Council says it's ready for any weather

Gritters are on standby in the Black Country in preparation for a long and cold winter, with some authorities offering extra parking to cover pay and display cars.

Civil redundancies in Dudley were “fully paid for” anything the weather throws at them.”

The remaining 464 staff voted voluntary redundancy which was supported by senior management and agreed by council.

Projects such as a new store in Selly Oak were approved by Dudley Group of Hospitals Charity, raising much needed funds for their Leukemia patients and The Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Families Association (SSAFA).

Council across the Black Country say they will be checking forecats on a daily basis to make sure the predicted freezing conditions and now has 6,950 tons of rock salt stockpiled a third more than last year.

Gritting trucks in Wyre Forest went on standby last weekend – ready to swing into action if winter sneaks up.

A total of 460 staff have been shed by Dudley Council as part of cost-cutting measures to make sure the roads of Sandwell can be kept safe.

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New Tesco superstore welcomes first shoppers

Its slogan may be Every Little Helps but there is nothing little about Tesco’s new Dudley superstore which opened its doors this week.

Covering a space of 440,000 sq ft, the sprawling Tesco Extra on Burnt Tree Island is a new landmark for the borough.

Thousands of shoppers have passed through the doors of the new £27 million store since it opened on Monday.

And they have given it their seal of approval. The supermarket includes a Domino Pizzas, beauty salon and a dedicated technology zone selling TVS, iPods and other equipment.

There is also a Timpson dry cleaners and tailors and a bank with ATM machine and a cash machine.

The first customers through the doors at 8am on Monday were retired fireman Dave Birch and his wife Ruth, who had paced outside the store since 5am waiting for it to open.

The couple from Common Road, Wombourne, were given a round of applause by staff gathered on the shop floor as they entered one of the store’s escalators.

They were given a bottle of champagne, a box of chocolates, flowers and a Domino’s voucher to mark the occasion.

Regular

Mr Birch, 51, said they had been regular shoppers at the old Tesco supermarket on the site which closed in January to make way for the new store.

“The scale of the new building is amazing,” he said. “It will mean a lot for this area, both in terms of jobs and simply bringing people into this area.

Mr Birch, 51, said they had been regular shoppers at the old Tesco supermarket on the site which closed in January to make way for the new store.

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The first shoppers at the Tesco store start filling their trollies.

The technology zone in the Dudley superstore.

The addition to the Dudley skyline is the Tesco extra superstore on Burnt Tree Island.

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Noel makes big deal of Betty’s surprise

Noel Edmonds gave a Wordesley great-grandmother the shock of her life when he turned up at her social club – and revealed she was to be filmed live on Deal or No Deal.

Unexpected Betty Burns was at a dance class at the Royal British Legion club in Kingswinford when the television presenter crept up behind her.

The 78-year-old and her pals travelled down to Bristol on Monday of last week for what was only the second in a series of shows recorded in front of a live audience.

She appeared on the hit programme the next day – but despite having several chances at taking home thousands of pounds, she ended up with £250 after swapping her box with the banker’s.

Dance

Edmonds turned up to surprise Betty the previous Monday. Mrs Burns, of Wordesley, was preparing for a weekly sequence dance group she helps run at the club in Summerhill, which is regularly attended by more than 30 members.

The mother of two, who has been married to husband Frank for 60 years, was getting the music ready for the session when Noel walked in through a back door. He greeted her with the words “Are you Betty Burns who loves Deal Or No Deal?” to which she replied “I do.”

He then turned her around and she hugged him, before he asked her: “Would you like to be on the show?”

Betty, who is now back at home, said: “Somewhere up there I know all along that I would have £250, so I’m not disappointed. I have loved every minute and nobody can take this away from me.”

Betty Burns and husband Frank who recently celebrated 60 years of marriage

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Noel reveals that Betty has just £250 in her chosen box
A controversial one-way system in Dudley could be scrapped within weeks as residents step up their campaign against it. Residents say the system in Parkway Road, Dudley has created huge queues and left the area gridlocked.

The new plans are to be advertised this week and hundreds of residents are expected to contact Dudley Council in support. Once that is in place highways chiefs will look to start working on getting the signs and markings removed to free up traffic in the town.

Locals have fought ever since the system was installed a year ago. They collected a 600-name petition and complained to Government watchdog the Local Government Ombudsman.

Bill Chambers, who lives in nearby Fullbrook Road, has been leading protests.

Complained

Parkway Road was made one-way in January after some residents complained it was a rat run.

He claims emergency vehicles struggle to get through at peak times.

Mr Chambers wrote to the Ombudsman claiming the views of residents were not taken into account before the road was made one-way.

Queues are stretching along Grange Road, which joins with Parkway Road and runs from busy Salop Street. Motorists who used to cut through Parkway Road to Himley Road now have to make their way further up Grange Road.

He said: ‘We have shown if you keep fighting the people in charge will have to make changes.’

Councillor Patrick Harley, cabinet member for transportation, said: ‘In this case we have to remove the one-way system and if the road is made two-way traffic from Himley Road will be advertised.’

Volunteers at a Black Country cancer charity donned pink for the day to raise awareness of their monthly meetings.

About 30 women of all ages gather at The Breast Cancer Care group at Dudley Cancer Support on one-way scheme

### In the pink for campaign

Front, Marion Griffiths, with cancer specialist Dr Vijay Ganesh, donning pink at the Breast Cancer Care group at Dudley Cancer Support

Volunteers at a Black Country charity donned pink for the day to raise awareness of their monthly meetings.

About 30 women of all ages gathered at the Breast Cancer Care group at Dudley Cancer Support on Tuesday.

The Breast Cancer Care group’s volunteers give cancer sufferers the chance to speak to people in similar situations. Members, volunteers and staff all wore pink clothing to mark National Breast Cancer Awareness Month.

Mrs Griffiths, who was first diagnosed with breast cancer 21 years ago, said: ‘We do anything we can to make their lives a bit easier and it is so important to our members.’

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**Tesco close to starting work**

Plans to demolish part of a new extension of Stourbridge Town Hall have been lodged by Tesco as the firm moves closer to starting work on a new £50m distribution warehouse.

The application for listed building consent is the next stage in preparatory work needed before construction can start in the new year.

Under the £50m plan, Tesco is expected to build a major section of its new 1.2m sq ft distribution warehouse on the site of Stourbridge Town Hall. It will be demolished to create a 28m x 50m footprint, the same size as the ground floor of the Town Hall, plus a 59m x 7m roof space above. The multi-storey car park inPhillips Street will be demolished, as will a building and a small basement on Constitution Street.

Councillor Angus Adams, cabinet member for regeneration, said: “We are continuing discussions with Tesco in relation to specific timescales. While preparatory works will take place in the coming months, there will be no major work on the project until the new year.”

The scheme was given the go-ahead in February this year and will create 400 jobs. It is expected to be taking local traders an extra £30,000 a week.

Stourbridge Town Council will hold a public meeting in the next few weeks to make way for the development.

Councillor Bessey says there are looking at providing some services elsewhere to those who may lose their shops or be forced to move to make way for the development.
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24 December – lunch & dinner in the bar with your host; candlelit dinner; cabaret and light entertainment; light supper
25 December – morning Father Christmas visit, along with a gift during breakfast; Christmas drink and sing along in the bar at approximately 12.30pm; followed by Christmas dinner, fun and entertainment from 6.30pm; high tea in the evening; cabaret and entertainment; light supper
26 December – morning of leisure – why not visit the sales; light lunch; in the afternoon Free & Easy – play bowls or sing along candlelit dinner: tonight everyone can be in fancy dress – prizes for the winners; cabaret and entertainment; light supper
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On day 3 we travel through the New Forest on our return journey home.

3 Days • 2 Nights: 28 October from £99.95

Ciao time at restaurant
Co-owner Fred Bartram receives the keys to the Bellagio from designer Anthony Bowen

A £1 million Italian restaurant has opened in a Dudley retail park, creating 30 new jobs.

The new Bellagio restaurant has welcomed its first customers following months of planning and building work at Castle Gate Retail Park. The official opening was last week.

The building, which seats 150, has been built on the retail site rather than taking over an existing unit. It has taken six months to create and follows the successful opening of the first Bellagio restaurant in West Bromwich around 18 months ago. It includes a separate bar to accommodate 100.

Co-owner Fred Bartram said: “Developing this site has cost more than £1 million which is a significant investment in this part of Dudley. It is an excellent location and we hope the restaurant will bring in even more people to this part of the town.”

The building has been specially designed and built to meet the criteria we wanted and we are delighted with the new restaurant.”

Metal theft bid ‘like the Keystone Cops’
A would-be metal thief caught trying to steal sections of railway track from a disused line in the Black Country tried to give police the slip in scenes likened to a slapstick film, a court heard.

Pilfer wanted for Aaron Anslow at both ends of the mile-long Dudley Tunnel for an hour, but he still managed to escape. The 17-year-old father-of-two had been cutting up 50ft of track near the tunnel New Road, Netherton.

He was being chased by a 17-year-old accomplice, Dudley magnesium expert was told last week. Officers spotted a van parked nearby and passed-by reported seeing flashing lights in the tunnel.

After somehow escaping, the pair were found hiding behind a lorry in Castle Gate Park, Dudley.

When officers arrived at the tunnel at about 10.30am on December 28, Anslow’s Rufford Hall bull terrier barked and stopped them entering, said Miss Marcellina Mistriotto, prosecuting.

The shop then ran away when a police dog arrived. But, despite officers guarding each end, they were surrounded and the pair had managed to get out.

Later two canisters were found connected to a cutting torch along with other cutting equipment.

None of the pieces of track had been loaded on to the van.

Anslow, of Steadbourne Road, Dudley, claimed he had been asked to cut up track by a man he met in a pub.

Mr Dennis Dudley, defending, said: “It was like something from The Keystone Cops with police waiting outside a tunnel in a van which this dog somehow they got away.”

He said that the track had not been used for up to 30 years, but it had not been ruled out that it could be used again.

The 17-year-old was dealt with at a previous hearing. Anslow, who pleaded not guilty, was given a 12-month community order and told to carry out 150 hours' unpaid work and pay £250 costs.

A 4.1 million Italian restaurant has opened in a Dudley retail park, creating 30 new jobs.

The new Bellagio restaurant has welcomed its first customers following months of planning and building work at Castle Gate Retail Park. The official opening was last week.

The building, which seats 150, has been built on the retail site rather than taking over an existing unit. It has taken six months to create and follows the successful opening of the first Bellagio restaurant in West Bromwich around 18 months ago. It includes a separate bar to accommodate 100.

Co-owner Fred Bartram said: “Developing this site has cost more than £1 million which is a significant investment in this part of Dudley. It is an excellent location and we hope the restaurant will bring in even more people to this part of the town.”

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A housing estate will be built in the grounds of a stately home after a row over wildlife at the site was resolved.

A peaceful tunnel will be dug to accommodate reptiles and slowworms at Wordsley Manor when the houses are constructed.

The proposals were given the go-ahead by Dudley planning chiefs despite objections from more than 100 residents. And some councillors at a recent meeting said the manor house would be ‘decorated’ by the development. The scheme has faced stiff opposition from conservation body Natural England which said rare slow worms and bat roostings could be at risk.

Josh Hart and Darren Bills, aged four and 12, with commander Tom Edwards.
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Setting the records straight on borough’s £6m archives service

MOST of the windows are bricked up – but inside an uninviting shell of a building are some of the Black Country’s greatest treasures, dating back to a document signed by the Pope in 1182.

The documents housed in Dudley’s Archive and Local History Service give a fascinating insight into the lives of the borough’s citizens, businesses, churches and civic leaders throughout the turbulent centuries.

Now the archives themselves are at the centre of some controversy – with the service due to move into a £10 million state-of-the-art new premises next to the Black Country Living Museum, opposed by local campaigners who want to keep the records in the current base in a Victorian school building at Canley.

The gems stored within hundreds of thousands of documents at the school site include the accounts for Brierley crystal building, the ‘bull’ letter for a school, signed by Pope Lucius III in 1182; granting permission for Dudley’s Priory to be built.

Also in the original design by landscape gardener Capability Brown for the grounds of Himley Hall – and the original plan for a palace and hill of oak, drawn to the last halfpenny, for the Titanic anchor, built by Noah Bingley and Sons in Netherton.

The site is popular with members of the public who want to learn more about the history of the area and even their own family.

Census

Retired maintenance man Derek Knowles has spent the last 10 years “trying to find” his great great grandfather.

Mr Knowles aged 67, of Southfield Grove, Wolverhampton, visits the archives several times a year to check census and parish church records on microfilm in the hunt for more information about Thomas Knowles for a family tree he is building up.

“Once you’ve started on this trail it’s like a drug and you just can’t stop exploring,” says Mr Knowles.

At least 20 people a day visit the school centre and, at times, it is so busy that appointments have to be made for visitors to come and take a look.

Dudley planners gave the go-ahead last week and work on the Tipton Road site is expected to start January next year and to be open and in use by summer 2013.

But local urban groundwater is needed to get rid of potentially dangerous gases and contamination.

Councillors said the hi-tech building was much-needed to help with the town’s regeneration.

The Mount Pleasant School archives site will be redeveloped for housing. Pretenders including Dudley North MP Ian Austin, say the council had better hurry up to explore the possibility of extending and improving

the facilities at Mount Pleasant.

With loans repayments, the total cost to taxpayers of the £6 million building will be £13.8 million but council planning officer and archives staff say the school building does not provide the right environment to control the humidity and temperature required for the storage of old documents.

As approval is finally given for Dudley’s new archive centre, Louise JEW has a look at some of the treasures it will hold.

The oldest document in the archives, the papal bull, signed by Pope Lucius III in 1182, granting permission for Dudley’s Priory to be built.

Robert Leach looks through records at the Mount Pleasant centre.
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BATHROOM MAGIC

Claire Green admires the wedding dresses at Himley Hall
It is a venue fit for royalty, and now Himley Hall is aiming to tempt more couples to have their wedding at the historic setting. The Grade II listed house staged a wedding fair to showcase ideas for couples tying the knot. Arrangements of stalls were set up allowing people to browse for anything from wedding dresses to styling tips. Designers held a show for brides-to-be to see what dresses were on offer.

Lucy Jordan and Gareth Elwell, both aged 29, from Tack Farm Road, Wordsley, will be celebrating their big day at 18th century house next September. “We have always loved Himley Hall and its setting so it was a natural choice for us to have our wedding here,” said Lucy.

Love in the air at hall

A notorious pub that was forced to shut
for three months amid complaints over noise faces an uncertain future after cus-
tomers were banned from drinking outside the front or side of the premises. The Painters Arms in Cooseley will focus on serving food when it re-opens in November after being closed for three months for holding late-night discos. Owner Graham Watkins withdrew plans to open until 2am when locals objected.

However, he wanted conditions changed allowing drinkers to stand out at the front and smoke. Dudley Council licensing bosses rejected his application and 56-year-old Mr Watkins now says he could struggle to keep the business going if he fears customers will be put off.

He said there had been “confrontations” with punters when he had asked them not to take their drinks outside.

Although the pub has a beer garden at the back, Mr Watkins told councillors that it is difficult to access and claims people have always stood outside the front entrance.

Members of the council’s licensing sub-committee recently said they were concerned that groups of people congregating outside would create too much noise.

Review
But they agreed to review the application in six months after the pub has reopened.
Mr Watkins said: “There’s so many restrictions on the pub now that it is making it very difficult to make the business viable.

“I am trying to make the pub a success and we just need some help.

“With complaints about music, we can just turn it off, but it is hard to stop people talking when they stand outside.

“We will come back as a pub mainly selling food and see how it goes but it will be an uncertain six months.

“The pub is adjacent to residents’ homes and the new Extra Care retirement village being built in the town.

“The licensing committee forced the pub to close on August 10 and abide by numerous conditions before it could re-open following a string of complaints.

They include fitting an noise limiter to the pub’s jukebox.

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£120m plan goes to council next month

Plans to create up to 1,300 new jobs, 200 homes and a brand new supermarket as part of a £120 million scheme in Coalsley will be lodged next month, it has recently emerged.

Under the proposals, a 60-acre site stretching between the Birmingham New Road and Sedgley Road West will be redeveloped with new business units to house new and existing companies.

A community hall and full-size football pitch would also be created along with a food store, retail warehouse and a specialist shop.

A series of public meetings giving residents and businesses the chance to comment on the proposals were held last month.

Simon Lawrence, spokesman for the site’s owner, Shelton Group Investments, said the response to the Coalsley Eco-Park scheme had been positive and plans were expected to be submitted to Dudley Council next month.

“We had a very successful three days of exhibition events with around 120 visitors coming to view the plans and speak to the project team,” he said.

Investment

“The overwhelming majority of those who attended were positive about the plans and the general mood was one of welcoming the development in the area.”

The fact that Coalsley has seen very little of this type of investment over the years meant that the local community were excited to see something happening.

It was most universally recognised that the site could not continue as it is at the moment.

The site is currently home to around 30 manufacturing and light industrial business employing about 120 people on Newey Business Park, Wellington Industrial Estate and Bean Road Industrial Estates.

The number of firms has fallen over the past few years with large employers such as Blackburn Metals, relocating to other sites in the borough.

The site’s owners say between 400 and 500 new jobs would be created by the new food store and warehouse warehouse while around 300 posts would be made available during the construction phase. It is hoped the rest of the new jobs can come from the park attracting new businesses.

Shadhihur curries favour with judges

Eric Pickles MP, Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, chef Shadhihur Rahman from Raj Spice Restaurant with his son Wahidur and daughter Rabia and Rhon Frank Dobson MP

A CHERP from Rowley Regis has won a top award for his curries.

Chef Shadhihur Rahman, from the Raj Spices, Rowley Regis, was a special guest at Curry Life Magazine’s best Curry Chef Awards at The Cumberland Hotel in London.

Chef Shadhihur is no stranger to awards having previously won a British Curry Award and British Fusion Food Festival Award. His restaurant Raj Spices has been included in the UK Top 100 Restaurants.

He has been creating his particular brand of magic with authentic Bangladeshi cuisine at the popular venue in Halesowen Street for 14 years, having worked in Indian restaurants since the age of 16.

Excellence

Curry Life Magazine, widely regarded as the authoritative voice for thousands of Indian Restaurants in the UK, recognises excellence in the industry.

Chef Shadhihur said: “I am absolutely delighted. We’ve always been very proud of our food here at Raj Spices and it’s a great honour to be named the best Curry Chef in my area.”

More than 300 guests attended the prestigious awards ceremony at the Beswick, presided over by the guest speaker, Eric Pickles MP, Secretary of State for Communities, who said: “I can’t believe this has not been the case in Britain but it has found a welcome home here.”

“With over 12,000 establishments turning over £4.2 billion each year it’s not difficult to see that British curry is a great success story.”
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MP backs Commons campaign

The government’s economic policy is not working, a Black Country Labour MP has recently claimed.

Ian Austin has signed a Commons petition calling on the Government to defend manufacturing jobs and support economic regeneration in former industrial areas like the West Midlands.

The petition was launched following the recent announcement by defence giant BAE Systems that it makes 3,000 job cuts at a number of United Kingdom-wide sites including factories in Lancashire and East Yorkshire.

The company has already announced plans to axe its factory in Wolverhampton, which is set to close by the end of this week.

Evidence

Mr Austin said: ‘Job creation must be the Government’s number one priority.’

‘But the loss of 3,000 jobs at BAE Systems is further evidence that the Government’s economic policy is not working.

‘We need a plan of action to retain those key, advanced skills in the UK economy and to provide some certainty for industry.’

‘The defence industry is vital to ensuring the UK’s historic manufacturing heritage remains sustainable.’

‘Defence Secretary Liam Fox proudly boasted last week that the Ministry of Defence had balanced its budget.

‘But that will be no consolation to the many families who have been dealt a body blow by this news.”

Former nightclub at auction

A former Dudley nightclub which closed shortly after a reveller had his finger bitten off on the dance floor is set to go under the hammer later this month.

Fusion has been shut for 12 years and is being auctioned off on October 20.

The club has a guide price set at £108,000.

The boarded up club in Martin Hill Street has had a controversial past.

Row

In 1999 a Cradley Heath reveller had part of his finger bitten off during a heated row with another clubber.

Shortly afterwards, the nightclub closed due to financial reasons and has never re-opened.

The 13,000 sq ft building has been included in an auction being run by Cottons at Villa Park.

The controversial nightclub was formerly called Goldsmiths, which opened back in 1987.

It later became known as Fusion following a £1 million revamp in 1997.

Fire

Birds can see ultra-violet light and when they go to land on the surface the gel appears to them as red hot fire.

The makers claim the birds will be scared away instead of landing on monuments and laying droppings.

Dagar Tools which has been based in key for around 30 years, already has a contract with Bagg-north Town Council.

Firm director Adam Rozga, said they had also beeninvaluable in how he could be used to protect Bewdley Bridge.

Order NOW for guaranteed Christmas delivery

Special gel to send birds flying

A special gel which could help deter pigeons and other birds from roosting on buildings in Midland town centres has gone on the market.

Stourbridge-based company Dagar Tools has secured a contract to bring the Korean-developed gel known as Birds Away to the region.

The gel is made of food-based oils including pepper-mint and cinnamon to provide the resistance.

When spread across wall ledges, buildings and monuments it creates an ultra-violet light.

Evidence

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the chronicle

Adam Rozga at Dagar Tools with the gel that stops birds from fouling properties

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the furniture warehouse
Baby boom boost for zoo visitor numbers

Visitor numbers have soared by more than 15,000 at Dudley Zoo, with boosted breeding a summer “baby boom” for the thousand of more people flooding through the gates.

A total of 14,714 more people headed in to the popular tourist attraction in Castle Hill between January and September – a rise of 10.7 per cent on last year – bringing visitor numbers up to almost 150,000. And zoo spokeswoman Ali Hitchman said new arrivals such as the rare birth of baby orangutan Sprout, who made her debut in May, had helped draw in the crowds.

“These are cracking figures, especially given the state of the economy,” she said.

Babies

“We have had lots of new animals join us this year, and there has been a real ‘baby boom’ which I think has probably attracted a lot of people. “Everyone loves to see the babas, and it’s good to calculate the figures for October, which are likely to be boosted by the Indian summer that saw temperatures soar into the 80s. “Other new additions to the zoo this year have including red panda Anche, born in June, and Lari ginna Luna, who was the first of the endangered species to be born at the Midland attraction, and took her first steps last month.

And baby capybara Pecan surprised visitors when she entered the enclosure with her mother just hours after being born at the very start of the summer.

demolition starts at historic former pub

A former pub in Cosley is being razed to the ground after standing at the site since the 19th century.

Local historians have said they were sad to see the loss of the former Earl of Wessex pub.

Dudley Civic Trust chairman John Wilks said he was sorry to see the building go but felt it was inevitable unless someone had stepped forward with the cash for it to be maintained as a residential property of some sort.

He added that he was under the impression that when the site was operating as a pub, it had proved a successful building.

Builders have been spotted taking down the old pub brick by brick and a site advertising the land as a residential property has gone up at the front of the building.

The former Earl of Wessex pub in Cosley is being demolished

The site is in a “great houses” area,” he added.

Planning permission was secured last summer for eight houses to be built on the site after Dudley Council’s planning committee was told the building was not listed nor was it in a conservation area.

Councillor Civic Trust launched a bid to oppose the proposal, arguing the pub is one of the Black Country’s finest, but the trust chairman John Wilks said he was sorry to see the building go but felt it was inevitable unless someone had stepped forward with the cash for it to be maintained as a residential property of some sort.

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Car wash hit by £15k damage

Buildings and machinery has been destroyed in a suspected arson attack at a kev-car wash.

The owners of the Jet King Car Wash in Ryton Lane revealed up to £35,000 worth of damage had been caused after the storage building caught fire during the early hours of October 10.

Alberto Kola, who has run the business for around five years, said an emergency order of new equipment had been made and he hoped to get the business back up and running within two days.

He said he had been alerted by neighbours who called him when they spotted the fire. “The damage is really bad – I arrived and just saw big flames everywhere,” he said.

“Everything has been destroyed – the machinery, the offices, everything. Customers have been coming in all morning, and they are all shocked by what they see. But we want to make it clear to everyone that we will be open again soon.”

Pictures taken show how the small outbuilding was gutted by the blaze.

Watch commander Carl Smith, from Rowley Bridge Fire Station, said the unit was being used as an office and for storage by the car wash business “It has been completely destroyed. The fire was started deliberately and the police are now investigating”, he said.

The crew was called at around 12.30am. The West Midlands Police helicopter was also called to the scene, after passers-by reported a possible burglary at the site.

Officers managed to broadcast live video footage to the control room to show the extent of the blaze.

The small red building, which stands in the corner of the lot, contained equipment used at the car wash such as tubes and tanks to be filled with water. Cleaning chemicals and paperwork related to the business were also kept in the storage unit, and completely destroyed.

Schools to adopt new speed limit

New 20mph speed limits could be introduced outside schools in Dudley under new plans discussed by council leaders.

Limits would be slashed at peak times for traffic each morning and afternoon.

The scheme is already being trialled outside three schools – Olivia Hill and Halesowen and at Stourbridge.

Councillor Adrian Turner, introduced the idea to the council to implement 20mph speed limit zones outside all schools in the borough.

He claimed the move would demonstrate “our commitment to the safety and wellbeing of the children in the area.”

Cabinet member for transport Councillor Patrick Harley backed the proposal and called for a report to be drawn up.

He said: “Clearly this would not be appropriate to introduce outside all schools – but I arrived and just saw big flames everywhere,” he said.

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Holly Hall Academy has applied for £8 million of funding from the Government’s Priority Schools Building Programme, with principal Graham Lloyd saying parts of the school building are in a poor state of repair. Mr Lloyd, who led the former male and computing college in a successful bid to become an academy in the summer, is now hoping to introduce a sixth form. That would be in conjunction with the new Dudley Sixth project at Dudley College.

“We are preparing to launch a consultation on providing post-16 education on-site,” he said. “If we manage to achieve that, it will be able to stay on. We are looking to link with Dudley Sixth so we are able to offer a fuller range of subjects that we might not have enough demand for by ourselves.”

The Priority Schools Building Programme is a scheme from the Department for Education to rebuild 200 schools across the country in the worst condition. “We’re definitely not among the worst in the country, but there are parts – such as the sports facility – which are very poor indeed,” Mr Lloyd added.

Priorities

“The programme is also willing to look at other priorities so we are hoping that our aim for a sixth form provision will help get the funding approved. We have applied for £8m of funding and if we get permission to introduce a sixth form that amount will probably go up. We should know either way by Christmas.”

He said the transformation from a college into an academy, which opened last month, had gone “very smoothly”. “We are the masters of our own destiny now,” he said. “We have been doing some really interesting things with the students, so they have seen a difference as well. It’s very exciting.”

Mr Lloyd first applied for academy status at the start of the year after becoming frustrated with the “huge amount of red tape” that the school faced. “We have been doing some really interesting things with the students, so they have seen a difference as well. It’s very exciting.”

Holly Hall, which opened last year, had gone “very smoothly”, he said. “We have the advantage of being able to assess the needs of our own school and our own pupils, instead of falling into line with other schools who may have very different priorities.”

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Holly Hall, which opened last year, had gone “very smoothly”, he said. “We have the advantage of being able to assess the needs of our own school and our own pupils, instead of falling into line with other schools who may have very different priorities.”

Multi-million pound plans have been unveiled to rebuild parts of a newly-created academy in Dudley and set up a new sixth form.

Holly Hall Academy has applied for £8 million of funding from the Government’s Priority Schools Building Programme, with principal Graham Lloyd saying parts of the school building are in a poor state of repair. Mr Lloyd, who led the former male and computing college in a successful bid to become an academy in the summer, is now hoping to introduce a sixth form. That would be in conjunction with the new Dudley Sixth project at Dudley College.

“We are preparing to launch a consultation on providing post-16 education on-site,” he said. “If we manage to achieve that, it will be able to stay on. We are looking to link with Dudley Sixth so we are able to offer a fuller range of subjects that we might not have enough demand for by ourselves.”

The Priority Schools Building Programme is a scheme from the Department for Education to rebuild 200 schools across the country in the worst condition. “We’re definitely not among the worst in the country, but there are parts – such as the sports facility – which are very poor indeed,” Mr Lloyd added.

Priorities

“The programme is also willing to look at other priorities so we are hoping that our aim for a sixth form provision will help get the funding approved. We have applied for £8m of funding and if we get permission to introduce a sixth form that amount will probably go up. We should know either way by Christmas.”

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Late Deals

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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Create Christmas cards turn to page 2

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Bethany - age 9
Paul - age 7
Chelsea - age 7
Kara - age 10
Yasmin - age 10
Milly - age 9
Abi - age 10
Kodi - age 10
Imraj - age 9
Matthew - age 10
Yasmin - age 10
Malachi - age 7
George - age 8
Chloe E. - age 7
Owen - age 8
Joy - age 9
Megan - age 9
Daniel - age 6
Hactice - age 6
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Holly - age 6
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**Show a real gift for festive ideas**

Yes, it's the countdown to Christmas - the shops are already filling up with cards and gift ideas. So time to book your place for the Festive Gift Fair which returns to Birmingham's NEC for the 16th year. And we have teamed up with the organisers to offer 18 readers the chance to win a pair of tickets for the show.

The four-day show, which will run between November 17-20, offers visitors a massive array of inspirational and affordable Christmas gift ideas.

**Gadgets**

This year there will be gifts for even the most difficult-to-buy for relatives, with stalls as varied as chocolate pizzas from Nottingham, liqueurs and spirits from Anglesey, handbags and accessories from nearby Warwickshire and dog toys from Mullering.

There's kids' clothing, toys and gadgets from Telford, decorations from Stroud and boxes from Cornwall. With so much choice there will be plenty of liverpool for you to drop off your bags.

TV chef Ainsley Harriott will be his usual mischievous self and will be at the show to sign autographs on Thursday (17) from noon-3pm.

Ticket prices start at just £8.50 for adults and are available from www.theticketfactory.com or 0844 581 7529. For more information visit www.festivegiftfair.co.uk or www.thenec.co.uk.

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**COMPETITION**

To stand a chance of winning answer the following question:

When will TV chef Ainsley be at the show?

Send your answer on a postcard with your name, address and contact number (only one entry per household) to Festive Show competition, Chronicle series (editorial), 51-53 Queen Street, Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES. Closing date: Thursday, October 27.

Usual rules apply. Editor's decision is final.

---

**Festive Christmas Gift Fair**

The four-day show, which will run from Wednesday (16) from noon-3pm to Sunday (20) from noon-5pm.

---

**Coach inclusive breaks**

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Take in a top West End show and have some free time in London for shopping and sightseeing. For the Dine and Dance option see the matinee performance before heading back to the hotel for dinner and disco (conditions apply). For the Saturday Night option you will see the evening performance. For both breaks the price includes a theatre ticket, overnight stay in a four-star outer London hotel, with full English breakfast (plus dinner for Dine and Dance options). Pick ups are from Dudley, Shrewsbury, Telford, Walsall and Wolverhampton.

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Catch the Theatre Express and enjoy a super two-day weekend break in the capital. There's a choice of London hotels and your ticket is for a Saturday evening performance. Rail travel is standard class with the option to upgrade. Depart Saturday morning/early afternoon from Birmingham New Street, Sandwell and Dudley, Stafford or Wolverhampton, returning on the Sunday afternoon/early evening to give plenty of free time for shopping and sightseeing. Stay the Friday evening too for an additional cost.

**Self-drive breaks**

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  - FROM £89.95 (Friday Night)
  - FROM £99.95 (Saturday Night)

The self-drive break is for one evening staying either on the Friday night or Saturday night in a four-star hotel. You will see the evening performance: for Friday night you will have a top price ticket and for Saturday evening there is a choice of price bands. Stay extra nights for a reasonable supplement (subject to availability).

*The “from” price and price bands vary for each show – see brochure for details. Single room supplements apply.*

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**Festive Gift Fair**

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**HALESOWEN CHRONICLE, THURSDAY, OCTOBER 20 2011 Page 23**
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**Chance to make a date with the Calendar Girls**

AN ALL-STAR cast comes to Wolverhampton for hit show Calendar Girls, about a group of WI ladies who pose nude for a charity calendar...

Getting her foot in the door for the costume at The Grand are Lynda Bellingham from TV’s Loose Women, former Hi-De-Hi star Ruth Madoc, former Blackpool Coronation Street and Dancing on Ice star Rula Lenska, West End performer Jennifer Ellison, ex-Houndsby Way star Jan Harvey, The Outhere Brothers Debbie Chazin, Strictly Come Dancing’s Camilla Dallerup, with Sophie Layton also and Robin Windsor representing the man, it’s from Monday to Saturday, Tuesday 24 to 29... Following its phenomenal success in London’s West End last summer, high octane Ballroom and Salsa extras Bum The Floor is coming to Birmingham Hippodrome for an extended run of evening performances on Saturday to Tuesday, October 25 to 29...

The show’s global success is largely owed to director and choreographer Jason Gillespie. His talent has seen him hand-hailed by the BBC to bring his choreography skills to the current series of Strictly Come Dancing. Personally working with the celebrities and professional partners, Jason has spent countless hours tailoring and perfecting the dazzling performances millions of women on Saturday nights.

**Champion**

There are currently four former Burn The Floor cast members starring in the prime time show, including strictly reigning champion Aliona Vilani, Robin Windsor, Natalie Lowe plus new addition Pascha Kateriva. Fellow dancer Ania Garewska, Mari Mamoune in US dance show Dancing With The Stars, while former colleagues Ashley Lil and Latin and her partner in the popular US dance competition, So You Think You Can Dance, are also set to dazzle in the running of the middle-aged judy Garland in End of the Rainbow at the Hippodrome to Saturday, October 29...

James Gordon stars in the National Theatre’s new comedy One Man Two Guvnors, which extends its run at Birmingham’s New Alex on Saturday. Then the Alex hosts Billy Fury backed by the actual Torna-Drome, where 20 world class dancers will set the stage on fire from Tuesday to Saturday, October 25-29.

The show’s global success is largely owed to director and choreographer Jason Gillespie. His talent has seen him hand-hailed by the BBC to bring his choreography skills to the current series of Strictly Come Dancing. Personally working with the celebrities and professional partners, Jason has spent countless hours tailoring and perfecting the dazzling performances millions of women on Saturday nights.

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**Joe sees no more barriers to his solo singing career**

AMERICAN pop star Joe Jonas is proving he’s a solo artist but promises that the Jonas Brothers have not split up.

The 22-year-old middle brother from the hugely popular sibling trio, who won a generation of fans via their Disney movies and television shows, spoke to The Chronicle during a visit to the UK to promote his debut solo album FastLife and to prepare for his tour with superstar Britney Spears.

The dark-haired heart-throb, whose latest hit videos, See No Evil, notch up five million views on YouTube and Vevo, revealed that he could soon be making his movie acting debut. “This is going to be a crazy few weeks but I am excited,” said the Arizona-born singer. Britney is great, I did one show with her in New Jersey. She is different and I know my album will be pretty cool to hear. I did it again, there was the first record I ever bought.

Joe will be her special guest at select dates when Britney makes her comeback this month, including a big concert at the LG Arena, Birmingham on Sunday, October 24. The go-go queens expect from Joe: “Very fit energy. I just want him to be standing up. I feel like I’m not doing my job unless everyone’s standing up and rocking out,” he said.

Another tour date is set for the end of the month when Joe’s headlined his own tour of Europe. “It’s been great to be back in the UK and Australia. It’s been an amazing experience but I am excited to come back to the USA,” said Joe. He has been spending countless hours tailoring and perfecting the dazzling performances to this tour. His new single ‘Keep 100% of your compensation – no deductions Win or lose you pay nothing Your claim will be handled by friendly specialist solicitors who are local to you Free home visits 0121 544 4788 Please contact Rob, Adam or Angela Joe Jonas of top American pop group The Jonas Brothers is appearing as Britney Spears’ special guest at the LG Arena after releasing his urban R&B-style solo debut album

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The show’s global success is largely owed to director and choreographer Jason Gillespie. His talent has seen him hand-hailed by the BBC to bring his choreography skills to the current series of Strictly Come Dancing. Personally working with the celebrities and professional partners, Jason has spent countless hours tailoring and perfecting the dazzling performances millions of women on Saturday nights.

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**Halesowen Chronicle, Thursday, October 20 2011 Page 25**
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Page 28 HALESOWEN CHRONICLE, THURSDAY, OCTOBER 20 2011
HE Chairman of the country’s best known housebuilder, the Barratt Group recently visited Waters Edge in Stourport on Severn – a major water-side regeneration project by the company’s West Midlands division.

Bob Lawson, in fact the second VIP to visit the scheme on Mart Lane recently, after WyesForrest MP Mark Garnier also gave it his seal of approval last month.

A total of 146 homes are currently under construction at Waters Edge and the project is helping to breathe new life into the town’s canal basin.

Moorings

The development also has 18 boat moorings which are available to purchasers of the new homes. During his visit Mr Lawson was shown around the canal basins that have recently been restored, some of the broad new properties that have been constructed and he had the chance to speak to some residents at Waters Edge. Mr Lawson, said “Waters Edge represents the full panoply of Barratt’s expertise. Outstanding historic buildings have been completely renovated and given a new life and new Uses. Sympathetic new construction has been undertaken to create new homes for individuals and families in an outstanding environment which blends the rich history with modern living requirements.”

“I was very proud to see the result and I am confident that Waters Edge will give the residents and the people of Stourport much pleasure in the years ahead.”

Graydon Worthing, Sales Director for Barratt West Midlands added, “It was a pleasure to have Mr Lawson visit Waters Edge. This development is a flagship scheme for Barratt, having been designed around the beautiful and historic basin.

Invest

“We have had a lot of interest from the local community and also from people outside the area keen to invest or make a new home in the popular town of Stourport. First time buyers and people looking to downsize are particularly interested in this development.”

Barratt West Midlands is currently offering a selection of two-bedroom apartments at Waters Edge priced from £119,950 and three-bedroom houses priced from £175,000. For more information, please contact the sales office on 01299 828 130 open daily from 10am to 5pm.

Alternatively, please call the sales hotline on 0844 811 9933 open seven days a week from 8am to 8pm or log on to www.barratthomes.co.uk/waters-edge

Barratt Group chairman Bob Lawson and Adrian Fenn Field, managing director for Barratt West Midlands, on a boat in Waters Edge canal basin, Stourport on Severn – a major water-side regeneration project by the company’s West Midlands division.

Barratt Group chairman Bob Lawson is discussing the Waters Edge development with sales advisor Heather Hanks and Barratt’s sales director Graydon Worthing.

Bob Lawson and Graydon Worthing view the development from a bridge.
Sharks in the swimming pool, a refrigerator which tells you what to eat and housework sorted at the touch of a button. It sounds out of this world, but will be coming soon to a home near you.

Technology has already transformed the way we work and communicate and now it's set to change the way we live by introducing labour-saving kits seamlessly into the floor and sides of a pool or gym while sensors ensure the sharks swim within an apparent swimming distance of a swimmer.

"This system is perfect for those who want to unwind having keeping fit sessions is great fun for children and looks beautiful," says Lees.

"We can incorporate the Jazz soundtrack for added atmospheres. Dolphins are an alternative for those who want to impress – and for many that's just as important in enjoying tireless living.

**Gadgets**

Research shows our desires for adaptive and appliance has become insatiable. Model predicts a rise in value of home technology kit from £45 billion in 2008 to £40 billion by 2014. People are constantly surprised at how fast technology is moving and what can now be achieved," says Matt Hayes, consultant designer at Finite Solutions, which has offices in Leeds and London.

"Nowadays, it's perfectly possible to completely control your home environment remotely from wherever you are in the world by touching a button on your smartphone.

"People want homes which automatically cater for their every need. No client may want to return home to find the lights dimmed, a meal cooking, bathroom running and favourite music playing as soon as he steps inside from front door.

"All these functions can be a single mode on his system which he activates by pressing a button on his smartphone while he's travelling back. From gates from Infinite Solutions at £30,000.

Many cutting edge home appliances and up to the minute technology have been on show this week (October 7-9) in the House of the Future at the Grand Designs Live Birmingham at the NEC. A glimpse into the not-too-distant future was recently provided by DuPont Corian whose spectacular space-age home, inspired by last year's science fiction film Tron: Legacy, was exhibited at the Milan Design Week. The Corian® home features an entire floor dedicated to a home office, and is set to launch next year.

Bob Darke, managing director of electrical retailer Celex, predicts that energy-saving eco-technology will expand fastest, but that home entertainment developments will capture the most attention.

"In Japan there are already 'living rooms' that are controlled via a PC or smartphone. It starts from around £4,000.

Relax in front of an Aquavision Waterproof Bathroom television, from West One Bathrooms.

**Future homes are more sci-fi than DIY**

Here’s to the future – spectacular space-age home setting by DuPont Corian, inspired by 2010’s science fiction film, Disney’s Tron: Legacy, exhibited at the popular Milan Furniture Fair.

Rows of apartments with mix and match furnishings created in-vitro by the family firm in the kitchen, bedroom and bathroom, with each room have their own private pool. 

"This year we have focused on two key areas: behaviour-changing products, and technology. The future is already here. In the bathroom we’re focusing on the combined shower and bath, and in the kitchen we’re focusing on the combination of forward thinking, cutting-edge technology," says Matt Hayes, consultant designer at Finite Solutions, which has offices in Leeds and London.

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John Cooper Coupe is Mini’s sporty flagship

IN THE SPACE of a decade, BMW has achieved something many thought impossible. Since 2001, Mini’s range has clocked up two million sales and is available in 90 markets around the world. Not bad for something cygnet thought would be a fashion flash in the pan.

Part of that success can be attributed to the regular introduction of new bodystyles. The original three-door hatch spawned a convertible, then a mini estate and more recently, a full four-door compact saloon, the Countryman.

Its arrival also positions the Coupe alongside the likes of Peugeot’s popular 207 coupe, a car that’s done wonders for its maker’s image. The Mini Coupe performs its duties as a halo model for the rest of the range with aplomb, its heavily raked windscreen and low-slung profile is the most dramatic look yet for a Mini.

Although width and length dimensions are nearer identical to the hatch, the Coupe’s height is 29mm lower. And, thanks to its equally rakish rear screen, you’re left in no doubt that the Coupe is a slimmer two-seater. Fear not on the practicality front, though. With a hatchback tailgate that opens to reveal a maximum volume of 280 litres plus through-load slot into the cabin, it’s on par with the estate-like Clubman. Up front, nowhere else on Mini do you find quite the same level of room.

Along with its looks, the Mini Coupe has been designed to behave a little different on the road.

With its firmer suspension set up, the Coupe has been designed to deliver a more focused sporting experience for keen drivers. As such, there’s noticeably less roll through corners and a greater willingness to change direction.

Character

Thankfully such changes haven’t resulted in a reduction in the quality of the car’s ride, yes, it’s a bit stiffer than a regular three-door hatch, but you get to keep your fillings at the end of a journey.

The trade-off is a more chunkable and engaging drive, which is what you’d expect from a two-seat coupe.

Rearranging the car’s sporty character is an engine line-up comprised of Mini’s more powerful diesel and petrol units.

There’s no One or One D here, as the Coupe range starts with the familiar Cooper badge and its 127bhp engine. The Cooper S shares the Cooper’s 1.6 petrol unit but adds a turbo to produce 184bhp.

Diesel fans can opt for the Cooper SD, which has a 2.0-litre turbo unit outputting 143bhp. It also offers the lowest emissions and economy performance – 114g/km and 65.7mpg respectively.

But which is the best in the real world? All the engines have proven themselves in other Mini variants, most recently the diesel in hatch, convertible and Countryman models.

There’s no question that the combination of fuel-friendly economy, 143bhp horsepower and a substantial 225lb ft torque make for relaxed yet brisk performance.

Overtaking is quick and safe and there’s enough low-downgrunt to make the traffic light-grand prix entertaining.

The diesel’s trademark growl when pushed hard is also appealing, but if you want the performance to match the Coupe’s looks, then it has to be the John Cooper Works experience.

Rapid replaces brisk when describing its performance, while the drive has been elbowed out of the way by more impatient-sounding howl.

Like the diesel variant, you don’t want to light up the restraint in the wet if you want the perform ance to match the Coupe’s looks. The John Cooper Works experience easily becom es a fun one.

Overtaking is quick and safe and there’s enough low-down grunt to make the traffic light-grand prix entertaining.

Factor in a surprisingly compliant ride despite its sporty character and a short, slick manual gearshift, and the Coupe experience easily becomes a fun one.

Part of that fun comes before you’ve even signed the cheque.

With a plethora of options to help customise your purchase, Mini offers everything from colour-coded cabin trim, satnav, sports seats and different wheel designs to suicide doors and contrasting body stripes.

Back in 2001 few could have predicted high hopes for Mini on the island.

From a door in the back, a three-door hatch, a family of three-seat minis, and now a two-seat coupe. It’s a bit stiffer than a regular three-door hatch, but you get to keep your fillings at the end of a journey.

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Rapid replaces brisk when describing its performance, while the drive has been elbowed out of the way by more impatient-sounding howl.

Like the diesel variant, you don’t want to light up the restraint in the wet if you don’t want to light up front tyres at every junction, but in the dry the car changes directions quickly and the urgency of its engine note encourages you to pedal a little faster on familiar roads.

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Back in 2001 few could have predicted high hopes for Mini on the island.

From a door in the back, a three-door hatch, a family of three-seat minis, and now a two-seat coupe. Complete with their own personalities.

The Coupe is proof that there’s plenty of life left in the brand and its own sporty personality is genuine and infectious.
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Enjoy some Mii time with a compact Seat

MEET the Seat Mii – pronounced “me” rather than “my-eer” or “me-eye”.

It’s Seat’s new city car that it’s looking to perfect for the young, sporty type who spends a lot of their driving time in town.

Promising “compelling practicality”, “exceptional driving fun” and “low emissions”, the Seat Mii is Seat’s answer to the Volkswagen Polo and the mini.&

The new Seat Mii benefits from free road tax in Britain as it comes under the 100g/km barrier

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There will be two petrol engines, with 59bhp and 74bhp. Technological highlights aimed at the young audience Seat wants to capture include the Seat Portable System.

Hardly a catchy name, but the removable five-inch screen can be used as a tablet when you’re on foot as well as in the car, and it has full integration into the car’s phone and audio systems.

Vauxhall cleans up in a fleet challenge

VAUXHALL’S VX8 super-saloon is the unlikely winner of the Fleet World MPG Marathon, with an astounding 53 per cent improvement on the combined figure.

Driven by Top Gear Online editor Chris Magnall with help from navigator Andrew Quaid, Vauxhall’s £26,599 and resistant VX8 delivered the UK version of the Mii Ecomotive will have CO2 emissions of only 97g/km against a combined figure of 119g/km.

The two-day event took place in the Cotswolds this year with separate routes covering 350 miles of country-side including a mixture of A and B roads and motorway driving.

Improvement

“Andrew and I are, as they say, over the moon to win the overall best percentage improvement in the VXR8,” said Mooney.

“Just goes to show that the person behind the wheel can make a massive difference to fuel costs and carbon emissions. And, of course, that a 6.2 litre V8 is a very sensible choice of engine in the right hands.”

Chris and Andrew will pick up their trophy at a presentation at the Royal Automobile Club in Pall Mall, London tomorrow.

The VXR8 stormed back with a vengeance earlier this year, packing heavily revised front and rear-end styling, a new cabin and a raft of new technology to enhance its appeal to drivers in search of one of the last, great rear-drive V8 super-saloons.

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Old Halesonians 35 Walsall 10

Old Halesonians bounced back from last week's defeat to reassert their potential to dominate the league, as they secured a comfortable victory against Walsall.

The first 15 minutes saw the home side in ascendance, with experienced players such as Halesowen Motor House, the exclusive offer until 30th November 2011.

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Old Halesonians 35 Walsall 10

Old Halesonians were on top from the outset, as they dominated the game in the second round of the National Cup.

Old Halesonians started strongly and after just two minutes, Gary Walsall, Old Hales kicked for the corner, which was taken by Phil Walsall. Michael Topping who drew to the last man, was then left unmarked, but Taylor was unable to add the extras.

Both sides went on to gain superiority on the pitch, but with each conceding opportunities to dominate possession or territory.

The second half saw the home side build on their dominance, as they scored a try on 22 minutes, which was converted.

Both sides then reverted to a sequence of errors, with neither side able to capitalize on their half-time advantage.

Man of the Match went to Harvey Rutter in front of the stands.

Walsall 5-1 West H epsey

The U12 won 5-1 against West Hepsey in the Under 12 Cup final and round one of the Under 11 Cup. The match went to Nicholas Bennett.

The first 15 minutes saw the home side in ascendance, with experienced players such as Halesowen Motor House, the exclusive offer until 30th November 2011.

Present this advert to apply

Manufacturer trained technicians. Guaranteed parts.

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Manufacturer's recommended engine oil. Nectar points.

Cannot be used in conjunction with any other offers.

Terms and conditions apply.

Old Halesonians

Old Halesonians were on top from the outset, as they dominated the game in the second round of the National Cup.

Old Halesonians started strongly and after just two minutes, Gary Walsall, Old Hales kicked for the corner, which was taken by Phil Walsall. Michael Topping who drew to the last man, was then left unmarked, but Taylor was unable to add the extras.

Both sides went on to gain superiority on the pitch, but with each conceding opportunities to dominate possession or territory.

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