and Councillor Margaret Bell.

It was a great night with opportunity to showcase all the local talent across North Warwickshire, and the Council are proud to show their support.

From the 36 shortlisted finalists, the following businesses were announced as this year's winners:

Best New Business Award

Simply Doughlicious

Business Service Award

Aspire and Thrive

Social Media & Website Award

Flowers by Chris

Shop Front Award

Sofia's Italian Deli & Kitchen

Customer Service Excellence Award

RSVP Celebrations

Young Entrepreneur Award

Faces Beauty Salon & Training Academy

Heart of Gold Award

Bee Bold Bee Beautiful

Workplace Wellbeing Award

Aspire and Thrive

Lifetime Achievement in Business Award

4 Church Street

Food & Drink Award

Rajrani Restaurant

Not for Profit Business Award

Middleton Hall and Gardens

Fastest Growing Small Business

MK Brow Academy

Leader of the Council, Councillor David Wright, said:

"It's important to celebrate and recognise our small businesses and I'm immensely proud that we have so many outstanding businesses across North Warwickshire. They bring character to our towns and villages, create local jobs, and drive the innovation that keeps our borough thriving.

The Council's first Small Business Awards ceremony was an outstanding success and a truly memorable evening. We're pleased to have hosted the awards and hope to continue them in the future. It was great to bring so many people together to celebrate their businesses and recognise their hard work and dedication."



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Reader travel



Steaming through Yorkshire & Settle to Carlisle Railway

Departing Mon 1 Jun '26

On this break we experience the preserved Embsay & Bolton Abbey Steam Railway and the Settle-Carlisle Railway, take a canal cruise through Skipton and also explore York, home to an array of fascinating sights plus the award-winning National Railway Museum.

SO MUCH INCLUDED...

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- ✓ 4 nights at the Corn Mill Lodge, Leeds (JG3 rating) with dinner & breakfast
- ✓ Entertainment some evenings
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- ✓ Cruise on the Leeds & Liverpool Canal
- ✓ Free time in Skipton & Carlisle
- ✓ Excursions to York & Grassington

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Balmoral Castle & Aberdeenshire

Departing Fri 5 Jun '26

Discover the Grampian Highlands with its striking granite skyline and the city of Aberdeen, the base for our break. Our itinerary takes us from the quaint village of Ballater, all the way to the historic Scottish residence of the Royal Family, Balmoral Castle.

SO MUCH INCLUDED...

- ✓ Return coach travel **from Solihull, Sutton Coldfield**
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Cllr Martin McCarthy, Castle Bromwich Ward (Solihull MBC)

April Update

Welcome to April in Castle Bromwich, our Gardens and many of our open spaces are beginning to bloom and our new trees are greening up, things are warming up weather wise and politically with All up Solihull council Elections set for the 7th May.

The Upcoming All-up Council elections are due to Ward boundary changes within the Solihull MBC Area, You will have 3 Votes.

On the 7th May you are able to choose three of the candidates on the ballot paper to be your councillor team that represent you and be available to you when you have issues or concerns about Castle Bromwich or the future of our area.

The Election is also about who you trust to run Solihull and to work to keep Council Tax under control.

Local Authority Ward Boundary Changes

Castle Bromwich Ward has unlike some areas has retained our name and has gained a few residents these are in Buckingham Road, Windsor Road, Balmoral Road, Kings Croft, Mey Coppice, one property on Windward way and a short stretch of Chester Road.

We have three elections every four years with one year being fallow. Any questions please do ask us.

Water Orton Road update

Residents have reported a noticeable improvement when the service through road was closed for the speed bump installation, some residents are sceptical of how effective this will be, let's see, if this does prove to be ineffective we will continue to push for improvements until speeding of through traffic abates.

Castle Bromwich Local Plan Development

Following the most recent meeting of the Castle Bromwich Society the Local plan update first draft is planned to be available by the end of April for the Committee members to evaluate prior to release on the society website.

Regular Councillor Surgery at Castle Bromwich Library

The next monthly surgery is scheduled for Monday the 13th of April (Due to the bank holiday) 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.

I will also be prepared to talk to you about NHS app and online GP surgery access.

Our councillor emails are martin.mccarthy@solihull.gov.uk
alan.feeney@solihull.gov.uk
and leslie.kaye@solihull.gov.uk

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Police News



Say goodbye to PCSO SMITH



Start of this month are very own PCSO Smith left the Atherstone & Coleshill SNT team.

'It has been a privilege to work at Coleshill Police Station for the past 4.5 years. During this time, I have had the opportunity to work alongside fantastic colleagues and meet many great people, all of whom have contributed to making my experience so rewarding. I have learned a great deal throughout my time in policing, gaining skills and knowledge that I will carry forward into my new role.

I am sincerely grateful to Warwickshire Police for the support, opportunities, and experiences I have been given. It has been an honour to serve and to be part of such a dedicated team.

To any young people aspiring to join the Police, I would encourage you to go for it. It is a challenging but incredibly rewarding career where you can make a positive difference in your community.'

Operations

OP Town Safe

As our continued commitment to keeping Atherstone town centre safe Atherstone SNT has been working with the parish council and CCTV panel in producing new signage for town.

We are pleased to say these are now fitted throughout the town centre along with roads entering Atherstone town just above the flower borders promoting the use of the retail radio network and CCTV in the town centre.



OP VAWG – Violence Against Women and Girls.

Operation Yard is a targeted policing initiative focused on reducing HGV-related crime at motorway service stations and freight hubs. These locations are essential rest points for drivers, but they're also vulnerable to offences such as fuel theft, load interference, vehicle break-ins, and organised criminal activity.

The purpose of Operation Yard is to:

- Protect HGV drivers and their cargo.
- Identify and disrupt offenders operating around service stations.
- Increase visibility and reassurance in high-risk areas.
- Gather intelligence linked to freight crime and organised networks.
- Work with partner agencies and service-station operators to improve safety.

Officers conduct patrols, speak with drivers, check vehicles linked to intelligence, and monitor behaviour around the services to spot early signs of criminal activity.

By focusing on the places where HGV drivers rest and refuel, Operation Yard aims to keep the road network safer, prevent costly thefts, and support those who play a vital role in keeping goods moving across the country.

Bobbies on the Beat Atherstone

On the 28/02/2026 Late night to early morning patrols have been carried out by PCSO Scott around residential and industrial estates in Atherstone town centre to combat car keyless thefts and burglaries.

Patrols have also been conducted around the M42 and M6 Corley services HGV parking bays to deter freight theft.

We still have free faraday pouches available kindly funded by the community safety partnership team from NWBC.

If you are a resident and live in the North Warwickshire area, please email the team with your name and address to nwe.snt@warwickshire.police.uk.



02/03/2026 officers from Atherstone SNT recovered this BMW from

Florence Close after concerns were raised about it being driven around the town with no insurance, tax or mot.



On the afternoon of 02/03/2026, thanks to the vigilance of our local community, officers from Atherstone were able to recover a vehicle that had been stolen from Nuneaton last night.

After a member of the public reported a suspicious-looking vehicle, our officers quickly attended and confirmed it had been stolen. We're pleased to say the owner has now been notified and will soon be reunited with his vehicle.

This is a great example of how important the public are in helping us keep our communities safe. Your calls, your information, and your willingness to speak up really do make a difference.

If you see something that doesn't look right, please don't hesitate to report it.



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



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.

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



Mother Teresa: Not all of us can

do great things, but we can do small things with great Love.

Jesus made the ultimate, once-for-all sacrifice by dying on the cross to atone for humanity's sins. Mary stood at the foot of the cross, she must have experienced profound sorrow, a crushing feeling too much to bear, but still she stood there never leaving, as she watched her son die; her trust in God unwavering. Laughter, joy, sorrow and pain are all wrapped up in moments, as we watch our children grow, but without any doubt being a mother is a challenge, however old your child is, but such a joy.

During Lent we celebrated Mothering Sunday to say a huge thank you to our mothers and carers for all they do for us. Sourcing daffodils proved difficult this year, so we've decided to expand our display by planting more ourselves to avoid the same issue next year. "Grow our own" feels like the most practical solution.

On Saturday 28th March we held our Easter Tea and Bonnet parade in memory of Janet Smith. Smiling faces and games of Bingo with jelly and ice cream made for an afternoon of fun and laughter. Judging the bonnets was certainly a challenge as they were all amazing. So much talent; see what you think!



On Saturday 4th April we came together to get the Church ready for Easter Sunday. Preparations for the 8am Sunrise Service and breakfast, transforming the Church with flowers. It was a hive of activity. There can be joy in the simple things and doing it together makes it very special.

Our next event will be Saturday 16th May with a Quiz starting at 4pm including a fish and chip supper (already provisionally booked). Tickets will be on sale shortly at £8.50 each. You can find further details on our Facebook page and in our noticeboards or just give the Church a ring if interested.

We were delighted to welcome Smith Wood Academy to St Clements at the end of April. Welcoming children from local schools is something we have been proud to do as a Church for many years. Their young voices and laughter always create a wonderful "feel-good" atmosphere, whatever the weather.

Our annual trip this year will take place on Saturday 18th July to Gloucester Cathedral, with Johnson's Coach booked. This outing follows the wonderful example set by Janet Smith, who for many years brought such care and dedication to organising our trips. As a former Guider, she had a real gift for making every event, large or small, run smoothly. We hope to honour her memory and continue her tradition in a way that would make her proud.

Last year's visit to Weston was certainly memorable, not least for being one of the hottest days of the year! This time, we're hoping for dry weather—just perhaps a little less heat.

We were pleased to welcome some new faces to our Forget Me Not Memory Café on the 26th March which we hold on the 2nd and 4th Thursday of each month from 1pm to 2.30 pm. Bird Bingo a new game for us proved a great success. If you are a carer or have someone with memory loss then just come along to St Clements. You will be most welcome and the tea, coffee and cake isn't so bad either!

Our Mary Bridgeman Tea and Coffee Lounge will be inspected by Environmental Health Solihull on 20th April, as part of the routine two-yearly review. At our last inspection, we were awarded a Level 5 rating. All our volunteers hold current Level 2 Food Hygiene certificates, and our records are fully up to date. We are hopeful of another positive outcome.

Members of St Clements will be supporting Castle Bromwich Parish Council with Party in the Park on Saturday 27th June, all details are on their website.

If you want to more about St Clement's, our Services, how to arrange a baptism or wedding, our work in the community or events, you can get in touch in the usual way by:

We would love to hear from you. Please get in touch for more information:

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Atherstone bids to put its Culture and Heritage on the regional map by entering Town of Culture 2028



The historic market town of Atherstone has officially announced its intention to enter the Town of Culture 2028 competition, marking an exciting new chapter for the community as it celebrates its rich heritage, vibrant cultural life, and ambitious vision for the future.

The UK Town of Culture competition is a national programme that recognises towns with a strong cultural identity and ambitious plans for arts, heritage and community activity. The winning town receives funding and national recognition to deliver a year long programme of cultural events, helping to boost tourism, support local businesses and strengthen community pride.

Led by The Atherstone Partnership, alongside North Warwickshire Borough Council, Atherstone Town Council,

community groups and cultural organisations, the bid will showcase Atherstone's unique identity, from its centuries-old traditions to its growing creative scene. The initiative aims to bring together residents, artists, businesses, and young people to celebrate what makes the town special while creating new opportunities for cultural participation and economic growth.

The Town of Culture programme recognises towns that demonstrate a strong commitment to culture and creativity, using arts, heritage, and community engagement to inspire local pride and attract visitors. The competition invites towns from across the United Kingdom to submit proposals showing how culture can help shape their future and bring communities together.

Atherstone sits on the ancient Roman road Watling Street, a key route through Britain for nearly 2,000 years. Roman forces once travelled this road during the era of Boudica's revolt, and in 1485 King Richard III is believed to have stayed in Atherstone on the eve of the Battle of Bosworth.

The town has a long history of cultural celebration and is renowned for its annual

Shrove Tuesday Ball Game, a centuries-old tradition that continues to draw crowds from across the region. It hosts a proud heritage of inclusive sport and wellbeing, where community clubs, open spaces, and local initiatives have long brought people of all ages and abilities together to stay active, healthy, and connected. Alongside historic landmarks, independent businesses, and active community organisations, Atherstone offers a vibrant foundation for a year-long cultural programme.

The Town of Culture 2028 bid will focus on three key themes:

- Heritage and Tradition – celebrating Atherstone's historic character and long-standing customs
- Creativity and Community – supporting local artists, makers, and performers
- Future Generations – creating opportunities for young people to shape the town's cultural future

The current stage of the process is an expression of interest, which allows towns to outline their cultural strengths and ambitions. If shortlisted, Atherstone would develop a full bid with partners across the town.

Local leaders say the bid is about more than winning the title, it is about bringing the community together and building a lasting cultural legacy.

Chairman of Atherstone Partnership, Laura Donnelly, said:

"Entering the Town of Culture 2028 competition is a fantastic opportunity to shine a spotlight on Atherstone. Our town has an incredible story to tell, and this bid will celebrate our heritage while encouraging creativity, innovation, and community pride."

If successful, Atherstone would host a year long programme of festivals, exhibitions, performances, and community activities in 2028, placing the town firmly on the cultural map of the region.

There is a Town of Culture Survey available on Visit Atherstone's website, where residents can explain what Atherstone means to them, which can be used towards the application for the Town of Culture competition. Feedback from residents will play an important role in shaping the town's bid, helping organisers demonstrate the strength of community support and the ideas people have for Atherstone's cultural future.

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By Coach from Solihull, Sutton Coldfield

Reader travel



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Departing Sun 21 Jun '26

Have you always wanted to take a peek behind the historic walls of Norfolk's Sandringham? Well now is your chance! Follow in the footsteps of royalty, discover the stone town of Stamford and wander through the ancient seaport of King's Lynn on this break.

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Interiors & Decorating



Platinum Hints and Tips

Spring is one of the most inspiring times of year to refresh your home. As the days grow longer and natural light floods in, it becomes the perfect opportunity to rethink your interior design, introduce lighter colours, and embrace a renewed sense of space and comfort. In the UK, where winter interiors often lean towards darker tones and heavier textures, spring invites a shift towards brightness, freshness, and subtle vibrancy. Here are some thoughtful and practical suggestions for interior design, painting, and decorating to help you make the most of the season.

Embrace a Lighter Colour Palette

One of the simplest yet most effective ways to transform your home for spring is through colour. Swap out deep winter hues for softer, lighter shades. Think warm whites, soft creams, pale greys, and gentle pastels such as sage green, blush pink, or powder blue. These tones reflect natural light beautifully and create an airy, open feel.

If you are considering repainting, feature walls in muted spring shades can add character without overwhelming the room. Alternatively, colour drenching—painting walls, skirting boards, and even ceilings in the same soft tone—can create a cohesive and calming look that feels modern and fresh.

Refresh Walls with Paint or Wallpaper

Spring is an ideal time to tackle decorating projects like repainting or adding wallpaper. If your walls have taken on wear and tear over winter, a fresh coat of paint can instantly revitalise a room. Opt for durable, washable paints, especially in high-traffic areas such as hallways and kitchens.

Wallpaper is also making a strong comeback in UK interiors. Floral patterns, botanical prints, and nature-inspired designs are particularly suited to spring. Consider using wallpaper on a single accent wall or in smaller spaces like a downstairs loo or alcove to introduce pattern without overwhelming the space.

Maximise Natural Light

With longer daylight hours, it is important to make the most of natural light. Start by replacing heavy curtains with lighter fabrics such as linen or cotton. Sheer curtains can soften the light while still allowing it to fill the room.

You might also consider rearranging furniture to ensure windows are not blocked. Mirrors are another effective tool; placing a mirror opposite or adjacent to a window can reflect light and make a room feel brighter and more spacious.

Incorporate Natural Materials

Spring interiors benefit greatly from the inclusion of natural materials. Wood, rattan, wicker, and stone can all help bring a sense of the outdoors inside. Consider swapping out accessories such as lampshades, baskets, or side tables for pieces made from these materials.

Textiles also play a role. Replace heavier winter throws and cushions with lighter fabrics like cotton or linen. Subtle textures, such as waffle weaves or embroidered details, can add interest without adding visual weight.

Introduce Greenery and Florals

Nothing says spring quite like fresh greenery and flowers. House-plants not only enhance the aesthetic of a room but can also improve air quality and boost mood. Easy-to-care-for plants such as snake plants, pothos, or peace lilies are ideal for beginners.

Fresh flowers, whether from a local market or your own garden, can be used to create simple yet striking displays. Tulips, daffodils, and hyacinths are classic spring choices in the UK. Even a small vase on a bedside table or kitchen counter can make a noticeable difference.

Update Soft Furnishings

Soft furnishings offer a quick and cost-effective way to update your interiors without committing to major changes. Swap out cushion covers, throws, and rugs to reflect the season. Opt for lighter colours, playful patterns, or subtle stripes. Spring is also a good time to reassess your bedding. Lighter duvets, breathable sheets, and fresh pillowcases can improve comfort as temperatures begin to rise. Consider layering textures to maintain cosiness while keeping things light.

Declutter and Reorganise

Spring cleaning is more than just a tradition—it is an opportunity to reassess your space. De-cluttering can have a significant impact on how your home feels. Remove items that no longer serve a purpose and organise belongings to create a sense of order.

Storage solutions such as baskets, shelving units, and multifunctional furniture can

help maintain a tidy environment. A well-organised space not only looks better but also contributes to a calmer, more relaxed atmosphere.

Refresh Outdoor-Indoor Connections

In many UK homes, the transition between indoor and outdoor spaces becomes more important in spring. If you have a garden, patio, or balcony, consider how your interior design can complement it. Use similar colour schemes or materials to create a seamless flow.

Position seating near windows or doors that open to outdoor areas. Adding plants near these spaces can blur the boundary between inside and out, enhancing the overall sense of freshness.

Consider Subtle Decorative Updates

Small decorative changes can have a big impact. Swap out artwork for pieces that reflect spring themes, such as landscapes, florals, or abstract designs in lighter tones. Change lampshades, update photo frames, or introduce new decorative objects like vases or ceramics.

Even scent can play a role in interior design. Candles or diffusers with fragrances such as citrus, lavender, or fresh linen can enhance the seasonal atmosphere.

Focus on Sustainable Choices

Sustainability is increasingly important in UK homes. When updating your interiors, consider eco-friendly options. Choose paints with low volatile organic compounds (VOCs), invest in quality

pieces that will last, and consider upcycling or repurposing existing furniture.

Shopping locally or supporting independent makers can also reduce environmental impact while adding unique character to your home.

Plan Larger Projects Thoughtfully

If you are considering more significant renovations, such as updating a kitchen or bathroom, spring can be a good time to start planning. Focus on timeless designs with a nod to seasonal freshness—light cabinetry, natural stone surfaces, and simple, elegant fixtures.

However, it is important to balance trends with longevity. While spring-inspired updates can refresh your home, choosing designs that will remain appealing throughout the year ensures your efforts are worthwhile.

Final Thoughts

Spring offers a natural opportunity to breathe new life into your home. By embracing lighter colours, natural materials, and thoughtful decorative changes, you can create a space that feels fresh, welcoming, and aligned with the season.

Whether you undertake a full redecoration or simply update a few key elements, even small changes can make a meaningful difference.

Ultimately, the goal is to create an environment that reflects both the energy of spring and your personal style—a place where you can enjoy the brighter days ahead in comfort and harmony.



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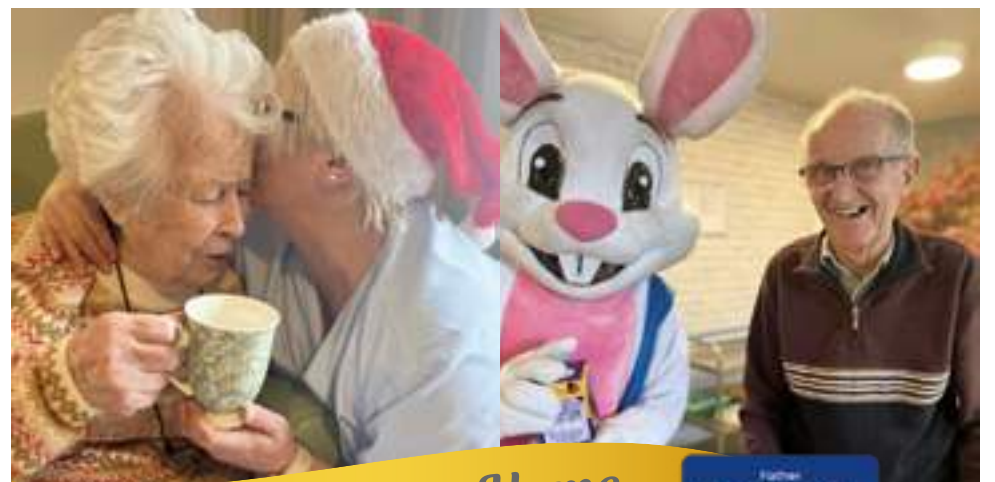
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Castle Bromwich Library Book Club

The Littlest Library by Poppy Alexander

Jess Metcalf is perfectly happy with her quiet, predictable life - it's just the way she likes it. But when her beloved grandmother passes away and she loses her job at the local library, her life is turned upside-down. Packing up her grandmother's books, she moves to a tiny cottage in a charming country village. To her surprise, Jess finds herself the owner of an old red telephone box, too - and she soon turns it into the littlest library around! It's not long before the books are borrowed and begin to work their magic - somehow, they seem to be bringing the villagers together once more. Maybe it's finally time for Jess to follow her heart and find a place to call home?

What a heart-warming book about community, friendship, courage, second chances, family, and romance. I would highly recommend a read but have some tissues near because it really pulls on your heartstrings.

Review by Castle Bromwich Library member



Maybe Tomorrow by Penny Parkes

Jamie Matson had once enjoyed a wonderful life working alongside her best friend, organising adventures for single-parent families, and her son Bo's artistic flair a source of pride rather than concern. She hadn't been prepared to lose her business, her home, and her friend. Not all in one dreadful year. And now she finds herself reeling - rebuilding her world, with Bo at its heart - swallowing her pride and asking for help. Jamie certainly hadn't expected to find such hope and camaraderie in the queue at her local Food Bank - thrown together with an unlikely and colourful group of people - all of them struggling to get by, yet still determined to reclaim their lost careers and agency over their lives. Even if just choosing their own groceries again is a goal they can all share.

A beautifully written book about courage, hope and resilience.

The story and characters will touch your heart and will stay with you for a long time.

Review by Castle Bromwich Library member



Flamingo by Rachel Elliott

Sherry and Leslie and their daughters, Rae and Pauline - and Eve and her son Daniel. Sherry loves her husband, Leslie. She also loves Eve. It couldn't have been a happier summer. But then Eve left and everything went grey. Now Daniel is all grown-up and broken. And when he turns up at Sherry's door, it's almost as if they've all come home again. But there's still one missing. Where is Eve? And what, exactly, is her story?

A lovely story full of feeling and expression. It is about love, kindness and being around people that accept you for who you are. A wonderful read that settles the mind & makes you reflect on the deeper meanings of life. I really didn't want this book to end.

Review by Castle Bromwich Library member



About Us by Sinéad Moriarty

Alice and Niall used to be lovers, best friends and parents, in that order. Now they're no longer on the same page or even reading from the same book. Ann thought when she and Ken retired, it would be their second spring. Instead, it feels more like an icy winter. Orla is falling in love with boyfriend Paul, but her complicated past makes her unsure if she can ever be intimate with anyone. Three couples find themselves telling a stranger about the most private part of their lives - their hopes, their disappointments, their awkward realisations. Can they learn to be honest with each other? And what life-changing decisions will be made when they do?

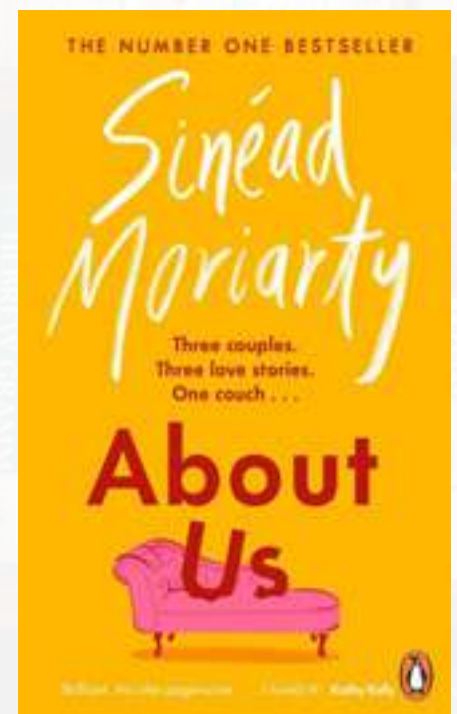
This is such an interesting book!

It made me laugh and cry. The

characters are so well described you feel you know them personally. There is so much emotion as you read about what each couple is going through.

It will completely draw you in - highly recommended.

Review by Castle Bromwich Library member





St Mary and St Margaret Church

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Whats On

The Coffee Pot Bereavement Group

Monday 13th April

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

8th & 22nd April

10.00 - 11.30am Community Hall

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

Soup & a Roll Lunch

Wednesday 8th April

12.00 - 1.30pm Community Hall

Join us for our monthly Soup & a Roll Lunch for a £1.50 donation, on every 2nd Wednesday of the month following our Family Service and Wednesday Drop In

Mothers Union Friendship Afternoon

Wednesday 15th April

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



Family Easter Services

Friday 3rd April

10am - Cafe Worship Good Friday

Interactive worship with crafts & hot cross buns in the Community Hall

Sunday 5th April

11am - All Age Easter Sunday
(with Childrens Easter trail in grounds weather permitting)

Upcoming Services

Thursday 2nd April

Maundy Thursday

7.30pm service followed by watch until 10pm

Friday 3rd April

Good Friday

10am Cafe Worship (Community Hall)

12pm Good Friday service (Church)

Sunday 5th April

Easter Sunday

11am All Age Communion with Baptism

Sunday 12th April

9.30am Parish Communion & Messy Worship for families

Sunday 19th April

11am Sung Eucharist
(NO CAFE WORSHIP)

Wednesday 22nd April

9.30am Family Communion

Sunday 26th April

9.30am Parish Communion & Messy Worship for families



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- ✓ Entertainment some evenings
- ✓ Excursions to Whitby, North Yorkshire Moors (Goathland & Pickering) & York

Optional excursion to Beverley & Filey (£12pp)

5 Days by Coach only £459
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Llandudno & Scenic Snowdonia

Departing Mon 24 Aug '26

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Isle of Wight Weekend

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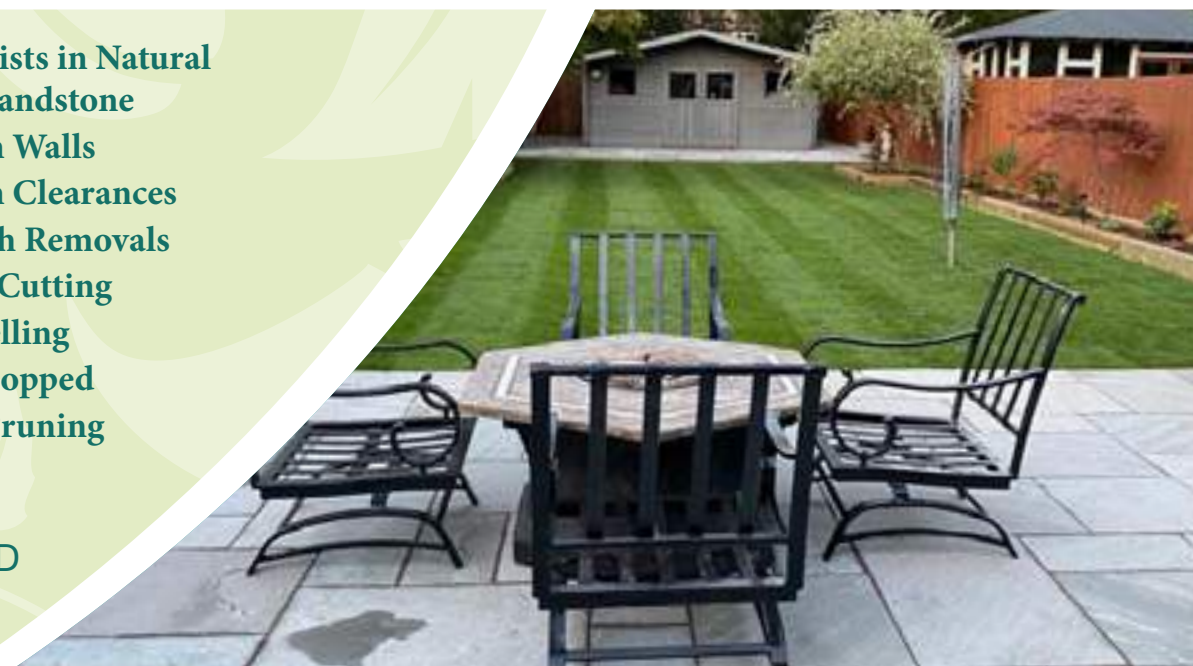
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Nuneaton and Bedworth to get three new playgrounds with £270k government investment

Families in Nuneaton and Bedworth will soon be able to enjoy three new playgrounds, after the announcement of £270,000 in funding from the Labour government.

The money is part of an £18m allocation to 66 councils across the country that are most in need of support, with projects set to be completed in two years' time.

The investment is the latest in a string of exciting announcements by the Labour government and Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council that will benefit the local area, including £20 million Pride in Place funding for both Bedworth and Camp Hill in Nuneaton, £1.5 million in further Pride in Place investment, and the new Bedworth Physical Activity Hub having recently opened its doors.

Labour Leader of Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council, Steve Hey, said:

"Our Labour council is working hard to revitalise our parks and public spaces across Nuneaton and Bedworth, so this new government funding is a huge shot in the arm for those efforts.

"Families with children deserve fantastic free green spaces to relax and enjoy themselves in their local area, so I'm really excited to start work immediately with communities across Nuneaton and Bedworth to hear where and how they would like to see this money spent."

Rachel Taylor MP, Labour MP for North Warwickshire and Bedworth, said:

"This is fantastic news for Bedworth and a really important investment from our Labour government. Over the last six months more than 1,500 Bedworth residents have been consulted about the £20 million Believe in Bedworth regeneration project. They told us that the decline of green spaces and the lack of things to do for families with children are among their biggest priorities.

"This funding is yet another example of how Bedworth is finally seeing the investment it deserves after years of neglect under the Conservatives, with a brand-new playground being added to the list of exciting projects to look forward to over the coming months."

Jodie Gosling, Labour MP for Nuneaton and Bedworth said:

"I've heard from countless families in Nuneaton about the need for better, safer places for children and young people to play.

"This funding is a direct response to those conversations. It represents a real investment in our Borough's future and a commitment to giving every child the chance to grow up with high-quality local facilities. Strong communities are built on spaces where families can come together, and these new playgrounds will play an important part in that."

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Local Sports



Coleshill Town F.C.

A Season Forged in Fight, Flair and Pure Heart

Coleshill Town's recent run has served up everything that makes following The Coleman an addiction: late drama, derby delight, penalty heroics and a statement win over the league leaders. Here's how the story has unfolded from the terraces.

Belper Town 1-1 Coleshill Town

Belford's Brilliance Keeps The Coleman Alive

Coleshill's trip to Belper began with backs to the wall, but goalkeeper Cameron Belford produced a string of superb saves to keep the hosts at bay. Belper eventually broke through on 29 minutes, yet the second half belonged to Coleshill.

On the hour, Ben Usher-Shipway finished a flowing move to level the game, and from there The Coleman pushed for a winner. McSkeane and Gyasi both went close, but a point felt earned and deserved thanks to Belford's heroics.

Basford United 1-2 Coleshill Town

Makeshift Defence, Maximum Spirit

With no recognised centre-backs available, Coleshill arrived in Nottingham with a patched-up back line but a fearless attitude. A trademark Usher-Shipway long throw caused chaos on 26 minutes, and Tristan Dunkley reacted quickest to stab home.

Ten minutes into the second half, emergency centre-half Gio Dainty bundled in a second from another set-piece. Basford pulled one back, but Coleshill's organisation and sheer graft secured a superb away win.

Wellingborough 1-1 Coleshill Town

Four Reds, One Debut Hero

A wild afternoon saw early chances at both ends before a worrying injury to Wellingborough's forward. Moments before half-time, McSkeane saw red, leaving Coleshill with ten.

Wellingborough struck on 73 minutes, and a late flare-up saw two more red cards, including Carter-Byrne.

But deep into stoppage time, Dunkley was fouled in the box and debutant Ryan Boothe stepped up. Ice in his veins. He buried the penalty to send The Coleman home with a point that felt like a win.

Coleshill Town 1-1 Rugby Town (Coleshill win 4-2 on penalties)

Marvellous Levels It, Cam and Bassit Seal the Shootout
Rugby took the lead after the break, but Coleshill hit back quickly when Marvellous Onabirekhanlen met Usher-Shipway's driven cross.

With chances at both ends, the tie went to penalties.

Coleshill were flawless from the spot, Belford saved Rugby's fourth, and Bassit Mandey slotted the winner to send The Coleman into the Birmingham Senior Cup quarter-finals.

Long Eaton 1-1 Coleshill Town

Rowe Rescues a Point

Missing key players and forced into unfamiliar positions, Coleshill struggled for rhythm. Long Eaton took the lead from a scrappy corner, but on 72 minutes Marvellous slipped in Theo Rowe, who saw his first effort saved before looping a header over the keeper.

A gritty, hard-earned point.

Sutton Coldfield Town 0-1 Coleshill Town

Derby Day Belongs to The Coleman

A tense, physical derby was settled by a single moment of quality Dan Brookes arriving to fire home the winner.

Coleshill defended superbly, fought for every ball, and claimed the bragging rights in a fixture that always matters.

Coleshill Town 2-1 Carlton Town

A Statement Win Over the League Leaders

Pack Meadow was bouncing as Coleshill stunned top-of-the-table Carlton with a blistering start.

After just 43 seconds, Bassit Mandey smashed home a half-volley.

Minutes later, relentless pressing forced a mistake and Mason Rees coolly slotted in for 2-0.

Carlton pulled one back late on, but Belford's earlier full-stretch save proved decisive as The Coleman held firm for a huge victory.

ON THE HORIZON

Birmingham Senior Cup – Away at Leamington

Coleshill now head to Leamington in the next round of the Birmingham Senior Cup a massive test, but with momentum building and belief growing, The Coleman will travel confident and hungry.

Away Day at St Neots – Coach Places Available

The club is running a supporters' coach for the upcoming trip to St Neots.

Seats are available a perfect chance to get behind the lads, make some noise, and turn an away ground into Pack Meadow South.

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The season is heating up and Coleshill Town are right in the thick of it.



Paddy's back at it

The sun was shining and Paddy was back at it on 14th March 2026, taking on the challenge of beating Exclusive World Record Holder Association R. Hemavardhan (Taekwondo martial artist and world recorder holder, India) who was the holder of most full-contact, one leg knee strikes in 1 minute. The target to beat was 95 and Doyle achieved 117 in sixty seconds, taking the record for GB.

This was followed immediately by an attempt to set four Masters' Challenge Records

Doyle chose to set the bar for most punch strikes in 30 seconds, setting the standard to beat of 146 in 30 seconds.

He then completed a further three Masters' Challenge Records of most martial arts knee strikes (alternate legs) in 30 seconds, setting the bar of 62

This was immediately followed by most martial arts knee strikes in 30 seconds (one leg only) of 70 and then Doyle set a fourth Masters' Record of most martial arts high knee strikes in 30 seconds (alternate legs with foot flat on floor following each knee strike) of 52 in 30 seconds. Rules stipulated that all knee strike record / challenges, that the striking knee must be returned to floor

with the whole foot firmly placed on the mat.

The venue for all these challenges was Stamina's 1-2-1 Self Defence Boxing Gym, Coleshill, Warwickshire, this takes Doyle's record of documented challenge attempts and world records covering 13 different sporting disciplines tally to an amazing 1,024.



Marston Lakes Golf Club Announces Season-Long Silver Jubilee Celebrations



Marston Lakes Golf Club is proud to announce a comprehensive calendar of events for its Silver Jubilee, marking 25 years (2001–2026) of golfing excellence, enjoyment and community spirit. Throughout 2026, the club will host a series of commemorative tournaments, social gatherings, and charity challenges designed to honour its history and welcome new members.

The celebrations officially tee off in April 2026 with the Jubilee Celebration Day. This marquee event will feature an all-sections 18-hole scramble, followed by a post-match jubilee launch and raffle. The summer months will see a competitive "Silver Salver" series, including dedicated

tournaments for all sections of the golf club.

Another highlight of the season includes a gruelling endurance challenge consisting of 25x9 rounds (225 holes) on the Lakes in just two days. Two of our members will be taking this challenge on at the end of June, in support of the golf club and local Alzheimer's charity, TBC.

Beyond the golf course, the club will host a number of family-focused events such as a Quiz Night in May, a family BBQ in June, and a Ladies' Afternoon Tea in July. The celebrations will culminate in October, with an Invitational Jubilee 18-hole Scramble and ceremony for past members and captains of all sections.

"Our goal for this landmark year is to acknowledge everyone who helped establish this club while providing every member an opportunity to participate and get involved. As well as looking forward to the next 25 years," the planning committee stated.

For more information on membership or the golf club, please contact the Pro Shop or visit our social media pages. @marstonlakesgc – Instagram

Water Orton & District Tennis Club



Hello everyone, our new 2026 season has now started and we have now played our first Spring League matches. New Membership enquiries are now being welcomed with spaces available for our Ladies and Men's sections currently up for grabs.

Our Membership fees will remain the same as last season as there has been no increase over the past two years. In addition to welcoming established players we also welcome adult beginners and improvers. Coaching groups are run for adult beginners, improvers and also Cardio Tennis for improving adults fitness. We welcome everyone, regardless of tennis ability and standard of play. Our coaching team will help you improve and raise your game as needed. We also have spaces for junior members and youth players. Nothing pleases us more than to see our juniors rise through the ranks and end up playing in our Ladies and Men's Leagues. So come and join us, improve your fitness and make new friends.

For Membership enquiries, please e-mail paul.messenger82@hotmail.co.uk and he will forward all the required information back to you straight away.

Red Roses Star Inspires at Old Saltleians Women's Rugby Session



The visit proved to be a huge success, with players thoroughly enjoying the experience and taking away lessons they can build on in future fixtures. Old Saltleians Women's Rugby Club was delighted to host such an accomplished athlete and is extremely grateful for the time and expertise she shared.

Sessions like this continue to play a vital role in developing the women's game, and the team looks forward to building on what they learned during a memorable evening of rugby.

Old Saltleians Women's Rugby Club was proud to welcome England Red Roses international Amy Cokayne to a recent training session, delivering an evening that left players inspired and full of enthusiasm.

The session focused on key elements of game play, with an emphasis on structure, communication, and decision-making under pressure. Players were given a valuable opportunity to experience elite-level coaching, gaining insight into the standards required at the highest level of the sport.

Throughout the evening, Amy worked closely with the squad, offering guidance, encouragement, and practical advice to help develop both individual skills and overall team cohesion. Her energy and approachable manner helped create a positive and engaging atmosphere, ensuring everyone got the most out of the session.



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